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Institutions of Higher Education and Unwelcome Pregnant Coeds: Overcoming the Problem of Unintended Pregnancy

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INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND UNWELCOME PREGNANT COEDS: OVERCOMING THE PROBLEM OF UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my Mother, Rita Maria Bertasi. She is a woman of strength and integrity who has always considered her children before herself.

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Thank you to all of my family and friends who believe in me and help me to carry out all of my hopes and dreams. Without my family and friends I would not have the support I need to succeed and the courage I need to work for that which I believe in. I would also like to thank all of my professors and my advisor, Dr. Michael Fitzgerald, who have given me the tools to continue my education. A special thank you goes to Dr. Christopher Craig, who gave me the opportunity to be a part of the College Scholars program that provided me a unique, challenging, and rewarding education and encouraged me to achieve my greatest academic potential.

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INTRODUCTION

Many colleges require that all freshmen live on campus but have no on-campus family housing. I found no college that would allow a mother to bring a child with her into a dorm. Many colleges call their family housing "graduate student housing" or "married student housing," thereby discouraging moms from considering themselves as qualified. The top schools are the worst offenders. Some colleges have token programs to help a handful of single moms for one year in a separate, almost segregated, setting, but have no mothers who are students or accommodations for mothers on the campus itself. The best schools are usually large state universities, where single mothers sometimes have access to the "married student" housing built for World War II veterans taking advantage of the GI Bill.

- Katherine Arnoldi, You Look Too Young to be a Mom

The thesis of this work is that unintended pregnancy in students of higher education is a significant social concern demanding proactive attention from institutions of higher education. The main research question in this paper is: *What is the relationship between education and fertility that denies women the opportunity to make certain reproductive choices and often forces them to choose abortion while they are students in higher education?*

This work came into being as a result of my personal knowledge of the enormous quantity of abortions that take place in the United States each year and from my personal witness of the emergence of crisis pregnancy centers near the campus of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee. These observations allowed me to question the cause of these occurrences. This questioning led me to the discovery that unintended pregnancy is a large social concern in America today. That information allowed me to delve deeper into the plague

of unintended pregnancy that affects young women today, specifically in the setting which I have called home for the last three and one-half years, college.

This paper confirms the fact that unintended pregnancy in America is a social problem in need of resolution. There are several assumptions that are critical to the functionality of this piece of work; these assumptions are: (1) Abortion is a negative solution to the problem of unintended pregnancy; (2) There is a desire among women to obtain the role of motherhood during their lifetime. This paper, built from these assumptions and based on the problem of unintended pregnancy in higher education, will allow one to gain the knowledge of the problem of unintended pregnancy in female students between eighteen and twenty-four and the answer to how institutions of higher education need to respond.

There is supporting evidence for these two assumptions. The reality is that women often seek abortion in negative situations. They seek them out of fear of social disgrace or because pregnancy seems to interfere with their life goals and plans (Lynch 16). In a study intended to examine women's reasoning after choosing abortion the two most selected reasons were: (1) "having a baby would dramatically change my life" (Finer et al 11); and (2) "I can't afford a baby" (Finer et al 11). These words indicate that women in these situations are left with the feeling that they cannot carry a pregnancy to term without negative consequences. The fact is that the majority of Americans, fifty-three percent, believe that abortion is morally wrong; however, fifty-seven percent believe that it should be legal in certain circumstances ("Abortions: People's Chief Concerns") because they cannot fathom that there is a better solution to the problem of unintended pregnancy. Abortion is seen as a last resort solution to a problem most women do not anticipate. This information demonstrates that abortion is not something that

people want to have, but rather something that is a painful solution to a problem where many people cannot see any other alternative.

The other assumption, that women generally want to be mothers at some point in their lives, is built upon the fact that although there have been many changes within the context of female roles in society that discourage motherhood, the majority of women continue to choose motherhood (Gillespie 123). There is the general consensus that the urge to become a mother is strong for many women in today's society as well as the notion that "motherhood is constitutive of feminine gender identity" (Gillespie 122). There is also evidence, through studies of college women, that many college women aspire roles as both mothers and employees (Bridges 591). The notion of motherhood as part of the feminine role in our world is ingrained in society (Gillespie 122), which enables this assumption to be part of this thesis. When one considers the cultural conditions of pregnancy there is the assumption that at least some women in society want to become mothers. Abortion and motherhood are part of the crux of the issue of unintended pregnancy in higher education. This is because abortion is the most common result of an unintended pregnancy; however, women often indicate that they would like to assume the role of motherhood if circumstances allowed them.

This paper focuses on the problem of unintended pregnancy in higher education. Chapter 2 discusses the evolution of the problem of unintended pregnancy relating the magnitude of the situation and the negative consequences of unintended pregnancy. Chapter 3 introduces the evolution of the separation of education and fertility and the traditional outlook that these goals are divergent. Chapter 4 illustrates the environment of college campuses as well as the problems associated with the risky sexual behavior rampant in college life. Chapter 5 relates the circumstances surrounding a pregnant student at an institution of higher education that lacks the

resources to support a pregnant or parenting student. Chapter 6 shows that institutions of higher education have the resources available to develop programs for pregnant and parenting students. Chapter 7 outlines the comprehensive program that institutions of higher education need to develop to safeguard the education of pregnant and parenting students. This paper seeks to demonstrate the necessity for institutions of higher education to use their resources to benefit society and initiate a positive change in the environment that pregnant and parenting students face in their attempt to achieve education in America while at the same time providing an outlet for the reduction of abortion in America

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UNINTENDED PREGNANCY: DRAFTING THE PROBLEM

The power of this desire to have a child, when women no longer need to have a child to define themselves as women, seems to be as great or even greater than ever.

-Melissa Ludtake, On Our Own: Unmarried Motherhood in America

INTRODUCTION

There are several components that combine to shape the significant problem of unintended pregnancy among young students, aged eighteen to twenty-four, in our American society that calls for the attention of institutions of higher education. The series of measures that lead to the development of unintended pregnancy as a considerable social concern primarily include the discussion of gender roles, the rate of unintended pregnancies, the consequences of unintended pregnancies, and lastly the government's failure to acceptably handle this crisis. To best define the problems associated with unintended pregnancy in the community of higher education one must first comprehend the background of the recent evolution of gender roles. Along with this evolution in society's placement of men and women there have been several consequential effects. Pregnancy in women is now more frequently termed unintended as a result of women's placement in society disabling them from handling their pregnancy. The problem of unintended pregnancy in the community of higher education has been exacerbated by the changes in the sexual culture of the United States, specifically in higher education. Although these changes have occurred, the consequences of those changes have largely been ignored making unintended pregnancy a colossal task for women obtaining a higher education, a problem

that demands a remedy. This chapter will discuss all the issues and consequences that have led to the difficulties women face in a pregnancy during higher education that calls for a renovation in policy on college campuses in the United States.

WHAT IS UNINTENDED PREGNANCY?

In order to better understand this phenomenon of unintended pregnancy it is essential that there be a definition of unintended pregnancy. For a pregnancy to be considered *unintended* one of the following conditions must be met: the participants must not intentionally try to conceive; the participants become pregnant as a result of failed birth control; or, the participants judge the pregnancy a mistake, unwanted, or untimely (Story 5; Mauldon and Delbanco 25; Washington State Department of Health; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services). The Washington State Department of Health defines an unintended pregnancy as slightly vague terminology that is contingent on the influences of many cultural perceptions.

With these definitions in mind, unintended pregnancy today in the United States remains a very frequent occurrence among young college women for the reason that the environment women aspire to has grown away from the cradle. With regard to the magnitude of unintended pregnancies in women of higher education, a pregnancy may often be termed unintended due to the incompatibility of a pregnancy with the cultural perceptions of her environment. The cultural changes in women's roles that have effectively excluded women's reproductive needs from her environment force women into a difficult situation with pregnancy. Women find themselves inside a barricade of classes, interviews, business meetings, and project deadlines where it difficult to find time or space for pregnant bodies to grow.

The roles of work and family have traditionally been associated with men and women respectively; however, within the later part of the twentieth century, the United States, along with other countries of similar development, offered new roles to men and women alike. This traditionally gender defined society evolved into an environment that began to disassociate gender with specific roles and strict boundaries; women were initiated as rising forces in the occupational world, some leaving behind their traditional garb of aprons and diaper bags. The familiar image, though slightly embellished, places the young men and women of the 1950's and early 1960's as young married couples with children arriving soon after the couple declares their vows, often making women mothers before employees (Rindfuss, Morgan, and Offult 278). Young mothers in this conventional image were encouraged to succeed in their schooling; however, the direction of this success pointed towards motherhood, not the workforce (Rindfuss, Morgan, and Offult 278). Although this picture is well known it quickly passes with the social revolution in the 1960's and 1970's that succeeded in drastically reconstructing the role of women in society.

This traditional image has changed completely, the only remnants of this impression can be seen on the reruns of *Leave It To Beaver.* Today, the formerly principle position of men in the labor force has given way to make room for women in the workplace. This modification of gender roles occurred partly as a byproduct of the deterioration of male employment which continues to render it difficult for the male to be the primary breadwinner of a household (Rindfuss, Morgan, and Offult 279) effectively changing women's traditional roles. Women now receive more opportunities in higher education, which allows them to quickly move up the ladder of success in a career. The combination of the emergence of the feminist movement,

increased access to reproductive technology, and women's increased participation in the workforce has been the key to the social changes in the world of American women (Gillespie 123). The fact that women's roles have changed is apparent in our daily lives today. However, the crisis of unintended pregnancy and the failure to address the needs of women are often overlooked as consequences of the changes in women's roles in society. Throughout all the changes in society's view of women's roles and reproductive experiences the majority of women still choose to continue to be mothers during their lifetime (Gillespie 123). The incidence of pregnancy within a cultural context that ignores reproductive needs effectively creates the grand conception of unintended pregnancy in our society. Society has failed to present effective solutions for the reproductive responsibility of women. These women have struggled in the face of alterations to women's positions in society. This failure has succeeded in presenting unintended pregnancy as a major social concern of the United States (Lynch 1).

The phenomenon of unintended pregnancy in the United States has become such a large social concern to policy in the United States as a result of the change in women's occupational and educational roles. The woman's primary role to stay at home and raise children when they become pregnant has been exchanged with new norms in society's behavior. These changes produce the term *unintended pregnancy*, a trend that has never affected society to the extent that it has in today's civilization. In 2000, *The Guttmacher Report on Policy* reported that half of all women in the United States of reproductive age, thirty-four million women, were labeled as in need of services or supplies to prevent unintended pregnancy (1). If the classic image of the 1950's had not been replaced, society would not as frequently term pregnancies as unintended because women's primary role would be the rearing of children. Society has given way to women's rights and freedoms, as they should; however, it has left behind women's roles as

mothers. Motherhood is a role that transcends time and cultures; it is a desire that most women retain.

THE NATURE OF THE SOCIAL CONCERN

Fretful citizens of the United States, as well as policy makers, have of late been disturbed by unintended pregnancy and named it a priority social concern. The root of the enormity of the situation is the quantity of pregnancies termed unintended. The vast number of these pregnancies signifies how women's environments have continued to change while their needs have been left unmet. From the period between 1982 and 1988 it is found that at least forty percent of births to American women have been categorized as unintended pregnancy (Mauldon and Delbanco 25). In 2001, forty-nine percent of pregnancies in the United States were considered unintended (Finer and Henshaw 90). The number of unintended pregnancies is quite substantial, thereby creating the initial social concern of the public.

In reports from the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands it is found that Americans believe that the social concern of unintended pregnancy is increasing (Delbanco et al 73). This information shows that there is accurate concern among the American population for the magnitude of this societal problem; however, this may also convey American's fear regarding the consequences of these unintended pregnancies (Delbanco et al 73). In this same study, it was only concluded that the percentage of Americans who consider unintended pregnancy a large concern is ten times greater than the Dutch and two times greater than Canadians (Delbanco et al 72). The United States holds the record among its Western counterparts for the highest rates of pregnancy in women under twenty-five years of age, contributing to the estimate that nearly half of pregnancies in the United States are unintended and almost half of those unintended

pregnancies end in induced abortions (Westoff 254, 257; "Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States").

The appearance of such considerable societal concern for unintended pregnancy is due, according to James Trussell, as it is found that "despite the many contraceptive options available in the United States, nearly half (49%) of the 6.4 million pregnancies each year are unintended" (168). Most Americans believe that the problem of unintended pregnancy is of an alarming nature; however, they do not understand the cause of the problem of unintended pregnancy, which is traditionally attributed to the lack of contraceptive use or failed contraceptive use (Delbanco et al; Mauldon and Delbanco). The fact is that women's roles have changed and their reproductive needs, for the most part, are unmet; however, their risk for pregnancy still remains. The United States Department of Education cites that 18.4% of secondary school teachers conceive student pregnancy to be a serious concern in education (Schools and Staffing Survey). The problem of unintended pregnancy is such a great concern not only because of its magnitude but because of its concentration within the younger population: those adolescents in high school and college who have achieved this situation through increased risky behaviors.

Although the problem of unintended pregnancy is an important social concern for the general American public it becomes noted with greater urgency as a social and public health problem when it becomes common among adolescents (Silva S151). *The Guttmacher Report on Public Policy* explains that, in today's society, it is quite common for the average American woman to engage in sexual intercourse for the first time by age seventeen (1). The increase in sexual activity among young American women was first noted during the post-war years in the mid twentieth century (Westoff 257). Though this information may take some by surprise, it is a sobering reality that cultural influences have imposed on young women in American searching

for a higher education (Westoff 1). As adolescents typically become sexually active for the first time in high school this type of behavior continues and becomes more popular in communities of higher education, such as a college campus, where studies have shown that the numbers of college females who engage in premarital sexual intercourse have risen substantially since 1970 (Lelm and Neutens 39). Thus, the mere concern of unintended pregnancy is actually a "monumental task for [American] college women" (Story 2) as the women of traditional college age, twenty to twenty-four years, "have a higher rate of unintended pregnancy than do women in any other age group" (Glei 73). Women in this age group obtain thirty-three percent of all abortions ("Facts on Induced Abortions in the United States"). The reality of unintended pregnancy is certainly a substantial consideration for the average American college woman (Finer and Hanshaw 90). The consequential effects of the cultural changes, such as abortion, have magnified the negative extent of unintended pregnancy.

CONSEQUENCES OF UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

Unintended pregnancy has many consequences for individuals who find themselves surprised and pregnant as well as for society itself (Mauldon and Delbanco 25). In the case of unintended pregnancy in college females, those consequences are not only delivered to individual pregnant females but also to the institutions of higher learning. The high rate of unintended pregnancy in America is noted as the immediate cause of abortion (Henshaw 24). The rate of unintended pregnancy is substantially higher in the age group of eighteen to twenty-four than other age groups (Finer and Henshaw 90). The grave consequence is that women aged twenty to twenty-four obtain thirty-three percent of all abortions in the United States ("Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States"). The consequences of unintended pregnancy primarily

serve, in this paper, to exemplify the unmet needs of women's reproduction. If the cultural changes adequately took into account women's reproductive responsibilities the high numbers of negative consequences of unintended pregnancy would not take place.

The majority of unintended pregnancies result in abortions and the majority of abortions are termed *educational abortions* (Clarke 321). This suggests that the abortions during adolescence and the early twenties occur while these young women are in school and are subjected to the cultural impression that education is incompatible with parenting (Clarke 321). The common result: women must forfeit motherhood on the grounds of the continuance of their higher education. This is due to the lack of adequate support of women by society.

These consequences come in the form of frequent induced abortions and the interference of educational and career goals, both of which affect the individual and society, making the problem of unintended pregnancy of larger concern. Stanley and Henshaw note that the aim to reduce abortion in society often fails to account for unintended pregnancy as the major determinant of abortion (24). *The Guttmacher Report on Policy* indicates that for reasons of interference with education, employment, and the inability to support a pregnancy, half of women that encounter unintended pregnancies chose to end them with induced abortions (*The Guttmacher Report on Policy* 1; Silva S153). The abortion rate in the United States is much greater than that of Canada and the Netherlands (Delbanco et al 70) resulting in the statistic that nearly forty-two percent of unintended pregnancies result in an induced abortion (Trussell 169). Moreover, the majority of abortion applicants are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four years (Lynch 1) making it imperative that the concern of unintended pregnancies focuses on this group of college aged pregnant females. It is apparent that their needs have not been met by society although there is an expressed concern in this area.

CULTURE OF PREGNANCY

When a woman becomes pregnant she enters into a state of being where everything around her exists with relation to her pregnancy, Jean Thrasher describes this as the subculture of pregnancy (13). In a subculture, one exists within a larger cultural context; people within the same subculture share "a common social interaction, face common problems, or share common experiences" (Thrasher 13). A woman who becomes pregnant for the first time enters such a subculture, resulting perhaps from the stimulation of certain hormone changes; a pregnancy soon becomes the axis of identification for the pregnant woman (Thrasher 13-14). The contribution of the subculture of pregnancy to the vast number of unintended pregnancies in college is that the subculture demands women to identify themselves in terms of their pregnancy; however, the culture of higher education largely ignores pregnancy in female students, which puts the two at odds.

The subculture of pregnancy in the environment surrounding higher education undertakes a more thorough discussion in Chapter 3; nevertheless, one must realize the extent of the crisis of unintended pregnancies in college females by taking a glance at the absence of a pregnancy support group at the collegiate level. The pregnant woman is the lead role in this subculture; however, women with unintended pregnancies in higher education often cannot find this subculture and are left battling the crisis of this turning point in their lives without the supporting role of the subculture of pregnancy, many times the pregnant woman in this situation loses her own identification and incurs feelings of being cheated or that her pregnancy is incomplete (Thrasher 15). The fact that teenage pregnancy is the single greatest cause of school dropouts (Brindis and Philliber 242) only hints at the perplexities facing women with unintended pregnancies in educational environments. The complications of unsupportive environments for

unintended pregnancies in places of higher education only emphasizes the serious questions (*The Guttmacher Report on Policy* 1) that young pregnant students must face in their life-altering encounters with pregnancy within the culture of higher education.

FAILURE TO ADDRESS THE FEMININE NEED

The topic of college women and their hardships with unintended pregnancies has generally been ignored (Story 11) and although there is concern for this problem the needs of those confronted with these challenges have not been sufficiently attended. The political environment succeeds only in polarizing the topic of unintended pregnancy instead of working toward a solution. The 2004 Democratic Party platform supports efforts toward family planning and advocates that abortion should be "safe, legal, and rare" (Wooley and Peters). The 2004 Republican Party platform says that they want to "ensure that women with problem pregnancies have the kind of support, material, and otherwise, they need for themselves and for their babies" (Wooley and Peters). Although the two main political parties continue to advocate that they want to meet the needs of American women and make abortion rare, there has been no substantial change with regard to resolving the problem of unintended pregnancy in college females, where the need is great. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declares family planning to be one of the ten most significant public health achievements of the twentieth century yet half of all the pregnancies in the United States are still categorized as unintended (*The Guttmacher Report on Policy* 1) and the run on abortions still exists. This suggests that women's needs must be met in a different way. Furthermore, although *Title IX* of the *Education Amendments of 1972* celebrates thirty-five years in 2007, many colleges and

universities still do not adhere to this federal statute prohibiting discrimination against pregnant students.

Although the United States government confirms the problem of unintended pregnancy to be one of the nation's official health goals in Healthy People 2010 this progress has proved to be difficult (*The Guttmacher Report on Policy* 2). The high rate of unintended pregnancy still evident at present is indicative of the lack of success of the ninth goal of the Healthy People 2010 program, which is to "improve pregnancy planning and spacing and unintended pregnancy" (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services). This program states that the cornerstone of this goal is in "achieving planned, wanted pregnancies and preventing unintended pregnancies" (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services). The Healthy People 2010 program claims to have adopted the recommendation of the 1995 Institute of Medicine Report which called for the nation "to adopt a social norm in which all pregnancies are intended" (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services); however, the solution indicated by Healthy People 2010 and by the Institute of Medicine largely involves increasing access to contraceptives. The proposed solution by Healthy People 2010 is indicative of the failure by the government to accurately access the need of the main population at risk for unintended pregnancy. It also improperly addresses the method to curb the rates of unintended pregnancy in students of higher education. The vast majority of colleges and universities offer contraceptives or information regarding the obtainment of family planning services; however, this age group often fails to use contraceptives and usually engages in risky sexual behaviors. Though the government is working toward increased access to contraceptives, it fails to address the needs of those women who are confronted with unintended pregnancy in settings where contraceptives abound. The solution to unintended pregnancy is to create an environment where all pregnancies are intended. This does

not involve further prevention of pregnancies by contraceptives because students already have access to these services; instead, it demands that the government use university resources to create a social norm where all pregnancies are welcomed. The following chapters will discuss the college environment in more detail to further support this conclusion.

Democrats For Life confirm the failure of governmental help in this public interest issue and attribute it to the disagreement on how to address the issue due to religious, ethical, and personal reasons ("95-10 Initiative"). This organization also notes that there is the agreement that unintended pregnancy is of important social concern and the government has several bills on their desk to combat this problem because there is the recognition that students engage in risky behaviors and the traditional solution of contraception is not wholly effective ("95-10 Initiative"). There is the consensus that the government has provided much support for contraceptives and reproductive technology; however, they have not given the same consideration to those who wish to carry their pregnancies to term but cannot due to the lack of support they face, especially those students of higher education ("95-10 Initiative"). The Democrats For Life suggests that there is the need to offer support to pregnant and parenting students because these women feel that abortion is their only option ("95-10 Initiative"). The Institute of Medicine recently published a report summarizing the consequential effects of unintended pregnancy; the result of this study was the urging of the government to adopt new goals to reduce the incidence of unintended pregnancy (Henshaw 24). The goal of this paper is to create an environment that welcomes all pregnancies through the innovative support of pregnant and parenting students. With the government's goal to make abortion rare it is imperative that their policy goals concerning pregnant and parenting students change.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

The general public has expressed concern for the problem of unintended pregnancy and the consensus is that "policymakers should be more disturbed by the underlying fact that the unintended pregnancy rate in the United States is so high, and that so many women experience repeat unintended pregnancies" (Cohen 8); yet, women's needs are still left unattended. The inability of the United States to meet the needs of women enduring the grave problem facing the United States, that of unintended pregnancy in female students of higher education, suggests that these needs must be met by another route. The negative consequences of unintended pregnancy can only be solved by "helping women prevent unintended pregnancy in the first place" (Cohen 8). This goal entails making a planned environment for unintended pregnancy whereby women feel that they have the support to turn their crisis into a planned pregnancy.

The chapter discusses the development of the culture of unintended pregnancy as a result of the change of women's roles in society and the lack of society's adaptation to the needs of women. This chapter also demonstrates that the magnitude of unintended pregnancy is enormous in women of traditional college ages. The negative consequences, as a result of women's inability to combine education and childbearing, are appalling in situations of higher education. The finding is that the combination of all of these factors along with society's inability to control the situation with the measures that it has tried in the past calls for the attention of institutions of higher education to become part of the solution to the problem of unintended pregnancy. The next chapter will thoroughly examine the divergence of the goals of motherhood and education.

3

PREGNANT STUDENTS: FACING THE IRRECONCILABLE WORLDS OF EDUCATION AND MOTHERHOOD

Often, I felt like my life was dichotomous: single college student in the morning, food stamp-paying single mama at night.

-Sarah Travis, You Look Too Young to be a Mom

INTRODUCTION

Deficient and misguided policy goals, aimed at the resolution of unintended pregnancy among young pregnant students of higher education, have served to emphasize the significant problem of unintended pregnancies in American society. Although many policymakers concern themselves with this problem, perhaps the policy aims and goals are not working to address the core cause of the phenomenon of unintended pregnancy among college students. The cultural changes within the occupational and educational worlds of women are a major topic of discussion in relation to unintended pregnancy. This issue partakes in the expulsion of reproduction as a key component of women's roles in society. One must address the origination of this cultural separation that distances women from their desires of motherhood. This is an important consideration in the goal of resolving unintended pregnancy because this cultural separation has acted in a way to emphasize pregnancy as a crisis in America.

WORLD OF EDUCATION

Research has long confirmed that education is a crucial factor in influencing childbearing patterns among women (Martin and Jaurez 152). Mary Beth Weinberger suggests that the level

of educational differential in fertility varies depending on the developmental level of each individual country (38). This suggests that the educational differential in fertility is smaller in lesser-developed countries while it is larger in more developed countries. This differential has been increasing in many rapidly developing countries and is especially apparent in Latin America as women become more highly educated (Weinberger 38). It has been shown that women with between four and seven years of education have substantially lower fertility rates than women of lesser education in developed and developing countries (Weinberger 38).

Since the 1960's there has been a consistent trend delaying childbearing (Wilkie 583) so much so that by 1988 the result was that one-third of all first births were to women twenty-five years of age or older (Roose 322). Research in this area consistently finds that women with higher levels of education develop a pattern of childbirth that begins at a later age than traditional patterns would dictate (Rindfuss, Morgan and Offult 279). Age patterns in childbearing have shifted significantly in all age groups. It is clear that fertility has shifted to older women; however, the actual rate of fertility in the United States has not changed. The change in the pattern of American fertility can easily be determined when examining the fertility patterns in 1973 and comparing it with those in 1988; the rate of fertility was the same over the course of both years (Rindfuss, Morgan and Offult 277). The fertility was reallocated to different age groups by the following percentages between these years: fertility decreased by 10% within the 15-19 year age group; fertility decreased again by 7% within the 20-24 year age group; fertility increased by 1% within the 25-29 year age group; fertility increased a substantial 33% within the 30-34 year age group; and fertility increased again within the 35-39 year age group (Rindfuss, Morgan, and Offult 277). This research demonstrates the reality of the shift from young mothers

to older mothers in the childbearing patterns among American women in the later part of the twentieth century.

The apparent shift in childbearing confirms the pronouncement that "regardless of race, women enrolled in college or who have obtained higher education are less likely to carry a pregnancy to term than less educated women" (Story 19). The conclusion is that with each additional year of schooling there is a delay of a woman's first birth by three-fourths of a year (Rindfuss, Bumpass, and St. John 1440). This gradual shift of fertility to later years following each additional year of education reasonably suggests that education does play a significant role in the fertility of a female student; this relationship between education and fertility is not apparent, however, until the adolescent years (1432). The adolescent years determine the developmental stage where women must make a decision about the future, one that does not include both motherhood and education simultaneously. This confirms that education and fertility promote divergent goals under the current cultural influences. This condition makes the role of the pregnant student lost amid the misguided efforts and policies aimed at solving the problem of unintended pregnancy.

EDUCATION IN A BOX

The comprehension of society's divergent paths of education and fertility includes the goals of education as an institution in order to justify its incompatibility with fertility. Teresa Martin and Fatima Jaurez define some key dimensions of education:

- Education as a source of knowledge.
- Education as a vehicle of socioeconomic advancement.
- Education as a transformer of attitudes (53).

Education as an institution imparts those "values, aspirations, and skills which encourage and facilitate nonfamilial roles" (Rindfuss, Bumpass and St. John 431). As a result, these dimensions of education ensure significant impact on the reproductive behavior and desires of women, especially those who find themselves pregnant while attending institutions of higher education.

The first dimension, "education as a source of knowledge," is the most explicit goal of an institution of learning, allowing the experience of education and the institution to have long-lasting implications for women as it shapes their abilities and opportunities that they will have in the occupational field (Martin and Jaurez 53-56); in this way, "education as a source of knowledge" has far-reaching implications on a woman's reproductive decisions (Martin and Jaurez 53). This is true because education instills knowledge in women that does not incorporate familial roles. Similarly, the dimension dictating "education as a vehicle for socio-economic advancement" is a principle factor that diverges education and fertility because the dimensions of education do not include childbearing. Rather, education advances one's economic opportunities and does not reflect childbearing as an achievement (Martin and Jaurez 53). There is a certain stigma surrounding a student carrying a pregnancy to term because of the idea promulgated in education that having a child at a young age is causally related to negative socio-economic outcomes (Clarke 4). The culture blames childbearing as the culprit in bad social and economic situations; however, it is the fault of society's disregard of women's needs when women's roles in society are altered. The last dimension, "education as a transformer of attitudes," highlights education's role in attitude formation that leads to the questioning of traditional beliefs, actions, and authority structures (Martin and Jaurez 53). This component inherently has implications for the fertility behavior and choices of students of higher education.

Mary Beth Weinberger confirms that education may in fact encourage attitudes, values, and beliefs that do not include childbearing as compatible with education; in fact, Weinberger notes that education may influence one to acquire small family norms and promote the necessity of the accumulation of vast wealth; notions that discourage fertility rates (35). The educational culture has made it apparent that reproduction cannot evade the influence of education and it provides a pervasive effect that shapes the entire range of the roles of women in our society (Martin and Jaurez 56). Rather than agreeing with the cultural acceptance that education is an institution inherently incompatible with reproduction it may make more sense to consider education as an institution before women were given many higher opportunities in education. At that time those institutions were primarily aimed toward the success of men, not women. This implies that those institutions have not yet fully considered the needs of women.

As previously established, the context of women's occupational and educational roles in society have changed dramatically during the later part of the twentieth century (Rindfuss, Morgan, and Offult 278); thus, women must cope with these changes which forces them to forego their traditional patterns of reproduction. Many have observed this delay in childbearing as a strategy to fit the mold of new roles imposed on women by changes in occupational and educational fields. The association between education and fertility has only become stronger which indicates that there are certain societal expectations for women's reproductive behavior resulting from changes in female educational and occupational expectations (Rindfuss, Morgan, and Offult 278). These changes result from the difficulties with preserving professional or educational self-presentation while carrying a pregnancy to term. In this light, women do not delay childbearing as an inventive behavior but rather the "conditions promoting fertility delay have intensified in recent decades" (Rindfuss, Morgan, and Offult 287).

There has been an increased emphasis on the importance of women's education and women are increasingly working in better-paid career type jobs. Although there are still gender disparities, women are less likely to leave the labor force to bear and raise children (Rindfuss, Morgan, and Offult 279). Women's work profiles are conforming to male dominated occupational roles. With these changes in mind, women are more likely to choose social patterns that are less likely to incur childbearing responsibilities early on in their lives, especially during school. However, these behaviors conflict with the expressed interest of women in the role of childbearing (Bridge 591). Women do want to become mothers but society forces them to adhere to the separate cultural conditions of education and fertility.

All the incongruities between education and fertility suggest that education and fertility are divergent goals. It is the culture to accept that it is too difficult to combine the roles of student and mother, making women postpone childbearing until they have completed the years of education and career attainment that they desire (Rindfuss, Morgan, and Offult 279). The traditional recommendations of academic scholars have advised women to postpone childbearing until a later age with the use of reproductive technology (Clarke 2) because of the traditional acceptance of the Culture of Poverty Thesis that says that women's poverty and inability to attain educational credentials is caused by:

- Early Childbearing
- Non-Marital Childbearing
- High-Rates of Childbearing (Clarke 2).

These negative outlooks on childbearing and education reduce the odds of conception by fifty percent for women of all races enrolled at an educational institution; however, these findings do not reflect a female student's risk of unintended pregnancy (Story 17). Women fulfilling these

roles do not abdicate their reproductive abilities; women in this area of life have reproductive needs that are ignored, furthering the problem of unintended pregnancy. Women in this environment still become pregnant; oftentimes they indicate that they would be willing to carry a pregnancy to term if they were able to find a way to keep parenting from interfering with their education (Clarke 320). This conflict prevents them from combining the roles of student and mother.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE DIVERGENCE

Although it is clear that education has a negative effect on fertility rates there is also a very interesting component to this equation that encourages the idea that the needs of women are unmet. Educational attainment has a positive effect on abortion rates (Story 17). This negative relationship between education and fertility followed by the positive relationship between education and abortion alludes to the determination that childbearing for women in higher education entails more costs than for women with less education (Trent and Griner 1122). One might think that the problem of unintended pregnancy is resolved with the fact that education discourages childbearing; however, the problem is only begun because the high rates of abortion in this group of women determines the vast need among college women that has been left deficient. Henshaw and O'Reilly suggest that the "desire for fewer children associated with higher educational attainment may also lower the tolerance of better-educated women for unplanned pregnancies and thereby increase their likelihood of obtaining an abortion rather than giving birth" (Trent and Powell-Griner 1122-23). The problem comes into being because of the desire for women to be a part of both worlds; many women aspire to be mothers as well as to be a part of the educational world and workforce (Bridges 591).

Women that fall into the age group of traditionally aged college women obtain the highest numbers of abortions; this is true regardless of race (Story 18). The completion of high school is a good indicator of the likelihood of abortion; abortion is twice as likely among those who have completed high school (Trent and Powell-Griner 1135). The devastating numbers of abortion in this age group is explained in terms of risk, a woman with more education has a higher risk with regard to financial and career livelihood than a woman who does not have higher education (Story 19). This augments the positive effect of education on abortion as well as highlights that the risk of combining fertility and education in higher education is greater for unmarried women than it is for married women because single women generally have more invested in their education and less resources for child care (Trent and Powell-Griner 1136). Most of the abortions are due to interferences with education indicating that women cannot complete their education and have children. Many assume that abortion is the woman's definitive solution to her unintended pregnancy, thus solving half of all unintended pregnancies in America. Abortion is a negative solution to an unfortunate crisis; society must be willing to adapt education to meet women's reproductive needs.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Research proves that our institution of education and the workplace needs a renovation. Women succeeded in altering their world to be part of the educational and occupational worlds of men. With that change society did not include any amenities in the occupational and education worlds to include women's needs as far as their reproduction is concerned. Education as an institution only serves to distance women from their desire for motherhood. Society continues to tell women that the two roles that women employ are incompatible but what some

women fail to see, especially those young pregnant students in higher education, is that society has ignored women's needs and artificially constructed a role for women without any thought to women's roles as mothers in our society. The environment found surrounding institutions of higher education contributes to this mode of thinking by women and allows it to become a cultural norm that is accepted by society as a whole while the problem of unintended pregnancy in this group remains worrisome. This chapter has found that unintended pregnancy is initiated by the discrepancies and lack of compatibility in the dual roles of women. The next chapter will focus on the environment on campus that contributes to the instances of pregnancy in this age group.

4

COLLEGE TOWN: AT RISK FOR UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

[College] seems to be such a decadent place...it seems that everyone here is always talking about sex or the person they've been having sex with.

-Female College Sophomore, anonymous paper

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental cultural separation between reproduction and education effectively determines the classification of unintended pregnancies. Unintended pregnancy is an incredible feat when one focuses on those women at risk for pregnancy in higher education. The environment surrounding these women is an extremely important factor when considering how these women have such a high risk for pregnancy. The age group in question in this paper is that group of students, aged eighteen to twenty-four, who are entering higher education for the first time and are probably leaving home for the first time. This is a time in one's life where there are life changes occurring and these students are making decisions that will permanently affect their lives. It has been established that high school introduces the majority of Americans to sexual activities; college only develops this lifestyle for most students of higher education. The contributing factor to the magnitude of unintended pregnancies in this population is inherent in the very essence of college life.

COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

The environment on a college campus today that contributes to the problem of unintended pregnancy in college females is the cultural norm of sexual promiscuity (Story 13).

Adding to the norm of sexual promiscuity on college campuses is the fact that students have become increasingly sexually promiscuous with more partners and it is acceptable to have casual friends or acquaintances as sexual partners (Story 12-13). All these cultural features of sexual behavior found today at American institutions of higher education are part of the changes in sexual behavior in recent decades. These behaviors are not exaggerations of campus life; the majority of students choose to engage in this behavior (Story 2; Kaufman 13). Many studies indicate that there is a large proportion of college students that behave in a sexually promiscuous way. Sex is a very large part of college life (Moffatt 30). In a 1996 survey of 2,000 college students, Elliot and Brantley suggest that 80% of the male students are sexually active as are 81% of female students (Story 13). This type of behavior makes up the very essence of college life; college life is conceptualized through "sexuality, drinking, and entertainment" (Moffatt 30).

The environment of a college campus only becomes more problematic with the significant number of sexually active college students that do not use contraceptives or use them improperly (Story 14). Although students generally show a favorable attitude toward the use of contraceptives it is the ineffective use of contraceptives or lack thereof, that is the "major contributing factor to the occurrence of problem pregnancies" (Lelm and Neutens 40) among the college population. Although contraceptives are largely available they do not avoid the risk of unintended pregnancy. A sampling of college students showed that while 79% of them were sexually active only 20% used condoms all the time and only 44% used condoms less than half of the time (Miller 15). In 1994, it is found that college students, aged eighteen to twenty-three years of age, are the most likely to use condoms sporadically and have sexual intercourse with multiple partners (Miller 16). Oswalt and Matsen found that those students who were surveyed to have the most sexual partners were also the ones who used condoms least often (Miller 16).

Condoms are the preferred method of contraceptives among college students (Miller 16). Hispanic students and women in general appear to be at the greatest risk for ineffective contraceptive use because they are the least likely to use contraceptives (Miller 12, 18).

Alcohol use is another risky behavior that augments the sexual promiscuity rampant on campuses of institutions of higher education. College students tend to use alcohol very frequently and alcohol has been associated with lower levels of condom use (Miller 8). Risky behaviors tend to cluster together. Thus, college students who engage in any of these behaviors are positioned at an increased risk for pregnancy. When students' risky behaviors result in pregnancy the atmosphere where they find themselves offers minimal choices with how to cope with the problem of their pregnancy and encourages them to think of their pregnancy as unintended and seek the most popular solution, abortion. All of these factors augment the societal concern.

ENVIRONMENTAL OBSTACLES

When female students find themselves in this culture of college pregnancy there are many obstacles that fill their environment. These struggles are sharpened with the fact that the support of a subculture of pregnancy, discussed in Chapter 1, does not exist. Research suggests that pregnant and parenting students live in a culture of depression, loneliness, and introspection (Perrin and Modermott 4). Moore and Schultz show that the pregnant adolescent who incurs signs of loneliness has a larger probability of being anxious and depressed with lower levels of self-satisfaction (Perrin and Modermott 4). This environment induces a pregnant adolescent to be in a very socially vulnerable position (Perrin and Modermott 4) and very much dependent on those supporting factors largely missing from a college campus. The depression that the

pregnant student feels in this culture of college pregnancy manifests itself in feelings of failure, helplessness, and powerlessness (Perrin and Modermott 4). It is very important that there be a social support buffer to help a young pregnant student through this time (Perrin and Modermott 4).

It has been suggested that the burden of pregnancy on the individual college woman may be too much for her to handle, resulting in a complete sense of helplessness and isolation if there is no one or nothing to help her through. To cope through this time, the environment a pregnant student encounters must have some sort of supporting social structure (Story 27). The burden of pregnancy on college students is even much greater than that of pregnancy in teens. College students, for the most part, lack familial support because they are often living independently and do not see their family often; this contributes to secrecy which results in an intense level of emotionally anxiety (Story 67). College students must endure the feeling of being stigmatized when they experience a pregnancy, this leaves the woman feeling consumed by her fear of being socially marked because of her pregnancy (Story 52).

The societal and political atmosphere today provides the social expectation that women are largely responsible for their own pregnancy (Story 77). As abortion is frequently a topic of political debate it has become such a polarized issue that women have come to view unintended pregnancies as results of careless and sexually irresponsible women making this image a part of the culture of pregnancy on college campuses (Story 77). This image contributes to women being unable to ask for support. Both sides of the issue have had effects on the way women view unintended pregnancy. The pro-life movement has made women conceptualize their pregnancies as babies thereby making women feel like murderers for terminating their pregnancies (Story 78). The pro-choice movement has taught women that they are the only ones responsible for

their pregnancy and that they should control their bodies, which has contributed to the fear of isolation and the fear of carrying a pregnancy to term without anyone to help (Story 78). These images and feelings that are associated with the cultures of pregnancy at colleges and universities force many women feel as if they must keep their pregnancies secret. Over thirty percent of college women who used home pregnancy tests did so in order to keep their pregnancy result confidential (Miller 25). Often women make decisions regarding their fertility during their years in higher education to keep their self-dignity because they feel guilty and careless as a result of the culturally imposed images associated with unintended pregnancy in college.

The rates of unintended pregnancy resulting from this culture of risky sexual behavior among college students is hard to determine accurately because no agency keeps a record; however, a 1993 survey of 1,408 male and female college students showed that 23% of those students reported ever being pregnant or impregnating someone else (Story 12). In a sampling of college females in Texas it was determined that 27% of females students had experienced pregnancy (Miller 9). Pregnancy is also common among college athletes, although it is also hard to determine exact numbers; however, athletic officials generally agree that pregnancies among college athletes are far from rare (Rainey 2). The risk of unintended pregnancy is a reality. This reality has been ignored while research has chosen to attribute the problem to the inability of the institution of education to incorporate reproduction. Rather, we should attribute this problem to the inadequacies of our culture to attend to the needs of our women.

An important part of the environmental obstacles women face on campus is the cultural framework that disables a woman to effectively cope with her pregnancy. At college, unintended pregnancy generally adheres to a cultural definition of it being a sickness (Story 22) rather that it being a natural part of women's roles in society. This causes the divergence between school and

childbearing (Clarke 2). Women have not attempted to bring these two separate paths together because the cultural framework generally spins motherhood and education as incompatible (Clarke 321). The college culture finds it acceptable for a woman to drop out of school for her pregnancy (Rindfuss, Bumpass, and St. John 434), further alluding to the point that these two paths are incompatible because of the culture's absence of support for these women. Students desire a more sensitive environment at their universities because they do not feel safe disclosing their pregnancies in such hostile environments (Story 73-4).

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

The environment that surrounds a woman when she is pregnant is an important concept to understand in order to delve into the problem of unintended pregnancy in America. Social support is an important aspect of a successful pregnancy. A pregnant woman has to incur many different feelings and when she is surrounded by scorn and negative images of irresponsibility shown to an unmarried young pregnant student, she falls into depression, loneliness, and guilt, which inhibit her success in pregnancy. The college life, full of sex and careless sexual behaviors, is an environment that discourages responsibility and ignores the needs of women when they find themselves in tough situations such as unintended pregnancy with no support system. This chapter finds that the instances of pregnancy among college females is exacerbated by the reckless sexual behaviors normal in college life; moreover, these instances of pregnancies are overlooked by educational institutions thereby increasing the problem of unintended pregnancy. The next chapter will examine what opportunities for support a woman can find on campus.

5

POSITIVE PREGNANCY TEST: WHAT CAN A STUDENT EXPECT?

I search for another pregnant girl on campus while walking between classes but never see one. I just want to meet someone's eyes and, without saying a word, give an I know what you're going through look. People hold doors open for me, smiling, but I know their thoughts.

-Rebecca Angel, You Look Too Young to be a Mom

INTRODUCTION

Due to the cultural constraints on reproduction during educational years it is very difficult for a student who finds herself pregnant to balance her pregnancy with the social and academic demands of a college campus. The environment on campus assumes no responsibility for the problem of unintended pregnancy. Society frowns upon a young unmarried student who finds herself pregnant and silently accuses her of carelessness and irresponsibility while giving her limited ways to help herself. The difficulty of unintended pregnancy is certainly exacerbated by the sexual culture of college life; however, institutions of higher education have all the resources to help young women facing tough times. The next step in attempting to resolve the social ill of unintended pregnancy is the evaluation of what a young girl can expect on campus if she finds herself pregnant.

ON CAMPUS

Society and research confirm the difficulty of choosing to bear a child and complete school at the same time; researchers and academic scholars suggest that it cannot be done and advocate that it would be detrimental for the women if she chooses this path because her

occupational and educational goals will suffer as a result. The cultural conditions that surround college students suggest that carrying a pregnancy to term is the less traveled path in college. Considering the cultural context of sexuality in higher education the likelihood of pregnancy is high. Any student who becomes pregnant in college needs to expect difficulty knowing they will tread those waters alone; institutions of higher education generally do not have a well-established support system for women experiencing unintended pregnancies as students.

As determined by the discussion of the subculture of pregnancy in Chapter 1, pregnant women in this subculture need emotional and environmental support because during pregnancy women face life-changes to their bodies and within their stable environments. This is especially important in college because college students have only recently left their homes and are on their own and are suddenly faced with a life-changing situation. Social support is certainly absolutely necessary for college women and it is something that educational institutions are able to form because they have support resources available that they may use to specifically address the needs of pregnant women in this environment. If these institutions engage in this type of support for women they will help initiate change in cultural norms to encourage the positive view of women who choose roles as mothers and students.

To initiate a positive cultural change of the image of young mothers, women need to encounter an environment of social and emotional support on campus specifically designed to fit the needs of young pregnant college women. First, institutions must understand the basic precepts of support necessary for any type of crisis. Susan Kaufman determines that social support is made up of two basic conditions:

- The perception that there is a sufficient number of available others to whom one can turn in times of need.

- A degree of satisfaction with the available support (Kaufman 1).

All university or college campuses provide health centers that distribute birth control and pregnancy tests or provide information where students may obtain these services as well as counseling centers that are available to students in desperate times. A student who becomes pregnant unintentionally can usually expect that their university will provide them some degree of counseling and information about where they can receive health care, whether it be from a university source or an outside source (Story 8). Universities do not make an effort past these minimal services, although there are a few exceptions. With only these bare necessities, which barely fulfill the university's legal responsibility to student health, the student does not have the necessary conditions of social support to help them cope in their crisis. There remains an absence of other students to whom the pregnant student may relate and the student has difficulty feeling satisfied with the limited help offered by universities. Regardless, the majority of universities do not offer nontraditional support services for students in special circumstances.

Although most colleges and universities provide birth control to their students, the problem of unintended pregnancy is still a common risk to females in higher education (Kaufman 3). The paradigm of services that institutions of higher education provide to pregnant and parenting student is exemplified in Lelm and Neutens' study at a large Midwestern university where students were provided with routinely scheduled appointments to undergo an induced abortion after they received positive pregnancy results (39). This adequately illustrates the inadequacy of the support encountered at educational institutions when students seek help for an unintended pregnancy. The university health center takes no personal interest in the best interest of the student; instead, it acts as a referral service. The university succeeds in ridding their waiting room of students with social problems while the student struggles silently without

anywhere to go but the abortion clinic because the university confirms their belief that there are no other alternatives to choose.

Susan Kaufman undertook a study of what college students see as alternatives to unintended pregnancies; she interviewed ten unmarried undergraduate couples (Kaufman 5) and Kaufman asked them two questions:

- What do you see as your alternatives?
- Which alternative would you choose?

The most popular response to the first question was abortion, listed by 70% (Kaufman 5). Marriage was seen as an alternative by 60% while adoption and single parenthood were listed as alternatives by 50% (5). The responses to Kaufman's second question were equally favorable of termination; abortion was listed as the most common alternative while single parenthood was listed as an alternative by only one couple. These results are not surprising given the lack of support that students have in their collegiate environment to help them cope with unintended pregnancies. It makes sense that marriage was listed as the second common alternative, next to abortion, because students are looking for a support system when they enter into the experience of premarital unintended pregnancy; they need a support system that will help them cope and marriage suggests that someone will be there to support them; on the other hand, for girls that do not choose marriage, colleges and universities provide no genuine support system interested in making women successful in this situation. In her study, Kaufman found that women choose abortion although they were often previously pro-life. These women were forced to view abortion as an unfortunate necessity because the environment of the crisis of unintended pregnancy required these women to shift their values (Kaufman 12).

When women face unintended pregnancy while they are students of higher education they encounter uncertainties regarding housing, medical care, and child care; all these things are necessary for a pregnant woman to think about. When there is no one around to help solve these types of problems the pregnant woman enters into the realm of despair and decides that she cannot face pregnancy on her own, termination becomes her only option. There are many real situations that have forced students in the past to endure hardships and make traumatic decisions because they felt alone and despaired in the face of the adversity of unintended pregnancy during college. The environment that colleges radiate regarding unintended pregnancy, which generally consists of just ignoring the situation, has sadly adversely affected many students and their pregnancies.

The Chronicle of Higher Education ran a heartbreaking story about Linda Chu, an undergraduate at the University of Southern California, who delivered her baby in her dormitory room alone and later discarded the baby in a trash chute in the dorm before leaving on vacation (Geraghty A49). Later, university officials claim that no one knew that Linda Chu was pregnant (Gegharty A49). Her situation became that desperate because she felt alone and without any other alternatives. The University of Louisville unfortunately contains the history of another student who was adversely affected by the university's response to her unintended pregnancy. In 2003, Connie Neal, an athlete at the University of Louisville, felt that she needed to keep her pregnancy a secret from university officials because she did not want her scholarship revoked as a result of carrying her pregnancy to term (Rainey 1). At the time, the university did not have a written policy for regular students or athletes that became pregnant, leaving Connie Neal wondering what was going to happen to her educational future as a consequence of her pregnancy. Often uncertainties such as the one that Connie Neal faced, forces athletes to

withdraw from college or have abortions, both of which are negative consequences to a woman's crisis of unintended pregnancy (Rainey 1). These are just a sample of the many stories of hardship that young pregnant women face on campus.

As the collegiate environment fails to adequately pay attention to student needs it also radiates an environment of stigmas associated with unintended pregnancy in college that make women feel guilty and isolated in their situations. In her biographical narrative, Jocelyn Moore tells her tale of her experience of unintended pregnancy as an African American at a small private and southern Roman Catholic college (Moore 85). Already facing difficulties with the acceptance of her race she becomes pregnant and is dealt the scorns and laughs of embarrassment from people at the public health clinic that should have been there to help her cope; she did not feel as if she could trust anyone with "shameful secret" (Moore 87). The prevailing culture surrounding unintended pregnancy made Jocelyn Moore feel that she "embodies 'the specter of Black women who procreate irresponsibly and have no aspirations beyond maximizing [their] take from the public trough.' No wonder their injurious censure effectively compounded [her] sense of shame about [her] 'illegitimacy,' [her] pregnancy, and [her] dependency" (Moore 89). Jocelyn Moore, at the time of her unintended pregnancy, had already removed herself from any parental dependency and the father of her child was undependable; she found herself alone (91). For Jocelyn Moore, as it happens for many other young students who find themselves in similar situations, there was no welcome sign, there was no safe haven for isolated students, and there was no support group. All these things are necessary for a woman to stay healthy, emotionally and physically, during her crisis of unintended pregnancy.

Institutions of higher education do not have sufficient support systems for pregnant and parenting students. There are some colleges that offer nontraditional student services for situations of unintended pregnancy but there is not a guarantee that any university will have them. Many community colleges have resources for parenting students such as child care, scholarships for books and tuition, daycare, and housing (Arnoldi). Institutions of higher education need to take heed of this example to better serve their female students. Few universities act as good examples. For instance, Emporia State University located in Kansas offers support such as childcare, housing, health insurance, job information and other services (Arnoldi). Kansas State University is another example of universities using their resources to help pregnant and parenting students. Kansas State University has a program geared toward non-traditional students whom they identify as older students, married students, parenting students, and returning students ("Adult Student Services"). Kansas State provides services such as free tutoring, scholarships, childcare, student health insurance, networking with peers, student advocacy, housing, and alternative credit opportunities (Adult Student Services"). These exceptions are rare and scattered throughout the country. Universities across the nation need to guarantee all students will be provided with the services they need.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville is a prime example of institutions of higher education lacking services for pregnant and parenting students. Although the University of Tennessee has relatively fair tuition rates and some housing for parenting students they lack in may others areas. At the University of Tennessee there are no written policies for students when they become pregnant regarding the status of financial aid and scholarships if students must take a leave of absence from school or athletic activities. The University of Tennessee has counseling services and a health center, but nothing specifically guided to support women during their crisis

of an unintended pregnancy, they only provide generic services. There is no subsidized day care or solutions for students without health insurance. This is an example of the apathetic attitude frequented by universities toward pregnant and parenting students; universities choose not to make it their problem.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

As well illustrated, many colleges and universities are ill prepared and students will suffer as a result (Rainey 1). It has well been established that the collegiate context is one that has traditionally ignored a woman's sexuality (Story 6); however, those colleges that choose to continue to ignore unintended pregnancy in college expose themselves to potential problems such as lawsuits (Rainey 1). Colleges and universities take a chance by not having written policies concerning pregnancy in their students, not only do they succeed in subjecting themselves to lawsuits, they also succeed in creating hazardous environments for students facing these problems. Instead of a college helping women realize their higher education potential in spite of their difficulties, students are suffering silently or dropping out of school (Rainey 2). All of these stories about young women facing tragedy on campus as a consequence of unintended pregnancy in higher education brings into question the adequacy of the institution in its dealing with this situation. This chapter finds that institutions of higher education have the resources and the responsibility to take better care of their female students when they experience an unintended pregnancy; however, they must choose to engage in programs that fulfill these needs. The next chapter will explain how institutions of higher education can use their resources and benefit from supporting students with unintended pregnancies.

6

RESOURCES FOR PARENTING EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCAITON

If you educate a man you educate a person, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family.

-Rudy Manikan

INTRODUCTION

The unintended pregnancy crisis in higher education represents a failure of the social structure to provide ample support and alternatives to students facing the crisis of unintended pregnancy. Although scholars state that education and pregnancy are two incompatible routes of life, the phenomenon of unintended pregnancy is a reality for college women (Story 11) due to the liberal sexual behaviors of students. When students experience an unintended pregnancy they enter into a stressful life-changing period and evidence suggests that a supportive environment could facilitate a positive response to the tumultuous experience. In the absence of such an environment pregnant women suffer emotional hurt and depression and normal functioning in life becomes difficult (Perrin and Midermott 2). The high rate of abortion and tragedy among unintentionally pregnant students of higher education demonstrates that women's needs in this area have not been met and must be addressed directly by institutions of higher education that have the resources to cope with this situation.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Institutions of learning find themselves in a unique position (Brindis and Phillber 243) to be able to help resolve this problem in a different way than government programs have traditionally addressed this problem. Schools are able to provide students with adequate support

services that may be able to transform the culture of unintended pregnancy into an environment that welcomes pregnant women and help them through the hardships of pregnancies. It is important to provide and improve prenatal and childbirth assistance to young women who find themselves wishing to carry their pregnancies to term and continue their education; a woman in this condition traditionally has very little support and deserves special attention (Silva S156). When an institution of higher learning undertakes this sort of responsibility they make a good long-term investment in the education of the mother. When a young mother drops out of school there usually follows a negative chain of events that lead to economic dependence on societal welfare (Brindis and Philliber 242). The components that combine to form a catalyst to this mother's economic dependence on society are:

- Decreased educational attainment
- Subsequent high fertility rates
- Marital instability leading to a high incidence of single-parent one-income families (Brindis and Philliber 242).

Reflecting in these components that help form the downward fall of a young mother from a path of education to one of welfare is helpful in determining the benefits for a college or university to invest in a pregnant woman's education. If society educates a mother, those children are more likely to be educated; universities with environments that induce women to drop out of school to have their child concentrate childbearing in a disadvantaged social class (Clarke 4). It is not only an investment but also a responsibility for institutions of higher learning because colleges and universities have a responsibility toward students in need of medical attention. These institutions should at least take the initial step towards resolving the issue of unintended pregnancy in their students (Geraghty A50).

As a general rule when adequate support is available for adolescent mothers "their chances of returning to school, entering the labor force, and finding employment improves" (Perrin and Midermott 3). Young unintentional mothers need a university resolution to the problem because they are without much familial support. Students have often expressed that a support group is essential during this experience and if they had a support group they would endure the situation more easily (Story 74). Students should not have to be made to feel like they are going to be punished for an unintended pregnancy; instead pregnant students should be able to know that there is support available (Rainey 2).

INSTITUTIONAL OUTLOOK

One may determine how an institution regards their responsibility toward unintended pregnancy with consideration to how the university defines an unintended pregnancy. The definition illustrates how a university would respond, if they respond at all, to the situation (Story 28). It has been suggested that there are three ways in which a university may regard an unintended pregnancy:

- Unintended pregnancy as a crisis
- Unintended pregnancy as a stage of development
- Ignorance of unintended pregnancy on campus (Story 28).

If institutions regard unintended pregnancy as a crisis they are likely to respond to the situation with the responsibility to intervene and "ensure that the students' mental and physical health is of top priority" (Story 28). The responsibility of the university to intervene may well affect resident life, health services, counseling services, and academics (Story 28). This crisis intervention would require the establishment of a protocol (Story 28). With regard to those institutions that

regard unintended pregnancy as a stage of development they require a more non-judgmental policy toward these circumstances and not such a strict protocol for intervention (Story 28). In this case the institution would need to examine each individual case and consider how each student would grow the most in that experience and context (Story 29). Those institutions that just choose to ignore the situation in its entirety provide no support or intervention and appear quite intolerant of the situation (Story 29). The best solution to the support of pregnant and parenting students would be to consider the problem of unintended pregnancy as a crisis and as a stage of development where institutions would be able to provide supporting services with a protocol of intervention in a non-judgmental way.

Discrimination based on pregnancy is part of sex discrimination and is covered by *Title IX* which states that "No person in the United State shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" ("Title IX"). *Title IX* covers programs and activities such as admissions, recruitment, financial aid, academic programs, student treatment and services, counseling, guidance, discipline, classroom assignments, grading, vocational education, recreation, physical education, athletics, housing and employment ("Title IX"). This federal statute provides a broad basis for educational institutions to adhere to and many institutions do so in a very limited sense by providing birth control and counseling services; however, pregnant and parenting students demand better support and services. It only seems fair considering all the other programs that universities direct toward students for a variety of other reasons. The United States Department of Education makes it clear that institutions need to increase their quality of services toward pregnant students with the 2007 Dear Colleague Letter from the United States Title IX Coordinator. This letter is a reminder for prompt attention to the mater of treating pregnant students in a nondiscriminatory

manner (Monroe). Universities have the legal responsibility as well as the basic resources necessary to provide for pregnant and parenting students.

Universities currently have the resources they need to install a program designed for the educational benefit of pregnant and parenting students. The University of Tennessee is a good example of university potential to provide excellent resources for pregnant and parenting students. The University of Tennessee's mission is "to discover and disseminate new knowledge through scholarships, teaching, and outreach" ("Hilltopics"). The University also believes that "the responsibility to secure and to respect general conditions conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the academic community. This University has a duty to develop policies and procedures that provide a safeguard to this freedom" ("Hilltopics"). As the University has the written desire to provide a learning environment for all students it also has the resources that it may develop for the purpose of providing support for pregnant and parenting students. The resources that the University of Tennessee currently has and may develop into a program for pregnant and parenting students are:

- Counseling Services/Psychological Clinic - This student service does not provide support groups for pregnant and parenting students unless students seek out a counselor individually.
- Health Clinic – This service is only a referral service.
- Health Insurance – Although it is available, not all students on campus have health insurance.
- Day Care – Although the Department of Child and Family Studies has a child care program there is no subsidized program for student parents.
- Housing – There is some housing for parenting students but it is becoming more limited.

- Law School – The University has a law school that could potentially help provide legal services for pregnant mothers.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

The use of these resources is vital to the success of pregnant and parenting students in our American society. These resources are vital considering the frequency of unintended pregnancy on campus and the hostility toward women carrying their pregnancies to term. This chapter finds that universities have all resources and sources of responsibilities to provide for pregnant and parenting students. This discussion realizes the importance of the mission of a university to provide the necessary support for pregnant students to have the opportunity to learn. The next chapter suggests how universities may develop their current resources into a comprehensive support program for pregnant and parenting students.

7

COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM MOVING PRGNANCY OUT OF DELINQUENCY

What's the single biggest issue, obstacle, or challenge teen parents face today?

Education, hands down! There are very few resources for us mothers.

- Single Mother, You Look Too Young to be a Mom

INTRODUCTION

I have read many stories of the hardships that women face as young mothers struggling through school and I have experienced the environment that university campuses offer for students facing this crisis. Through research I have determined that pregnant students on college campuses need a program that is directed toward their special needs and is specifically designed to focus on college students. Previous attempts to solve the problem of unintended pregnancies have failed. Many organizations suggest the need to support pregnant and parenting students as a key to combating the social concern of unintended pregnancies. Students at institutions of higher education need a program that allows them to feel that they are free to make more than one choice. Student support in higher education has generally ignored pregnant and parenting student needs. However, there are many components of support for pregnant and parenting students that are necessary to help these students fulfill their educational goals and carry their pregnancies to term, these components can easily be attained by colleges.

THE PROGRAM

After reviewing the situation of unintended pregnancies in the United States, the culture of sexuality in college life, and the difficulties women face with pregnancies at college there are

some support services that universities cannot sacrifice for the success of their pregnant and parenting students. These components require a change in campus environment that will initiate removal of the social stigma of unintended pregnancy thereby allowing women to carry their pregnancy to term without feelings of guilt, loneliness, and depression. These components acknowledge the importance of the education of women. It allows women to define their environments based on their nature as a woman rather than continuing to accept the environmental constraints that society imposes on women. The dream for women in higher education is to provide supportive services for pregnant and parenting students, which would drastically transform the problem of unintended pregnancy in America. After reading many personal accounts of the struggles of pregnant and parenting students and looking over the policy suggestions of many organizations, I have come up with what I believe is an adequate support program educational institutions should institute to support their pregnant and parenting students. This type of program will initiate the cultural transformation that society needs to welcome pregnant and parenting students in environments outside of the home. The components for this comprehensive program include:

- **Housing**: Pregnant and parenting students need the assurance that they can afford housing for themselves as well as for their children. Many times housing is expensive and difficult to find. If pregnant and parenting students have adequate and affordable housing they will have less stress as a result of their unintended pregnancy.
- **Daycare**: Pregnant and parenting students need the availability of on-site subsidized daycare that would allow them to attend classes without the worry of expensive and inconvenient childcare. The convenience of on-site day care would foster a better relationship between parent and child and allow the women to breastfeed or spend time

with her child between classes. The option of co-op daycare would allow a university to provide this service without a large financial burden.

- **Health Insurance**: Maternity coverage in health insurance is necessary and although it is included with most health insurance plans, the problem is that not all students have health insurance. Pregnant and parenting students need to have the assurance that their medical necessities will be covered. Institutions of higher education must include a program to cover all students and make sure that everyone has access to affordable health insurance.
- **Legal Assistance**: Pregnant and parenting students need to have access to legal help.
- **Support Groups/Counseling**: Institutions of higher education must provide counseling services for the difficulties women face when they become pregnant and for relationship support groups.
- **Parenting Classes/Club**: Institutions of higher education should address certain issues that pregnant and parenting students face so that these students are ensured the knowledge necessary to make their pregnancy and parenting easier. These classes would include such topics as nutrition, breastfeeding, parenting, financial aid for parenting students, and childbirth.
- **Financial Aid Counselor**: Pregnant and parenting students need to have a special counselor helping them find financial aid and loan programs to help them get through their education in the most economically healthy way.
- **Career Services For Parenting Students**: Parenting students in higher education need to have a support program available that guides young single mothers and fathers in a search for an employment that meets their employment and parenting needs.

An Office for Pregnant and Parenting Students would coordinate this program. This paper does not address the monetary source needed to support a program for pregnant and parenting students; therefore, more research and detailed design of the program is needed. Advocacy of distance learning would further benefit pregnant and parenting students and add to the success of a policy directed toward pregnant and parenting students. Research on the success of distance learning for this group of individuals is necessary; however, it should not undermine the need for a cultural change in the treatment of pregnant and parenting students. This paper only seeks to demonstrate the needs of women and the solution that institutions of higher education could bestow. This program would allow institutions of higher education to foster a welcoming environment for women experiencing an unintended pregnancy on campus – it would turn an unintended pregnancy into a welcomed event through non-traditional services for pregnant and parenting students.

CHAPTER SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter finds that there are several components that are crucial to the creation of a comprehensive program designed to support pregnant and parenting students in higher education and guarantee those students that their education is not contingent on their reproductive choice. The recommendation of this chapter is that institutions of higher education need to implement a comprehensive program with the components outlined in this chapter. These services may be created through resources that the institution already has at its disposal. Women in higher education need to know that their pregnancy will not destroy their life; instead, they should find many resources to help them through the crisis. The findings of this work and the

recommendation of this chapter are vital to the resolution of the problem and the consequences of unintended pregnancy in the United States.

8

SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSION

Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of being.

-Goethe

INTRODUCTION

The final chapter affords a comprehensive recapitulation of the major findings, thoughts, and implications of the thesis of this paper as stated in the introduction. The thesis states that the major social concern of unintended pregnancy in American claims the prompt attention from institutions of higher education. The parting words of this paper allow the summary discussion of the details of this thesis.

STUDY SUMMARY

Chapter 1 of this paper introduced the topic of unintended pregnancy and the question of its relationship to the success of higher education. This chapter also offered the preview of the direction that the study would take in the following chapters. Chapter 2 took hold of the topic and studied the series of measures that led to the development of the problem of unintended pregnancy in America as it is currently conceived: the evolution of gender roles and the failure to apply new standards to women's work and educational goals that includes their role in reproduction in society. This chapter worked to define unintended pregnancy and analyzed the evolution of gender roles in the latter part of the twentieth century. This chapter found that unintended pregnancy is an especially critical theme for women ages eighteen to twenty-four

years; unintended pregnancy and abortion occurs at the highest rate in this age group than in other group of American women.

This finding implicates a large problem concerning higher education; eighteen to twenty-four years is the traditional age students enter into institutions of higher education. This chapter notes the importance of support for women during pregnancy and the consequences women face when they find no support for their crisis of unintended pregnancy. The final delineation of the problem of unintended pregnancy in America in this chapter finds that this crisis has generally been ignored or insufficiently addressed by the government. The major findings of this chapter are that the problem of unintended pregnancy focuses on women ages eighteen to twenty-four years and that this problem is perceived as a major social concern to all Americans.

Chapter 3 of this study highlights the traditional discrepancy between the roles of reproduction and education. The cultural assumption in America agrees with traditional researchers and educators who believe that education and fertility are divergent goals as a result of the conditions that surround women with little education: young childbearing and high fertility rates. The dimensions of education, as traditionally perceived, render education incompatible with women's fertility roles. The outcome of this cultural conviction has been the shift of fertility to women of older ages from women of younger ages; however, the risk of pregnancy still predominantly resides in the younger age group. The findings of this chapter conclude that education and fertility have been made incompatible by the cultural circumstances that impede women from affording to make certain reproductive choices. Instead, they force women into a pattern of delayed fertility.

Chapter 4 brings into question the environment surrounding students on campuses of institutions of higher education. The previous conclusions are that women of higher education

constitute a large part of the population at risk for an unintended pregnancy. This conclusion is a product of the risky sexual behaviors displayed by a majority of students in the arena of higher education. The environment of risky sexuality and lack of protective measures against unintended pregnancy is a norm of college life today, although institutions of higher education frequently offer birth control on their campuses. The environment surrounding students of higher education also includes the obstacles that women with unintended pregnancies face as a result of the cultural framework of unintended pregnancy. The image projected by the political and social culture today advocates negative psychological conditions (i.e. depression, isolation, guilt, and shame) for students facing the crisis of unintended pregnancy. The environment of risky sexuality catalyzed by negative social images contributes to the grave problem of unintended pregnancy in this group of women. Specifically, the failure of these institutions to meet the needs of their female students exacerbates the situation of abortion and unintended pregnancy in America.

Chapter 5 realizes the conditions of campus through the eyes of a pregnant student looking for support during her unintended pregnancy. It looks at the support required by a student facing the crisis of unintended pregnancy and the support that is available, or perceived to be available, by that student. This chapter finds that many institutions of higher education fail to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students even though they often have the resources to meet these needs. Chapter 6 finds that institutions of higher education may use their current resources to build a future for pregnant and parenting students and combat the problem of unintended pregnancy and abortion. This chapter also notes that it is in the institution's interest to ensure the education of their students facing unintended pregnancy. These educational institutions are in a unique position to fulfill the needs of pregnant and parenting students and

offer the promise of education to all those in need, especially those struggling to support a family and receive an education.

Chapter 7 uses the information of the entire study of the problem of unintended pregnancy in higher education to show where institutions of higher education are able to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Institutions of higher education must meet the needs of this group of students in the following areas: (1) Housing; (2) On-Site Daycare; (3) Maternity Coverage in Health Insurance; (4) Legal Assistance; (5) Support Groups/Counseling; Parenting Classes; (6) Pregnant and Parenting Student Financial Aid Counseling; and (7) Career Services For Parenting Students. This entire study confirms that the attention of institutions of higher education is vital to the resolution of the problem of unintended pregnancy in America.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The conclusion of this study implies the extreme necessity for society to reevaluate its treatment of women in education and institute new standards to meet the needs of women in this role. This paper concludes with the recommendation that institutions of higher education need to renovate their campus resources for pregnant and parenting students.

This paper instills one with only the faintest knowledge of the problem of unintended pregnancy in higher education and indicates the need for more research in this area. This paper promotes questions regarding the implications of this type of innovation in education. Some of questions this paper brings to mind are:

- What would be the result of this type of policy in education for the continued success of women in the areas of education and the workplace?

- What are the implications for this type of educational rehabilitation for women in poverty who are currently denied the promise of education because of their fertility situation?
- How would these types of programs bring together the opposite political arguments of pro-choice and pro-life advocators?

These questions are important to the continuation of this research and the extent of how the cultural constraints of education have demoted some women in our democratic society, which promotes the idea that all persons are entitled to an education. The research provided in this paper indicate the beginning of the need for a revolution to take place in our society that will have significant implications for the successful education of American women and their families while at the same time work to reduce the quantity of abortions in America each year.

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