

Research Project Proposal

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History 4250
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For my research assignment I wish to look at abortion hardships in the 20th and 21st centuries and how the movements related to them have impacted change. I have become aware in my recent years that about 20% of pregnancies in North America end in miscarriage. I am also aware that this is not a known statistic and people do not like to discuss miscarriages as they make people uncomfortable. This is somewhat understandable because miscarriage has never been a major topic in society, but abortion has been a major topic and it still makes people uncomfortable. The topic of abortion is still a taboo subject with many opposing views and beliefs even though it underwent many changes in the 1900s. Although it is now legal, women still do not feel comfortable discussing abortions and feel shamed by needing to have one. This leads into my research question, which is: how have the abortion related movements in the 1900s affected the social stigma and hardships related to abortion in the 21st century?

I will have an introductory paragraph that outlines what my essay will talk about and have my thesis statement in it. My thesis statement will be something along the lines of “This essay will examine the changes made to abortion laws and rights in the 1900s and how they have impacted the 21st century views on abortion.” I will then look at how abortion was talked about and referred to in the 20th century before the abortion movements were made, this will help us to see the massive change on the views of abortion. I will then look at the movements that affected change in abortion such as the birth control movement, second wave feminism, the legalization of abortions and Morgentaler's role in this.

In my body paragraphs I will explore why women have abortions in the first place and how this affects how they feel. I will also look at how religion has played a role in the shame women feel as many religious figures do not believe in abortion, only abstinence, which leads into “slut shaming”. I also wish to examine the book *One Kind Word* and look at actual stories by women who have gotten abortions to show that women are still feeling unsafe and uncomfortable about abortions. I will use *Helping Women Recover* to look at PAS (Post Abortion Syndrome) and how this demonstrates the need for more open talk about abortion. If I find enough literature I would also like to include the stress put on by the partner when getting an abortion. Although these are just basic ideas currently, I will examine them further and add more topics as I examine my literature.

Proposed Bibliography

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1. How did you choose your topic? Please explain in as much detail as possible.

I chose the topic of abortion because I have an interest in pregnancy as I think having a living creature inside you is very amazing. I also want to have a child in the next few years so I want to become better educated on this topic specifically. I chose to focus on abortion because I know there is a lot of research on it as well as great amounts of social stigma related to its controversy in our society. When looking at books on abortion I realized that although the 21st century is supposed to be a new era of acceptance, females are still being treated poorly when choosing to get abortions and I decided I wanted to focus on that.

2. How did you choose your sources? Please explain your thinking that led you to choose the evidence you will use to interpret the topic.

I chose my sources by visiting the TRU library and looking at the books on abortion. I focused on the dates they were written so I would have some both from the 1900s and 2000s as well as their table of contents to determine if the information provided was related to my topic. I also made sure they were specific to Canada or North America in general. I also researched articles in the Canadian Medical Association Journal specifically for primary sources.

3. What assumptions did you bring to your research? For example, what preconceived notions about the topic did you have before you began your research? Did your sources cause you to reconsider those ideas? Please explain in as much detail as possible.

I assumed there would be more scholarly articles related to my topic online that I would have access to but I am finding it difficult to find them. I also have a preconceived notion that there would be no literature on the partner's point of view but several of my articles have references to this.

4. How has your view of the past changed as a result of the research that you have done? What unanswered questions about this topic do you still have?

I want to know Morgentaler's influence in changing the abortion laws as his name has come up many times but I have not looked into him enough to understand his direct influence. I also want to know how the birth control movement related to abortion as well as I have not looked at that in depth either.

5. What will you do differently next time?

I would start my research earlier so I would be able to get feedback on my topic so I could historicize it more as this is something I struggle with. I would also want to make an appointment with a librarian sooner as finding online sources was much more difficult than finding books related to my topic. As well I would want to thoroughly analyze my sources before writing my proposal so I could have stronger questions and ideas when writing it.