

Why the Philippines is the only country where divorce is illegal

Even by the standards of former Spanish colonies, **the Philippines** has extremely socially conservative laws. It is the only country in world, **bar the Vatican City**, to **outlaw** divorce (except for Muslims).

the Philippines 菲律宾

bar 除...外

the Vatican City 梵蒂冈城

outlaw 禁止; 取缔

Filipinos seem less conservative than the laws that govern them. More than half think divorce should be legal, according to surveys conducted in 2017 by Social Weather Stations (SWS), a **pollster**.

pollster 民意调查人

espouse 支持; 嫁娶

So why are Filipinos' views so poorly represented in national legislation? The explanation lies in an unfortunate mix of politics and faith. About three-quarters of Filipinos consider religion "very important", SWS found in 2018. A study the same year suggests that almost four in ten voters are likely to cast their **ballots** for a candidate **endorsed** by their church or religious movement.

ballot 投票

endorse 认可; 赞同

In recent years the **clout** of the Catholic church has diminished somewhat. But Catholics' declining influence over politics has been offset by the growing importance of various **Protestant** sects. Although only about 10% of Filipinos, or roughly 10m people, describe themselves as Protestants or **evangelicals**, their relative **fervour** makes them a political lobby to be reckoned with. They tend to **espouse** a literal interpretation of the Bible and so are fiercely opposed to divorce, same-sex marriage and abortion, says Jayeel Serrano Cornelio of Ateneo de Manila University.

clout 势力; 影响力

protestant 抗议的; 新教的

evangelical 福音派

fervor 热情; 炽热

Fierce religious opposition helped to delay by 13 years the passage of the law allowing the government to distribute *contraceptives*. The ongoing battle bodes ill for the bill to legalise divorce that is currently under consideration in Congress.

contraception 避孕

contraceptive 避孕药