

Religious Media, Conversion and its Socioeconomic Consequences: The Rise of Pentecostals in Brazil

Marcela Mello
with Giulia Buccione

Brown University

Motivation

- All world religions endorse certain behaviors and uphold certain social norms
 - ▶ Marital norms, fertility
 - ▶ Political candidates and parties
- Despite recent advance, we still know little about the causal effects of religion on behaviors
- Difficult to study the causal effect of religion on behaviors
 - 1) Ingrained to culture and institutions
 - 2) Endogeneity in affiliation and participation

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- Despite recent advance, we still know little about the causal effects of religion on behaviors
- Difficult to study the causal effect of religion on behaviors
 - 1) Ingrained to culture and institutions → Fast-growing new religious movements
 - 2) Endogeneity in affiliation and participation → Exogenous shocks to the probability of conversion

This Paper

We study the rise of Pentecostal in Brazil

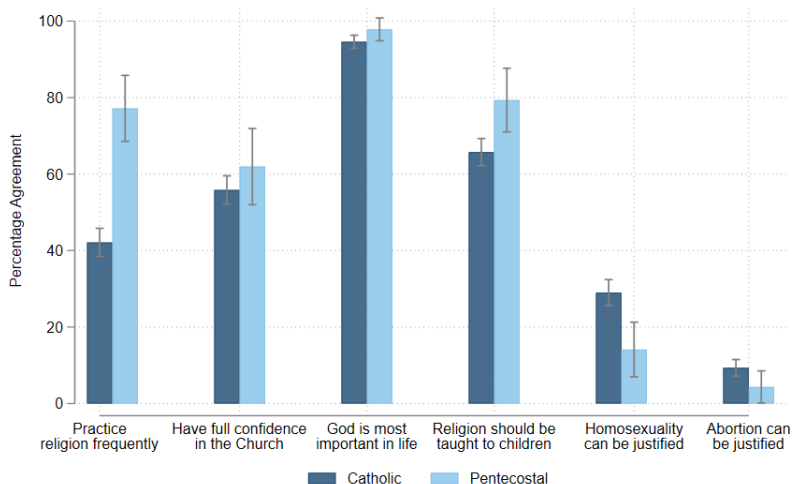
- One of the world's fastest-growing religious movement
 - ▶ Increased by 400% between 1991 and 2010 in Brazil
 - ▶ From 3% of the population in 1980, to 16.8% in 2010
 - ▶ Foster conservative values, particularly for women
- Quasi-random variation in exposure to religious media
 - ▶ Bankruptcy of a channel in a very concentrated → unique opportunity
 - ▶ Change of ownership of a TV channel → religious content

Question

- 1) Can *religious media* affect religious affiliation?
- 2) If so, is this change in religious affiliation followed by changes in behaviors?

Pentecostal's values

► Table

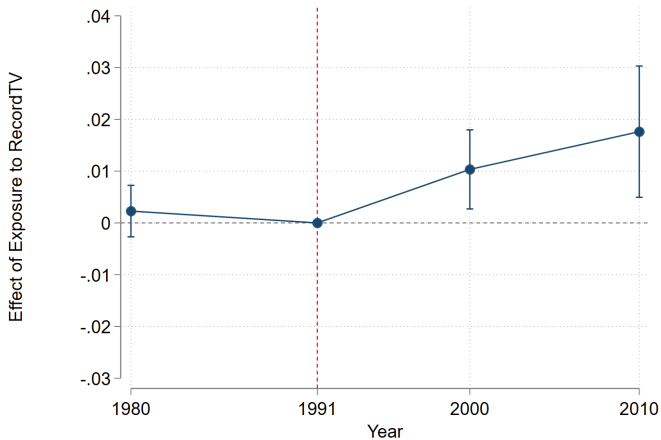


Baseline Empirical Strategy

- We compare the evolution of the outcomes of interest in regions exposed to religious content to those in regions not exposed to religious content
- We use only RecordTV's transmitters before the change of ownership
 - ▶ Placement of transmitters was exogenous to the expansion strategy of the church
 - ▶ Media market is very **concentrated** → unique opportunity to buy a TV channel
- Assumption: In the absence of changes in the content of the TV channel, the evolution of the outcomes of interest for exposed area would have been the same as for non-exposed areas

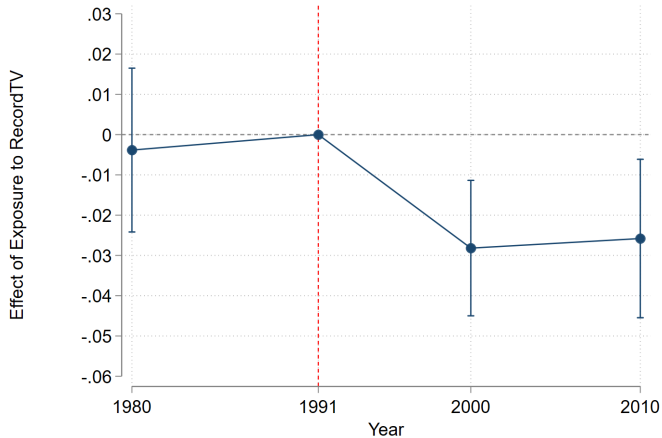
Main Results

Share of Pentecostals



Main Results

Female Labor Force Participation



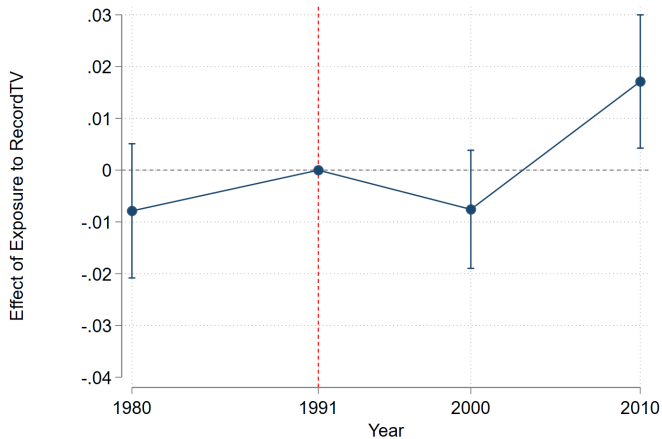
► Table

► Pre-trend

► Other

Main Results

Male Labor Force Participation



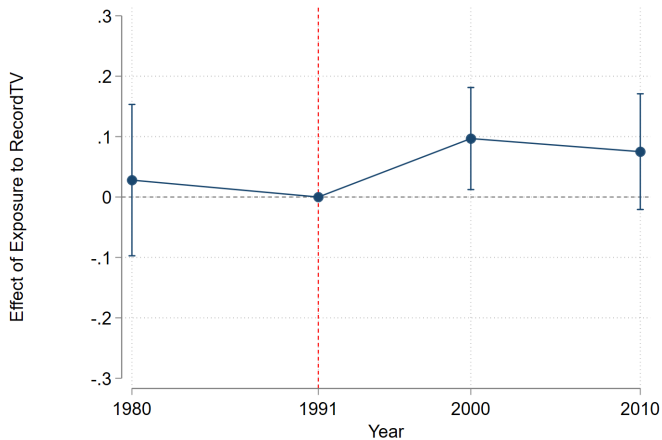
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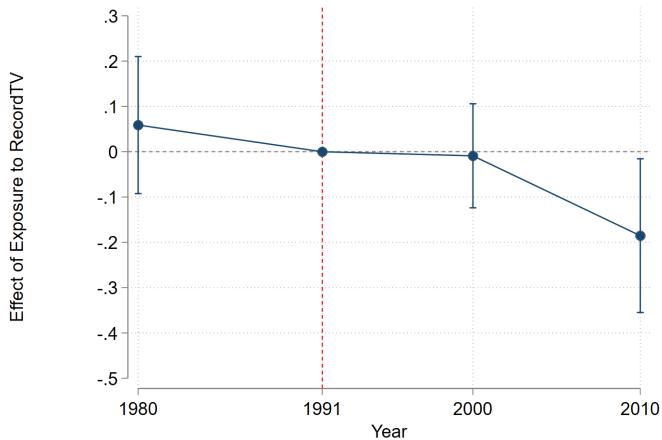
Main Results

Total Fertility



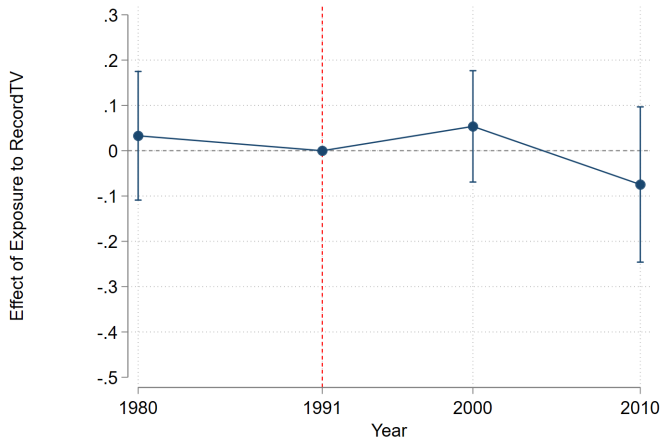
Main Results

Girls Education



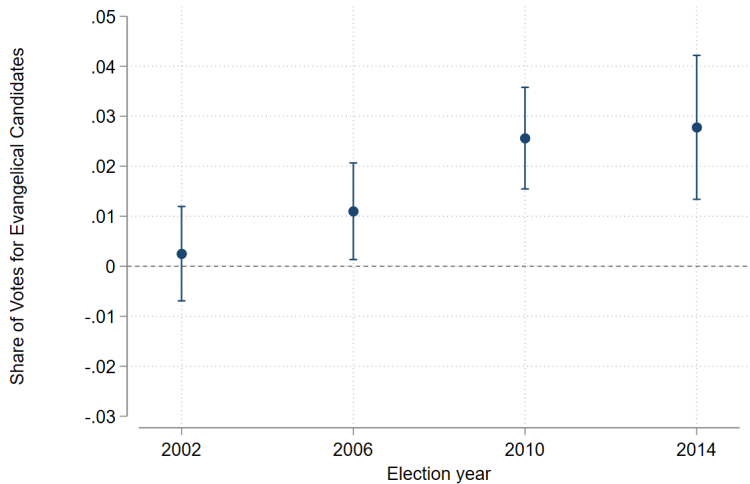
Main Results

Boys Education



Results

Voting



Conclusion

- Exposure to RecordTV increases adherence to the Pentecostal church
- Results suggest that the expansion of Pentecostalism lead to more conservative behaviors
- This paper emphasizes how the impact of technology is channeled through social norms and religious practices.
- Study of social norms has to account for the possibility of rapid change, as social movements can leverage changing technology to further their goals and quickly reshape the social landscape.

Thank you!

Contact: marcela_mello_silva@brown.edu