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Which Kind Of Relation Do Evangelicals Intend To Establish With The State In Mexico?

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Abstract

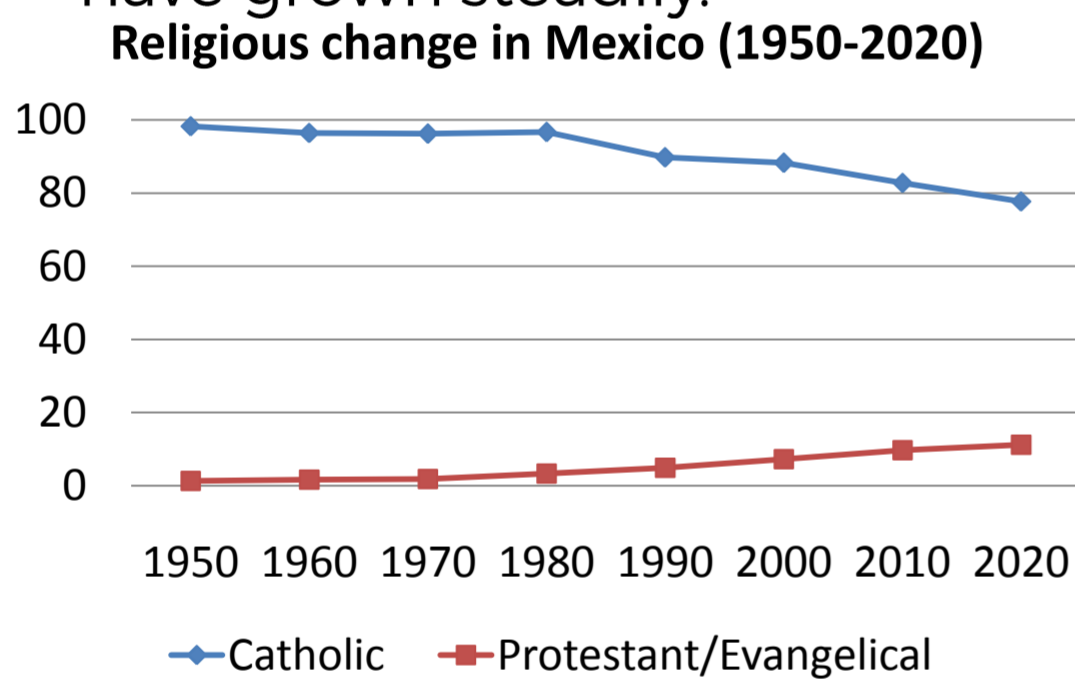
This poster defines and classifies the types of relations that, since 1992, Mexican Evangelicals intend to establish with the State.

Thesis statement

Based on a literature review and in a case study, it is proposed that Evangelicals in Mexico do not seek a unique model for state-church relations, but many. In the Pentecostal church analyzed, two models were identified: 1) a "multi-confessional" regime inspired by biblical theocracy, and 2) a secular regime with "less jurisdictional" and more "ultra-liberal" tendencies.

Introduction

- Do Evangelicals want to conquer the State?
- Traditionally, Mexico was an eminently Catholic country.
- However, in the past five decades, Evangelical groups have grown steadily.



Own elaboration based on INEGI (2005, 2010a, 2010b, 2021)..

- This religious change has worried some analysts because of the political intentions of Evangelicals.
- Evangelicals have become more involved in the public sphere in the last years.
- Some think that these churches will try to turn the Mexican secular regime into a confessional one with a conservative agenda.



Meeting of the President of Mexico with evangelical leaders to discuss the offer of mass media licenses to churches. The photo was taken from Forbes (2019).

- However, the label "Evangelical" encompasses a multiplicity of religious groups.
- Would it be accurate to assume that all of them have the same political intentions?

Theoretical framework

A. Typical political attitudes of Mexican Evangelical churches

- According to Carlos Garma-Navarro (2018a, pp. 356-358), Mexican Evangelicals are constituted by three kinds of churches: **Historical Protestantism**, **Pentecostals** and **Neopentecostals**.
- Pérez Guadalupe (2018, pp. 28-30) developed a classification of the most characteristic political attitudes of each of these churches.

Historical Protestantism

- They interpret the Gospel from a social perspective.
- Historically, they involved in educational tasks and in the defense of human rights.
- They supported the separation between the State and the churches in the XIX century.

Pentecostals

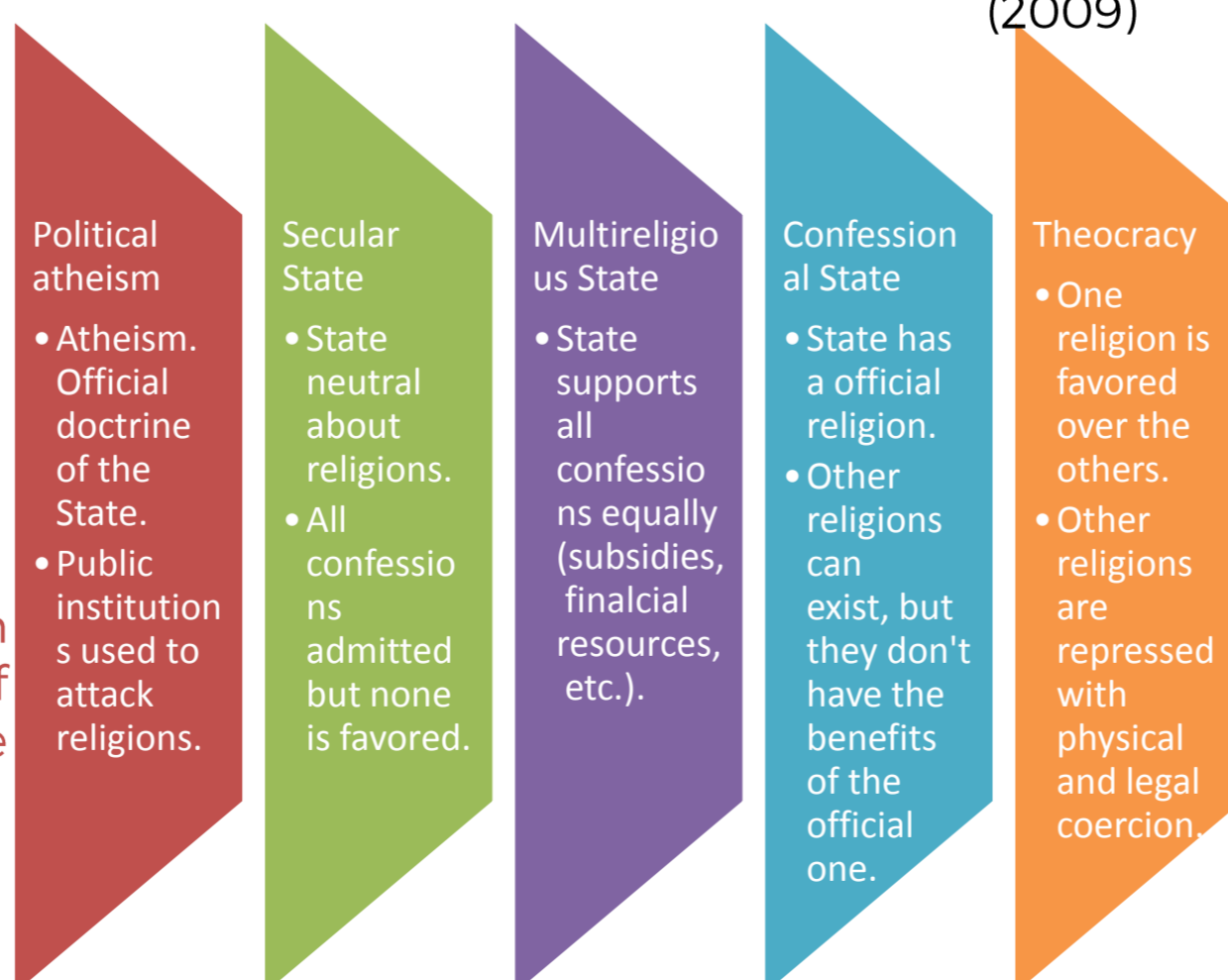
- They avoid to get interested in worldly matters because of their beliefs.
- They consider charitable activities as means subordinated to evangelization.

Neopentecostals

- They tend to get more interested in worldly issues such as political power or economic wealth.
- They are interested in appearing in the mass media and participating in political campaigns.

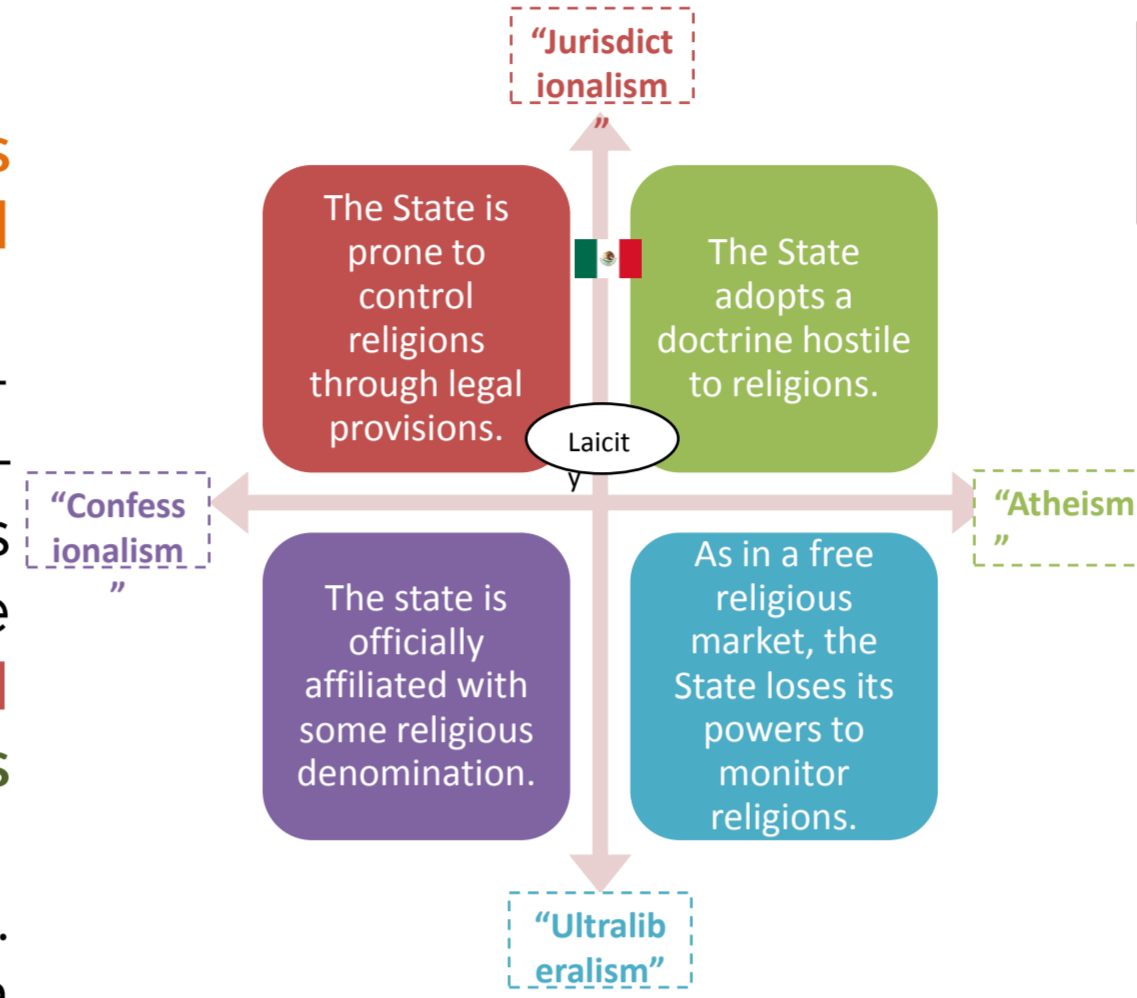
B. Ways to classify the relations between the State and religions

Typology by Paul Cliteur (2009)



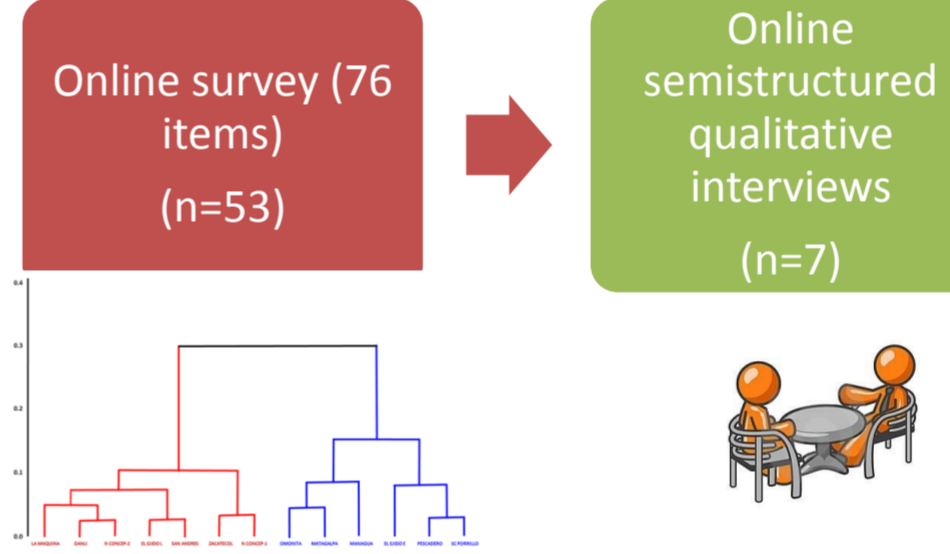
A variant between the multi-religious and the confessional state is the multi-confessional state. Blancarte (2011, p. 204) describes it as one in which increasingly influential religious minorities no longer limit themselves to seeking to suppress the historical privileges of the majority church. Instead, they fight and negotiate to acquire the same benefits.

Typology of Emile Poulat (seen in Blancarte, 2004, p. 18) in two Cartesian axes



Methodology

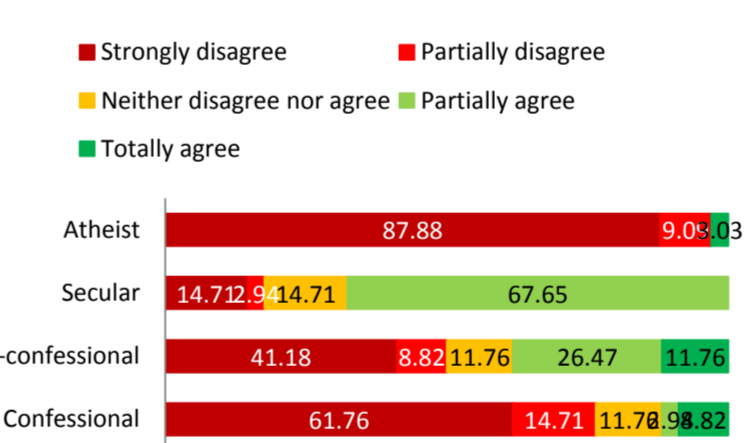
- Literature review.
- Case study in a Mexican Pentecostal church: the "Philadelphia Christian Church" (Hawley, 2021).
- In this research I used a mixed methods strategy with two phases:



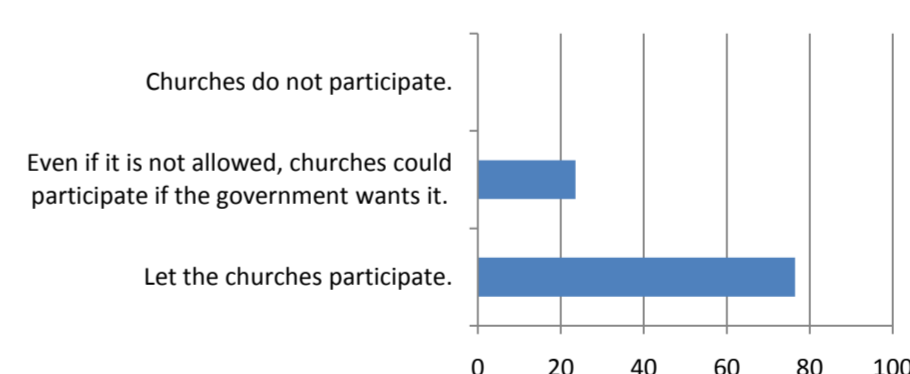
Results

Cluster 1: a "multi-confessional" regime inspired by biblical theocracy.

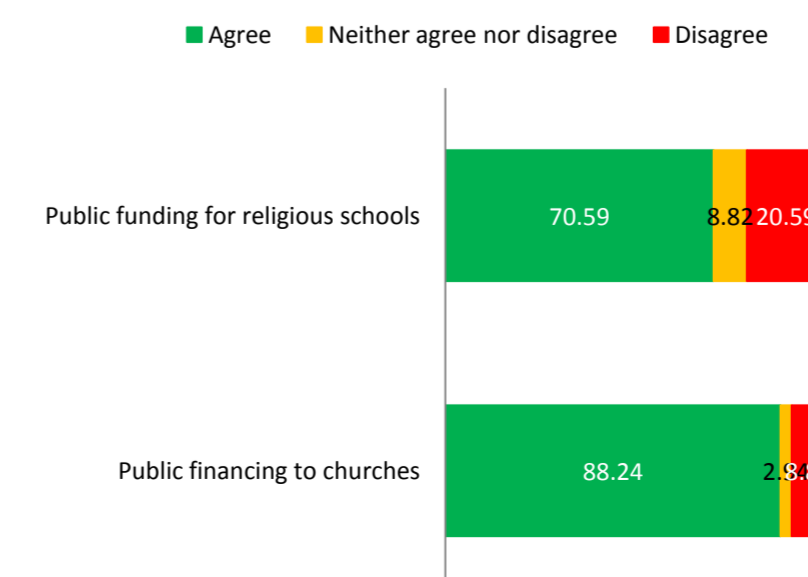
Model of state-church relations recognized in the Constitution



Regarding the possibility of churches participating in public policies, you prefer that...

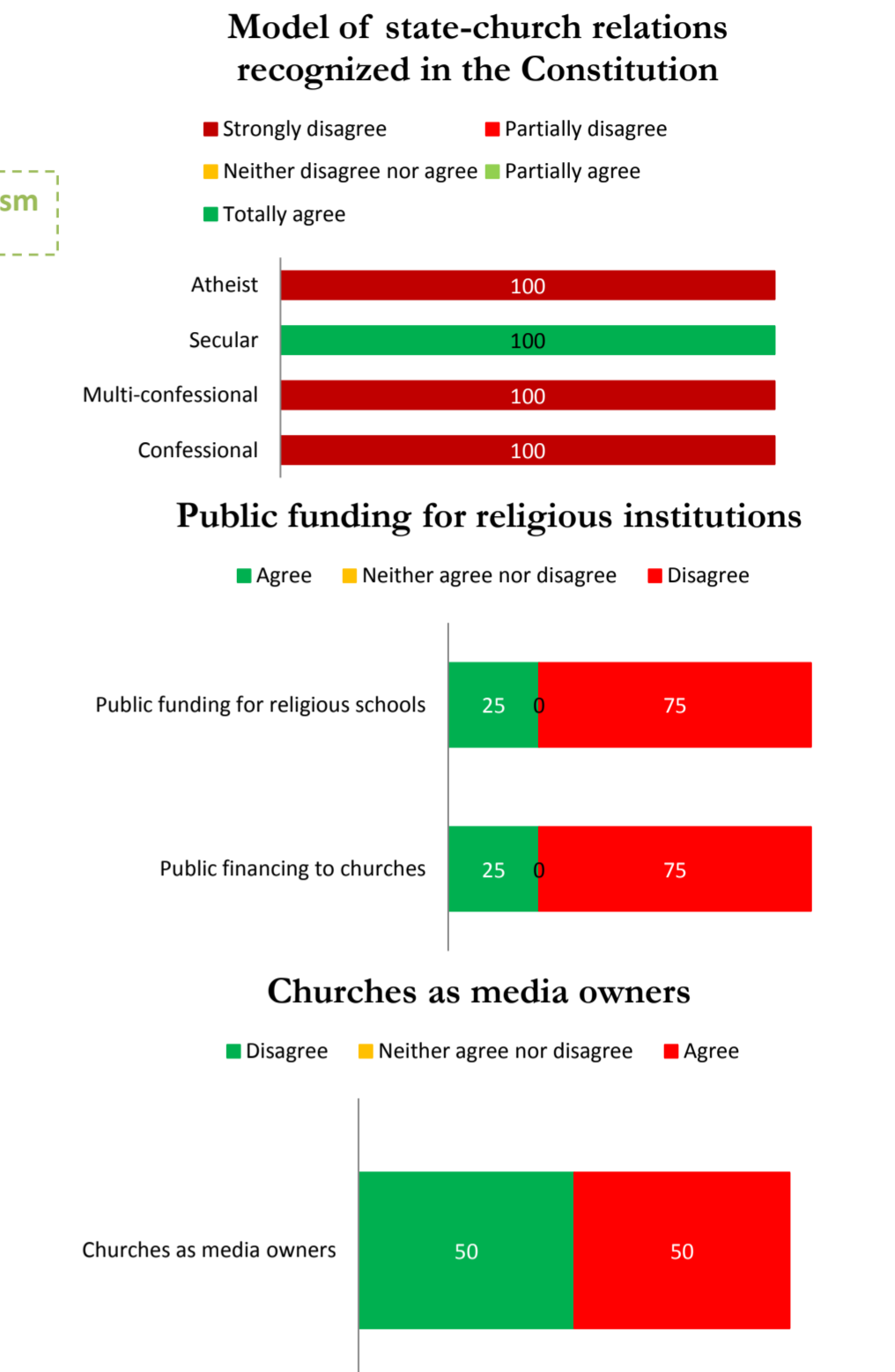


Public funding for religious institutions



Cluster 2: a secular regime with "less jurisdictional" and more "ultra-liberal" tendencies.

"In the Bible there is a verse where Jesus said 'Give Caesar what is Caesar's.' [...] So the tasks that the Church does and the tasks that the government does should not be related." Cluster 2 interviewee.



Conclusions

- Evangelical churches are extremely diverse, so they do not all have the same political intentions.
- Among Evangelical churches, there are different political attitudes, such as indifference, support to secular regimes, or the intention to get involved in electoral politics.
- Evangelical churches are internally diverse. In the "Philadelphia Christian Church", we find support for two different models of state-church relations: a "multi-confessional" one inspired by the Old Testament theocracy, and a secular one but with less state surveillance over the activities of the churches.

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