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PLURALISM AND INDIVIDUALIZATION IN THE ARGENTINE RELIGIOUS FIELD: CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLICISM IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS

Abstract

This article analyses the changes in the modern Argentine religious field. Based upon statistical studies on beliefs and religious attitudes, we describe the consequences of secularization in Argentine society, the way in which people believe and practice religion, the changes in religious identification, the religious diversification process and the way in which the religious practices' and beliefs' level of institutionalization have been decreasing. In this framework, we trace the development of the complex relationship between the State, the politics and the Catholic institution. We focus particularly on Catholicism because it is the most prominently public religion in Argentina, the most powerful and the most influential on the State and political arenas.

Keywords: Argentina, Religious field, Beliefs, Catholicism, Politics

Introduction

The religious map in Argentina has been changing since the last quarter of the 20th century. The religious scene, once predominantly Catholic, has become a space of multiple religions. Argentine religious universe could be briefly described as a Catholic majority, a notable minority of Evangelicals with Pentecostal predominance and a growing and distinct group of Indifferents. Though Argentinians are still religious and predominantly Catholic, we can detect a diversity of beliefs and a multiplicity of practices within the religious options. The many and different ways of believing reveal a society that is being deeply transformed by the secularization processes.

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In this article, we will describe the transformations of Argentine religious field, focusing on the challenges for Catholicism, the main religion in the country. To accomplish this goal, we present the results of a quantitative research that include a multi-stage probability sample, with systematic random clusters selected in the first stage and, subsequently, gender/age parameters. The sample is composed of 2403 Argentine residents.

We also propose to analyze the articulation strategies of Catholicism with the State and politics in its attempt to preserve its institutional power throughout history, focusing on the latest decades.

As the process of secularization in Argentina -and in Latin America- has developed in a particular way, the concept must be re-thought and discussed taking into account the particular historical processes.

Coinciding with Enzo Pace and Giordan, secularization theory has proved to be unsustainable if we consider the contemporary relationships between religion and society. The prediction of the disappearance of religion from the public sphere does not correspond with the empirical facts (Pace and Giordan, 2012). As we will reflect, Catholicism in Argentina has never confined itself to the private sphere.

Other authors correct the secularization theory, including 'secularization in reverse' or 're-sacralization', in order to explain a supposed return of religion to the public sphere. Referring to Bryan Turner and David Martin, Casanova clarifies why these sociological concepts are problematic and misleading (Casanova, 2011). His theses about 'de-privatization' of religion does not question the predominance of social secularization as he marks out "three separate dimensions of secularization, namely 'social differentiation', 'privatization' and 'decline of religion'. He highlights that political and social secularization have their own course: *"In large regions of Europe, social differentiation is clearly associated historically with drastic declines of church religiosity. In the United States by contrast (...), a more radical process of social differentiation, is actually associated with much higher and more vital rates of religious belief and practice. If one finds such a variation even within Western Christianity, the chances are that patterns of social differentiation elsewhere will also be inflected by diverse histories and by specific cultural patterns associated with other religious traditions. The specifically Christian and European character of the historical process with should not be confused as a general and universal developmental process of social secularization"* (Casanova, 2011: 438-439).

Habermas analyzes the theoretical perspectives that distinguish secularization of post- secularization. While secular, at least in its most radical version, means that religion would disappear worldwide, post-secular supposes that religion maintains lays claim to a public influence and relevance significance (Habermas, 2008).

But what does this distinction mean in Argentina, where religion in general and Catholicism in particular have been always present in the public sphere?

We will try to answer the question taking into account the historical and cultural particularities of the secularization process in the country, and the multiplicity of patterns of secularization throughout the world.

Brief history of the Argentine religious field

From the viewpoint of religion, Argentina has been predominantly Catholic since its constitution in the latter half of the 19th century. Arriving in what would later become Argentinean territory with the Spanish conquerors, Catholicism expanded with the evangelization of the aboriginal groups and the advance of Spanish settlements in the region. The colony's Iberian political system articulated political and religious institutions according to the model of Christendom (Di Stefano and Zanatta, 2000), which superimposes political and religious symbols and functions.

In the 19th century, colonial Christianity would complete its transition to the building of the Argentine Church. This process was not linear, but was marked by a number of conflicts which manifested different state and Catholicity projects. Such projects were, in turn, defined in mutual confrontation or collaboration, and originated a matrix which has since then shaped the relationship among the state, political society and religious actors.

The interpenetration between politics and religion -a clear continuity with the colonial period- emerged as a constitutive and foundational characteristic of the new country. During the independence wars, religion was used to legitimize the actions of both sides. Their central figures insisted on the religious dimension of their undertaking. Catholicism was viewed as a necessary moral force to unify and give cultural cohesion to a nation in its initial stages.

The reciprocal legitimation between the state and the religious fields -the latter being understood as only the Catholic- would become a constant feature in the form of their relationships. Far from establishing autonomy between the state and the Church, the law created a more complex scene. The porous fabric of the relationships between the political and the Catholic has made it difficult, from an analytical approach, to draw the boundaries between them. Such boundaries have become mobile, vague and, at some points in history, nonexistent.

The politically conservative and economically liberal State model reigning in the last decades of the 19th century imposed secularist measures such as the civil registry of birth, matrimony and death (1884), a free public education law which also regulated confessional education (1884); total separation of Church and State, however, has not yet been legislated. During the liberal period, the population remained true to Catholicism, which was broadly extended and culturally present but lacking in clergymen (Di Stefano, 1998).

In the 1930s, the Catholic Church became stronger, as the liberal state model headed for crisis. Within Catholicism, which is definitely not a homogenous

social space, a certain current prevailed: 'integral Catholicism' (Mallimaci, 1988; Esquivel, 2004). The Catholic Church steadily took over public and political institutions by getting Catholic men appointed to key positions in political parties, unions, universities, factories and ministries. In the middle of the crisis of the liberal and positivist ideals that heralded unlimited progress, Catholicism intensified its fight for ideological and moral hegemony, and for establishing a new horizon of meaning from which to permeate the state and political culture, as well as that of Argentine society at large. The confinement of Catholicism to the private realm was categorically rejected. The Catholic Church, which in the late 19th century had started its romanization process, being reluctant to restrict itself to the sacristy and the individual's conscience, set out to Christianize society and to become active in the public arena.

In this way, the Catholic Church managed to build a web of influence, which developed mostly throughout the time of the military governments (1955–1958; 1966–1969; 1976–1983), broadening its territorial and educational structures. This Catholic predominance, visible in the construction of churches and the presence of Catholic symbols in schools, public areas and public health centres, began to weaken towards the end of the 1980s decade, with the fall of the last military dictatorship of the 20th century. Non-Catholic groups emerged to claim their share of believers in the popular sectors (Oro and Seman, 2000). These religious groups, which challenged the predominance of Catholicism in the recent Argentine history, comprised a renewed religious field that had not been statistically documented before the present study.

The beliefs of Argentinean people

The First Survey on Religious Attitudes and Beliefs shows significant data regarding the different ways in which adult (over 18 years old) Argentinean inhabitants relate to their beliefs, in particular religious ones.

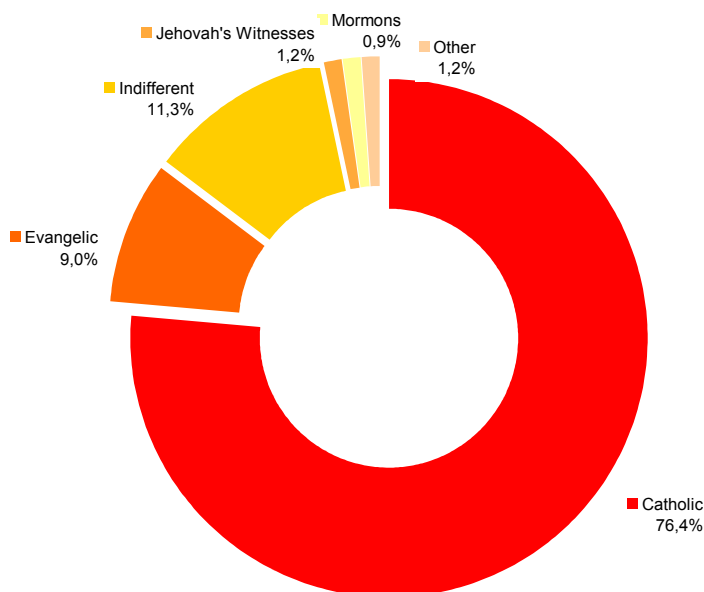
The first data that strikes us as relevant is that we live in a nation of believers: 9 out of 10 inhabitants of Argentina believe in God. Only 4.9% do not believe, and 4% are doubtful. The moments and circumstances in which people resort to their deity, as well as the idea of God, may vary. Most commonly, people resort to God in times of suffering (45% of the believers). Those who do so may be seeking compensation when they cannot get answers from society or the State, or simply because suffering is in some ways vital to Christianity. Perhaps, as stated by Geertz (1973), religions face the problem of suffering and provide symbols to make it more tolerable. Resorting to God in times of suffering is more common among Evangelical believers (60%) than among Catholics (45%), revealing the importance of suffering in Evangelist preaching. It is worth remembering the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) motto: 'Stop suffering'.

What traditional religious frames apply to Argentinean beliefs? While most

Argentineans are still Catholic, other religions' share has broadened and diversified. A total of 76.4% of the inhabitants claim to be Catholic³, 9% Evangelist⁴ and 11.3% are Indifferent.⁵ Among the Evangelicals, 1.1% identifies themselves as Protestants⁶ while 7.9% are Pentecostals⁷. The rest are distributed among Jehovah's Witnesses (1.2%), Mormons (0.9%) and other religions (1.2%) such as Judaism, Islam, Umbanda or Africanists, Buddhism and Spiritism.

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- 3 The term 'Catholic' in Argentina is applied to those believers who are identified with the Roman Catholic Church. The Argentine State gives the Catholic Church a privileged position compared to other religions. Catholics tend to recognize their church through initiation and passage rites (baptism, matrimony) more than actually congregating and actively participating in the parish community. We may say that the 'cultural' recognition is more frequent than the dogmatic. The Catholic Church has a strong presence in the public and political sphere; therefore, it is an unavoidable benchmark of Argentinean identity. However, Catholic prescriptions are losing ground in the private lives of followers.
 - 4 The term 'Evangelical' in Argentina is generally applied to Protestants, including the historical churches and the Pentecostal currents, and it will be used in this sense throughout the present article. The category is used by Evangelicals themselves, and it is related to these believers' movement toward unity of churches.
 - 5 In the present article, we will use the Indifferent category to include: atheists (who deny the existence of a deity), agnostics (who neither deny nor accept the idea of a superior being) and those who consider themselves believers but do not identify with any of the existing religions (those with no religion). These three categories, although not comparable, show statistically similar behaviour regarding religious practices.
 - 6 Among Evangelicals, we have distinguished Protestants as those identified with the historical Protestant Churches (Lutheran, Methodist, Adventist, Baptist). We use this term for those churches settled in Argentina before 1853 (sanction of the first Argentine constitution) as well as the communities arriving up to the first quarter of the 20th century. The former were defined by their ethnic components, while the latter were missionary minded (Baptists, 'Hermanos Libres', Salvation Army) (Algranti, 2010). According to the present survey, Protestants make up 1.1% of the Argentine population.
 - 7 Social Sciences studies agree on use of the term Pentecostals to define the new currents within Protestantism, which have been expanding throughout Latin America since the mid-1980s (Algranti, 2010; Mariano, 1995, Oro and Semán, 2000). The Pentecostal churches' hallmarks are: the idea of the Holy Spirit as the core of their beliefs and practices, the importance of the emotional sphere in experiencing religion and, at a theological level, the articulation of three promises: Jesus heals, saves and returns.

Chart I: Religious belongings in Argentina



Source: own data collection⁸

Indifferent: agnostic, atheists and no religion

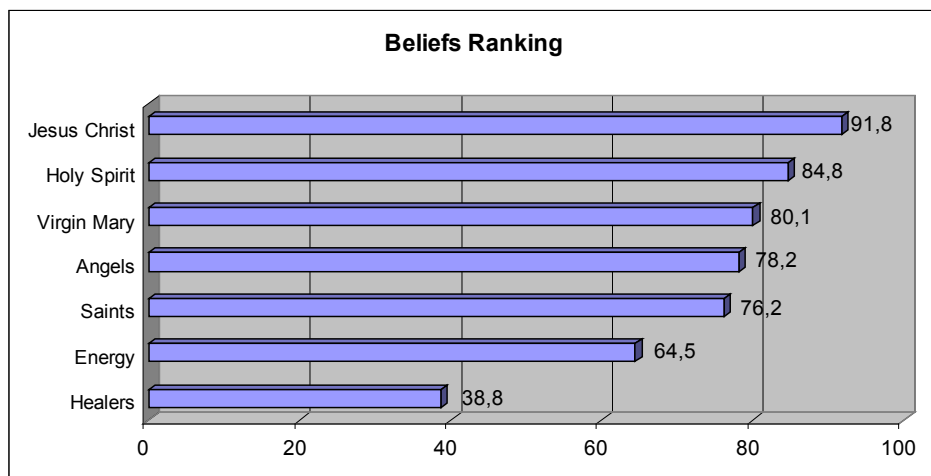
Evangelical: Pentecostal, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Adventist and UCKG

The data collected clearly reveal the pluralism and diversity of the religious field, together with the preservation of a long standing Judeo-Christian culture which has deep social roots.

If we analyse Argentinean people's beliefs beyond general belief in God, we can prove that Catholic and Christian culture is reaffirmed in most of the population. As a sign of the modern times, it is important to mention a belief in Energy, resulting from the diffusion of New Age ideas.

⁸ The source of the information is from our own data collection: <http://www.ceil-conicet.gov.ar/category/publicaciones/publicaciones-sociedad/>

Chart II



Source: own data collection

This survey provides useful data on the different ways in which Argentines relate to their deity. We find complex processes of religious individualization and detachment from the religious institution.

Elsewhere, convergent processes can be found: *“Giving more and more importance to individuals, to their choices and values, considering the individual as a bearer of rights besides duties, has shifted the axis of the legitimacy of individual choices from obedience to institutions, to freedom of choice by the subject. It is a long process and not without contradictions, whose outcome, however, appears to be challenge to the ‘institutional model’, which is seemingly not always up to the individual’s needs”* (Pace and Giordan, 2012: 2).

Believers relate to their God and their beliefs on their own, and when deciding upon their religious practices and behaviour they do not seem to consult a specialist in their religion. It is relevant to note that, from a historical perspective, the roots of the Argentine religious field are not recognized in the clerical, cultural and territorial model of organization in a parish community, in which a clerical authority regulates the beliefs and then crumbles as secularization advances. Historically, the Catholic Church has developed a type of widespread influence based on initiation and transition rites more than on active participation in the parish community. This situation may derive from difficulties in recruiting specialists, geographical and symbolic distance, and also the colonial Christianity model. Consequently, the Catholic culture in Latin America has been diffuse, broadly extended and little regulated by institutions.

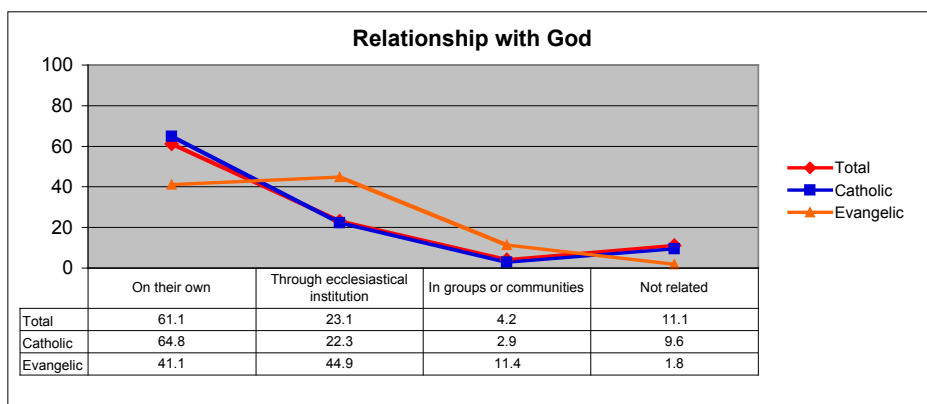
This gap between the religious institutions and the believer’s daily life is deep-

ening and can be seen in two convergent processes. In the first place, believers resort less and less to institutional intervention. On the other hand, believers do not attend religious services in massive numbers.

Looking at the first tendency, figures showing institutional detachment are rather eloquent. The main type of relation with God is the personal approach: this is stated by 61.1% of the believers. We are in the face of a cultural phenomenon that pervades all religious groups. In all, 23.1% of the Argentine inhabitants relate to their religion through institutions.

If we focus on the largest religious group in Argentina, three quarters of Catholics deal with their beliefs without institutional intervention (64.8% of Catholics have their own personal approach and 9.6% do not relate at all). Among Evangelicals, however, the relation with institutions is stronger: 56.3% resort to religious institutions (groups and institutions), while 41.4% claim to have a personal approach. Very few Evangelicals do not relate to their deity (1.8%).

Chart III



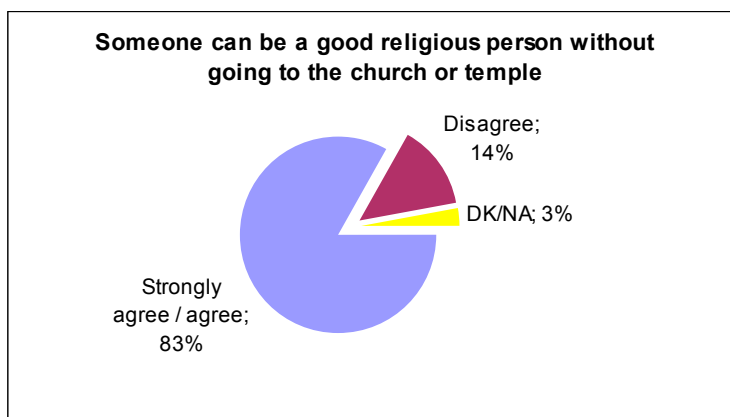
Source: own data collection

As for the second process -daily religious practice- attendance to religious rites is in fact another variable that shows people's detachment from ecclesiastical institutions. In all, 76.2% of the subjects claim rarely or never to attend religious ceremonies. It seems odd that 23.8% often participate in religious ceremonies while another 26.8% never do: between these two extremes, most of the population claim to attend weekly ceremonies only rarely. Based on these data, it is interesting to further deepen the configuration of the religious field: two minority groups are outlined, those who frequently attend ceremonies and those who never do, while almost half of the population maintain a cool, vague relationship with their beliefs (Cipriani, 1998), occasionally attending religious ceremonies.

When respondents were asked about a series of statements deriving from

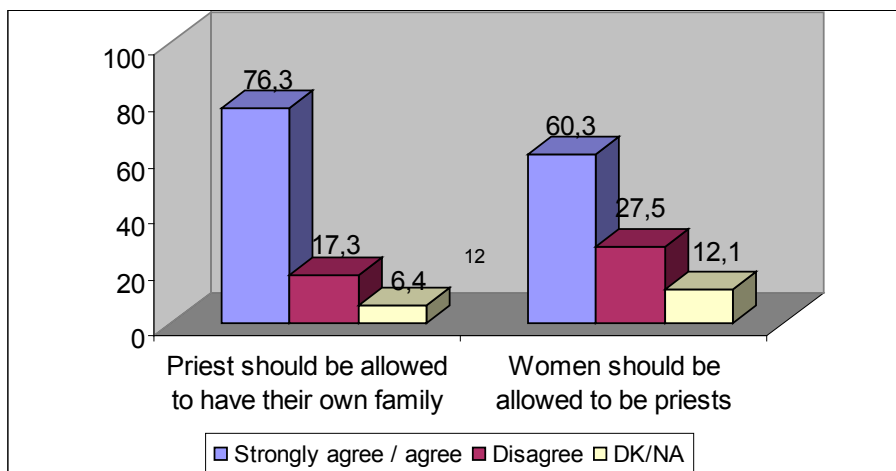
doctrinal principles or transcendental connections, we found that the opinions expressed by the majority clearly departed from the norms established by religious institutions and that a significant number of participants related to the divine in ways which are not confined to sites of worship and do not involve any mediation by religious specialists. In this sense, the following statement was proposed: 'You can be a good believer without going to the church or temple'. In total, 83% of respondents totally or partially agreed with this; only 14% disagreed.

Chart IV



Source: own data collection

Chart V



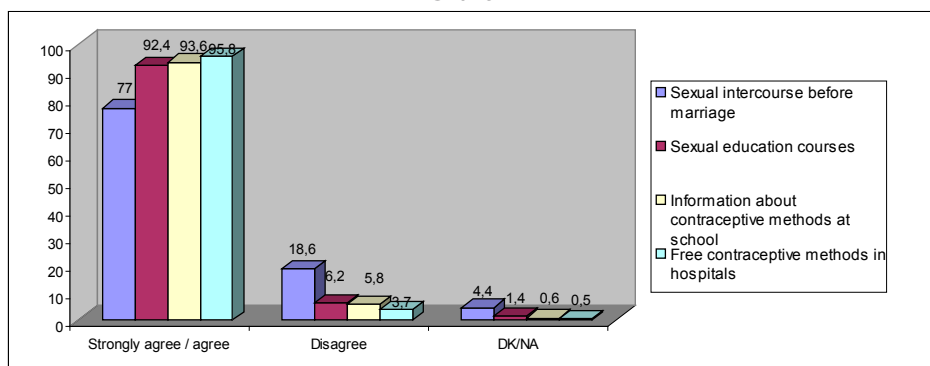
Source: own data collection

On a smaller scale, the rate of approval of the following statements also reinforces the perception of people's freedom of conscience over the premises of the religious institutions. A total of 76.3% agree with letting clergymen have their own family. Simultaneously, 60.3% think that women should be accepted into the priesthood, as is the case in the Anglican Church and in many Pentecostal churches in Latin America.

Sexuality is another core factor in which the private decision is evidently defended. When, how and with whom: these are three questions that Argentines keep for their own. However, certain institutions, such as the school or the hospital, are regarded as public spaces destined to inform, educate and provide citizens with information about what is correct. In total, 77% of subjects think that pre-marital sexual intercourse is a positive experience.

Almost the entire Argentine society (92.4%) supports sexual education of students at schools. Only 6.2% disagree with this policy. Similar results were observed with respect to whether schools should provide information on contraceptive methods: 93.6% responded affirmatively while only 5.8% expressed disagreement. Similarly, 95.8% are in favour of hospitals, clinics and health centres providing free contraception.

Chart VI



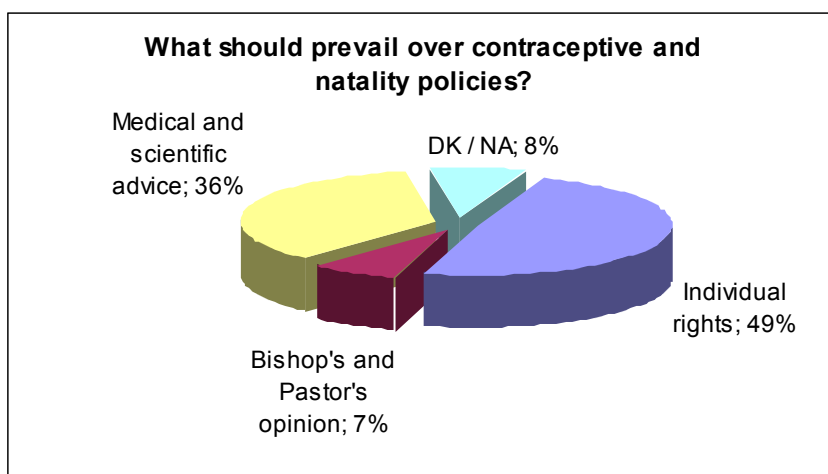
Source: own data collection

These opinions reflecting a significant level of secularization in society do not imply a loss of religious belief. 'Religion without ecclesiastical institution', 'believing without belonging' (Davie, 1994) and 'believing in their own personal way' (Parker Gumucio, 2004) are phrases that describe a complex process that combines spirituality, in terms of beliefs and practices, and institutional detachment.

As noticeable in the charts, we can remark a complex pattern within the secularization process of the Argentine society. Such secularization, understood as independence of conscience and decision, is being adjusted to a Catholic cul-

ture that is diffuse but bears great social mobility. The presence of an extended Christian culture, which consists of a high percentage of belief in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary and the Saints, does not necessarily imply acceptance of religious specialists' intervention in the regulation of private life issues. It is in these matters that conscience autonomy becomes clear and roles from other fields -namely, the scientific- take part and are more heeded. Legitimacy in the religious sphere is not projected on to other aspects of social life. Only 7% of Argentinean society thinks that the State should consider the opinion of priests and bishops when defining public policies in contraception and birth control.

Chart VII



Source: own data collection

State, politics and Catholicism

In Argentina, not all movements have the same constitutional status. Catholicism has a privileged position on the basis of article 2 of the Charta Magna, which establishes that the State must sustain the Roman Catholic Church. Also, the Civil Code highlights that the Catholic Church is a public entity, while other worship is private. In addition, non-Catholic religions must be registered in the National Worship Agency in order to legalize their religious practice.

Considering that the Catholic Church has played a substantial role in Argentina's institutional fabric and that it has become, in countless opportunities, one of the main sources of legitimacy of political processes, it is inescapable to focus on Catholicism's hegemonic trends, on the stages of its institutionalization and on the wide variety of its relationships with the political world. By understanding the complex ties between politics and religion in modern Argentina from a

historical and sociological point of view, we will be in a position to recognize the scope, dilemmas and crossroads of the particular processes of societal secularization and state laicization, processes which do not necessarily take a parallel or predetermined course.

Before we undertake the sociohistorical analysis, we must discuss some theoretical and analytical assumptions and premises. Firstly, we need to make a few distinctions if we are to gain a deeper understanding of any phenomena.

First, it is essential to contextualize concepts, which social sciences sometimes attempt to make universal and prescriptive. Both secularization and laicity - which, it should be stressed, are two different processes - are involved in this dilemma. A definition established for a concrete situation is taken as a starting point, it is then universalized, and an attempt is made to determine to what extent other historical experiences come close to/depart from the preconceived conceptualization. Thus, analyses are made in terms of "declines", "evolutions", "delays", "progressive developments", or semantic resources produce an abundance of prefixes: "post-secularization", "de-secularization" and so on. However, it is precisely historical experiences that challenge definitions and actually bring into question the universal character of concepts. To say it in other words, they warn about the complexity of applying an analytical category to quite different historical, political, institutional or cultural configurations. It should not be forgotten that the vast majority of Christian believers live -in their own way- both the Christian and the secularized culture amid multiple cultural processes of readjustment of beliefs and in separate spheres. We could venture that the different Christian individuations in Argentina -and in Latin America- give rise to different types of secularization, and that these different secularizations cause, rather than the disappearance of the Christian, multiple readjustments of spiritualities and religions. At the same time, the institutional and legitimate processes involving the legal and social connections among state, political society, civil society and the religious groups and movements produce different types of laicity in Latin America. Once again, research must be carried out if we are to understand the degrees and types of the laicities "actually present" in each Latin American country, and the attributes we may ascribe to them. We should remember that we can live -in terms of ideal types- in secularized societies with lay states, in secularized societies with minimum-laicity states, in non-secularized societies with broad-laicity states, and in non-secularized societies with minimum-laicity states.

Secondly, by "politics", we refer not only to the state, the government or ministries, but also to civil servants, Congress, the Judiciary, political society as linked to civil society, social movements, NGOs and/or the beliefs held by citizens. In Argentina, the connections between the Catholic and the political, the political and the Catholic, pervade, broaden and filter into many different spaces, worlds and spheres which cannot be overlooked by any piece of research. In fact, it is impossible to confine the Catholic and the political only to the fields of Catholicism or

politics. Therefore, at present, understanding the religious and how it relates to the political, the economic, the social, the cultural and the symbolic in Latin America involves paying attention to a double process : on the one hand, the diversity of religious people, groups and organizations in various levels and spheres, both public and private ; on the other, to the transfers, legitimacies and mutual dislocations in what could be called the field of power and symbolic effectiveness, where the religious and the political blend with each other. Both politicization of the religious and religionization of politics are taking place. Although, in the Argentine case, the religionization (Catholicization) achieved through the long forging of a Catholic national and military identity has been much more significant than the weak laicity of some historical periods, Argentina is far from the combination of forced secularization and forced religionization experienced, e.g. by Spain in the 20th century (Díaz Salazar, 1998), and closer -as claimed here- to a situation in which areas of privatization and politicization of the religious exist side by side.

Regardless of the wayward relationship between the state and the Catholic Church throughout history, some enduring features show certain imaginaries that are shared by hegemonic political and religious actors.

On the one hand, political leaders continue to entertain a set of concepts which view the religious institution as a safeguard of national identity and a source of legitimacy. The prevailing political culture views the presence of the Church in political society as natural, since the actors themselves strongly believe that they can gain an extra-political advantage by being linked to ecclesiastical authorities. This culture is part of the integral matrix, according to which the Catholic, the political and the national form a seamless tripod without boundaries.

In this context, governments of different political parties have resorted to support by the Church as a main source of legitimacy. To that effect, they have rid themselves of a large part of their government duties, directly or indirectly delegating to the Catholic Church the design, formulation and even implementation of certain public policies, especially in educational, family planning and social matters. Of course, these processes are not uniform throughout the entire country. Historical, religious and institutional factors affect how the relationships between politics and religion develop in each province.

In addition, the Catholic Church deploys a strategy to preserve its institutional power, based on its broad public presence and on the attempt to influence the design and implementation of certain state policies and regulatory frameworks. Its men act *as if* the population's culture were integrally Catholic and, from that position of power, make demands of the political system.

However, at present, the reproduction of this blend between the political and the religious, in which roles and areas of competence overlap and both spheres legitimize each other, occurs in a society where volatile senses of belonging, lack of attachment to institutions and a drift from traditional frames of reference are increasingly prevalent (Bauman, 2003).

If in the 20th century an individual's world of meaning and social belonging could be understood on the basis of macro-entities such as the Catholic Church, able to provide a view that imposed order on the world and to fully respond to the population's identity demands, a more plural and heterogeneous society has emerged today, in which the universal principles which intended to regulate social behaviour in the political, religious, familiar and sexual spheres have become blurred. When even Catholics themselves have pre-marital sex, get divorced, support euthanasia, do not attend mass every Sunday and approve of the death penalty, among other postures, it becomes evident that the official norms are increasingly losing effectiveness *vis-à-vis* the behaviours adopted by individuals themselves (Esquivel, 2009).

Conclusions

The situation actually "experienced" in Argentina shows the tight bonds between religious institutions and the (executive, legislative or judicial) state decision-makers, whose political culture still gives a central and influential role to religion. This culture consists of collective imaginaries and representations which translate into in a number of naturalized practices, very often not motivated by laws in force or by the implementation of a certain government agenda, but rather by an instituted *habitus*. While militarization -the dream of having a "colonel friend"- has been left behind, Catholicization (imitated today by other religious groups, especially Evangelicals), carried out during decades of civilian, military and ecclesiastical dictatorships, has not ceased.

This contrast leads us to make a necessary distinction between secularization and laicity. By "secularization" we mean the long process of cultural readjustment of religious beliefs in our capitalist societies, which goes together with the declining power of Christian institutions and the emergence of other domains of social life. In turn, the term "laicity" can be specially analyzed from a "political-religious" viewpoint, since it immediately evokes the concept of, and the role played by, the state, especially a nation-state in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, in terms of how it relates to the political, civil and religious society when searching for sources of legitimacy. The state may guarantee separation, freedom of worship, privileges, plurality, monopolies or freedom of beliefs and religions, totally, partially or not at all, for one, more than one, or no public expression of religion or beliefs.

Laicity should be thought as having degrees and limits, instead of being considered in progressive or evolutionary terms, particularly if we are to analyze and grasp its ups and downs, and the steps back and forth of a process that is inherent to democracy and which has developed differently in each nation-state and point in history. Hence the importance of talking about "laicities" (Bauberot, 2007).

Casanova (2011) is in line with the kind of comparative analyses that our research groups have been conducting based on the recognition of multiple mo-

dermities, secularizations and religions within global capitalist modernity. This enables social sciences to become de-centered, de-Westernized and de-ethnized, while compelling them to make rigorous comparisons, avoiding a normative rather than scientific point of view.

Multiple modernities entail the existence of multiple and diverse laicities. As suggested by Bauberot and Milot (2011), in analyzing our countries we can consider four principles which are to be understood and related both synchronically and diachronically: freedom of conscience, equality among beliefs, state neutrality, and separation between religious groups and the state. Various combinations of these principles are found at different points in time and space, that is, depending on the historical moment and the social relationships in a specific country. In addition, each society shows more or less interest in some particular laicity principle around which political debate and the “actual” power relationships revolve. These authors differentiate among six kinds of laicity: separatist, authoritarian, anti-clerical, civil faith-oriented, recognition-oriented and collaboration-oriented. This work is a great contribution that avoids any “essentialist” or “reductionist” approaches.

This web of relationships is found in most of the political-religious imaginaries, even in a context that shows the phenomena of religious individualization and detachment from the religious institution as two of the streamlines that can be followed to understand the changes in the ways in which Argentinean and Latin American people believe nowadays.

Argentine society, as shown in other Latin American and worldwide studies, is profoundly pervaded by modernizing and globalizing currents that, within a particular social and cultural territory, produce innovative recomposition of believing and new religious practices in a plural landscape.

These mutations require us to *“use with much caution words, concepts and theories that until no long ago has a convincing heuristic and explanatory power and were, at least apparently, indisputable. Sometimes the cognitive tools are there, but the social changes have been so rapid and profound as to make them useful only as long as one specifies their scope and their meaning. In other words, we need new words and new narratives”* (Pace, 2011: 4).

Those processes, in addition with the political influence of the main religious actors, who are clearly central in the public scene, gives new relevance to the debate in social theory and nurtures new empirical research efforts.

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ПЛУРАЛИЗАМ И ИНДИВИДУАЛИЗАЦИЈА У АРГЕНТИНСКОМ ВЕРСКОМ МОЗАИКУ: ИЗАЗОВИ ЗА КАТОЛИЦИЗАМ ИЗ ПЕРСПЕКТИВЕ ДРУШТВА И ПОЛИТИКЕ

Сажетак

Овај чланак анализира промене у верском мозаику модерне Аргентине. Заснивајући своје ставове на статистичким подацима о веровањима и верским ставовима, ми описујемо последице секуларизације у аргентинском друштву, начин на који људи верују и практикују веру, промене у верској идентификацији, процес верске диверзификације и начин на који се институционализација верске праксе и уверења смањује. У овом оквиру ми пратимо развој комплексног односа између државе, политике и институције католичке цркве. Посебно се фокусирамо на католицизам јер је то доминантна религија у Аргентини, која је уједно и најмоћнија и са највише утицаја на државу и политичку арену.

Кључне речи: Аргентина, верски мозаик, уверења, католицизам, политика

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