“Shot Gun Marriages” were very predominate in the middle 1900’s, due to women conceiving children out of wedlock. However, in today’s societies more women are having children without the result of marriage. The birthrate to unmarried women in 2004 was 46.1 per 1,000 unmarried women that ranged from 15-44 years of age in the United States. This is very important considering there were 4,115,590 births in 2004. This number does include mothers that have children and then decide to get married. This is the number of unmarried women that gave birth in the United States in 2004. This is the number of unmarried women that gave birth in the United States in 2004. Shown in figure 7, the amount of births to women of ages 15-19 years old are declining. On the other hand, women that are 20-39 years of age have had a steady increase in births over the years.

![Figure 7. Birth rates for unmarried women, by age of mother: United States, 1980–2004](image)

Although some think of this matter to be common, people do not contemplate on it. I think that this is a major problem that will affect society in its current years and in the future. If we look at the current situation, we see many single women that strive for the best for their children. Yet, it is impossible to give them the best in all aspects of life, due to the decreased amount of income coming into their household. Just with this aspect of being a single parent a child could have issues at school with other students. This could

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2 Ibid
3 Ibid
result in the child having violence issues throughout their prime years of life. From this, issues may arise in the later years of the child’s life.

The mother of the child does not think about the trials that their child will have to go through as he/she gets older. They only think about themselves at the time that they conceive the child. Unmarried mothers have different thoughts when it comes to having a child. Some of them think that they have messed up in life so many times that no one loves them anymore. They then decide to have a child so that they will have someone to love, and something to love them back. Others may think that since they are in a relationship, they want to keep their boyfriend. They then decide that the only way they will keep him is to have a child and then they will marry and have “the dream.” Yet, studies show that “twelve months after birth, half have split, and by the time the child turns three fully, two-thirds will have done so.” Women also think that “the response to pregnancy is the measure of a man, and hope the crisis will force their partners to move toward maturity.” But, it some time drives their partner away, or causes him to act violently. Women make their decision based on these ideas, and their decision is impulsive or at times well thought out and planned. Yet, their result is life changing.

When it comes to reflecting on their decision, some say it was planned and others say it was not. If we as a society reflect on their decision for them, we will see that many issues do arise when it comes to the issue of births to unmarried women. It seems that this issue has become more and more common in society. It seems that we accepted “shot gun marriages” and now we as a society have evolved to no marriage. In today’s society some women think that children are the first step in marriage, yet marriage should be the first step and then children. If marriage was the first step in today’s society, we would not have some of the issues with single mothers, and fatherless children asking, “Where’s Daddy?!”

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4 Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas, Promises I Can Keep (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005) 74
5 Ibid, 57