I'll Make You a Believer: The Impact of Religion and Partisanship on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in the US

Giulia Mariani (giulia.mariani@upf.edu)
Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Abstract
Despite the flourishing literature on morality policies in the US, the conditions under which religion influences policy output, such as its linkage to partisanship of state governments, have remained largely unexplored. Using the conceptual framework of “manifest” morality policies, this study explores the adoption of legislation in the field of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights. In particular, it concentrates on abortion, same-sex marriage and sexuality education in 49 US states over the period 1980-2014. The findings obtained through discrete-time Event History Analysis suggest that the adoption of these policies is strongly informed by religion. Firstly, the most prominent religious group in each state pushes policy output towards its values and, secondly, the religious fragmentation of the state shapes the influence of partisan control of the government on the probabilities of adopting legislation.

Keywords: religion, partisanship, morality policies, sexual and reproductive health rights, event history analysis, US