A PASSION TO PUNISH: ABORTION OPPONENTS WHO FAVOR THE DEATH PENALTY*

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The purpose of this study is to empirically examine the attitudinal foundations of "pro-life" people who support capital punishment. To abortion opponents, the procedure represents the deliberate killing of human beings and should be a punishable criminal offense. According to death penalty supporters, the capital defendant deserves the ultimate punishment because he or she has destroyed innocent human life. Although these attitudes may seem contradictory to some, in that taking "human life" is condemned in one instance and supported in another, empirical analysis demonstrates that the desire for punishment is essential to understanding them. Individuals who express a strong commitment to punishment are more likely to oppose abortion and also to favor capital punishment.

In the political arena, abortion and the death penalty have become litmus tests for persons seeking public office. Pro-life advocates have been vocal for more than 25 years and have had an important impact on recent federal and state elections, especially in Republican contests (McKeegan 1992). The death penalty has been politically important since the 1988 presidential campaign, where angry lines were drawn between proponents and opponents of capital punishment (Cook 1998; Jamieson 1992; Radelet and Pierce 1992). Perhaps even more curious is the political overlap between those who are pro-life when discussing abortion and pro-death when discussing capital punishment; some of this overlap, however, may be explained by attitudes toward punishment in general.

The power to punish, to secure obedience to the law or moral order be means of punishment, is one of the most influential social forces for obtaining conformity in human societies (Garland 1990). Americans widely support the use of punishment (Ellison and

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Sherkat 1993; Greven 1990): In a national survey, 90 percent of American parents agreed that physical punishment of children was "normal, necessary and good" (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1980). One of the primary motives for incarceration is to punish those who breach the social and moral contract (Foucault 1979; Garland 1990; Ignatieff 1978). Punitive vengeance is a major incentive for promoting capital punishment (Ellsworth and Gross 1994; Ellsworth and Ross 1983; Haas 1994).

Garland writes that punishment "rests, at least in part, upon a shared emotional reaction caused by the criminal's desecration of the sacred things" (1990:30). He goes on to argue that despite the veneer of utilitarian motivations for punishment, there exists an underlying "vengeful, motivating passion which guides punishment and supplies its force" (1990:31). Therefore, to regard punishment as a simple social interaction between those with the power to punish and those who receive the punishment is inadequate.

This desire for punishment rests in part on the shared emotional reactions caused by the "desecration" of what is perceived as sacred. Punitiveness applies to anti-abortion sentiments in that most abortion opponents believe that the procedure results in the desecration of human embryos, and that this should be illegal and punishable. Punitiveness applies to pro-death penalty sentiments in that the condemned has desecrated human life through murder, which is illegal and must be severely punished.

Page and Clelland (1978) argue that public and political protests to restore traditional institutions are an attempt to preserve a lifestyle based on traditional morality and social order. Anti-abortion legislation and protests are an attempt to preserve and ensure a particular lifestyle through political means, by criminalizing abortion and punishing abortion "criminals." Cook (1993) cites an unsuccessful anti-abortion state legislator in Massachusetts, who introduced a bill that would have redefined abortion as a capital offense and the appropriate punishment to be death by electrocution. Similarly, Staten Island borough president Guy V. Molinari urged the New York state legislature "to pass laws under which doctors who perform a form of late-term abortion would be charged with first-degree murder and executed by the same method used in the abortions" (New York Times, March 25, 1997:B2). Pro-death penalty demonstrations, notably at executions of notorious criminals, reinforce the state's power to seek vengeance (Mello 1991). This "cultural fundamentalism" (Blanchard 1994) is seen on the political right in the United States, where vested interests in maintaining the traditional status quo are an important concern.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON ANTI ABORTION AND PRO-DEATH PENALTY OPINIONS

Two public opinion studies have directly examined the relationship between opinions opposing abortion and favoring the death penalty. Johnson and Tamney (1988:40) used the 1983 and 1984 General Social Surveys to examine factors related to "inconsistent life-views." Employing the three most extreme cases of anti-abortion opinion (fetal defect, rape, and maternal health), Johnson and Tamney classified respondents as "inconsistent" if they opposed abortion under any one of these three extreme circumstances and also supported the death penalty. On the basis of this organization, they found that 218 respondents in 1983 and 195 respondents in 1984 held inconsistent life-views. Their findings revealed that those with such seemingly inconsistent views tended to be members of fundamentalist Protestant denominations who held strict dogmatic beliefs. Such persons are concerned about young people's sexual morality and believe in the use of physical force to solve problems (perhaps more strongly than they believe in "preserving life"). Johnson and Tamney concluded that these people actually hold consistent traditional views which lead to opposing abortion and supporting the death penalty. As social traditionalists, they believe in the state's authority to regulate moral behavior, including abortion, and to inflict punishment on perceived offenders, including the death penalty.

Claggett and Shafer (1991) examined the anti-abortion and pro-death penalty connection using a 1989 *Times Mirror* survey of more than 10,000 U.S. adults. This survey included two questions assessing opinions on death the penalty and abortion. The death penalty question asked respondents whether they favored or opposed a "mandatory death penalty for anyone convicted of premeditated murder." Seventy-six percent favored the mandatory death penalty.[1] Regarding abortion, the survey asked respondents whether they favored or opposed "changing the laws to make it more difficult for a woman to get an abortion." Forty-four percent favored such legal changes.

Claggett and Shafer (1991), whose findings are most relevant to the present study, identified the anti-abortion and pro-death penalty respondents as "just desserts" [sic],[2] defined as

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[1] In 1976 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that mandatory death penalties in the state laws are unconstitutional (*Gregg v. Georgia*). Also see Epstein and Kibylka (1992) for a thorough examination of death penalty and abortion decisions rendered by the Supreme Court.

[2] These authors spell the word *desserts*, but I use the correct spelling *deserts* in reference to a reward or a punishment.

> support[ing] the taking of life for the guilty, presumably those convicted of sufficiently heinous crime [sic], but not the taking of life for the innocent, those who cannot be said to be sufficiently conscious to make choices—and pay penalties. (p. 34)

Employing this scheme, Claggett and Shafer found that 35 percent of the general public fall into the just deserts category. Whites and "low Protestants," or born-agains, are more likely than others to belong to this group. Because the authors' intention was to map public opinion on these issues rather than conducting empirical analyses of the social correlates of these seemingly inconsistent life-views, their study does not include examinations of the social origins of these views; it demonstrates that those who oppose abortion and support capital punishment were far more likely than other voters to vote for Reagan in the 1980 and 1984 presidential elections.

In this research I examine the relationship between attitudes opposing legal abortion and supporting capital punishment in the United States. I use data from the 1988 General Social Survey to determine the extent of support for the anti-abortion and pro-death penalty set of opinions. I assume that a significant number of people oppose abortion because they consider it equivalent to murder (Cook 1998; Ginsburg 1989; Luker 1984) and believe that murderers must be punished (Hill 1993). Other opponents consider abortion a sin and believe that sinners must be punished (Falwell 1981). I contend that the desire to punish sinners increases the probability of simultaneously opposing abortion and supporting the death penalty.

METHODS

Sample

The General Social Survey (GSS), a full-probability survey of English-speaking adults in the United States (Davis and Smith 1992), is conducted through personal interviews in the spring of each survey year. Because of the size, cost, and complexity of the survey, the designs used in the GSS have included various forms and rotations, split samples, and split ballots. Over the years, compromises have been made to include as many questions as possible within a reasonable cost range. As a result, not all questions are repeated every year; when the split ballot design[3] is used, not all

[3] The split ballot is designed to allow for the greatest number of questions on a survey without sacrificing respresentativeness of the sample. Split balloting results, as in the 1988 GSS, in three subsurveys (Ballots A, B, and C); all of these include the "core" questions related to demographic and basic information from the respondents. In addition, specific topics are addressed on each ballot. For instance, the abortion

respondents are asked the same questions. In this way the largest possible number of questions can be asked at the lowest possible cost, but the trade-off is the diminished number of respondents who have answered key questions for the research at hand.

This research uses data from the 1988 survey, which included questions on punitive attitudes, abortion opinions, and death penalty opinions. The survey had a 77.3 percent response rate and included 1,481 respondents. Eighty-three percent of these respondents were white, 12.6 percent were black, and 4 percent belonged to some other ethnic minority. Fifty-seven percent were women. Subjective class identification was divided almost evenly: 45 percent of the respondents claimed to be working class, and 47.5 percent middle class. The majority (63.6 percent) were employed in blue-collar occupations, and 36.4 percent were white-collar professionals. Forty-eight percent earned $25,000 or more in total family income. The respondents' average age was 44, and their ages ranged from 18 to 89. Seventy-three percent of these respondents had at least completed high school, 23.5 percent were high school graduates with some post-secondary training, and 19.2 percent were college graduates.

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 80.3 percent of the population are white, 52 percent are female, the median age is 32.9, and 25 percent are under age 18. Seventy-three percent work in technical, service, crafts, farming, and laboring jobs; 26.4 percent are employed in managerial positions. The median family income is $35,225. Seventy-five percent have high school diplomas or higher, 45 percent have some college background, and 20 percent hold bachelor's or higher degrees (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990a, 1990b). In comparison with the Census figures, the General Social Survey respondents are slightly less ethnically diverse and more female, with a larger proportion employed in white-collar occupations. GSS respondents' level of education is commensurate with that of the general population; the Census figures report more post-secondary training without college degrees. These figures indicate that the GSS comes close to its goal of representing the country's adult English-speaking population.

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questions were included on Ballots A and C of the 1988 GSS, but not on Ballot B. This arrangement allowed respondents on Ballot B to answer questions on topics other than abortion, which may be useful to various researchers. One problem with the split ballot design encountered in this research is the reduced number of available cases with complete information. One-third of the 1,481 respondents are not analyzed here because they were not asked the abortion questions. Another one-third were not included in this analysis because they were not asked other questions related to this research. This reduces the potential reliability of findings, but not necessarily the representativeness, because the separate ballots were administered randomly. (For further details, see the *General Social Survey Cumulative Codebook*, 1972-1991.)

Nearly 67 percent of the 1988 General Social Survey respondents were Protestant, 29 percent were Catholic, and 2.3 percent were Jewish. Among the Protestants, 35 percent were Baptists, the modal denomination. Other denominations were Methodist (15 percent), Lutheran (8 percent), Presbyterian (7 percent), and Episcopal (3.4 percent). Twenty-four percent of the Protestants belonged to denominations other than those listed here. Davis and Smith (1991) grouped these denominations into three categories—fundamentalist, moderate, and liberal—based on a series of criteria in their official doctrines. According to this scheme, 35.4 percent were fundamentalist, 38.6 percent were moderate, and 25.9 percent were liberal.

Politically, 28.2 percent identified their views as liberal, 34.7 percent as moderate, and 35.6 percent as conservative. Nearly half (49.4 percent) of the respondents were either Democrats or leaned toward Democratic affiliation. Thirty-eight percent were either Republican or leaned toward Republican affiliation; the rest (12.6 percent) were independent.

One problem emerges in these data. Because of the split-ballot design of the 1988 GSS, one-third of the respondents were not asked the questions on abortion; thus nearly 500 respondents were ineligible for analysis. Another one-third were not available for complete analyses because they were not asked other relevant questions. Only those who were asked questions on Ballot A (484 respondents) supplied potentially complete answers to all the questions, and some refused to respond to these sensitive questions. Other respondents either answered a particular question "don't know" or refused to answer. Therefore, in the combined statistical analyses, I selected only the cases with complete data for the multivariate regression analysis. This step produced 243 respondents with complete surveys available for multivariate analysis. Demographically these 243 respondents do not differ significantly from the full sample.

Anti-Abortion Opinions

The 1988 General Social Survey included seven questions regarding abortion in the United States. Here, however, following the established method of Johnson and Tamney (1988), I focus on the responses to questions about the "hard" circumstances of abortion involving physical trauma. In these questions, respondents were asked whether "it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion" if there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby (no: 21.2%); The woman's health is seriously endangered

by the pregnancy (no: 11.3%); She became pregnant as the result of rape (no: 18.9%).

I tabulated these data into a scale of anti-abortion opinions, with 899 complete cases of abortion opinion. Eight percent opposed all forms of abortion involving physical trauma, 74 percent opposed none of these abortions, 7.3 percent opposed two, and 10.6 percent opposed one.

Support for the Death Penalty

The 1988 General Social Survey included one question regarding views of capital punishment. When asked "Do you favor or oppose capital punishment for someone convicted of first degree murder?" 76 percent of those who took a position (N = 1,373) supported the death penalty.

This question is not the most accurate measure of public opinion regarding capital punishment because it asks respondents simply whether they "favor" or "oppose." Other researchers have found that when respondents are asked whether they "prefer" the death penalty to life without parole for someone convicted of first-degree murder, support for capital punishment falls to less than one-half of the respondents (Ellsworth and Gross 1994; Fox, Radelet, and Bonsteel 1991; Haines 1996). Still other research shows that support for capital punishment fluctuates with the circumstances surrounding vignettes of murders (Durham, Elrod, and Kinkade 1996). Durham et al. (1996:728) demonstrated that most citizens remain in favor of capital punishment; they conclude that "the public would like to see the death penalty used for a wider variety of murders, such as those involving voluntary manslaughter."

Just Deserts

Employing the concept of Claggett and Shafer (1991), I combined respondents holding these anti-abortion and pro-death-penalty opinions to create a category of those who oppose abortion and favor the death penalty, known as "just deserts" respondents. Table 1 shows the percentages of those who oppose abortion under the three "hard" circumstances and also support capital punishment. Among 182 respondents opposed to abortion even in a case of fetal defect, nearly 70 percent support the death penalty. Among those who oppose abortion even when the pregnancy is the result of rape, 65.2 percent favor capital punishment. Among those who oppose abortion even when maternal health is threatened, 64.6 percent favor capital punishment. In short, the majority of those who oppose abortion even in these extreme cases also support capital punishment. For the purposes of this research, those who oppose

abortion in at least one of the hard cases and who support capital punishment are categorized as just deserts; they were coded 1 for multivariate analysis and account for 17.7 percent of the usable sample. (See Table 2.)

Table 1. Opposition to Abortion and Death Penalty Support

Abortion Circumstances	Death Penalty Support	
	%	*N*
Fetal Defect	69.8	182
Rape	65.2	158
Threat to Health	64.6	96

Table 2. Cross-Tabulation of Opinions on Abortion and the Death Penalty[a]

		Abortion Opinion	
		Yes	No
Death Penalty Opinion	No	15.0% (126)	8.1% (68)
	Yes	59.2% (497)	17.7% (149)

Note: N = 840; chi-square = 11.18; p = .0008
[a] Ns in parentheses.

Punitiveness

Punitiveness is measured by one GSS question.[4] Respondents were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statement "Those who violate God's rules must be punished." Those who strongly agreed were assigned a value of 4; those who strongly disagreed were assigned a value of 1. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (62.3 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed that sinners must be punished. Other research has found that this measure is related significantly to fundamentalist Protestant beliefs (Ellison and Sherkat 1993).

[4] I attempted to construct a composite variable measuring punitiveness, combining support for spanking children,views that courts are not harsh enough in dealing with criminals, and agreement that those who violate God's law must be punished. The reliability on this composite variable was low (.36), however, so I rejected it. Given the moral nature of beliefs about abortion and the death penalty, I chose for this analysis, to use responses to the question about punishing sinners, which best represents the moral foundation of punishment.

Independent Variables

On the basis of findings from previous studies, I included several variables in the multivariate analysis as possible competing explanations for opposition to abortion[5] and support of capital punishment.[6] These variables include demographic and structural estimators (age, education, race, socio-economic status, gender, region, and political conservatism), religious estimators (Catholics, fundamentalists, literalists, and images of God), and other estimators of morality (views regarding traditional gender roles, sexual activity, and euthanasia/suicide).

Demographic and structural variables. In addition to testing for punitive attitudes increasing the odds of just deserts, I included the following structural variables in the multivariate analysis. I measured age in decades: ages 18 and 19, and respondents in their twenties, thirties, forties, fifties, sixties, seventies, and eighties. Education was measured by levels completed: high school graduates, high school graduates with some postsecondary education, college graduates, and those with education beyond college. I coded race 1 for whites and 0 for ethnic minorities. Socioeconomic status was a composite variable of income, occupation, and self-reported class status, constructed with SPSS's principal-components factor analysis (theta = .56). I coded gender 1 for males and 0 for females. Region was coded 1 for southern residence and 0 for nonsouthern residence. I measured political influence as a composite of party affiliation and self-identified political views ranging rom liberal to conservative, using principal-components factor analysis (theta = .46).

Religion. I used several religious variables to estimate the probability of just deserts. Respondents who view the Bible as the literal word of God were assigned a value of 1; I assigned others a value of 0. Fundamentalists (as identified by Davis and Smith 1991) were coded 1; moderates or liberals were coded 0. I coded Catholics 1, Protestants and others 0. I measured image of God by factor-analyzing responses to three questions: viewing God as

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[5] See Arney and Trescher (1976); Chafetz and Ebaugh (1983); Claggett and Shafer (1991); Clayton and Tolone (1973); Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox (1992); Davis (1980); de Boer (1977); Ebaugh and Haney (1985); Granberg (1978); Granberg and Granberg (1980); Huff and Scott (1975); Jelen (1988); Johnson and Tamney (1988); Luker (1984); McCutcheon (1987); McIntosh and Alston (1977); Petchesky (1990); Scott (1989); Tamney, Johnson, and Burton (1992); Wilcox (1990).

[6] See Bohm (1990, 1991); Ellsworth and Ross (1983); Fox, Radelet, and Bonsteel (1991); Gallup (1986, 1989); Gelles and Straus (1976); Rankin (1979); Thomas and Foster (1975); Tyler and Weber (1982); Vidmar and Ellsworth (1982); Vidmar and Miller (1980); Warr and Stafford (1984); Young (1992); Zeisel and Gallup (1989).

either spouse or master, lover or judge, or mother or father. I reversed the original coding (where necessary) to indicate high scores as the most traditional, or Old Testament, image of God (theta = .51).

Morality. Most researchers[7] have found shared values among abortion opponents. Opposition to euthanasia and suicide has been used as a measure of "sanctity of life" and is an important predictor of opinions on abortion and the death penalty. This measure is a composite of three questions asking respondents whether they support allowing "an incurable patient to die" (passive euthanasia), "suicide if a patient has an incurable disease" (active euthanasia), and "suicide if the person is tired of living" (theta = .623). Higher factor scores indicate opposition to such suicides.

Sexual restrictiveness is measured as a composite of two variables: viewing extramarital sexual activity and homosexuality as "wrong" (theta = .507).[8] Higher scores indicate more restrictive sexual views.

Support for traditional gender roles is a scale of responses to six questions regarding women's role in family and public life: home, work, politics, duty to assist husband's career, the belief that preschool children suffer if their mothers work, and the opinion that it is better for the man to work and the woman to tend to the home. Factor analysis of these items revealed one latent dimension (theta =.789): High scores indicated support for traditional gender roles.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Because the dependent variable is dichotomous, logistic regression is the appropriate technique for multiple regression. Logistic regression allows the analyst to predict the probability that an event will occur: in this case, the probability of holding just deserts views about abortion and capital punishment. The results are reported as estimated probabilities.[9] Table 3 presents the results of logistic regression analyses estimating the probability of just

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[7] See footnote 5.

[8] I selected these two variables as a measure of sexual restrictiveness because they were the only two that appeared on the same ballot as the abortion items in 1988. Two other sexuality questions were asked, pertaining to premarital sex and teen sex. If I had included them in this measure, however, it would have been impossible to use them with all the other variables in this study.

[9] Because the independent variables are correlated with each other, problems of multicollinearity are possible, which violate the independence assumptions of multiple regression. Careful examination of the data for symptoms of multicollinearity (Hamilton 1992) revealed that standard errors and coefficients were normal; therefore multicollinearity was not a problem in the mulitvariate analysis.

deserts in odds ratios and one-tailed tests of significance. The table is organized around nested regression models, in which each model builds onto the previous one. Model 1 includes demographic and structural estimators, Model 2 adds religious variables, Model 3 incorporates the morality variables, and Model 4 combines all of these independent variables with punitiveness, as predictors of just deserts. For simplicity, the discussion is organized around the specific groups of estimators.

Demographic and Structural Variables.

When the odds of just deserts are estimated, the structural and political variables are consistent: Men and conservatives are significantly more likely to hold just deserts views. Table 3 shows that political conservatives are 1.89 times more likely than other respondents to oppose abortion while supporting capital punishment, net of other structural estimators (Model 1); 1.86 times more likely, net of other structural and religious estimators (Model 2); and 1.8 times more likely, net of other structural, religious, morality and punitive estimators (Model 4). In Model 4, men are estimated as 2.4 times more likely to hold just deserts views, net of all other estimators included in these analysis. Region of residence is also related to just deserts views: Southerners have 55 percent lower odds of holding just deserts views, net of other possible explanations.

Religious Variables.

Surprisingly, the odds of just deserts (Models 2 and 4) are not consistently influenced by any of the religious variables. Net of structural estimators, interpreting the Bible as the literal word of God more than triples the probability of just deserts views. When included with morality variables, literal interpretation of the Bible increases the odds of just deserts by 2.34. When punitiveness is included in the models, however, religious variables lose their significant relationship to the just deserts position. This finding indicates that religious beliefs present a veneer for these opinions, but beneath the surface is the view that those "who violate God's rules must be punished."

Morality Variables

Table 3, Model 3 shows that support for traditional gender roles doubles the odds of just deserts views, net of other morality variables, religion, and structural variables. Support for traditional gender roles increases the odds of just deserts by 1.85 when for all other variables, including punitiveness, are controlled. Opposition to euthanasia and suicide more than doubles the odds of

Table 3. Logistic Regression, Just Deserts (Coefficients)[a]

Variables	Structural and Political, Model 1		Religion, Model 2		Morality, Model 3		Punitiveness, Model 4	
Age	.126	(1.14)	.141	(1.15)	–.022	(.98)	–.028	(.97)
SES	–.197	(.82)	–.091	(.91)	.056	(1.06)	.132	(1.14)
Education	–.033	(.96)	.082	(1.08)	.258	(1.30)	.270	(1.31)
White	.459	(1.58)	.404	(1.50)	.750	(2.11)	.796	(2.21)
Male	.741	(2.10)*	.835	(2.31)*	.883	(2.42)*	.882	(2.41)*
South	–.506	(.60)	–.621	(.54)	–.823	(.44)*	–.795	(.45)*
Conservative	.636	(1.89)**	.618	(1.86)**	.596	(1.81)**	.586	(1.80)**
Literalist		—	1.21	(3.35)**	.848	(2.34)*	.727	(2.06)
Fundamentalist		—	–.075	(.93)	–.416	(.66)	–.499	(.60)
Catholic		—	.012	(1.01)	–.081	(.92)	–.114	(.89)
O.T. God Image		—	.112	(1.12)	–.109	(.89)	–.134	(.87)
Trad'l Gender Roles		—		—	.686	(1.99)**	.614	(1.85)**
Oppose Euthanasia		—		—	.711	(2.04)**	.579	(1.78)**
Sexually Restrictive		—		—	.484	(1.62)	.380	(1.46)
Punish Sinners		—		—		—	.640	(1.90)*
Model Chi-Square	27.3**		30.3**		53.4**		58.4**	
% Correctly Predicted	82.9		84.4		86.4		85.6	
Sample Size	243		243		243		243	

[a] Odds ratios in parentheses.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ one-tailed because of directional hypotheses.

just deserts views, net of other morality, religious, and structural variables. Odds of just deserts views are 1.78 times greater when respondents oppose euthanasia and suicide, net of punitiveness and all the other variables.

Punitiveness

Table 3, Model 4 shows that punitive respondents have 1.9 times greater odds of holding just deserts views than do less punitive respondents, net of religious, moral, and structural variables ($p = .05$). This finding supports the contention that punitiveness undergirds extreme anti-abortion and pro-death-penalty sentiments in the United States. Therefore the desire for punishment is important among those who take extreme anti-abortion and pro-death-penalty views.

Furthermore, bivariate ordinary least squares regression analysis of the relationship between punitiveness and morality variables demonstrates that punitive respondents are more likely to hold restrictive sexual attitudes ($b = .266$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .06$), to support traditional gender roles ($b = .306$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .077$), and to oppose euthanasia and suicide ($b = .319$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .08$). These bivariate regressions suggest that punitiveness also fuels opposition to gender equality, euthanasia, and sexual liberty, which are important components of opposition to abortion. The significant correlates of just deserts opinions are gender (men 2.4 times more likely than women), punitiveness toward sinners (nearly twice as likely), political conservatism (1.8 times greater odds), and opposition to euthanasia and suicide (1.78 greater odds).

CONCLUSIONS

This analysis demonstrates that a significant minority of respondents oppose abortion and also support the death penalty. Empirical analyses of these opinions reveal three important findings. First, punitiveness significantly increases the odds of opposing abortion while favoring capital punishment. Punitive respondents are nearly twice as likely as nonpunitive respondents to oppose legal abortion and to favor the state's use of executions in the United States. Punitive respondents also show a greater probability of supporting traditional gender roles for women, being sexually restrictive, and opposing euthanasia; these positions, in turn, influence just deserts opinions.

Second, this analysis suggests that opposition to euthanasia and suicide may be more an indicator of social traditionalism than of belief in the sanctity of lie, because of the punitive attitudes that significantly accompany opposition to euthanasia. On the surface it

may seem that attitudes regarding euthanasia are an appropriate indicator of sanctity of life. These findings, however, challenge that idea, suggesting that there is no inconsistent view of life; rather, a consistently punitive moral view exists. These opinions should not be seen as inconsistent life views, but as coherent traditionalist perspectives expressing the desire to secure obedience to traditional morality through punishment. Opposing abortion is one way in which respondents can support limitations on women's achievement in the public world of men. Supporting capital punishment is one way in which respondents can demonstrate their desire for a return to their image of the "good old days," when men were the legal heads of households and women were the homemakers. Punitive respondents believe that contemporary society is moving away from the traditional security and the known expectations of the traditional gender roles and division of labor; in such a society, liberal abortion laws are a major means of undermining the status quo.

Third, this study confirms the difference between religious beliefs, such as literal interpretation of the Bible, and membership in a fundamentalist denomination. Over and above the effects of fundamentalism, literal interpretation of the Bible indicates a subjective dimension to religious beliefs. Personal religious beliefs apparently predict the just deserts position more accurately than does denominational affiliation. Not all members of fundamentalist denominations interpret the Bible as the literal word of God; conversely, many who do so may not belong to fundamentalist denominations. Some Catholics may interpret the Bible literally, as may some moderate or liberal Protestants. Insofar as this situation is plausible, we see that the distinctively religious foundation of the just deserts position is related more closely to the literal interpretation of the Christian Bible than to denominational affiliation. We also see that literalists tend, more than nonliteralists, to hold punitive attitudes; this finding confirms previous research (Ellison and Sherkat 1993; Grasmick et al. 1992; Grasmick and McGill 1994; Greven 1990). Because the effect of religion evaporated when punitiveness was added to the model, I conclude that conservative religious convictions provide a socially acceptable veneer to the underlying passion for punishment of abortion patients, abortion providers, and convicted murderers.

Examining these findings in light of recent violent attacks at abortion clinics and the increasingly rapid pace of executions in the United States, I offer some final observations. Public policy has become increasingly punitive in a variety of arenas: welfare reform, "three strikes and you're out" sentencing, and so-called "truth in

sentencing" legislation. Politicians have hailed these policies and laws as effective solutions to many problems in modern society; at the same time, this legislation is endorsed by a public that has become increasingly cynical about rehabilitation and government assistance to the poor. By appealing to this punitive passion in the general public, policy advocates have exposed a nerve. When this nerve is hit, the public clamors for harsher punishment at the expense of rehabilitation and relief programs.

Because the pro-choice laws remain in effect, the abortion providers must be increasingly vigilant about security at clinics and in their homes. The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances law has proved helpful, but it is not sufficient. Although most anti-abortion demonstrators are not physically violent, they have become increasingly frustrated with government protections for abortion providers and patients. This frustration has the potential for exploding into more punitive violence such as the murders of Dr. David Gunn, Dr. John Britton and his bodyguard James Barrett, Shannon Lowney, and LeeAnne Nichols, the recent bombing in Birmingham, as well as nonfatal attacks at clinics around the country (Blanchard 1994; Cook 1998).

Because capital punishment remains a prominent and popular instrument for political gain (Von Drehle 1995), public opinion research is increasingly important as a barometer of the public tolerance for executions. The 1990s have proved to be a decade of death facilitated by the courts and fed by political rhetoric. Therefore the death penalty has become an important but grim symbol of justice in our courts; the public tacitly endorses this trend. Abolishing the death penalty will require the convincing, more punitive argument that life without parole in fact may be harsher and more severe than execution. After all, putting a convict to death ends his or her suffering on death row. The current research suggests that punitive passions will continue to fuel the debates on capital punishment and abortion, and that social reform movements must address the underlying dimension of punitiveness if social attitudes are to be altered.

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