

Gallup Poll Survey on Attitudes Towards Pornography

"A Nationally representative sample"

1. How was this group of people selected?
2. Is a mere 956 a sufficient number on which to form a conclusive judgement?
3. What is the breakdown of the ages of the people selected - i.e. how many men & women of each age, 18, 19, 20, 21 and so on?
4. Who selected the statements which were put to the respondents?

Responses to Statements

- a) No-one in his right mind would disagree with this. If paintings of naked people engaged in "pornographic" activities (i.e. sexually explicit) were displayed in art galleries, they would be liable to seizure under the O.P. Acts. (This has, of course, happened e.g. John Lennon's exhibition in a Bond Street Art Gallery). Consequently such paintings are rarely exhibited publicly. The question has no real value to a survey of this sort.
- b) Sex is a private matter for some - and a public one for others. As long as the public display of sex (i.e. under controlled circumstances e.g. in a cinema or theatre or club - or even a house where there is no coercion either for people to participate or observe and where such activity is clearly and unambiguously advertised beforehand) is restricted to consenting adults only, there is absolutely no justification whatsoever for legislation prohibiting it. It harms no-one (see 'c' & 'g')

- c) The 54% who disagree with this statement are simply in ignorance of the facts. No-one has ever proved that pornography is harmful but there is substantial evidence that to many it is beneficial. (Refer to N.C.R.O.P.A.'s evidence to the Williams Committee). In any case 54% is only just over half. There is thus a substantial minority (if we accept these figures) who do not disagree with this statement and minorities have their rights too.
- d) We really need to know the exact numbers of men and women - not percentages - in order to properly evaluate the 60% who agree with this statement. They are, in any case, reacting emotively to this and not in accordance with logic. Since men also participate in sexually explicit films and photographs, why the emphasis on women only being "degraded"? Why does it not make men into "sex objects" for female use? Furthermore are we to draw the natural inference from re-action to this question that homosexual activity of this kind is acceptable by the same 60% since lesbians do not "use" males and male homosexuals do not "use" women? I wonder what the response to the ~~statement~~ statement "The pornography trade degrades men because it makes them into 'sex objects' for ~~male~~ female use"? The question is as loaded as it is silly. Consequently the answers are as irrational as they are unreliable.
- e) Again here the 40% who disagree with this statement are in ignorance of the facts. Doctors and psychiatrists and other experts in sexual medicine are virtually unanimous in believing that the use of "pornography" by some married couples is undoubtedly beneficial. It is even recommended by S.P.O.D. (quote).
- f) The facts speak for themselves whatever Gallup's respondents make think.

This has not only happened in places like Denmark (the evidence for which is indisputable ~~XXXXXXXX~~ however much the pro-censorship lobby may try to prove otherwise) but even in our own country - viz. the reduction in sexual offences up until (quote from N.C.R.O.P.A.'s evidence to Williams) when there was a gradual relaxation in rigidly enforcing the O.P. laws, followed by a more recent (details if possible?) increase in sexual offences since the recent "clamp-down" and consequent near disappearance and unavailability of the more explicit material. This response shows yet again just how ill-informed about pornography the public are and how the media (with one or two notable exceptions) have grossly misrepresented the truth of the situation.

- g) This question is really the only one of any real significance because, as the poll rightly concludes and N.C.R.O.P.A. heavily endorses, irrespective of the respondents responses to all other statements read to them, a majority (48% to 39%) believe that people should decide for themselves. In other words there should be no censorship. (See 'i'). With the exception of "The Guardian", this most important point was either barely mentioned or played down as if unimportant ^{by the media}. It is also interesting to note that Raymond Johnston's re-action to the response to this key question was to dismiss it as a "loaded question"! It is, in fact, one of the few which certainly isn't loaded.
- h) Of course it is possible that in a tiny minority of cases "the use of pornography can trigger off sexual assault" but the real causes of such an assault ^{one} ~~is~~ almost certainly to be found elsewhere. In any case this small risk is far outweighed by the "safety valve" factor it provides for the many, thus preventing sexual assault (see Dick's section in Williams). An honest response (Gallup's) to a virtually dishonest question.

- i) The responses to this statement completely contradict statement (g) because there the majority was in favour of no censorship. The introduction of the words "on sexual grounds" in the statement (i) may be significant. What the respondents no doubt have in mind here are protections for children and for those who do not wish to be forcibly affronted by material they would deem offensive. They are thus on their guard somewhat. And, indeed, so, of course, is NCROPA and its supporters. We have always made it absolutely clear that our "no censorship" demand is for consenting adults only. It was irresponsible of the press to make so much of this 70% figure (who disagreed with the statement) and so little of the response to statement (g).
- j) The question of rape has no relevance to a survey on attitudes towards pornography. The implication is that the two are inevitably related. They are not. No-one in his right mind would condone rape but rapists do not become rapists because of their exposure to "pornography". In fact potential rapists are much more likely to refrain from committing sexual assaults if they have access to pornography. This provides a safety valve and they are able to act out their phantasies through masturbation. Why this question was included at all is puzzling - unless the poll organiser's aim was to obtain the result he or she - or the client - wanted.
- k) Again this was a particularly stupid statement to use. The many ways in which the word "immoral" would be interpreted really renders the results valueless. However it is still important to note that a majority (44% to 41%) disagreed. NCROPA's "terms of reference" do not include television and, if we are to be true to our protection of children safeguard, we do accept that should perhaps be a certain amount of censorship of TV although at what level it is extremely difficult to say.