

Religion and public space in the Uruguayan ‘laïcité’

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journals.sagepub.com/home/scp**Néstor DA COSTA**

Universidad Católica del Uruguay, Uruguay

Abstract

Uruguay is an atypical country as regards the place of the religious in society. This is due to many factors dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in a process that culminated in the separation of the Church and the State in 1919, along with the subsequent privatization of religion. This matrix impregnated the Uruguayan imagination up until today; however, some changes in the traditional location of the religious in society are apparent, and some debates are quite similar to those of the nineteenth century. This article will explore the foundational bases of the model of Uruguayan *laïcité*, some of the main debates about it, along with the trends existing in the twenty-first century.

Keywords

laïcité, public sphere, religion, state, Uruguay

Résumé

L'Uruguay est un pays atypique concernant la place du religieux dans la société. Cette situation est la conséquence de plusieurs facteurs apparus depuis la fin du 19^{ème} siècle et le début du 20^{ème} siècle et qui ont culminé en 1919 aboutissant à la séparation précoce de l'Église et de l'État et, par la suite, à la privatisation de la religion. Cette matrice a imprégné l'imaginaire uruguayen jusqu'à nos jours. Cela étant, on observe à présent certaines mutations dans la place qu'occupe traditionnellement le religieux dans la société, et plusieurs débats sont similaires à ceux du 19^{ème} siècle. Cet article explore tant les bases fondamentales du modèle de la *laïcité* uruguayenne que ses grands débats et les tendances de ce début de 21^{ème} siècle.

Corresponding author:

Néstor Da Costa, Universidad Católica del Uruguay, Av. 8 de Octubre 2738, 11600 Montevideo, Uruguay.

Email: ndacosta@ucu.edu.uy

Mots-clés

État, laïcité, sphère publique, religion, Uruguay

Uruguay is a small country in southern Latin America whose religious profile is unique from that of the rest of the continent's. Uruguay has the lowest percentage of Catholics (41%) on the continent and the highest percentage of non-affiliated believers (24%; Pew Research Center, 2014). These figures result from a peculiar process of 'laicization,' which began in the second half of the nineteenth century and continued into the first 20 years of the twentieth century. During this time, the nascent state disputed the occupation of spaces by the Catholic Church, which resisted such changes in its power and social position (Caetano, 2013; Caetano and Geymonat, 1997).

When Uruguay reformed its constitution in 1919, it separated the State and the Church both formally and legally. Simultaneously, a development in the national identity emphasized this separation, as well as the privatization of religion, and as far as possible, even the total erasure of collective meaning through Jacobinism.¹ The parameters of this article make it impossible to explain in detail every element of this very long separation process; therefore, the article will mention the most relevant events.

Since the privatization of religion, the Jacobin emphasis of this process has permeated Uruguay's local culture, giving place to a form of *laïcité* that reinforces strict separation of religion and the public – which may refer to state institutions, the public sphere, or public space. Uruguayan *laïcité* takes a hegemonic format, and a century after religion's institutional separation, it preserves a good part of the initial Jacobin features and continues to reinforce the *laïcité* arrangement as a concrete system (Milot, 2009).

The term *laïcité* has itself become a part of the national identity (Da Costa, 2011) and has turned out to be polysemic, understood in diverse forms and different contexts. Even the sociological literature offers different views on the phenomenon of *laïcité*. Its origins can be found in France, despite the fact that the first laws of *laïcité* manifested in Mexico. This polysemic term requires de-essentialization, as mentioned by Milot (2009) and his typology regarding *laïcité*. Many authors have faced the challenges of *laïcité*'s definition and its contemporary social implications. These authors include Bauberot (2010) in France, Blancarte (2008) in Mexico, Velasco (2006) in Spain, Rapport « Stasi » de la Commission de réflexion sur l'application du principe de Laïcité dans la République (2003) in France, and the Bouchard and Taylor (2008) report in Canada. Yet, in different efforts to define this concept, a commonality exists in identifying the implied manifestation of the religious in the public sphere, the bond between the State and religions, various manifestations of *laïcité*, and its specific expressions.

Extensive research has been conducted in Uruguay to clarify how *laïcité* is a lived practice (Caetano, 2013; Caetano and Geymonat, 1997; Da Costa, 2003; 2011; Guigou, 2000). Taking into account contemporary debates, it will be necessary to continue constructing an analysis and frame of interpretation for *laïcité*. However, the main goal of this article is not to define *laïcité* but to explore and understand the historical itinerary that formed the Uruguayan model of it. In order to achieve this goal, this article will go

through key milestones of the model's foundational stage and more current milestones that express and manifest religious social dynamics between the country's public and private spheres.

Some historical references

Today's unique Uruguayan secularist process started around the second half of the nineteenth century. The official milestone is the separation of the Catholic Church and the State in 1919, but as a cultural brand, the milestone exceeded that real and symbolic date. As a result of this separation, religion effectively relocated to the margins of the social system, toward the intimacy of the private sphere. In Article 5 of the 1919 Constitution, the country resolved to construct a young Uruguayan state, initiating a process that not only impacted the state space but also had effects on the public sphere:

There is freedom of cult in Uruguay. The State does not have a religion. It acknowledges the Catholic's Church domain of all temples that have been partially or totally funded by national treasury, except for those that provide service to asylums, hospitals, jails or other public establishments. It also declares exempt from all types of taxes, every temple consecrated to the cult of different religions.²

After this historical turning point, the Catholic Church relocated its action to private life, in its traditions and clothing, therefore accepting its new place within the new State. The Protestant churches participated in this process on the State's side, supporting efforts to decrease the hegemonic power of the Catholic Church and its affiliates who persecuted them.

With religious privatization came a progressive conviction of decadence and future disappearance of religion. This conviction proceeded more from the political program of the Illustration to eradicate the religious in society than an affirmation that suggested empirical and even theoretical elements (Casanova, 2000).

While the Catholic Church weakened at the institutional level, it maintained a prestigious social role, a position secured through a premodern, Roman attitude that continued until the beginning of the twentieth century. The rejection and resistance to modernity from the Catholic Church at a local and a global level was characteristic of this period.

Msgr. Mariano Soler Archbishop of Montevideo, who was head of the diocese between the years 1891 and 1908, was an important figure during the debate about the institutional separation in which the Uruguayan *laïcité* process took place. While initially opposed to the separation, the Archbishop's attitude changed at the end of his term, when he started to consider if the institutional Church-State separation was something desirable for the Church. This position had never even been considered by his predecessor, Msgr. Jacinto Vera, whose position was Roman antimodernist. The actors that intervened in the separation process were in fact the Catholic Church leaders who held a pro-Roman, antimodern position that resisted the emancipation of the secular spheres and the loss of political-state influence. In contrast, the group of actors that advocated for constructing a modern Uruguayan state was formed of elites educated in France, where they witnessed

firsthand a country whose trajectory they wanted to follow. Among these participants were groups of masons (Garibaldi founded the Uruguayan Freemasonry) and historical Protestant churches.

According to Casanova's (2000) thesis, the critique toward the religion of the Illustration was:

. . . particularly effective wherever the church was still committed to the medieval Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysical synthesis, resisted all modern cognitive heresies, and continued to claim absolute rights to the control of education. The same critique had to be less relevant wherever religion had freed itself from its ties to medieval scholasticism[. . .].

Promoting anticlericalism in Uruguayan society was a strategy for successfully constructing the new State upon the antimodern positions of the Catholic Church, liberals and Jacobins of the dominant elites.

The historical and political construction of Uruguay gives relevance to the fact that it is a republic. Within its official title, the country's name even falls behind its designation as a republic, giving special importance to its form of government: República Oriental del Uruguay (Western Republic of Uruguay). Furthermore, this regional designation means that the Republic is in the east part of a river – the River Uruguay. Even in its name, the concept of republic defeats that of nation because the concept of a republic is more important there. For example, the State bank is called 'Banco de la República' or 'Republic Bank,' which varies greatly from the practices in other countries. Neighboring Argentina, which privileges the concept of nation, named its bank 'Banco Nación' or 'Nation Bank.'

A liberal hallmark motivated several of this Republic's affairs, including religion. In the liberal tradition, conceptions of religion in the public space tend to be confined strictly to private life, while conceptions of republican court tend to give rise to religion in society. As a result of this liberalism, religions and churches disappeared from the public space until the beginning of the 1960s, when the Catholic Church and other Protestant churches became socially active and began participating in the public sphere for the first time since the country embraced *laïcité*.

Religion in the public sphere

At the beginning of the 1960s, religious institutions started to have a revived sense of social concern. In 1961, a catholic pastoral letter appeared and expressed such changes in the Catholic Church's preoccupations (Parteli, 1961). Specifically, this letter expressed the terrible living conditions suffered by those living in the countryside. At the same time, the Vatican Council II and the Episcopate Catholic Conference in Medellín made other expressions that signaled a returning concern for public affairs.

The rise of social violence and the rise of authoritarianism with the coup d'état in 1973 accentuated the public presence of the Catholic Church, whose pronouncements, attitudes, and gestures led up to the coup.

While there was a strong dictatorship with great surveillance capacity for such a small country, different religious actions demonstrated clear intentions to create public spaces

where citizens could participate. For example, the Catholic Church offered National Youth Meetings annually. These meetings brought together thousands of young people from all over the country, turning Church events into public spaces of citizenship socialization.

Apart from the Church's renewed social concern, and independent from the days of the dictatorship regime, religion in Uruguay has largely flourished in personal life experiences and private cultural spaces. Uruguay's legal framework established complete freedom of religion, and as a result, implicit social sanctions developed regarding those who made public religious expressions. Public expressions of religion began to develop, but timidly, because being a believer was socially suspect, bordering on ignorance and backwardness.

Through the 1980s and early 1990s, the slow and irreversible pluralization and widening of the religious arena contributed to the reappearance of the religious in the public sphere. Afro-Brazilian cults had appeared in the country several decades earlier, but they had not been able to develop or obtain legitimacy. Their public visibility peaked with two events: first, the unveiling of a public statue opposite the Rio de la Plata in honor of Iemanjá, (deity equivalent to The Virgin Mary), and second, the celebration of Iemanjá day on 2nd February, a day in which thousands of supporters go to the beach in Montevideo to conduct their rituals with the celebrants (paes and maes). This celebration has increased the religion's visibility and has become a legitimating event – even an attraction.

When the Pentecostal or neo-Pentecostal churches arrived, they initiated a double strategy for moving into public spaces. First, they established a presence in central buildings, like old theaters, and second, they used popular media such as radio and television. Their location and communication strategy brought religious expression further into the public sphere.

In the 1990s, a popularized form of Catholic religiosity appeared strongly on the public stage through social media. For example, the case of the cult of Saints Pancras, Cono, and Cajetan or the cult of dedications to virgins Lourdes or del Verdún, among others – such displays gained the attention of mass media on a scale previously unattained in both coverage and prominence.

This expanding visibility of religion in the public generated conditions for a fall in antireligious prejudice, and therefore contributed to a greater propensity for manifestations of personal faith in public.

One cross and two statues

Public monuments in the city of Montevideo are emblems that invoke realities or situations, seeking to impress these meanings in the public in a permanent way. Since the return of democracy in 1985, three religious monuments have been installed on the same street. Two of them generated several debates of varying intensity, while the third did not generate any noticeable resistance. At the beginning of 2017, the Catholic Church requested the installation of a Virgin Mary statue in another public space in Montevideo, and the request was rejected. The controversy surrounding these religious monuments reveals differing viewpoints regarding the place of religion, especially concerning its publicly visible expression.

In 1987, a pope visited Uruguay for the first time: John Paul II went to Montevideo to sign a peace agreement between Argentina and Chile, which put an end to these countries' conflict over the Beagle Channel. On this occasion, the Pope officiated a mass attended by around 250,000 people. The celebration openly took place in Montevideo's city center, and a huge iron cross commemorated the occasion, installed next to the altar. Once the Pope left Uruguay, an intense debate ignited over the possibility of leaving the cross in that central public space to mark the country's first papal visit.

The initiative, based on acting President Sanguinetti, who defines himself as agnostic, generated several debates and confrontations of varied intensity. First, the legislative body of the city reasoned that the cross, as a religious symbol, should not be present in public. Religion was a private issue.

During an interim in the debate, the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Uruguay sent a letter to Montevideo's mayor donating the cross as a monument and specifying that it should remain in its original public place. There were various sides to this polemical issue, especially among Catholic Churches, which even among themselves valued different visions for the monument.

After the Church's donation, the National Parliament intervened, starting yet another long debate that cut across political parties and showed, for the first time in decades, the public presence of the Freemasonry. Freemason affiliation surfaced in the political parties of parliament or with public communications in the local press. Parliament decided that the cross should remain in its public place as a commemoration of the Pope's visit and 'in honour of the designated Head of State.' The bill draft for this decision stated that the cross would stay in its place as a commemorative monument of a historical fact and not as 'a religious symbol nor adhesion of the State to a particular religion.'

Even after this legal decision, the controversy continued, especially in newspaper opinion-pieces and editorial sections. A particularly interesting editorial appeared in the *El Día* newspaper on 4 April 1987, titled 'The Cross Issue. Everything in Place.' In the editorial, the writer expressed surprise over the multitude that gathered for the Pope's visit. In a country with a long-standing secular tradition, the writer affirmed that the 'natural place' of religious expression was in the 'private' spaces. Then the writer appealed to certain 'essential values' of the 'national identity,' suggesting as a solution to the controversy that the monument relocate to ecclesiastical territory – away from public space.

The Great Mastery of the Grand Lodge of Masonry in Uruguay also participated in the polemic, maintaining that:

[...] it is in any way acceptable the exhibition in the public spaces of a religious symbol which congregates around it only a part of Uruguayan society and therefore it cannot be imposed on the rest of the population.³

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the reverse process had occurred through the removal of all religious symbols from hospitals and public institutions, in a process known as 'the crucifix removal.' Now, debate about returning religious artifacts to the public sphere stretched on, with all legislators participating and often taking personal positions

over their party's positions. In response, charges surfaced in the curia claiming wrongful expression, making valuations like 'the Republic will have gone backwards in its secular (and national) traditions.'⁴ As a senator of the governing party affirmed, opinions like this were common and controversial: 'I don't think that it is an unedifying spectacle for a liberal and secular country like ours, that in civic audience, on the public streets the symbol of a Church is erected.'⁵ There were also people who cataloged the monument as a 'serious setback,' asking themselves, 'but what does it mean, the Catholic Uruguay?'⁶

The Chamber of Senators approved the monument, a decision that then proceeded to the Chamber of Deputies, where polemical issues resurfaced: the place of religion in public and private, the relationship between Church and State, conceptions of laicism, pluralism, tolerance, national identity, and national values.

Deputy Asiaín took the following position on the matter:

The story of this and other crosses is not quite innocent [...] Plain and simple, the cross dogma and this attempted homage are today nonsense. To insist on its maintaining is to pretend to close or offending the eyes of those who have managed to surpass spiritual obscurantism in which a big part of humanity is already immersed. This attitude is also an act of arrogance (because it is clear) that this cross was conceived and placed to stay.⁷

Deputy Fau added:

A Uruguayan Head of State cannot promote measures that imply damage to the principle of '*laïcité*' and remitting to the mason condition of Manuel Oribe, founder of the National Party [one of the historical, political parties in Uruguay] said, 'Did not have the cross as a symbol, but a compass, a square, a spoon, a level, a plumb line,' concluding: 'seventy years of peaceful and tolerant coexistence end now at a point of discord in Uruguayan society.'⁸

Finally, National Parliament sanctioned by majority rule that the cross will remain at the site of the papal mass. After this decision, rumors started circulating that the architects who participated in the design of the Pope's platform built the cross as a permanent addition to this public space.

While the controversy over the cross monument was pervasive and heated, 7 years later, another religious statue was erected in a public space without sparking any debate. The statue was in honor of Iemanjá, the divinity of Afro-Brazilian worship. It was unveiled on the coast of Montevideo, facing out toward the sea, as noted by a priest of the Afro-Brazilian religion.⁹ This statue's installation was so lacking in controversy that the public seemed to accept it as an administrative fact.

In 2005, not long after the death of Pope John Paul II, the president of Uruguay arranged to move a statue of the Pope from Catholic Church property to public space, at the foot of the cross connected to the earlier controversy.

Once again, controversy over bringing a religious artifact into the public sphere ensued. The Federation of Evangelical Churches in Uruguay made a declaration through a public letter to the president of the Republic, stating:

We are in a secular State, from which we cannot mention our disconformity with the fact, considering it a violation of the spirit of respect in the secular context all Uruguayans want to

live. Religious symbols outside of the own lands of their respective churches or institutions and placed in public spaces threaten against freedom of thought and State laicism, undermining social coexistence subtly but in depth.¹⁰

The monuments discussed here sparked different reactions. The monument to Iemanjá did not present any concern over religious occupation of public space, but the other two monuments connected to Catholicism were extremely controversial. Because the Catholic monuments were controversial and the other religious monument was not, resistance to religion entering the public sphere is likely because of anticlerical sentiments more than anti-religious ones. In fact, in 2017, another Catholic monument was considered for the public space. The monument would have been a statue of the Virgin Mary, but after deliberating for more than a year, the Montevideo legislature voted against the statue. This situation was much like that of the papal cross and the statue of the Pope, the primary argument being that religion cannot have a presence in the public space.

Cultural manifestations

While public expression of religions is still a contested practice in Uruguay, especially concerning permanent additions to the city as with monuments, religion has begun to surface in popular culture. Cultural expressions of religion have shown up in Carnival, specifically in *murgas*.

A *murga* is a musical theater group that delivers social criticism through singing and acting. *Murgas* may have developed from similar groups in Cadiz, Spain, though *murgas* have evolved beyond other comparable groups in their expressions of melody, wardrobe, and overall artistic presentation. A popular belief is that the Uruguayan Carnival is the longest in the world, as these groups perform around the city for the entirety of February in order to prepare for a competition in the final days of Carnival. This is a public competition coordinated with the State at the departmental level, meaning the State authorities of Montevideo preside over it.

Humor, political criticism, social criticism, philosophy, and other thoughtful topics are a part of *murgas*. *Murgas* rarely address religious topics, except to satirize neo-Pentecostalism as it is portrayed in mass media or to address the position of a leading religious figure. While religion is not a focal point of *murgas*, the Carnival of 2007 deviated from this norm: two *murgas* referred to religious issues. One focused on an already legendary figure – a priest who had died 2 years previously, who ministered to outsiders, and who worked to dignify the lives of people living in this impoverished settlement. The other *murga* was immediately out of the ordinary with its religion-based title, ‘The Faith.’ The *murga*, though stepping away from traditional content and even bringing religion into the public sphere, was well received by the city. The *murga* directly reflected on the role of faith in secular Uruguay.

Here are some excerpts from their performance:

A human being vastly alone

Lighting up as he can with the poor little light remedied with its faith

Huge nothingness.

The hostile, nontransferable world,
painful down the air, which is known,
it is less and less friendly.

A human being looking for comfort in the idea,
claiming the possibility,
begging for the existence of an order,
of something
that explains what is inexplicable
that answers and calms down,
that helps us sleep,
and then, waking up
and then, to go on,
and then to change.

A human being vastly alone before God
Each one with its soul
And each one with its faith
With a sip of hope
Without our skin weighing
As every human
Has learned to live
To the beat of the left side
As an obstinate oil lamp

While the *murga* does not directly address the church or any specific form of religion, faith is nonetheless an unusual topic in Uruguayan Carnival performances. This

performance is notable in its uniqueness and is important as an example of religion coming into the public space through popular culture. In addition, the performance approached faith with deep respect, not as social satire, which made its acceptance by Carnival spectators that much more a novelty. The acceptance of this performance likely indicates that a large part of the population held similar views on faith but did not have an avenue to publicly express them so directly.

Christmas

In 2016, Christmas brought another novelty in the Uruguayan treatment of religion. Catholics displayed seasonal posters in their windows or on their balconies. These posters depicted a nativity scene. Underneath Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, the poster said: 'Christmas with Jesus.'

Previously, Catholics had not displayed personal beliefs outside of their homes and in view of common city spaces. The Uruguayan cardinal (the second one in the Catholic Church history) inspired this phenomenon in a public statement on Uruguayan *laïcité*:

I like to say that we are a poor and austere Church. We do not have many means, we are not a powerful lobby.

At the same time, we are a free Church. We do not have bonds and we have learned to be part of this pluralistic society where we say our word with simplicity.

We understand laicism as a healthy diversity in mutual respect, in the contribution of all of us to create a more fair, free and human society. The dialog and the reconciliation between believers and non-believers, between the different Christian communities, and the distinct religions, it is a benefit to our country that we are always called to increase.¹¹

His message was clear: the Catholic Church should not mix with the political power of the State. Instead, the Church should express itself in local interactions with people. And so Cardinal Sturla promoted these posters, which had high visibility outside of houses and apartments in Montevideo.

This phenomenon of bringing religion into the public space once again ignited debates. There were strong stances against displaying the posters within public view: the argument was that the country's secularism made these displays inappropriate, even if the posters were technically located in private spaces. Some expressed neutrality regarding the social significance of these posters, and even some without religious affiliations defended the Catholics' right to free public expression.

The debate continued when President Tabaré Vázquez displayed the posters at his home. The president lives in his own private home, not on State property, and he is a renowned mason, with a wife and sons who have Catholic beliefs. While President Vázquez displayed the posters for personal reasons and on his private property, this choice generated another discussion of Uruguay's principle of *laïcité*, as people debated if the president had jeopardized the country's secularism by allowing his personal religious beliefs to be known to the public.

As an open conclusion

The goal of this article was to explore and consider the religious itinerary between public and private spaces in Uruguay. The article started by mentioning the institutional distinction between these spaces and a consequent, radical privatization of religion that attempted to diffuse conflict between the State and the Catholic Church from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century.

This radical privatization lasted until around 1960, when religion started to return to the public sphere. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Church renewed its interest in civil society, actively participating in politics of the time.

The debate – or the absence of debate – regarding the placement of religious monuments in central public spaces indicates distinct reactions about power loss and gives important social context to these discussions. In the debate involving the statue of Pope John Paul II, the only institutional resistance came from a religious party, though the more recent debate about the Virgin Mary statue primarily met resistance from the political system. Uruguay has changed slowly, making room for religion to occupy a few spaces in society, but there is still clear resistance to placing religious symbols in public spaces around the city.

The realities of the founding moments of Uruguayan *laïcité* have shifted slightly in today's *laïcité*, which shows small movements toward accepting religion in public space. The initial Uruguayan *laïcité* made a homogenizing effort in citizenship. Rama (1989) recognized this effort of hyper-integration as a model that did not welcome diversity. Diversity is becoming increasingly valued at the international and local levels, as demonstrated in laws concerned with safeguarding personal liberties in expression, like sexuality. Uruguay wants to promote diversity in many respects, including religion, and therefore tries to avoid public endorsements of a single religion. Religious diversity in Uruguay is undeniable (Da Costa, 2008). Uruguayan people tend to exhibit searches for transcendence in more visible ways (and less privately) than they did decades ago.¹² Tendencies for and against religion coexist, which explains the need to fight the presence of religious symbols in the public space. As Uruguay's practice of *laïcité* continues to evolve, it will be necessary to continue analyzing the changing relationship between religion and society.

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Notes

1. Jacobinism was one of the currents inside the French Revolution. It was imbued with a will to gather the social body, to unify and eliminate all individual or collective factors that expressed diversity: no heterogeneous body should be left in the Republic.

2. The Constitution of Uruguay has been modified eight times since 1919, in 1934, 1938, 1942, 1952, 1967, 1989, 1994, and 1996. Article 5 has never been modified. For comparative purposes, it is worth mentioning what happened in neighboring Argentina in this regard, to account for the different religious itinerary on both sides of the Rio de la Plata. The Constitution of the Republic of Argentina, last modified in 1994, includes the text in force since 1953 in Article 2, which states: 'The Federal Government maintains the Roman Catholic apostolic cult.' While in a margin of the Silver River the separation became effective and it was perpetuated in the time, in the other the bonding Catholic Church State, consecrated constitutionally.
3. Edition of 5 May 1987 *El Diario* of Montevideo and an edition of newspaper *La Mañana* of 6 May 1987.
4. Speech of Senator A. Traversoni del Partido Colorado, *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Senadores*, Tomo 305.
5. Speech of Senator C. Cigliutti del Partido Colorado, *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Senadores*, tomo 305.
6. Speech of Senator Rodríguez Camusso del Frente Amplio, *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Senadores*, tomo 305.
7. Cfr. Sessions diary of Senator Cambers, tomo 305.
8. Cfr. Sessions diary of Senator Cambers, tomo 305.
9. Monument devised and patriciated by A.T.E.E.U.M.D. (Asociación Templo Evangélico Espiritual Umbandista 'Menino Deus) under the presidency of Babalorisá Armando Ayala.
10. Letter from Uruguayan Churches Federation, dated 25 April 2005, to the Republic Presidente al Señor Presidente with the support of the following churches: Confraternidad de las Iglesias Evangélicas Menonitas, Congregación Evangélica Alemana de Montevideo, Ejército de Salvación, Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida, Iglesia Evangélica Valdense del Río de la Plata, Iglesia Metodista en el Uruguay, and Iglesia Pentecostal Naciente y Primera Iglesia Evangélica Armenia.
11. Speech of Catholic Cardinal Sturla Archbishop of Montevideo during the mass inauguration of his role as Cardinal. 15 March 2015. Available at: <http://www.arquidiocesis.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Entre-Todos-N.%C2%BA-350.pdf>Surla.
12. Cfr. Da Costa, Nestor. 2017. 'Creencia e increencia desde las vivencias cotidianas. Una mirada desde Uruguay.' *Estudos de Religião*. edição de número 3, vol. 31, Sao Paulo and Valentina Pereira Arena, Camila Brusoni, 'Individuos, instituciones y espacios de fe. El caso de los católicos en Uruguay' in: 'Visioni LatinoAmericane 17 (2017), Numero speciale: The Roman-Catholic experience in everyday life,' Trieste, EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste.

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Author biography

Néstor DA COSTA is Director of the Society and Religion Institute at Catholic University of Uruguay. He is a member of the National Researchers System of Uruguay. He was Co-PI of the international research Project 'The transformation of ived religión in urban Latin America: A study of contemporary Latin Americans experience of transcendence' supported by John Templeton Foundation (2016–2018). He was visiting fellow at Boston College Jesuit Institute (2017). He is former president of the Association of Social Scientist of Religion at MERCOSUR (2011–2013). He was international coordinator of Alfa Project of the European Union on Religion and Modernity in Europe and Latin America (2005–2008). He was a Fullbright Scholar at University of California at Santa Barbara on Religion, Pluralism, and Public Presence at United States (2005). Address: Universidad Católica del Uruguay, Av. 8 de Octubre 2738, 11600 Montevideo, Uruguay. Email: ndacosta@ucu.edu.uy