

## **Symbolic Violence and Religious Persecution in Latin America**

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Despite being a fundamental human right, there are serious violations against religious freedom in Latin America. In this regard, it's important to distinguish two concepts of violence. The distinction is based on the theory of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and the German legal doctrine, between "real violence" and "symbolic violence". In the current context of religious persecution especially in the Middle East and Africa, there has been a real genocide of Christians. Physical violence - we call it the "real violence" - is notorious and constant. This violence results in injury or death of the victim. On the other hand, symbolic violence is the process by which the class that dominates imposes its culture on the dominated. It is expressed by imposing "legitimate" and disguised constraints, with the internalization of the dominant culture. The subdued is not opposed to his oppressor, as he/she is not perceived as a victim of this process: on the contrary, the oppressed considers it a natural and inevitable situation. We find many examples of symbolic violence as we take these concepts to the right of religious freedom. One of them occurs when governments and social movements label everyone who thinks differently from them as 'fundamentalists'. This paper aims to analyze the right to religious freedom in some countries in Latin America, specifically Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Cuba, presenting some cases of real and symbolic violence to this right, with the purpose to increase the protection of religious freedom around Latin America.