

**Motherhood or abortion:  
Pregnancy resolution decisions of Australian teenagers**

Ann Evans

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## Declaration

Except where stated this thesis is my own work carried out during my PhD study at the Australian National University.

Ann Evans

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Australia has a lower teenage fertility rate than other industrialised English-speaking countries. However, with over 11,000 births and 12,000 abortions to teenagers each year, the resolution of teenage pregnancy is an issue faced by many young Australian women.

This research seeks to explore the factors that discriminate between those who terminate and those who continue a teenage pregnancy. To achieve this aim a survey was conducted on young ever-pregnant women throughout New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. The survey sought information on young women's characteristics on three different levels: individual; institutional; and societal or cultural.

The findings suggest that, at each of the three levels proposed, there are factors that discriminate between young women who choose abortion and those who choose motherhood. At the individual level, attitudes to abortion and career aspirations were found to affect pregnancy resolution. At the institutional level factors relating to education, family, relationships and religion were found to discriminate between the two groups. Finally, at the cultural level, ethnicity and area of residence were found to be associated with pregnancy resolution, in addition to modifying the effect of characteristics at other levels.

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## List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AGI	Alan Guttmacher Institute
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
DSS	Commonwealth Department of Social Security
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
HIC	Health Insurance Commission
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NSS	National Survey of Australian Secondary Schools
NSW	New South Wales
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SD	Statistical Division
SSD	Statistical Sub-Division
YMS	Young Mothers Survey
YWPS	Young Women's Pregnancy Survey