

Hooking Up, Contraceptive Scripts, and Catholic Social Teaching

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IN HER 2010 ARTICLE, KARI-SHANE DAVIS Zimmerman wrote, “Given the current ‘unhooked’ dating practices of today’s young men and women, it becomes ever more pressing that moral theologians address the issue of sex and contraception outside of the marital relationship.”¹ Seven years later as we near the fiftieth anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, we believe more work on this issue remains. Therefore, in this paper, we would like to take up this task of discussing “the issue of sex and contraception outside of the marital relationship” by attending to two tasks. First, we seek to address contraception use in American college hookup culture. As our research suggests, a complicated portrait exists, and there are new issues moral theologians ought to be attending to inside the classroom and within the field of sexual ethics. Second, we offer a way forward that can be used in classrooms and other settings that has served us well as we seek to expand both the ways in which twentysomethings approach the issue of contraception specifically and sexual activity more broadly speaking, as well as how they develop and engage their own moral compass when faced with complex decision-making.

We have chosen the context of college hookup culture for this discussion as it suggests two key aspects about contraceptive use outside of marital relationship.² First, how college students use contraception

¹ Kari-Shane Davis Zimmerman, “Hooking Up: Sex, Theology and Today’s ‘Unhooked’ Dating Practices,” *Horizons* 37, no. 1 (2010): 72-91, 90.

² Admittedly, this discussion brackets questions of contraceptive use as a prophylaxis. We have done so in the belief that it helps us better identify the social dynamics operative in hookup culture. Based on works like Emily Reimer-Barry’s *Catholic Theology of Marriage in the Era of HIV and AIDS: Marriage for Life* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 2015), especially chapter 6, and Mary Jo Iozzio, Elsie Miranda, Mary Doyle Roche, *Calling for Justice Throughout the World: Catholic Women Theologians on the HIV/AIDS Pandemic* (New York: Continuum, 2008) however, we imagine that the positions of vulnerability and privilege shaping students’ decisions about the use of contraception would similarly shape the use of contraception as prophylaxis. While supporting this claim would require additional research and a different essay, it would reinforce our argument that a Catholic Social Justice framework is needed to adequately analyze contraceptive use.

reveals some important social forces at play when students make decisions about hooking up. In particular, we argue students' decisions about contraception use are tied to positions of power and privilege or weakness and marginalization within hookup culture. Second, as a result, college hookup culture calls forth a Catholic Social Justice framework for dealing with contraceptive use outside of marriage. Specifically, and in response to the issues of power, the context calls forth the Catholic Social Teaching values of dignity and solidarity.

This essay proceeds in the following way. First, we look at the current context of hooking up and the role contraception plays in this. Research suggests a dynamic not so much about personal choice but rather about power and marginalization. Second, we discuss how this context raises such kinds of problems as objectification and conformity and thus calls forth the need for a discussion on dignity and solidarity. Third, we indicate how these issues can be addressed in the classroom. Particularly, by leading with a discussion of Natural Family Planning, we believe one can open up conversation about the operative social forces at play and so enter into a broader dialogue that is not so much about the specific use of contraception or Natural Family Planning but rather about how one can make responsible decisions in the light of certain power dynamics at play within hookup culture that can affect anyone.

HOOKUP CULTURES AND CONTRACEPTIVE USE

Before we begin, let us mention two things that are needed to understand contraceptive use within hookup culture. First, as Jason King recently argues, there is not one or "a" hookup culture operating on college campuses, but rather there are four hookup cultures.³ Each of these cultures establishes the meaning of hooking up, and we argue that each sets the context for contraceptive use. Second is the idea of a script. Technically, a script is "a cognitive schematic structure—a mental road map—containing the basic actions (and their temporal and causal relations) that comprise a complex action."⁴ More simply put, scripts are mental structures that people rely upon to know how to see, judge, and act. They provide possible courses of actions that are acceptable for particular contexts.⁵ Thus, scripts are not pure abstractions but rather social guides. They indicate what is typical and expected, what is acceptable and possible, and what is objectionable

³ Jason King, *Faith with Benefits* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 5-17.

⁴ "Script, Definition 2," in Gary R. Vandenbos, ed., *APA Dictionary of Psychology*, (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2007), p. 820.

⁵ See *The Complete Dictionary of Sexology* (New York, NY: Continuum, 1995), s. v. "Script": "a repertoire of acts and statuses that are recognized by a social group, together with the rules, expectations and sanctions governing these acts and statuses."

and discouraged. They are less moral guides and more social expectations about how to function in a particular setting. The more people understand the social context, the more people know what scripts to employ and what ones to avoid. To understand contraceptive use in hookup culture, one needs to understand how different contraceptive scripts are operative in different hookup cultures. To that task we now turn.

The first kind of hookup culture operating is referred to by King as “*stereotypical*” hookup culture. It is what most students and researchers assume to be the norm on all college campuses for all students. Students in this category hookup without expectations of anything afterwards, and they do so frequently. However, far from being the statistical norm, it is actually the culture of a select few, around 25% of students.⁶ Typically, these young men and women are white and wealthy⁷ and, if available, belong to fraternities and sororities.⁸ In other words, they tend to be the most privileged students on a campus.

Within *stereotypical* hookup culture, men lean towards not using contraception because they tend to employ a “no contraception” script. Their positions of power, from gender, race, and class, usually mean they need not be concerned about contraception. In “Sexual Esteem in Emerging Adulthood,” Megan Maas and Eva Lefkowitz explain, “Through the lens of hegemonic masculinity, men are more privileged sexually and therefore can insist on experiencing pleasure and passion over responsibility.”⁹ Moreover, their position of power gives them confidence, an attribute associated with “never using contraception during recent penetrative sex.”¹⁰

Yet, the same does not hold true for most of the white women who are a part of *stereotypical* hookup culture. Their contraceptive script differs. Even though they too may have racial and socio-economic privilege, they lack gender privilege. Thus, women in this group tend to use something like the pill or IUD and thus plan their contraception

⁶ See Caroline Heldman and Lisa Wade “Hook-Up Culture: Setting a New Research Agenda,” *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 7, no. 4 (2010): 323-333, 324, and Megan Manthos, Jesse Owen, and Frank Fincham, “A New Perspective on Hooking Up Among College Students,” *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 31, no. 6 (2014): 815-829, 824.

⁷ Jesse J. Owen, Galena K. Rhoades, Scott M. Stanley, and Frank D. Fincham, “‘Hooking Up’ Among College Students: Demographic and Psychosocial Correlates,” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 39, no. 3 (2010): 653-663.

⁸ Mark Regnerus and Jeremy Uecker, *Premarital Sex in America: How Young Americans Meet, Mate, and Think about Marrying* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 104.

⁹ Megan Maas and Eva Lefkowitz, “Sexual Esteem in Emerging Adulthood: Associations with Sexual Behavior, Contraception Use, and Romantic Relationships,” *Journal of Sex Research* 52, no.7 (2015): 795-806, 802.

¹⁰ Maas and Lefkowitz, “Sexual Esteem in Emerging Adulthood,” 802.

use ahead of time.¹¹ According to Maas and Lefkowitz, this should not come as a surprise given that since the invention of hormonal birth control in the late 1960s “the responsibility for contraception has predominantly been delegated to women.”¹² In her 2008 book *Unhooked*, Laura Sessions Stepp notes that, since the 1960s women have been told to succeed and have done so, they often have to do so by playing just like men “play.”¹³ In *stereotypical* hookup culture, this means hooking up without expectations of a relationship. However, it also means that they need to attend to contraception to do so.

In contrast to the above, most students do not embrace *stereotypical* hookup culture but rather a second culture, a *relationship* hookup culture. These students make up a large majority of students on college campuses. While many in this cohort know that hooking up is not supposed to include any subsequent relationship expectations, they indirectly work against this assumption by using hooking up as a way into a relationship. In their 2012 essay “Sexual Hookup Culture”, Justin Garcia and his fellow authors found that not only did most people hope for a relationship—65% of women and 45% of men—many people even talked about it—51% of women and 42% of men.¹⁴ Regarding positions of power and privilege, students operating within *relationship* hookup culture tend to be in the middle. They are not the highly privileged; therefore they do not control the social norms of hookup culture. However, they rarely experience social marginalization because of race, sexual orientation, or religiosity. Thus, while many feel like they need to participate in hookup culture in order to establish a personal relationship, they also feel like they can subtly alter its terms.

Men and women in *relationship* hookup culture tend not to plan for contraception use in advance. They have a habit of employing a “spontaneous contraception” script. While those in long-term relationships usually employ reliable and long-term contraception methods, those who are in *relationship* hookup culture are hooking up as a way into relationships but are not yet in a relationship. They are not looking

¹¹ Karen Ingersoll, Sherry Dyche Ceperich, Mary Nettlemen, and Betty Anne Johnson, “Risk Drinking and Contraception Effectiveness Among College Women,” *Psychology and Health* 23, no. 8 (2008): 965-981, 976-977; Jinyung Lee, Abbey Berenson, Pooja Patel, “Characteristics of Females Who use Contraception at Coitarche: An Analysis of the National Survey of Family Growth 2006-2010 Database,” *Journal of Women’s Health* 24, no. 12 (2015): 972-977, 973; Maas and Lefkowitz, “Sexual Esteem in Emerging Adulthood,” 802; Caroline Free, Jane Ogden, and Ray Lee, “Young Women’s Contraception Use as a Contextual and Dynamic Behavior: A Qualitative Study,” *Psychology and Health* 20, no. 5 (2005): 673-690, 687-688.

¹² Maas and Lefkowitz, “Sexual Esteem in Emerging Adulthood,” 802.

¹³ Laura Sessions Stepp, *Unhooked: How Young Women Pursue Sex, Delay Love and Lose at Both* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2007), 36.

¹⁴ Justin Garcia, Chris Reiber, Sean Massey, and Ann Merriwether, “Sexual Hookup Culture: A Review,” *Review of General Psychology* 16, no. 2 (2012): 161-176, 167-168.

for an anonymous hookup but a way into something more, something that could lead to a relationship. Within this context, they are *not* typically looking for intercourse and thus do not plan for it. When they do hookup however, the sexual activity is often impulsive, so they employ one of three spontaneous contraceptive scripts. First is the use of the condom. However, as some students' sexual activity progresses toward penetrative sex, they often hesitate to stop and discuss contraception for fear of "ruining the 'mood.'"¹⁵ Thus, a second option sometimes chosen by men and women in this large middle is actually the use of no contraception. Third and finally, in order to avoid pregnancy altogether, some will employ an alternative form of contraception: oral or anal sex.¹⁶ This last option has been growing in prominence as men and women "evaluate oral sex as having fewer social, emotional, and health risks, judge oral sex to be more acceptable in dating and non-dating relationships; and consider oral sex less threatening to their values and beliefs than penetrative sex."¹⁷

A third hookup culture is an *anti-hookup culture*. While it might seem strange to name *not* hooking up as a hookup culture, it is a culture that exists in opposition to *stereotypical* hookup culture. Although not the majority of students, these men and women are a substantive minority, approximately 20% on any given campus.¹⁸ These students tend not to hookup and so find themselves on the fringes of campus life, socially vulnerable and marginalized. These students tend to be racial minorities, those of the lower economic class,¹⁹ members of the LGBTQ community,²⁰ and those who are highly religiously committed.²¹

The students who find themselves in this context do not hookup and therefore do not resort to using contraception. They utilize a "no contraception" script. The reasons for this vary however. Racial minorities tend not to participate in hooking up because they feel like

¹⁵ Sally Brown and Kate Guthrie, "Why Don't Teenagers use Contraception? A Qualitative Interview Study," *The European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care* 15 (2010): 197-204, 197.

¹⁶ See Heldman and Lisa Wade "Hook-Up Culture," 324-235. See also Maas and Lefkowitz, "Sexual Esteem in Emerging Adulthood," 802: Young men and women "evaluate oral sex as having fewer social, emotional, and health risks, judge oral sex to be more acceptable in dating and non-dating relationships; and consider oral sex less threatening to their values and beliefs than penetrative sex."

¹⁷ Maas and Lefkowitz, "Sexual Esteem in Emerging Adulthood," 796-797.

¹⁸ King, *Faith with Benefits*, 8-11.

¹⁹ Brian Sweeney, "Party Animals or Responsible Men: Social Class, Race, and Masculinity on Campus," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 27, no. 6 (2014): 804-821.

²⁰ Wade and Heldman, "Hooking Up and Opting Out," 130.

²¹ Tina Penhollow, Michael Young, George Denny, "Impact of Personal and Organizational Religiosity on College Student Sexual Behavior," *American Journal of Health Studies* 27, no. 1 (2012): 13-22.

they are jeopardizing their college opportunity, viewing it as “a time for assuming adult responsibilities and leaving childish things behind.”²² Similarly, members of the LGBTQ community often do not participate in campus hookup culture because, being unsure if they or their homosexual activity would be welcomed where hooking up occurs, they worry about physical safety.²³ For those in the lower economic classes, cost becomes a factor in not using more reliable forms of contraception like the pill, so they typically do not hookup so they can avoid the risk.²⁴

Religiously committed students’ contraceptive use is a bit harder to pin down. For the most part, these students do not hookup and oppose hooking up in principle. In *Faith with Benefits*, King’s research confirms this, claiming Catholic students who strongly believe that “contraception is wrong” tend to hookup less.²⁵ To maintain this opposition, these religious students usually form and stay within a network of students with similar beliefs. When they enter into a long-term relationship however, some become sexually active. At this stage, they most often employ hormonal contraception not only to prevent pregnancy but also to hide their sexual activity and preserve their status as a member of their religious group.²⁶ One can see then that even within this group of marginalized students there is evidence of fear of marginalization.²⁷

Lastly, the fourth type of culture is a *coercive hookup culture*. Coercive hookup culture takes stereotypical hookup culture and attempts to legitimize the use of force in sexual activity. This is done in various ways. Some utilize gender stereotypes and cultural norms to legitimize coercion, others tap into beliefs about masculinity and rape, and still others rationalize their actions by blaming alcohol.²⁸ Whether through

²² Sweeney, “Party Animals or Responsible Men,” 817.

²³ Wade and Heldman, “Hooking Up and Opting Out,” 130.

²⁴ Larissa Huber and Jennifer Ersek, “Contraceptive Use Among Sexually Active University Students,” *Journal of Women’s Health* 18, no. 7 (2009): 1063-1070.

²⁵ King, *Faith with Benefits*, 53-59.

²⁶ See Nicholas Hill, Mxolisi Siwatu, and Alexander Robinson, “My Religion Picked My Birth Control”: The Influence of Religion on Contraceptive Use,” *Journal of Religious Health* 53 (2014): 825-833. See also Annie Wright, Jennifer Duffy, Sarah Kershner, Shannon Flynn, and Andrea Lamont, “New Opportunities in Teen Pregnancy Prevention: Identifying Individual and Environmental Differences Between Youth Who Abstain, Use Contraception, and Use No Contraception,” *Journal of Community Psychology* 43, no. 8 (2015): 931-953, 949-950.

²⁷ Nicholas Bowman and Jenny Small, “Do College Students Who Identify with a Privileged Religion Experience Greater Spiritual Development? Exploring Individual and Institutional Dynamics,” *Research in Higher Education* 51 (2010): 595-614.

²⁸ See Matthew Hogben, Donn Byrne, Merle E. Hamburger, and Julie Osland, “Legitimized Aggression and Sexual Coercion: Individual Differences in Cultural Spillover,” *Aggressive Behavior* 27 (2001): 26-43; Laina Y. Bay-Cheng and Rebecca K. Eliseo-Arras, “The Making of Unwanted Sex: Gendered and Neoliberal Norms in College Women’s Unwanted Sexual Experiences,” *Journal of Sex Research* 45, no. 4

one of these means or some other, perpetrators' legitimation of the violence enables the rampant sexual assault on college campuses, a coercive hookup culture. According to the Center for Disease Control, 20% of women in college experience completed or attempted rape, and 85% percent of these assailants are known, usually boyfriends, ex-boyfriends, or classmates.²⁹ Those who are assaulted do not have a choice over the situation and so often cannot employ contraception.³⁰ Albeit for slightly different reasons, this culture has a "no contraceptive" script like the anti-hookup culture.

THE NEED FOR HUMAN DIGNITY AND SOLIDARITY

The abovementioned survey of hookup cultures and contraceptive scripts within them indicates that viewing contraception simply in a narrow framework of pregnancy prevention cannot adequately account for the multiplicity of meanings attached to contraceptive use. In her original article, Davis Zimmerman applies the concept of a "contraceptive mentality" to help explain these power dynamics within hookup culture. First, she argues the contraceptive mentality that emerges within hookup culture is a view of one's hookup partner as "an object of sexual gratification; the body is merely something to be consumed (devoured almost) and then immediately discarded (or spit out again)."³¹ In other words, persons become objectified in a hookup, viewed not as human beings but rather things to be used and manipulated for one's own sexual gratification. The contraceptive scripts within hookup culture suggest one reason why this kind of manipulation can happen. Persons with power and privilege can more easily disregard the impact of their sexual activity upon others, and, as a result, they can disregard their contraception use. Therefore, white, wealthy men tend not to use contraception, and those coercing others not only do not use contraception but also prevent others from choosing it by their very actions. Far from concerns about openness to life,

(2008): 386-397; Sarah R. Edwards and David L. Vogel, "Young Men's Likelihood Ratings to Be Sexually Aggressive as a Function of Norms and Perceived Sexual Interest," *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 16, no. 1 (2015): 88-96.

²⁹ Center for Disease Control, "Understanding Sexual Violence (2014 Fact Sheet)," <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv-factsheet.pdf>.

³⁰ See Eve Walternaurer, Helene Doleyres, Robert Bednarczyk, and Louise-Anne McNutt, "Emergency Contraception Considerations and use Among College Women," *Journal of Women's Health* 22, no. 2 (2013): 141-146. Women who find themselves vulnerable, even in cases where there is no threat or assault, will often not employ contraception as they assume "contingency and indeterminacy as central to the reproductive experience"; see Don Seeman, Iman Roushdy-Hammady, Annie Hardison-Moody, Winnifred Thompson, Laura Gaydos, Carol Rowland Hogue, "Blessing Unintended Pregnancy: Religion and the Discourse of Women's Agency in Public Health," *Medical Anthropology Theory* 3, no. 1 (2016): 29-54.

³¹ Davis Zimmerman, "Hooking Up," 89.

this non-contraceptive use is hostile to life—one turns the other into an object of sexual gratification, regardless of the effects on the other.

Second, Davis Zimmerman contends the contraceptive mentality “contributes to the development of an abbreviated anthropology” that pressures all to conform to the “physically indifferent and psychologically unattached” mentality of those in privileged positions.³² In other words, those who dominate the culture not only objectify others, but they also have a social influence that pressures others to conform or, at least, comply with their mentality (at least in outward appearance). Others must approach the world as the privileged do. Thus, it is not just that certain individuals are “indifferent” and “unattached” but that the whole culture assumes this “abbreviated anthropology” as the norm for everyone.

This type of pressure to comply with the “abbreviated anthropology” can be seen in two different ways people experience marginalization *within* hookup culture. First, white, wealthy women participating in stereotypical hookup culture experience a kind of marginalization. As explained above, these women tend to choose planned forms of contraception both to participate in hookup culture and to protect themselves from white, privileged men who fail to concern themselves with contraception. Similarly, those who hookup in pursuit of a relationship can experience marginalization. They feel the pressure to conform to the expectations of hookup culture; therefore, they resort to using spontaneous means of contraception, condoms or oral and anal sex, as a way to protect themselves within the system. The exceptions prove the rule. Those who are sexually coerced would choose means to protect themselves but have had this choice hindered or revoked, while those who hookup and unexpectedly move to sexual intercourse will not use contraception in order to preserve the “mood” and thus comply with the dominant norms of stereotypical hookup culture.

A second group of students can be marginalized by being *pushed out* of the system all together for not complying with the “abbreviated anthropology.” These students tend to be the highly religious, racial minorities, members of the LGBTQ community, and the economically disadvantaged. While they tend to employ a “no contraception” script, the choice has little to do with preventing conception. Being outside of the system, they take measures to protect themselves, but they are done for their own safety and security. Thus, they tend not to participate in hookup culture, and not using contraception is more the result of not participating. Here too, the exception proves the rule. Highly religious students will employ contraception to preserve their status amongst their peers, choosing to hide their sexual activity in order to conform to the expectations of their group. If one wants to preserve the openness to life that has guided traditional church discourse on

³² Davis Zimmerman, “Hooking Up,” 89.

contraception, then we need an approach that also can address the objectification of others and the pressure to conform to an abbreviated anthropology. We argue at least two additional principles must be added: human dignity and solidarity.

First, the notion of human dignity needs to be included in the conversation about contraception in order to respond to the problem of objectification found in hookup culture. The tradition of Catholic Social Teaching argues every human being has an inherent dignity. They are of “equal value” and have a relationship with God, being made in God’s image and having a “capacity for God” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 109-110). This notion of dignity speaks out against the mistreatment of those who are marginalized within hookup culture. The privileged feel free to disregard the effects of their actions upon others, and this lack of concern turns the marginalized into “objects of sexual gratification.” Human dignity enables the evaluation of contraceptive use by examining how it can contribute to the instrumentalizing of others, especially the marginalized who are more susceptible to being harmed in hookup culture.³³

Second, the notion of solidarity is also needed in discussions of contraception to help mitigate the pressure to conform to the “abbreviated anthropology” of hookup culture. Solidarity more broadly speaking refers to that “bond of interdependence between individuals and people,” the truth that “we are all really responsible for all,” and the “willingness to give oneself for the good of one’s neighbor, beyond any individual or particular interest” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 192-194). In short, solidarity is about a system of relationships that does not leave people out of community life. Put differently, solidarity implies attending to the reasons for exclusion and working to undo them. Without this category of social analysis, moral theology’s discussion of contraceptive use will fail to attend to who is excluded and why, remaining unable to speak about the pressure to fit into hookup culture that guides the choice to use contraception and the social exclusion that renders using contraception pointless.

Together, dignity and solidarity not only address the situation of the vulnerable within hookup culture, but they also have the power to transform the actions taken by the privileged. For example, these concepts can help wealthy, white men understand how hookup culture damages them. As Donna Freitas argues in *The End of Sex*, men face an “emotional glass ceiling.” She writes, “We ask that they repress their feelings surrounding their own vulnerabilities and need for love, respect, and relationship so intensely that we’ve convinced them that to express feeling is to have somehow failed as men; that to express

³³ This point echoes Margaret Farley’s principle of “Do No Unjust Harm” in *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 216-218.

such feeling not only makes them look bad in front of other men, but in front of women, too.”³⁴ White men grow up hearing, visualizing, and thus internalizing these cultural assumptions that at the heart of their masculinity lies sexual performance and an absence of emotion.³⁵ They adopt a self-inflicted objectification that neither values their dignity beyond their sexual activity nor allows for solidarity by disparaging emotions. It strips men down to their mere physical existence. If those with power and privilege grasp this self-inflicted damage along with the damage done to the more vulnerable, they can contribute to and thereby hasten the demise of this troubling culture.

Moral theologians stand in a unique position to help both the marginalized and the privileged. Hookup culture’s objectification of the body stands in stark contrast to the view of the body put forth by Scripture where the body is a temple to be nourished and cared for and by tradition that values the body through its teaching on the incarnation and resurrection. Moral theologians not only have these resources at their disposal but also the principles of human dignity and solidarity found in Catholic social teaching. To help students appropriate these principles though, they need some way to dislodge the norms of hookup culture. Without this element of moral analysis, the use or non-use of contraception will be inadequately analyzed, failing to account for the ways in which using contraception can protect one’s vulnerability and non-use can result from coercion and violence.

TEACHING NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

One way to get at the values of human dignity and solidarity into the thought processes of college students is by discussing Natural Family Planning (NFP) in the classroom. While NFP is consistent with the teaching of the Catholic church and, as a result, safe and easy to teach on a Catholic campus, this is not why we recommend it. We are advancing it as a pedagogical technique that can open up conversations about the social dynamics at play within hookup culture. This is because NFP presents a different perspective on human sexual relationships because it is so far removed from the typical assumptions about contraception and so very foreign to hookup culture’s view of the human person and human body. Thus, teaching NFP challenges the idea that contraception and hooking up are just “the way things are” and so generates a critical examination of this assumption. It does this in three important ways.

³⁴ Donna Freitas, *The End of Sex: How Hookup Culture is Leaving a Generation Unhappy, Sexually Unfulfilled and Confused About Intimacy* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), 115.

³⁵ Freitas, *The End of Sex*, 100. For a similar view, see Michael Kimmel, *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008).

First, NFP begins with a discussion of correct biological knowledge as to when and how the sexual act can produce new human life. For some, it will serve as a refresher course from middle school health classes. For others, it will be the first time they have participated in a discussion regarding “female signs of fertility.”³⁶ In either case, it assumes that, if one is going to engage in any sexual act, both persons must be “biologically knowledgeable” of a woman’s stage of fertility and infertility. This starting point presumes an equality and respect between men and women as it requires an “information balance.” Men, and not just women, have to understand human sexual biology in general and of women in particular. Put differently, teaching NFP builds a foundation of human dignity and solidarity between the sexes because it makes students more knowledgeable about human beings and their biological processes, especially women who are so frequently marginalized in hookup culture.

Second, teaching NFP and its implicit challenge to the assumed norm of hooking up and contraception creates space for students from the margins to participate and speak. They no longer need to feel fearful or isolated because they hold a differing or a minority position, as a differing and minority position already has been put forward in NFP. Thus, the silent minorities can be encouraged to use their voices. The highly religious can more easily speak up in favor of the practice because it has been introduced as basic “biological information” and a legitimate alternative. Women in the classroom can confront the assumption (implicit or explicit) that they are responsible for contraception and men are not, thus tackling the issues of power and privilege. The traditional connection of sex and procreation can be discussed as this is presumed in NFP, and this connection can also be challenged as not using contraception can be a way that people exercise their privilege over others. As NFP has opened the door to challenging norms, those of the LGBTQ community can raise questions about the applicability of NFP to their experiences, as both outsiders and, in some instances, less concerned about pregnancy. In each of these cases, students are encouraged to speak up for their views because the normativity of hookup culture has been destabilized. The result is openings to discuss alternative perspectives, especially those on the margins of hookup culture.

³⁶ For the lack of sexual knowledge in college students see Erin Moore and William Smith, “What college student do not know: where are the gaps in sexual healthy knowledge?” *Journal of American College Health* 60, no. 6 (2012): 436-442, 436 and Jean Claude Martin and Jennifer Y. Mak, “College Students’ Sexual Knowledge and Attitudes,” *Kentucky Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance* 51, no. 1 (2013): 16-25, 17-18.

Finally, leading with NFP enables further conversation about solidarity and what it truly means to pursue a healthy personal relationship. As we have indicated all along, one significant problem with hookup culture is the assumption that everyone must be like or comply with the preferences of the wealthy, white male. It is the pervasiveness of the “abbreviated anthropology” model or in students’ minds the idea that “everyone is doing it.” This dominance shuts down conversation and makes students fearful and confused about how to talk about and pursue healthy personal relationships.³⁷ NFP fosters conversations about sexual activity and so fosters communication about relationships. As Julie Hanlon Rubio notes in her “Beyond the Liberal/Conservative Divide on Contraception,” NFP can foster a relationship that is not ordered hierarchically, with one receiving and one giving, but one of reciprocity and respect.³⁸ Based on the testimonies of practitioners, Rubio noted that NFP has the potential for “an increased capacity for total self-giving, growth in mutuality, better communication, higher levels of intimacy, increased sexual pleasure and spiritual growth.”³⁹ The point here is not that this inevitably occurs or to advocate for NFP as an entry way into these kinds of relationships. Rather, noting this testimony and the experience of those practicing NFP reveals to students a different kind of relationship between persons who are (or planning to be) sexually active than that found in hookup culture. Instead of shame, mistrust, fear, lack of vulnerability and authenticity, or the white, wealthy male focus on sexual performance and being unfeeling, NFP proposes a relationship of communication, biological awareness, mutuality, and consideration of the consequences of choices. NFP seeks to consider the whole person and the relationship, the opposite of the “abbreviated anthropology” at the heart of hookup culture. By introducing this aspect that NFP implies, students can then begin to think more clearly and critically about their connections with people in general and their personal relationships in particular, regardless of their actual acceptance of NFP.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have attempted to complicate the portrait of hookup culture because research suggests there is not one hookup culture but several hookup cultures operating on any given college campus. Moreover, within those hookup cultures, contraception use var-

³⁷ Olga Khazan, “Why College Students Need a Class in Dating,” *The Atlantic*, June 2, 2014, www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/07/why-todays-college-students-need-a-class-on-dating/373823/.

³⁸ Julie Hanlon Rubio, “Beyond the Liberal/Conservative Divide on Contraception,” *Horizons* 32, no. 2 (2005): 270-294.

³⁹ Rubio, “Beyond the Liberal/Conservative Divide on Contraception,” 277.

ies, and what is evident is that power and privilege, as well as marginalization and feelings of vulnerability, shape students' actions. Because such a complicated portrait exists, we contend more work remains in helping students think critically about their and others' possible sexual activity outside of the marriage context. We therefore propose adding the principles of human dignity and solidarity to the discussion to have a more adequate analysis of the use and non-use of contraception within American college hookup culture. These principles help illuminate the dynamics of power and privilege, as well as weakness and vulnerability, which often guide the contraceptive choices young men and women make within hookup culture. Lastly, we contend that teaching NFP can, by challenging the presumed norms of hookup culture and contraception, reinforce the importance of dignity and solidarity for students and their relationships. Doing so, we hope, provides a way for students to make wise decisions about sexual activity and the use of contraception in the context of college hookup culture. **M**