

'Don't push your immorals on me': Encouraging anti-porn advocacy in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

J Edward Sumerau

University of Tampa, USA

Ryan T Cragun

University of Tampa, USA

Sexualities

2015, Vol. 18(1/2) 57-79

© The Author(s) 2015

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/1363460714531433

sex.sagepub.com



Abstract

In this article, we examine how leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS or LDS Church) encouraged their followers to oppose pornography. Based on archival materials from the LDS Church, we examine how LDS leaders, responding to the expansion of pornography over the last 40 years, fostered anti-porn advocacy among their followers by (1) creating anti-porn media offerings, (2) celebrating anti-porn activism, and (3) negotiating pornography laws. In conclusion, we draw out implications for understanding how religious leaders influence public debates about sexual controversies, and the reciprocal relationship between religious and sexual politics.

Keywords

Activism, advocacy, anti-porn, LDS, Mormon, porn, pornography, sexual controversies

We abhor, with all our power, pornography, permissiveness, and the so-called freedom of the sexes, and we fear that those who have supported, taught, and encouraged the permissiveness that brings about this immoral behavior will someday come to a sad reckoning with Him who has established the standards.

(The time to labor is now, Spencer W Kimball, *Ensign*, 1975)

Corresponding author:

J Edward Sumerau, University of Tampa, 401 West Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606, USA.

Email: jsumerau@ut.edu

The quotation that opens this article comes from one of the early speeches one of the leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS, LDS Church, or Mormon) made concerning the expansion of pornographic influence in American society. The rest of the speech outlines steps Mormons may take to stem the tide of pornography before it contaminates the world. What Mormons can do, according to this speech and many other LDS speeches and official publications in the last 40 years, is build a public moral presence and work together to re-establish Christian sexual values throughout American society. Recognizing the considerable influence Christian leaders have had upon sexual politics in America in recent years (see e.g. Fetner, 2008; Fields, 2008; Robinson and Spivey, 2007), this article illustrates how LDS leaders used their institutional and theological authority to encourage their followers to engage in advocacy against pornography. Specifically, we describe how LDS elites defined opposition to pornography as an inspired calling for Mormon people.

Some sociological studies have offered important insights into the ways conservative Christians interpret pornographic content. Sherkat and Ellison (1997), for example, demonstrated that people who believed in scriptural inerrancy and moral absolutes were more likely to adopt negative interpretations of pornographic material. Similarly, Patterson and Price (2012) found that conservative Christians experienced more negative emotional effects from pornography use than other people. Further, Jelen (1986) demonstrated that fundamentalist Christians opposed pornography because they believed it led to the breakdown of societal morals. While these studies revealed some ways conservative Christian lay-people experienced pornography and explained their opposition to sexually explicit materials, they left the process whereby Christian leaders establish negative conceptions of pornography unexplored.

Building on these insights, this article extends previous investigations into the relationship between conservative Christianity and pornography in three ways. First, our analysis situates conservative Christian opposition to pornography within the context of specific institutional and theological conceptions of sexual morality. In so doing, our analysis also reveals some ways that conservative Christian opposition to pornography may be socially constructed by religious leaders. Additionally, our analysis reveals how conservative Christian leaders – through official speeches and publications – encourage followers to engage in advocacy to forestall the influence of pornography. While previous studies (see e.g. Jelen, 1986; Patterson and Price, 2012; Sherkat and Ellison, 1997) sometimes reference efforts by religious leaders or advocacy by religious groups, we demonstrate some ways LDS leaders explicitly encourage anti-porn advocacy.

Admittedly, the relationship between Christianity and sexuality over the past 40 years may best be characterized by tension and complexity. Whereas many conservative Christian institutions, organizations, and individuals have mobilized substantial opposition to shifting social attitudes concerning, for example, abortion (Rohlinger, 2006), sex education (Fields, 2008), homosexuality (Robinson and Spivey, 2007), marriage (Powell et al., 2010), and pornography (Jelen, 1986),

other Christian entities – typically referred to as mainline and liberal Protestants – have begun opening their doors to sexual minorities (Moon, 2004) and wrestling with ways to incorporate or make sense of sexual diversity (Cadge et al., 2012). Similarly, Christian and sexual social movements have often incorporated political tactics and approaches from one another during legislative battles (see, e.g., Broad, 2011; Fetner, 2008). Further, sexual minorities have established their own Christian institutions (Wilcox, 2001), local organizations (Sumerau, 2012a), and support groups (Wolkomir, 2006), which seek to expand Christian notions of sexual morality, but often, regardless of their intentions, reproduce traditional Christian patterns of sexual oppression (see e.g. McQueeney, 2009; Sumerau, 2012b). Considering the emphasis upon sexual regulation throughout religious history (see e.g. Durkheim, 1897; Foucault, 1978; Weber, 1993 [1922]), the last 40 years offer fertile ground for deconstructing the ways the reciprocal relationship between religious and sexual values shape broader social norms. While our archival materials capture over 100 years of Mormon history, we thus focus our examination on the past 40 years to illustrate how a specific group of conservative Christian leaders shaped their followers' political attitudes and actions concerning recent expansions in pornography.

In many ways, Mormonism offers an opportune case for examining how these sexual and religious dynamics play out within a specific conservative Christian context. Although Mormons differ from many other conservative Christian traditions in terms of institutional and theological foundations, structures, and authority (see e.g. Campbell and Monson, 2003; Lawson and Cragun, 2012; Phillips, 2008), their religious and political beliefs echo other conservative Christian traditions in relation to controversial sexual issues. In fact, they have adopted very similar theological and political positions on abortion (Cragun and Phillips, 2012), masturbation (Malan and Bullough, 2005), homosexuality (Phillips, 2005), and sex education (Ludlow, 1992). Further, Mormon doctrine, like most other conservative Christian traditions (see Fetner, 2008), is founded upon the sanctity of heterosexual marriage and an emphasis upon sexual purity and restraint (Ludlow, 1992). Although scholars have generally left Mormon – and for the most part other conservative Christian – interpretations of pornography unexplored (though see Thomas, 2013 for a very recent exception), our analysis reveals that LDS leaders encourage staunch opposition to pornographic consumption and influence.

To better understand these dynamics, it is important to note that pornographic materials and influence have dramatically expanded throughout the last 40 years (see Sarracino and Scott, 2009). Reviewing recent pornographic scholarship, for example, Attwood (2011) noted that pornographic aesthetics, styles, and sexual patterns of action have become increasingly diversified through multiple media platforms and in mainstream media offerings. Similarly, Ezzell (2009), while reviewing recent trends in pornographic content, found that the USA has become the largest single producer of pornographic content in the world, and that pornographic profits regularly outpace many fortune 500 companies in the American marketplace (see also Weitzer, 2009). Further, Fisher and Barak (2001)

observed that the elaboration of more sophisticated online technology resulted in widespread access to and acceptance of pornography (see also Attwood, 2011). Deconstructing the historical expansion of pornographic materials throughout American history, Sarracino and Scott (2009) summed up these trends by characterizing contemporary American society as “pornified.”

Seeking to ascertain what effect – if any – the expansion of pornography may have had upon the teachings of Mormon leaders in the past 40 years, we initially approached and selected the archival data at the heart of this study in search of shifting patterns of religious and pornographic interpretation. While LDS leaders’ earliest reference to pornography occurred in 1958 and was followed by a handful of similar references in the 1960s, they began regularly raising the issue in the 1970s. Although this timeline suggests the expansion of pornography at this time (see e.g. Sarracino and Scott, 2009) influenced the frequency of the topic in LDS leaders’ speeches and publications, our analysis revealed that their lessons have remained constant over the past 40 years, despite continually shifting notions of pornography as well as many other sexual issues. Although utilizing a much smaller sample of conservative Christian discourse (e.g. 82 magazine articles), Thomas (2013) found a similar continuity in the framing of pornography in *Christianity Today* over a similar time period, suggesting conservative Christian opposition to pornography has remained unchanged since it became a focal issue in their battle against changing sexual mores. Rather than presenting a chronological analysis of LDS leaders’ teaching about anti-porn activism, we thus employ representative examples throughout our analysis to capture the content and implications of these lessons. In so doing, our analysis sheds light upon some ways religious teachings concerning “proper” sexualities may remain constant despite shifting attitudes in the wider society, and slow efforts toward sexual-political change.

As a result, our analysis focuses on how LDS elites encouraged their followers to publicly oppose pornography over the last 40 years. Specifically, we examine the ways that LDS leaders talked about and affirmed anti-porn advocacy by the Church as well as groups of followers. In so doing, we examine how they primed followers to become active in the fight against shifting societal attitudes concerning sexual morality. In conclusion, we discuss some ways LDS leaders’ call for anti-porn advocacy provides insight into the relationship between conservative Christianity and sexualities, and the importance of examining the ways religious leaders influence public debates about sexual morality.

Methods and analysis

As part of a larger project examining LDS leaders’ negotiation of sexual controversies, we collected archives of the LDS’s General Conference talks (1897–2012) and its monthly publication *Ensign* (1971–2012). The LDS General Conference is a biannual meeting where members and others gather to receive instruction and inspiration from Church elites. Similarly, *Ensign* is the official adult publication of the LDS Church, which generally contains faith-promoting and proselytizing

guidance for members. In 2007, for example, there were 850,000 paying subscribers to the magazine, suggesting wide readership among Mormons. Since LDS leaders hold editorial power over the release of all official Church documents, the combination of these materials represents a comprehensive record of official LDS teachings about pornography over time. In fact, the only people granted the ability to give General Conference talks or publish in *Ensign* are either LDS leaders themselves or members they select for the purposes of promoting specific Church-sanctioned messages.

In order to specify materials concerning pornography, we utilized a word search program called dtSearch, which allowed us to index text files and rapidly search for specific terms. Doing so allowed us to identify all usages of relevant terms, such as “pornography,” “porn,” and “sexually explicit material” in order to pull the documents wherein LDS members discussed these issues. After identifying relevant documents, we sorted out articles and speeches concerning pornography, and set these aside for analysis. This process yielded a final sample of 427 *Ensign* articles and General Conference (GC) talks. Collectively, there were 1249 occurrences or “hits” on the words “pornography”, “porn”, and “pornographic” in the corpus we searched; 43% were in GC talks while the balance, 57%, occurred in *Ensign* (see Figure 1). While occasional documents simply listed pornography among other supposed sins and some others were written by representatives selected by LDS leaders instead of the leaders themselves, the vast majority of our sample derives from speeches and publications authored or delivered by LDS leaders wherein pornography was the primary theme of the document.

Our analysis developed in an inductive manner. Drawing on elements of “grounded theory” (Charmaz, 2006), we examined the content for recurring

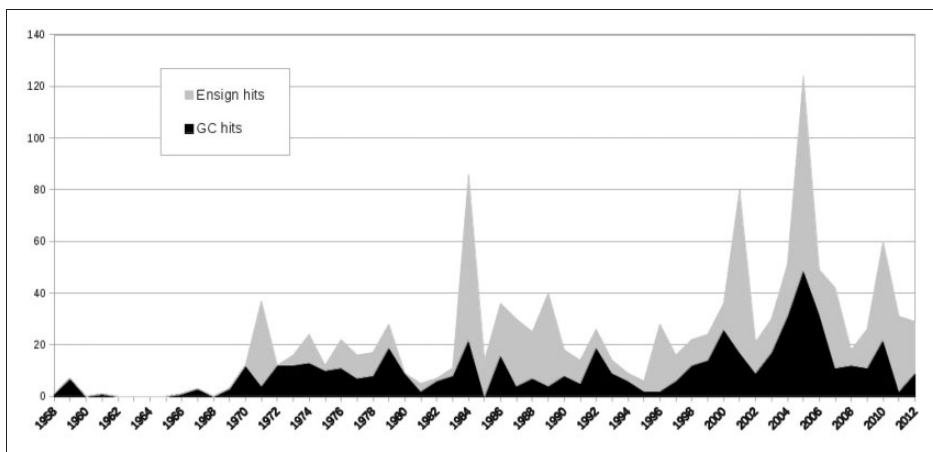


Figure 1. Occurrences or “hits” of the words “pornography,” “pornographic,” and “porn” from 1958 to 2012 in LDS leaders’ discourse by General Conference talk or *Ensign* article.

patterns, and noted that LDS leaders actively encouraged and celebrated the public activity of followers as well as the Church as a whole. Following this observation, we began sorting these instances into categories, which revealed that they were praising and sharing efforts to eliminate pornography. While we examined materials dating as far back as the initial reference to pornography in 1958, we observed that the overall themes of these teachings held constant throughout our data, and thus focused our attention on illustrative representations of the primary themes in the speeches and publication. As a result, we created labels to capture the ways LDS leaders discussed anti-pornography public action: (1) creating anti-pornographic media; (2) celebrating anti-porn activism; and (3) negotiating pornography laws.

Encouraging anti-porn advocacy

What follows is an analysis of the ways LDS leaders encouraged followers to engage in anti-porn public action. First, we examine how they discussed the creation of anti-porn media. Specifically, they praised Church efforts to combat pornographic influence by producing and disseminating official LDS lessons about sexual morality. Then, we demonstrate how LDS leaders celebrated anti-porn activism by highlighting the efforts of the Church as an official body and followers as committed citizens to combat pornographic influence. Finally, we show how LDS leaders negotiated pornographic laws by both explicitly criticizing unwelcome legal changes and lobbying for anti-porn legislation. Throughout our analysis, we further demonstrate that LDS leaders constructed the relationship between Mormonism and pornography as an ongoing battle reliant upon the commitment and effort of true believers.

Creating anti-porn media

Similar to many other conservative Christian traditions (Robinson and Spivey, 2007), the LDS Church regularly produces and distributes media offerings targeted at specific issues believers may face. In the last 40 years, for example, the LDS Church has released various pamphlets, websites, and handbooks concerning, for example, raising youth in a moral fashion, honouring the sacred nature of marriage, maintaining sexual purity, and managing homosexual desire. Alongside these offerings, the LDS Church has also produced a number of media offerings concerning pornography, and LDS leaders have often emphasized these productions in their official statements and publications. Specifically, they have praised the creation of anti-porn media offerings by suggesting these activities represent proper moral advocacy.

The LDS Church produced and disseminated pamphlets explaining the danger of pornographic consumption. Alongside the production of this media, LDS leaders used official speeches to promote these materials to followers, and suggest followers should share the pamphlets widely. During one of a handful of speeches

decrying the “moral corruption” of pornography following the release of this material, for example, R Gary Shapiro said:

A Church-produced pamphlet, “How can I help in the fight against Pornography,” suggests the following steps to avoid exposure to pornography: set personal family standards that focus on human dignity and wholesome living; have open family discussions with children of a suitable age about pornography and its dangers; emphasize the sacred nature of the human body and the joy of proper sexual relationships; and control and monitor television viewing. (Shapiro, 1989)

Employing the language distributed by the Church itself, LDS leaders defined pornography as unwholesome, dangerous, and improper while encouraging followers to spread these views. Further, Shapiro also offered steps that followers could take into the public sphere:

The pamphlet suggests the following steps: let law enforcement know that you and your neighbors want anti-pornography laws enforced; enforcement requires proof that the materials offend local community standards; speak out so those standards will be known; alert officials to the sources of obscene materials; if unsolicited materials are mailed to you forward them to your postmaster with your complaint; encourage legislators to enact additional laws where needed in such areas as telephone, computer pornography, cable television, and so forth. (Shapiro, 1989)

Echoing the other pamphlets LDS leaders discussed, this one not only suggested ways to avoid pornography, but also encouraged followers to engage with officials in an attempt to remove or limit pornographic exposure in their community. As Shapiro noted at the end of his speech:

No matter which course of action we choose, we can often measure our effectiveness by the amount of opposition we encounter. One cannot promote righteousness without provoking criticism. (Shapiro, 1989)

Similar to the oppositional rhetoric employed by the Religious Right (Fetner, 2008), LDS leaders thus used both their printed materials and discussions about these materials to foster anti-porn advocacy in the name of “righteousness.” Moreover, this tactic positioned pornography as inherently incongruent with true Mormonism.

LDS leaders also produced and distributed radio broadcasts encouraging followers to take a stance against pornography. In so doing, they often emphasized the importance of putting forth concrete moral examples to dissuade people from getting lost in the trap of pornography. The following excerpt offers a typical example of this type of discourse:

Several of the thirteen “Times and Seasons” radio programs have already been used by dozens of radio stations across the United States. Two of the programs earned the

Silver Angel award from the Los Angeles-based Religion in Media Foundation. The radio series includes programs on religion and marriage, the influence of pornography on society and the family, gambling and lotteries, sex and morality, community service, alcohol, tobacco, religious tolerance, family violence, and drug abuse. (Name withheld, 1988a)

Emphasizing “gospel-based approaches to solving social problems,” LDS leaders produced radio programs concerning many topics, but generally brought these up during articles and speeches focused on pornography and other sexual issues. In so doing, they implicitly linked pornographic consumption to other behaviors, such as smoking and drinking, the Church had long diagnosed as sources of spiritual failure. Further, they used discussions and articles about radio broadcasts to link their ongoing oppositional activities to other Christian groups. As William S Evans explained during a speech discussing how to use the radio to combat sexual immorality:

The Church itself has found that participating with others can generate much good and goodwill. Joining with other churches in the Vision Interfaith Satellite Network (VISN), the Religious Alliance Against Pornography (RAAP), the American Council on Alcohol Problems (ACAP), and other worthy causes has been very fruitful, accomplishing much good. And even though some in these organizations initially greeted our involvement with skepticism and even opposition, most now appreciate and support our participation as they have come to see that we, as they, are committed to worthy causes. (Evans, 1990)

In so doing, LDS leaders used the example of other Christian advocacy groups to emphasize the “worthy” nature of their anti-porn – and other – radio campaigns. They also suggested that all good Christians – Mormon or otherwise – could and should recognize the destructive potential of pornography for both believers and society.

Alongside radio broadcasts and pamphlets, LDS leaders also emphasized the importance of spreading the word against pornography through film. Specifically, they emphasized Church efforts to create and distribute documentaries that could teach people moral lessons regarding pornographic and other sexual issues. The following excerpt offers a typical example:

Documentaries produced by the Church have won three 1986 Silver Angel awards in a national competition sponsored by Religion in Media. Religion in Media is an international, interdenominational organization, which honors “great social and/or moral impact” in the media each year. The Church’s two television awards were for public affairs documentaries on the evils of pornography and gambling. In the radio competition, the Silver Angel was awarded for a public affairs program on the principle of fasting. (Name withheld, 1987a)

In examples like this, LDS leaders made sure followers understood the rewards of anti-porn efforts, and in so doing, emphasized the importance of taking a stance. Further, many editions of the *Ensign* contained official press releases concerning the production of these documentaries. The following excerpt offers a typical example of this type of media offering:

The Church has produced several half-hour radio and television documentaries on the plague of pornography and plans to distribute them as widely as possible as free public affairs programs. The programs resulted from the Church's longstanding concern about the growing availability and impact of pornographic material. The documentaries feature comments on the pornography issue from a clinical psychologist, a former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent, a U.S. attorney, and clergy and other leaders of various denominations, including Elder Haight and Ardeith G. Kapp, general president of the Church's Young Women organization. The programs will be distributed to commercial television stations, cable TV systems, and radio stations throughout the United States. (Name withheld, 1987b)

Emphasizing the Church's "longstanding concern about the growing availability and impact of pornographic material," these advertisements stressed the importance of producing a public message that could be widely disseminated. As such, LDS leaders used these documentaries – as well as discussions about them – to stress the need for anti-porn advocacy.

Finally, LDS leaders oversaw and announced the creation of an official Church website for combating pornography. As this excerpt from a press release explains:

LDS Family Services has launched a new Web site to help people learn about and overcome pornography addictions. The Web site, combatingpornography.org, targets five different audiences: individuals with a problem, spouses, parents, youth, and leaders. The Combating Pornography site was not designed as a treatment site, but rather a site to provide people with accurate information from a gospel perspective and to educate them about the problem of pornography, said Michael Gardner, product manager for developing the site. Within each of the target audiences, the Web site is divided into four main categories: prevention, recognition, overcoming the problem, and support. Each category contains resources and information specific to each audience. (Name withheld, 2010)

Similar to other conservative Christian traditions (Robinson and Spivey, 2007), LDS leaders thus encouraged anti-porn advocacy by creating media offerings on the topic. Further, they used their official speeches and publications to promote and praise these efforts, which simultaneously defined pornography as a serious issue worthy of Church attention and primed followers for ongoing anti-porn advocacy efforts. Whereas pornographic media offerings, as well as people's interpretations of them in the wider society, changed dramatically over the past four

decades, LDS leaders consistently defined pornography as dangerous while suggesting that only concerted efforts from true believers could rescue society from pornography.

Celebrating anti-porn activism

Echoing the efforts of the Religious Right (Fetner, 2008), LDS leaders encouraged religious-based political advocacy by celebrating the political efforts of their Church and followers. Specifically, they made a point of providing their audiences with detailed accounts of the courageous efforts believers were making to eliminate pornography. In so doing, they encouraged anti-porn advocacy throughout the Church by highlighting and complimenting believers who had already begun to engage in such activities. Considering the esteem typically granted to religious leaders by their followers in many aspects of social and political life (see e.g. Fetner, 2008), these messages likely carried tremendous weight for lay Mormons and provided a powerful incentive – the moral praise of God’s chosen representatives – for anti-porn advocacy.

LDS leaders regularly took time during speeches or within articles to celebrate anti-porn activism by the Church. Specifically, they talked about the ways the Church collectively worked to oppose pornographic consumption and influence. The following excerpt from a speech by Don L Searle that was later published in *Ensign* offers an illustrative example:

On issues of deep moral concern, the Church as an institution continues to speak out wherever there is a need. In the United States, for example, the Church was one of the founding members of the Religious Alliance Against Pornography (RAAP). Both Elder John K. Carmack and Elder Richard P. Lindsay of the Seventy have served on its board. (Searle, 1991)

Echoing this sentiment, Harold B Lee explained:

While we must stand solidly behind those who are trying to stamp out the filthy and provocative display of so-called pornographic materials, we have but one answer to all those who thus take such radical measures, and this is the word of the Lord. (Lee, 1973)

Similarly, Hoyt W Brewster Jr explained the importance of remaining vigilant as time passes:

During the ensuing years of the 1980s, the Church spoke out against the immorality and drug abuse that had escalated the modern-day plague of AIDS, and specifically criticized pornography and gambling, including lotteries. Church leaders undoubtedly

will continue to speak out against these and other social ills in the coming decade. (Brewster, 1990)

In statements like these, LDS leaders painted the Church as God's earthly source of activism at work in the world, and in so doing, praised the efforts of those who get involved. In so doing, they stressed the importance of fighting "filthy" influences while situating this battle within the eternal story of their creator. Rather than simply encouraging political activity, one could thus argue that Mormon leaders granted anti-porn advocacy sacred standing within the institutional and theological traditions of the Church.

At other times, LDS leaders made similar statements while also emphasizing the urgency inherent in advocacy. Specifically, they stressed the need for moral soldiers in the world who were willing to stand against the pornographic beast. As David B Haight noted:

Only when men and women concerned for their families and communities let their voices and their influence be felt in thoughtful, rational ways will we alter the destructive course on which we are traveling. Silent indignation may be misinterpreted as approval. (Haight, 1984)

Echoing this sentiment, N Eldon Tanner stressed the urgency of the pornography situation facing God's people in the course of issuing a Church-wide call to arms:

It is time we realized that these are all Satan's ways of destroying mankind. Now, what must we do? If there is pornography or obscenity in bookstores, on television or radio, or in places of entertainment, if there are those who would make more easily available to the young and inexperienced alcohol and its attendant evils, including drunken driving, highway fatalities, broken homes, and if we are threatened with the passage of laws which violate the commandments of God, it is our duty and responsibility as individuals to speak out, to organize, and to protect ourselves and our community against such encroachments. (Tanner, 1973)

In a similar fashion, Thomas S Monson – the current President and Prophet of the LDS Church (though an apostle at the time he gave this speech) – called for followers to "wage and win the war" against pornography:

We have the capacity and the responsibility to stand as a bulwark between all we hold dear and the fatal contamination of the pornography beetle. A pledge to wage and win the war against pernicious permissiveness. As we encounter that evil carrier, the pornography beetle, let our battle standard and that of our communities be taken from that famous ensign of early America, "Don't tread on me." Let our hearts be pure. Let our lives be clean. Let our voices be heard. Let our actions be felt. (Monson, 1979)

Considering the growth of the pornography industry since this statement (see Ezzell, 2009), it is safe to say that the Mormon war against pornography has largely been ineffectual. That said, the production of media as well as Church activist endeavors following this speech suggest that Mormons took this call to arms very seriously. Further, these lessons define anti-porn advocacy as a moral calling incumbent upon true believers while providing both followers and leaders of the Mormon religion with a constant threat that requires their continued collective action, commitment, and faithfulness to overcome.

Alongside general celebrations of Church efforts, LDS leaders also singled out specific examples of followers fighting the war against pornography. In so doing, they generally praised the efforts of these followers while encouraging other believers to emulate their efforts. The following excerpt from an article by Jan Underwood Pinborough offers a typical case:

At first, Brother Poelman was somewhat uncomfortable stepping into this area of service. But he has proceeded boldly—inviting others to become involved, holding a press conference, and generously giving of his time. He has attended and chaired national conferences on pornography. The group has sponsored luncheons with law-enforcement officials and produced a videotape to be presented to civic and church groups. (Pinborough, 1986)

Similarly, LDS leaders offered portraits of specific cases where believers were actively opposing pornography with the help of others. Donald S Conkey recalled:

While Dolina Smith was serving as Young Women president in the Toronto Ontario Stake in 1986, she asked an expert to speak at a fireside about the growing problem of pornography. Later she became involved with a nationwide group called Canadians for Decency, which mobilizes thousands of anti-pornography Canadians to contact their elected officials as specific concerns about pornography arise. (Conkey, 1996)

As these illustrations reveal, LDS leaders – speaking or writing in separate decades – regularly gave followers examples of people engaged in anti-porn advocacy, and while celebrating these efforts, suggested to others to follow suit. Further, they generally followed these celebratory statements by suggesting, as Cheryl Lynn May put it after recounting a story about local anti-porn demonstrations, “The commitment of time and energy to civic projects need not be full-time or statewide to accomplish meaningful results” (May, 1976). In so doing, Mormon leaders created a moral example for their followers that required taking a stance against pornography, and promised rewards – such as praise disseminated throughout the religion – for anti-porn vigilance.

Finally, LDS leaders celebrated occasions where believers worked to pass anti-porn laws in their local communities. In so doing, they often discussed the

importance of setting moral goals and recognizing that the smallest victories added up over time. As Janice Smith noted:

Members involved in their communities are fighting what they consider to be pornography. Alfred E. Hall, bishop of the Minneapolis Third Ward, Minneapolis, Minnesota – and serving his fifth term as mayor of Burnsville, a Minneapolis suburb – recently led a campaign to close a bowling alley where “lingerie shows” featured “go-go” dancers. Bishop Hall’s concern brought about passage of an anti-obscenity ordinance. “I’m not trying to push my morals on anyone else,” he says, “but I don’t want them pushing their immorals on me, either”. (Smith, 1976)

Echoing conservative Christian notions of moral contamination (see Sherkat and Ellison, 1997), they thus celebrated the totality of many unrelated activities wherein people fought to keep secular people from “pushing their immorals” on good Mormons. Janice Smith continued:

In Beaumont, Texas, Brother David D. Geddes, vice-president for Academic Affairs at Lamar University, has worked to organize a local chapter of Morality in Media. This is an interfaith organization “working to stop the traffic in pornography, constitutionally and effectively.” Brother Geddes has spoken out frequently in his community against pornography and says that “as concerned citizens, recognizing that we have a right to a better community, we should demand local ordinances that prevent the spread of obscenity”. (Smith, 1976)

As we discuss in the next section, LDS leaders were intimately aware of the power of local activism to change unfavorable laws and ordinances. As a result, they celebrated the efforts of individual believers to change such laws, and in so doing, offered these stories as illustrations of the ways good Mormons could challenge evil pornography. Further, the practice of exalting local efforts affirmed the messages contained in their media offerings, and like the foregoing illustrations, promised praise and moral status to those followers who mounted campaigns against pornography. In so doing, the combination of their efforts to celebrate anti-porn advocacy created “discursive conditions” (see Foucault, 1978; Warner, 1999) wherein the endeavors of followers to oppose pornography in all forms could become a behavioral norm affirmed at all levels of the institutional and theological structure of the Mormon Church.

Negotiating pornographic laws

Although rarely the focus of sexual or sociological analyses, research has shown that the presence of conservative Christian organizations and groups may implicitly influence legislative decisions regardless of the level of activism within a given

region (see Scheitle and Hahn, 2011). Alongside these implicit demographic influences, researchers have also noted – especially in the case of the Religious Right (Fetner, 2008) and the National Right to Life Committee (Rohlinger, 2006) – that conservative Christian leaders may strategically mobilize their beliefs, followers, and monetary donations to advance specific policy agendas. Echoing these observations, LDS leaders spent considerable time negotiating pornographic laws in their speeches and publications. Specifically, they decried unwanted legal results while lobbying for laws against pornography.

LDS leaders generally used the passage of unfavorable laws to emphasize the importance of anti-porn advocacy. As Giles H Florence explained:

He points to the permissive laws passed in the 1960s as the country became more prosperous. “Suddenly our country was affluent and wanted to show the world that our wealth gave us sophistication and understanding. So we passed laws allowing pornography, nudity on beaches, abortion on demand, marriage of homosexuals. Moral barriers fell all around us”. (Florence, 1992)

Warning of the dangers of secularization taking place in other countries, LDS leaders emphasized the importance of engaging in legal battles. As the following editorial notes:

There is a subtle but real trend in the United States to see nothing as being obscene or to make obscenity a protected form of expression. This is the growing tolerance for evil spoken of earlier. And it is gaining support in some legal decisions. In most instances that support is based outwardly on the idea that freedom of expression is of greater importance than anything else. (Name withheld, 1971a)

Similarly, many articles summarizing news in the Church expressed these themes:

We have long been concerned about the shocking inroads of pornography in our society, not only in the United States, but around the world. Licentiousness masquerades in the robes of liberty as profiteers prey upon young and old alike and loose a veritable flood of evil. (Name withheld, 1985)

As these illustrations suggest, LDS elites responded to the passage of “porn-friendly” legislation by calling for opposition, and warning believers about the dangers such policies could pose. Rather than simply avoiding pornography in their own lives, these statements suggested followers had a responsibility to influence larger societal debates concerning pornography and other sexual-political issues.

Along the same lines, LDS leaders often responded to pornography “victories” by sharing stories about successful attempts to pass more “Christian” laws.

Specifically, they often followed statements or articles about negative laws with stories recounting positive moments in their ongoing battle against pornography. In so doing, they used the combination of perceived losses and victories to encourage followers to fight pornography. The following press releases published in *Ensign* – generally following or preceding perceived losses – offer typical cases:

The Church has been honored for its part in supporting passage of a new California law prohibiting possession of child pornography. The law went into effect 1 January 1990, and has already been used in prosecution of child abusers. The new law classifies all offenses after the first one as felonies. (Name withheld, 1990)

Helena, Montana – Church members in Montana have joined with people of other faiths in the fight to stop pornography. President Jed Stanfill of the Helena Montana Stake was among the representatives of religious groups at the signing of the governor's proclamation of "Pornography Awareness Week" beginning October 3. The president of Montana Citizens for Decency through Law, Dallas D. Erickson, of the Libby Ward, also arranged for a state interdenominational meeting December 1. The religious representatives then drafted a position paper against obscene materials. The paper was to circulate throughout Montana. (Name withheld, 1989)

Los Angeles, California – Elder John K. Carmack of the First Quorum of the Seventy went on record here on December 1 in support of Los Angeles County Supervisor Peter F. Schabarum's motion to step up the fight against pornography. Elder Carmack appeared before the County Board of Supervisors "to help give a push to the fight against pornography". (Name withheld, 1988b)

In statements like these, LDS leaders both emphasized perceived victories in the legal battle with pro-pornography forces, and stressed the importance of the Church in these endeavors. These statements gave the impression the Church was an instrumental force in the ongoing legal battles surrounding pornography. Further, the publication of these press releases represents an ongoing reminder for followers to be involved in the unfolding battle while providing incentives and hope – in the form of concrete victories – for further action on behalf of the Church. As such, these statements are not merely announcements, but rather, they serve as political tools themselves by affirming the ongoing anti-porn efforts of the Church.

Alongside state activities, LDS leaders also emphasized the importance of working to shift federal laws. Specifically, they argued that the federal government had a responsibility to protect society from immoral influence, and as a result, followers needed to make their voices heard in the halls of the federal government. Offering weight to these assertions, they often added notes concerning federal legislative

efforts in progress while defining them as activities capable of transforming the world for God. The following excerpts offer typical examples:

After hearings and study on the issues involved, the commission tentatively approved a draft report recommending a variety of approaches to fighting pornography in the U.S. These approaches ranged from seizure of the assets of businesses selling obscene materials to use of pandering and prostitution laws against producers and casts of X-rated films. (Name withheld, 1986: Recommendation against pornography lauded, *Ensign*)

Since February 1 members of the Church in the United States and other interested citizens have been able to join in the fight against pornography with the help of a new law. The legislation protects families from receiving sexually oriented advertisements through the mail. (Name withheld, 1971b Programs and policies newsletter, *Ensign*)

Echoing their coverage of state legislative decisions, LDS leaders suggested ongoing Mormon activity was deeply intertwined with the moral fate of American law. In so doing, they primed followers for anti-porn advocacy while reminding them that losses did not have to be permanent. Similar to Religious Right leaders (Fetner, 2008), they thus prepared their followers for long-term legislative efforts geared toward the legal restoration of Christian sexual morality. Rather than merely establishing moral guidelines, however, statements like this also affirmed their celebratory and media-based encouragement of anti-porn advocacy by positioning the battle as a worldwide crusade for the souls of God's children and the continuation of Mormonism as whole.

Conclusion

LDS leaders interpreted the expansion of pornography as a dangerous force that could contaminate society. Seeking to forestall such moral decay, they encouraged their followers to become anti-porn advocates. As such, they emphasized the importance of Christian people standing strong against pornography. Specifically, they accomplished this by creating anti-porn media offerings, celebrating anti-porn activism, and negotiating pornography laws. In so doing, they built and maintained a long-term pattern of strategic anti-porn moral advocacy that has held constant throughout the last 40 years despite shifting societal attitudes about sexual morality.

These findings support research on the relationship between conservative Christianity and pornography (see e.g. Jelen, 1986; Patterson and Price, 2012; Sherkat and Ellison, 1997; Thomas, 2013), and extend this research by revealing some ways conservative Christian leaders provide followers with the negative interpretations they report on large-scale surveys. Specifically, LDS leaders taught their followers that pornography would contaminate their world, wreck their communities, and destroy God's plans unless they actively opposed this evil force. Further, their discussions emphasized the role of committed Christian

soldiers in the ongoing battle for societal sexual morality, and offered moral value and prestige to the believers who had already become involved in such advocacy. Whereas researchers have generally focused on the ways individual believers respond to pornography (see Sherkat and Ellison, 1997), the case of LDS leaders suggests there may be much to learn from the ways believers are taught about pornography. These findings thus reveal the importance of examining and comparing the ways conservative Christian leaders teach followers to respond to pornography in both their own lives and the larger social world.

To this end, our analysis complements previous theoretical development concerning the social reproduction of inequalities by drawing our attention to the discursive work done by religious leaders. Following Schwalbe and associates (2000), sociological studies of inequality reproduction have a tendency to focus on subordinates (e.g. followers), and outline the ways subordinate groups respond to cultural beliefs, institutional patterns, and societal norms constructed and affirmed by members of dominant groups (e.g. their leaders). Although this focus has generated a plethora of knowledge concerning the ways subordinates accomplish social life, we know far less about the ways dominants create and sustain the “discursive structures” (see Foucault, 1978) that shape subordinate activity. Rather than abstract ideals subordinates simply respond to, however, our focus on religious leaders (i.e. societal dominants in terms of prestige, authority, and power) illustrate how some elements of the social construction of “normative” patterns of activity occur (see also Foucault, 1978). In fact, LDS leaders actively construct appropriate patterns of action for their followers, which followers may only reject if they are willing to lose standing within their religious tradition. Our analysis thus calls for further research comparing the multitude of ways dominants – religious or otherwise – shape the sexual interpretations and political activities of their followers as well as the consequences these lessons may have for the reproduction of societal patterns of oppression and privilege (see also Schwalbe et al., 2000).

These findings also have implications for analyses of religion and sexualities. Whereas such studies often conceptualize religion and sexuality as inherently oppositional forces (see Wolkomir, 2006), other studies have characterized these two social forces in terms of a reciprocal relationship wherein each borrows from the other to adjust to shifting societal notions concerning sexualities (see e.g. Fetner, 2008; Fields, 2008; Sumerau, 2012b). In the case of LDS leaders, however, the story is a bit more complicated.

On the one hand, our analysis revealed a reciprocal relationship wherein Mormon leaders focused on pornography at the same time – the 1970s – that this issue became a centerpiece of wider societal debates, and made use of wider social happenings (such as pro-and anti-porn legislation) to encourage anti-porn advocacy. On the other hand, LDS leaders did not adjust their discourses in relation to shifts in sexual politics in recent decades, and did not appear to borrow tactics from pro-pornography movements at any time in the past four decades. As a result, one could argue that LDS leaders’ opposition to pornography was not inherently oppositional (e.g. it was not an issue prior to 1958 despite the existence

of pornography well before this time), or completely reciprocal (e.g. they did reciprocate the greater attention to pornography other elements of society have witnessed in recent decades, but did not draw upon these other approaches or shift their tactics in relation to other groups; similar to what Thomas (2013) found in an Evangelical Christian publication).

Our analysis thus complicates previous conceptualizations of the relationship between sexualities and religion. Specifically, our findings suggest religious and sexual intersections may not be as straightforward as previously suggested, and reveal the importance of critically evaluating the multitude of ways religious and sexually identified groups may respond to both one another and broader societal debates concerning “appropriate” sexualities. Future studies could, for example, investigate the ways other religious traditions interpret sexual controversies and instruct followers concerning the proper ways for handling said controversies by utilizing survey, ethnographic, and interview methods to ascertain the exact lessons followers receive and leaders promote about sexuality and religion. Further, researchers could examine the actual sexual teachings – concerning pornography or other sexual controversies – contained in archival collections maintained by other religious traditions, such as The Southern Baptist Convention, The Catholic Church, and The Metropolitan Community Churches, and compare and contrast these teachings to those offered in the Mormon Church (see also Thomas, 2013 for potential strategies for analyzing the frequency of such discussions in religious publications). Finally, researchers could investigate to what extent sexually identified movement groups – such as those committed to advocating access to pornography, rights for sex workers, civil liberties for sexual minorities – are aware of and/or draw from religious conceptualizations of “normative” sexualities, which may be especially important at a time when many sexually identified groups are forming partnerships with faith-based groups in their pursuit for rights and recognition (see e.g. Warner, 1999; see also McQueeney, 2009 for a discussion of the potential problems stemming from sexual and religious political collaboration in the case of same-sex marriage rights). Rather than accepting religious teachings at face value, such an approach might begin to illuminate not only what religious leaders and followers say about “deviant” sexualities, but also how they disseminate these shared beliefs in ways that have real world consequences for social change.

Finally, our findings have implications for treatments of religious and sexual advocacy. Whereas researchers have typically focused on the ways that officially established social movement organizations impact ongoing sexual and religious debates (see e.g. Broad, 2011; Fetner, 2008; Robinson and Spivey, 2007), our analysis suggests there may be much to learn from the ways that explicitly religious institutions – that may or may not form or participate within official social movement organizational campaigns – shape sexual debates and outcomes. In the case of the Mormon Church, for example, LDS leaders have often contributed to political action opposing, for example, abortion, homosexuality, and as our analysis reveals, pornography, despite the fact that they hold no official allegiance to a given social movement (see also Cragun and Phillips, 2012). Rather than explicitly tying

themselves to social movement organizations, they have accomplished this by, as was the case with pornography, mobilizing their institutional, financial, and theological resources to encourage conservative Christian advocacy on the part of ordinary – or non-movement affiliated – believers, and contributing to or demonstrating support for the efforts of social movement organizations. As a result, the case of LDS leaders reveals the importance of expanding our analyses of sexual and religious advocacy to include the political activity accomplished in religious institutions, organizations, publications, and communities.

Importantly, attending to the political activity embedded within religious practice and belief may begin to shed light on some curious aspects of contemporary sexual and religious movement activities and outcomes. Considering that researchers have found that the mere presence of large proportions of conservative Christians – regardless of official social movement activity – may influence legislation at the state level (see Scheitle and Hahn, 2011), examinations of the sexual meaning making within conservative Christian institutions could shed light upon legislative patterns that social movement activities cannot explain. In a similar fashion, recent studies have revealed that – contrary to shifting societal attitudes concerning sexual expression and practice – abstinence-only and other fear-based sexual-political campaigns continue to receive broad public support, and suggest much of this support may come from the meanings about sex and sexuality conveyed to – and interpreted by – people in their local communities (see e.g. Elliott, 2012; Fields, 2008; Rose, 2005). Exploring these localized systems of meaning – as well as their institutional roots – might thus shed light on many ongoing sexual-political battles in contemporary society.

In fact, the case of LDS leaders suggests that religious messages – regardless of their ties to official social movement organizations – may provide a significant deterrent to social change. Rather than mirroring the shifting societal attitudes about sex and sexualities illustrated in the broader social world (see e.g. Powell et al., 2012), LDS leaders offered a stable portrait of pornography and a continuous call for opposition to this phenomena throughout the past 40 years. Although there has been much attention granted to changing attitudes and beliefs concerning sex and sexuality, analyses of other systems of oppression and privilege – such as race, class and gender (see e.g. Collins, 2005) – and the historical construction and articulation of “normative” institutional and cultural belief systems (see e.g. Foucault, 1978; Warner, 1999) have long shown that the appearance of change (e.g. attitudes) often masks the structural continuation of inequalities (see also Schwalbe et al., 2000). While it is (understandably) tempting to believe both that we “know” what religious groups are saying or doing and that things get better over time, only systematic analyses of the social and historical construction and dissemination of sexual and religious meanings will provide the insights necessary for actual social change. After all, critical sociological practice has long recognized that the personal is utterly political, and what could be more personal – and thus more politically relevant – than the personalized sexual meanings constructed within the context of our most deeply held institutional and theological structures.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors

Conflict of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

References

- Attwood F (2011) The paradigm shift: Pornography research, sexualization, and extreme images. *Sociology Compass* 5(1): 13–22.
- Brewster HW Jr (1990) The 80s—looking back; The '90s—looking ahead. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1990/01/the-80s-looking-back-the-90s-looking-ahead?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Broad KL (2011) Coming out for parents, families, and friends of lesbians and gays: From support group grieving to love advocacy. *Sexualities* 14(4): 399–415.
- Cadge W, Girouard J, et al. (2012) Uncertainty in clergy's perspectives on homosexuality: A research note. *Review of Religious Research* 3(3): 371–387.
- Campbell DE and Monson JQ (2003) Following the leader? Mormon voting on ballot propositions. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42(4): 605–619.
- Charmaz KC (2006) *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Collins PH (2005) *Black Sexual Politics: African-Americans, Gender, and the New Racism*. New York: Routledge.
- Conkey DS (1996) Portraits: 'Together we can make a difference'. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1996/02/portraits?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Cragun RT and Phillips R (2012) *Could I Vote for a Mormon for President? An Election Year Guide to Mitt Romney's Religion*. Washington, DC: Strange Violin Editions.
- Durkheim E (1897) *Suicide*. New York: Free Press.
- Elliott S (2012) *Not My Kid: What Parents Believe about the Sex Lives of their Teenagers*. New York: New York University Press.
- Evans WS (1990) News of the Church: A conversation about community service. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1990/06/news-of-the-church?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Ezzell MB (2009) Pornography, lad mags, video games, and boys: Reviving the canary in the cultural coal mine. In: Olfman S (ed) *The Sexualization of Childhood*. Westport, CT: Praeger, pp. 7–32.
- Fetner T (2008) *How the Religious Right Shaped Lesbian and Gay Activism*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fields J (2008) *Risky Lessons: Sex Education and Social Inequality*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Fisher WA and Barak A (2001) Internet pornography: A social psychological perspective on internet sexuality. *The Journal of Sex Research* 38(4): 312–323.
- Florence GH Jr (1988) Sea, soil, and souls in Denmark. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1992/02/sea-soil-and-souls-in-denmark?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).

- Foucault M (1978) *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1*. New York: Random House.
- Haight DB (1984) Personal morality. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1984/11/personal-morality?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Jelen TG (1986) Fundamentalism, feminism, and attitudes toward pornography. *Review of Religious Research* 28(2): 97–103.
- Kimball SW (1975) The time to labor is now. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1975/11/the-time-to-labor-is-now?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Lawson R and Cragun RT (2012) Comparing the geographic distributions and growth of Mormons, Adventists, and Witnesses. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51(2): 220–240.
- Lee HB (1973) Admonitions for the priesthood of God. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1973/01/admonitions-for-the-priesthood-of-god?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Ludlow DH (1992) *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*. New York: Macmillan.
- Malan MK and Bullough V (2005) Historical development of new masturbation attitudes in Mormon culture: Silence, secular conformity, counter revolution, and emerging reform. *Sexuality & Culture* 9(4): 80–127.
- May CL (1976) Beyond voting: Some duties of the LDS citizen. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1976/06/beyond-voting-some-duties-of-the-lds-citizen?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- McQueeney K (2009) ‘We are God’s children, y’all’: Race, gender, and sexuality in lesbian-and-gay-affirming congregations. *Social Problems* 56(1): 151–173.
- Monson TS (1979) Pornography—the deadly carrier. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/11/pornography-the-deadly-carrier?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Moon D (2004) *God, Sex, and Politics: Homosexuality and Everyday Theologies*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Name withheld (1971a) Editorial: Tolerance for evil. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1971/10/editorial-tolerance-for-evil?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Name withheld (1971b) Programs and policies newsletter. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1971/05/programs-and-policies-newsletter?lang=eng> (accessed 9 July 2014).
- Name withheld (1985) News of the Church: Policies and announcements. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1985/08/news-of-the-church?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Name withheld (1986) Recommendation against pornography lauded. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1986/05/news-of-the-church/recommendation-against-pornography-lauded?lang=eng> (accessed 9 July 2014).
- Name withheld (1987a) News of the Church: LDS scene. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/05/news-of-the-church?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Name withheld (1987b) News of the Church: Church produces anti-pornography documentaries. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/01/news-of-the-church?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).

- Name withheld (1988a) News of the Church: Radio, TV programs look at social ills in Gospel light. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1988/12/news-of-the-church?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Name withheld (1988b) News of the Church: Church supports anti-pornography motion. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1988/02/news-of-the-church?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Name withheld (1989) News of the Church: LDS scene. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1989/02/news-of-the-church?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Name withheld (1990) News of the Church: Church honored for helping in passage of anti-porn law. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1990/06/news-of-the-church?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Name withheld (2010) Education is key to protecting families from pornography. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2010/06/education-is-key-to-protecting-families-from-pornography?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Patterson R and Pryce J (2012) Pornography, religion, and the happiness gap: Does pornography impact the actively religious differently? *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51(1): 79–89.
- Phillips R (2005) *Conservative Christian Identity and Same-Sex Orientation*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Phillips R (2008) 'De facto congregationalism' and Mormon missionary outreach: An ethnographic case study. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47(4): 628–643.
- Pinborough JU (1986) Community service: Reaching beyond our circle. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1986/10/community-service-reaching-beyond-our-circle?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Powell B, Bolzendahl C, et al. (2010) *Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and Americans' Definitions of Family*. New York: SAGE.
- Robinson CM and Spivey SE (2007) The politics of masculinity and the ex-gay movement. *Gender & Society* 21(5): 650–675.
- Rohlinger DA (2006) Friend and foe: Media, politics, and tactics in the abortion war. *Social Problems* 53(4): 537–561.
- Rose S (2005) Going too far: Sex, sin, and social policy. *Social Forces* 84(2): 1207–1232.
- Sarracino C and Scott KM (2009) *The Porning of America: The Rise of Porn Culture, What it Means, and Where We Go From Here*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Scheitle CP and Hahn BB (2011) From the pews to policy: Specifying Evangelical Protestantism's influence on states' sexual orientation policies. *Social Forces* 89(3): 913–933.
- Schwalbe M, Godwin S, Holden D, et al. (2000) Generic processes in the reproduction of inequality: An interactionist analysis. *Social Forces* 79(2): 419–452.
- Searle DL (1991) Two-way window on the world. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1991/07/two-way-window-on-the-world?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Shapiro RG (1989) Leave the obscene unseen. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1989/08/leave-the-obscene-unseen?lang=eng> (accessed 27 June 2014).
- Sherkat DE and Ellison CG (1997) The cognitive structure of a moral crusade: Conservative Protestantism and opposition to pornography. *Social Forces* 75(3): 957–980.
- Smith J (1976) Making a difference. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1976/06/making-a-difference?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).

- Sumerau JE (2012a) 'That's what men are supposed to do': Compensatory manhood acts in an LGBT Christian church. *Gender & Society* 26(3): 461–487.
- Sumerau JE (2012b) Mobilizing race, class, and gender discourses in a metropolitan community church. *Race, Gender, and Class* 19(3–4): 93–112.
- Tanner NE (1973) 'Thou mayest choose for thyself'. *Ensign*. Available at: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1973/07/thou-mayest-choose-for-thyself?lang=eng> (accessed 8 July 2014).
- Thomas JN (2013) Outsourcing moral authority: The internal secularization of evangelicals' anti-pornography narratives. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52(3): 457–475.
- Warner M (1999) *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics and the Ethics of Queer Life*. New York: Free Press.
- Weber M (1993 [1922]) *The Sociology of Religion* (trans Ephraim Fischhoff). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Weitzer R (2009) Sociology of sex work. *Annual Review of Sociology* 35: 213–234.
- Wilcox MM (2001) Of markets and missions: The early history of the universal fellowship of metropolitan community churches. *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 11(1): 83–108.
- Wolkomir M (2006) *Be Not Deceived: The Sacred and Sexual Struggles of G\$ay and Ex-Gay Christian Men*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

J Sumerau is an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Tampa. Zir research focuses on the application of social psychological, feminist, and queer theories, and the interrelation of sexualities, gender, religion, and health in the interpersonal and historical experiences of sexual and religious minorities.

Ryan Cragun is an associate professor of sociology at The University of Tampa. His research focuses on Mormonism and the nonreligious and has been published in numerous professional journals. He is also the author of two books: *Could I Vote for a Mormon for President?* (with Rick Phillips) and *What You Don't Know about Religion (But Should)*.