How Partisanship & Religion Impact Democratic Participation in Brazil

Amy Erica Smith

February 25, 2020
The rise of religious engagement in democratic politics in Brazil....

Why?

With what consequences?
Growing Evangelical Activism
Growing Evangelical Activism
Growing Evangelical Activism
Catholic Activism?
The Evidence

National Surveys, 2002-2017
• Sneak peak at some 2018 data

Congregational study, 2014 & 2017
• Juiz de Fora
• Clergy interviews
• Participant observation
• Focus groups
• Quantitative surveys
Clergy support for candidates: “pulverization”

Source: Brazilian Electoral Panel Studies 2010 and 2014
2018:

From “pulverization” to ... consensus?

![Bar chart showing percentage reporting their clergy supported Bolsonaro by religious affiliation: Catholic, Evangelical/Pentecostal, None, Other.]

Source: Brazilian Democracy in the Balance panel study, 2018.
Clergy also talk about many other political issues with congregants.

Source: Churches North and South 2014, Clergy Study. Whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals. Frequency of speech on issue has been recentered around the mean within each denomination.
Why?
Religious Changes

Religious Affiliation in the Brazilian Census

- Catholic
- Evangelical/Protestant
- No Religion/Unidentified
- Other Religion

Percentage of Population


Religious Changes

- Catholic: 99.7, 98.9, 95.0, 93.5, 92.0, 90.4, 87.4, 83.3, 73.7, 65
- Evangelical/Protestant: 1.0, 2.6, 3.4, 4.0, 5.1, 6.5, 9.0, 15.4, 22.2
- No Religion/Unidentified: 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
- Other Religion: 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0

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Catholic clergy face a culture war on two fronts.

Religious Affiliation in the Brazilian Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Evangelical/Protestant</th>
<th>No Religion/Unidentified</th>
<th>Other Religion</th>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
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</table>

Percentage of Population

- Catholic: 51%
- Evangelical/Protestant: 22.2%
- No Religion/Unidentified: 15.4%
- Other Religion: 6.5%
A survey experiment

Note: Marginal effects of indicator for membership threat treatment, with fixed effects for sample component. Sample limited to full questionnaire. Num. observations: 278 to 285.
With what consequences?
A hypodermic needle effect?
Figure 1. Approval for Religious Leaders Campaigning for Candidates in Brazil

Support for religious leaders campaigning for candidates

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP, 2014; Brazil 2014 v1_W
What happens when a clergy member takes a position on a candidate?

Another survey experiment

Source: Religion, Race, and Class Online Experimental Study, 2012. Whiskers represent 95% confidence intervals.
But church effects extend far beyond clergy!
An emerging culture war?

Party identification

Predicted Percentage Petista

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, Brazil. Estimates adjusted for design effects.
An emerging culture war?

Public opinion

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, Brazil. Estimates adjusted for design effects. See text and appendix for dependent variables.
An emerging culture war?

Elite politics

Senador Magno Malta diz que Parada do Orgulho Gay 'passou dos limites'; deputado quer criminalizar 'Cristofobia'
My subsequent work

• A five-wave panel study of the 2018 elections

• A cross-national study of how sexual politics issues affect voting

• A study of religion and climate change
BRASIL ACIMA DE TUDO,
DEUS ACIMA DE TODOS.

Presidente
JAIR BOLSONARO
Explaining 2018: A demographic realignment
Explaining 2018:
Campaign focused on sexual politics
THE BURNING BUSH

Religion and Climate Change in Latin America
Obrigadão!

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