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Religion in Latin America

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Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



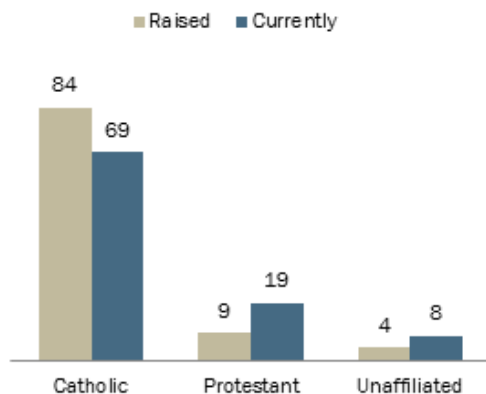
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New Trend in Latin America

- “Latin America is home to more than 425 million Catholics – nearly 40% of the world’s total Catholic population – and the Roman Catholic Church now has a Latin American pope for the first time in its history. Yet identification with Catholicism has declined throughout the region, according to a major new Pew Research Center survey that examines religious affiliations, beliefs and practices in 18 countries and one U.S. territory (Puerto Rico) across Latin America and the Caribbean.” [Pew Research](#)

Shifting Religious Identity in Latin America

% of the region's adult population raised in each religious group vs. % currently identifying with each group



QCHREL, QCURREL

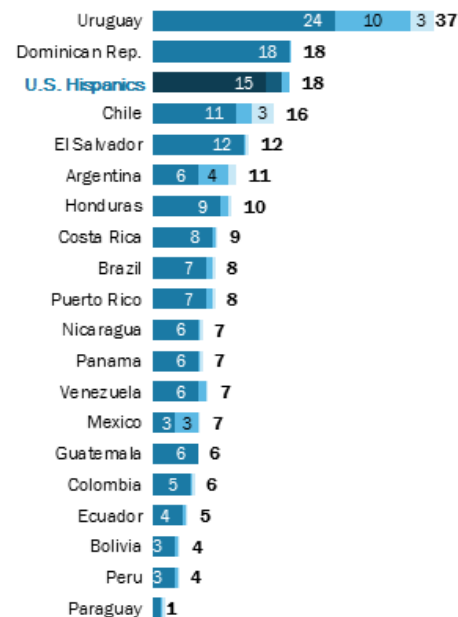
Results based on aggregated survey data from 18 countries and the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico, taking into account differences in the population size of each country/territory.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Unaffiliated Identity

% who describe their religion as ...

■ No particular religion ■ Atheist ■ Agnostic



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Catholic Affiliation in Latin America

% of Catholic population

	1910	1950	1970	2014	1910- 1970 Diff.	1970- 2014 Diff.
Argentina	97	95	91	71	-6	-20
Brazil	95	93	92	61	-3	-31
Bolivia	94	94	89	77	-5	-12
Chile	96	89	76	64	-20	-12
Colombia	80	91	95	79	+15	-16
Costa Rica	99	98	93	62	-6	-31
Dominican Republic	98	96	94	57	-4	-37
Ecuador	88	98	95	79	+7	-16
El Salvador	98	99	93	50	-5	-43
Guatemala	99	99	91	50	-8	-41
Honduras	97	96	94	46	-3	-47
Mexico	99	96	96	81	-3	-15
Nicaragua	96	96	93	50	-4	-43
Panama	84	87	87	70	+3	-17
Paraguay	97	96	95	90	-2	-5
Peru	95	95	95	76	0	-19
Puerto Rico	100	94	87	56	-13	-31
Uruguay	61	62	63	42	+2	-21
Venezuela	93	91	93	73	0	-20

The 1910, 1950 and 1970 estimates are from the World Religion Database and the Brazilian and Mexican censuses. The 2014 estimates are based on the Pew Research Center survey. See this report's methodology for more on how population estimates were calculated.

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Departure from the golden age..

- “.. the idea of a golden age of Catholicism, which ruled as the hegemonic and “cultural” religion of Latin America from colonization to the first half of the twentieth century.” (Martin, p. 1140)
- During the golden age religious institutions hold a monopoly position within society.

But

- “Catholicism is no longer the hegemonic or monopoly religion that it was until at least the mid-twentieth century” (Parker 2016,18)
- But critics suggest that what precedes and predominates in Latin American religion, both over and through Catholicism, is a folk cosmovision!

'folk cosmovision'

- = a local and also cultural logic that prevails in parallel, and in spite of Christian denominationalism— be they Catholicism, traditional Christian churches, Pentecostals, or Neopentecostals

- this cosmovision survives because of its creativity and adaptability to any transformation in the religious landscape
- -> "a different logic" in Latin America?

- It cuts across the experience of people
- This native cosmological view is defined as “an alternative to the illustrated rationality and to the kind of rationalized faith, which is its byproduct” (Parker 1996, 192).

- “in Latin America there is a worldview according to which the sacred cosmos, inhabited by spirits and souls, is a kind of ‘symbolic umbrella of protection against the adversities of this life.’ (Parker 1996, 317).

"cosmological popular view"

- a cultural logic that articulates in a unique totality the relationships between heaven, nature, and human beings, combined in a cosmic and harmonic whole (Seman 2001, 45)

- religion does not lose its symbolic weight in the construction of the meaning of life and nomos
- religion is “restoring meaning in the midst of uncertainty, generating new hopes for the vast majority of the Latin American population” (Parker 1996, 127-28).

Religious landscape

- “According to Frigerio, the Latin American religious landscape is not defined exclusively in terms of monopoly or market, but as a continuum of possibilities, involving different degrees of regulation and the action of different variables that affect the freedom with which individuals can choose their religious options. ...(next slide)”

- “...In this regard, there will always be other systems of beliefs that may not acquire the status of religion but will emerge in a situation of less regulation.” (Martin, p. 1142)