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## ABSTRACT

### A QUANTATIVE STUDY TO DETERMINE IF A DIFFERENCE EXISTS IN PATTERNS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH WHEN CONTROLLED BY MAJOR WESTERN RELIGION

Cole, Ohanian, Riascos & Schmitz (2005), in an attempt to attribute Latin America's long-run economic performance to something besides culture, argued that when considering ethnic, language, and religion, "... Latin America is a Western region." Thus, it was reasonable to compare Latin America to a peer group of other Western market economies, and by holding culture constant, Cole et al. (2005) were presumably able to attribute differences in long-run economic performance to something besides culture.

The goal of my research was to determine if there was a difference in patterns of economic growth in the peer group of 22 nations and the 12 'Western' nations of Latin America, utilized by Cole et al. (2005), when controlled by major western religion. The literature makes a strong case that there are significant differences between the Protestant and the Catholic expressions of the Christian faith, and importantly, that these theological differences should make a temporal difference. I argued that not all western religions were the same in that [eternal] religious beliefs should make an [temporal] economic difference. Ultimately, the data failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between western religion adherence and the economic performance of a nation.