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Denominational Differences in Attitude Toward Abortion

Sharon Cropper
Western Kentucky University

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DENOMINATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDE TOWARD ABORTION

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of

Sociology and Anthropology

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Sharon J. Cropper

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DENOMINATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDE TOWARD ABORTION

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by the author
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Director of Thesis

Hart M. Nelson

Thomas W. Welch

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Date

Edward Gray
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a break in a long "conspiracy of silence" on the subject of abortion, and attitude toward abortion has come to demand a great deal of public attention. The year 1967 marked the first changes in the abortion-prohibition laws of the United States in three-quarters of a century. And in early 1973, the United States Supreme Court, for all practical purposes, legalized abortion. The gist of the Supreme Court's ruling was that, except in very limited circumstances, government may not deter the right to abortion at will.

Reaction to the Court's decision has been forthcoming from both abortion proponents and opponents alike. Those who favor abortion have heralded the pronouncement as "an advance in social ethics" while those who disfavor abortion have denounced it as the "slaughter of the innocent unborn."¹ The ethical questions about the termination of pregnancy cannot, of course, be settled by any court ruling.² However, with the removal of legal restraints, attitude toward abortion may well become a more productive area of investigation with the interpretation of the effectiveness of selected variables taking on added salience in the explanation of these attitudes.

Some research efforts have been directed toward religious dimensions of attitude toward abortion. Few researchers, however,

have sought to go beyond traditional Protestant-Catholic-Jewish differences in their examinations of the relationship between attitude toward abortion and religion. Moreover, fewer still have examined differences in this relationship among the various Protestant denominations.

Judith Blake has indicated directions for further inquiry into this subject. Concerning Catholic-non-Catholic disapproval of abortion, she states: "It also seems understandable that in general non-Catholics would disapprove less than Catholics, but that fundamentalist non-Catholics (located in the South and Midwest) would be on par with Catholics when it comes to disapproval."³

Is religion a significant factor in differentiating attitude toward abortion? And if religion is significant, how will it relate to these attitudes when other sociological variables are controlled?

As a reflection of some previous inquiries, it is proposed to investigate attitude toward abortion using selected sociological variables in the analysis. More specifically, the purpose in this thesis is to examine whether or not Protestant denominational orientation has any relationship to attitude toward abortion.

Footnotes - Chapter I

¹"Abortion on Demand," Time, January 29, 1973, pp. 46-47.

²Garrett Hardin suggests that difficulties are created by asking the wrong question, namely: "How can we justify abortion?" Rather the question asked should be "How can we justify compulsory pregnancy?" Garrett Hardin, "Abortion or Compulsory Pregnancy?" Journal of Marriage and the Family 30 (May 1968): 246-51.

³Judith Blake, "Abortion and Public Opinion: The 1960-1970 Decade," Science 171 (February 1971): 541.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent inquiries have been made into abortion attitudes. This survey of literature focuses on those studies which utilize attitude toward abortion as a dependent variable. The specific independent or predictor variables to be considered include, in addition to Protestant denominational preference: age, sex, region, residence, income, education, occupation, and church attendance.

"In a democratic society, the conclusive right or wrong—for political or social purposes—is only a composite of the individual conclusions of many people."¹ So, too, with attitudes toward abortion. While recent research has suggested that over the years Americans have generally taken an increasingly liberal attitude toward abortion—there appears to be a trend toward its lessened disapproval—there is by no means consensus on the subject. Rather, the extent to which approval is granted varies with the circumstances for abortion, with greater approval being accorded to the conservative or "hard" reasons than to the liberal or "soft" reasons for abortion.

Generally, one or more of six varying circumstances have dominated discussions in abortion literature. These circumstances, or justifications, include the following: to protect the life or the health of the mother; in cases of rape, forcible or statutory, or incest; in the case of a potentially defective child; in the case of

economic hardship of the family; in the case of an unmarried woman who does not want to marry the man; and in the case of a married woman who does not want any more children. Of these circumstances, the former three are considered the conservative or hard reasons for abortion, while the latter three are considered the liberal or soft reasons.

American opinion today accords an acceptance to abortion which it did not hold even a decade ago. Judith Blake, in a secondary analysis of white American attitudes based on data drawn from various surveys taken between 1962 and 1969,² reported that respondents demonstrated less disapproval of abortion on grounds of the mother's health than on grounds of child deformity, economic hardship, or simply the desire for no more children. Despite the somewhat imperfect comparability of the surveys, there was, over the decade, a general decline in disapproval of abortion on all four grounds considered. By the end of the decade, 13 percent of all respondents disapproved of abortion in the interest of the mother's health and 25 percent disapproved in the case of child deformity, while 68 percent disapproved for economic reasons and 79 percent disapproved if no more children were desired. Among non-Catholics only, 65 percent disapproved of abortion justified solely by economic hardship, while 78 percent disapproved if no more children were desired. Among Catholics at this time, disapproval on grounds of the mother's health was characteristic of 20 percent of the respondents and disapproval on grounds of child deformity of 37 percent; disapproval on economic grounds and where no more children were desired was 74 and 83 percent, respectively. Thus Blake points to

attitudinal differences on the varying circumstances: in general, abortion to save the mother's health or to prevent child deformity was publicly well accepted over the decade among all respondents (both Catholic and non-Catholic); abortion for discretionary reasons received minimal, yet increasing, acceptance over the decade—again, among both groups of respondents.³

Norman B. Ryder and Charles F. Westoff had somewhat similar findings. Using national data collected in the 1965 National Fertility Study,⁴ they noted three common response patterns among married American women. The authors wrote:

American women are overwhelmingly predisposed to favor abortion if the mother's health is seriously endangered; they are almost evenly divided on the questions of deformity and rape; and they are overwhelmingly opposed if the grounds are that the woman is not married, cannot afford another child, or simply doesn't want any more children.⁵

(The positive responses were 87, 50, 52, 13, 11, and 8 percent, respectively.) The two most prevalent combinations of responses were the rejection of all circumstances except mother's health, and the acceptance on the grounds of mother's health, child deformity, and rape but a rejection in the remaining three circumstances. Nine percent of the entire sample indicated negative responses for all six reasons for abortion, while 5 percent indicated positive responses for all six reasons—thus, 5 percent seemingly endorsed the principle of elective abortion. Not unlike Blake, Ryder and Westoff contend "that a genuine liberalization of attitudes toward the subject is underway."⁶

National data collected in December 1965 by the National Opinion Research Center have been analyzed by Alice B. Rossi. The analysis showed that a majority of Americans support abortion for reasons

of mother's health (71 percent), rape (56 percent), and child deformity (55 percent). However, once again it was found that Americans did not support abortion on the more liberal grounds of economic hardship (21 percent), in the case of an unmarried woman who does not want to marry the man (18 percent), or in the case of a married woman who does not want any more children (15 percent).⁷

Further studies which have shown increased acceptance of abortion are those by Gavin Jones and Dorothy Nortman and by Patricia Donovan. Jones and Nortman concluded, in an analysis of 1967 Gallup survey data: "Respondents in general favored abortion for 'hard' reasons . . . but were opposed to abortion for 'soft' reasons"⁸ They found little attitudinal differentiation between Protestant and Catholic respondents for either the conservative or liberal reasons for abortion. Donovan generalized from Gallup surveys conducted in November 1969, January 1972, and June 1972 and from a May 1971 survey for the Commission on Population and the American Future: "The overwhelming majority now believes that abortion should be legal for reasons other than danger to a woman's life, and well over half believe that the matter should be strictly a personal decision involving only a woman and her doctor."⁹ A closer examination of the Gallup surveys reveals that in January 1972, the adherents to this belief had increased to almost two-thirds (64 percent) of all respondents.¹⁰ Respondents to a later Gallup survey in December 1972 were almost equally divided on the more liberal question: "Would you favor or oppose a law which would permit a woman to go to a doctor to end pregnancy at any time during the first three months?" Forty-six percent responded favorably while 45 percent were in opposition as compared with 40 and 50 percent, respectively, to the same question in November 1969.¹¹

Louise Corman and Judith B. Schaefer found additional support for abortion among a group of northeastern college students sampled in 1971. Sixty-two percent of the respondents thought that "a woman, married or single, should be able to have an abortion on demand."¹²

A major factor affecting American fertility attitudes in general is religion.¹³ Charles F. Westoff, Robert G. Potter, Jr., and Philip C. Sagi have assigned to it particular importance: "Religious preference, that is, the preference for the Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish faith, is the strongest of all major social characteristics in its influence on fertility."¹⁴ With regard to attitude toward abortion, Protestant-Catholic-Jewish differences have been found. But among Protestants attempts to account for variations in fertility have proved less than successful. Charles F. Westoff and Raymond H. Potvin have asserted: "All religions have not adapted equally to the values of rationality and the processes of secularization that have influenced the modern world."¹⁵ Perhaps it is that the classification "Protestant" is more heterogeneous than either Catholic or Jew and that this, at least in part, accounts for some of the unexplained variation. Denominational preference, then, seems a relevant consideration in view of the fact that denominations differ in belief systems, as well as in the intensity with which they stress conformity and in the strength to which coercion is applied.¹⁶ Therefore, it seems highly credible that significant variations in attitude toward abortion would be found among the various denominations within the Protestant religion.

Although there has been a paucity of research efforts directed toward differences in attitude toward abortion among the various Prot-

estant denominations, Gordon F. De Jong has undertaken a related study in that he concerned himself with the effects of religion on the broader area of fertility. In the study of fertility attitudes and values of Protestant Southern Appalachian residents, De Jong has analyzed the relationship between a measure of religious fundamentalism and fertility attitudes and the effect of socio-economic status as well as other variables on this relationship.¹⁷

Fundamentalism, in most instances, was found by De Jong to be significantly related to fertility attitudes, even when socio-economic status, age, and residence are statistically controlled. A very fundamentalist religious orientation was associated with attitudinal responses supporting high fertility and high socio-economic status was associated with attitudinal responses supporting low fertility. Among the attitudinal responses utilized were those which tapped ideal number of children, ideal age of marriage, and birth control practices. The mean number of children considered ideal was 3.40 for the very fundamentalist, compared with 2.83 for the not very fundamentalist. Similarly, respondents with low socio-economic status reported a mean ideal number of 3.47 children, while respondents with high socio-economic status reported a mean ideal of 2.79 children. The mean ideal age of marriage increased with successive fundamentalist categories. Socio-economic status and religious fundamentalism were also found to differentiate attitudinal responses to the question on birth control practices. Significant relationships were noted between both religious fundamentalism and socio-economic status and disapproval of birth control. Those respondents who were highly fundamentalist in religious orientation

and those who were in lower socio-economic status categories tended to disapprove of birth control practices to a greater extent than did those who were not very fundamentalist in religious orientation and those who were in higher socio-economic categories.¹⁸

Religious fundamentalism, socio-economic status, and age accounted for a statistically significant, but yet a relatively small part of fertility attitude variation among the Southern Appalachian residents. With place of residence controlled, fundamentalism, status, and age remained significantly related to fertility attitude for both rural and metropolitan areas; however, for non-metropolitan urban areas, the relationship was found to be statistically significant in only a few instances. De Jong concludes that among Protestant Southern Appalachian residents, at least, "religious fundamentalism appears as an important factor in differentiating attitudes and values related to fertility."¹⁹

One research effort which has sought to examine the more immediate relationship between Protestant denominational preference and attitude toward abortion is that by Charles F. Westoff, Emily C. Moore, and Norman B. Ryder who used data collected from a national probability sample of married women in the mid-1960's. An examination of respondents by Protestant denominations showed that members of the fundamentalist sects and the Baptists ranked highest in terms of conservatism on attitude toward abortion. The Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists, on the other hand, appeared to hold the most liberal attitudes on the issue of abortion, followed respectively by the Lutherans and the Methodists. Furthermore, the authors note "the persistence of a very strong relation of attitude and denomination that is not reducible to differences in educational composition."²⁰

Moreover, the authors have sought to determine the effect of church attendance on the stated relationship between religiousness and attitudes. In general, they found that opposition to abortion increased with increasing participation in religious services. However, no real consistency was found; among Methodist women no relationship was revealed and among the Evangelical women and those classified in the various sects, only a very irregular pattern was evident. Among Protestant women, the strongest relationship was found in the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, and the Congregational classifications. These denominational differences persisted even at similar levels of religious activity. Despite their conclusion that denominational differences are not "explained" by variations in educational composition, the authors point out that subcultural differences exist along social class and other dimensions that bear on the expression of attitudes toward such a subject as abortion.²¹

A commonly employed predictor variable in sociological analysis is age. It is a widely held belief that a direct relationship exists between age and conservatism--that is, the old are more disposed to hold to conservative beliefs and practices than are the young. It might be expected then that the more favorable attitudes toward abortion would be held by the younger people and the less favorable attitudes by the older people. However, an examination of research reveals contradictory findings. Blake noted "above average disapproval" by white American youthful respondents except in the case of mother's health. But, in the case of child deformity, the direct relationship holds among a sample of non-Catholic Americans; those respondents 45 years of age and older were more likely to hold negative atti-

tudes on abortion than were those under 45. Based on a sample of non-Catholics, the inverse relationship was once again found--acceptance of abortion on economic grounds was characteristic of only about one-fourth of the under 30 respondents whereas it was characteristic of about one-third of those over 45. With regard to elective abortion, an inverse relationship was evident among male respondents, while among female respondents a direct relationship was apparent. Men under 30 were more favorable toward elective abortion than were older men; women under 30 were consistently more disapproving of elective abortion than were older women.²² Blake notes also that the age differential, while disappearing, is not entirely gone. She states: "There appears to be a secular trend toward lessened disapproval of abortion affecting all ages, and affecting younger people more than older ones."²³

Utilizing a national sample of women in their analysis of attitude toward abortion, Westoff, Moore, and Ryder have suggested that the age factor operates with childbearing. The authors found that the more favorable attitudes toward abortion were held by older women who had reached a more advanced stage in family formation. They state: "Although the association is not strong it is clear that younger women are less, not more favorable toward abortion than are older women."²⁴ In estimating induced abortions, James R. Abernathy, Bernard G. Greenburg, and Daniel G. Horvitz presented a similar finding; they observed a direct relationship between incidence of induced abortion and number of pregnancies--the estimates based on lifetime were higher for women with a history of five or more pregnancies than with less than five pregnancies.²⁵

There have been virtually no conclusive data about male and female attitudes toward abortion due, at least in part, to the paucity of comparative research thus directed. One effort that has been concerned with these attitudinal differences is that by Blake. On the average, women were more disapproving than were men; they were generally less enthusiastic about introducing total freedom of choice into the abortion sphere. Among white Americans, women were generally more disapproving of abortion than were men on the justifications of mother's health, child deformity, and economic hardship of the family as well as on purely elective reasons for abortion. Moreover, disapproval of financial and discretionary reasons for abortion was greater among women than among men, even when education was statistically controlled.²⁶

Some researchers have found that rural areas are areas where traditional and conservative values are more strongly embraced while urban areas are less influenced by these values.²⁷ Differences between rural and urban residents in attitude toward abortion might then be expected. Research on abortion has pointed to place of residence as an important variable in differentiating these attitudes. Westoff, Moore, and Ryder noted that acceptance of abortion varied directly with size of place of residence, independent of the effects of race and religion; those women who resided in the most populated areas were the most receptive to abortion and those who resided in small towns and rural areas were the least receptive to abortion.²⁸ In an exploratory study of attitudes toward abortion among a sample of university coeds in the Upper South, John P. Reed, Paul Douglas Mader, and Hart M. Nelsen have found evidence of rural-urban differences. When compared

with rural coeds, urban coeds were found to be more receptive to abortion; two intervening variables were utilized to interpret the relationship—attitude toward authority figures and behavior indicative of freedom from constraint.²⁹

Geographical region of the country is another variable which has served to differentiate conservative-liberal beliefs and practices in general, with liberalism being most characteristic of the Northeast and the West and conservatism most characteristic of the South. Abortion laws have been, until the very recent past, state laws; thus, it might be expected that regional variations would exist in public attitudes toward abortion. Westoff, Moore, and Ryder reported that women living in the Northeast and the Far West held the most favorable attitudes, while those who lived in the South were most opposed to abortion.³⁰ Blake has observed:

. . . among non-Catholic Americans, attitudes toward abortion differ substantially by region—particularly when the more controversial justifications for it are considered.³¹ The Far West and the East lead in support for abortion reform.

And the South is alluded to as "the bastion of conservative attitudes toward abortion."³² Similar findings were revealed in a recent Gallup survey of June 1972. Geographically, approval on the abortion issue ("the decision to have an abortion should be made solely by a woman and her physician") was greatest among those respondents in the West, followed, respectively, by those in the East, the Midwest, and the South.³³

The number of years one spends in attaining a formal education involves many different variables—for instance, social class—related with fertility in general. Education may operate to broaden interests and widen knowledge—both of which may affect familial

values. With regard to abortion, the implication might follow, then, that the higher the level of education a person attains, the more liberal his attitudes. Westoff, Moore, and Ryder have found that "attitude toward abortion varies strongly with the amount of education a woman has received."³⁴ There was a direct relationship between educational level and support for abortion. Among women they found: "In general, except among Catholics, the higher the level of education the more favorable the attitude toward abortion."³⁵ In giving consideration to the more acceptable reasons for abortion among non-Catholic white Americans, Blake has found significant variation by educational levels. In general, acceptance of abortion varied directly with level of education—that is, those attaining a higher level of education held more favorable attitudes toward abortion than did those in the lower educational levels. The author also points to a widening gap over time between the college educated and the grade-school educated: "The difference was particularly large . . . because disapproval declined markedly among the highest class but remained stable or increased among the lowest class."³⁶ With regard to the more liberal justifications for abortion, attitudinal changes are also taking place, although not equally by educational levels. Attitudes among the college educated have changed most rapidly (toward increased acceptance), while attitudes among the grade-school educated have shown the least change.³⁷ "Among non-Catholics, the college-educated men are quite clearly the most favorable toward freedom of abortion."³⁸

Westoff, Moore, and Ryder have also found that tolerance of abortion (among non-Catholic and non-white women) varied directly

with husband's income and educational status.³⁹ Recent Gallup surveys also lend support to these general relationships. A June 1972 survey of Americans found greater agreement with the statement "the decision to have an abortion should be made solely by a woman and her physician" among persons of higher income and educational levels.⁴⁰ And favorableness toward liberalizing abortion was found to vary directly with education when respondents were presented with the following question in December 1972: "Would you favor or oppose a law which would permit a woman to go to a doctor to end pregnancy at any time during the first three months?"⁴¹

In conclusion, previous researchers have identified the following variables as relevant for predicting attitude toward abortion: age, sex, region, residence, income, education, and occupation. Of special interest for this thesis is the effect of denominational preference: members of the more sectarian denominations should hold to more conservative ideas on abortion while the more churchlike denominations should be more liberal in their attitude toward abortion.

Footnotes - Chapter II

¹Robert E. Cooke, ed., The Terrible Choice: The Abortion Dilemma (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, Bantam Books, 1968), p. 39.

²The data are drawn from the National Fertility Study of 1965 conducted by Norman B. Ryder and Charles F. Westoff and from five Gallup polls taken during the period 1962 through 1969.

³Judith Blake, "Abortion and Public Opinion: The 1960-1970 Decade," Science 171 (February 1971): 541-46.

⁴The National Fertility Study of 1965 utilized a national probability sample of 5,617 married women in the United States.

⁵Norman B. Ryder and Charles F. Westoff, Reproduction in the United States 1965 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 269-70.

⁶Ibid., p. 270.

⁷Alice S. Rossi, "Abortion Laws and Their Victims," Trans-Action 3 (September-October 1966): 8.

⁸Gavin Jones and Dorothy Nortman, "Roman Catholic Fertility Planning: A Comparative Review of the Research Literature," Studies in Family Planning no. 34 (October 1968): 21.

⁹Patricia Donovan, "Trends . . . Support for Abortion Reform Increasing," Family Planning Population Reporter 1 (December 1972): 13.

¹⁰Gallup Opinion Index, report no. 87 (September 1972), pp. 13-14.

¹¹Gallup Opinion Index, report no. 92 (February 1973), p. 21.

¹²Louise Corman and Judith B. Schaefer, "Population Growth and Family Planning," Journal of Marriage and the Family 35 (February 1973): 90.

¹³David Alvarez, "The Effects of Formal Church Affiliation and Religiosity on the Fertility Patterns of Mexican-American Catholics," Demography 10 (February 1973): 20.

¹⁴Charles F. Westoff, Robert G. Potter, Jr., and Philip C. Sagi, The Third Child: A Study in the Prediction of Fertility (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 238.

¹⁵Charles F. Westoff and Raymond H. Potvin, College Women and Fertility Values (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 125.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Gordon F. De Jong, "Religious Fundamentalism, Socio-economic Status, and Fertility Attitudes in the Southern Appalachians," Demography 2 (1965): 540-48.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 548.

²⁰Charles F. Westoff, Emily C. Moore, and Norman B. Ryder, "The Structure of Attitudes Toward Abortion," The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly 47 (January 1969): 17.

²¹Ibid., pp. 20-22.

²²Blake, "Abortion and Public Opinion: The 1960-1970 Decade," pp. 540-41.

²³Ibid., p. 545.

²⁴Westoff, Moore, and Ryder, "The Structure of Attitudes Toward Abortion," p. 15.

²⁵James R. Abernathy, Bernard G. Greenburg, and Daniel G. Horvitz, "Estimates of Induced Abortion in Urban North Carolina," Demography 7 (February 1970): 25.

²⁶Blake, "Abortion and Public Opinion: The 1960-1970 Decade," pp. 540-41.

²⁷For example, evidence of rural-urban differences in attitude toward the law is shown in Hart M. Nelsen, John P. Reed, and Ralph E. Tish, "Locality, Property Offenders, and Attitude Toward Law," Rural Sociology 36 (June 1971): 195-202. Civil rights attitudinal differences are found to vary with place of residence in Hart M. Nelsen and Raytha L. Yokley, "Civil Rights Attitudes of Rural and Urban Presbyterians," Rural Sociology 35 (June 1970): 161-74. Residential differences on pornography are noted by John P. Reed and Robin S. Reed, "P.R.U.D.E.S. (Pornography Research Using Direct Erotic Stimuli)," The Journal of Sex Research 8 (August 1972): 237-46.

²⁸Westoff, Moore, and Ryder, "The Structure of Attitudes Toward Abortion," p. 23.

²⁹John P. Reed, Paul Douglas Mader, and Hart M. Nelsen, "City Setting and Tolerance Toward Abortion: An Exploratory Study of the Attitudes of Coeds," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Sociological Society, Atlanta, Georgia, April 1973.

³⁰Westoff, Moore, and Ryder, "The Structure of Attitudes Toward Abortion," p. 33.

³¹Blake, "Abortion and Public Opinion: The 1960-1970 Decade," p. 547.

³²Ibid.

³³Gallup Opinion Index, report no. 87 (September 1972),
p. 14.

³⁴Westoff, Moore, and Ryder, "The Structure of Attitudes
Toward Abortion," p. 33.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Blake, "Abortion and Public Opinion: The 1960-1970 Decade,"
p. 543.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., p. 544.

³⁹Westoff, Moore, and Ryder, "The Structure of Attitudes
Toward Abortion," p. 23.

⁴⁰Gallup Opinion Index, report no. 87 (September 1972),
pp. 13-14.

⁴¹Gallup Opinion Index, report no. 92 (February 1973),
pp. 21-22.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHOD

Hypotheses

The present study examines a number of propositions indicated in the foregoing survey of literature. Of central concern here, however, is the effect of Protestant denominational preference—as it represents sectarianism—on attitude toward abortion.

All the factors affecting attitudes toward abortion cannot, of course, be assessed empirically within the confines of this study. Some, nevertheless, can be at least partially isolated. From the literature, correlates of these attitudes may be obtained. Liberal abortion attitudes appear to be most characteristic of those who are young, educated, rank high in terms of income and occupational status, reside in urban areas, and are from the West and the Northeast. These same correlates have also been found to be associated with religious orientation. Sectarian Protestants tend to be older, have lower educational levels, rank lower in terms of income and occupation, reside in rural areas and be from the South. Since the correlates of sectarianism are also the correlates of abortion attitude, it is quite possible that a spurious relationship between sectarianism and abortion attitude might be obtained in the absence of controls on these common correlates.¹

The effect of church attendance on attitude toward abortion will also be examined. The question here is: Is sectarian outlook or mentality independently related to holding conservative views on abortion or is it transmitted (through ongoing religious socialization) through church attendance?

It is expected that sectarianism will be inversely related to favorableness toward abortion--that is, those ranking high on sectarianism will hold less favorable attitudes toward abortion and those ranking low on sectarianism will hold more favorable attitudes. The idea that denominations differ in terms of sectarianism further leads to some definite expectations regarding the relationships between attitude toward abortion and the selected independent variables. It is expected that age and favorableness toward abortion will be inversely related--that is, younger respondents will hold more favorable attitudes toward abortion than will older respondents. No significant difference in liberal-conservative attitudes is anticipated among males and females. With regard to region, it is thought that residents of the West and the Northeast will be most favorable and residents of the South least favorable toward abortion. And it is expected that positive relationships will obtain between favorableness toward abortion and the variables of residence, income, occupation, and education. Respondents who live in urban areas and those who have higher income, occupational, and educational levels will hold the more favorable attitudes toward abortion.

Sample

The social survey data utilized in this analysis have been gathered through the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) and dis-

tributed by the Roper Public Opinion Research Center. The amalgam survey was conducted during the months of February, March, and April of 1972. The sample is a standard multistage probability one (with quota sampling at the block level), and it is drawn from a universe consisting of the total noninstitutional population of the United States, 18 years of age and older.²

The initial sample yielded interviews with a total of 1,613 respondents. While this number is inclusive of 265 non-white respondents, the analysis undertaken here is restricted to include only white respondents. Further reductions in the sample size have also been necessitated. Some of the respondents, for instance, could not be assigned abortion scores because they did not respond to one or more of the six abortion items. Considerable overlap in "non-responses" and responses considered not applicable resulted among respondents; for example, the Catholic respondent who did not respond to an abortion item (Catholics were excluded from the general analysis). Rather than reporting the frequencies for all the various combinations that led to a reduction in the sample size, the rate of non-response and inapplicable items are reported separately for each variable. The N sizes (by variable) representing additional loss from the original sample of 1,613 include the following: abortion index (N=13), Catholic (413), non-Catholic and non-Protestant (169), age (5), education (5), income (139), occupation (70), and church attendance (13). Thus, the total N size is reduced to 676. The reduction of the sample to approximate a probability sample has been accomplished by a weight variable of .625 assigned to each respondent. Reported N sizes and statistics for testing significance have been affected by the weighting process.

Variable Identification

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable—attitude toward abortion—is measured through the construction of an index consisting of six items. These items involve six varying circumstances for abortion: (1) to protect the life or the health of the mother, (2) in cases of rape, (3) in the case of a potentially defective child, (4) in the case of economic hardship of the family, (5) in the case of an unmarried woman who does not want to marry the man, and (6) in the case of a married woman who does not want any more children. (The questions as they appeared in the interview schedule are listed in table 1, along with the percentage of positive responses [and the number so responding] to each item.) The responses by all interviewees have been utilized at this point in the analysis.

Each respondent is given a score of 1 for each item to which a positive abortion response is indicated. When summed, the abortion scale scores range from 0 through 6, from most conservative to most liberal attitude toward abortion. Scale scores are also dichotomized into two factors. Factor I is a Liberal Abortion Index and consists of the abortion items 4 through 6 as indicated above—the soft reasons for abortion. Factor II is a Conservative Abortion Index and consists of the abortion items 1 through 3 as indicated above—the hard reasons for abortion.

Inter-item and item-total correlation coefficients and the alpha coefficient have been calculated in order to establish the internal reliability of the Abortion Index (see table 1). Guilford has recommended that inter-item coefficients fall within $+ .10$ and

TABLE 1
ITEMS IN ABORTION SCALE

Abortion Item	Item Intercorrelations ^a						Item Total ^b r's	Percentage of Positive ^c Responses ^d
	A	B	C	D	E	F		
A. If there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby?	—	.40	.60	.45	.61	.41	.73	74.6 (N=1,199)
B. If she is married and does not want any more children?		—	.29	.73	.40	.70	.80	37.7 (607)
C. If the woman's own health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy?			—	.37	.56	.32	.64	83.4 (1,333)
D. If the family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children?				—	.48	.70	.84	45.8 (735)
E. If she became pregnant as a result of rape?					—	.46	.75	74.6 (1,196)
F. If she is not married and does not want to marry the man?						—	.81	40.7 (654)

Scale reliability = .86 (obtained from Kuder-Richardson Formula 20).

^aA negative response (disfavoring abortion) was assigned to a response of 0. A positive response was assigned a response of 2. Responses "don't know" were assigned scores of 1. "No responses" were not included.

^bPearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient.

^cPositive responses were defined as "Yes" (score 2).

^d"No responses" are deleted for each individual item. This no response ranged from .37 percent through .56 percent.

+ .60 and that item-total coefficients fall within +.30 and +.80.³ The inter-item coefficients for the Abortion Index range between +.29 and +.73; the item-total coefficients range between +.64 and +.84. The former exceeds Guilford's suggested upper boundary. Based on the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, an alpha of .86 was calculated, which indicates very high internal reliability.⁴ It is concluded that the six-item Abortion Index has internal reliability.

These same coefficients have also been calculated for the Liberal Abortion Index (Factor I) and for the Conservative Abortion Index (Factor II). The range of inter-item correlation coefficients on Factor I is +.70 through +.73; the range of item-total correlation coefficients is +.89 through +.90. Factor I yields an alpha coefficient of .88. On Factor II, inter-item coefficients fall within +.83 and +.87. Here, the alpha coefficient is .81. Both alphas again indicate very high internal reliability.

The responses to the six abortion items have been subjected to a principal component solution factor analysis with independent (orthogonal) rotation. Factor loadings so derived are presented in table 2.⁵ The factor analysis of the data resulted in items 4, 5, and 6 clearly loading under Factor II (Liberal Abortion Index) and items 1, 2, and 3 clearly loading under Factor I (Conservative Abortion Index). The loadings thus reflect the same breakdown in attitude toward abortion as indicated in the review of literature.

While face validity of the items may be determined by visual examination, further validity of the scales has been supported by three measures of construct validity. It was presupposed, first of all, that both abortion indexes should be negatively correlated with

TABLE 2
SIX ABORTION ITEMS WITH FACTOR LOADINGS^a

Abortion Item	Loadings on:	
	Factor I	Factor II
A. If there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby?	.27	-.82
B. If she is married and does not want any more children?	.89	-.18
C. If the woman's own health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy?	.12	-.86
D. If the family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children?	.85	-.29
E. If she became pregnant as a result of rape?	.33	-.77
F. If she is not married and does not want to marry the man?	.85	-.24

^aThese loadings were derived from a principal component solution factor analysis (with orthogonal rotation).

ideal number of children, with those in favor of abortion being less likely to believe the ideal number of children for a family to be three or more. The results, presented in table 3, support this supposition. Eta coefficients for both the Liberal and Conservative Indexes, as well as for the Total Abortion Index, are significant at least at the .001 level.

Secondly, it was felt that an opposite relation should result with regard to a question on morals involving attitude toward premarital sex. It was felt both abortion indexes should be positively correlated with permissive attitude toward premarital sex, with those in favor of abortion being more tolerant of premarital sexual relationships. The results presented in table 4 show support for this relationship. Once again, eta coefficients for the Liberal and Conservative Indexes, as well as for the Total Abortion Index, are significant at least at the .001 level.

And third, it would be expected that Protestant-Catholic differences would be found in outlook toward abortion. It was believed that Protestant respondents would be more likely to score high on all three abortion indexes. Data shown in table 5 uphold this projected relationship. Eta coefficients for each of the indexes are significant at least at the .01 level.

Independent Variables

A total of nine independent or predictor variables have been utilized. These include, in addition to Protestant denominational preference and church attendance: age, sex, region, residence, income, education, and occupation. As noted previously, the selection of these particular independent variables has not been based simply

TABLE 3
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDE TOWARD ABORTION
AND IDEAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Subscale	Percent Believing Ideal Number of Children to Be 3 or More by Scale Value ^a				Eta
	0(Low)	1	2	3(High)	
I	62.2 (N=334)	60.7 (94)	56.0 (84)	32.0 (258)	.28
II	72.3 (N=63)	67.0 (59)	61.3 (97)	45.4 (551)	.19

^aThe values for the Total Scale are as follows: (0)72.4 (N=61), (1)67.1 (53), (2)64.5 (76), (3)55.1 (167), (4)61.8 (82), (5)56.0 (78), (6)31.4 (253). The eta coefficient is -.30.

All eta coefficients are significant at least at the .001 level as determined by the appropriate F-Test.

TABLE 4

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDE TOWARD ABORTION
AND ATTITUDE TOWARD PREMARITAL SEX

Subscale	Percent Indicating Permissive Attitude toward Premarital Sex by Scale Value ^a				Eta
	0(Low)	1	2	3(High)	
I	31.3 (N=365)	47.4 (95)	48.9 (82)	72.7 (259)	.36
II	20.7 (N=76)	30.6 (69)	34.2 (101)	57.0 (555)	.27

^aThe values for the Total Scale are as follows: (0)21.0 (N=74), (1)27.7 (63), (2)32.0 (80), (3)38.0 (169), (4)48.9 (83), (5)50.4 (123), (6)72.9 (254). The eta coefficient is +.37.

All eta coefficients are significant at least at the .001 level as determined by the appropriate F-Test.

TABLE 5
 PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC DIFFERENCES
 IN ATTITUDE TOWARD ABORTION

Religion	Percent Scoring High on Abortion Scale ^a		
	Subscale I	Subscale II	Total Scale
Protestant (N=499)	42.3	72.5	52.9
Catholic (N=241)	30.8	58.8	39.4
Eta	-.11	-.14	-.13
p	<.01	<.001	<.001

^aThe indexes have been dichotomized as follows: Subscale I: low (scores 0-1) and high (2-3), Subscale II: low (0-2) and high (3), and Total Scale: low (0-3) and high (4-6).

on their relevance to abortion attitude, but rather they have been included here because previous research has also demonstrated their relevance to denominational preference as an indicator of sectarianism.

Protestant denominational preference. Denominational preference is that of the respondent and is coded into seven classifications: (1) Sect, (2) Baptist, (3) Lutheran, (4) Methodist, (5) Presbyterian, (6) Episcopalian, and (7) Other "church."

While the denominational variable is at the nominal level of measurement, an attempt has been made to order the various Protestant denominations along a sectarianism continuum, from high to low sectarianism, thus implying ordinal measurement. The first step in ordering involved the defining of sectarianism as those denominations not belonging to the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.⁶ Those denominations classified as Sect (a miscellaneous group of denominations) and Baptist are not members of the National Council. The breaking point for member-nonmember status lies within Lutheranism, most (but not all) denominations of which are affiliated with the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.⁷ The remaining classifications—Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Other "church"—are affiliated with the National Council.⁸

Glock and Stark include in their five dimensions of religiosity an ideological dimension which "is constituted . . . by expectations that the religious person will hold to certain beliefs."⁹ Stark and Glock, in a manner similar to the one used here, order the various denominations along a continuum on two different measures of religious beliefs—orthodoxy and particularism.¹⁰

In addition, the rank ordering of denominations here is similar to that order devised by Gockel who stratified religious groups according to family income levels.¹¹ The significance of this ordering can be interpreted by an observation by Pope who saw income as a measure indicative of sect-church status.¹²

Church attendance. For the purpose of this study church attendance of each respondent has been dichotomized according to frequency of attendance at religious services: (1) high church attendance, defined as attending "nearly every week" or more; and (2) low church attendance, defined as attending "2 or 3 times a month" or less.

Age. Age of respondent is at the ordinal level of measurement and is coded into five categories: (1) 10 years of age through 29 years of age, (2) 30 years through 39 years, (3) 40 years through 49 years, (4) 50 years through 59 years, and (5) 60 years and over.

Sex. Sex of respondent is at the nominal level of measurement. Percentages of respondents by sex are 49 percent and 51 percent, for males and females respectively.

Region. A fourfold classification identifies the place of residence of each respondent by geographical region of the United States. The classifications are as follows: (1) South, (2) Midwest, (3) Northeast, and (4) West.¹³ While region is technically a nominal variable, an ordinal scale has been implied through the ordering of regions based on increasing liberality in general.¹⁴

Residence. Residence is defined operationally as the size of place of respondent's present residence and is used as an ordinal measure. The five categories include residence in: (1) a rural area

including residence in a small town under 2,500; (2) a small city or town under 50,000; (3) a medium size city, 50,000 to 250,000; (4) a suburb near a large city; and (5) a large city over 250,000. The residence variable, as employed here, is an ordinal measure.

Income. Income is used to refer to the respondent's total family income (before taxes) for the preceding year (1971). Five income groupings are used: (1) under \$4,000; (2) \$4,000 to \$7,999; (3) \$8,000 to \$12,499; (4) \$12,500 to \$17,499; and (5) \$17,500 and over. Income, too, is at the ordinal level of measurement.

Education. Education is used to refer to levels of formal education and is measured according to the years of schooling completed. The education variable is at the ordinal level of measurement. The four educational categories have been developed as follows: (1) no formal education through eighth grade, (2) grades nine through eleven, (3) high school (twelfth grade), and (4) some college or more.

Occupation. Occupation refers to the job level of the head of the household and is stratified into four categories ranging from low to high prestige. Prestige scores are based on the 1960 Hodge-Siegel-Rossi prestige score assignments.¹⁵

Manipulation of the Data

The statistical technique utilized in the analysis of data is Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA), an analogue of multiple regression analysis. The MCA program, assuming the dependent variable is predictable from an additive combination of the predictor variables, permits the examination of the interrelationships among several independent or predictor variables and a dependent variable. The independent variables may be at the nominal, ordinal, or interval

level of measurement; the dependent variable should be either dichotomous or at the interval level of measurement. (To use the program for analyzing a dependent variable having ordinal properties it is necessary to make the assumption that it approximated an underlying scale.) The program allows for the examination of the effects of any selected independent variable on a designated dependent variable, both before and after adjusting for the effects of the other related independent variables.

The MCA program implements a multivariate technique applicable to many kinds of data for which the simpler forms of the traditional techniques—multiple analysis of variance and multiple regression—would be inappropriate. The MCA program is designed to handle weak measurement on the independent variables, correlated predictors, and non-linear relationships. No serious limitations are encountered by the program either in the range of values the dependent variable may embrace or in the number of predictor variables which may be used. The program is able to handle missing data on both the dependent and independent variables, and provision is made for the analysis of various subgroups.

The program computes eta (a correlation ratio which indicates the effectiveness of a single independent variable in explaining the variation in the dependent variable) and beta (a partial coefficient which indicates the effectiveness of a single independent variable, after the effects of the other independent variables have been statistically controlled). Directional signs may be affixed to the coefficients on the basis of a visual inspection of the means across the categories of the independent variable. In addition, the program

yields a multiple (R) correlation coefficient, which indicates the amount of variance in the dependent variable explained jointly by all the independent variables, as well as various sums of squares for computing appropriate F ratios as tests of statistical significance.¹⁶

The MCA program has been used in this thesis to test the significance of relationships suggested by earlier studies. The analysis employs three abortion indexes—the Liberal Abortion Index, the Conservative Abortion Index, and the Total Abortion Index—as dependent variables and a total of nine predictor variables. MCA has been used to: (1) measure the effect of each predictor variable on attitude toward abortion both before and after adjusting for the effects of all other variables, (2) test for the statistical significance of each variable, and (3) determine the amount of variance in attitude toward abortion explained by the predictor variables.

Footnotes - Chapter III

¹The Multiple Classification Analysis program operates, in effect, to utilize these selected correlates as both controls and predictors.

²For a more detailed description of the sample design, see: National Opinion Research Center, "National Data Program for the Social Sciences: Codebook for the Spring 1972 General Social Survey," University of Chicago, July 1972, Appendix A, pp. 49-53.

³J. P. Guilford, Fundamental Statistics in Psychology and Education, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1905), p. 481.

⁴J. P. Guilford, Psychometric Methods, 2d. ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1954), pp. 380-81.

⁵For a discussion of factor analysis, see: R. J. Rummel, Applied Factor Analysis (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

⁶For a complete listing of members of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A., see: Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed., Yearbook of American Churches 1970 (New York: Council Press, 1970), pp. 195-96.

⁷For an example of a Lutheran Church that is not a member of the National Council of Churches (The Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod), see: Yearbook of American Churches 1970, p. 51.

⁸"Other 'church'" includes those denominations belonging to the National Council of Churches but not listed separately in these analyses.

⁹Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, Religion and Society in Tension, Rand McNally Sociology Series (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1965), p. 20.

¹⁰Rodney Stark and Charles Y. Glock, American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 62, 68.

¹¹Galen L. Gockel, "Income and Religious Affiliation: A Regression Analysis," American Journal of Sociology 74 (May 1969): 637.

¹²Liston Pope, Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), p. 122.

¹³The states which comprise each region are as follows: (1) South—Delaware, Maryland, Washington, D.C., Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas; (2) Midwest—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wis-

consin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas; (3) Northeast—Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania; and (4) West—Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii.

¹⁴Although some research findings have pointed to the lessened importance of differences based on the rural-urban distinction, it has been recently maintained that "the residence variable remains useful in attitudinal and other studies." Hart M. Nelsen, John P. Reed, and Ralph E. Tish, "Locality, Property Offenders, and Attitude Toward Law," Rural Sociology 36 (June 1971): 195.

¹⁵For an explanation of occupational prestige score assignments, see: National Opinion Research Center, "National Data Program for the Social Sciences: Codebook for the Spring 1972 General Social Survey," Appendix G, pp. 103-06.

¹⁶For more information on MCA, see: Frank Andrews, James Morgan, and John Sonquist, Multiple Classification Analysis (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, 1967). For the use of MCA with other data, see: Hart M. Nelsen, Raytha L. Yokley, and Thomas W. Madron, "Ministerial Roles and Social Actionist Stance: Protestant Clergy and Protest in the Sixties," American Sociological Review 38 (June 1973): 375-86; Hart M. Nelsen, "Sectarianism, World View, and Anomie," Social Forces 51 (December 1972): 226-33; and Marvin E. Olsen, "Social and Political Participation of Blacks," American Sociological Review 35 (August 1970): 682-97.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

It is the major hypothesis of this research that Protestant denominational preference, as a measure of sectarianism, will be inversely related to favorableness toward abortion. It is also hypothesized that previously stated relationships will exist between favorableness toward abortion and other selected sociological variables: age, sex, region, residence, income, education, and occupation.

Parallel analyses have been performed for the three dependent variables: the total abortion scale and the two subscales (liberal bases for abortion and conservative bases for abortion). Later in the analysis, church attendance has been introduced as an additional predictor in an attempt to ascertain its influence.

In table 6 are shown the eta and beta coefficients for the effect of denominational preference (sectarianism) on liberal attitude toward abortion (Subscale I). Without controls, the expected relationship generally holds with respondents of the more sectarian denominations endorsing liberal bases for abortion to a lesser extent than respondents of the more churchlike denominations. The eta coefficient is $-.22$ and is significant at the $.001$ level. With the introduction of controls (age, sex, region, residence, income, education, and occupation), the ability of Protestant denominational preference

TABLE 6
 PERCENT SCORING HIGH ON (DICHOTOMIZED)
 ABORTION SUBSCALE I BY DENOMINATION

Denominational Preference		Percent High	
		Unadjusted	Adjusted
Sect	(N=69)	32.7	33.5
Baptist	(98)	31.8	35.1
Lutheran	(76)	35.5	38.8
Other "church"	(21)	52.9	51.0
Methodist	(101)	50.9	49.7
Presbyterian	(41)	53.8	47.2
Episcopalian	(18)	71.4	60.4

Eta² = .22 (p < .001)
 R = .363^a

Beta = -.16 (p > .05)
 N = 424

^aIn this analysis, in addition to denominational preference, the following predictors were used: age, sex, region, residence, income, education, and occupation.

to predict liberal attitude toward abortion falls to a level perhaps due to chance alone. The beta coefficient is $-.16$ ($p > .05$). While the beta values for the denominational variable are in the correct direction, as indicated from a visual inspection of percentages on attitude toward abortion across denominational categories, the $.05$ significance level is not reached here and in table 7 (to be introduced shortly). The dependent variables are the subscales of attitude toward abortion. It is adduced that use of the subscales as dependent variables has the effect of attenuating variation among the respondents on outlook toward abortion. Thus, the major test of the denominational variable as a predictor will not come until the Total Abortion Scale is utilized as the dependent variable. The reader should examine the direction of the beta coefficients and might also compare the magnitude of these coefficients with the beta coefficient for the effect of denominational preference on attitude toward abortion--the Total Scale--which will be presented later in the thesis.

In table 7 are shown the eta and beta coefficients for the effect of the denominational categories on conservative attitude toward abortion (Subscale II). The overall pattern observed in table 7 is virtually the same as the pattern in table 6. Again, interviewees belonging to the more sectarian denominations appear to endorse abortion on conservative grounds less than those of the more churchlike denominations ($\eta = -.18$, $p < .05$). With the introduction of control variables, the relationship between sectarianism and conservative attitude toward abortion is once again diminished to a level perhaps due only to chance ($\beta = -.13$, $p > .05$).

TABLE 7
 PERCENT SCORING HIGH ON (DICHOTOMIZED)
 ABORTION SUBSCALE II BY DENOMINATION

Denominational Preference		Percent High	
		Unadjusted	Adjusted
Sect	(N=69)	62.7	63.8
Baptist	(98)	66.2	68.6
Lutheran	(76)	68.6	71.6
Other "church"	(21)	73.5	72.5
Methodist	(101)	80.1	79.0
Presbyterian	(41)	81.5	75.2
Episcopalian	(18)	92.9	84.1

Eta \rightarrow .18 (p<.05)
 R=.342^a

Beta \rightarrow .13 (p>.05)
 N=424

^aIn this analysis, in addition to denominational preference, the following predictors were used: age, sex, region, residence, income, education, and occupation.

In table 8, zero-order and partial coefficients are shown for each predictor variable. Age yields an eta coefficient of .14 and a beta coefficient of .08, neither of which is significant at the .05 level. Although it was expected that age and favorableness toward abortion would be inversely related, the data here do not lend support to this hypothesis. Sex yields an eta of $-.06$ and a beta of $-.04$; again, neither is significant at the .05 level. As expected, no discernible relationship has been found between sex and attitude toward abortion. The variable region yields an eta of $+.07$ and a beta of $.02$; both exceed the .05 significance level. Therefore, the expected relation between region and attitude toward abortion is not given support. The hypothesized relation between residence and attitude toward abortion is upheld, with urban residents being more liberal than ruralites; the coefficients include an eta of $+.22$ which is significant at the .001 level and a beta of $+.16$ which is significant at the .05 level. Income yields an eta of $+.25$ ($p < .001$) and a beta of $.08$ ($p > .05$). Thus, the hypothesized relation between income and attitude toward abortion, while significant without controls, is diminished with the addition of control variables. Education yields a $+.33$ eta coefficient and a $+.22$ beta coefficient. Both coefficients are significant at the .001 level. Thus, the expected relationship between education and attitude toward abortion is supported. Occupation yields an eta of $.18$ which is significant at the .01 level; however, with controls introduced, a beta value of $.05$ is yielded, not reaching significance at the .05 level. Thus, the hypothesis indicating a relationship between occupation and attitude toward abortion is rejected. Denominational preference yields an eta coefficient of $-.25$

TABLE 8
EFFECTS OF SELECTED PREDICTORS ON ABORTION SCALE

Predictors	Eta	p	Beta	p
Age	.14	>.05	.08	>.05
Sex	-.06	>.05	-.04	>.05
Region	+.07	>.05	.02	>.05
Residence	+.22	<.001	+.16	<.05
Income	+.25	<.001	.08	>.05
Education	+.33	<.001	+.22	<.001
Occupation	.18	<.01	.05	>.05
Denominational preference	-.25	<.05	-.19	<.05

R=.395

N=423

which is significant at the .05 level and a beta coefficient of $-.19$ which is significant at the .05 level. Thus, prediction of a relationship between denominational preference and attitude toward abortion is supported. From most to least important, the predictors are as follows: education, denominational preference, and residence.

Table 9 presents the effect of denominational preference on the Total Abortion Scale. Respondents belonging to the less sectarian denominations are more likely to score high on the scale (more likely to endorse abortion) than those of the more sectarian denominations. The value for eta is $-.25$ ($p < .05$), while the value for beta is $-.19$ ($p < .05$).

In table 10, zero-order and partial coefficients are again reported with the introduction of church attendance as an additional predictor variable. Church attendance yields an eta coefficient of $-.11$ which is significant at the .05 level and a beta coefficient of $-.08$ which is not significant at the .05 level.

Table 11 reports percentages of respondents scoring high on the Total Abortion Scale by denominational categories with the addition of church attendance as a predictor variable. The eta coefficient is $-.25$ ($p < .001$) and the beta coefficient is $-.17$ ($p < .05$). The predicted relationship between denominational preference and attitude toward abortion is supported with church attendance statistically controlled.

Table 12 reports the effect of church attendance on attitude toward abortion. Those respondents who are characterized by low church attendance hold more favorable attitudes than do those respondents characterized by high church attendance. An eta value of $-.11$ is obtained which is significant at the .05 level. With the introduction

TABLE 9
PERCENT SCORING HIGH ON ABORTION SCALE BY DENOMINATION

Denominational Preference		Percent High	
		Unadjusted	Adjusted
Sect	(N=69)	37.3	39.6
Baptist	(98)	42.0	44.9
Lutheran	(76)	47.9	50.9
Other "church"	(21)	64.7	63.7
Methodist	(101)	64.0	62.5
Presbyterian	(41)	63.1	56.4
Episcopalian	(18)	82.1	71.0

Eta² = .25 (p < .05)
R = .395^a

Beta = -.19 (p < .05)
N = 424

^aIn this analysis, in addition to denominational preference, the following predictors were used: age, sex, region, residence, income, education, and occupation.

TABLE 10
EFFECTS OF SELECTED PREDICTORS ON ABORTION SCALE

Predictors	Eta	p	Beta	p
Age	.14	> .05	.08	> .05
Sex	-.06	> .05	-.03	> .05
Region	+.07	> .05	.02	> .05
Residence	+.22	< .001	+.16	< .05
Income	+.25	< .001	.09	> .05
Education	+.33	< .001	+.23	< .001
Occupation	+.18	< .01	.06	> .05
Denominational preference	-.25	< .001	-.17	< .05
Church attendance	-.11	< .05	-.08	> .05

R=.402

N=422

TABLE 11
 PERCENT SCORING HIGH ON ABORTION SCALE BY DENOMINATION

Denominational Preference		Percent High	
		Unadjusted	Adjusted
Sect	(N=69)	37.3	40.5
Baptist	(98)	42.0	45.4
Lutheran	(75)	47.5	50.5
Other "church"	(21)	64.7	61.8
Methodist	(101)	64.0	61.8
Presbyterian	(41)	63.1	56.3
Episcopalian	(18)	82.1	69.7

Eta \approx .25 (p<.001)
 R=.402^a

Beta \approx -.17 (p<.05)
 N=423

^aIn this analysis, in addition to denominational preference, the following predictors were used: age, sex, region, residence, income, education, occupation, and church attendance.

TABLE 12

PERCENT SCORING HIGH ON ABORTION SCALE BY CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Church Attendance ^a	Percent High	
	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Low attendance (N=420)	56.7	55.5
High attendance (255)	45.1	47.1

Eta² = .11 (p < .05)
 R = .402^b

Beta = .08 (p > .05)

^aChurch attendance has been dichotomized into low attendance (2-3 times a month or less) and high attendance (nearly every week and more).

^bIn this analysis, in addition to denominational preference, the following predictors were used: age, sex, region, residence, income, education, occupation, and church attendance.

of control variables, the ability of church attendance to predict attitude toward abortion falls to a level perhaps due to chance alone (beta $-.08$, $p > .05$).

The multiple R coefficient for the joint effects of the selected predictors—Protestant denominational preference (sectarianism), age, sex, region, residence, income, education, and occupation—on the Liberal Abortion Scale is $.363$ (table 6). The multiple R coefficient for the joint effects of the predictors on the Conservative Abortion Scale is $.342$ (table 7). The multiple R coefficient for the joint effects of the predictors on the Total Abortion Scale is $.395$ (table 9); when church attendance is added as a predictor variable, the multiple R coefficient is raised only slightly— $R = .402$ (table 11).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This analysis has centered on the relationship between a measure indicative of sectarianism--Protestant denominational preference--and attitude toward abortion and how this relationship is affected when other selected sociological variables are taken into account. An abortion scale ranging from 0 (most conservative) to 6 (most liberal) was judged to have high internal consistency and validity. Data drawn from a national sample of the adult population of the United States were subjected to Multiple Classification Analysis using both dichotomized (liberal-conservative) abortion responses as well as the total abortion responses.

The results of the analysis support the major contention that there are differences in attitude toward abortion among the various Protestant denominations. The inverse relationship between sectarianism and endorsement of abortion was significant, independent of the effects of age, sex, region, residence, income, education, occupation, and church attendance. Respondents of the more sectarian denominations were less likely to support abortion--either on the hard or conservative grounds or on the soft or liberal grounds--than were those of the more churchlike denominations. By denominational category, support for abortion (from high to low) was as follows: Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Other "church," Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, and Sect. The

set of predictor variables account for a statistically significant, yet a relatively small part, of variation in attitude toward abortion.

Previous researchers have found that Protestants, in general, tend to hold more liberal attitudes toward abortion than do Catholics and more conservative attitudes than do Jews. The main conclusion emerging from this study is that this generalization can be broadened. Among the Protestant respondents, members of the more sectarian denominations are more conservative in their support of abortion than are those of the more churchlike denominations, even when a number of correlates common to both sectarianism and attitude toward abortion are taken into account.

Given the above findings, what comments can be made with respect to the effect of Protestant denominational preference on attitude toward abortion? Sectarianism emerges as an important factor in differentiating attitudes related to abortion. Future research should be completed in order to identify those beliefs and values of sectarianism that are related to attitude toward abortion. Is a conservative definition of life (the fetus as a living human) at work here? Are traditional sex roles supported by sectarian outlooks, with abortion disfavored because it upsets a traditional view of the female role? Finally, is the relationship between sectarianism and attitude toward abortion due to a simplistic interpretation of God's commandment to be fruitful and multiply? These and other questions should be considered in future studies.

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