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0521552095 - The Moral Veto: Framing Contraception, Abortion, and Cultural Pluralism in the United States

Gene Burns

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The Moral Veto

Why have legislative initiatives occurred on such controversial issues as contraception and abortion at times when activist movements had demobilized and the public seemed indifferent? Why did the South – currently a region where antiabortion sentiment is stronger than in most of the country – liberalize its abortion laws in the 1960s at a faster pace than any other region? Why have abortion and contraception sometimes been framed as matters of medical practice, and at other times as matters of moral significance? These are some of the questions addressed in *The Moral Veto: Framing Contraception, Abortion, and Cultural Pluralism in the United States*. Based on archival and sociological research, and speaking to issues in the study of culture, social movements, and legal change, *The Moral Veto* examines what the history of controversies over such morally charged issues tells us about cultural pluralism in the United States.

Gene Burns is an award-winning teacher and associate professor of public affairs at James Madison College of Michigan State University. A sociologist by training, he is the author of *The Frontiers of Catholicism: The Politics of Ideology in a Liberal World*, a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year in 1993. He has written articles on social movements, revolutions, and the politics of religion in the *American Journal of Sociology*, *Theory and Society*, *Sociology of Religion*, and other journals.

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*Framing Contraception, Abortion, and
Cultural Pluralism in the United States*

GENE BURNS

*James Madison College
of Michigan State University*



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For Fred Block and Steve Warner, wonderful teachers

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Acknowledgments

Although we academic authors often labor in a fair amount of obscurity, one advantage of writing a second book is that the author is not quite so obscure as during the writing of the first and so more easily connects with many helpful colleagues. Thus I had an opportunity to talk with many people about this project and fear that I may have lost track of a few names. One example is the very friendly and knowledgeable scholar from California whom I met over file drawers at the Library of Congress and who shared with me his impressive knowledge of Mary Ware Dennett and the suffrage movement; I never learned his name. More specifically, I would like to thank, first of all, the generosity of the Annenberg Scholars Program at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, where I spent the 1995–96 year on a fellowship. Elihu Katz, an impressively wide-ranging thinker, provided everything one could want in terms of intellectual stimulation and moral support. I also gained a great deal, both intellectually and personally, from my colleagues David Buckingham, Michael Griffin, and Dona Schwartz. I would like to extend special thanks to Barbara Grabias and Crispin Sartwell.

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I admire Steve Warner for multiple reasons, both professional and personal. He is an excellent illustration of someone who integrates depth of intellect with depth of character. Steve is one of those people who come into your life and are unusually supportive and helpful, for reasons we never fully understand.

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