

Effects of Sexual Businesses on Society

Research Synthesis Paper: [The Effects of Pornography on Individuals, Marriage, Family and Community](#)

Sexually-oriented businesses (SOBs)—pornography stores and strip clubs— deleteriously affect their surrounding communities. For instance, SOBs along Garden Grove Boulevard in California contributed to 36 percent of all crime in that area.¹⁾ A similar study in Centralia, Washington found that, after an SOB opened, the serious crime rate rose significantly in the vicinity of the SOB's address.²⁾ Findings such as these generally come from studies commissioned by cities to measure the incidence of the eight serious crimes of the Uniform Crime Reports: homicide, rape, assault, robbery, burglary, theft, auto theft, and arson.³⁾

1. Crime Rates

SOBs have been found to cause more crime than non-sexually oriented nightclubs and bars. A report from Daytona Beach, Florida found that SOB neighborhoods have 270 percent more total crime than non-SOB control neighborhoods and 180 percent more than non-SOB neighborhoods with "taverns."⁴⁾ A study in Adams County, Colorado found that 83 percent of crimes in a neighborhood featuring two adult businesses were connected to those adult businesses.⁵⁾

SOBs can also act as centers for crime. In Houston, Texas, more than 517 arrests took place within 12 months at SOBs, 50 at one SOB alone.⁶⁾

2. Sexual Offenses

A study of Sexually-oriented businesses (SOBs) in Phoenix, Arizona found that the number of sex offenses was 506 percent greater in a neighborhood containing a SOB.⁷⁾ Sexual deviants are attracted to these areas, intending to pay for sexual pleasures. The forbidden partners they desire include children, the invalid, and the elderly.⁸⁾

3. Transmission of STDs

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are commonplace at many Sexually-oriented businesses (SOBs). Pennsylvania's attorney general closed several Philadelphia SOBs because patrons created a serious public health risk by regularly engaging in unprotected sexual activity inside the video booths, promoting the spread of HIV, hepatitis B, and other STDs.⁹⁾ The numbers of incidences may be higher than reported to police (and thus used in these studies) because many victims are reluctant to report crimes committed against them while at SOBs. This reluctance makes many patrons easy prey for criminals.

4. Property Value

Sexually-oriented businesses (SOBs) affect property values as well. The closer a property is to an SOB, the more its value depreciates. A study of owners of commercial property or their owners from Dallas, Texas found that all concluded that SOBs drastically decrease property value. Property sales were significantly lower at \$1.50 to \$7 per square foot in areas in close proximity to SOBs, compared to \$10 to \$12 per square foot a mile away from SOBs.¹⁰⁾

The close proximity of SOBs to neighborhoods leads to a greater exposure of children to pornographic material.¹¹⁾ In Denver, Colorado, an investigation into the adverse secondary effects of SOBs on surrounding neighborhoods found large amounts of litter in these neighborhoods that included pornographic images, sex paraphernalia, used condoms, and used syringes.¹²⁾

The devaluation of people and property by SOBs has not gone unnoticed by the courts, which have consistently afforded substantial deference to government entities seeking to regulate adverse secondary effects associated with SOBs. The U.S. Supreme Court has held that a jurisdiction need not conduct its own study, but may rely on relevant studies and evidence produced by other jurisdictions.¹³⁾ The Court has also recognized that common experience and case law can be relevant factors in support of SOB regulation.¹⁴⁾

¹⁾ "Protecting Communities from Sexually Oriented Businesses," 2nd ed. (Scottsdale, AZ: Alliance Defense Fund, November 2002), <http://www.communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/pcsob/pcsob2ed.pdf> (accessed October 21, 2009), 151.

²⁾ Richard McCleary, "Crime Risk in the Vicinity of a Sexually Oriented Business: A Report to the Centralia City Attorney's Office" (Revised Report, February 28, 2004), http://communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/landuse/pdf/washington_centralia_2004.pdf (accessed October 21, 2009), 2.

³⁾ Richard McCleary, "Crime Risk in the Vicinity of a Sexually Oriented Business: A Report to the Centralia City Attorney's Office" (Revised Report, February 28, 2004), http://communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/landuse/pdf/washington_centralia_2004.pdf (accessed October 21, 2009), 2-3.

⁴⁾ Valerie Jenness, Richard McCleary, and James W. Meeker, "Crime-Related Secondary Effects of Sexually-Oriented Businesses Report to the County Attorney Palm Beach County, Florida" (Executive Summary, August 15, 2007), http://communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/landuse/pdf/florida_palmbeach_2007.pdf (accessed October 21, 2009), 3.

⁵⁾ "Protecting Communities from Sexually Oriented Businesses," 2nd ed. (Scottsdale, AZ: Alliance Defense Fund, November 2002), <http://www.communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/pcsob/pcsob2ed.pdf> (accessed October 21, 2009), 153.

⁶⁾ Jew Don Boney Jr., Helen Huey, John Castillo, Ray Driscoll, Joe Roach, Judson Robinson Jr., Gracie Guzman Saenz, and Orlando Sanchez, "Sexually Oriented Businesses Ordinance Revision Committee Legislative Report" (Houston, TX, January 7, 1997), <http://www.communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/landuse/pdf/txhouston.pdf> (accessed October 21, 2009), 8-9.

⁷⁾ "Protecting Communities from Sexually Oriented Businesses," 2nd ed. (Scottsdale, AZ: Alliance Defense Fund, November 2002), <http://www.communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/pcsob/pcsob2ed.pdf> (accessed October 21, 2009), 149.

⁸⁾ Jew Don Boney Jr., Helen Huey, John Castillo, Ray Driscoll, Joe Roach, Judson Robinson Jr., Gracie Guzman Saenz, and Orlando Sanchez, "Sexually Oriented Businesses Ordinance Revision Committee

Legislative Report” (Houston, TX, January 7, 1997),

<http://www.communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/landuse/pdf/txhouston.pdf> (accessed October 21, 2009), 10.

⁹⁾ “Protecting Communities from Sexually Oriented Businesses,” 2nd ed. (Scottsdale, AZ: Alliance Defense Fund, November 2002), <http://www.communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/pcsob/pcsob2ed.pdf> (accessed October 21, 2009), 8-9.

¹⁰⁾ Peter Malin, “An Analysis of the effects of SOBs on the Surrounding Neighborhoods in Dallas, Texas” The Malin Group, April 29, 1997, Dallas, TX:

<http://www.communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/landuse/pdf/txdallas.pdf> (accessed June 1, 2009), 8-9.

¹¹⁾ “Protecting Communities from Sexually Oriented Businesses,” 2nd ed. (Scottsdale, AZ: Alliance Defense Fund, November 2002), <http://www.communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/pcsob/pcsob2ed.pdf> (accessed October 21, 2009), 11.

¹²⁾ “Protecting Communities from Sexually Oriented Businesses,” 2nd ed. (Scottsdale, AZ: Alliance Defense Fund, November 2002), <http://www.communitydefense.org/cdcdocs/pcsob/pcsob2ed.pdf> (accessed October 21, 2009), 154.

¹³⁾ *City of Renton v. Playtime Theatres, Inc.*, 475 U.S. 41, 51-52 (1986) (“The First Amendment does not require a city, before enacting such an ordinance, to conduct new studies or produce evidence independent of that already generated by other cities, so long as whatever evidence the city relies upon is reasonably believed to be relevant to the problem that the city addresses.”).

¹⁴⁾ See, e.g., *City of Erie v. Pap’s A.M.*, 529 U.S. 277 (2000); *City of Los Angeles v. Alameda Books, Inc.*, 535 U.S. 425 (2002).

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