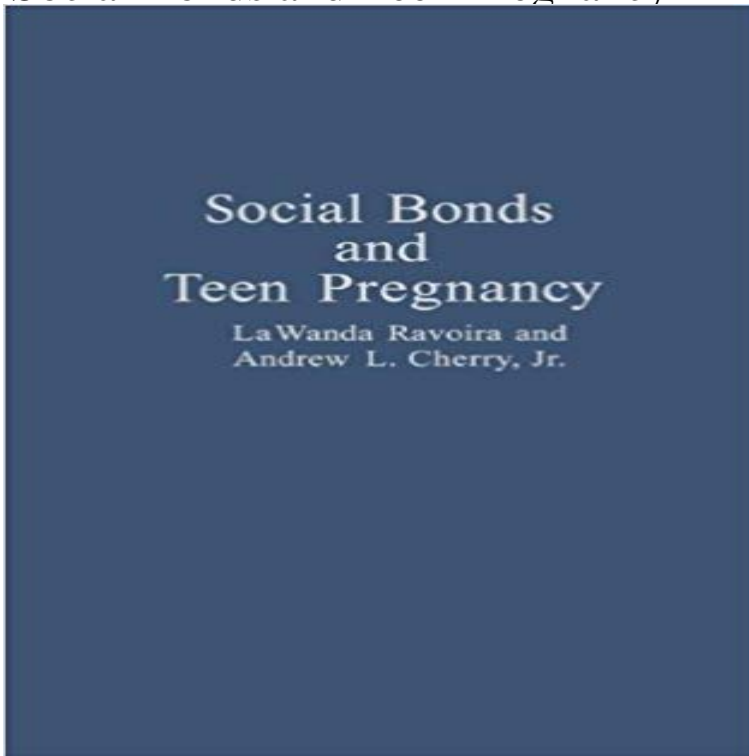


## Social Bonds and Teen Pregnancy



Nearly eight out of ten homeless and runaway young girls between the ages of 13 and 20 have given birth to at least one child. Social Bonds and Teen Pregnancy reports on a recent study of pregnant and parenting runaway and homeless girls found on American streets. Authors LaWanda Ravoira and Andrew Cherry examine the factors that shape these girls' decisions and life experiences, including family, individual, and community bonds; religiosity; parental and individual attitudes toward premarital sex; tolerance for minor deviance; feelings of self-worth; and sense of power over one's own life. Contrary to prior research, which characterizes sexually active girls as dependent or victimized, this study suggests that girls who have had sexual intercourse before age sixteen are more mature and in control of their lives than their peers. Social Bond theory is used to provide a framework for thinking about the development of prevention and intervention programs for at-risk girls, as well as for the development of national policies to address the long-term negative consequences of adolescent pregnancy and parenting. Ravoira and Cherry provide an overview of youth services, along with an appraisal of the impact of current government policies, in order to highlight gaps in services at the national and local levels. A review of the antecedents of teen pregnancy and a critique of the theoretical literature suggest numerous psychosocial reasons for the growing phenomenon of earlier pregnancy and parenting. Excerpts from and summaries of actual case studies and tape-recorded personal accounts of teenage mothers bring the research to life.

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