

# Voluntary Exposure to Pornography and Men's Attitudes Toward Feminism and Rape

Kimberly A. Davies, Ph.D.

Department of Sociology, Augusta State University

*The effects that pornography have on men's attitudes toward women remains an issue of contention. Most previous researchers who have examined the relationship between pornography and attitudes toward women have used experimental studies or aggregate studies. Instead, I examined a sample of men who voluntarily viewed sexually explicit videos of their choosing in a non-experimental setting. I examined the relationship between these men's renting of pornographic videos and their attitudes toward feminism and rape. More specifically, the purpose of this research was to determine whether men who rented more X-rated videos displayed more negative attitudes toward feminism and if they were more likely to condone violence toward women than were men who rented fewer X-rated videos. In this article, I used cross tabulation to compare 194 men who rented X-rated videos of their choosing from a single pornography establishment in a large metropolitan county during 1988. The men were compared on their attitudes concerning the Equal Rights Amendment, a law against marital rape, and punishment for date rape and marital rape. No correlations were found between the number of videos a man had rented and his attitudes toward feminism and rape. These findings suggest that calloused attitudes toward women may not be generated by sexually explicit videos but are more deeply ingrained in our society.*

The availability of pornography and the effects it may have on the public, men in particular, continues to be controversial. Anti-pornography feminists argue that pornography teaches men to despise women. Through pornography, these feminists believe, men learn that women are to be abhorred, seen as less human than themselves, and used. Robin Morgan (1980, p. 128) asserted that "pornography is the theory; rape is the practice." Andrea Dworkin and others believe that pornography trivializes rape (Everywoman, 1988) and makes men "increasingly callous to cruelty, to infliction of pain, to violence against persons, to abuse of women" (Dworkin, 1988, p. 205). Pornography and men's attitudes about violence and women are clearly linked, according to anti-pornography feminists. Yet, empirical research on the possible effects of pornography remains contradictory.

The purpose of my research was to explore the relationship between men's viewing of sexually explicit videos and their attitudes toward feminism and rape. This work is different from much previous experimental and aggregate research in that I examined a sample of men who rented sexually explicit videos of their choosing.

For the most part, two methodological approaches have been used in social

science research to explore the links between exposure to pornography and aggressive attitudes and actions toward women (Baron, 1990; Childress, 1991; also see Davis & Bauserman, 1993, for a more inclusive literature review). First, researchers have used aggregate studies to examine the relationship between the availability of pornography and officially reported rape rates within particular geographic areas. Second, in experiments, men have been exposed to pornography in a laboratory setting and then either given the opportunity to aggress against a female confederate or given questionnaires intended to measure attitudes toward women and rape. The findings of these aggregate and experimental studies are mixed, and the limitations of these types of research are many.

During the 1960s, pornography was decriminalized in Denmark, and its production and sales increased. This situation allowed researchers to compare reported rates of sex crimes before and after decriminalization. Both Kutchinsky (1973) and Ben-Veniste (1971) reported a significant decrease in reported sex crimes, including rape, during the years in which widespread dissemination of pornography increased in Copenhagen, Denmark.

This finding leads to the belief that pornography may actually lead to a decrease in the number of sex crimes rather than to an increase in calloused behavior toward women (Ben-Veniste, 1971; Kutchinsky, 1973). On the other hand, Court (1984) argued that, although the number of sex crimes overall may have decreased in Denmark after the decriminalization of pornography, rape actually increased. Yet, Danish crime experts argued that this increase in rape reports was not a result of a greater tolerance of rape but a "greater willingness to report rape because of increased public awareness"

This article stems from a Master's thesis completed in August 1990 in sociology at The Ohio State University under the direction of Joseph E. Scott. An earlier version of this article was presented at the November 1992 American Society of Criminology Meeting in New Orleans.

I thank Joseph E. Scott for permission to use these data and Debbie Edwards Wilson for her assistance with the data. Additionally, I thank Rita Benson, Carla Corroto, Ruth D. Peterson, Kent P. Schwirian, Joseph E. Scott, and anonymous reviewers for their comments on this and/or previous versions of this article.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Kimberly A. Davies, Ph.D., Department of Sociology, Augusta State University, 2500 Walton Way, Augusta, GA 30904-2200. Phone: 706-737-1735.

(Donnerstein, Linz, & Penrod, 1987). Overall, the Denmark experience is inconclusive and may not be generalizable to the U.S. because of differences in cultural norms.

Others have compared the consumption of pornography with rape rates in different geographic areas. Both Baron and Straus (1984) and Scott and Schwalm (1988b) compared the circulation rates of sex-oriented magazines and rape rates for each state in the U.S. Findings in both studies supported anti-pornography feminists' claims about the connection between pornography and rape. Both Baron and Straus (1984) and Scott and Schwalm (1988b) found that circulation rates of sexually explicit magazines and rape rates were positively correlated. On the other hand, Scott and Schwalm (1988a) compared the numbers of adult theaters with rape rates in 41 areas of the U.S. (either individual states or 2 states together) and found that the relationship between rape rates and adult theater rates was nonsignificant. Similarly, Gentry (1991) essentially replicated the research of Scott and Schwalm (1988b) and Baron and Straus (1984) but used standard metropolitan statistical areas (cities and the surrounding metropolitan areas) as her units of analyses, resulting in the finding of no relationship between the circulation of sexually-oriented magazines and rape rates. Furthermore, Baron (1990) compared gender equality (measured with an index reflecting the status of women relative to men in politics, economics, and legal rights) and pornography circulation rates in states and found that gender equality and pornography were positively correlated.

The findings of Baron and Straus (1984) and Scott and Schwalm (1988a) suggest that pornography may be harmful to women. However the research by Baron (1990), Scott and Schwalm (1988a), and Gentry (1991) indicates that, on a macro level, claims about pornography's harm to women are not certain. In fact, Baron's findings suggest that gender equality is

greater where pornography is more prevalent, suggesting perhaps that liberal attitudes about portrayals of sex extend to liberal ideas about gender equality. Furthermore, although some aggregate studies suggest a relationship between pornography and rape, it is not clear that those men who view pornography are the same men who are committing rapes.

In most studies of pornography since 1970, researchers have used an experimental approach (Childress, 1991). Researchers have not directly studied the link between pornography and sexual offenses. Rather, researchers have attempted to look at the relationship between pornography and aggression or the relationship between pornography and attitudes toward women.

Zillmann and Bryant's research (1982, 1984) is supportive of the argument that pornography is detrimental to women. These researchers exposed both women and men undergraduate students to sexually explicit (what Zillmann and Bryant called "erotic," 1984) films for six weeks to assess the effects of "massive" exposure to pornography on perceptions and attitudes about women and rape. These experimenters found that the men (and women) exposed to massive doses of pornography (parts of 36 erotic films viewed for 4 hours, 48 minutes in 6 weeks) became less supportive of statements about sexual equality and became more lenient in assigning punishment to a rapist whose crime was described in a newspaper account than did men and women in control groups with less (parts of 18 erotic films viewed for 2 hours, 20 minutes in 6 weeks) or no exposure to pornography (Zillmann & Bryant, 1982).

Linz, Donnerstein, and Penrod (1988) exposed male college students to nonerotic violent films and nonviolent erotic films and failed to support Zillmann and Bryant's (1982, 1984) findings that sexually explicit films negatively affect beliefs and attitudes about women. Instead, Linz et al. (1988) found that participants exposed to R-rated film violence against women showed a tendency to be less

sympathetic to a rape victim when compared with control groups, including those exposed to nonviolent erotic films. In other words, Linz et al. (1988) found that violent nonsexual depictions were more likely to lead to calloused attitudes toward rape victims than sexual or pornographic depictions.

Although experimental researchers attempt to avoid the difficulties involved with aggregate studies, the problems of experiments focusing on pornography's possible connection to violence against women are well known (Childress, 1991; Fisher & Grenier, 1994). [For a critique of Zillmann and Bryant's experimental work, see Branigan (1987), Christensen (1986), and Zillmann and Bryant's replies (Zillmann & Bryant, 1986, 1987).] Childress (1991) included the following possible limiting factors of experiments:

1. the unreal nature of lab violence
2. lack of real punishment or social control
3. respondents' inhibitions while being observed or interviewed
4. the use of willing college students as the norm
5. an experimenter demand effect
6. publication of studies, mainly if they have positive results
7. lack of precise definitions of violence and aggression
8. the ethical inability to produce real violence

[See Childress (1991) for a detailed discussion of these problems and Berkowitz and Donnerstein (1982) for a discussion of the artificiality of laboratory experiments.]

A handful of researchers (Boeringer, 1994; Garcia, 1986; Padgett, Brislin-Slut, & Neal, 1989) have avoided some concerns expressed about experimental research, such as the artificiality of exposing participants to sexual material in a lab. (Also see Malamuth & Check, 1981, and Weisz & Earls, 1995, for an examination of the effects of exposure to non-X-rated films in a non-experimental setting.)

Garcia (1986) employed questionnaires to determine male undergraduates' previous experience with sexually explicit material and their attitudes to-

ward women and rape. In agreement with Zillmann and Bryant's findings (1982, 1984), Garcia found that those most exposed to coercive sexual material held more traditional attitudes toward women and believed rapists should not be severely punished. However, those exposed to mostly nonviolent pornography believed that rape is an act of power, not sex, which is a contention of feminists, findings that are more in agreement with the work of Linz et al. (1988).

Boeringer (1994) also asked college men about their exposure to pornography using questions about his respondents' involvement in sexually coercive behavior and propensity to commit rape as dependent variables. Boeringer's findings were in line with Linz et al. (1988) in that he found that the strongest correlates of sexual coercion were exposure to violent pornography and pornography depicting rape. However, Boeringer's (1994) findings may at the same time support Zillmann and Bryant's (1982, 1984) findings. Boeringer (1994, p. 299) found that reported exposure to milder materials found in "soft-core pornography" was positively related to "coercive verbal behavior and the hypothetical likelihood of using sexual force."

Unlike Garcia (1986), Boeringer (1994), and other experimental researchers, Padgett et al. (1989) did not limit their investigation to college students. Rather, they compared college students who they exposed to erotic materials with 21 male patrons of an "adult" movie theater who completed questionnaires about experience with pornography and attitudes toward women. Although the "adult patron" group had more experience with sexually explicit material, they held more favorable attitudes toward women than did the college students. Again, these findings are counter to Zillmann's and Bryant's (1982, 1984) laboratory findings. However, they must be viewed with caution, as there were only 21 adult patrons, and they voluntarily completed a questionnaire displayed at the "adult" movie the-

ater, which they may have answered in ways that would appear favorable for pornography.

The research findings thus far are conflicting. Moreover, little is known about the relationship between voluntary X-rated video viewing and attitudes about rape and feminism. Researchers such as Garcia (1986) and Boeringer (1994), who studied the relationship of pornography and attitudes toward women among those who view sexually explicit materials on their own, have been limited by the use of college students as the sample. Padgett et al.'s (1989) study was limited by their small non-college sample who volunteered to complete a survey inside an "adult" theater. In this study, I move beyond some of these limitations by examining a random sample of men who voluntarily viewed sexually explicit material. Thus, this work adds to the literature to investigate the relationship between sexually explicit material and attitudes about women.

### Methods

I used data collected by a research firm to explore the relationship between viewing of sexually explicit material and attitudes about rape and feminism. Using questions similar to those used by Zillmann and Bryant (1982), I tested hypotheses about rape attitudes and attitudes about feminism and the equality of women as related to the number of sexually explicit videos rented by men.

The data were collected in a large Southern metropolitan county that had a population of 450,800 in 1986 (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1988). Originally, the data were collected as part of a court case about obscenity. Although the data were collected at the request of attorneys representing an establishment that rented and sold sexually explicit materials, the collection of data was overseen by a market research firm.

### Participants

Two hundred two persons who had rented X-rated videos during 1988

Table 1

*Frequency Distribution of the Number of Videos Rented by Men in 12 Months*

X-rated Videos Rented	Frequency	Percent
1	29	14.9%
2	58	29.9%
3 or more	107	55.2%
Total	194	100%

were surveyed between January 26 and February 17, 1989. Although both men and women completed surveys, only eight women in the sample of renters had rented X-rated videos in the past year. As a result of the low number of women renters in the survey, and because feminists often argue that exposure to pornography affects men's attitudes about women, the data were reduced to a sample of 194 men for the renter population (see Table 1). Although it cannot be determined if those surveyed are a representative sample of the establishment's renter population in 1988, it is at least representative of the county in terms of race. In 1986, this metropolitan county's population was 72.19% White and 26.52% Black (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1988). Similarly, 70.1% (136) of the male respondents were White, 25.3% (49) were Black, and 2% (4) were other (2.6% or 5 did not give answers for the race question).

### Measures

The primary independent variable for this analysis was the number of X-rated videos an individual had rented in 1988 from one of two "adult" establishments that rented and sold X-rated videos in a large metropolitan county in the southern United States. The number of X-rated videos rented was recorded for each respondent at the time the data set was created. Table 1 presents a frequency distribution of the number of X-rated videos that the men rented in 1988. The numbers of videos rented ranged from 1 to 59 (mean = 5.72, standard deviation, 7.58; median number of videos rented = 3, and the modal number = 2). I divided the

renters into those who had rented one video, those who had rented two videos, and those who had rented three or more videos in 1988. Users were broken into these categories because they are somewhat equal groupings. Further, someone who rented three or more videos was defined as a regular user and thus was expected to be more affected or influenced by the videos than someone who had only rented one or two in a single year. Additionally, Eysenck (1984) argued that people make their way to more hard-core pornography as they rent more. Thus, although I did not know which videos each respondent rented, those who rented larger numbers of videos may have rented more violent videos than those who rented fewer videos. Last, the same results were found if the men were split into 1, 2, 3, 4-60, and other combinations.

Dependent variables for this analysis were obtained through four questions. First, I used the following question as to whether the Constitution should be amended to include the Equal Rights Amendment: "There has been considerable discussion about amending the U.S. Constitution with an Equal Rights Amendment. What about you? Do you *favor* or *oppose* an Equal Rights Amendment?" This question reflects participants' support or lack of support for feminism.

The second question I used asked whether a law against marital rape should be passed: "Do you *favor* or *oppose* having a law in (State) that would permit a wife to accuse her husband of rape?" This question reflects respondents' attitudes about the individuality of women as well as exposing general attitudes toward rape. Last, I used two similar questions about the punishment, if any, a man who has committed date rape or marital rape should receive:

There has been a considerable amount of discussion in the mass media about "*marital rape*," which is when a man, with the use of physical force or threat of force, has sexual relations with his wife.

Some people feel this is a serious crime while others feel this should not be considered a crime. What about you? Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about what, if anything, should happen to a man who with the use of such force has sexual relations with his wife?

- 1 He should serve a long term, 10 years or more, in prison.
- 2 He should serve a short term, at least 1 or 2 years in prison.
- 3 He should serve a few months in a local jail.
- 4 He should be required to have counseling and do community service work.
- 5 This should not be treated as a crime, but should be grounds for divorce.
- 6 Do nothing—this is a private issue between a husband and a wife.
- 7 Don't know/no answer.

There has been a considerable amount of discussion in the mass media about "*date rape*," which is when a man, with the use of physical force or threat of force, has sexual relations with his *date*. Some people feel this is a serious crime while others feel this should not be considered a crime. What about you? Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about what, if anything, should happen to a man who with the use of such force has sexual relations with his *date*?

- 1-4 Same as first four responses above.
- 5 This should not be treated as a crime, but the woman should be able to sue him.
- 6 Do nothing--this is a private issue between a man and his date.
- 7 Don't know/no answer.

As with Zillmann and Bryant's (1984) study, a longer period of incarceration represents disapproval for these types of rape. Sexual callousness toward women is expected to be expressed in no punishment or less severe punishment for the rapists.

The questionnaire used for this research was designed to help secure completion. It contained 30 questions. Except for the final three questions about date and marital rape, the ques-

tionnaire was originally designed and previously used to measure community obscenity standards. Questions about the media and the community's acceptance of nudity and sexual activities in movies and magazines were included in addition to the four questions used in my analysis. The first questions were general media questions such as whether a person subscribed to a newspaper and if his or her television was connected to cable. Then, the Equal Rights Amendment question was included along with questions about a person's religious and political conservatism/liberalism. Next, questions about community standards of obscenity were included, followed by common demographic questions such as the respondent's age and educational level. Finally, the last three questions asked were the marital and date rape questions that I used in my analysis.

#### *Procedure*

One of two establishments in the county that rented sexually explicit materials in 1988 granted access to the store's 1988 video rental records. These records contained names of 1,064 renters, their phone numbers, and the number of X-rated videos that they had rented from this establishment in 1988. From these records a list of all 1,064 persons and their phone numbers was constructed. Numbers of X-rated videos rented was not recorded on the phone list. Instead, each person was assigned an anonymous code so that the number of videos that each respondent had rented during 1988 could be recorded when creating the data file for completed surveys.

The phone list was given to a market research firm that was hired to complete 200 surveys with respondents residing in the county in which the court case was taking place. The research firm employed 10 interviewers (mean age 33.1 years), with an average of 5.1 years of experience to phone the respondents and complete the surveys over the telephone.

In training interviewers, great care was taken to avoid bias so that the

data would be accepted in court. Interviewers were not told details about the court case or that the data were being collected at the request of defense attorneys. Further, the interviewers were instructed not to speculate about the reasons for the data being collected. They were simply to read the survey questions to the respondents and direct any questions about the purpose of the survey to the social scientist who oversaw data collection.

The research firm personnel told the interviewers that the sample was randomly generated; they were not told that the names were obtained from a video-rental establishment. Interviewers, however, were instructed to record a respondent's code on surveys as they interviewed that person.

Upon completion of training, interviewers dialed the numbers listed on individual calling records and read the following statement:

Hello, my name is (*interviewer's name*) with (*research firm*). Let me assure you that we are not selling anything but rather interviewing a sample of adults concerning a variety of current issues. To make this survey scientific, I need to speak with (*sampled video-renter's name from the phone list*). Is (*he or she*) home?

If the person they asked for was not at home, they noted that and attempted the call later. If the person was there but had not answered the phone, the interviewer repeated the opening statement when the requested person came to the phone.

After the intended respondent was on the phone, he or she was told that the survey would only take a few minutes and that the answers would remain confidential and anonymous. A question as to which state and county he or she lived in was used as a screening question. If a person did not live in the southern county where the court case was taking place, the interview was terminated at that time, and the respondent was excluded from the sample. One hundred forty-five (21% of 689) were excluded in this way.

Care was taken so that the respondents remained anonymous and their answers remained confidential, as

promised. Respondents' names were not recorded on the surveys. Only the first three digits of the respondent's phone number and his or her assigned identification number were recorded on the completed surveys to ensure that the respondent and the numbers of videos rented were correctly matched. Respondent identification number lists were carefully locked away separately from the surveys to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Of the 1,064 numbers provided by the pornography outlet, 184 were non-working, 35 went to business or government offices, 53 were out of the area code, and 103 were never contacted. Of the 689 (65% of 1,064) remaining numbers, 145 (21%) respondents were not eligible to respond because they lived outside of the county of interest. One hundred fourteen (16.5%) refused to answer the survey, and six (.9%) terminated the interview before completing the survey. Two hundred two (29.3%) completed the telephone survey. Upon completion of the 202 interviews, no other attempts to complete additional surveys were made, because 200 completions was the number that the researchers wanted for the court case.

Twenty-six or 12.9% of the 202 respondents who completed the survey (22% of those who had originally refused to answer the survey) agreed to answer the survey on a subsequent call. This refusal-conversion population did not differ significantly by age, education, race, income, marital status, political party, or any dependent variables from those who completed the survey. This suggests that those who refused may not have differed in a significant way from those who completed surveys.

## Results

Tabular analysis was used to examine the relationship between renting X-rated videotapes and attitudes about rape and the Equal Rights Amendment. Chi-square was calculated to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between those who rented one video or two videos and those who rented three or more videos.

Because the numbers of X-rated videos rented did not vary significantly for any demographic variables (age, education in years, income, marital status, and political party), one can be more certain that the results from a cross-tabulation measure effects of renting sexually explicit videos rather than these demographic variables. If a respondent refused to answer the question of interest, he was not included in that particular analysis.

First, I performed a cross tabulation of men who rented different numbers of sexually explicit videos and their opinions on whether a law against marital rape should be passed. In contrast to Zillmann and Bryant (1984) and what is expected based on anti-pornography feminists' beliefs about pornography, these results suggested that there was no significant difference between those who rented one, two, and three or more X-rated videos during 1988. Of the 177 men who answered this question, only 53.8% of those who had rented one explicit video favored a marital rape law, whereas at least 70% of those who had seen two, three, or more X-rated videos did so.

There were also no significant differences between those who rented one, two, and three or more X-rated videos with regard to opinions on what punishment one deserves for marital rape. The responses were varied. About half of the men (79 of 184 who answered, or 47%) reported that they believed that a man who forces his wife to have sexual relations should spend one or more years in prison. Forty-six percent (12) of the single renters, 43.6% (20) of those who rented 2 videos and 52.4% (47) of those who rented more than 2 videos favored a year or more punishment for a man convicted of raping his wife. Approximately 58% (15) of those who rented 1 video, 43.6% (24) of those who rented 2 videos, and 52.4% (53) of those who rented 3 or more videos believed that marital rape deserved some length of incarceration. Likewise, there were no significant differences found when punishment categories were divided by those who were in favor of serving some time incarcer-

ated versus no time incarcerated or when the punishments were divided into the categories of incarceration, counseling or grounds for divorce, and nothing. Of those who rented 1 video, 23% felt that a man who rapes his wife should receive counseling, 3.8% (1) believed marital rape was grounds for divorce, and 15.3%, or 4, thought that nothing should be done to the husband. Thirteen (23.6%) of those who rented 2 videos believed that the man should be counseled, 13 believed that marital rape was grounds for divorce, and 5, or 9.1%, believed that nothing should be done. Finally, 25.2% (26) of those who rented 3 or more videos believed that a man who raped his wife should receive counseling, 14.6% (15) thought it was grounds for divorce, and 7.8% (8) believed that there should be no punishment.

Similarly, the number of videos rented did not result in significantly different opinions on assigning punishment for date rape. However, date rape appears to be seen as more serious than marital rape, with 84 of the 186 respondents (45%) calling for 10 years in prison and 140 of the 186 respondents (75%) saying that date rape should be punished with 1 year or more of incarceration. Of those who rented 1 video, 35.7% believed that the punishment for date rape should be 10 years, 32.1% felt it should be 1-2 years, 10.7% answered 1-2 months, 10.7% thought the punishment should be counseling, 3.7% thought the victim should be able to sue, and 7.1% thought that nothing should be done. Approximately 49% of those who rented 2 videos thought that the punishment for date rape should be 10 years, 23.6% felt it should be 1-2 years, 10.9% said 1-2 months, 12.7% selected counseling, 3.6% said counseling, and 0 thought that the punishment for date rape should be nothing. Of those renting 3 or more videos, 45.6% responded that the punishment for date rape should be 10 years, 33% said 1-2 years, 2.9% felt 1-2 months was sufficient, 12.6% responded that the punishment for date rape should be counseling, and 5.8% said that the victim should be permitted to sue.

Last, men who have viewed one, two, or three or more X-rated videos are not significantly different from one another in their support or opposition for the ERA. Unlike Zillmann and Bryant (1982, 1984), who found less support for feminism among those exposed to sexually explicit videos, only 18.2% of those who had rented 3 or more videos were opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment, suggesting that viewing pornography in a non-laboratory setting is not related to negative attitudes toward women and/or feminism. The percentage opposed in other categories is similar, with 18.5% of those who had rented 1 X-rated video in 1988 opposed and 25% of those who had rented 2 opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment. At least 75% of all X-rated film renters favored the Equal Rights Amendment.

### Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine the effects of viewing sexually explicit materials on men's attitudes toward feminism and rape. Attitudes about rape and feminism of a sample of 194 men who were known to have rented sexually explicit videos during 1988 were compared by numbers of X-rated videos rented.

The number of X-rated self-chosen videos rented by these men during 1988 was not significantly related to their support for the Equal Rights Amendment, a law against marital rape, or opinions on punishment for marital and date rape. Those who rented more pornographic videos did not differ from those renting fewer videos. These findings suggest that greater exposure to pornography did not result in more negative opinions toward feminism or to a greater acceptance of marital or date rape. Men who voluntarily rent greater numbers of sexually explicit videos of their choosing in a non-experimental setting do not appear any more likely to have negative attitudes toward feminism or condone violence against women than those who rent fewer X-rated videos.

Of those men who rented X-rated videos in 1988, 79.7% favored the Equal Rights Amendment, 68.9% favored a marital rape law, 81.7% believed that a man who is found guilty of date rape should be incarcerated (defined as serving *any* jail or prison time), and 68.9% believed that a man found guilty of marital rape should be incarcerated. Men who view sexually explicit videos of their choosing are not necessarily likely to have negative attitudes toward feminism or condone violence toward women.

These findings are contrary to those in many previous studies, such as those by Zillmann and Bryant (1982, 1984), in which exposure to sexually explicit videos was found to be correlated with calloused attitudes toward women. My research suggests that pornographic videos may not have the effects on men that anti-pornography feminists have previously argued. Instead, it suggests that calloused attitudes toward women are not generated by sexually explicit videos but arise elsewhere in our society. Furthermore, the results of this research indicate that experimental studies may not, as has been suggested, be a valid representation of what occurs outside of an experimental laboratory when men view sexually explicit videos of their choosing (Eysenck, 1984).

Overall, this research introduces an alternative approach for exploring relationships between sexually explicit materials and men's attitudes toward women. However, this research has some limitations, including willingness of store owners to make records available, as they might not do. Also, in this research, I assumed that those who rented the videos and participated in this survey actually viewed the videos they rented. Similarly, it cannot be ascertained as to how representative these men are with regard to men who rent sexually explicit videos in other places. Additionally, in this study I reported only the number of videos rented at this video store. I do not know if these men rented videos from the other video store in the county that rented X-rated videos or if they

purchased X-rated material from other outlets. Furthermore, I did not know which X-rated videos these men rented, and thus it is not known if these men rented violent or nonviolent X-rated videos. Although this study and surveys of college respondents are a beginning, more data collected from general populations of individuals who voluntarily view sexually explicit materials would be helpful in exploring the connection between sexually explicit material and men's attitudes toward women and rape. Further research should include methods such as those used here, with data from different areas of the country and studies that include types of videos rented.

Ultimately, however, if the goal is to explain negative attitudes and actions directed at women in our society, closer examination of male dominance and the power structure of our society may be needed instead of a narrow focus on how pornography affects men. More important questions need to be asked: How can it be that violent material showing women bruised, battered, and beaten are created with the intention of arousing men? Why are the obvious physical sufferings of certain individuals portrayed in some pornography arousing to other individuals in our society? It seems that violent depictions of women as portrayed in some pornography are not generating violent actions against women but are a symptom of a greater underlying problem.

## References

- Baron, L. (1990). Pornography and gender equality: An empirical analysis. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 27, 363-380.
- Baron, L., & Straus, M. (1984). Sexual stratification, pornography, and rape in the United States. In N. M. Malamuth & E. Donnerstein (Eds.), *Pornography, sexual aggression* (pp. 185-209). New York: Academic Press.
- Ben-Veniste, R. (1971). Pornography and sex crime: The Danish experience. *Technical reports of the commission on obscenity and pornography*. Vol. 7. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Berkowitz, L., & Donnerstein, E. (1982). External validity is more than skin deep: Some answers to criticisms of laboratory experiments. *American Psychologist*, 37, 245-257.
- Boeringer, S. B. (1994). Pornography and sexual aggression: Associations of violent and nonviolent depictions with rape and rape proclivity. *Deviant Behavior*, 15, 289-304.
- Branigan, A. (1987). Pornography and behavior: Alternative explanations. *Journal of Communication*, 37, 185-192.
- Childress, S. A. (1991). Reel "rape speech": Violent pornography and the politics of harm. *Law and Society Review*, 25, 177-214.
- Christensen, F. (1986). Sexual callousness re-examined. *Journal of Communication*, 36, 174-184.
- Court, J. H. (1984). Sex and violence: A ripple effect. In N. M. Malamuth & E. Donnerstein (Eds.), *Pornography and sexual aggression* (pp. 143-172). New York: Academic Press.
- Davis, C. M., & Bauserman, R. (1993). Exposure to sexually explicit materials: An attitude change perspective. *Annual Review of Sex Research*, 4, 121-209.
- Donnerstein, E., Linz, D., & Penrod, S. (1987). *The question of pornography: Research findings and policy implications*. New York: Macmillan.
- Dworkin, A. (1988). *Letters from a war zone*. New York: E. P. Dutton.
- Everywoman. (1988). *Pornography and sexual violence: Evidence of the links*. London: Everywoman.
- Eysenck, H. J. (1984). Aftermath: Sex, violence, and the media: Where do we stand now? In N. M. Malamuth & E. Donnerstein (Eds.), *Pornography and sexual aggression* (pp. 305-318). New York: Academic Press.
- Fisher, W. A., & Grenier, G. (1994). Violent pornography, antiwoman thoughts, and antiwoman acts: In search of reliable effects. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 31, 23-38.
- Garcia, L. T. (1986). Exposure to pornography and attitudes about women and rape: A correlational study. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 22, 378-385.
- Gentry, C. S. (1991). Pornography and rape: An empirical analysis. *Deviant Behavior*, 12, 277-288.
- Kutchinsky, B. (1973). The effect of easy availability of pornography on the incidence of sex crimes: The Danish experience. *Journal of Social Issues*, 29, 163-181.
- Linz, D., Donnerstein, E., & Penrod, S. (1988). Effects of long-term exposure to violent and sexually degrading depictions of women. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55, 758-768.
- Malamuth, N. M., & Check, J. V. P. (1981). The effects of mass media exposure on acceptance of violence against women: A field experiment. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 15, 436-446.
- Morgan, R. (1980). Theory and practice: Pornography and rape. In L. J. Lederer (Ed.), *Take back the night* (pp. 134-140). New York: William Morrow.
- Padgett, V. R., Brislin-Slutz, J., & Neal, J. A. (1989). Pornography, erotica, and attitudes toward women: The effects of repeated exposure. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 26, 479-491.
- Scott, J. E., & Schwalm, L. A. (1988a). Pornography and rape: An examination of adult theater rates and rape rates by state. In J. E. Scott & T. Hirschi (Eds.), *Controversial issues in crime and justice* (pp. 40-53). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Scott, J. E., & Schwalm, L. A. (1988b). Rape rates and the circulation rates of adult magazines. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 24, 241-250.
- U.S. Bureau of Census. (1988). *U.S. Bureau of Census County & City Data Book 1988*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Weisz, M. G., & Earls, C. M. (1995). The effects of exposure to filmed sexual violence on attitudes toward rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 10, 71-84.
- Zillmann, D., & Bryant, J. (1982). Pornography, sexual callousness and the trivialization of rape. *Journal of Communications*, 32, 10-21.
- Zillmann, D., & Bryant, J. (1984). Effects of massive exposure to pornography. In N. M. Malamuth & E. Donnerstein (Eds.), *Pornography and sexual aggression* (pp. 115-138). New York: Academic Press.
- Zillmann, D., & Bryant, J. (1986). Sexual callousness re-examined, a reply. *Journal of Communication*, 36, 184-188.
- Zillmann, D., & Bryant, J. (1987). Pornography and behavior: Alternative explanations, a reply. *Journal of Communication*, 37, 189-192.

Manuscript accepted May 20, 1996