El patriarcado es un juez
que nos juzga por nacer,
y nuestro castigo
es la violencia que no ves.
El patriarcado es un juez
que nos juzga por nacer,
y nuestro castigo
es la violencia que ya ves.
Es feminicidio.
Impunidad para mi asesino.
Es la desaparición.
Es la violación.
Y la culpa no era mía, ni dónde estaba ni cómo vestía.
Y la culpa no era mía, ni dónde estaba ni cómo vestía.
Y la culpa no era mía, ni dónde estaba ni cómo vestía.
Y la culpa no era mía, ni dónde estaba ni cómo vestía.
El violador eras tú.
El violador eres tú.
Son los pacos,
los jueces,
el Estado,
el presidente.
El Estado opresor es un macho violador.
El Estado opresor es un macho violador.
El violador eras tú.
El violador eres tú.
Duerme tranquila, niña inocente,
sin preocuparte del bandolero,
que por tu sueño dulce y sonriente
vela tu amante carabinero.
Introduction

The performance “The Rapist Is You”, created and executed by the Chilean activist group Colectivo Lastesis, has gone viral all over the world and is a powerful statement on issues related to gender, sexuality and masculinities in Latin America. It has been replicated in many countries, contexts and languages, including by native women in their original languages as well as outside of Latin America. It expresses, among many things, a position about the political and economic crisis in Chile (and everywhere) and an awareness of the ways in which the machinery of patriarchy is embedded in the cultural systems that affect the daily lives, mostly of women. But it is also a strong statement about the role of men, the need to question and review how gender and sexual relations are organized and how institutions produce, maintain and reproduce those systems.

This chapter presents an overview of gender, masculinities and sexual diversity in relation to religion and theology in Latin America. The main focus will be on academic studies and initiatives that exemplify experiences in this field, through both academic training and work, and as part of the struggles for social justice. This approach seeks to make visible the theoretical and methodological contributions that emerge from the Latin American context and, at the same time, applying this framework in the way the chapter is constructed. The focus on academic studies does not intend to suggest that the knowledge produced by research and that produced by grassroots and social movements are in opposition. On the contrary, the academic works, authors and institutions mentioned in this chapter were chosen precisely because of their intentional and strong articulation of what is commonly called “theory” and “praxis”. This way, while there is a descriptive element in what is presented, the sources—which focus on gender, masculinities and sexual diversity in relation to religion as developed in feminist and queer studies—and how they are used by the authors, are, in themselves, a way of articulating a position in relation to the topic of this chapter.

I begin the chapter by demonstrating how the context of Latin America is set by the perspective of coloniality, both in historical terms of a specific project that promoted the exploitation of native peoples and lands and as an ordering system that is constantly updated, and that this depends on certain assumptions about gender and sexuality. I then discuss the ways in which Latin American liberation theology offers a framework to discuss the relation of religion to gender, masculinities and sexual diversity, considering its contributions within this area as well as its shortcomings. As a consequence, both “gender” and “religion” become “troubling” elements in the Latin American context, precisely because of how they are seen and operationalized by different groups, particularly when it comes to the study of masculinities. The chapter continues with an example from Brazil, which further exemplifies the challenges faced by those working in academic contexts on religion, gender, masculinities and sexual diversity. This section looks at more recent attempts to take steps forward, creating a new scene when it comes to issues of gender, masculinities and sexual diversity, and discusses the contributions and possibilities that such work offers in face of the emergence of extreme right and conservative religious and political movements. Gender and sexuality, and more specifically the sexed and gendered bodies of the most vulnerable, are the battlefields in which the colonial powers fight to prevail once again and control through violence the future of the peoples and lands.
Latin American context

Latin America is the result of rape and violence, with the colonial project invading, penetrating and violating the land, culture and people. Through a process of exploitation and extractivism (material and symbolic), colonialism destroyed and subjugated native peoples, languages, religions and knowledges (Cardoso, 2016). It imposed a social order based on domination and production for profit and the so-called development of the North. The legacy of this process, lived and relived throughout the centuries, is a colonial worldview embedded in the social, political, cultural and religious fabric of the continent. Coloniality, as the intertwining of capitalism, racism and patriarchy, marks the bodies of Latin American peoples and structures the institutions that regulate everyday life. According to Rita Segato (2013), there have been four main theories originating in Latin America in the 20th century that have been able to cross the “Great Frontier” that divides North and South: liberation theology, pedagogy of the oppressed, theory of marginality and the perspective of the coloniality of power. Together, they form an “ecology of knowledges” (Santos, 2010) developed and emerging from the South. Feminist and/or gender and sexual diversity issues and reflections have been present in all of them. Even so, these aspects have often been marginalized and questioned, perhaps because they are one of the last “frontiers” to actually cross the divide and to articulate a liberationist perspective that is radical enough to crumble coloniality as a way of thinking and ordering life, as has been shown by decolonial feminism (Roese, 2015).

This is one of the reasons why the movement expressed through the performances of Lastesis is so symbolic and important. As the group states, “We call ourselves Lastesis because our premise is to use feminist theories and take them to the scene so as to spread this message” (Rodríguez, 2019). This aim of the group and its impact are not accidental. It reflects the work and action of feminist movements throughout Latin America, present in movements like #NiUnaMenos, the Green Wave in Argentina, and even in the #EleNão demonstrations during the 2018 electoral campaign in Brazil. The work of feminist, women’s and LGBTIQ+ groups and scholars in Latin America have paved the way for the kind of statement Lastesis represents. Also, it has been present in and has impacted the fields of religious studies and theology, although this aspect is surprisingly absent in the aforementioned performance, since there is no reference to religion in the way it presents the construction and maintenance of patriarchy. Looking from this perspective, one could add to the lyrics: “Priest, Pastor, Religious leader: the rapist is you!” to draw attention to whenever religion takes the side of patriarchy and operates as a key element in sustaining such a system.

The main backlash in relation to the advance of issues concerning gender and sexual equality is found within extreme right-wing political groups who make use of religious discourse and structures. In recent years, such initiatives are well exemplified through the campaign against what has been called “gender ideology” in the Latin American continent. With a history that leads back to the Vatican, the pseudo (or at least ill-formulated and misleading) theory of a “gender ideology” that is set out to destroy “the family” (and society as a whole) has aligned conservative Roman Catholic with Pentecostal/Evangelical groups. It has impacted political processes, such as elections and the impeachment of presidents, as well as very concrete public policies in all areas of life through a moral panic that mixes the fear of (radical) feminism, sexual diversity (homosexuality) and the old ghosts of communism.

Such right-wing political groups aim their critique towards social movements that articulate reproductive and sexual rights as well as to scholars and academic groups and areas of study working with what is labeled as “gender theory”. Special attention has been paid to religious groups and their theological productions that are understood to be aligned with such “theory”,
ranging from inclusive churches and religious groups (both traditional—such as Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran and even Roman Catholic—and new ones—such as the Metropolitan Community Churches) to theological institutions, research groups and scholars. So, although the performance of Lastesis reflects the important work done in the Latin American context in relation to gender and sexuality, its boldness and the reactions to it (both for and against) show that this is an ongoing struggle. It reflects the historical alignment between coloniality and heteropatriarchy and the constant resistance posed by social movements and academic production in dialogue. And religion and theology play an important role in this struggle.

Theological perspectives

Liberation theology is, in academic and in religious terms, certainly the most well-known expression of Latin American thinking. It is both the result of religious experience and practice on the ground (usually associated with the ecclesiastical base communities and their struggle against military dictatorial regimes), and of the work of scholars and academics in theology in dialogue with other disciplines. After more than seven decades since its birth, many things have changed in the field. From being considered dead, to “going to Disneyland”, to the emergence of new subjects (in terms both of themes and authors and of theory and methodology), liberation theology is ever-changing, and issues of gender and sexuality are part of this history and its present state (Bock, 2002).

Usually Latin American feminist liberation theology is considered as emerging out of the “classic” or “original” liberation theology. In terms of the systematic use of feminist studies and its categories, women religious leaders and theologians in Latin America started to call themselves feminist and to work with its categories and theoretical frameworks later in the history of liberation theology, around the 1990s (Deifelt, 2003). Yet, this historical narrative does not take into account the work women were doing from early on, in grassroots groups (religious and social) and at an academic level (notwithstanding the restrictions to their presence in this mostly male context). Ivone Gebara is just one of many important religious women and theologians in the continent. Her engagement with liberation theology from early on and her ongoing work shows her commitment to the liberationist perspective and her growing engagement with feminist and gender studies. In the 1990s she was one of the theologians who were silenced by the Vatican alongside a group of male theologians, precisely for her work and positions on issues of gender and sexuality in the context of liberation theology.

Afro Latin American and Indigenous/native peoples, LGBTIQ+ people and so many other “emerging subjects” also gained public visibility particularly in the 1990s and early 2000s. Although a more systematized and conscious presence of these groups within the liberation theology movement was not evident in most publications and debates in its early days, it is possible to say that their experience was part of what made liberation theology possible in the first place. However, those “issues” were considered by many as “secondary” to the “main struggle”, perhaps because the means to articulate a more solid reflection and presence were just not accessible to them (Pérez-Hernández, 2004). Even so, those groups and the reflections and actions that arose from their lived experience, as sexed and gendered people who were part of this movement, were present and influenced what became liberation theology and its theories and methods (Musskopf, 2015, 2012). So, it is in the context of liberation theologies (in plural) that this reflection on gender, masculinities and sexual diversity is situated in terms of religion and theology. Despite the fact that many liberation theologians are still not comfortable and truly engaging with those issues, the tools developed in the context of such theologies both were influenced by and became important resources for those working with them.
Gender and religion “trouble” and the ambiguous place of masculinity

Gender and sexual diversity studies, including studies on masculinities, can be undertaken from several different perspectives. That is also true for Latin America. Even among feminist, LGBTIQ+ and queer scholars and groups there are many differences, sometimes conflicting, in terms of methodological and theoretical approaches. “Gender” has been a very problematic category throughout the last decades, especially for some scholars and activists working in the field of feminist, LGBTIQ+ and queer studies. This is mostly because it was considered too broad and too neutral, both in political movements and in the academy, and was somehow seen as softening the political approach. In many cases, it was just a way of using a less “radical” term than “feminism”, mostly because it was unknown to the general public. However, it was also the case that suddenly many people and groups, not committed to the feminist agenda, started to use the term to refer to their work, and many feminist and queer scholars saw this way of using it as being in contrast to the basic idea of gender as a critical analytical category as developed by feminist scholars such as Butler (1999).

The popularization of the term “gender” through the “gender ideology” campaign of conservative Roman Catholic and Pentecostal/Evangelical groups, as already discussed, has changed this landscape. Most of those who approached gender from a perspective that did not engage with feminist, LGBTIQ+ and queer studies or a political position increasingly tried to distance themselves from anything related to “gender”, with some also spending a lot of time and energy explaining why “gender” was not as bad and as troubling as it was being accused of being. Alternatively, some of those who were reluctant to embrace “gender” as a way to identify their work, because they saw it as too broad and neutral (while nonetheless usually applying the category in their analysis), started to use it more flagrantly precisely because it became an issue of political dispute since it had become such a controversial term. But some also resisted it, arguing that it was old news, since they themselves questioned the use of “gender” and its political and theoretical implications. In many ways, as a result of the “gender ideology” campaign, “gender” in Latin America became a “queer” term.12

During the 1990s, the question about men and how their identities and behaviors are constructed started to emerge in the context of gender studies. Initially, some women were positioning themselves as, directly or indirectly, influenced by the feminist critique on patriarchy as a male-dominated system demanding self-reflection on the part of men and were committed to the introduction of gender as an analytical category. In systemic terms, if the roles women are expected to perform are being questioned, it inevitably leads to the questioning of the roles men play. In response, some initial studies and groups started to emerge around issues of masculinities. Studies on masculinity and religion in Latin America appeared, for example, in specialized journals, especially in the area of biblical studies, where an important part of liberation theology was developed. In 2005, the journal Estudos Bíblicos, published by Editora Vozes, in Brazil, presented a volume on Bible and Masculinity (Estudos Bíblicos, 2005), and, in 2007, the Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana published a volume with articles written around the theme of “re-imagining masculinities” (Ribla, 2007).

Despite this interest in and important reflections on the theme of masculinities, many of the initial debates on the subject did not really engage with feminist critical thinking and politics. Instead, they were centered on what was called the “crisis of the macho” in face of the consequences of the work of feminist movements and studies. Some of them pointed to the apparent victimization of men, seeing them as suffering equally to women the misfortunes of patriarchy, but did not engage in a deep analysis of the dynamics of power relations and the different
positions occupied by men and women in maintaining or dismantling the patriarchal system. This was also a reason that some feminists were critical of “gender studies” when applied to masculinities, since it took out the political and critical element of it.

Other complicating factors in the debates on gender, masculinities and sexual diversity in relation to religion are related to the place of religion itself in the Latin American context. Besides having to argue about those issues in academic settings as well as in social movements and political struggles, those dealing with issues of gender and sexual diversity in theology and religious studies, particularly from the perspective of feminism and queer studies and politics, have also had to argue with their colleagues from other fields about the importance or even the pertinence of dealing with religion at all. Maybe more than in other contexts, the association between religion and gender, and sexual discrimination and violence, experienced in Latin America throughout the colonial process and authoritarian and dictatorial political regimes, made religion an almost taboo issue, especially in social movements and left-wing political groups. In many cases and in many circles, religion (especially Christianity as expressed in the “Christendom project”—meaning Christianity supporting the colonial project) has been seen as “the” problem of Latin American underdevelopment and dependency and unrelatable to gender and sexual justice.

It is only very recently that those working within theology and religious studies have started to be seen in a more positive (although still skeptical) way and as having something useful to contribute to the analysis of social and political problems. This is partly due to the ways in which religious extremism has made itself present once again, even under (supposed) democratic political regimes that were elected with popular majorities. Moreover, it is also the case that processes of secularization (simplistically understood as the overcoming of religion) have not occurred as had been predicted and, instead, there is a reemergence of the “the sacred” or the “re-enchantment” of the world (Alves, 1978).14

The initial efforts on discussing masculinities in relation to religion and theology in the mid-2000s seem to have found their limits, since very little has been seen in the period that followed. There has been some conflict and dispute over whether gay studies in the study of religion could be classified as studies on masculinity (for they supposedly deal with issues related to gay men only). But mostly, the virtual absence or the loss of interest in this specific focus seems to be a result of a failure to question the heterosexist power structures and not being able to think about masculinities outside of this scope, disturbing the power positions men still occupy in all areas, including in academic studies of religion and theology. When failing to do that, studies on masculinities become irrelevant in participating in actual changes.

The “troubles” with “gender” as a descriptive term in academic studies and political movements and with “religion” seen as instrumentalized by conservative and right-wing groups have tested the limits of gender studies and religion in general and studies on masculinities and religion in particular, leaving it in an ambiguous position. Even after the progressive and revolutionary work done in the context of liberation theology, a more radical and consistent critique has been called for in terms of sexual and gender diversity, mainly from more intersectional feminist approaches and queer studies.

Sexual and gender diversity in the study of religion and theology

Gay/lesbian/queer theologies and studies in religion have also gained little attention in Latin America, even in the context of liberation theology. Most of the work done by Marcella Althaus-Reid, a global leading scholar in the field, is virtually unknown in the continent, and very few of her writings are available either in Spanish or in Portuguese. During the 1980s, especially in
response to HIV and AIDS, many pamphlets, liturgies and statements about the role of religion were developed, usually by non-governmental organizations fighting the epidemic. In addition, during the 1990s, the organization and articulation of inclusive churches and religious groups gave this kind of work and reflection a more systematized form and prompted its way into the debates of some Latin American liberation theology circles. Academic papers, books and articles also appeared during this period, produced mostly by male Protestant scholars and activists (Musskopf, 2012: 228–289).

These initiatives faded during the 2000s. One reason for this virtual disappearance is that these approaches were supposedly incorporated by more traditional and classic liberation theology and theologians. Most of the work done on issues related to gender, sexuality and even race and ethnicity or ecology throughout the 1990s was done by particular scholars or groups and seen as separate from classic liberation theology. However, over time, such “emerging issues” or “emerging subjects”, and the interest they raised, were seen by some as a form of fragmentation of a more solid block identified as “the” liberation theology. Such issues also became more popular and urgent in several social movements (beyond the traditional identity movements) and some scholars started to incorporate them in their more “general” approaches, not always with the full knowledge or commitment to these emerging fields.

The existence and promise of so-called left-wing social democratic governments by the 2000s—with concrete gains in terms of gender and sexuality in public policy—meant that there was apparently less need to deal with “religious issues”, even more so in relation to issues of gender and sexuality. The crisis of theological education (mostly at Protestant institutions) and the weakening of inclusive churches (mostly for depending—financially and theologically—on churches from the North and not being able to relate to the Latin American context and reality) also impacted work on gender and sexuality.

So, even with significant work being done during the 1990s and early 2000s in the field of gay/lesbian/queer theologies in Latin America, it almost seemed as if issues related to gender and sexuality were being taken care of, both in religion and politics, as things were progressing and problems were being overcome. These same issues that led to a less solid reflection on gender and sexuality in theology and religion likely made it possible for an extremist religious and political right wing to re-emerge in the second half of the 2010s, relying on a moralist agenda that used sexual and gender diversity as the key to create a moral panic with the “gender ideology campaign” and producing an undeniable backlash in all areas in the continent. Even so, the 2010s also saw a reemergence of feminist, gender, LGBTIQ+ and queer movements and scholarly work, including in the area of theology and religious studies.

An example from Brazil

The movement that took place at Faculdades EST, in São Leopoldo, Brazil, is an example of what has been mentioned up to now and how this relates particularly to masculinities. At this specific institution affiliated to the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil, a feminist theology chair was created in 1991. With the strong participation of students, pushed by the Women’s Group and with the support of male students, the establishment of the chair meant hiring a female professor specializing in feminist theology. She would not only be responsible for teaching a regular class for theology students, but would also be able to articulate the discussion on issues of gender and sexuality at the institution as a whole, in the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil and beyond—through teaching, research, advising, participation in events and publications. As in many other places, this was mostly possible through international funding, in this case coming from the Protestant churches in the Netherlands. In 1999,
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after the creation and establishment of the graduate program, the Gender Research Group was created, with graduate students who were interested in feminist and gender studies and who had already been meeting and discussing their research projects. For more than two decades the institution amassed a solid body of research expressed through master’s theses and doctoral dissertations, as well as several other publications, constituting a significant “field of knowledge” (Musskopf, 2014).

In 2004, the Gender Research Group published its first collectively produced book (Ströher, Deifelt and Musskopf, 2006) and organized the *I Latin American Congress on Gender and Religion* (Musskopf and Ströher, 2005).20 Both in the book and in the themes of the *I Congress*, masculinity appears as one of the emerging topics for the researchers of this particular group, also reflecting how it was on the agenda in the field of feminist and gender studies in Latin America. The Latin American Congress on Gender and Religion produced two further editions (2006 and 2009)21 but after that, work on feminist theology and gender studies were strongly affected by the financial crisis that hit theological institutions, as mentioned earlier. This more general financial crisis coincided, in this case, with the ending of the support for the feminist theology chair and the work associated with it specifically, and the departure of all the feminist scholars working at the institution. Most of the work was interrupted between 2009 and 2012 (Musskopf, 2014).

Already in 2008, a new format for the feminist theology chair was designed in what became the Gender and Religion Program. Including religious studies was an answer to the new developments in the field, the demands from financial agencies and a sign of the opening of the institution itself to a broader perspective than theology. In 2014, with the support of the Church of Sweden, a new project focused on the support and promotion of research on issues of gender and sexuality connected with social and ecclesiastical movements reinvigorated the Gender and Religion Program. Through the support of the Church of Sweden, it was possible to issue publications, including the book *Ainda feminismo e gênero* [*Still Feminism and Gender*] (Musskopf and Blasi, 2014), as well as articles produced by the members of the Gender Research Group and the launching of the online journal *Coisas do Gênero*.22 A significant part of this renewed effort is expressed through the resuming of the Latin American Congress on Gender and Religion (with editions in 2015, 2017 and 2019).23 This Congress, gathering hundreds of scholars, researchers, students, religious leaders and activists from all over the continent, has become an expression of the importance that the study of religion has taken on most recently, particularly in relation to sexual and gender diversity. The diversity of themes, activities and people show an invigoration of the field and the much-needed work as we move forward.

The theme of masculinities has also reemerged as a strong topic, particularly when discussing gender-based violence. It has again awakened interest in terms of both research and work with social movements and faith-based organizations such as the *Escuela Equinócio*24 in El Salvador and the research and courses produced and offered by Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales—FLACSO.25 The intersection with issues of race and ethnicity (questioning whiteness), but also with sexual diversity (questioning heteronormativity), promises very fruitful reflections on the way ahead.

**Conclusion: moving forward**

After the “crisis” of liberation theology in the early 1990s, there has been a call for renewal in Latin American theological reflections, coming from grassroots groups and students who are taking the call for liberation to their own contexts. As seen, this has prompted the creation of
research and study groups, the organization of events and the publication of books and materials, resulting in a solid body of work on issues of gender and sexuality. The strong presence of religion in Latin America, and how it affects people’s lives, makes it impossible to ignore, since it is part of the culture and of what drives and gives meaning to it. As a result of this acknowledgement and the work done throughout the years, there is a more public and visible presence of religious studies, scholars, leaders and activists defending democracy and human rights and questioning oppressive and unjust social relations and structures, including issues of gender and sexuality. Even so, many feminist, LGBTIQ+ and queer scholars and groups still have to fight their way into those political and academic circles against all odds, including facing institutional heterosexism, and to put their feet at the door claiming their right to be there, to speak and to be heard.

The reemergence of movements and studies related to gender and sexuality in religion and theology in the 2010s, as outlined in the example of Faculdades EST, took further and deepened earlier reflections, building on social and political advances in dealing with those issues as they were experienced in the continent under progressive governments. Such studies have questioned matters that had been left untouched, critiquing the way in which many of the advances did not really represent a structural and fundamental change in the institutions and mentalities. The emergence of a “feminist spring”, with a more intersectional approach and pointing precisely to the inability of past movements to secure radical change, is also an expression of this, as in the performance created by Lastesis, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

As is common in patriarchal societies, many new movements or existing movements that take on new approaches have been accused of being the cause of the rise of fundamentalist religious right waves. Even among progressive political and religious leaders they are seen as “too radical” in their effort of questioning the status quo and are thus seen as weakening progressive governments and policies. By being too bold and by demanding “too much”, they are seen as “provoking” the reaction of more conservative groups and make it difficult for progressive groups to negotiate less disturbing changes which, in general, do not represent significant changes at all. As mentioned previously, there has also been a renewed interest in understanding how religion functions and how it can be associated with progressive agendas. It is very hard to say at this point how all this will unfold in the next decade, as extremist governments and their religious allies are persecuting political leaders and attacking universities and research centers, not only, but especially, when it comes to issues of gender and sexuality. However, the future of the continent will surely depend on the responses we are able to give in relation to gender and sexuality.

As Marcella Althaus-Reid has already pointed out, “the sexual suspicion has not been introduced in the economic and political levels of life in América Latina” (Althaus-Reid, 2001: 23). According to her, in relation to theology and religion:

We have not had a sexual analysis of systematic, or dogmatic theology. The reason for that is that economic systems can change, but the sexual nature of theology is too close to the final product. It is because of the sexual nature of theological systems that always, invariably, start with the declaration of compulsory heterosexuality and gender roles as part of its distributive system, that a heterosexuality in the closet has been developed and assumed as a natural thing. Decency is the name of Latin American in the closet heterosexuality, that is, the assumption that even heterosexuality can be moulded according to a prescriptive way—which is not true.

(Althaus-Reid, 2001: 45–46)
Although she stated this 20 years ago, it is still the main challenge when it comes to issues of religion, gender, masculinities and sexual diversity. Gender, although an important analytical category, will have to be broad (not restricted to predefined notions of masculine and feminine, heterosexual and homosexual) and articulated alongside other categories in order to disturb heteropatriarchal assumptions that sustain coloniality. Masculinities is perhaps even more problematic and, although an important entry to the discussions about violence against women and LGBTQ+ phobia, will have to go beyond the idea of creating “new men”, who are kinder and more partner-like, and risk overcoming the very idea that there is something that can be called by that name. And the study of religion and theology can play an important role in this process, since religion and sexuality are two fundamental dimensions of human experience and, therefore, defining how societies are organized and function.

Notes

1 Patriarchy is a judge / who judges us by birth / and our punishment / is the violence that you do not see / Patriarchy is a judge / who judges us by birth / and our punishment / is the violence that you do not see / It is feminicide / impunity for my killer / It is disappearance / It is rape / And the fault was not mine, not where I was, nor what I wore / And the fault was not mine, not where I was, nor what I wore / And the fault was not mine, not where I was, nor what I wore / The rapist is you / The rapist is you / It is the cops / The judges / The State / The President / The oppressive State is a rapist macho / The oppressive State is a rapist macho / The rapist is you / The rapist is you / Sleep tight, innocent girl / Without worrying about the bandit / Because your sweet and smiling sleep / Is watched over by your carabineer / The rapist is you / The rapist is you / The rapist is you.

2 Text in the original language: “Nos llamamos Lastesis porque nuestra premisa es usar tesis de teóricas feministas y llevarlos a puestas en escena para que se difunda este mensaje”.

3 “The [#NiUnaMenos] movement that started in 2015 in Argentina and gathered millions, crossed the borders reaching several Latin-American countries such as Chile, Uruguay, Ecuador, etc., and every June 3rd, day of the death of Páez, the march is repeated and the struggle for the end of feminicide and for gender equality continues” (Maciel and Silva Neto, 2020; also Lima-Lopes, 2018). In 2018, also in Argentina, the “National campaign for the right to safe and free abortion” had its most important win when the House of Deputies approved the law that would allow for the interruption of pregnancy up to the 14th week. The law was later rejected by the Senate, but the “green wave” ran through all of Latin America and echoed in similar movements all over the continent. The main symbol of this movement was a green triangular scarf with the inscription “sexual education to decide, contraceptives not to abort, legal abortion not to die” (Frayssinet, 2020). During the electoral campaign of 2018 in Brazil the movement #EleNão took the streets all over the country, especially after very controversial statements by the then candidate Jair Bolsonaro, especially on issues of gender and sexuality (Lemos and Oliveira, 2019).

4 See, for example, Junqueira (2017), Miskolci and Campana (2017) and Reis and Eggert (2017).

5 See, for example, Muelle (2017).

6 Latin American liberation theology is a movement that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s from the work of ecclesiastical base communities with a strong relation to social and liberationist movements. Born from the concrete struggles of those communities in their contexts in dialogue with faith and religious perspectives, it further developed in more academic discourse and has been complexified over the decades with new and urgent matters, particularly in relation to social injustice. It faced strong resistance from government and traditional religious institutions and was a strong force in overthrowing dictatorial regimes and building democratic processes.

7 This is the title of a chapter in the book From Feminist Theology to Indecent Theology by Marcella Althaus-Reid (2004), in which the author discusses the assimilation of liberation theology by the theological market of the North.

8 In Gebara (2005), the author describes her own personal journey. Among her many works see Gebara (1997).

9 In the book Breaking Silence (Rompendo o silêncio), Gebara (2000) talks about this period, and the book itself is a response to the silencing by the Vatican.
10 See, for example, Ulloa (2004).
11 Reference to Judith Butler’s work *Gender Trouble* (Butler, 1999).
12 “Queer” is a word that started to be used by feminist and LGBTI+ activists and scholars to move beyond assimilationist perspectives in the 1990s. It literally means “odd” or “strange”, and is used as a way to express the multiplicity and provisionality of possible combinations of sex, gender and sexuality. The aforementioned “gender ideology” campaign in Latin America was used deliberately to accuse all forms of gender and sexual identities and identifications not confirming to heteronormative patterns to be evil (in religious terms) or socially deviant and dangerous (in political terms). Although the campaign focused more on homosexuality and transsexuality, it was not so vocal in relation to women’s or more traditional gender issues. Thus, through the campaign, the use of the word “gender” started to be identified with all that was “queer” in the use of this word in English-speaking contexts.
13 See Muskopf, 2005.
14 About the role of neopentecostal churches in this process, see Espinheira (1996).
15 See, for example, Muskopf (2007).
16 Some of her main works are Althaus-Reid (2001, 2003, 2004). The first one was translated into Spanish in Spain (Althaus-Reid, 2005) and the second one in Portuguese in Brazil (Althaus-Reid, 2019).
17 Theology as an academic field has not been recognized as a discipline and regulated by official education government bodies until very recently, and in some countries in Latin America it is still not recognized. Historically, the study of theology usually depended on its affiliated churches and was carried out in church-related institutions and not universities. It relied on support received from international religious organizations (often mother churches in other countries), which explains why institutional churches have had so much power in controlling what is studied and researched in theological institutions. This dependency also explains why many Protestant and Ecumenical institutions have gone through a strong crisis (especially economic), which has resulted in very respectable and known institutions closing as funding streams dried up. Moreover, while religion has been studied in other disciplines of social sciences, there has not been a very strong presence of religious studies as a specific field in Latin America.
18 The fact that theology was not an acknowledged discipline and that theological education depended on churches’ funding meant that the study of issues of gender, sexuality and religion were not “incentivized”. The example of Faculdades EST (later) shows this.
19 Similar examples can be found throughout Latin America in theological institutions such as the Universidade Metodista de São Paulo and the Pontificia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, the Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos in Argentina, the Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana in Costa Rica, among others. It is noticeable that most of these institutions are Protestant or Ecumenical, and this also has implications for the current discussion of issues of gender and sexuality.
20 The three main themes were embodiment, ethnicity and masculinity.
21 The themes of the II Congress were epistemology, sexuality and violence (Neuenfeldt, Bergesch and Parlow, 2015) and the themes of the III Congress were aesthetics/ethics and human rights.
23 See Muskopf and Blasi (2016) and Blasi, Brun and Fonseca (2018).
24 See www.escuelaequinoccio.org/.
25 See www.flacso.org/.
26 On queer theology and studies in religion, see Bochler, Bedurke and Silva (2013).
27 For example “Evangélicas pela Igualdade de Gênero” (https://mulhereseig.wordpress.com/), “Rede de Teólogas, Pastoras, Ativistas e Lideranças Cristãs” (https://www.facebook.com/RedTEPALI/ [accessed on September 26, 2021]) and “Católicas pelo Direito de Decidir” (https://catolicas.org.br/ [accessed on September 26, 2021]).
28 In 2015 several manifestations started to take place in Brazil and were called “feminist spring” (see El País, 2015). See also Holanda (2018).

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### Webpages


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