In this chapter, we seek a further view of data about these eight conditions and other possible explanations for their regional diversity. This begins with an attempt to understand the variations in education achieved in the four regions.

Education

Many report that pregnant teens drop out of school (Danziger and Farber, 1990; Upchurch, 1993), but there are also indications that black and white adolescent mothers may attain some further education (Furstenberg, 1976; Farber, 1989). However, males also drop out. In their study of black and white teenagers, Stevenson, Maton, and Tetid (1998) found that dropping out of school seemed more strongly related to sociocultural factors than to individual characteristics, and most of the cohort felt that remaining in school and continuing education were important. A review of the literature on high school dropouts provides many explanatory views.

Across the United States, a high percentage of inner-city children do not graduate from high school for various reasons: social and economic (Ekström et al., 1986); contributions by the schools (Wehlage and Rutter, 1986); and pregnancy (Fine, 1986). Fine asserts that the various recommendations, such as increasing standardized testing, eliminating social promotions, returning to basics, deleting sex education, and so on, are diversions from the major problem of SES issues. Thus, prominence is given to the SES issue.
Despite being strong components, the effects of racial and ethnic factors decrease when SES is held constant, according to Fitzpatrick and Yoels (1992). These authors point out that adolescents from single-parent and large families have a higher dropout rate than those from other families. However, when these features are held constant, it appears that students in the South or West were more likely to leave school earlier than students in the Northeast or Midwest. They theorize that residing in the South, in contrast to all other regions, is an important determinant of school dropout rates.

Fitzpatrick and Yoels (1992) focused on three particular elements that they felt were most significant for the dropout rate:

1. School structure, which includes the student-teacher and support staff-teacher ratio.
2. State spending per student (i.e., state policy toward education).
3. Region (the highest dropout rate was in the South).

They divided the United States into South and non-South regions, with the following states included in the South: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. The basis for this division is unclarified and the rest of the states are not demarcated into regions despite listings of Northeast, Midwest, and West. Listings for the South include the Backcountry and Coastal South, and omit Maryland, District of Columbia, Arizona, and Texas. Furthermore, there is no explanation offered for the South having the highest rate of school dropouts.

Although a regional problem in school dropout rates is noted by these authors, it is not well-defined by region or explicated. The theory of a regional identity heritage from early colonial days appears to provide a suitable explanation for the dropout rates by region across the country.

Unwed Motherhood

In one study (Clements et al., 1998), the variations in teenage conception rates were related to the age of the teenager, her deprivation level, the presence of certain homogeneously distinct groups, and distance to the nearest youth-oriented family planning clinic. Fiscella et al. (1998) indicated that prior child sexual abuse seems to be a risk factor for teen pregnancy in African-American women. Child sexual abuse was associated