

Pornography and moral attitudes

Eric Woodrum

To cite this article: Eric Woodrum (1992) Pornography and moral attitudes, Sociological Spectrum, 12:4, 329-347, DOI: [10.1080/02732173.1992.9982007](https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.1992.9982007)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.1992.9982007>



Published online: 30 Jul 2010.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 57



View related articles [↗](#)

PORNOGRAPHY AND MORAL ATTITUDES

ERIC WOODRUM

North Carolina State University

Previous research identifies two dissimilar strains of anti-pornography sentiment: conservative moral traditionalism and feminism. Spokespersons for each of these sources of opposition to pornography have achieved some visibility in the media and political arena, but their general level of support is undetermined. This study analyzes the underpinnings of attitudes toward pornography in the public with data from a citywide survey. Initially, five demographic factors, five religiosity factors, three political indicators, and sexual restrictiveness are examined as pornography attitude predictors using bivariate and multivariate techniques. Women and elderly, married, and less educated persons are most condemning of pornography as are religious traditionalists, political conservatives, and persons with restrictive attitudes toward sexuality. These patterns are analyzed further with the estimation of a causal model, gender interaction terms, and a decomposition of the predictor variables' effects. Although women are notably more opposed to pornography than men, there are no substantial gender interaction effects, and gender effects on pornography are largely direct.

Pornography and its control continue to be bitterly contested and have been the subject of considerably recent controversy (Gallup 1986; New York Times News Service 1990a). Efforts to restrict pornography are routinely led by morally conservative forces, including conservative political and religious leaders and organizations. They champion a restrictive attitude toward sexuality outside of marriage and condemn pornography as undermining traditional values and family relations (Mauss and McKelvy 1975). Recently, feminist critics of pornography received publicity when they led protests against sexually explicit portraits of women and won legal battles against representatives of that industry. This suggests a distinctly nontraditional basis for anti-pornography sentiments

An earlier version of this article was presented at the annual meeting of the Religious Research Association, Virginia Beach, Virginia, November 1990.

I gratefully acknowledge methodological consultation received from Dr. Cathy Zimmer and from an anonymous reviewer.

that might apply to politically liberal women especially. The prevalence of feminist derived opposition to pornography in the general public is unknown.

As emphasized in these feminist critiques and confirmed by social science research, most pornographic commercial material depicts females for the arousal and gratification of male consumers. Given the overtly gender-specific character of pornography and its market, it is warranted to search for gender-specific influences on peoples' attitudes toward pornography.

This study seeks to answer a series of questions about attitudes toward pornography. To what extent do political and religious conservatism affect dispositions toward control of pornography, and how widespread is feminist-based opposition as compared to more traditional bases of opposition? Do these influences remain when the effects of relevant background variables like education and marital status are controlled, and are there significant gender-specific influences on attitudes toward pornography?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Jelen (1986) and Swatos (1988) have written on the strange collaboration occasioned by pornography opposition. Religious conservatives and feminists agree that pornography is detrimental and should be prohibited. These more typically antagonistic ideological and political constituencies arrive at anti-pornography positions via dissimilar premises and logic.

Jelen (1986) uses General Social Survey data to assess religious fundamentalist versus feminist rationales for anti-pornography. His findings reinforce the conclusion that fundamentalists are concerned that pornography contributes to the breakdown of morals. Feminists, instead, are concerned that pornography exploits women and contributes to sexual violence against them.

Swatos studied anti-pornography activists and found cultural fundamentalism rooted in religious fundamentalism as most important for explaining their behavior. One of his most striking findings was near unanimity among his sample of activists that a "living Satan" is directly involved in pornography.

These studies suggest that conservative religious orientations may underlie some persons' motivations to prohibit por-

nography (i.e., Falwell 1981). Such beliefs regularly entail traditional, restrictive attitudes toward sexuality offended by what so oriented persons regard as obscenity. Swatos reports (1988, p. 79) that majorities of his sample of anti-pornography activists agreed sex education (67%), abortion (93%), and liberalism (62%), as well as pornography (96%), contribute "to our society's current problems."

A very different basis for anti-pornography concern derives from a particular variety of feminism. As was documented in studies for the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography (1970), most commercial pornography depicts females for the sexual arousal and gratification of male heterosexual consumers. Some feminists object to pornography on the ground that it promotes sexist images of women, which contribute to violence and subjugation of women (Bart and Jozsa 1980; Morgan 1980).

As Jelen (1986, pp. 97, 101) notes, religious fundamentalists and feminists have "incompatible preferences on other issues" including abortion and women's rights. Indeed the current feminist movement has championed nonrestrictive sexuality and abortion rights.

These considerations indicate that attitudes toward sexuality might be critical in distinguishing these two varieties of pornography opposition: feminism versus cultural conservatism. If that is the case, it would be consistent with research indicating attitudes toward sexuality are critical for abortion attitudes. Anti-abortion attitudes have been found to rest significantly on both traditional, restrictive attitudes toward sexuality and pro-life commitments to protect the sanctity of the unborn (Benin 1985; Jelen 1984; Granberg 1982; McCutcheon 1987). There is little room to doubt that the feminist strain of opposition to pornography has been politically and legally consequential (Dworkin 1980; Gever and Hall 1980; *Newsweek* 1985; New York Times News Service 1990b). But it is not yet clear to what extent feminist opposition, versus cultural conservatism, contributes to anti-pornography attitudes in the general public.

This study attempts to answer that question, among others. First a causal model for attitudes toward pornography in the general public will be developed. The model builds on fundamental demographic variables, including gender, as well as indicators of religiosity, political orientation, and sexual restric-

tiveness. The model and data will then be analyzed further to evaluate possible gender-specific dynamics of anti-pornography attitudes. Finally, a decomposition of effects is reported to directly access how gender, religiosity, and sexual restrictiveness affect pornography attitudes.

SAMPLE AND METHODS

The data for this study were collected in Raleigh, North Carolina, during the fall of 1984. A stratified random sample of the city's adult population was drawn from census tracts across the city. Twenty-five individuals participated in contacting respondents ($N = 378$) and collecting data.

Comparisons between the sample parameters and the city population suggest the sample is highly representative. For instance, the residents of this moderate-sized (150,000+) city are 73.1% white and 25.1% black; the sample is 71.9% white and 26.4% black. City residents older than 18 years have a median age of 33.4 as compared to the sample's median age of 35 years. The city population is 52% female and 48% male, and the sample is evenly divided between females and males.

The demographic information collected includes gender, race, age, marital status, and education.¹ These variables are included because previous research indicates that they are related to pornography attitudes and for that reason they are appropriate control variables to employ when examining the effects of other possible influences such as varieties of conservatism.

Respondents were asked about five aspects of religiosity and three indicators of political orientation. The religion items include church membership and type, religious self-identification, worship frequency, private devotional behavior, and frequency of watching or listening to religious programs on television or radio.² The political indicators are general self-

¹Demographic variables are coded as follows: Sex: men = 0, women = 1; Race: blacks = 0, whites = 1; Age in years; Marital status: single, divorced = 0, married, widowed = 1; Education in years.

²Religiosity variables are coded as follows: Religious self-identification: not religious = 0, liberal = 1, moderate = 2, conservative = 3; Church type: no church membership = 0, member of one of the following liberal denominations or faiths

identification from liberal to conservative, party registration, and partisan identification.³

Respondents were asked about several controversial issues, and political and moral attitudes from which various scales were constructed. Three items are used to measure restrictive attitudes toward sexuality.⁴

The fully endogenous dependent variable is measured by asking respondents the strength of their agreement or disagreement with the statement "Pornography is harmful and should be outlawed."⁵

(Episcopalian, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, Unity, Jewish) = 1, member of one of the following moderate churches (Methodist, Lutheran, Christian Church, Moravian, Dutch Reform, Protestant or Christian unspecified) = 2, member of one of the following conservative churches or faiths (Baptist, Fundamentalist, Evangelical, The Way, Orthodox, Mormon, Islamic) = 3; Worship: never = 0, rarely = 1, a few times each year = 2, at least once per month = 3, weekly = 4; Religious TV or radio listening frequency: never = 0, occasionally = 1, several times each week = 2, daily = 3.

³Political variables are coded as follows: Political self-identification: liberal = 0, moderate = 1, conservative = 2; Party registration: not registered = 0, registered Independent or minor party = 1, registered Democrat = 2, registered Republican = 3; Party identification: strong Democrat = 0, not strong Democrat = 1, Independent = 2, not strong Republican = 3, strong Republican = 4.

⁴Sexual restrictiveness scale: summated index responses to following statements: "Sexual relations outside marriage are immoral." "Homosexuality is immoral and should be prosecuted by law." "Abortion should be outlawed except for rape, incest, or threat to the mother's life." Response codes for each statement: strongly disagree = 0, disagree = 1, uncertain = 2, agree = 3, strongly agree = 4.

⁵The pornography statement is technically double barreled. Agreement with the statement logically requires acceptance of both the judgment that pornography has harmful effects *and* it should be outlawed. Still, I believe it an appropriate indicator for theoretical and practical empirical reasons. Theoretically it is defensible in that the indicator merely makes explicit a presumption of opposition by many who condemn pornography to the extent of supporting its legal suppression. That attitude is routinely premised on the conviction that exposure to the offensive material has detrimental effects intrinsically, morally, or politically. The alleged harmful effects are the justification for infringing first amendment rights by restricting pornography (Copp and Wendell 1983). The indicators can be defended on practical grounds quite apart from the preceding rationale on conceptual grounds. The majority of the sample agrees with the statement, suggesting that relatively few respondents in fact object to its logical presumption. In the same vein I acknowledge that the statement does not define "pornography." Rather that term and concept are left to the respondent to interpret. Less than 8% of the sample did not respond to the pornography indicator. This suggests the dependent variable indicator is meaningful to the sample.

FINDINGS

The sample as a whole condemns pornography. The model response to the statement "Pornography is harmful and should be outlawed" is "strongly agree," adopted by 39.8% of the sample. An additional 17.2% agree and 15.2% are uncertain. Only 19.5% disagree and 8.3% strongly disagree with the statement.

Table 1 reports means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlation coefficients with pornography opposition for the independent variables examined. Women are more likely than men to object to pornography. The same is true of older respondents, married or widowed persons, and those with less formal education. Race is not significantly correlated with pornography attitude at the bivariate level in this sample.

Each of the religiosity variables is positively associated with pornography opposition at the .001 statistical significance level. Frequency of listening to religious television or radio pro-

TABLE 1. Variable Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations with Pornography Attitude

	Mean	Standard deviations	Bivariate correlations
Demographic			
Gender	.504	.501	.268***
Race	.762	.426	-.036
Age	38.9	15.3	.233***
Marital status	.628	.484	.138**
Education	14.9	2.58	-.257***
Religious			
Self-identification	1.85	.84	.306***
Church type	1.59	1.25	.328***
Worship	2.48	1.37	.338***
Private piety	1.63	1.08	.312***
Rel. TV-radio	.79	.83	.355***
Political			
Self-identification	1.06	.70	.237***
Party registration	1.87	.83	.045
Party identification	1.52	1.34	.088
Sexual restrictiveness scale	8.70	3.62	.568***

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

grams is the strongest correlate ($r = .355$) among the religiosity indicators. The only political variable significantly correlated with pornography attitudes is political self-identification ($r = .237$). Predictably, those who identify themselves as political liberals are less condemning toward pornography than self-identified political moderates or conservatives.

The strongest bivariate correlate of pornography attitudes is the sexual restrictiveness scale ($r = .568$). Respondents who hold the most traditional moral attitudes about sex are more likely to consider pornography harmful and warranting legal restrictions.

The findings reported in Table 1, taken with those in Table 2, were used when selecting variables for the causal model discussed below. In Table 2, two series of regressions are summarized. In the left panel of this table, regression coefficients are reported for equations in which the entire set of five demographic, five religious, and three political variables are introduced in blocks, and finally the sexual restrictiveness scale. The final equation statistically predicts 43.7% of the variation in pornography attitudes among the sample.

In the right panel of Table 2, the same series of regressions is summarized using a reduced set of independent variables. These equations utilize two fewer religious and political indicators, yet statistically predict 42.6% of the variations in pornography attitudes among the sample.⁶ Because the more parsimonious model is nearly as effective at predicting the dependent variable, this simpler model is used below.

The strength of gender as a predictor of attitudes toward pornography is evident throughout this analysis. As noted by the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography (1970) and the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography (1986), most of this material graphically portrays female subjects for male customers' enjoyment, even if objectionable to some women. For this reason it is understandable that gender is significantly

⁶The coefficients of determination (R^2) for the simplified model (columns five and six) are incrementally larger than their counterparts in the full model (columns one and two). This perplexing detail results from methodologically conservative listwise deletion of missing cases. The full model includes more variables, resulting in slightly fewer entirely complete cases. Only the cases with complete data are utilized for the two correlation matrices from the regression coefficients reported in the table.

TABLE 2. Regression Summaries for Pornography Opposition with Demographic, Religious, and Political Variables, Sexual Restrictiveness Scale: Full and Simplified Models, Beta Coefficients

	Full model				Simplified model			
Demographic								
Gender	.239***	.177***	.207***	.260***	.238***	.180***	.197***	.233***
Race	.013	.153**	.127*	.100	.011	.148**	.131*	.100
Age	.224***	.179**	.201***	.141**	.229***	.182**	.187**	.126*
Marital status	.016	-.080	-.089	-.096	.010	-.081	-.090	-.092
Education	-.226***	-.173**	-.157**	-.051	.226***	-.168**	-.161	-.063
Religious								
Self-identification		.134*	.066	.028		.156**	.100	.043
Church type		.107	.114	.039		.142**	.141**	.054
Worship		.117	.132	.102				
Private piety		-.007	-.023	-.104				
Rel. TV-radio		.222***	.211**	.129*		.263***	.249***	.140*
Political								
Self-identification			.103	.058			.115	.040
Party registration			-.059	-.075				
Party identification			.064	.001				
Sexual restrictiveness scale				.454***				.427***
R ²	.176***	.309***	.323***	.437***	.177***	.310***	.318***	.426***

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

related to dispositions toward pornography and it may be that various other influences on pornography attitudes operate differently for each gender. This issue now becomes the focus of the analysis.

Two methodological strategies were employed to explore the role of gender in pornography attitudes. First, a total of nine gender interaction (cross-product) terms were constructed in which gender of respondent (coded: men = 0, women = 1) was multiplied with each of the other nine predictor variables. These were added to the regression equation after the four significant predictors identified in Table 2 were entered into the equation: gender (main effect), age, religious television or radio, and sexual restrictiveness.

The initial strategy directly assesses the strength of potential gender interaction effects on pornography attitudes. The increment in explained variation (R^2), is only 2% over the level of explained variation without any gender interaction terms. Substantively, this is a null result for the omnibus test of gender interaction effects on pornography attitudes.

A second strategy to identify and assess possible gender-specific patterns affecting pornography attitudes is presented below. That second approach builds on a general causal model for pornography attitudes that is to be developed first using the entire sample.

The strength and statistical significance of the partial regression coefficients reported in Table 2 are affected greatly by other variables in the equations. Note, for instance, that race is not statistically significant when only demographic variables are included (columns one and five). However, whites are shown to be more condemning of pornography than blacks when religious and political variables are introduced but prior to the inclusion of the sexual restrictiveness scale (see columns two and three, or columns six and seven). The relationships among these variables affecting pornography attitudes are clearly complex.

This pattern of findings suggests that developing and testing a path model may be a productive analytical strategy. Figure 1 is a causal model for pornography attitudes using the variables identified above as most consequential. The five demo-

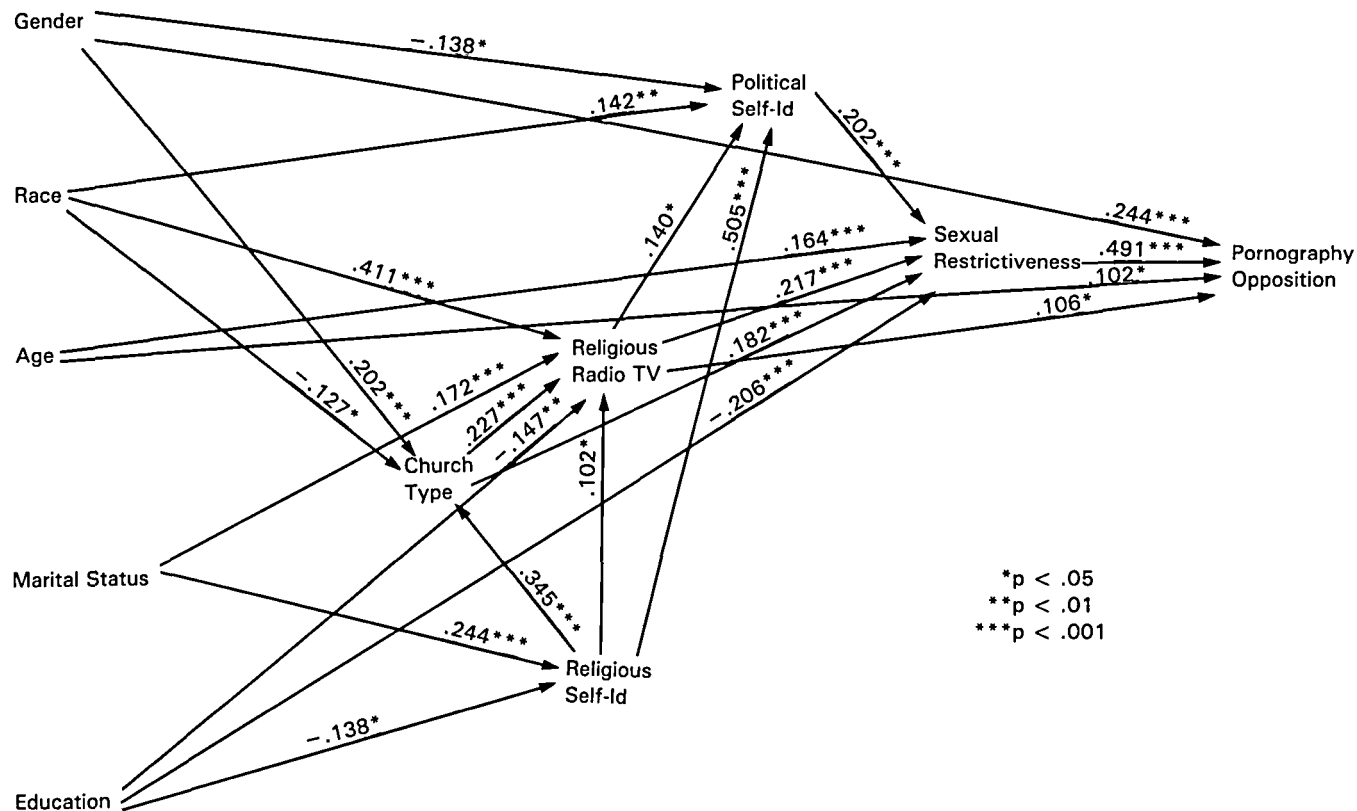


FIGURE 1. Causal model for opposition to pornography.

graphic variables are treated as fully exogenous.⁷ The religious variables are sequenced earlier than the political one because it is assumed that religious identities and affiliations routinely are shaped earlier in life than political ones (Beatty and Walter 1982; Smith 1990). Both political and religious variables are sequenced before sexual restrictiveness and pornography attitude.

Among the three religiosity variables, religious self-identification is treated as occurring first. Church membership and type is the second endogenous variable and frequency of listening to religious television or radio is third. The presumed causal ordering is that religious identity influences church affiliation, which in turn influences probability of such behaviors as religious program listening (White 1968).

Initially a fully recursive path model was estimated. Thus all proceeding variables in the model were included in equations for each endogenous variable. Then a simplified model that includes only those paths that are statistically significant was estimated. The path coefficients from the simplified model are very similar to those from the fully recursive model. The coefficients reported in Figure 1 are those estimated with the simplified set of regression equations. The estimates for the equations shown in Figure 1 are summarized in Table 3. These results are summarized below.

Married or widowed status is positively associated with conservative religious self-identity. Education is negatively associated with conservative religious self-identity. Women and blacks belong to conservative churches more often than do men and whites, respectively, as do those with conservative religious self-identities. Blacks and married persons listen to religious television and radio programs more frequently than others, as do persons with conservative religious self-identities and church memberships.

Men and whites in the sample have more conservative political self-identities than women and blacks. Respondents

⁷The zero-order correlations among the fully exogenous variables are as follows: gender and race = $-.131^*$; gender and age = $-.023$; gender and marital status = $-.003$; gender and education = $-.154^{**}$; race and age = $.204^{***}$; race and marital status = $.125^*$; race and education = $.295^{***}$; age and marital status = $.541^{***}$; age and education = $-.009$; marital status and education = $-.012$.

TABLE 3. Regression Summaries for Non-Recursive Causal Model of Pornography Opposition: Significant Standardized Coefficients for Demographic, Religious, and Political Variables, Sexual Restrictiveness Scale, R^2 Coefficients

Dependent variable	Predictor variable										<i>R</i> ²
	Gender	Race	Age	Marital status	Education	Religious self-id.	Church	Religious TV-radio	Political Self-id.	Sexual restrict.	
Religious self-identification				.244***	−.138*						.079***
Church type		.202***	−.127*			.345***					.188***
Religious TV-radio		−.411***		.172***	−.147**	.102*	.227***				.369**
Political self-identification	−.138**	.142**				.505***		.140*			.324***
Sexual restrictiveness			.164***		−.206***	.133*	.182***	.217***	.202***		.400***
Pornography opposition	.244***		.102*					.106*		.491***	.406***

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

with conservative religious self-identities and regular listeners of religious programs more often identify themselves as political conservatives.

High scores on the sexual restrictiveness scale (indicating more restrictive views) are characteristic of older and less educated persons. All three religious variables and conservative political self-identities also directly predict high scale scores.

The causal model facilitates the consideration of the underlying variable relationships and processes that affect the ultimate dependent variable. One is able to examine indirect and total effects, as well as the more immediately apparent direct effects of given predictor variables on the dependent variable, as reported in Table 2 and Figure 1. Table 4 displays the various types of variable effects on pornography attitudes corresponding to the causal model portrayed in Figure 1.

Table 4 provides a decomposition of variables' effects on pornography attitudes (Alwin and Hauser 1975). The first column of coefficients reports the total effects of each predictor on the ultimate dependent variable of the path model, pornography opposition. Total effects are comprised of indirect effects operating through other variables, as well as direct effects.

The third column of Table 4 reports variables' direct effects on respondents' attitudes toward pornography. These coefficients are the same as those reported in Figure 1 for significant paths from exogenous and endogenous predictor variables. The second column of Table 4 reports the sum of indirect effects for each variable on pornography attitudes, operating via intervening variables and paths as indicated in Figure 1.

These calculations reveal more about underlying influences on pornography attitudes than is otherwise apparent. For instance, gender's effects on pornography attitudes are largely direct. Any indirect effects, via religious or political variables, for instance, sum to little consequence.

Age and education operate quite differently than does gender with respect to pornography. This is shown to be the case although all three have roughly equal total effects as indicated in column one of Table 4. Each of these demographic predictors of pornography attitudes is statistically significant at the .001 level. The negative total effect of age on pornography

TABLE 4. Decomposition of Effects on Pornography Opposition:
Standardized Coefficients for Total Effects, Sum of Indirect
Effects, and Direct Effects

Predictor variables	Total effects	Sum of indirect effects	Direct effects
Demographic			
Gender	.259	.015	.244
Race	-.097	-.097	.0
Age	.183	.081	.102
Marital status	.085	.085	.0
Education	-.160	.160	.0
Religious			
Self-identification	.187	.187	.0
Church type	.141	.141	.0
Rel. TV-radio	.227	.120	.106
Political			
Self-identification	.099	.099	.0
Sexual restrictiveness scale	.491		.491

attitudes is approximately one-half direct and one-half indirect via encouraging sexual restrictiveness. The positive effect of education on pornography liberality is indirect, by reducing religiosity, political conservatism, and sexual restrictiveness.

The religious variables affect pornography attitudes more indirectly than directly with one exception. Religious self-identification and church type operate through later staged variables like sexual restrictiveness. Religious television and radio listening have significant direct, as well as indirect, effects.

Political self-identity significantly affects pornography attitudes only via sexual restrictiveness in these data. Because sexual restrictiveness is the last sequenced endogenous variable, its effects are entirely direct.

The second strategy to identify and evaluate possible gender-specific influences on pornography attitudes is now presented. The specific question this strategy seeks to answer is: When the main effects of gender are removed, are there notably dissimilar underlying patterns among the variables affecting pornography attitudes among women and men? To answer that question the women's and men's subsamples are analyzed separately and compared. The series of equations

developed for the total sample path model, Figure 1, is calculated for the two subsamples and corresponding unstandardized coefficients are compared (see Blalock 1967).

Minimal differences between men and women in the underpinnings of pornography attitudes were revealed by comparing the male and female subsamples. One notable difference is that sexual restrictiveness scale scores of respondents predict condemnation of pornography somewhat more strongly among women ($b = .176^{***}$; standard error = .031) than among men ($b = .152^{***}$; standard error = .033). The only other statistically significant direct effect on women's pornography attitudes is race ($b = .521^*$; standard error = .258). White women are more condemning of pornography than black women, but race is not a significant predictor of men's attitudes toward pornography. Alternatively, among men, unlike women, age ($b = .017^*$; standard error = .007) and religious television or radio listening ($b = .274^*$; standard error = .137) directly predicts hostility toward pornography.

DISCUSSION

The findings reported above provide significant understanding of the complex interplay of factors affecting attitudes toward pornography. Among the demographic variables considered, gender, age, and education are more consequential. Collectively they account for more than one sixth of the variation in the dependent variable. Young and highly educated persons are relatively more accepting of pornography. Women tend to be offended by it much more than men regardless of other considerations or controls.

The religious variables are all strongly associated with condemnation of pornography. When they are included in the model, close to a third of the total variation is predicted. The political indicators add little to the explanation. Alternatively, restrictive attitudes toward sexuality are critical for individuals' pornography attitudes.

The pattern of findings in these data is quite consistent with what Swatos (1988) terms the cultural and socialization model of anti-pornography. His account coincides with Wood and Hughes' (1984) explanation of the moral basis of moral reform movements like anti-pornography. These data provide no

support for status politics explanations that attribute anti-pornography sentiments to status contradictions and anxieties (Harper and Leicht 1984; Hertel and Hughes 1987; Lorentzen 1980; Page and Clélland 1978; Peek, Witt and Gay 1981; Simpson 1983; Woodrum 1988).

The study's results confirm significant direct effects of gender on pornography attitudes: women are much more opposed to pornography than men. But a surprising result of the research is that there are no significant gender interaction effects or indications of gender-specific influences on pornography attitudes. This conclusion coincides with Jelen's (1986, p. 99) report of "a rather interesting 'non-finding' . . . of no measurable interaction between any of the attitudinal variables . . . and the respondent's own gender." That now replicated null result is quite inconsistent with what might be deduced by the gender-specific character of most pornographic materials and markets. The finding is also inconsistent with publicized statements by some feminist anti-pornography spokespersons.

The finding that traditional sexual restrictiveness is even slightly more predictive of women's than men's opposition to pornography is also noteworthy. The finding suggests modern feminist bases for condemning pornography are not at present particularly relevant for pornography opponents in this sample, even among women specifically.

Instead, traditionalism associated with age, little education, conventional marital and family status, religiosity, and political conservatism seems far more relevant for most persons' dispositions toward pornography. This interpretation is consistent with the view that a broad political struggle is unfolding between conservative cultural traditionalists and liberal cultural modernists. In this context, attitudes toward pornography and its control are symbolic of larger, clashing identities and orientations (Lorentzen 1980; McConahay 1988; Peek et al. 1981). This explanation reinforces the view that another bitterly contested issue entailing considerations of sexuality, abortion, is as passionately contested as it is because it evokes contending values and gender ideals (Luker 1984).

Previous commentators note that factors affecting activists' dispositions on moral reform and political ideological movements may be different than those factors that operate in the general public. For this sample, moral conservatism is con-

spicuous as a salient factor in respondents' dispositions toward pornography. Feminist-derived bases for the same conclusion in the general public are not reflected in these data. Still, feminist motivations may obtain significant consequence for anti-pornography among some activists. That is plausible, although of course the data reported here cannot speak to the issue.

REFERENCES

- Alwin, D. F., and R. M. Hauser. 1975. "The Decomposition of Effects in Path Analysis." *American Sociological Review* 40:37-47.
- Attorney General's Commission on Pornography. 1986. Final Report. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Bart, P. B., and M. Jozsa. 1980. "Dirty Books, Dirty Films, and Dirty Data." Pp. 204-217 in *Take Back the Night*, edited by L. Lederer. New York: Morrow.
- Beatty, K. M., and O. Walter. 1982. "Religious Belief and Practice: New Forces in American Politics?" Paper presented at American Political Science Association Meeting, Denver, CO, September.
- Benin, M. H. 1985. "Determinants of Opposition to Abortion." *Sociological Perspective* 28:199-216.
- Blalock, H. 1967. "Status Inconsistency, Social Mobility, Status Integration and Structural Effects." *American Sociological Review* 32:790-801.
- Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. 1970. The Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. New York: Random House.
- Copp, D., and S. Wendell (eds.). 1983. *Pornography and Censorship*. New York: Prometheus.
- Dworkin, A. 1980. "Pornography and Grief." Pp. 286-291 in *Take Back the Night*, edited by L. Lederer. New York: Morrow.
- Falwell, J. (ed.). 1981. *How You Can Help Clean Up America*. Washington, DC: Moral Majority.
- Gallup, G., Jr. 1986. "Pornography: Growing Support Found for Ban on Sex, Violence in Movies, Magazines." *The Gallup Report*, No. 251:2-12.
- Gever, M., and M. Hall. 1980. "Fighting Pornography." Pp. 279-285 in *Take Back the Night*, edited by L. Lederer. New York: Morrow.
- Granberg, D. 1982. "Family Size Preferences and Sexual Permissiveness as Factors Differentiating Abortion Activists." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 45:15-23.
- Harper, C. L., and K. Leicht. 1984. "Religious Awakenings and Status Politics." *Sociological Analysis* 45:339-353.

- Hertel, B. R., and M. Hughes. 1987. "Religious Affiliation, Attendance, and Support for 'Pro-Family' Issues in the United States." *Social Forces* 65:858-882.
- Jelen, T. G. 1984. "Respect for Life, Sexual Morality, and Opposition to Abortion." *Review of Religious Research* 25:220-231.
- . 1986. "Fundamentalism, Feminism, and Attitudes toward Pornography." *Review of Religious Research* 28:97-103.
- Lorentzen, L. J. 1980. "Evangelical Life-Style Concerns Expressed in Political Action." *Sociological Analysis* 41:144-154.
- Luker, Kristin. 1984. *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mauss, A. L., and J. G. McKelvy. 1975. "Sexual Behavior." Pp. 357-402 in *Social Problems as Social Movements*, edited by A. L. Mauss. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott.
- McConahay, J. B. 1988. "Pornography: The Symbolic Politics of Fantasy." *Law and Contemporary Problems* 51:31-69.
- McCutcheon, A. L. 1987. "Sexual Morality, Pro-Life Values and Attitudes toward Abortion." *Sociological Methods and Research* 16:256-275.
- Morgan, R. 1980. "Theory and Practice: Pornography and Rape." Pp. 134-140 in *Take Back the Night*, edited by L. Lederer. New York: Morrow.
- New York Times News Service. 1990a, October 3. "Conflicting Perspectives Make Obscenity Trial a Tower of Babel." Raleigh, NC: *News and Observer* 4A.
- . 1990b, October 7. "Maplethorpe, 2 Live Crew Cases Send Mixed Messages on Obscenity." Raleigh, NC: *News and Observer* 19A.
- Newsweek. 1985, March 18. "The War against Pornography." Pp. 58-67.
- Page, A. L., and D. A. Clelland. 1978. "The Kanawha County Textbook Controversy: A Study of the Politics of Life Style Concern." *Social Forces* 57:265-281.
- Peek, C. W., D. D. Witt, and D. A. Gay. 1981. "Pornography: Important Political Symbol or Limited Political Issue?" *Sociological Focus* 15:41-51.
- Simpson, J. H. 1983. "Moral Issues and Status Politics." Pp. 187-205 in *The New Christian Right*, edited by R. C. Liebman and R. Wuthnow. New York: Aldine.
- . 1985. "Status Inconsistency and Moral Issues." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 24:155-162.
- Swatos, W. H., Jr. 1988. "Picketing Satan Enfleshed at 7-Eleven." *Review of Religious Research* 30:73-82.

- White, R. H. 1968. "Toward a Theory of Religious Influence." *Pacific Sociological Review* 11:23-28.
- Wood, M., and M. Hughes. 1984. "The Moral Basis of Moral Reform." *American Sociological Review* 49:86-99.
- Woodrum, E. 1988. "Determinants of Moral Attitudes." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 27:553-573.