

# Religion and Politics in Argentina

## Religious Influence on Legislative Decisions on Sexual and Reproductive Rights

by

Juan Cruz Esquivel

Translated by

Carlos Pérez

---

*The interactions between the state and religious institutions in Argentina are expressed on the municipal, provincial, and national levels, in the sphere of legislation and public policy, and in a wide range of undefined informal relationships. Politics and religion have historically been intertwined, and their relationship can be described as subsidiary laicism, in which the recognition of civil rights coexists with significant intervention of the Church in the implementation of public policy and in which state support of religion at an intermediate level is considered legitimate. Religious institutions and convictions influence votes in the Congress on laws expanding sexual and reproductive rights, and under such influence provincial and municipal governments delay the implementation of those laws.*

*Las interacciones entre las instituciones estatales y religiosas en la Argentina se expresan a nivel municipal, provincial y nacional en el ámbito de la legislación y la política pública, y en una amplia gama de relaciones informales no definidas. La política y la religión han sido entrelazadas históricamente, y se puede describir su relación como laicismo ancilar, donde el reconocimiento de los derechos civiles coexiste con apreciable intervención de la Iglesia en la implementación de la política pública, y en dónde el apoyo estatal a la religión a un nivel intermedio se considera legítimo. Las instituciones y convicciones religiosas influyen sobre la votación en el Congreso sobre leyes ampliando los derechos sexuales y reproductivos, y bajo tal influencia los gobiernos provinciales y municipales retrasan la implementación de aquellas leyes.*

**Keywords:** State, Religion, Laicism, Sexual and reproductive rights, Argentina

---

Interactions between the state and religious institutions in Argentina take many forms. They are expressed on the national, provincial, and municipal levels, on the level of legislation and public policy, and in a wide range of undefined informal networks. This study examines the influence of faith-based institutions and the religious convictions of legislators on the development and writing of bills concerning sexual and reproductive rights—artificial insemination, sexual

Juan Cruz Esquivel is a Ph.D. in sociology, a researcher of the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, and a professor of social research methodology at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina. A similar article appeared in Spanish in Juan Cruz Esquivel and Juan Marco Vaggione, *Permeabilidades activas* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2015). Carlos Pérez teaches Chicano and Latin American studies at California State University, Fresno.

LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES, Issue 208, Vol. 43 No. 3, May 2016, 133–143

DOI: 10.1177/0094582X16629459

© 2016 Latin American Perspectives

identity, abortion, same-sex marriage, euthanasia, and same-sex couples' adoption of children—in the Congress. Is the state laicist, faith-based, or associated with an official religion? Does it give equal treatment to all religions, or does it favor one over others? Answering these questions requires conceptual precision regarding laicism.

From a normative point of view, in a laicist regime religious authorities and symbols do not confer legitimacy on the civil authority (Milot, 2009). Laicism is recognized as a juridical-political-cultural system that, devoid of the imprint of a particular religion, guarantees freedom of conscience and religious liberty by virtue of the state's neutrality regarding religious matters (Blancarte, 2008). Therefore, there is some agreement that, beyond the formal separation of church and state, the legitimacy of civil authority is based on the existence of a laicist state. However, the processes of laicization are not univocal; on the contrary, they have had zigzagging trajectories according to the hegemonic cultural matrix and the historical configuration of each nation. The form that laicism takes in contexts in which it emerged as an expression of religious pluralism is not identical to the form it takes where it signified freedom from the religious tutelage of public affairs.

In 1791, the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment established two principles: the prohibition of any law regarding the establishment of a religion and freedom of religion. In contrast to that of most Latin American nations, the autonomy of the state in the United States was not conflictive, nor did it emerge from traumatic wars waged by dominant religions as, for example, in Mexico. Almost naturally, a form materialized that made possible the existing religious diversity. While in some European countries the state was based on its separation from the Catholic Church, in the United States its foundation was the guarantee of religious liberty, and in most of Latin America it was consolidated by interaction with religious groups in terms of a logic of subordination. These historical particularities in the configuration of the state and the process of laicization help us to understand the multiple meanings of "laicist." It is the context that challenges its definition and calls into question its universal character.

### LAICISM AS A METHODOLOGICAL KEY

One possible way of approaching the complexity of laicism is to think about it in terms of the different levels at which it operates and analyze its variations with regard to those dimensions. Thus we can explore the form that laicism takes in the legal system, in the arena of public policy, and in the political culture.<sup>1</sup> We will not necessarily find correspondence or continuity between dimensions in the same political-geographical space. It is possible to foresee scenarios with intricate combinations, among them regulations that pay tribute to the principles of laicism but are inconsistent with public policies that have strong religious overtones. For example, in Chile, the separation of church and state in 1925 did not signify the autonomy of civil authority; one had to wait until the twenty-first century for the passage of a law permitting divorce. Therefore the

analysis cannot be reduced to a legal approach but must include the socio-historical and the cultural to produce an accurate appraisal of the field of study. In Latin America in general and in Argentina in particular, politics and religion have historically been intertwined, taking on a definite structure based more on their porosity than on the autonomy of the two spheres. These different levels of analysis provide not only indispensable empirical support for the study of the degree of correspondence between legislation, public policy, and the hegemonic political culture but also criteria for identifying different forms of laicism. From a theoretical perspective, they also deepen our understanding of whether the diverse forms of the political and the religious are autonomous or intertwined (Blancarte, 2012).

Although it might be interesting to identify the various levels of laicization in different nations, it is more important to unravel the types of laicism existing in each political, legal, and sociocultural context. Along these lines, Jean Baubérot and Micheline Milot (2011) have formulated five ideal types of laicism: separatist, anticlerical, authoritarian, civil religious, and recognition. These conceptualizations, Milot (2009: 39) explains, "should not be considered as descriptions of social realities. . . . Instead, they are typical ways of thinking about laicist adaptation." They are, however, inspired by the political configurations of empirical reality, and, once created, the use of them to determine to what extent the different aspects of reality approximate or deviate from one or another type is unavoidable. Clarifying the distance between the ideal models and reality is key for understanding their usefulness in sociological interpretation. In this regard, it is difficult to find affinities between these models and the Argentine case. I propose another ideal type, subsidiary laicism, to fill the lacuna from an analytical perspective.

In order to describe this type of laicism, it is first necessary to deconstruct some of the claims usually associated with laicism. If laicism presupposes political autonomy vis-à-vis religion and a displacement of the latter as a source of legitimation for the former, the passage of laws that increase rights in clear conflict with the beliefs of the hegemonic religious institutions might be considered evidence of laicization. But to what degree do these laws reflect an intensification of democracy and a recognition of pluralism rather than laicization?

In Argentina, a law passed in 2002 allowed for the distribution of contraceptives and information to support free and autonomous decision making with regard to family planning. A law passed in 2006 allowed the state to identify curricular guidelines based on scientific knowledge for the education of students regarding sexual topics. In 2010 an article of the civil code was modified in order to allow marriage between two people of the same sex. Laws on changes in sexual identity and death with dignity were passed in 2012. The broadening of the conditions for legal abortion is currently circulating in the committees of the Congress, and in Buenos Aires the banning of religious symbols in public offices has been proposed. A first impression of all this is of a clear advance of laicization in Argentina, but how many of these laws have been translated into concrete public policies? To what extent do they tend toward the construction of a new political culture lacking any source of religious

legitimacy? Does this undeniable broadening of civil rights amount to laicization? While in terms of a nominal definition of laicization, there is in fact less religious influence on the making of political decisions, the passage of these laws reflects more a context of increasing democratization, defense of human rights, incorporation of minority groups into citizenship, and agreement between the opportunities for political representation and the demands of various social actors. This spectrum of initiatives does not necessarily develop from a strictly laicist political culture. The instances of the broadening of citizen rights registered in the past few years have not resulted in more autonomy for civil authority. The measures regarding sexual and reproductive health and same-sex marriage refer primarily to the position of the government—or of some functionaries or legislators in particular—rather than from an idea of the state ingrained in the political class.

The gap between the passage of laws in the area of health, family, and education and their degree of application is largely attributable to the provincial and municipal governments, a matter of the greater influence of religious authority over local executives than over national legislators. Apparently the daily contact with government bureaucrats—whose appointment often depends on the consent of the religious authorities—produces a logic that differs from that of legislators, which is more sensitive to the agendas of the active organizations of civil society. This divergence with regard to norms and the delay in their implementation open new lines of inquiry about the dominant culture in the management of the public domain, the differences in degree of influence of religious authority on the executive and legislative spheres, and the beginnings of laicization (Baubérot, 2005; 2007). An analysis of Argentine electoral campaigns reveals religious symbolism in some of their messages. For example, Daniel Scioli's successful campaign for the governorship of the province of Buenos Aires in 2011 had as its slogan "I believe in you," and the image of the candidate as a believer praying in a church was exhibited in one of its television commercials.

### CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN ARGENTINA

Historically, the Catholic Church has had clear hegemony over Argentina's religious life. In the only national censuses in which the question of religious affiliation was asked of the Argentine population (1947 and 1960), more than 90 percent of the population reported a strong attachment to Catholicism. In 2008 the National Council of Scientific and Technological Investigation's study of religious beliefs and attitudes showed Catholicism maintaining its dominance (76 percent) but clear signs of religious diversity: 9 percent declared themselves Evangelicals and 11 percent atheists, agnostics, or believers without a specific religious orientation, while the rest were divided among Jehovah's Witnesses (1.2 percent), Mormons (0.9 percent), and other religions (1.1 percent).

In political, social, and cultural terms, the Catholic Church has played a significant role in the construction of the identity of Argentine society and has been a principal source of legitimacy for the political process. Since the beginning of evangelization, the model of Christianity and the system of royal patronage reflected a

complex institutional map in which the political and the religious were intertwined, and independence did not modify this state of affairs. On the contrary, Catholicism was recognized as an integrating moral force that was required for cultural cohesion in the emerging nation-state. In the nineteenth century, Catholicism played an important role in the configuration of the nation-state. In effect, it was possible to understand the meaning of the universe and where an individual belonged socially through a macro-institution like the Catholic Church, which provided an ordered perception of the world and a response to the population's demand for an identity. At the same time, the predominance of Catholicism provided the state the juridical, financial, cultural, and symbolic support necessary to guarantee its privileged place. Numerous examples confirm the prominent role given to the Catholic Church by the civil authority, among them state support of Catholic worship, the requirement that the president and vice president be Catholic (abolished only by the constitutional reform of 1994), subsidies to religious schools, exclusive religious support of the military and the security forces, management of the official funds dedicated to the charitable social programs supported by the Catholic Church, the issuance of diplomatic and official passports to archbishops and bishops, and the employment of Catholic iconography by state institutions.

The 1853 Constitution, which has shaped the legal system of Argentina up to the present in spite of subsequent reforms, endorsed the Catholic Church's dominant status. Article 2 established that "the federal government supports the Roman Catholic Apostolic faith." Freedom of religion was contemplated in Article 14 but not equality among them. While Catholicism was not recognized as the "official religion," it maintained a privileged position. At the same time, the collective imagination of the political leadership perceived the Church as a relevant actor on the national political scene, naturalizing the influence of religious norms in the discourse on certain public policies. The modernizing and liberal currents that predominated in the 1880s brought with them a series of laws with secularizing tendencies (civil registry and marriage law), but the foundation of the church-state relation remained untouched. The presence—albeit reduced—of the ecclesiastical institution was functional to the official project. The fact that the state did not sanction a formal separation from the Church—a decision that had been made by the neighboring states of Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay—should not be underestimated.

In the twentieth century, with the crisis of the positivist ideals that promised infinite progress, Catholicism reaffirmed its battle for ideological and moral hegemony. The division of labor that the secularization paradigm had established was rejected without comment. Reluctant to limit itself to the work of the sacristy and the individual sphere of conscience, the Church made Christianizing society and having an active presence in the public sphere the objectives of its policy. After its institutional consolidation in the 1930s, it went on the offensive, undertaking a series of strategies to guarantee a pervasive public presence. Its ascendancy in the upper echelons of government and its strong presence in the social arena were designed to facilitate the dissemination of Christian values in all orders of social life. In addition, the network of Catholic educational institutions, which had grown exponentially after the emergence of new religious orders at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth,

was consolidated during this period, becoming indispensable when the time came for organizing the educational system.

This religious institution proposed to Catholicize the state and the society, training its leaders in management and using the resources of the state apparatus to extend its pastoral activities throughout the nation. Its objective was explicit: "reconquering all of society for Christ, radiating a Catholic culture throughout all aspects of society." For the ruling classes, Catholicism began to position itself in the public sphere as a constant source of legitimacy, especially after the civilian-military coups of 1930, which over time also became religious.

The return to democracy in the 1980s did not modify the traditional *modus operandi* of political society in its links with the ecclesiastical establishment. Ascendancy over the upper echelons of government continued to be a central nexus of the Church's behavior. Its proximity to or distance from a particular administration corresponded to the degree of influence it wielded over the areas it considered its natural purview—principally education, social assistance, the family, and sexual morality. Thus, its relations with the governments of Raúl Alfonsín (1983–1999) and Néstor Kirchner (2003–2007) showed signs of conflict, while those with the governments of Carlos Menem (1989–1999) and Fernando de la Rúa (1999–2001) were characterized by shared legitimacy.

Argentine political history demonstrates the importance of a political culture that situates the Catholic Church as a source of legitimacy. In that context, not only is it "naturalized" but its intervention in the public sphere—its participation in the management of public policies and in legislative discussions—is promoted. The basis of the system of patronage and this model of Christianity, which established the foundations for a symbiotic institutional framework between the Church and the state, allowed for considering the Church the bestower of transcendent values on the nation. These values have become ingrained in the representations of a political class that, independently of its religious affiliation, recognizes the Church as a leading voice in decision making and political practice.

Nevertheless, throughout the four years of the Néstor Kirchner administration the ecclesiastical authorities resisted government programs and laws including the permission of tubal ligation and vasectomy as anticontraceptive surgical procedures without judicial authorization, the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (which was interpreted by the ecclesiastical hierarchy as a "shortcut" to legalization of abortion), reproductive health laws and sexual education in the schools, and the provision of the "morning after" pill by the nation's primary health care centers and public hospitals.

The democratization process and cultural and religious pluralism demand a modification of church-state relations. The democratic imperative to promote social harmony within the framework of increasing pluralism puts demands on the political system for expanding citizen rights. In the past few years, the secular as the framework for the political and social system has been placed on the agenda, with some contradictory advances and retreats that depend more on the character and background of the particular bureaucrat than on any strategic perspective or policy.

## THE POLITICAL AND THE RELIGIOUS IN THE ARGENTINE CONGRESS

A study of the statements on religion of members of the Congress will open up the question of the type of laicism that is applicable to the Argentine case. In the context of a more thorough investigation financed by the National Scientific and Technical Research Council on political, religious, and social leadership in the Argentine public sphere,<sup>2</sup> the social imagery of members of the Congress and their links with religious actors and institutions were explored. The Congress is a bicameral structure, with 257 deputies and 72 senators. A third of the legislators, selected as a representative sample on the basis of their political identities and the regions they represented, responded to our questionnaire. I will analyze their positions regarding crucial issues in the public debate that the religious institutions are seeking to regulate.

On all of the topics raised, individuals declared themselves in favor, although to various degrees, of legislation aimed at a significant expansion of citizenship. Support for allowing artificial insemination was at 84 percent, while that for changing sexual identity was at 75 percent. Adoption by same-sex partners received only 51 percent endorsement, even though the modification of the civil code regarding marriage removed any impediment in this regard. Same-sex marriage was supported by 59 percent, euthanasia by 52 percent, and abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy by 84 percent. As a general tendency, approval came more from women legislators, from deputies (rather than senators), and from younger members from the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires and from the center of the country. Even a general analysis of these numbers permits one to conclude that there is a retreat from religious intervention in congressional decisions regarding civil rights questions. This assertion must be qualified by the recognition that in the discussion of same-sex marriage in the 2010 Congress appeal to the Bible and Jesus and other religious references were part of the argument on both sides, a veritable "war of the gods."

The presence of the religious factor in the construction of the meanings that permeate political praxis can be seen in the perception by legislators of the influence of religious convictions on votes in the Congress. Barely 3 percent of members reported that the religious convictions of their peers had no influence on their projects or their votes, and 27 percent said that they had considerable influence. Individuals' positions were supported by religious values, and when they differed from the collective perception it was because of lobbying and pressure from institutional authorities. Members who considered it appropriate to use religious convictions in addressing the standards for society presented the following arguments: (1) They are part of the conscience of the legislator. (2) No one can deny his or her religious or cultural upbringing. (3) They are a matter of principle. (4) Every representative votes according to his or her convictions. (5) Convictions are nonnegotiable. (6) One should defend one's religion. Here the priority of legislators' personal convictions over any notion of political representation and party affiliation is apparent.

Another line of argument that was favorable to the presence of religion in political debates appealed directly to the question of representation: (1) Religion is an expression of society. (2) The faith of the voters being represented should

be taken into consideration. (3) Ethical views should be part of the law. (4) Religion orders public ethics. This series of assertions opens up a discussion of the role of religion in a democratic system that is not pertinent here. I would argue that underlying all of them is the idea that if religion is part of civil society there is no reason it cannot be expressed in the Congress. This is a debate that is discussed in academic circles in Europe and the United States in the framework of what is known as postsecularization. Consideration of this issue would require analysis of the historical and institutional context of each region. In our latitudes, one would need to add, especially in the case of Catholicism, the widespread projection and experience of influence on and management of state structures.

Finally, the responses of those who believed that religious convictions should play no role in legislation corresponded to the classic arguments in favor of laicism:

(1) Religion is a private affair and public policy should be laicist. (2) Laws apply to everyone independent of belief system. (3) We are not here to express our personal beliefs because we are representatives of our nation. (4) The Congress is a laicist institution that should create laws that universalize rights, and not all of us are believers.

The legislators were also asked whether they had met with religious leaders in their positions as members of the Congress within the past year and the reasons for such meetings. Only 25 percent said they had not. Among the principal reasons for such meetings was the "naturalness" of the link between the political and the religious when addressing questions about public policy such as what materials should be considered for sexual education in public schools, same-sex marriage, the legislative agenda when this was of interest to the Church, Church petitions, and social services to relieve poverty. Three out of four legislators asserted that the opinion of the Catholic Church partially influenced their votes on bills regarding sexual education and same-sex marriage and close to 20 percent said that it determined their votes on those topics.

Asked about the proposed national council on bioethics, 56 percent said that it should have the participation of representatives of all religious faiths, 9 percent that it should be composed only of Catholics, and 34 percent said that religious affiliation should not be considered. Not only on this issue but also on religious service to the military and the existence of religious spaces in public buildings (ministries, hospitals, schools, etc.), the actions taken recognized pluralism in the religious sphere, but proposals of equality stemmed more from a multidominationality of the state than from its laicization.

In the Argentine political tradition, the pursuit of religious legitimation is part of political practice. The organization of civic politics takes into consideration the intervention of religious structures that are present in the neighborhoods. State funding goes to religious schools, Caritas dining halls, the Catholic organizations that build housing, and the pastoral health care services associated with each diocese.

The dominant political culture is imbued with ratiocinations that see religion as the sole arbiter of meaning. For 34 percent of the legislators, the support of the Church was important to winning an election, while 26 percent disagreed. Although the public is not religiously active, Christian culture is imposed as a



symbolic reference that permeates the values and meanings of political practices and decisions. Religious places are not necessarily visited, but they provide a diffuse framework for belonging. Even though the legislators do not frequent the churches, they consider themselves part of those churches and celebrate rites of passage and transcendent occasions in their lives there. Casanova (2009), paraphrasing Hervieu-Leger, speaks of "belonging without believing." Nearly half of the members opted for the expression "God, country, and the saints" at the moment of taking their oaths of office and another 12 percent swore in the name of "God and country."<sup>3</sup>

### SUBSIDIARY LAICISM AS AN INTERPRETATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ARGENTINE CASE

Taking up our initial questions and in the light of the analysis just discussed, the increase in rights that Argentina is undergoing is not necessarily rooted in significant secularization of Argentina's political culture, at least in its classical sense. In fact, many of those rights, especially in provincial governments, have been difficult to implement. Perhaps instead we should conceive of various types of the secular state according to concrete historical experiences, understanding the risk inherent in making the concept less precise. We can speak of subsidiary laicism for the Argentine case, in which the state, parallel to its conquest of autonomous spaces and significant recognition of various civil rights, confronts a religious institution that intervenes in the implementation of its policies. The concept of subsidiary laicism corresponds to a type of state that has strong Catholic roots but in which democratization and secularization have forged innovative recognitions of the plural forms existing in contemporary societies. While it promotes new rights in terms of gender, sexuality, and reproduction, it reproduces a logic of subordination in the implementation of public policy and citizen intervention through the intermediation of collective actors among which are religious believers.

The concept of the "subsidiary" refers to the axiological framework of Catholicism and in particular to the social doctrine of the Church.<sup>4</sup> The state is expected to guarantee the free initiative of individuals and intermediate organizations and intervene only when this is not adequately realized in an action that is directed toward the common good: "What a lesser man, group, or organization can accomplish correctly, a superior body should not usurp" (Equipo Episcopal, 1985: 131). The worldview that structures subordination condemns direct state intervention but legitimizes the state support of intermediate bodies of civil society. This support can be seen in the transfer of economic resources, in the participation of these organizations in the execution of public policy, in institutional instances of consultation such as the national committee on bioethics and the social consultation councils, and in the joint management of state spaces. It is not only governmental decision makers who think about public policy in terms of a logic of subordination; the intermediary organizations themselves intervene in state structures in terms of the same logic, and their strategies of institutional reproduction depend in large measure on those mechanisms of interaction.

Now, a state that has been defined by the assumption of subordination is not a weak political formation. It concentrates resources and knowledge, and where the procedures for distributing them are little institutionalized the intermediary bodies compete to acquire them in order to increase their social presence. Where subsidiary laicism prevails, we find legislatures that pay lip service to the principles of laicism (freedom of conscience, no discrimination) coexisting with public policies that have a religious substratum. Far from being a contradiction, this is an instance of the tensions and détente that are produced in the negotiation process between a norm, its translation into a public policy, and an ingrained political culture on the part of the managing class that is charged with executing state policies. The political formation of this type of state is characterized by an expansion and guaranteeing of civil rights not only from the perspective of discourse but also from that of legislation. It becomes manifest in the passage of laws regarding reproductive health, sex education, same-sex marriage, the right of same-sex couples to adopt, and changes in sexual identity. At the same time, the form of organized public policy preserves in its intermediary instances the religious structures that exist in the nation. As mentioned above, religious schools, Caritas dining halls, and the Catholic organizations that build housing and provide the pastoral health care services associated with each diocese receive financing from the state and are a part of the means employed by the state to “hand down” public policy to the citizenry. Whether because of the Catholic culture in which many governmental decision makers were socialized or because of their perception of extrapolitical benefits to be gained from a connection with the ecclesiastical authorities, these components are constitutive of this conception of laicism. We have here a model of laicism that presents a disjuncture in the cogency of its three principles. While freedom of conscience and absence of discrimination are fully guaranteed, this is not the case regarding the autonomy or the neutrality of the state, which exhibits some weakness in relation to religious organizations. One result of the tensions inherent in a subsidiary laicism is that variability is a constitutive element. Given the gap between the normative and public policy, the institutional precariousness of laicism, the political environment, and the profile of the governing class are decisive in evaluating the relative weight of the principles of laicism in each context.

Because of its strong French imprint and the historical experience of the Gallic nation, the definition of laicism was historically associated with the separation of church and state. In their struggle for autonomy from the Catholic Church, in some places the political powers have promoted such a separation, and it is this historical cycle that has traditionally been identified with laicism. By approaching laicism in terms of multiple interpretative dimensions rather than solely with reference to the French tradition—a theoretical exercise that is constantly expanding—we can recapture certain common characteristics that identify the specificity of the concept.

## NOTES

1. A transnational study group composed of Roberto Blancarte (Mexico), Daniel Gutiérrez (Mexico), Felipe Gaytán (Mexico), Roberto Lorea (Brazil), Violeta Barrientos (Peru), and Juan Cruz

Esquivel (Argentina) has been meeting in an effort to define the secular state in conceptual terms, both real and operational, with the aim of constructing an index.

2. CONICET Multiannual Research Projects (PIP) No. 359/08, "Disputas en el espacio public argentino: Dirigencia política, instituciones religiosas y organizaciones sociales pro-derechos, frente a las políticas en material educative y de regulación familiar y sexual" (director Juan Cruz Esquivel, codirector Juan Marco Vaggione).

3. One of the other options for the oath makes reference to the 30,000 disappeared—the citizens assassinated by the military dictatorship during the period from 1976 to 1983.

4. This principle is the basis of all the jurisprudence that validates the actions of the authorities closest to the sociopolitical area in which those actions will be implemented. The European Union incorporated it into the Maastricht Treaty of 1992.

## REFERENCES

Baubérot, Jean

2005 *Historia de la laicidad francesa*. Mexico City: El Colegio Mexiquense.

2007 *Les laïcités dans le monde*. Paris: PUF.

Baubérot, Jean and Micheline Milot

2011 *Laïcités sans frontières*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Blancarte, Roberto

2008 *Laicidad y valores en un estado democrático*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México.

2012 "¿Cómo podemos medir la laicidad?" *Estudios Sociológicos* 30 (88): 233–247.

Casanova, José

2009 "Religion, politics, and gender equality: public religions revisited," in José Casanova and Anne Phillips, *A Debate on the Public Role of Religion and Its Social and Gender Implications*. Gender and Development Paper no. 5. Geneva: UNRISD/Heinrich Böll Stiftung.

Equipo Episcopal de Educación Católica, Conferencia Episcopal Argentina

1985 *Educación y proyecto de vida*. Tandil: Conferencia Episcopal Argentina.

Milot, Micheline

2009 *La laicidad*. Madrid: Editorial CCS.