

Perceptions on the reasons for teenage
pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan
girls in the Netherlands
A qualitative study



Marieke Hoekstra
Population Research Centre
Faculty of Spatial Sciences
University of Groningen
April 2008
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. I. Hutter

Perceptions on the reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands

A qualitative study

Marieke Hoekstra

Population Research Centre

Faculty of Spatial Sciences

University of Groningen

April 2008

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. I. Hutter

Front page:

Picture of a pregnant woman

Internet: www.doula-praktijk.nl/ (Visited on 16-03-2008).

Preface

In the first week of September 2006 I started with the Master Population Studies. For the first course of the master's study programme, The Research Process, I had to develop the research proposal for my master thesis. Until then, I had not really thought about a topic for my thesis yet. After the first lecture of the aforementioned course – in the train back home – I read an article in the Spits that the number of teenage pregnancies had increased. I expected that teenage pregnancies could be an interesting topic for my master thesis. Therefore, I searched on the internet for more information about teenage pregnancies in the Netherlands. After some searching and changing the specific research question, I finally formulated the following research question: What are the perceptions on the reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands?

I am indebted to a number of people for their help and support. Therefore, this preface would not be complete without thanking these people; without their help and support I would not have been able to complete my master thesis. First of all, I especially would like to thank the girls who have been pregnant and wanted to share with me their outspoken stories about that important happening in their life. Secondly, I would like to thank the Turkish and Moroccan girls who were willing to give an interview about their perceptions on teenage pregnancies and marriage, sexuality, contraceptives and abortion. I am also indebted to all the organisations, abortion and delivery clinics and people who tried to help me come into contact with the girls; I cannot call them all by name, but thanks to you all! Furthermore, I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr I. Hutter for her help and comments on my master thesis. Last but not least I would also like to thank my family and friend for their help and support.

Marieke Hoekstra,

April, 2008

Abstract

This research is about the perceptions on the reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls. In this research the following research question has been formulated:

What are the perceptions on the reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands?

The objective of this study is to *describe* and *understand* the occurrence of teenage pregnancies among the aforementioned girls and provide recommendations whether it is necessary to develop a cultural specific policy on education and prevention. For the explanation of the teenage pregnancies, the fertility model of Bongaarts and Potter (1983) – proximate determinants of fertility – and the theory of planned behaviour of Ajzen (1991) have been used. Eleven in-depth interviews have been held in order to answer the research question. The topics marriage, sexuality, contraceptives, teenage pregnancies and abortion have been discussed in the in-depth interviews. Four interviews have been held with Turkish and Moroccan girls who have been pregnant when they were teenager. Finding girls who were willing to talk about this sensitive topic was very difficult. There is still a big taboo on girls who have sex before marriage and unplanned pregnancies. Besides the experiences of the four girls, seven Turkish and Moroccan girls between the ages 15 and 25, who have not been pregnant, have been interviewed as well. These were interviews about their perceptions on the reasons for teenage pregnancies. Quite some Turkish and Moroccan people expressed negative feelings about the research, because they were afraid that the research would create or enhance a negative image of their group. However, there were also positive remarks about the research. The most important results of the research are:

Marriage is very important for all of the girls; this is a consequence of their religion and culture. Relationships before marriage are prohibited in the Qur'an, however, nowadays relationships before marriage are more common according to the girls. At home most girls scarcely receive sexuality education. Furthermore, the sexuality education at school is experienced as very general and not specific enough for their culture. The use of contraceptives is limited among unmarried girls, because girls are not supposed to be sexually active before marriage. This means that there should be no need for them to use contraceptives.

In most cases the girls who got pregnant unplanned had two possibilities. They had to get married with the father of the child or they had to have an induced abortion. If a girl has had an abortion it often took place in strict secret so that the family honour would not be damaged. It can be concluded from the research that part of the teenage pregnancies is indeed planned, as it is assumed in the research of Rutgers Nisso Groep (Wijsen and van Lee, 2006) – the girls start early with the family formation. However, besides the planned pregnancies, part of the teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls is unplanned. Several recommendations have been made based on the results of this research. The first recommendation is that there should be more sexuality education for the Turkish and Moroccan girls, which should be especially directed at their culture. Secondly, the development of interventions should not only be directed at Turkish and Moroccan girls, but also at the boys and parents. Namely, the boys and parents also play an important role in the occurrence of teenage pregnancies. Finally, more research into the reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls is required.

Contents

Preface	4
Abstract	5
Tables and figures	9
1 Introduction	10
2 Background	13
2.1 Situation in the Netherlands	13
2.2 Policies regarding teenage pregnancies	19
2.3 Islam and sexuality	22
3 Theories and Conceptual model	25
3.1 Theoretical framework	25
3.1.1 Fertility model of Bongaarts; Proximate determinants of fertility	25
3.1.2 Theory of planned Behaviour	27
3.2 Conceptual model	28
4 Data en methodology	30
4.1 Conceptualisation	30
4.2 Operationalisation	32
4.3 Selection and finding of respondents	34
4.4 Ethical issues	36
4.5 Reflection on the research	37
4.5.1 Reflection on the search	37
4.5.2 Reflection on the interview methods	39
4.5.3 Reactions on the research	40
5 Experiences and perceptions on marriage, sexuality, contraceptive use, teenage pregnancy and abortion	42
5.1 Description of the sample	42
5.1.1 Individual characteristics	43
5.2 Marriage	44
5.2.1 Girls who have been pregnant	44
5.2.2 Girls who have not been pregnant	47
5.2.3 Summary	49

5.3	Sexuality	50
5.3.1	Girls who have been pregnant	50
5.3.2	Girls who have not been pregnant	53
5.3.3	Summary	55
5.4	Contraceptive use	56
5.4.1	Girls who have been pregnant	56
5.4.2	Girls who have not been pregnant	57
5.4.3	Summary	58
5.5	Teenage pregnancy	59
5.5.1	Experiences of girls who have been pregnant	59
5.5.2	Perceptions of girls who have not been pregnant	61
5.6	Abortion	63
5.7	Difference between culture and religion	65
6	Conclusions and recommendations	67
6.1	Conclusions	67
6.2	Recommendations	70
	References	71
	Appendix A List of questions	74
	Appendix B List of approached organisations/clinics etc. and sites	79
	Appendix C Poster	79

Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 2.1: Abortion rate and abortion ratio per country of origin, 2004- 2006	17
---	----

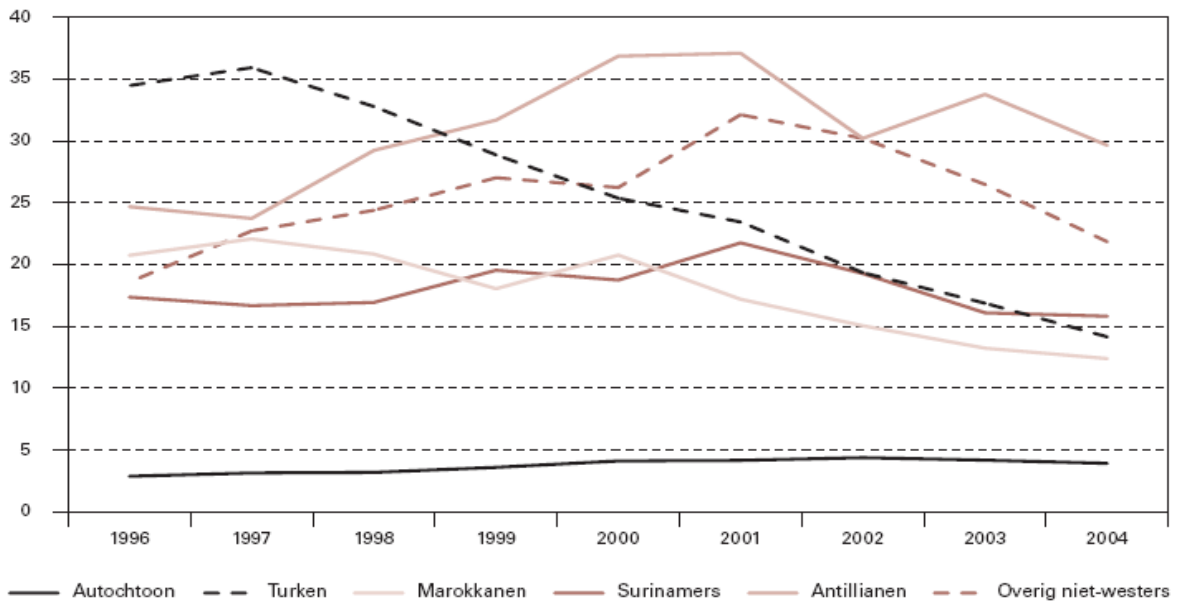
Figures

Figure 1.1: Number of births per 1.000 teenage girls in the Netherlands, by origin, 1996-2000	10
Figure 2.1: Number of teenage mothers by age in the Netherlands, 1950-2004	13
Figure 2.2: Number of births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years, by generation - 2005	16
Figure 3.1: Fertility model	26
Figure 3.2: Theory of planned behaviour	28
Figure 3.3: Conceptual model	29

1 Introduction

In assignment for the Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sports a qualitative research has been conducted in the Netherlands in 2005 by the Rutgers Nisso Groep to provide the backgrounds of teenage pregnancies among predominantly native Dutch girls. These are pregnancies occurring among young woman under the age of twenty (Martin 2006). Based on this study, “Gebrek aan regie” (Lack of direction), policy recommendations had been formulated in the field of prevention, information and care (Wijsen et al., 2005). The teenage girls of ethnic origins other than the Dutch played a minor part in this research. However, these girls have a higher risk of getting pregnant and becoming a teenage mother than native Dutch girls. As displayed in figure 1.1, the line that indicates the number of births per 1000 Native Dutch girls is lower in comparison to the lines of another Ethnic group¹.

Figure 1.1: Number of births per 1.000 teenage girls in the Netherlands, by origin, 1996-2000



Source: Garssen, 2005, p.51.

Therefore, the Rutgers Nisso Groep conducted similar research in 2006 for other ethnic groups. In that research however, only teenage girls from Surinam, the Dutch Antilles, sub-Saharan Africa and China had been included (Wijsen and van Lee, 2006). Turkish and Moroccan girls had not been included in this research, because Wijsen and van Lee (2006)

¹ In figure 1.1, the names of the groups are in Dutch. These are translated into English: Autochtoon – Native Dutch; Turken – Turks; Marokkanen – Moroccans; Surinamers – Surinamese; Antillianen – Antilleans; Overig niet-westers – Other non-western.

assumed that these girls are (more) often pregnant by choice – they start early with the family formation.

This assumption was based on the fact that Turkish and Moroccan girls who become pregnant are on average somewhat older and most of them were already married at the moment they gave birth to their first child. Another reason, mentioned by Wijzen and Van Lee (2006), why Turkish and Moroccan girls had not been included was that the abortion ratio of these girls was lower than that of the girls of other ethnic groups. There were unwanted teenage pregnancies and girls who chose for an induced abortion, but this number was relatively small (Wijzen and van Lee, 2006).

However, it has never been proved that most of the teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls are indeed planned. The abortion ratio of Turkish and Moroccan girls is not lower in comparison to girls of other ethnic groups anymore. In the last two years there has been an increase in the number of abortions by Turkish and Moroccan girls. In 2006, 64 percent of the known pregnant Turkish girls and 79 percent of the known pregnant Moroccan girls chose to have an abortion (Rutgers Nisso Groep, 2006 and Wijzen and van Lee, 2007). In 2004, these percentages were 44 percent and 59 percent respectively. Because of this large increase, the estimated abortion ratio of Moroccan girls has even become the highest one in 2006 (Wijzen and van Lee, 2007). This increase in abortions among Turkish and Moroccan girls can probably be explained by an increase in the number of unplanned pregnancies. Due to this probable increase of unplanned pregnancies, more attention for Turkish and Moroccan girls could be required in prevention programmes.

The reasons mentioned by Wijzen and van Lee for their assumption that most pregnancies were planned also makes one wonder whether marriage was a free choice for a lot of the pregnant Turkish and Moroccan teenage girls. Another possibility could be that the girls were engaged in a “shotgun marriage”, which means in this context that the pregnancy was unplanned and the girls get married with the father of the child.

There are thus some doubts on the assumption that most teenage pregnancies are planned among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands. Therefore, a qualitative research into the reasons for the teenage pregnancies as perceived by Turkish and Moroccan girls themselves is performed in this study. The research question is:

What are the perceptions on the reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands?

The objective of the research is to describe and understand the occurrence of teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan teenage girls. The ultimate goal of this study is to give recommendations for the development of specific sexuality education and pregnancy prevention policies for Turkish and Moroccan girls. In order to answer the research question, a qualitative data method is used; because of the sensitive object, in-depth interviews are performed among Turkish and Moroccan girls.

The structure of this thesis is as follows. After the introduction, background information about teenage pregnancies in the Netherlands, policies regarding teenage pregnancies and some information about the Islam and sexuality are provided in chapter 2. Almost all of the girls are Muslim and to understand the girls it is necessary to know more about the Islam. In chapter 3, the theories and the conceptual model are discussed. First, the two theories which are used to answer the research question are described. These are the fertility model of Bongaarts: proximate determinants of fertility (1983) and the theory of planned behaviour of Ajzen (1991). Secondly the conceptual model is presented, which is the basis of the entire research. Data and methodology are described in chapter 4. The concepts used in the research are discussed, but also the selection of the respondents and the process of finding them. Furthermore, the difficulties that came along and ethical issues are described. In the last section of chapter 4, a reflection on the research is given. Besides the reflections on the search for the girls and the interview methods, reactions of Turkish and Moroccan people on the appeal on internet are discussed.

In chapter 5, the experiences and perceptions of the interviewed girls on the topics marriage, sexuality, contraceptive use, teenage pregnancy and abortion are discussed. The results of the interviews are discussed for each aforementioned topic. The results have been divided in two groups: the girls who have been pregnant and the girls who have not been pregnant. In the last section the difference between culture and religion indicated by the respondents is discussed. In the last chapter, chapter 6, the conclusions and recommendations of the research are provided.

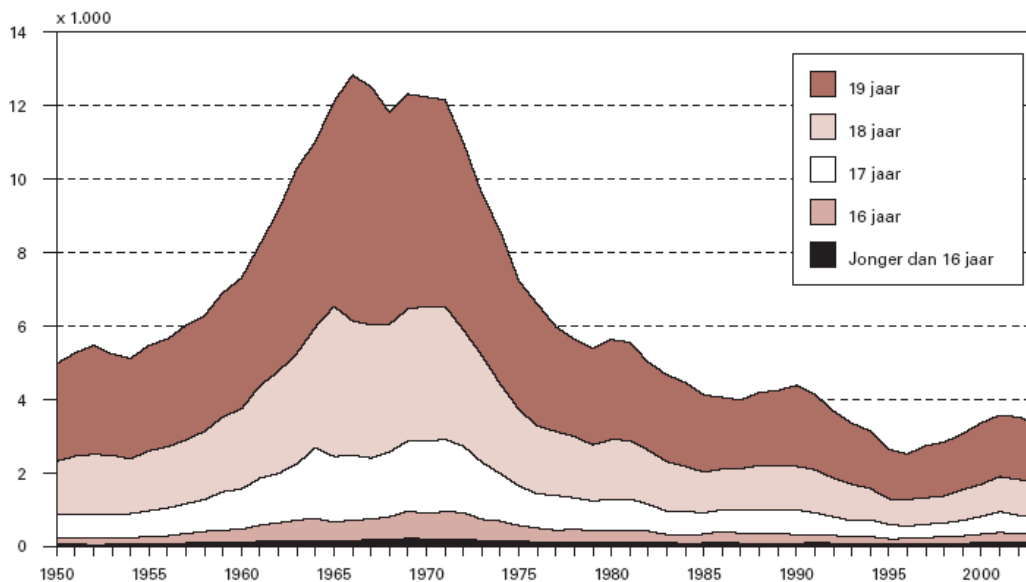
2 Background

The first section of this chapter is about the situation of teenage pregnancies in the Netherlands over the past 40 years, the current situation and developments. Previous research into the reasons for teenage pregnancies is also discussed. In the second part a closer look is taken into the policies related to teenage pregnancies. More than 90 percent of the Turkish and Moroccan people in the Netherlands are Muslim (Forum, 2008), so in order to understand the girls it is necessary to know more about the Islam. Therefore, in the third section the topics Islam and sexuality are discussed.

2.1 Situation in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has one of the lowest teenage fertility rates² in the world. In figure 2.1 is displayed the development of the number of teenage mothers in the Netherlands from 1950 till 2004. Teenage mothers are girls who gave birth before they reached the age of twenty; the reference age of the mother is the age she reached on her last birthday (CBS, 2005).

Figure 2.1: Number of teenage mothers by age in the Netherlands, 1950-2004



Source: Garssen, 2005, p.50

² Fertility rate: The number of live born babies per 1000 of the average number of women aged 15 to 50 in a certain period (usually a calendar year) (CBS, 2007).

The teenage fertility rates sharply decreased in the Netherlands since the 1970s. The number of teenage mothers per 1.000 teenage girls decreased from 17 in 1970 to 4 in 2005 (Garssen, 2005). However, from 1996 until 2001 the number of teenage mothers slightly increased. It seems that the attention for the prevention of teenage pregnancies had decreased and the preventive measures had been neglected by the authorities in that period, because the Netherlands was doing so well. After 2001, the increasing trend of the teenage fertility rate was reversed by renewed attention for prevention of teenage pregnancies (Garssen, 2005). Many of the teenage pregnancies are unplanned and therefore the fertility rate is reacting strongly to the information and prevention methods directed at the prevention of unplanned pregnancies (Garssen, 2005). The aforementioned indicates that policy, i.e. prevention methods, has an influence on the teenage fertility rate. The low teenage fertility in the Netherlands – in comparison to other countries in the world – can be explained by the sexuality education, the open sexual climate and the good access to contraceptives in this country (Garssen, 2005). In the Netherlands, approximately 3000 teenage girls become mother and 4000 have an induced abortion each year (Wijsen and van Lee, 2006).

Teenage pregnancies have large consequences for the girls and their child. First of all, the medical risks for teenage pregnancies are higher. Secondly, babies born to young teenage mothers have a higher risk of serious health problems. Also, the percentage of children born with a low birth-weight is significantly higher among teenage mothers. Furthermore, the chance of a premature birth is also higher for teenage mothers (Swierzewki, 2000). Apart from the aforementioned, becoming a teenage mother is not only an individual problem but also a societal problem (Wijsen and van Lee, 2006). Teenage mothers are more likely to drop out of school. Therefore, their prospects of finding a good job are less. Teenage births are associated with lower annual income for the mother and many of the girls are financially dependent on family and/or welfare. The girls have to manage with less money and when they are under the age of 18 they do not get a social security allowance. This is because their parents are obliged to support them; so a minor teenage mother only has a right to a child benefit (Schulinck, 2008).

Two cultures have an influence on the fertility behaviour of teenage girls from another ethnic group; first their original cultural background and secondly the Dutch culture. Therefore, the lives of these girls of another ethnic group are much more complex in comparison to those of the native Dutch girls (Wijsen and van Lee, 2006).

In the research of Wijssen and van Lee (2006) it had been concluded that a number of factors in a cultural background raise the risk of teenage pregnancy: “The parents’ lack of frankness and acceptance of sexuality, absence of sex education, culturally determined prejudices regarding contraceptive pills and condoms, the meaning of motherhood and fatherhood, and unequal relations between men and women” (Wijssen and van Lee, 2006, summary).

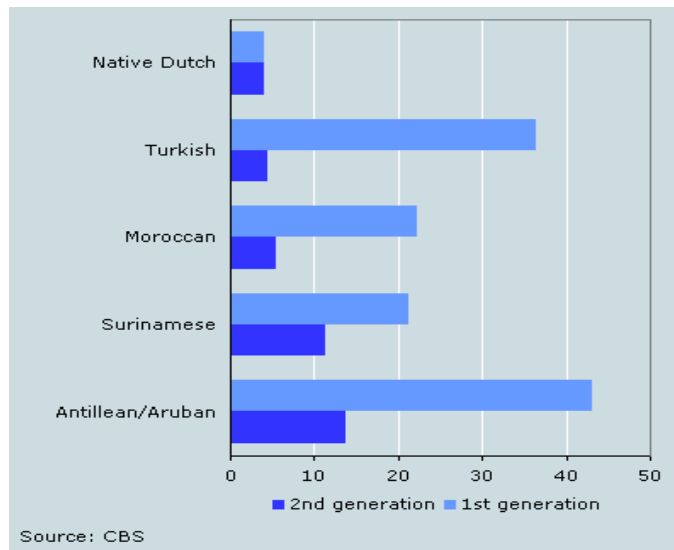
The age, origin and level of education also have a significant influence on the risk of getting pregnant for teenage girls (Wijssen and van Lee, 2006). In this research, it has also been investigated which factors in the cultural background raise the risk on teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls.

There are relatively high fertility rates among the first generation³ non-western teenage girls. The highest rates are among the first generation Turkish and Antillean girls, as can be seen in figure 2.2. In this figure the age criterion used for teenage mothers is 15 till 19, which is different in comparison to the one used in this research – i.e. girls younger than twenty years. In the figure, CBS used teenage mothers between the ages 15 and 19. This is because the number of teenage mothers below the age of 15 is small, so for the figure there was no need to use the age criterion of girls younger than twenty. The fertility rate for the first generation Turkish girls is four times higher than the fertility rate of the second generation and nine times higher than the fertility rate for the native Dutch teenage girls (Garssen, 2006). The birth rates of Turkish and Moroccan teenage girls in the second generation hardly differ from those of the native Dutch population. Their birth rates have nearly halved since 2001. So there was a large decrease of the fertility rate under Turkish and Moroccan teenagers of the second generation and only a small decrease under the first generation. The decrease of the fertility rate among Turkish girls cannot be attributed to the average age of marriage, which means that other factors than delay of family formation play a role (Garssen, 2004).

³ First generation foreigners are people born outside the Netherlands of whom at least one parent was also born outside the Netherlands.

Second generation foreigners are people born in the Netherlands of whom at least one parent was born outside the Netherlands (CBS, 2007).

Figure 2.2: Number of births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years, by generation – 2005



Abortion

Abortions are legal in the Netherlands since November 1984 – with the restriction that the abortion is performed at a clinic or hospital that is issued an official abortion certificate by the Dutch government. To give the women time to think through their decision of having an abortion or not, there must be a lapse of at least five days between the first conversation with the doctor and the actual abortion (NGvA, 2007). Abortions are performed until approximately 23 weeks into pregnancy (Fiom, 2007). Due to their religion, this is not possible for Turkish and Moroccan girls. They can only have an induced abortion till 4 weeks after conception (see information about abortions and the Islam in chapter 2.3).

Last year the total number of abortions among teenage girls slightly decreased and less teenage girls became pregnant (Rutgers Nisso Groep, 2006). The majority of the pregnant teenage girls in the Netherlands choose for an abortion. The abortion ratio had an increasing trend; this meant that more teenage girls have chosen for an abortion instead of motherhood. The abortion ratio is calculated by dividing the number of estimated abortions per country of origin by the known pregnancies of girls till 19 years from that specific country, times 100 (Wijsen and van Lee, 2007). In 2000, 60 per 100 pregnant teenage girls have had an abortion; in 2006 this was 65,9 per 100 pregnant teenage girls (Rutgers Nisso groep, 2006). Turkish girls and Moroccan girls had the lowest chance of having an abortion; 44,1 per 100 pregnant Turkish girls have had an induced abortion and 59,0 per 100 pregnant Moroccan girls in 2004. For Moroccan girls and native Dutch girls the abortion ratio was almost the same, 59 and 59,2 per 100 pregnant girls (Wijsen and van Lee, 2005).

Turkish and Moroccan girls had a relatively low abortion ratio in comparison to other ethnic groups, but the last two years there has been a large increase of the number of abortions among these girls. For Turkish girls the number of estimated abortions increased between 2004 and 2006 from 44,1 to 63,6 per 100 known pregnant girls and for Moroccan girls from 59 to 78,6 per 100 known pregnant girls, see table 2.1 (Wijsen and van Lee, 2007). Because of this increase, at this moment Moroccan girls even have the highest chance of having an abortion, while it is actually not allowed for them to have an abortion. After a few years of increase, the abortion rate has almost stabilised in comparison to the abortion ratio. The abortion rate is calculated by dividing the number of estimated abortions per country of origin by the total number of girls between the ages 15 and 19 from that specific country, times 1000 (Wijsen and van Lee, 2007). The large increase of the abortion ratio can probably be explained by an increase of the number of unplanned pregnancies.

Table 2.1: Abortion rate and abortion ratio per country of origin, 2004-2006

	Birth rate	Pregnancy rate	Abortion rate ⁴			Abortion ratio ⁵		
	per 1000	per 1000	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006
	2005	2005						
the Netherlands	3	7,2	4,3	4,2	4,3	59,2	58,3	59,8
Surinam	9,5	46,9	34,8	37,5	35,3	74,8	79,8	75,3
Antilles	20,1	55,9	43,1	35,9	43,2	65,1	64,1	68,8
Turkey	6,2	13,2	6,1	7,0	6,0	44,1	53,2	63,6
Morocco	5,3	16,2	10,5	10,9	11,3	59,0	67,2	78,6

Source: Wijsen and van Lee, 2006 and 2007, p. 21

Marriage and contraceptive use

Many teenage mothers stay single for a long time in comparison to mothers above the age of twenty. In the Netherlands, 35 percent of all children of a native Dutch teenage mother live in a single parent household. The percentage of single parents among Antillean girls in the Netherlands is over seventy even. The situation for Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands is very different.

⁴ The abortion rate is calculated by dividing the number of estimated abortions per country of origin by the total number of girls between the ages 15 and 19 from that specific country, times 1000 (Wijsen and van Lee, 2007)

⁵ The abortion ratio is calculated by dividing the number of estimated abortions per country of origin by the known pregnancies of girls till 19 years from that specific country, times 100 (Van Wijsen and van Lee, 2007)

The majority of the Turkish and Moroccan teenage mothers are married at the moment they give birth to their first child, only less than a quarter of Turkish and Moroccan teenage mothers are unmarried (Garssen, 2005). The Turkish and Moroccan teenage mothers are also the oldest teenage mothers; almost all of them are 18 or 19 when they give birth to their first child (Knijn and Rijken, 2003).

There are no numbers available about contraceptive use among Turkish and Moroccan people. However, some research has been performed on their perceptions and knowledge on contraceptives. One research was on safe sex and condom use by Turkish, Moroccan, Surinam and Antillean adolescents and young adults in comparison to native Dutchmen (Von Bergh and Sandfort, 2000). According to this research, Turkish and Moroccan adolescents and young adults have less knowledge about safe sex and sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) in comparison to native Dutchmen. In order to have safe sex, Moroccan people mentioned especially as possible ways: monogamy and no sexual intercourse. Turkish and Moroccan people are also more often negative about condom use than native Dutchmen. They mentioned as reasons: "You feel less when you use a condom, condoms are an unpleasant interruption of the sex; you often do not have a condom with you when you need it and if you have one with you, your only intention is to have sex" (Von Bergh and Sandfort, 2000. p.5).

One of the results of the research "Seks onder je 25e"(Sex under your 25th) was that Moroccan or Turkish adolescents score relatively low with regard to reported interaction competency and knowledge about reproduction, birth control and STD/HIV (De Graaf, Poelmam and Vanwesenbeeck, 2005). "Interaction competency is a complex concept that includes skills such as being able to talk about sex with your latest partner whenever you want, knowing what you want and what the other wants, being able to set and respect boundaries, and being self-confident about looks and abilities. It pertains to your own assessment determined on the basis of contacts with your latest partner" (De Graaf et al., 2005, p. 6). According to the study, Turkish and Moroccan boys and girls have relatively high feelings of guilt and shame about sexuality. Muslim girls have relatively little experience with all forms of sex; on the other hand the Muslim boys are often more experienced with sex (De Graaf et al., 2005). This is a remarkable difference because according to the Qur'an it is forbidden for boys and girls to have sex before marriage (Muslim Women's League, 1999; see for more information about sexuality and the Islam chapter 2.3).

2.2 Policy regarding teenage pregnancies

It is relevant for this study to know which policies concerning teenage pregnancies are implemented in the Netherlands. This is because policies can have an influence on demographic behaviour and therefore also on the occurrence of teenage pregnancies. But this is also the other way around – demographic behaviour can have an influence on policies. The definition of population policies is: “Population policies are deliberately constructed or modified institutional arrangements and/or specific programs through which government influence, direct or indirect, demographic change” (Demeny, 2003, p.2).

The Dutch government does not pursue an explicit population policy; namely, there is a widely shared reluctance in the Netherlands regarding state interventions in the private domain (Van Nimwegen et al., 2003). There is also no specific national policy on the topic teenage pregnancies and/or teenage mothers. In the Netherlands, the number of teenage pregnancies and teenage mothers is low in comparison to other countries in the world (Garssen, 2004). Therefore, there is no need for a specific national policy on teenage pregnancies.

However, there are some programmes concerning teenage pregnancies in the Netherlands. Two ministries have programmes in the field of teenage pregnancies; these are the Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sports and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sports expands diverse activities to prevent unwanted pregnancies (Ministry VWS, 2007). Teenage pregnancies are part of the prevention activities, because they are unplanned and unwanted to a large extent. Preventing unwanted pregnancies is important, as the consequences of an unwanted pregnancy are far-reaching. A decision must be made whether to keep the baby, choose for an adoption or terminate the pregnancy. To choose one of these possibilities can affect one’s well-being for a long time.

The national government is more directed at the prevention of unwanted (teenage) pregnancies than at the field of care for teenage mothers (Ministry VWS, 2007). This is because it is better to prevent the occurrence of teenage pregnancies than to help the teenage mothers afterwards: Prevention is better than cure.

Two examples of activities of the Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sports to prevent unwanted pregnancies are (Ministry VWS, 2007):

- First of all, the Ministry subsidizes the national foundation *Ambulante Fiom* and the association *VBOK* (*Vereniging Bescherming Ongeboren Kind*; the Dutch Association for the Protection of the Unborn Child). They both play an important part in the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and abortions and in accompanying young mothers (Ministry VWS, 2007).

Fiom is a foundation which offers help, information and advice on different fields – for example among unintentional pregnancies, teenage pregnancies and abortions. The *Fiom* also organizes meetings for pregnant girls and young mothers (*Fiom*, 2007). The *Fiom* claims to be neutral in its position about abortions.

VBOK is an organisation which offers counselling in cases of an unwanted pregnancy and pregnancy loss and it realises educational programs at schools. The *VBOK* is convinced that father, mother and child should be equally involved (*VBOK*, 2007).

The *VBOK* is established by some doctors and other persons concerned in Amsterdam in 1971. The first abortion clinic was established in Amsterdam and the founders of the *VBOK* wanted to provide unwanted pregnant women an alternative to abortion (*VBOK*, 2007). Since the Termination of Pregnancy Act was enacted in 1981, the *VBOK* is more directed at assistance and information. The Act entered into force in 1984, but in the intervening years the abortion clinics continued their work without legal action being taken against them. The *VBOK* wants to prevent abortions by offering girls and women assistance and providing them information and advice. They argue that a human being is worth to protect from the conception (*VBOK*, 2007).

- Secondly, the *Rutgers Nisso Groep*, the Dutch expert centre on sexuality, gets subsidies from the Ministry in order to develop programmes in the field of sexuality education. The *Rutgers Nisso Groep* mainly focuses on policy makers and professionals who deal with sexual issues in their work. Ministries, care institutions, educational institutes and so on also use the expertise of the *Rutgers Nisso Groep* (*Rutgers Nisso Groep*, 2007). The research of the *Rutgers Nisso Groep* into the reasons for teenage pregnancies, mentioned earlier in this thesis, is part of the “Birth regulation/ Reproductive health programme”.

This programme carries out the following activities:

- The coordination and realisation of the national abortion registration and the registration of reproductive care requests by general practitioners in the Netherlands.
- Research into determinants, perception and consequences of the use of contraception on the one hand, and infertility on the other.
- Development and implementation of education and prevention programmes and materials aimed at specific target groups, among both the general public and professionals (Rutgers Nisso Groep, 2007).

A second programme of the Rutgers Nisso Groep is the “Sexuality education Programme”. Sexuality and intimacy are important mainsprings in people’s lives. The focus of the programme is not only on the transfer of knowledge, but in particular on influencing notions, emotions and social and communication skills (Rutgers Nisso Groep, 2007). The objective is to promote a healthy sexuality and also to prevent sexual health problems such as HIV/STD, unwanted pregnancy and abortion. This Programme of the Rutgers Nisso Groep also has different projects. One of these projects with a link to teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls is: “Sexuality and education for Turkish and Moroccan mothers”. In this project, sexuality and education are discussed in group meetings with the Turkish and Moroccan mothers. Parents play an important part in the sexuality education of their children, but Turkish and Moroccan mothers find it very hard to make sexuality discussable. This is caused by shame, cultural limitations and shortage of knowledge (Rutgers Nisso Groep, 2007). The goal of the project is to make the mothers aware of the important role they play as a sexual educator. Furthermore, it is directed at making them aware that the sexuality education should start when the girls are still young. The mothers also learn more general knowledge about sexuality (Rutgers Nisso Groep, 2007). This project can have a positive influence on the occurrence of teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls. When the mothers can easier talk about sexuality with their children, the children will be better educated sexually and know more about contraceptives and sexuality. This way the number of unplanned teenage pregnancies can decrease.

2.3 Islam and sexuality

Almost all of the Turkish and Moroccan people in the Netherlands are Muslim (Forum, 2008). Religion has an influence on their sexual behaviour. Therefore, it is necessary to know more about the Islam and the Islamic perspective on sexuality in order to understand the Turkish and Moroccan girls. Much information, especially about the Qur'an, is derived from the internet site www.muslimwomensleague.com. The Muslim Women's League is a non-profit Muslim American organisation working to implement the values of the Islam and thereby reclaim the status of women as free, equal and vital contributors to society (Muslim Women's League, 1999).

In the Netherlands there are 368.600 Turkish and 329.493 Moroccan people per 1 January 2007 (CBS, 2007). Most children of Turkish and Moroccan Muslims have the same religion as their parents; in the Netherlands 89 percent of the children of a Muslim father consider themselves as Muslim (CBS, 2003). The Islam is after Roman Catholicism, the second-largest religion in West-Europe. The number of Muslims is growing in the world and also in the Netherlands. Approximately 5 percent of the Dutch population is Islamic, of which the Turkish and Moroccan people are the largest group (Van Herten, 2007). In the Netherlands 40 percent of the Dutch population is not religious. Roman Catholicism is the largest religion in the Netherlands with 30 percent; the second-largest religion is the Dutch Reformed Church with 11 percent (CBS, 2007).

For Muslims, based on an understanding of Qur'an and hadith, sexual relations are confined to marriage between wife and husband; sexual relations outside of marriage are not allowed by God (Muslim Women's League, 1999). Extra- and premarital sex are considered as a major sin (Ghaemina and Pietersen, 2007). According to the Muslim Women's League, Muslims are advised to behave in a way to avoid circumstances that could result in extra- or premarital sex (Muslim Women's League, 1999). The Qur'an prescribes that Muslims are encouraged to have and raise children in a marriage. Although Muslims are encouraged to have children, contraceptive use is not prohibited (Muslim Women's League, 1999). Some Muslims interpreted the encouragement of having children to mean that preventing pregnancy by using contraceptives is not recommended. The use of contraceptives is allowed, but according to the Muslim Women's League it is limited among unmarried girls and women. This is because sexual relations should be confined to marriage (Muslim Women's League, 1999). For unmarried women and girls there thus should be no need to use any contraceptives.

There is a taboo on talking about sex within the Turkish and Moroccan community (Ghaemina and Pietersen, 2007). According to Ghemina and Pietersen, this is also because Turkish and Moroccan adolescents almost do not get any sexuality education at home. The main reason Muslim parents do not or cannot discuss sexuality with their children is because of their culture, not their religion. Talking about sexuality is not prohibited in the Qur'an. In fact, the Qur'an points out that you should talk with your children about sexuality. However, this happens scarcely (Ghaemina and Pietersen, 2007). Talking about sex could suggest that you are sexually active and this is a reason for many Turkish and Moroccan adolescents and parents not to talk about sexuality (Ghaemina and Pietersen, 2007). Direct communication about sexuality between men and women and between parents and children happens barely. However, if communication about sexuality happens, it only happens with someone of the same sex. Preference is given to collect knowledge about this topic from books, sexuality education at school and personal experiences (Ghaemina and Pietersen, 2007).

According to the Islam, pregnancies can officially only occur in marriage and not as a result of extra- or premarital intercourses (Muslim Women's League, 1999). As a consequence of this, unmarried women who are pregnant are not really accepted in the Turkish and Moroccan community. The honour of the family is very important and if a girl loses her virginity before marriage it will damage this honour (HRW, 1993). According to Abdulwahid van Bommel, abortions among unmarried women often take place in strict secret, because sex before marriage is not allowed for Muslims (Van Bommel, 2007). This way nobody has to know anything about the pregnancy and the premarital sex and it will not damage the honour of the family.

The ideas about abortions are diverse. "Officially", abortions in the Islam are allowed in a limited sense. First of all, abortions are allowed if the life of the mother is at risk. Secondly, early Muslim lawyers used to consider abortions lawful until 120 days after conception. This was based on the interpretation of the Qur'an and hadith, which implied that life exists after that period of time (Muslim Women's League, 1999). From the point of view of contemporary Muslim thinkers, life begins much earlier than previously thought. Through available technology there is a visualization of an embryonic heartbeat at four weeks of gestation. Therefore, they argue that life begins much earlier and that abortions should only be allowed until four weeks after conception (Muslim Women's League, 1999).

In the research “Wat vind jij daar nou van?” (What do you think about that?), by order of the Rutgers Nisso Groep, 15 percent of the Moroccan and 11 percent of the Turkish adolescents who participated in the research agreed with the point of view that women cannot have an abortion under any circumstances. Only two percent of the Dutch adolescents agreed with this point of view (Rutgers Nisso Groep, 2004). In the same research, approximately three quarters of the Turkish and Moroccan adolescents who participated in the study agreed with the position that sex is not allowed before marriage; 74 percent of the Turkish and 77 percent of the Moroccan adolescents (Rutgers Nisso Groep, 2004).

3 Theories and Conceptual model

In this chapter, two theories are pointed out which are used to describe and understand the perceptions on the reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands, but also to answer the research question.

What are the perceptions on the reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands?

The first theory is the theory of proximate determinants of fertility of Bongaarts and Potter (1983). This theory provides a better understanding of fertility and the reproductive process. The second theory is the theory of planned behaviour of Ajzen (1991); this theory explains behaviour by looking at the choices and intentions of individuals. After describing these two theories, the conceptual model is presented; this model is the basis for the research.

3.1 Theoretical framework

The two theories described below are used to answer the main research question of this study: What are the reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands?

3.1.1 Fertility model of Bongaarts and Potter; Proximate determinants of fertility

The first theory used in this study is the fertility model of Bongaarts and Potter, the proximate determinants of fertility. The fertility rate is influenced directly by the proximate determinants or also called intermediate fertility variables. The fertility rate is the number of live born babies per 1000 of the average number of woman aged 15 to 50 in a certain period. The teenage fertility rate is the number of live born babies of the average number of women between the ages 15 to 19 in a certain period. The number of live born babies to teenage girls is part of the fertility rate on which the proximate determinants have an influence. Therefore, the proximate determinants of fertility have an influence on the teenage fertility rate and the number of teenage pregnancies.

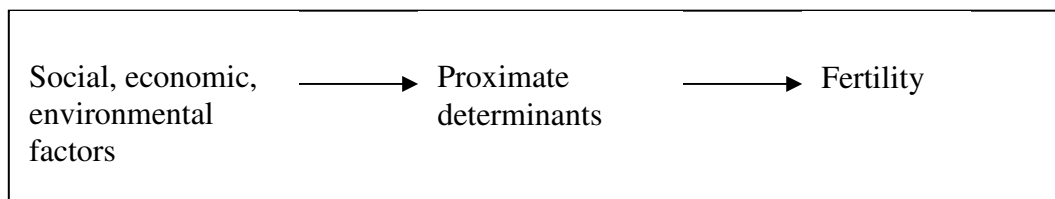
Davis and Blake (1956) elaborated a framework of the factors affecting fertility that recognized both indirect and direct determinants of fertility in the mid-1950s (Stover, 1998). However, their framework was not widely accepted in quantitative fertility studies, because it could not be incorporated easily into reproductive models (Bongaarts and Potter, 1983).

In 1978, Bongaarts developed the ideas of Davis and Blake into a framework for analyzing the proximate determinants of fertility that explained the fertility-inhibiting effects of the key direct determinants (Stover, 1998).

The Bongaarts model is now one of the most widely used tools in fertility analysis. Since it was first published, it has been applied in hundreds of analyses and has influenced the collection and reporting of fertility data (Stover, 1998).

Studies on the causes of fertility levels and their changes often seek to measure the impact of socioeconomic and environmental factors on fertility directly (Bongaarts, 1978). However, the effects of these factors are indirect. The biological and behavioural factors through which socioeconomic, cultural and environmental variables affect fertility are called proximate determinants. These proximate determinants have a direct influence on fertility (Bongaarts, 1978). The following figure, figure 3.1, summarizes the relationships among the determinants of fertility.

Figure 3.1: Fertility model



Source: Bongaarts, 1983

Bongaarts's original model included four proximate determinants: marriage, postpartum infecundability, abortion and contraception. In a later paper, Bongaarts added a fifth determinant, pathological sterility (Stover, 1998).

The basic model to draw up the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is:

$$TFR = C_m * C_i * C_a * C_p * C_c * TF,$$

Where C_m is the index of proportion married, C_i is the index of lactational infecundability, C_a is the index of abortion, C_p is the index of pathological sterility, C_c is the index of contraception and TF is total fecundity (Stover, 1998).

In this thesis there is an emphasis on three proximate determinants of fertility; these are marriage, contraception and abortion; these have an influence on the teenage fertility rate.

Contraceptives have an influence on the teenage fertility rate when they are used for the prevention of pregnancies. Marriage is an important indicator of women's exposure to the risk of pregnancy. Abortion has a direct influence on the teenage fertility rate, in that the pregnancy is terminated. Abortion is important for this research, because a majority of the pregnant teenage girls choose for an induced abortion.

3.1.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour

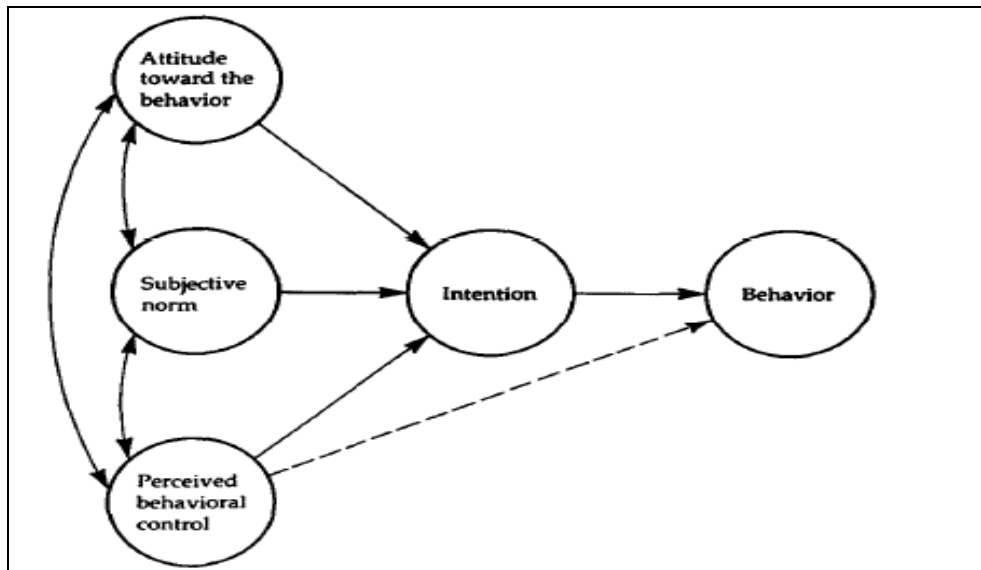
The second theory is the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) of Ajzen (1991). The theory focuses on the intention to predict certain behaviour and uses the micro level to explain individual behaviour. For this research the TBP is necessary, because having a child or not is such behaviour – i.e. decision-making behaviour. Also, the choice to marry, using contraceptives and having an abortion– the proximate determinants of this research – is decision-making behaviour. In order to answer the research question of this study, the aforementioned decision making behaviour of the girls has to be explained, which is possible with this theory.

Ajzen and Fishbein formulated the theory of reasoned action (TRA) in 1980, which was related to voluntary behaviour. However, it turned out that behaviour is not hundred percent voluntary and under control. This resulted in the addition of perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). With this addition the theory was called the theory of planned behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour was developed by Ajzen in 1991 (Ajzen, 1991). It helps to understand how we can change behaviour of people and it predicts deliberate/planned behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour has emerged as one of the most influential and popular conceptual frameworks for the study of human action (Ajzen, 2001). According to the theory, human behaviour is guided by:

- *Behavioural beliefs*; beliefs about the likely consequences of other attributes of the behaviour. This results in attitude toward behaviour.
- *Normative beliefs*; beliefs about the normative expectations of other people. This results in *subjective norm*.
- *Control beliefs*; beliefs about the presence of factors that may further or hinder performance of the behaviour. This results in *perceived behavioural control* (Ajzen, 2002, p. 665).

The best predictor of behaviour is intention. A general rule is: the stronger the intention to engage in a behaviour, the more likely should be its performance (Ajzen, 1991). Intention is determined by a person's attitude toward the specific behaviour, subjective norms and someone's perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 2001). See figure 3.2 for the model of the theory of planned behaviour.

Figure 3.2: Theory of planned behaviour.



Source: Ajzen, 1991, p.182.

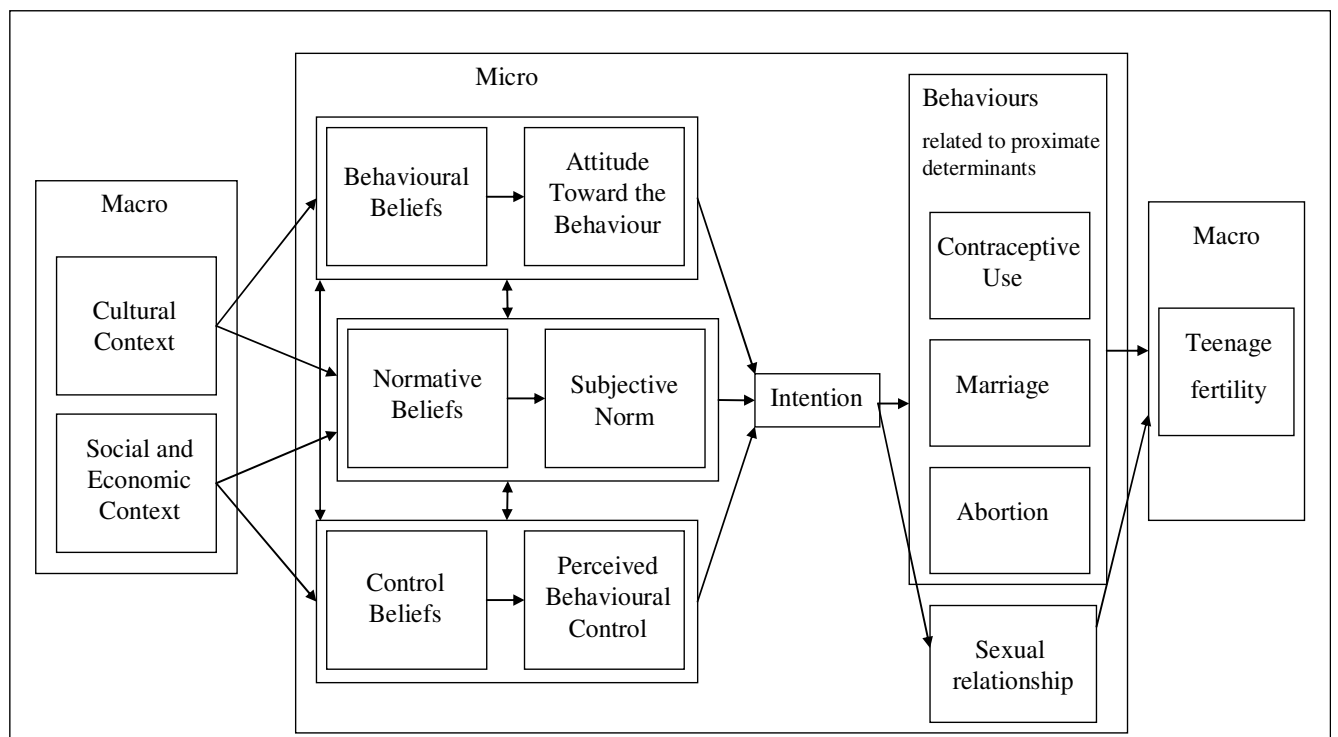
3.2 Conceptual model

In figure 3.3 the conceptual model of this research is presented. The model shows the concepts which are considered to have an influence on the occurrence of teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls. The conceptualisation and operationalisation of these concepts are described in Chapter 4.

The conceptual model is the basis for this research and is divided in a macro (societal) and a micro (individual) level. In this research, the macro level consists of the cultural and socio-economic context, but also the outcome of the behaviour – i.e. the number of teenage pregnancies. The micro level consists of the theory of planned behaviour and the behaviours related to the proximate determinants. The socio-economic and cultural factors on the macro level influence the proximate determinants on the micro level. For the explanation of the proximate determinants the theory of planned behaviour is used. The TPB is used to explain the decision-making process for contraceptive use, marriage, abortion and sexuality.

Contraceptive use, marriage and abortion – the three proximate determinants of fertility – have a direct influence on the teenage fertility rate and therefore also on the number of teenage pregnancies. Besides these three proximate determinants, sexual relationship is included in the conceptual model. This has been done because whether a girl is sexually active or not has an influence on the risk of getting pregnant and therefore has a direct influence on the teenage fertility.

Figure 3.3: Conceptual model



4 Data en methodology

This chapter consists of the conceptualisation and the operationalisation of important concepts for this study. Further the selection and finding of the respondents, ethical issues and the reflection on the research are discussed.

4.1 Conceptualisation

“Conceptualisation is the mental process whereby fuzzy and imprecise concepts are made more specific and precise” (Babbie, 1998, p.122). It refers to the process of identifying and clarifying concepts. In this section, the conceptualisation of important concepts for this study is discussed. Most of these concepts have also been displayed in the conceptual model in figure 3.3, chapter 3.2.

Teenage mothers: girls who gave birth before they reached the age of twenty; the reference age of the mother is the age she reached on her last birthday (CBS, 2005).

Teenage pregnancies: pregnancies occurring among young women under the age of twenty (Martin, 2006).

Culture context: culture denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life (Geertz, 1973). Culture is the traditional pattern of rights and duties of social expectations that direct and constrain the behaviour of individuals (Hammel, 1990).

Social and economic context: social economic status - characteristics of economic, social and physical environments in which individuals live and work, as well as demographic and genetic characteristics.

Behavioural beliefs: the subjective probability that the behaviour will produce a given outcome (Ajzen, 2006). Behavioural beliefs result in attitude toward a behaviour.

Attitude toward a behaviour: the degree to which performance of the behaviour is positively or negatively valued (Ajzen, 2006).

Normative beliefs: refers to the perceived behavioural expectations of such important referent individuals or groups as the person's spouse, family, friends, and – depending on the population and behaviour studied – teacher, doctor, supervisor, and co workers (Ajzen, 2006). Normative beliefs result in subjective norm.

Subjective norm: the perceived social pressure to engage or to not engage in a behaviour (Ajzen, 2006). This originates from the ideas a person holds on what other persons think and the willingness to comply with their ideas (Ajzen, 1991).

Control beliefs: beliefs that relate to the perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of a behaviour (Ajzen, 2006). Control beliefs result in perceived behavioural control.

Perceived behavioural control: refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen, 2006).

Intention: an indication of a person's readiness to perform a given behaviour; it is considered to be the immediate antecedent of behaviour (Ajzen, 2006).

Behaviour: the manifest, observable response in a given situation with respect to a given target (Ajzen, 2006).

Contraceptive use: the use of any method of preventing pregnancy.

Marriage: a contract made in due form of law, by which a man and a woman reciprocally engage to live with each other during their joint lives, in the union which ought to exist between husband and wife (Lectlaw, 2006).

Sexual relationship: having a sexual relationship.

Induced abortion: is the termination of a pregnancy, the abortion is brought about intentionally (MedicineNet, 2008).

The operationalisation of these concepts is provided in the next section, chapter 4.2.

4.2 Operationalisation

In order to answer the research question of this study it was necessary to use a qualitative research method. A qualitative research relies on the reasons behind various aspects of behaviour from the insider's point of view (emic). It is about the how and why of decision making as compared to the what, where and when from an outsider's point of view (etic) of quantitative research (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Quantitative research is performed more often, but for this study a qualitative research was necessary. Namely, you have to know the why and how of the pregnancies and you need in-depth knowledge for answering the research question. Because of the sensitive topic, in-depth interviews have been performed instead of focus group discussions.

The operationalisation of the most important concepts of this research is investigated in this section. Operationalisation is the construction of actual, concrete measurement techniques. Literally, it is the creation of "operations" that will result in the desired measurements (Babbie, 1998, p 5). In this section, the operationalisation of the concepts of the conceptual model is discussed. The concepts have already been described in section 4.1, but now they are transformed into questions. These questions are made fit for the interviews; the final list of questions for the interviews can be found in appendix A. The interviews consist of different sections. First, there is a general section with easy questions about different things such as the home situation, education and religion of the girls. This has been done to give the girls some time to get comfortable. In the other sections, the proximate determinants of fertility and sexual relationships are discussed. These concepts are leading in the conversation. The first determinant is marriage; this is the least sensitive topic and therefore it is discussed with the girls first. Sexual relationship is the second concept which is discussed and the third concept is contraceptive use; both are more sensitive concepts. After these two proximate determinants and the concept sexual relationships have been discussed there are some questions about the experiences of or perceptions on teenage pregnancy; the most important part of the interview. The final subject is related to the third proximate determinant; abortion. This can be very sensitive if a girl has had an induced abortion. To bring the interview to an end, the girls have been asked about their future plans.

Now first the operationalisation of the concepts is described below.

Cultural context: The cultural context is explained through cultural meaning systems, which consist of schemas shared by a group of people. Individual behaviour is the outcome of schemas, which are conceptual structures that make the identification of objects and events possible (D'Andrade, 1992). To understand the goals of the girls – which leads them to act – you must understand their overall interpretative systems (schemas).

Social economic context: is measured by education level, age, occupation, religion and family structure of the girls.

Behavioural belief and attitude toward a behaviour: The belief of the girl about the probability that she could get pregnant by having sex. Have you ever thought there was a chance that you could get pregnant? And how are teenage pregnancy, marriage/contraceptive use and sexuality valued by the girls. How do you think/feel about teenage pregnancy, marriage, contraceptive use and sexuality?

Normative beliefs and subjective norm: What do the girls think or how do they feel about what their parents/families expected from them. For instance, did your parents think you should use contraceptives/etc.? Also, do the girls perceive any pressure to get pregnant, to use contraceptives/to marry /to have sex? For example, did you perceive some pressure of you parents' to start with family formation? That you had to use contraceptives (or not)? That you had to marry or have sex?

Control beliefs and perceived behavioural control: are there perceived factors that may facilitate or impede performance of a behaviour (pregnancy, marriage, contraceptive use, sexuality). Do the girls think they are capable of performing certain behaviour? And what is the perceived ability of the girls to get pregnant, to use contraceptives, to marry, to have sex – Did the girls think/feel they were able to get pregnant/marry/have sex or use contraceptives?

Intention: the readiness of the girls to get pregnant, to marry, to use contraceptives and/or to have sex. Did the girls want to have sex, get pregnant, use contraceptives, or marry?

Behaviour:

- *Contraceptive use:* Were the girls using any contraceptives? No – why not? Yes – why?

- *Marriage:* Why did the girls get married?

- *Abortion:* Why did or didn't the girl choose for an abortion?

- *Sexual relationship:* Why did the girls have sex? What was the influence of the boy?

4.3 Selection and finding of the respondents

In order to answer the research question “What are the perceptions on reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands?”, a qualitative data method was necessary. In-depth interviews have been used for this research, because of the sensitive topic and in-depth understanding of the reasons of teenage pregnancies was necessary. Therefore a qualitative research has been conducted. The use of in-depth interviews was more suitable for this research than that of focus group discussions, because the topic of this research is too sensitive for a focus group discussion. According to the Turkish and Moroccan girls, it is difficult to speak openly about sexual experiences and other intimate objects for Turkish and Moroccan girls.

The initial idea was to interview six Turkish and six Moroccan girls who are:

- Teenage mothers who have been pregnant in the last five years.
- Teenage girls who are pregnant at the moment of the interview.
- Girls who have had an induced abortion when they were teenagers. This should have happened in the last five years.

The pregnancy should have happened in the last five years because of the retrospective character of this study. It is assumed that the respondents still know enough about their pregnancy when it happened no longer than five years ago. Another important aspect why the five year maximum has been chosen is to prevent recall biases – faulty memories. By choosing this maximum the respondents probably still know all the facts, experiences and feelings about their pregnancy precisely enough.

With different actions I tried to come into contact with the Turkish and Moroccan girls. However, it was very difficult to come into contact with girls who were willing to give an interview. I tried three different ways to come into contact with the girls.

First of all many relief organisations, abortion clinics, the Rutgers Nisso Groep, teenage mother groups and delivery clinics have been approached to help me come into contact with the girls. These organisations have asked, on behalf of me, girls who fitted in the study population if they were willing to give an interview. Furthermore, the organisations were asked to put up an appeal for the girls in their office or clinic. The appeal was an appeal to girls who are pregnant or girls who have been pregnant when they were teenager. People who

know a girl who fits in the study population were asked in the appeal if they wanted to pass on that I was searching for these girls. Girls or other people could respond to my email address. The complete list of all approached organisations, clinics etc. can be found in appendix B and in appendix C the appeal is displayed.

Secondly, almost all of my family, friends and acquaintances have been asked if they knew girls who fit in the study population and whether they could help me come into contact with them. Besides this question they have been asked if someone they know knew girls who fit in the study population and if they could help me come into contact with them. With this snowball effect many people have been reached.

As a third option internet was used; I have placed appeals for the girls on sites for teenage mothers, special sites for Turkish and or Moroccan people and on Islamic sites. Still I could not find enough girls; this was because the topic is a big taboo and very sensitive and girls were afraid for a negative goal of the research.

After searching more than four months I changed – out of necessity – the selection of the girls. At that moment I had found only two girls who had been pregnant and who were willing to give an interview about their experiences. From then on Turkish and Moroccan girls between the ages 15 and 25 have also been interviewed concerning their ideas/perceptions about teenage pregnancies, marriage, contraceptives, abortions and sexual relationships. The idea was to interview three Turkish and three Moroccan girls and to get to know their perceptions on the reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands. By interviewing them, I hoped to get more insight knowledge and get to know possible reasons for the teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls. Girls between the ages 15 and 25 have been chosen because those girls are from the same age group as the girls who are or have been pregnant when they were a teenager (when taking into account the already mentioned five year maximum). For these girls, in-depth interviews have been used as well instead of focus group discussions, because there appeared to be too much shame to speak openly in a group about sexuality and other intimate subjects as indicated by the girls. The girls probably speak more open in a face-to-face interview.

For searching these Turkish and Moroccan girls I especially used the internet. I placed an appeal for the girls on different internet sites and forums for Turkish and/or Moroccan people. In the appeal there was information on the research and the objective of the study. Also, the reason why I was searching for the girls and why their interview could be useful for the research were mentioned.

Besides internet, I again asked all my friends, family, acquaintances if they were acquainted with a Turkish and/or Moroccan girl between the ages 15 and 25 and if they could help me to come into contact with her. When I had found a girl, I asked her to help me come into contact with other Turkish and Moroccan girls she knew. A reflection on the search and the interview methods is given in the section 4.5. Besides the Turkish and Moroccan girls, there has also been contact with two key persons – these two persons know more about the subject. This has been done to get a more complete picture of the subject. The first key person is someone who is an employee of Stimezo, the abortion clinic of the Rutgers Nisso Groep in Groningen. Therefore, she has contact with many girls who have (or want to have) an induced abortion. These are also girls of Turkish and Moroccan descent. The second key person is a Turkish woman who works as an education coordinator of “Jonge Moeders Zelfstandig” (Young Girls Independent) in Rotterdam. She is from the same descent as the girls and has contact with teenage mothers at her work.

4.4 Ethical issues

Some ethical issues should be taken into account for this research. These ethical issues involve the part of research where in-depth interviews have been conducted with the girls.

The first ethical issue is to realize that teenage pregnancy is a very sensitive topic to talk about with the girls. The topic is mainly sensitive because of unplanned teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls. In the study population there was also a girl who had an induced abortion. When a girl has had an induced abortion it can be even more sensitive to talk about the pregnancy.

Another ethical issue is the confidentiality and anonymity regarding the girls. The confidentiality and anonymity regarding the girls is very important, because of the sensitive topic and the fact that there is still a taboo on unplanned pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls. “Confidentiality is assured when a research project guarantees confidentiality when a researcher can identify a given person’s response but promises not to do so publicly” (Babbie, 1998, p. 64). “Anonymity can be interpreted as it is guaranteed in a research project when neither the researcher nor the readers of the findings can identify a given response with a given respondent” (Babbie, 1998, p.65). Before the interviews were started, it was mentioned that everything the respondent said would remain anonymous and confidential and that they were free to stop with the interview at any time or refuse to answer any question.

4.5 Reflection on the research

In this section a reflection on the research is provided. There is a reflection on the search for the girls and on the interview methods. Besides these reflections, reactions of Turkish and Moroccan people on the appeals on internet are discussed.

4.5.1 Reflection on the search

When I started with this research in February 2007, I never thought it would be so difficult to find the girls. As described in section 4.3, I tried different things to find the girls. Despite these actions, I could not find enough girls who were pregnant or have been pregnant when they were a teenager. First of all teenage mothers are an over-asked group; there are many people doing research on teenage pregnancies or teenage mothers.

My experience is that it is difficult to come into contact with Turkish and Moroccan girls. Unplanned teenage pregnancies by unmarried girls are not accepted in the Turkish and Moroccan culture. As mentioned in chapter 2.3, it is not allowed to have sex before marriage according to the Islam and therefore some of the Turkish and Moroccan people think that only married girls can get pregnant. There is still a big taboo on girls who have sex before marriage and girls who get pregnant of premarital sex.

As already described, three different actions have been taken to come into contact with the girls. Here follows a reflection of these actions:

The first option to come into contact with the girls was to approach relief organisations, abortion clinics, the Rutgers Nisso Groep, teenage mother groups, crisis centres and delivery clinics. Many of the approached relief organisations could or would not help me come into contact with the girls. As a reason they mentioned that they were too busy or they could not help because of their confidentiality regarding the girls. Some organisations helped me; they asked the girls if they were willing to give an interview. The organisations did place an appeal for the girls by the office of the organisation. Of the approached abortion clinics, the clinics which are part of the Rutgers Nisso Groep wanted to help me and placed an appeal for the girls in the clinics. The other approached abortion clinics also could not help me because of their confidentiality regarding the girls. Almost all of the teenage mother groups and delivery clinics would or could not help me.

The two delivery clinics which helped me put up an appeal for the girls in the clinics. This first action as possibility to come into contact with the girls had no result; there was no response from girls.

The second way to come into contact with girls was by asking family, friends and acquaintances. This way I also found no girls who were pregnant or had been pregnant when they were a teenager.

As a third option to come into contact with the girls, internet was used. This action was more successful. From the site www.tienermoeders.nl and from some special Turkish, Moroccan and Islamic sites I got some response from girls. The search on internet was more successful, because the girls probably experienced this as more anonymous.

Eventually, I was able to find four girls who had been pregnant when they were a teenager and who were willing to participate. At first, I found some more girls, but a few girls pulled out or after a while I simply did not hear from them anymore. With one of these girls I had contact for several weeks, but when we made an appointment I never heard from her again. She was a Turkish girl of 15 who was unplanned pregnant and had left her parental home; she indicated this was because her father and brothers felt ashamed of her.

Since I could not find enough girls who had been pregnant I changed the study population into Turkish and Moroccan girls between the 15 and 25 years (see chapter 4.3). The search for these girls was less difficult. I found half of the girls on the internet and the other half thanks to family, friends and acquaintances. Next to the response of these girls, I got a lot of reactions on the appeals of other Turkish and Moroccan people. The appeals were on forums where everyone could write comments on the appeal. More information on these reactions is provided in section 4.5.3.

As already mentioned in section 4.4, ethical issues, for all of the girls it was very important that the interviews were anonymous. The respondents wanted everything they would say during the interview to be anonymous; nobody could find out afterwards that it had been them who participated. Therefore, there are no names on the interviews transcripts. A part of the girls would rather do the interview on MSN, a talking programma on internet where you can have private conversations, instead of a face-to-face interview. I think this was because they felt the interview was more anonymous this way. More about the interview methods is discussed in section 4.5.2.

Advantages for this research were my sex and age. Having the same sex as the study population was a large advantage for this research. If a boy had done this research it would

have been more difficult for him to interview the girls, because Turkish and Moroccan girls are not used to talk about sexuality and other intimate things with a boy.

My age was an advantage as well. At the moment the interviews were taken I was 22, which means I am of the same generation as the study population. This way talking with them about the concepts was somewhat easier. The girls who were interviewed spoke openly to me about their experiences and perceptions on the concepts. For example, talking about sexuality with someone older is probably more difficult than with someone of the same age group. The use of some internet sites, like hyves, and using MSN for interviews was also an advantage of my age.

A disadvantage for this research was my culture; some of the Turkish and Moroccan people indicated that they saw me as an outsider and they do not want that people from outside interfere. There was a culture barrier; presumably someone of Turkish or Moroccan descent would have been more suitable for doing this research, as is also described in section 4.5.3 – Reactions on my research. Someone of Turkish or Moroccan descent can probably get into contact with more girls and they know more about the culture and religion, which probably makes talking with these girls easier.

4.5.2 Reflection interview methods

The initial idea was to do all the in-depth interviews in person, but some of the girls would or could not do a face-to-face interview. They said they were too busy and one thought her husband and family would not appreciate it if she assists on a research; she indicated this was because of her culture. Therefore, she rather wanted to do the interview on MSN. Because some of the girls would rather do the interview on MSN instead of in person, it was necessary to do the interviews also on MSN in order to find enough girls who were willing to give an interview. Also, one interview was over the mail.

The face-to-face interviews were held in a neutral area; with as little interference as possible. This way the girls could speak openly with me without the influence of or being influenced by other people. The interviews lasted about 45 minutes. The interviews were taped and worked out afterwards, so none of the information of the interviews would be lost or forgotten. Especially the girls were talking in the interviews; I only asked the questions during the interviews on which I needed an answer and sometimes questions as a reaction to what the girls said. Not much information evolved out of the interview over the mail. This was because the answers were very short and you could not give any response and/or ask for further details. I only received short answers on the list of questions and no useful extra information.

The interviews held on MSN brought in useful information; these interviews lasted between 45 minutes and nearly two hours. The duration depended on how fast the respondent could type. You can ask a lot of questions and give response immediately. Furthermore, you can ask for more details when you want.

By using MSN no information is lost and the interviews are worked out immediately; you can save all the text after the interview.

A disadvantage of this interview method is that you cannot see the person who you are interviewing. You cannot be 100 percent sure that the person is the person who she says she is and also you cannot see any body language. Another disadvantage of MSN is that it is more unrestrained. It happened frequently that the girls did not show up or came later online when we had an appointment.

The in-depth interviews in person were the best source for the research. When you do an interview in person you get more information in a short time. The interviews on MSN take more time and less information evolves out of it. However, to do the interviews on MSN was a good second option. The interview which was done over the mail was not really useful; in fact this option is not a good source for a qualitative research.

4.5.3 Reactions on the research

A lot of reactions were placed by Turkish and Moroccan people on the aforementioned appeals on internet. These appeals were made to come into contact with Turkish and Moroccan girls who had been pregnant as a teenager. The appeals for the girls were placed on many different internet sites, see appendix 2 for a complete list of the internet sites. The reactions on the appeals were very diverse; a lot of the reactions were negative but there were also some positive reactions. Quite some Turkish and Moroccan people expressed negative feelings about the research, because they were afraid that the research would create or enhance a negative image of their group. One Moroccan girl said:

“Again a research to place Moroccan people in enraged daylight”.

But it is not the intention of this research to place the Turkish and Moroccan people in an enraged daylight; the study is as objective as possible. Furthermore, people thought I would not get any reactions of girls, because there is a big taboo on the topic and girls are afraid to talk about it. Some of the reactions were from people who never thought of the option that there could be unplanned teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls.

According to them girls only have sex after marriage; after all, sex before marriage is forbidden by the Qur'an (Muslim Women's League, 1999).

Besides all negative reactions, some of the Turkish and Moroccan people were positive about the research. They admitted teenage pregnancies occur among unmarried Turkish and Moroccan girls and they thought the research could be useful.

There was a reaction of a Turkish girl who has worked at an abortion clinic. She said she met pregnant Turkish or Moroccan girls almost every day, but none of the girls will admit that they have had an induced abortion.

A Turkish man said about unplanned pregnant girls that honour murder is faster than the birth. Someone else mentioned:

“Unplanned teenage pregnancies are kept in a family's own house, because when it becomes known, it damages the honour of the whole family”.

Family honour is very important and an unplanned pregnancy damages the honour of the family. According to the reactions, honour murder could happen when this kind of honour damage occurs. However, numbers on how often these honour murders occur are unknown. The reactions on internet especially pointed out that the Turkish and Moroccan girls who get unplanned pregnant have serious problems. A Turkish girl said in a discussion on internet about the appeal:

“I think it is especially a big problem for Turkish and Moroccan girls due to the reactions of their parents”.

Someone else mentioned as a possible consequence that a girl who gets pregnant unplanned will get a one way ticket to Turkey or Morocco.

Many of the Turkish and Moroccan people saw me as an outsider and according to them someone from outside should not interfere. Some who were not negative about the research topic recommended that someone of their own culture would be more suitable to do this research, because Dutch people can and never will understand their standards, values and culture.

5 Experiences and perceptions on marriage, sexuality, contraceptive use, teenage pregnancy and abortion.

In this chapter the results of this qualitative study are presented. In the first section the sample is described. In sections 5.2 till 5.6 the experiences and perceptions of the girls are discussed. In the research the respondents are called girls. There were also respondents of 25 and 27, but to call these different could be confusing and it has no extra value to make a distinction between a girl and a woman. So to make the results easier to read all the respondents are called girls. The results are divided by the concepts marriage, sexuality, contraceptive use, teenage pregnancy and abortion. In the final section, section 5.7, the difference between culture and religion as indicated by the girls is discussed. Quotes of the interviews are used in the results. Since the interviews were held in Dutch, the quotes are translated as literally as possible into English. For the analysis of the in-depth interviews, the grounded theory of Glaser and Strauss (1967) has been used. This theory is aimed at showing how theory emerged from data and to legitimise theory development from qualitative data. The different answers from the interviews have been compared manually per concept. First, important outcomes/quotes of the interviews were underlined and to which concept it belongs was written on the flank of the page. Subsequently, the answers were compared for similarities and these have been investigated in order to get the results.

5.1 Description of the sample

In total, eleven in-depth interviews have been conducted for this research. The study population consists of four girls who have been pregnant when they were a teenager. Of these four girls, three were Turkish and one was Moroccan. As already explained in chapter 4.2.2, it was not possible for me to find enough girls who have been pregnant. Therefore, five Turkish and two Moroccan girls between the ages 15 and 25, who have not been pregnant have also been interviewed. There were asked for their perceptions on marriage, sexuality, contraceptive use, abortion and teenage pregnancy. Why these girls have been selected can be read in chapter 4.2.2. The results of the interviews have been divided in these two groups; the experiences and perceptions of the girls who have been pregnant and the perceptions of the girls who have not been pregnant. Slightly different list of questions have been used for both groups; see appendix A for these list of questions.

5.1.1 Individual characteristics

First of all, the characteristics of the girls are described, including age, religion, education, marital status and the number of children. The study population consisted of two girls from the first generation; one girl was born in Morocco and the other in Turkey. The other nine girls are second generation migrants and were born in the Netherlands. It is written behind the quotes from which generation migrants the girls are. However, it is not investigated what kind of differences there are and why. Namely, due to the small study population it has no value to make a distinction between the generations.

- Girls who have been pregnant

Of the four girls who have been pregnant, three were Turkish and one was Moroccan. At the moment of the interviews the youngest girl was 17 and the oldest girl was 27 years old, the other two girls were both 23 years old. The girls have been pregnant between the ages 15 and 19; one girl was 15 years old at the moment she got pregnant, one girl was 17 and two girls were 19 years old. The girl who was 27 at the moment of the interview actually fell outside the study population; her teenage pregnancy was more than five years ago. As explained in chapter 4, it was difficult to find girls who were willing to give an interview. There was a risk of memory lapses, but nonetheless this girl was also included in the research since all possible information was welcome.

Two of the girls are first generation migrants; one girl migrated to the Netherlands when she was 14 years old and at the moment of the interview she was already living in the Netherlands for 13 years. The other girl migrated when she was 18 years old and was living in the Netherlands for five years at the moment the interview was conducted.

Of these four girls, three girls became teenage mothers – two of them were Turkish and one was Moroccan. Two girls were 19 years old when they gave birth to their first child; the other girl was 15 years old. The fourth girl has had an induced abortion when she was 17 years old. All three girls who became a teenage mother were mother of two children at the moment of the interview; one of them was pregnant of her third child.

The education level of the girls was completely different from each other. The girl who migrated to the Netherlands when she was 14 years old has a low education. After she came to the Netherlands she only learned Dutch and she did not finish any secondary school.

The girl who has had an abortion was being educated at the middle professional level (MBO), the other girl of the first generation at university level and the fourth girl had finished education at the higher professional level (HBO).

All of the girls have a religion. Three girls are Islamic and the girl who grew up in Turkey is Jewish. According to herself, the Turkish girl who has had an abortion is not very strict to her religion; she is very different in comparison to her parents she said. She is Muslim, but she does not pray or wear a headscarf.

The three girls who became a teenage mother are married. Two of the girls got married with the father of the child before they became pregnant of their first child. The third girl got married a few years after the birth of her first child with another man than the father of the child. These three married girls are living together with their husbands and children; the unmarried girl who has had an induced abortion is living with her parents.

- Girls who have not been pregnant

The non pregnant girls consisted of five Turkish and two Moroccan girls, who are all second generation migrants. At the moment of the interviews, the seven girls were between the ages 19 and 25. The Moroccan girls were 19 and 25 years old; the Turkish girls were 20, 21, 23 and two of the girls were 22 years old.

In general, the education level of these girls was high. Two girls already have a degree at a high education level – one at the higher professional level (HBO) and one at university level. Furthermore, there are five girls still attending ‘school’ – three girls are attending education at the higher professional level, one girl is going to university and one was attending education at the middle professional level (MBO).

All the girls are Muslims, some more strict than others. One girl said she believed in the modern versions of the Islam. According to herself she is not strict when it comes to her religion; she does not pray, abstain or wear a headscarf.

At the moment of the interviews, two of the girls were married the year before and living together with their husbands. The other girls were still living with their parents, except one, she is living with her grandmother because her parents went back to Turkey to start a company.

5.2 Marriage

In this section the first proximate determinant of fertility is discussed – marriage. The marital status, age of marriage and intentions to marry are described. The experiences of the married girls and the perceptions on marriage of the unmarried girls are discussed. Besides the experiences and perceptions of the girls, the influence of the parents and the influence of the culture on marriage and on the choice of the boy are described.

To explain the behaviour, marriage, you need to know the intention of the girls. And to know the intentions, you have to look at the attitude toward behaviour, subjective norm and the perceived behavioural control from the theory of planned behaviour.

5.2.1 Girls who have been pregnant

As already mentioned, three of the four interviewed girls who have been pregnant are married. Marriage is very important for all four girls. According to them, this is a consequence of their religion and culture. In the Muslim and Jewish religion it is important to get married and establish a family. As already described in section 2.3, according to the Qur'an Muslims are encouraged to have and raise children in a marriage.

“In the Jewish religion, marriage is an obligation to God, every person should marry and establish a family” (Turkish, 23 years, pregnant 19 years, 2 children and pregnant of the third, first generation⁶).

“Marriage is the best what can happen to you” (Turkish, 23 years, pregnant at 19 years, 2 children, second generation).

According to the girls, culture and religion have influence on the choice of the man. Namely, they argue that girls cannot flirt with boys and living together without being married is not an option; any relationship with a boy is in fact not possible.

The opinion of the parents about the boy is also important for the girls. The girl who grew up in Turkey mentioned that she was “an import bride”.

⁶ For the quotes of the girls who have been pregnant the following characteristics are mentioned: the origin, the age at the moment of the interview, the age when the respondent got pregnant for the first time, number of children, abortion experience (when applicable) and from which generation migrants the respondent is. For the girls who have not been pregnant the following characteristics are mentioned: the origin, the age at the moment of the interview and from which generation migrants the respondent is.

As she put it, this means that her parents – who were still living in Turkey – introduced her some guys who they considered to be suitable for their daughter; subsequently she had to choose one of them. Eventually, she chose a Turkish boy in the Netherlands who she knew because he was a friend of her brother. At the moment she migrated to the Netherlands and got married she was 18 years old.

She said she was not ready to get married at that age; it was more because she had to. She said she was kind of given into marriage. According to the other interviewed girls this is not common anymore. In former times, it was more common that Turkish and Moroccan girls were given into marriage – which means they could not choose their own husband. The respondents argue that in comparison to their mothers, girls have more freedom nowadays to choose their own husband. Most of the interviewed girls did not know any girls who were given into marriage. They did point out that it still happens sometimes, especially in the countryside of Turkey.

The other two married girls got married because they were in love with the boy. The unmarried girl, who has had an induced abortion, is not really thinking about marriage at this moment. She said if she is going to marry in the future it will be after she has finished education; when she is approximately 25 years old. This is because she has made a mistake and she is not a virgin anymore.

“I have made a mistake. Not that I have had sex before marriage, but that it was with the wrong boy probably”. “And a Turkish boy is not going to accept you one, two, three when you are not a virgin anymore” (Turkish, 17 years, pregnant at 17 years, abortion, second generation).

She is now 17 years old and said that there is some pressure from her parents to get married, since it is normal in the Turkish culture to get married early. She points out that her parents have influence on the choice of the boy. It does not matter to her from which descent the boy is, but for her parents sake she will marry a Turkish boy. She explained this with the next quote.

“I want to marry a Turkish boy, because I cannot hurt my parents by marrying a Christian boy; I already made it so difficult for them” (Turkish, 17 years, pregnant at 17 years, abortion, second generation).

5.2.2 Girls who have not been pregnant

As already mentioned by the girls who have been pregnant, marriage is very important for them. They also argued that this is a consequence of their religion and culture.

“Marriage belongs to our religion, but it also has a surplus value for me and my future husband” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

“Marriage in our culture differs from that in the Netherlands: over here you can get a divorce but in our culture that is not possible” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

The two girls, who were married at the moment of the interview, have first completed their education before they got married. They were 23 and 25 years old at the moment they got married. All of the unmarried girls want to get married in the future, but they also want to finish their education first. They argue that finishing their education first is very important in order to stand on their own feet and become independent. Most girls assume that their parents think the same way and do not pressure them to get married early. The two married said they got married out of love. One girl married the boy she met by coincidence and said it was love at first sight. This girl also said about marriage:

“I grew up in a culture where marriage is something taken for granted, so I knew from when I was a little girl that I should get married. However, when I became older I realized that you should not take it for granted to find the love of your life” (Moroccan, 25 years, second generation).

Some of the parents have an influence on the choice of the boy. Two girls said that it is very important for them that their parents get along fine with their future husband. It is important for some girls how their parents think of the boy. Most of the girls want to marry a boy from the same culture/religion, but for some of the girls it does not matter from which descent the boy is. However, they explained that because it does matter to their parents, they will probably marry a boy from their own culture and/or religion.

“My parents have some influence, because I want them to get along fine with my future husband. If my family cannot get along with him than I will break it off” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

“For me it does not matter, it can also be a boy from a different culture, but if he is Turkish my parents will be happier” (Turkish, 21 years, second generation).

“Yes, unfortunately. I know that my parents have an idea about the perfect man and their ideas influence me. However, I have a boyfriend at the moment and I know my parents will not approve of him” (Turkish, 20 years, second generation).

According to the respondents, relationships before marriage happen more often nowadays in comparison with the generation of their parents. In many cases the relationships are being kept secret from the parents. One girl who did not have a relationship said she knew some girls who indeed have a relationship and keep it a secret from their parents.

“Relationships before marriage are a taboo, but it just happens to you and you cannot stop it. In fact, the only relationship you can have with a man is marriage, indeed difficult, but yes” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

One of the married girls had a relationship without sex with the boy before they got married. Two of the unmarried girls had a relationship at the moment the interview was taken. One of these two girls' parents does not know anything about the relationship. She said this was because her parents would be against him. The other girl had a relationship without sex for five years with the boy who she wants to marry in the future. She only told it to her mother at first and her father only knows it for one year now.

“At first, it was a big shock for him and he did not accept it, but after a while he saw how serious we were and now he is ok with it” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

5.2.3 Summary

For all of the girls, marriage is important. According to them, this is a consequence of their religion and culture. Five of the eleven girls already got married and the other girls want to marry in the future; mostly with a boy from the same religion and/or culture. Finishing their education before getting married is also important; the girls want to be independent.

The parents of the girls still have some influence on the choice of the man, but to be given into marriage is not really happening anymore in the Netherlands. Although it is not allowed in their religion to have a relationship before marriage, relationships are nowadays more common according to the girls. But in many cases these relationships are being kept secret from the parents. Five of the interviewed girls do or did have a relationship before marriage.

5.3 Sexuality

In this part the sexuality education of the girls, the communication on sexuality at home and with friends and their sexual experiences and perceptions are discussed.

5.3.1 Girls who have been pregnant

Sexuality education and communication

Two of the girls are first generation migrants, one girl lived until her fourteenth in Morocco and the other girl until her eighteenth in Turkey before they migrated to the Netherlands. According to them, children do not get any sexuality education in Turkey and Morocco. Therefore, they did not know anything about sexuality at the moment they came to the Netherlands. The only thing one of the girls knew was that sex will hurt the first time, but it turns out to be better later on.

The two other girls, who were born in the Netherlands, have had sexuality education on secondary school. One of the girls was not very positive about the sexuality education. She said that she had only learned at school how to use the condom and the pill.

“I did not know what sex was, or have any information on how and what; I only knew you always have to do it safe” (Turkish, 17 years, pregnant at 17 years, abortion, second generation).

Of the girls who got pregnant when they were a teenager, three could never talk about sexuality with their parents. Only one of them could talk a little about it with her mother.

According to the girls, in most Turkish and Moroccan families it is not normal to speak openly about sexuality. One girl said about her own home situation:

“Sexuality was absolutely a forbidden subject for us” (Turkish, 23 years, pregnant at 19 years, 2 children and pregnant of the third, first generation).

The Turkish girl for whom it was possible to talk about sexuality with her mother, it was only possible when wrapped up in a joke. To speak openly about sexuality was not possible.

At this moment she does not talk about sexuality to her mother anymore, because she is afraid that her mother finds out that she has had sex before marriage, got pregnant and has had an induced abortion. And that must never happen she said, because then she has a really big problem. Three of the girls talk with friends and cousins about sexuality. Only one of the girls never talks with someone about sexuality, because her opinion is that it is a personal subject. The three girls learned and are still learning things about sexuality and contraceptives from friends, but also from watching television and reading magazines and books. According to one of the respondents, girls get less information about sexuality in comparison to boys because boys are permitted to have more freedom by their parents.

“Boys can go out and learn things, but girls cannot” (Moroccan, 27 years, pregnant at 15 years, 2 children, first generation).

Sexual experience and perceptions

Two of the girls did not have sex before their marriage; the other two girls did have sex before they got married. They both got unplanned pregnant of sex before marriage and for both of the girls it was their first sexual relationship.

“Every Muslim is not allowed to have sex before marriage, which is also prescribed in the Qur’an. However, they do have sex before marriage; I am not the only one. I never thought that I should stay a virgin for marriage” (Turkish, 17 years, pregnant at 17 years, abortion, second generation).

For the girl, who has had sex before marriage, the first time was very special. She explained that this was because she was in love with the boy and to lose her virginity was huge for her. However, she said she never thought about having sex before it happened. According to her, it happened due to the fact that she was so in love with him and she could and still cannot think straight because of him. After the first time they had sex, she said he treated her as if she was a whore and when he found out that she was pregnant he also did not believe that he was the father.

*“I find it huge if you lose your virginity and if the person is very special for you. However, for him I apparently was not. First, I was his darling, but after the first time we had sex I immediately was a whore; I was only easy for him. I have even slept with him after he said these things”.*⁷

The Moroccan girl, who had sex without being married, did not know anything about sex; she grew up in Morocco and migrated to the Netherlands when she was 14 years old. Her parents died and she had to go to Dutch foster parents, which she considered as very difficult because of the cultural differences. Because of the difficulties she ran away and met an older Moroccan boy. She said she was searching for the love that she was missing and became very dependent on the boy; she was scared to lose him also. She did not want the sex and did not like it either. She stated:

“I did not like the sex; it was not something I wanted to do. However, I was so insecure and I did not want to lose someone again, so I did what he wanted” (Moroccan, 27 years, pregnant at 15 years, 2 children, first generation).

A few years later she broke up with the boy and afterwards she did not have sex until she got married with her current husband. For these two unmarried girls, according to their stories, their first sexual experiences were both because the boys wanted sex and took initiative. Both girls did not think about having sex with the boy until it happened. The other two girls stayed virgins until they got married because of their religion. The first time was very special for the girls.

“The idea of saving yourself for someone else is very beautiful” (Turkish, 23 years, pregnant at 19 years, 2 children, pregnant of the third, first generation).

⁷ When the background characteristics of the girl are not pointed out, it is because the anonymity regarding the girl has been taken into account.

5.3.2 Girls who have not been pregnant

Sexuality education and communication

All of the non pregnant girls have had sexuality education on school. How suitable the sexuality education was for them differed for each girl. In general, the sexuality education at school is experienced by the girls as useful but very common. According to one of the girls, the sexuality education was in fact too early, because the girls are not yet sexually active at that time.

“The sexuality education was useful for me but if you are so young you think: where do they talk about? But when you are older, you can put it all together” (Moroccan, 25 years, second generation).

The sexuality education was not very useful for me; I only learned things about contraceptive use and that kind of things, nothing else” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

Some of the girls missed some specific cultural sexuality education. They said they had questions about sexuality concerning their culture or religion, but they could not or did not dare to ask questions. Also, they argued that the education was very general and because they are girls from another ethnic group they had other questions. Questions more directed at their culture and religion; about what is allowed, Halal, and what is not allowed, Haram, based on the Qur’an.

“I would feel ashamed and because many of the Muslim girls are not sexually active before their marriage, I did not dare to ask questions, because other people could think wrong about me” (Turkish, 21 years, second generation).

“Since you are not used to talk openly about sex or ask questions about it at home, you will neither do it in class” (Turkish, 21 years, second generation).

According to one of the girls, it should be the task of the parents and the imam to give sexuality education to children. She was one of the two girls for whom it was possible to talk about sexuality with her parents. However, for the five other girls it is not possible to speak openly with one of the parents about sexuality. For most of the interviewed girls it is not

normal that they can ask their parents questions or get any sexuality education at home. According to the girls, especially with the fathers it is a completely non spoken subject. Some of the girls can ask their mothers some things, but no intimate questions. They pointed out that they can almost never speak openly about sexuality; most of the girls would feel ashamed to talk about this subject with their mothers.

“I could probably talk about sexuality with my mother, but I will feel ashamed and out of respect for my mother I do not talk about it with her” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

All the girls talk about sexuality with their friends and most girls learned many things this way. Some of the girls especially talk about sexuality with Muslim girls who are married and Dutch girls. The reason that they talk with Muslim girls who are married is because some of the unmarried girls are very strict religious and they do not want to talk about it.

The interviewed Turkish and Moroccan girls are not really used to talk openly about sexuality. Characteristic about that is the next quote of one of the girls:

“Other girls speak so open about sexuality and ask intimate questions, and then I ask myself how they do that” (Turkish, 21 years, second generation).

“When I have an intimate question I ask friends about it or buy magazines. I buy magazines and learn things from reading and my parents are ok with this. My parents know they do not give any sexuality education, which affects me because I fall short. I notice that when we get new information, it is completely new for me but normal for the others.” (Turkish, 21 years, second generation).

Sexual experiences and perceptions

The five unmarried girls are not yet sexually active; they wanted to wait until they get married. The two married girls stayed virgins until they got married. According to the girls, their virginity is very important for themselves and their families. The girls do not want to have sex before marriage, because premarital sex is not allowed in their religion. Furthermore, some of the girls also did not want premarital sex, because they want it this way themselves.

“It is not only because of my religion, but also because I have respect for myself and want to keep my virginity for my husband” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

Only one of the girls considered the issue if she wants sex before marriage to be very difficult. She probably would have sex when she lives together with a boy or when she is engaged, but only if she could talk openly about it. However, she pointed out that this is not possible, because Muslim boys and girls do not talk about sex. Therefore, it is safer for her to wait until marriage since it could happen that the boy breaks up with you.

“It is not yet discussable and not everybody thinks in the same way. Therefore, if you would point out that sex before marriage should be possible you will get questions. In principle, I do not think it is strange that sex before marriage happens and is possible” (Turkish, 21 years, second generation).

5.3.3 Summary

Sex before marriage is forbidden for Muslims by the Qur’an (Muslim Women’s League, 1999) and also in the Jewish religion. The girls argue that this has an influence on their sexual behaviour. Only one of the girls does not live according to the Qur’an; she is having sex before marriage without any regret. One girl thinks that sex before marriage should be possible, but she does not dare to have sex before marriage because it is a big taboo. According to the girls it happens more often that girls have a relationship, with or without sex, before they get married. But this is usually without the parents’ knowledge.

Almost all of the girls have had sexuality education at school; only the two girls who grew up in Turkey and Morocco have not had any sexuality education, which was for one of them a big lack. What the girls still remember of their sexuality education on secondary school differs. Some learned a lot of things while others said they only learned how to use the pill and a condom. However, most girls experienced the education as very general and not always very suitable.

For most of the girls, eight out of eleven, it is not normal to talk openly about sexuality and relationships at home. According to the girls, there is almost no interaction between parents and child about sexuality. On the other hand it is normal for almost all of the girls to talk with friends about sexuality. They learn a lot about sexuality from them and also from magazines, books and television.

5.4 Contraceptive use

In this section the proximate determinant of fertility contraceptive use is discussed. First the perceptions on contraceptive use of the girls are described. Furthermore, it is discussed if the girls have ever used contraceptives, are currently using contraceptives or have intentions to use contraceptives in the future.

5.4.1 Girls who have been pregnant

Of the three girls who got married, two girls were using contraceptives at the moment of the interview. The other girl never used any and she also has no intention to use contraceptives in the future, because of her religion; she indicated that contraceptives are prohibited by the Jewish religion.

“I have no idea why you should use them when you are married. If you do not want anymore children, than you should not have sex anymore. However, if you have premarital or extra-sex you should use condoms” (Turkish, 23 years, pregnant at 19 years, 2 children and pregnant of third, first generation).

The Turkish girl who has sex before marriage uses contraceptives; she uses condoms. Of the four girls, three girls did not use any contraceptives at the moment they became pregnant. One girl was consistent in not using contraceptives at all. Of the three girls who did not use contraceptives, two girls were not using any because of their wish to get pregnant. The third girl did not use contraceptives, because she did not know anything about contraceptives and sexuality. She has never had any sexuality education and never thought about sex or that there was a chance of getting pregnant by having sexual intercourse. To the question why the boy did not want to use any contraceptives, she said that he probably thought that she used the pill or something.

The unmarried girl was consistent in not using contraceptives at all; she sometimes had sexual intercourse without a condom; so the sex was not always safe. Nonetheless, she never thought there was a chance she could get pregnant. She does not want to use the pill; because she heard from other girls that they gained weight by using it. Another reason why she does not want to use it relates to her parents.

“I hear from a lot of other girls that they gain weight because of the pill, so I have no intention to use the pill. I am young and when I start using the pill I will gain weight and I cannot do that. Furthermore, my father often goes to the family doctor and if he is going to tell that I am using the pill than I am in big trouble” (Turkish, 17 years, pregnant at 17 years, abortion, second generation).

The parents, culture and religion of the girls have influence on the use of contraceptives for three of the four girls. According to one girl, culture had influence on her contraceptive use, because her mother could not tell anything about contraceptives since she did not know anything about it either. The unmarried girl does not want to use the pill, because she fears that her parents will find out. Her parents are strict Muslims and therefore their opinion is that she should not have sex before marriage. This also means that there is no reason for her to use the pill. For the Jewish girl it is forbidden to use contraceptives according to her religion.

5.4.2 Girls who have not been pregnant

Contraceptive use is allowed for Muslims (Muslim Women’s League, 1999), although the use of contraceptives is limited among the interviewed unmarried girls. None of the unmarried girls have ever used or were using contraceptives at the moment of the interview. They indicated that they will not have sex before marriage so there is no need for them to use contraceptives.

“I do not have to use any contraceptives, I am in no need of them; I am in control of myself” (Turkish, 21 years, second generation).

Five out of seven girls could not talk about the use of contraceptives with their parents, but they do talk about it with friends. They learn a lot about contraceptives from friends, but also from magazines and television. These are the most important sources for the girls to get information.

All of the five unmarried girls have the intention to use contraceptives in the future, after they get married; they do not want children immediately.

“I will use contraceptives when I get married, because I do not want children right away” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

The two married girls are currently using contraceptives to prevent pregnancies. One of the girls indicated that she is using the pill to prevent pregnancies; she said it is not necessary for her to use condoms for the prevention of sexual transmitted diseases.

“If you are both a virgin when you get married, in principle you only need to use contraceptives to prevent pregnancies” (Turkish, 23 years, second generation).

5.4.3 Summary

Most of the unmarried girls have never used contraceptives in the past and were not using any at the moment the interviews were conducted; only one of them did use contraceptives and this is because she has sex before marriage. According to most of the unmarried girls, there is no need to use contraceptives, because they do not have sex before marriage. In the future, all of the unmarried girls have the intention to use contraceptives when they get married.

The married girls are currently using contraceptives, except the Jewish girl for whom contraceptive use is forbidden by her religion.

Almost all of the girls learn things about contraceptives from friends and magazines; for most of them, talking about contraceptives is not possible at home.

5.5 Teenage pregnancy

In this section, the experiences of the girls who have been pregnant are described. Those results have been divided in planned teenage pregnancies and unplanned pregnancies. For the girls who have not been pregnant, their perceptions on teenage pregnancies are discussed.

5.5.1 Experiences of girls who have been pregnant

Planned pregnancies

Two of the respondents' pregnancies were planned pregnancies; they both were 19 years old and married. They wanted children, which was the reason they had sexual intercourse and did not use contraceptives at that moment. One of the girls indicated that she is not allowed to use any contraceptives according to her Jewish religion. She got pregnant shortly after her marriage. She replied to the question if the pregnancy was planned:

“Yes, but I was pregnant really fast.” (Turkish, 23 years, pregnant at 19 years, 2 children and pregnant of third, first generation).

This answer could indicate that she thought the pregnancy was perhaps a little bit too early. However, she did argue that 19 years was a beautiful age to give birth to her first child. She indicated this was because her sister gave birth to her first child when she was 17 and her mother gave birth to her first child when she was 15 years old. It is normal in their family to start early with the family formation and that is why she started early as well. She experienced her first pregnancy as exciting, but also as lonely without her mother and aunts who are living in Turkey. Her social environment in the Netherlands was shocked by her first pregnancy. She was in the final exam year of the secondary school and people thought that she was throwing her future away.

The other girl who had a planned pregnancy also gave birth to her first child when she was 19 years old. She was married for a few months and considered herself to be ready to start early with the family formation. Her second pregnancy, when she was 22 years old, was unplanned; she got pregnant while she was using an IUD. The second pregnancy she experienced as very difficult, in contradiction to the first (planned) teenage pregnancy which she described as easy.

Unplanned pregnancies

The two other girls got pregnant unplanned when they were a teenager. Both were unmarried at that moment. One of the girls was only 15 years old when she got pregnant and gave birth to her first child. She found out that she was pregnant after four months.

“I found out that I was pregnant after four months. I was a child and knew little about it. One day, a girl said to me: you have a big belly, are you pregnant? I said no, but we did a pregnancy test and she was right. I was frightened to death”

When she found out she was pregnant it was really frightening for her, because she was a child herself and did not know anything about it. She said she thought her life was over at that moment. After she lost her parents and ran away from her Dutch foster parents, she met an older Moroccan boy. She did not want to have sex already, but because she was scared to lose someone again, she did what he wanted. According to what the respondent said, it can be concluded that her unstable home situation was an indirect reason of her first pregnancy. She argued that another reason for the pregnancy was the lack of sexuality education. She indicated that she did not know anything about sexuality and contraceptives.

The girl who got pregnant unplanned and had an abortion, was 17 years old at the moment that happened. She found out that she was pregnant after five weeks. She never thought there was a chance she could get pregnant, although the sex was not always completely safe. Most of the times, she had sexual intercourse with a condom, but sometimes he went in ‘naked’. She thought she probably got pregnant because of prejudice or because the condom had been torn, but they did not check that.

Her pregnancy was very difficult for her. First, she only told it to her best friend and the father of the child. He did not support her and did not believe he was the father. She could not tell it to her parents, because they think she does not have sex before marriage. All the secrets made it very difficult for her and also because she could not talk about her feelings.

“At the moment you are pregnant, even if it is only a month and a half, you know there is something in your belly, because it is a very strange feeling. And when you cannot tell it to your family and you cannot express your feelings, than you become very depressed”

5.5.2 Perceptions of girls who have not been pregnant

Almost all of the girls who have not been pregnant know Turkish and/or Moroccan girls who have been pregnant when they were a teenager. One of the girls said she knows ten girls. According to the girls, some of the teenage pregnancies they know are planned, but there are also some that are unplanned. The respondents indicated that the girls, who had a planned pregnancy, wanted to be a young mother and a housewife. According to the respondents, in most cases the girls who got pregnant unplanned had two possibilities: the pregnant girls had to get married with the father of the child or the girls had to have an induced abortion in strict secret. The Turkish key person thought unplanned pregnancies are still a taboo and she indicated that unplanned pregnancies are 'solved' with induced abortions, but according to her it also often happens that the girl is taken away to family in Turkey or Morocco.

“Most girls got married with the boy or had an abortion; a single Turkish/Moroccan mother is rare” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

According to the respondents, the reasons of the unplanned teenage pregnancies they know of were in many cases that no contraceptives had been used. For not using contraceptives the respondents mentioned different causes. One Turkish girl said that 9 out of 10 times sex before marriage happens in a moment; it is not expected, which is why the girls are not prepared. According to the respondent, this was not really the fault of the girls and boys, but of the parents; they had to do something about it.

“In most cases, sex before marriage is unplanned; it happens suddenly and then you are not prepared and you forget to use a condom. They do not think beyond the moment. Parents have to do something about it, and some character is necessary” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation)

Another cause of not using contraceptives, mentioned by a respondent, is that the boy and girl were too indolent and thought it would not happen to them. Also, one respondent indicated that the girl was not thinking straight; the love for the boy made her blind.

Another respondent said that unplanned pregnancies are not only the fault of the girls. She argues that the parents are guilty as well; the girls should get more explanation and information about sexuality at home.

“It is also the fault of the parents. Girls are curious and with little information about sexuality you get pregnancies as a result. However, the parents did not have any sexuality education as well, so it is also not really their fault that they cannot give sexuality education to their children” (Turkish, 21 years, second generation).

Most of the girls were very negative about unplanned teenage pregnancies; the pregnancies were considered as mindless, stupid and as an own mistake. Only two of the respondents mentioned explicitly that besides the girls, the boys are to blame as well for the pregnancies.

“Unbelievably stupid to become pregnant unplanned, especially in the Netherlands where you can buy condoms everywhere” (Turkish, 23 years, pregnant at 19 years, 2 children and pregnant of the third, first generation).

“The girls are turning their backs on their religion and are following their needs. The desire is bigger than the religion, which is wrong” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

For possible solutions to prevent unplanned teenage pregnancies, the interviewed girls came up with different ideas. Some girls thought more sexuality education directed at their culture/religion would help, but others thought you cannot prevent unplanned pregnancies easily. According to them, you need to change the range of thoughts of the parents. This will not happen soon, but some of the girls think it will improve in the future.

“It will probably get better, because second generation girls will most likely be more open so that their children can talk to them about sexuality and other important subjects” (Turkish, 20 years, second generation).

About planned teenage pregnancies the girls are not really positive. Most of the girls have the opinion that when you are a child yourself, you cannot raise a child.

“If you are ready and you can take good care of the child a teenage pregnancy is okay, but some girls think to easy about it” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

“It is too early; they will miss a part of their life, the most important part even” (Moroccan, 19 years, second generation).

5.6 Abortion

In this section the experience of one girl who has had an abortion is and the perceptions and ideas about abortions of the other interviewed girls are discussed.

According to the Islam, as described in chapter 2.3, abortions are forbidden four weeks after the conception. After these four weeks it is only allowed when the life of the mothers is at risk (Muslim Women's League, 1999). Some of the respondents knew this and some thought abortions are completely forbidden. In principle, all the respondents were against abortion.

“A child is a gift of god and who are we to touch that” (Turkish, 23 years, pregnant at 19 years, 2 children and pregnant of the third, first generation).

“You have sex, because you want it, so the consequence of becoming pregnant is also for yourself. Therefore, you should keep the child” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

However, some of the girls believe that an abortion should be possible in more cases; for example in a case of rape or by unplanned pregnancies.

“Abortions should be possible for unplanned pregnancies. Boys can walk away and girls are left behind with the problems. Also, a lot of gossip makes it worse” (Turkish, 21 years, second generation).

“Abortion is a big sin in our religion, but for girls for whom it is really impossible to take care of the child it should be possible” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

The girl, who has had an induced abortion, knew abortions are allowed according to the Qur'an until 4 weeks after conception. However, she had the abortion when she was 8 weeks pregnant. The abortion was in strict secret; only her best friend and the father of the child knew that she was pregnant and has had an abortion.

“When I was pregnant I had to keep it a secret. My doctor actually had to tell my parents about the abortion, because I am a minor. However, I made sure he did not tell it”

She chose for having an abortion, because of her boyfriend. He did not want a child and pushed her to have an abortion. First, after she told him that she was pregnant he did not believe that he was the father. He was sending many humiliating text messages to her, for example that she had to go to the father of the child. She told him that she wanted to keep the child, but after a while he was acting sweet and said to her that if she would get an abortion they were going away for a weekend together.

“I thought: why should I destruct my life, so I agreed. He was doing sweet so I terminated the pregnancy”

After the abortion and the weekend he changed again and gave her no attention anymore. The reason she chose for an abortion was not only because her friend wanted it, but also because of her family. When other people found out that she was pregnant, it would have bad consequences for her father, especially the gossip and stuff she said. The Moroccan and Turkish culture, as she explained, really is a “gossip culture” and the people are very sensitive for gossip. Gossip about sex before marriage of the daughter damages the family honour.

In this culture, getting pregnant unplanned and having an induced abortion has serious consequences for the girls. The virginity of the girls determines the honour of the family. In the Moroccan and Turkish culture, an induced abortion is considered as a sin and a big taboo and that is why most girls have an abortion in strict secret. This was also indicated by the two key persons.

The girl who got unplanned pregnant when she was 15 years old, was pushed by her social environment to have an induced abortion. However, she could not terminate the pregnancy.

“The father and other people said I should abort the child but I could not do that, I could not take a life from someone. In my religion abortion is not possible, but at that moment I did not know, it was my own feeling”

5.7 Difference between culture and religion

In this section, an important outcome of the interviews is discussed, namely the difference between the Turkish and Moroccan culture and the Muslim religion. Also, the perceptions of the girls on this difference are discussed.

According to the respondents, a remarkable difference between the Muslim religion and the Turkish and Moroccan culture is the ideas on sex before marriage. For Muslims, sexual relations outside of marriage are prohibited – according to the Qur’an boys and girls are not allowed to have sex before marriage. Within the Turkish and Moroccan culture, people are in fact not allowed to have sex before marriage, but this is especially for girls. Boys have much more freedom; they can have sex before marriage without consequences. On the other hand, the virginity of the girls is considered as important for the honour of the family. Boys have an advantage over girls in the Turkish and Moroccan culture; the culture is ‘boy-directed’. According to the respondents almost all of the Muslim boys have sex before marriage and they receive more freedom from their parents than girls.

“Boys are permitted to have more freedom by their parents than girls. The virginity of the girls is really protected so that she is going to marry as a virgin. A boy does not have to think about his virginity” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

Some of the interviewed girls are okay with this difference between religion and culture, but some of them argue that it is not fair. They also would like to see that boys cannot have sex before marriage or that girls can have more freedom. One girl who is okay with this difference between boys and girls explained this as follows:

“For boys, the need to have sex is different than it is for girls. So I can understand why boys have sex before marriage, but for girls I do not agree with sex before marriage” (Turkish, 22 years, second generation).

Other girls did not agree with the difference between culture and religion. According to them, it is not fair that boys can have sex before marriage and girls cannot. Due to the difference between culture and religion, some of the respondents are more directed at their religion than their culture, because in their religion boys and girls are treated equally.

“Boys have more freedom; they can have sex before marriage and girls cannot, which is not fair” (Moroccan, 27 years, pregnant at 15 years, 2 children, first generation).

“I think the difference is very bad; religion comes first for me. So what applies to women should also apply to men; it should be the same” (Moroccan, 19 years, second generation).

Another difference between the Turkish and Moroccan culture and the Muslim religion, mentioned by one of the girls, is about to be given into marriage. A few decades ago it was more common for Turkish and Moroccan girls to be given into marriage. However, according to the girls it happens more scarcely in the Netherlands nowadays. The respondent indicated that to be given into marriage is culture bounded and is prohibited by the Islam.

“To be given into marriage is bound to the Turkish and Moroccan culture; it is even prohibited by the Islam” (Moroccan, 25 years, second generation).

6 Conclusions and recommendations

In this chapter the conclusions and recommendations of this study are discussed.

6.1 Conclusions

The objective of this study is to understand and describe the teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands. The goal is to answer the following research question:

What are perceptions on the reasons for teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands?

Unplanned teenage pregnancy is a sensitive topic and a taboo in the Turkish and Moroccan culture. It was very difficult to find and come into contact with the girls. Eventually, I found four girls who were willing to give an interview about their teenage pregnancy. By also interviewing seven Turkish and Moroccan girls who have not been pregnant, conclusions can be made about the perceptions on the reasons for teenage pregnancies.

Part of the teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls is indeed planned, as was assumed in the research of Rutgers Nisso Group (2006); the girls start with the family formation. The girls got married young and wanted to start with the family formation early so they did not use any contraceptives at the moment they got pregnant. Their cultural background has an influence on this. Marriage and family formation is important in their religion and the Qur'an prescribes that Muslims are encouraged to have and raise children in a marriage. In the Turkish and Moroccan culture it is normal to marry young and start early with the family formation. However, for the second generation migrants it is becoming less normal to marry young; the girls want to finish education first.

Besides the planned pregnancies, part of the teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls is unplanned. Unplanned teenage pregnancies are in most cases a result of sexual relationships before marriage.

When it comes to sexuality and relationships, seven interviewed girls are living by the standards of how it is declared in their religion. Nonetheless, five of the girls have or have had a relationship with a boy before marriage and two of the girls even have had sex before marriage. According to the girls, it happens more often that girls have a relationship, with or without sex, before marriage. However, as they say, this is not accepted in their culture and the relationships are in many cases being kept secret from the parents. The girls who get pregnant unplanned are the girls with a serious problem; the honour of the family is at stake. The honour of the family is said to be for a large part dependent on the virginity of the girls and to be very important for families. Most of the times, the unmarried girls have two possibilities if they get pregnant. Part of the girls decide for having an induced abortion that takes place in strict secret, so people do not have to find out they have had sex before marriage and were pregnant. This way it will not damage the family honour. The abortion also has to take place in strict secret, because abortions are considered as a sin in the Turkish and Moroccan culture; in the Qur'an abortions are allowed only until four weeks after conception. The other possibility for the pregnant girls is to get married with the father of the child - sometimes pressurized by the family. Then, it looks like the girls start early with a desirable family formation, but that is not the case.

The direct reasons of unplanned pregnancies are that the girls and boys are not using any contraceptives or at least not consistently. The girls indicate they do not expect the sex to happen and are not prepared; it happens in the heat of the moment. They underestimate the risk of having unsafe sex and do not think about the possible consequences. For unmarried girls, the use of contraceptives is limited; as they are thought not have sex, there is no need for them to use contraceptives. The girls do not get informed well about contraceptives and sexuality at home. Most Turkish and Moroccan girls can never talk openly about sexuality and contraceptives at home. However, good sexuality education is an important factor for the prevention of unplanned teenage pregnancies. At school, Turkish and Moroccan girls only have sexuality education once. The sexuality education at school is especially directed at how it is in practise; as the girls indicate: they learn how to use the pill and condom but they never learn other more social aspects about sexuality. Also, for some girls the sexuality education is too early, because they are not sexually active at that moment. Some girls say that they miss some specific cultural sexuality education; they have questions about sexuality related to their culture and/or religion.

Turkish and Moroccan girls are more open about sexuality in comparison to their parents – the girls become more westernized. They talk with friends about sexuality and learn things from television and magazines. To talk about sexuality at home will probably become better in the future for Turkish and Moroccan girls. The parents of the interviewed girls have not had any sexuality education and it was not normal and possible for them to talk openly about sexuality. The girls and boys of the second generation have had sexuality education at school and it is getting more normal for them to talk about sexuality. So for their children it will probably become easier to talk about sexuality at home and get more education at home. This is a good development for the prevention of teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the future.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on this research a few recommendations can be made.

First of all, further research into the reasons of teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands is necessary. In this research, only four girls who have been pregnant were willing to give an interview about their teenage pregnancies. In order to acquire more knowledge about the reasons of the pregnancies, it is necessary to do more in-depth interviews.

Apart from the recommendation that further research is required, I will now point out some other recommendations for the prevention of teenage pregnancies among Turkish and Moroccan girls.

More and repeated sexuality education is required and should be directed more specifically at their culture. The girls only get sexuality education once at secondary school and at home almost no education at all. They have questions about sexuality in relation to their culture and religion and with the sexuality education at school and at home they are not able to ask these questions. On internet there are already some sites directed at young Islamic people, where they can ask questions about sexuality. These sites are a good initiative, but they probably need more attention.

The girls who choose to become a teenage mother need to be better informed how difficult it can be to become a young mother. Some of the girls think to easy about getting pregnant as a teenager and becoming a mother.

Not only interventions directed at Turkish and Moroccan girls should be developed, but also interventions directed at the boys and parents. The boys and the parents play an important role in the occurrence of teenage pregnancies.

There are already some projects with the objective to assist parents in the sexuality education of their children; for instance the Rutgers Nisso Group has a Turkish and Moroccan mother group. Perhaps these sorts of groups need to be expanded and directed more at teenage pregnancies and communication on sexuality and relationships at home.

Besides the parents, the Turkish and Moroccan boys require more attention; the girls are not the only ones who are responsible for the pregnancy. The boys have to become more aware of the possible consequences of unsafe sex.

References

- Ajzen (1991), "The theory of planned behaviour." *Organizational behaviour and human decision process*. Vol 50. pp 179-211.
- Ajzen (2002), "Perceived behavioural control, self-efficacy, locus of control, and the theory of planned behaviour". *Journal of applied social psychology*. 32 (4), P.665-683.
- Ajzen (2006), <http://www.people.umass.edu/aizen/tpb.diag.html#null-link> (Visited on 01-10-2006)
- Babbie. E. (1998), *The practice of social research*. United States of America: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Bommel, A., van (2007), http://www.lokum.nl/_liefde/seny/viewnews.cgi?category=2&id=1099227489 (Visited on 18-02-2008)
- Bongaarts, J. (1978), "A framework for analyzing the proximate determinants of fertility" *Population and Development Review* 4(1), P.105-132.
- Bongaarts, J., R.G. Potter (1983), *Fertility, Biology, and Behavior: An Analysis of the Proximate Determinants*. New York: Academic Press.
- CBS (2003), *Bevolkingstrends, 4e kwartaal 2003*. Voorburg: CBS
- CBS (2007), <http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/start.asp?lp=Carto>(Visited on 10-08-2007)
- CBS (2007), www.cbs.nl (Visited on 20-02-2008)
- Coleman, D., J. Garssen (2002), "The Netherlands: paradigm or exception in Western Europe's demography?" *Demographic research*. 7(12). P. 433-468.
- Demeny, P. (2003), "Population policy; a concise summary". *Population Council Working Papers*. No. 173 (24)
- Discoveryschool (2006), <http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/programs/teenpregnancy/> (Visited 01-11-2006)
- Fiom (2007), <http://www.fiom.nl/htm/01000.htm> (Visited on 10-04-2007).
- Garssen, J., A. van der Meulen (2004), "Perinatal mortality in the Netherlands, Background of a worsening international ranking". *Demographic research*. 11(13). P. 357-394.

- Garssen, J. (2004), "Tienermoeders: recente trends en mogelijke verklaringen". *Bevolkingstrends* 52(1) P.13-22.
- Garssen, J. (2005), "Helpt tienermoeders autochtoon". *Demos*. 21(7), P. 49-53.
- Garssen, J. (2005), *Teenage birth rate dwindling further*. Webmagazine CBS
- Garssen, J., C. Harmsen (2005), *Teenage mothers often single for a long time*. Webmagazine CBS.
- Garsen, J. (2006), *Minder allochtone tienermoeders*. Webmagazine CBS.
- Graaf, H. de, Meijer, S. Poelman, J., I. Vanwesenbeeck (2005), *Seks onder je 25^e*. Utrecht: Rutgers Nisso Groep
- Ghaemina, S., R. Pietersen (2007), *Meer openheid over islam en seks*. Trouw, nieuws en debat 30-11-2007
- Glesne, C., and A. Peshkin (1992), *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Human Rights Watch (HRW) (1993), <http://www.hrw.org/about/projects/womrep/General-219.htm> (Visited on 26-02-2008)
- Herten, M. van (2007), *Bevolkingstrends 3^e kwartaal 2007*. Den Haag: CBS.
- Knijn, T., A. Rijken (2003), *Demographic trends in the Netherlands*. Utrecht university
- Knox, P.L., S.A.Marston (2003), *Human geography, places and regions in global context*. New Jersey: Pearson education.
- Lectlaw (2006), <http://www.lectlaw.com/def2/m087.htm> (Visited on 10-11-2006)
- Martin, E., (2006), <http://uimc.discoveryhospital.com/main.php?id=1966> (Visited on 25-02-2008).
- MedicineNet (2008), <http://www.medterms.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=17775> (Visited on 16-03-2008).
- Ministry VWS (2004), <http://www.minvws.nl/dossiers/abortus/preventie-van-abortus/default.asp> (Visited on 10-04-2007).
- Muslim Women's League (1999), http://www.mwluca.org/topics/sexuality/sexuality_pos.html (Visited on 23-08-2007)
- Nederlands Genootschap van Abortusartsen (NGvA) (2007), <http://www.ngva.net/index.html> (Visited on 20-02-2008)

- Nimwegen, N. van, I Esveldt and G. Beets (2003), “*Population trends and family policies in the Netherlands*”. *Journal of population and social security*. 2 (1), Population study supplement, P. 203-229.
- Phalet, K., J. ter Wal (2004), *Moslim in Nederland*. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau
- Rutgers Nisso Groep (2004), *Wat vind jij daar nou van? Allochtone en autochtone jongeren over partnerkeuze en seksualiteit*. Utrecht: Rutgers Nisso Groep.
- Rutgers Nisso Groep (2006),
http://www.rutgersnissogroep.nl/news_items/Abortuscijfers_2005_zijn_bekend
(Visited on 19-10-2006)
- Rutgers Nisso groep (2007), http://www.rutgersnissogroep.nl/Onze_programmas
(Visited on 26-03-2007)
- Schulinck (2008), <http://www.rechttopalgemenebijstand.nl/inhoud/index/pid/22>
(Visited on 05-02-2008).
- University of Twente (2006),
http://www.tcw.utwente.nl/theorieenoverzicht/Theory%20clusters/Health%20Communication/theory_planned_behavior.doc/ (Visited on 10-10-2006).
- VBOK (2007), <http://www.vbok.nl/> (Visited on 07-04-2007)
- Bergh, M.Y.W. von, T.G.M. Sandfort (2000), *Veilig vrijen en condoomgebruik bij Turkse, Marokkaanse, Surinaamse en Antiliaanse jongeren en jong volwassenen: een vergelijking met autochtone Nederlanders*. Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht and Nisso.
- Wijzen, C., L. van Lee (2005), *Landelijke abortus registratie 2004*. Utrecht: Rutgers Nisso Groep.
- Wijzen, C. L. van Lee (2006), *Landelijke abortus registratie 2005*. Utrecht: Rutgers Nisso Groep
- Wijzen, C. L. van Lee (2007), *Landelijke abortus registratie 2006*. Utrecht: Rutgers Nisso Groep.
- Wijzen, C., L. van Lee (2006), *Kind van twee werelden. Een kwalitatief onderzoek naar achtergronden van zwangerschappen bij allochtone tieners*. Utrecht: Rutgers Nisso groep
- Wijzen, C., Vanwesenbeeck, I., W. van Berlo (2005), *Een gebrek aan regie. Een kwalitatief onderzoek naar achtergronden van tienerzwangerschappen*. Utrecht: Rutgers Nisso groep