Ewa Rzechowska
A,B,C,D,E,F
Monika Dacka
B,C,D,F

Experiencing and the realization of motherhood by teenage mothers

BACKGROUND

Early motherhood constitutes a difficult challenge for girls, and the level of their performance in that role is varied. In this article, teenage motherhood as a process is considered. The objective of the research was to determine the paths by which teenage girls enter the mother role. Particular attention was paid to the nature of individual differences in the ways of experiencing and the realization of the successive steps of teenage motherhood: how the girls reacted to the fact of being a mother, what they experienced and how they behaved during pregnancy and performed child care.

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

In the research, 166 mothers who had given birth to their children between the 15th and 19th year of life were included (at the moment of giving birth to the child, the age of the mother was $M = 17.22$). A follower interview was used. It was directed towards recreating the course of their lives from the period preceding becoming pregnant to the period of pregnancy and looking after the child, taking into consideration the complex situations connected with life and development of the female teenagers.

RESULTS

In the research, we applied the Reconstruction Strategy of the Process Transformation, setting the direction of qualitative analyses: (1) the level of single cases (case study), and (2) the level of the collection of cases (extracting groups of girls with common characteristics using the artificial intelligence algorithm C4.5). The analysis revealed the diversity and the internal structure of paths of the experience and realization of early motherhood: from negating oneself as a responsible mother to accepting the role of mother.

CONCLUSIONS

The final result is constituted by the model revealing the transformation of teenage motherhood and mechanisms underlying it.

KEY WORDS

adolescence; teenage motherhood; C4.5 algorithm; data mining; model of the transformation of the phenomenon

EARLY INITIATION: DEVELOPMENTAL AND SOCIAL-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS

Polish teenagers constitute the first generation brought up in a new social and cultural reality and experiencing changes resulting from technological revolution (the availability of modern communication and information processing technologies). The promoted cultural patterns of behaviour (the promotion of individual needs and consumerism and the blurring of the criteria of assessment – cf. Brzezińska, Czub, Nowotnik, & Rękosiewicz, 2012): (1) make it difficult to attain maturity, (2) create conditions conducive to early initiation and teenage motherhood (the erotization of social messages combined with the trivializing of the order based upon traditional values, (3) make it difficult for parents and educators not only to monitor, but also to support the development of teenagers (relationships within the family becoming less close, being transferred from one school to another at a critical moment: Adamski, 2007). Until the 1990s, the results of research had indicated difficult social and economic conditions in the family as factors conducive to an early initiation. The results of the research conducted in the subsequent period of time suggest the phenomenon of the democratization of teenage motherhood, and that means a significant increase in the number of female teenagers coming from families in a good and secure financial situation, and enjoying good rapport between the members of them. The following are revealed to be of significance for the delay of an initiation: strong emotional bonds with family, cordial ambience, intimacy and trust (Borowski, Ievers-Landis, Lovegreen, & Trapl, 2003), the strategies of upbringing (monitoring rather than controlling and restricting: Miller, Benson, & Galbraith, 2001), open communication and revealing information about oneself without being requested or pressured (Stattin & Kerr, 2000; Michalska, 2006), clear messages of the lack of acceptance of an early sexual initiation (Miller et al., 2001), parents being familiar with the milieu in which their daughter lives (contacts with the parents of her acquaintances: Mcneely et al., 2002), the age of the first menstruation (Meade, Kershaw, & Ickovics, 2008: the intergenerational cycle of a teenage motherhood).

The way of experiencing and the realization of motherhood constitutes the resultant of the major developmental features of female teenagers maturing in the rapidly changing social-cultural conditions. Development in the period of adolescence is connected with changes in the sphere of biology (anatomical-physiological changes, and the tension accompanying them and exerting an influence on the way in which one perceives one's own body and determining sexual behaviours), cognitive (increase in criticism, becoming sensitive to the incoherence of information, forward thinking), social (the pursuit of achieving independence from the control of parents, seeking acceptance in relationships with peers), emotional-motivational (evolution from impulsive reactions to mature emotionality, while gradually setting needs and motives against the hierarchy of values, and regulating one's own behaviour), and also in the structure of 'the self' (evolution from reliance upon external assessments to generating information about oneself independently, self-reflection and self-cognition).

Differentiation and the diversity of the individual rapidity of changes are the foundations of differences in the personal structure of adolescents, for example, in the degree of development and the character of changes in the formation of identity (Schwartz, Klimstra, Luyckx, Halle, & Meeus, 2012) and differences resulting from undertaking activities incompatible with the stage of development (pseudomaturity: Galambos, Barker, & Tilton-Weaver, 2003).

The entire area of the changes succinctly referred to in the text of this paper is reflected in a gradual increase in personal integration and the autonomous character of activities. What is not conducive to that is the contemporary conditions of the development of adolescents: on the one hand, the deficit of intimate contacts and social training, and, on the other hand, a large number of patterns and offers, functioning in real and virtual communities, scattered activities and the blurring of the criteria of evaluation (Gardner & Davis, 2013).

In the world placing emphasis upon individual needs, early sexual activity is becoming one of the paths of the formation of identity (experimenting and risky behaviours). Sex is treated as a substitute, or as a means, serving the purpose of satisfying the essential needs: safety, love, being at the centre of attention, intimacy, acceptance, intimacy and belonging (Bidzan, 2013). The basis for early sexual activity is constituted by:
• the need to relieve either sexual tension, or stress or frustration being experienced;
• curiosity and inclination for experimenting;
• attracting the interest and attention of a partner by means of expressing consent to sexual intercourse;
• looking for intimacy in relationships: (1) directed towards reduction in one's own sexual tension, (2) with noticeable concentration upon satisfying one's own needs, or (3) concentrated upon satisfying the needs of a partner;
• looking for acceptance by means of: (1) adopting the lifestyle of a group (initiation experiences are necessary in order to be a member of the group), (2) succumbing to the pressure exerted by peers, (3) adopting the style promoted in the media uncritically (sex as a means of gaining popularity), (4) confirming one's attractiveness in sexual contacts.

The character of relationships built by partners is reflected, in part, in the degree of maturity of both of

Ewa Rzechowska,
Monika Dacka

them. It exerts an influence on the way of coping in the situation of teenage motherhood.

ENTERING THE MOTHER ROLE AS A TEENAGER: EXPERIENCES OF THE PERIOD OF PREGNANCY AND MOTHERHOOD

Teenage, most frequently unplanned, motherhood, results in the simultaneous existence of the roles and tasks fulfilled in the period of adolescence, and also the roles and tasks connected with motherhood. It is conducive to the experience of role conflict (Mikołaj-czyk-Lerman, 2007), and is a substantial burden and challenge (Skowrońska-Zbierzchowska, 2010).

The internal world of a teenage mother: the development of the new order of life. A pregnancy undermines the fragile mental construction of a female teenager. Pregnant female teenagers experience a conflict between the fulfilment of the need to experience being cared for ('being taken care of') and the need to become a mother. The way of resolving a conflict is reflected in an attitude towards oneself, the child and other people. It activates new identification resulting in changes in identity (Schaffer & Pine, 1972; cf. also self-concept clarity: Campbell 1990). Changes in the body, a new situation, the prospect of new roles and the new way of the organization of life disintegrate the existing structure of the image of the self. A female teenager ceases to feel that they are a relatively coherent and stable unity. Not being pregnant itself, but rather the significance ascribed to that fact by herself and her milieu, is of significance. Internal opinions expressed in contacts with the world around her become a change in her conception of the self and self-esteem.

The shaping of the experiences of motherhood: building the relationship with the child. In its perfect form, maternal love is unconditional. The mother accepts and affirms her child as that child is (Fromm, 2000). She satisfies their need of safety (Bartosz, 2002; Drop & Maćkiewicz, 2012) and cares about the correct development of the relationship with the child (Augustyn, 1998; Bidzan, 2013). Her bond with the child, developing in the prenatal period, shapes her experiences of motherhood. Women who are going to be mothers treat their children as separate beings (they imagine them, ascribe particular qualities to them, and establish contact – Bartosz, 2002; Bidzan & Redzimska, 2004), and their love guarantees the stable emotional development of the child (Makowska, 2012). The sense of fulfilment in the mother role (or the lack of it) is dependent upon the way in which she reacts to arising challenges, her mental readiness to assume the role in question, her maturity, her responsibility and consistency in actions (Bartosz, 2002; Bidzan, 2013). The typical feature of pregnant

female teenagers is the varied degree of maturity to enter the mother role.

Difficulties in the realization of motherhood. The immaturity of female teenagers is reflected in the deficits of their behaviours as parents: the inadequacy of expectations (Królikowska, 2011), the lower level of sensitivity to her child, repressive attitude to the child, and the smaller number of verbal and emotional reactions (Conger, McCarty, Yang, Lahey, & Burgess, 1984; Garcia, Hoffman, Van Houten, & Oh, 1978; Ragozin, Basham, Crinic, Greenberg, & Robinson, 1982; Christ, Lahey, Frick, Russo, & McBurnett, 1990). The knowledge of teenage mothers in the aspect of the development of a child and looking after the child is frequently not precise. Their attitude to relevant responsibilities is a negative one, and the risk of stress while caring for the child is a greater one (Sommer et al., 1993). In the case of the majority of female teenagers, entering the mother role causes strong tensions. Support from mothers and partners significantly reduces difficulties (Gee & Rhodes, 2003), and female teenagers start to feel competent (Bidzan & Redzimska, 2004). Those of them who do not receive support succumb to depression more frequently, become withdrawn and feel guilty (Birkeland, Thompson, & Phares, 2005; Komorowska, 2012; Skowrońska-Zbierzchowska, 2010).

TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD: LOSS OR AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teenage parenthood may constitute both an inhibitor and a factor supporting maturing (Buchholz & Gol, 1986). A pregnancy does not have to constitute an obstacle to development. The majority of researchers associate teenage parenthood with a broad spectrum of negative consequences, both for mothers themselves and for their children. They include: (1) role conflict (Bartosz, 2002; Deręgowska & Majorczyk, 2012; Mikołajczyk-Lerman, 2007); (2) a difficult situation in life (the lower level of education, difficulties in finding a job, being dependent upon parents, relationships with the father of the child, lone parenthood and isolation from society (Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1998; Corcoran, 1998; Frankowicz-Gasiul et al., 2008; Adamski, 2007; Deręgowska & Majorczyk, 2012; Ferre, Gerstenbluth, Rossi, & Triunfo, 2013); (3) the situation of a child (a single parent, problems in relationship between the parents and the child, learning difficulties: Deal & Holt, 1998; Woodward & Fergusson, 1999; Furstenberg, Brooks-Gunn, & Chase-Lansdale, 1989; Ziemska, 2005; Kwak, 2005; Sakowicz, 2006; Bidzan, 2007; Borkowski, Bisconti, Willard, Keogh, & Whitman, 2002). In our times, the positive aspects of early motherhood are being noticed more and more frequently. It is revealed that female teen-

agers are competent and caring mothers (Thompson & Wood, 2012). Frequently, they function better than their peers. They feel stronger, more competent and important. They are more concerned about becoming educated, improving the standard of living and giving up entertainment. Girls from pathological families more frequently feel motivated to overcome poverty, and early motherhood does not exert much of an influence on their future qualifications, job and the level of incomes (Duncan, Edwards, & Alexander, 2010). The results of research make one question stereotypes relevant to the partners of teenage mothers. Usually, they accompanied female teenagers in the period of pregnancy, and remained involved after giving birth to the child. They declared their willingness to support them financially, and to participate in looking after the child. The research failed to confirm differences between minors and the older partners of teenage mothers (cf. the review of publications by: Gee & Rhodes, 2003).

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

SUBJECT OF RESEARCH AND THE METHODOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE FORMER IS DEFINED

Development research is intrinsically concentrated upon the genesis and processes of the transformation of phenomena. The question concerning experiencing and the realization of motherhood by female teenagers has evolved and assumed the form of a question concerning the process of constructing the individual paths of life (and entering motherhood by female teenagers)[1] considered in the context of the networks of relationships changing over time. When the subject of research has been defined in such a complicated manner, we do not have at our disposal a sufficient knowledge about the phenomenon, about the dynamics of it, the genesis and the mechanisms of it, etc. It being impossible to conduct an adequate conceptualization of the problem on the one hand, and inclination to avoid the simplification of the image of the phenomenon on the other hand, have made it logical to choose the processual approach. That means making an attempt to reconstruct the course of the phenomenon[2] (Rzechowska, 2004, 2011), and, ipso facto, transferring scientific investigations to an empirical level[3]. The processual attitude in research is oriented towards looking for the essence of transformations which are undergone by the phenomenon over time in the situation of the deficit of theoretical elaborations.

Studied individuals. In the research, 166 mothers who had given birth to their children between the 15th and 19th[4] year of life were included (at the moment of giving birth to the child, the age of the moth-

er was $M = 17.22$, whereas the age of the father was $M = 20.28$).

The objective of research and research problem. The objective of the research was to determine the differentiation of the ways of experiencing and the realization of motherhood by teenage mothers. The research problem finding a solution to which was to recreate the model of the transformation of the phenomenon, rather than to verify hypotheses, was formulated in a fairly general way. It evolved in the following question: How was the experience and realization of teenage motherhood shaped and expressed?

Answers were provided by means of solving particular problems. These had the form of questions concerning:
- the major features of each particular case (a case study), and were directed towards the reconstruction of the internal structure of the individual paths of the building of motherhood;
- properties making it possible to combine individual cases into groups having common major features, so as to build, on that basis, partial models of the phenomenon (variants of the phenomenon);
- the directions of transformations which were undergone by the phenomenon emerging from the analysis of the above-mentioned variants, and, on that basis, build a hypothetical model of the transformations of the phenomenon.

In order to recreate the ways of experiencing and the realization of teenage motherhood, *The Reconstruction Strategy of the Process Transformation* was applied.

COLLECTING DATA: THE AREA OF RESEARCH INVESTIGATIONS AND THEIR METHOD

Area of investigations. In the processual research, the direction of it is determined by:
- *the way of defining the subject of research*: building individual paths and, in the context of them, experiencing and the realization of teenage motherhood. The paths of life are reconstructed on the basis of detailed analyses of personal development, and also the ways of functioning in the family and in relationships with a partner and peers (in the milieu of school and outside the school setting) in the period encompassing the time preceding becoming pregnant, the time of pregnancy, and also the period of time after giving birth to the child;
- *the dimensions determining the space* of the construction of the individual paths of life, and also going through teenage motherhood and experiencing it, including, among others:
  - developmental and personal major features, describing the activity of a female teenager, and revealed in her activities or declarations (objectives,

Ewa Rzechowska,
Monika Dacka

plans, motives, values, preferences, assessments and interpretations);

– major features reflecting the activity and relationships of a female teenager in the milieu of her family and outside the family setting (for example, relationships with the partner/the father of the child, with peers and with teachers);

– major features reflecting experiences connected with pregnancy and entering the mother role, for example, major features connected with corporeality and the first relationships, with pregnancy and the way in which it is experienced, activities in the scope of nursing and caring, and building a relationship with the child (compare: Figure 1).

Method. A follower interview was used. It was directed towards recreating the course of their lives from the period preceding becoming pregnant, to the period of pregnancy and looking after the child, taking into consideration the complex situations connected with life and development which the female teenagers were in. The open and problem-revealing character of the questions made it possible for the studied female individual to express her opinions without restrictions, so as to obtain answers revealing the subjective image of the understanding and defining of herself, the world and relationships with the world by a female teenager. At the disposal of the researcher, there were: the flow chart of the reconstruction of individual paths (compare: Figure 1), and also the list of questions which were being asked by the researcher when there arose a need to make the answers more detailed or more precise. The researcher asked the starting question, followed by the narrative of the studied individual, appropriate for

the interpretation of the question by that individual. The studied individuals frequently initiated discussing the subsequent subjects themselves, which gave the conversation a natural and frequently therapeutic character.

The way of fulfilling the tasks. The research was conducted individually. It lasted for approximately 2 hours, and was conducted at the place indicated by the studied individual (for example, at her place). In the course of the research, detailed notes were made, or, most frequently, her utterances were recorded after having obtained the consent of the studied individual. The participants in the research were recruited through private contacts.

THE RECONSTRUCTION STRATEGY OF THE PROCESS TRANSFORMATION: THE ANALYSIS OF DATA AND THE LEVELS OF IT

The Reconstruction Strategy of the Process Transformation. The RPT Strategy is a procedure making it possible to go beyond the existing theories and models, and, simultaneously, by means of empirical research, reach 'new layers of data', absent in the previous theoretical elaborations. It is directed towards reconstructing the course of a phenomenon in its diversity and variability, but simultaneously and at each stage of analyses maintaining the initial properties of the studied subjects. The analysis is conducted at two levels: the level of an individual case, and also at the level of the collection of cases (compare: Figure 2).

Level I: the analysis of a single case. The analysis was directed towards determining significant major
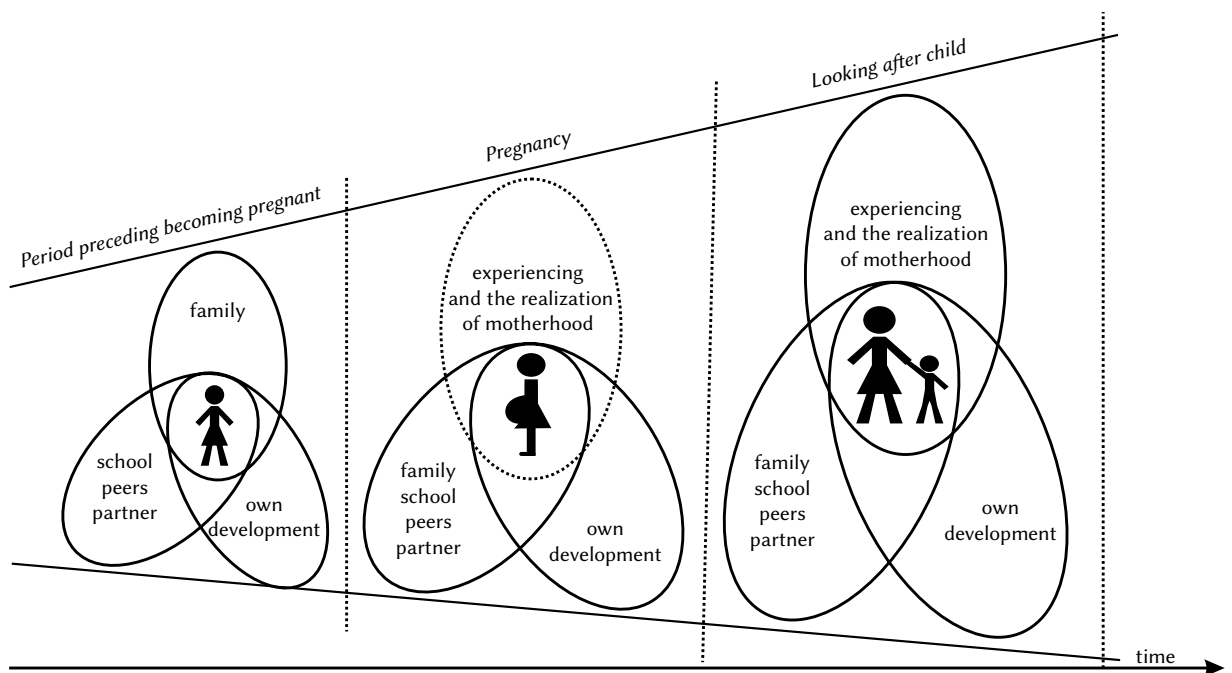

Figure 1. Experiencing and the realization of motherhood: the processual approach.

The initial analysis – the detailed recording of every case	**The analysis of the collection of cases looking for the groups of cases having common major features** (C4.5 Quinlan algorithm)
Re-analysis of each and every of cases – the empirically-developed network of genetically-connected categories	**Determining the variants of the phenomena**
The internal organization of each and every of cases	**The model of the phenomenon in the course of transformation**

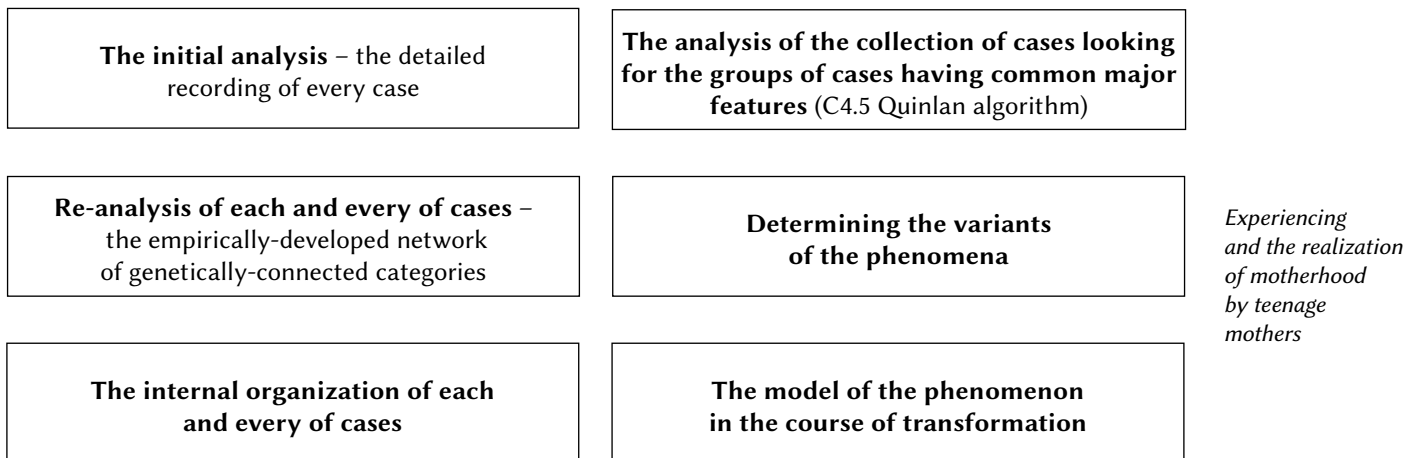*Experiencing and the realization of motherhood by teenage mothers*

Figure 2. The reconstruction strategy of the process transformation: the flow chart of the analysis.

features reflecting the subjective vision of the path of life and the process of entering motherhood in the case of each of the studied female teenagers, while taking into consideration the social context changing over time (Figure 2). The analysis encompassed the following aspects in the order as below[5]: (1) the detailed reconstruction and the recording of utterances, using audio and/or visual recordings and notes, reflecting their individual character; (2) the initial analysis introducing the topical order and structuring the collected material; (3) ensuring the impartiality of the subjective vision of each of the paths of life by means of creating the empirically developed network of categories making it possible to describe each case in a manner which was standard, and, therefore, comparable, and also (b) the recording of each interview, repeated and made objective. The obtained recordings constitute the starting point for developing the initial database (Level II, stage 1).

Level II: the analysis of the collection of cases. The analysis is directed towards reconstructing partial models of experiencing and the realization of motherhood, and, upon the basis of the analysis of connections between them, building the model of the transformation of the phenomenon. The analysis encompasses three stages:

1. *Database and the Quinlan algorithm (determining the collections of cases having similar major features).* The basis for the analysis is constituted by major features from the databases describing in detail the single paths of life and entering the mother role. The analysis is intended to determine the collections of cases (the paths of life) having similar major features with the application of one of the data mining methods. Criterion: a child is a priority for a studied

individual constituted the basis for generating a decision tree with the application of the C4.5 algorithm (Quinlan, 1993; Gatnar, 1998).

2. *The decision tree and the reconstruction of the partial models of the phenomenon (determining the six variants of experiencing and the realization of motherhood).* The C4.5 algorithm conducted multiple functions that allowed the collection of characteristics (the branches of the decision tree) that differentiated people with different paths of experience and experiencing motherhood to be revealed. The consequence of this was the selection of the minimum number of groups with the largest amount of common characteristics (homogeneous group) (Rzechowska, 2004; Nisbet, Elder, & Miner, 2009). Tracking the subsequent branches of a dendrogram constituted the starting point for the reconstruction of the partial models (referred to as variants below), reflecting the diversity and specific character of experiencing and the realization of motherhood. Upon that basis, the six paths of experiencing and the realization of motherhood were determined. Below, a fragment of the obtained decision tree is presented (Figure 3).

That fragment constituted the basis for the reconstruction of the partial model of experiencing and the realization of motherhood described as Variant III hereinafter. The following factors are reflected in the categories present in the decision tree:
• *the context of the housing and living conditions of the life* of teenagers in the period preceding the pregnancy, in the course of pregnancy, and also after giving birth to the child; major features described, among others, the relationships between the female teenagers and their parents, partner and peers, ob-
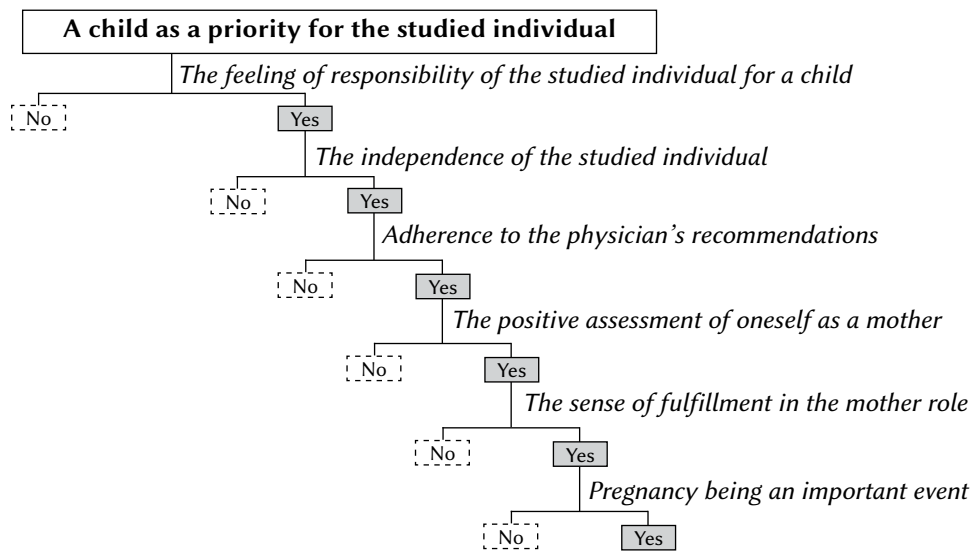
Ewa Rzechowska,
Monika Dacka

A child as a priority for the studied individual

The feeling of responsibility of the studied individual for a child

No   Yes

The independence of the studied individual

No   Yes

Adherence to the physician's recommendations

No   Yes

The positive assessment of oneself as a mother

No   Yes

The sense of fulfillment in the mother role

No   Yes

Pregnancy being an important event

No   Yes

Figure 3. Fragment of the decision tree constituting the basis for the reconstruction of experiencing and the realization of motherhood by teenage mothers (Variant III).

1. Context: the situation prior to and in the course of the pregnancy, and also after giving birth to the child

Relationships (parents, partner and peers),
and the character of support
Financial and residential conditions

2. Entering the mother role: experiencing and activities

Pregnancy:
Reaction to the pregnancy: **Experiencing**
Attitude to the child:
– **Experiencing:** the first relationships
  with the child
– **Ways of realization:** behaviours
  in the course of pregnancy
Attitude to oneself: **Experiencing**

After giving birth to the child
Attitude to the child:
– **Experiencing:** an attitude to the child
  and buildings bonds
– **Ways of realization:** behaviors directed
  towards the child
Attitude to oneself: **Experiencing**

3. Motherhood: experiencing and activities

Assessment of oneself in the mother role:
the assessment of **activities**
Reflecting upon oneself and motherhood
– **Experiencing:** Who I am
– **Experiencing:** How I define motherhood
– **Experiencing:** How I define myself as a mother

Figure 4. Flow chart of ordering major features in order to reconstruct the partial model (a variant) of experiencing and the realization of motherhood.

tained support, and also living and housing conditions;
• *the process of entering the mother role*: the activity and experiences connected with the pregnancy (reaction to the pregnancy, attitude to the child and to herself), and, after giving birth, the attitude to the child and to herself);
• *the way of experiencing motherhood*: the self-assessment as a mother and reflecting upon the new role.

The initial data determined with the application of the structure of a decision tree were complemented by information from the database relevant to the group described by the analyzed fragment of the dendrogram (compare: Figure 3). Those combined data constituted the basis for the reconstruction of the way of experiencing and the realization of motherhood by the individuals represented in the variant being described. The data were ordered adopting the flow chart presented below as the basis (Figure 4).

Upon that basis, a partial, reflecting one of the six ways, model of experiencing and the realization of motherhood (a so-called variant) was reconstructed.

3. *Constructing the hypothetical model of the transformation of the phenomenon.* In the processual approach, the phenomenon is defined as the process of transformation the course of which is reflected in partial models (variants). The detailed analysis of the internal structure of each variant, and also the genetic connections between them, constituted the basis for the hypothetical model of the phenomenon in the course of the transformation, which means here: the model of experiencing and the realization of motherhood in which its more and more mature forms are reflected.

ASSESSMENT OF THE CREDIBILITY
OF RECEIVED DATA

At the level of the case analysis, the credibility of research encompasses processing of the results by independent competent judges (compare: Figure 2). At the level of the analysis of a collection of cases, the credibility of research was assessed determining: (1) the decision tree encumbered with error (namely, 3.60%, with the permissible level of 25.00% for erroneous qualifications), and also (2) the cohesiveness of internal organization of each model of part of the phenomenon and the internal organization of the model in the entirety of it.

RESULTS

THE PATHS OF EXPERIENCING AND THE
REALIZATION OF TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD

The research was intended to determine the diversification of the ways of experiencing and the realization of premature motherhood by female teenagers. Six ways (partial models) of entering the mother role, described hereinafter as Variants I-VI, were reconstructed. In the arrangement of the variants, the process of evolution from the negation of entering the mother role (Variants I-II), gradually accepting that role (Variant III), until the moment of accepting the role in question (Variants IV-V) and becoming fully involved in it (Variant VI), is reflected. That process is accompanied by changes in the way that female teenagers experience their own motherhood. Initially, the vision of undertaking the mother role was dominated by the losses suffered in connection with the birth of the child (Variants I-II). Those were replaced with readiness to enter the mother role ('I will try'), which is accompanied by increasing awareness of the way in which the mother role is realized (Variants III-V). The acceptance of the new role as one's own occurred together with criticism of one's own imperfections (Variant VI) (Figure 5).

In this paper, we confined ourselves to presenting Variants VI, III and I as reflecting the crucial transformations in teenage motherhood. In each case, the following were presented: (1) the milieu and context of entering the mother role, (2) the reaction of female teenagers to the pregnancy, the way of experiencing the pregnancy and undertaking to take care of the child, (3) transformations in the understanding of motherhood and in the realization of the mother role, and (4) the internal transformations of young mothers.

I am a mother aware of my imperfections, but I am doing everything I can (Variant VI)

The supporting environment. Prior to becoming pregnant and afterwards, female teenagers were provided with support by their parents, their peers and the father of their child. The parents provided their daughters with the means of sustenance (in the course of pregnancy: accommodation, making sure that the needs of daily life were fulfilled, and money; after giving birth, daughters were living with their partner/husband at their parents' place or elsewhere). Parents are described as loving and supporting. The principal field of activity of mothers involved providing advice, whereas that of the fathers involved behaviours expressing acceptance. All the time, the relationships between the girls and the fathers of their children remained positive (in the conditions of sharing the address of residence as common-law marriage or spouses). The girls felt that they were supported by the fathers.

Entering the mother role

Reaction to the pregnancy. The first reactions of the parents to the pregnancy in the case of their daughter were surprise and anger. The mothers experienced shock, nervous breakdown and shame, whereas the fathers experienced regret turning into indifference. Both of them experienced a whole gamut of emotions, rapidly changing their way of thinking to one searching for constructive solutions. The mothers were involved to a greater degree (they looked after

Variant I: I do not want to be a mother. I feel that I am a child. Take care of me

Variant II: I may be a mother, but not at the expense of the loss of freedom

Variant III: I do not imagine myself in the mother role, but I am trying

Variant IV: I am still not mature to the mother role, but I am trying

Variant V: I am a mother, but I still have not become fully mature to that role

Variant VI: I am a mother aware of my imperfections, but I am doing everything I can
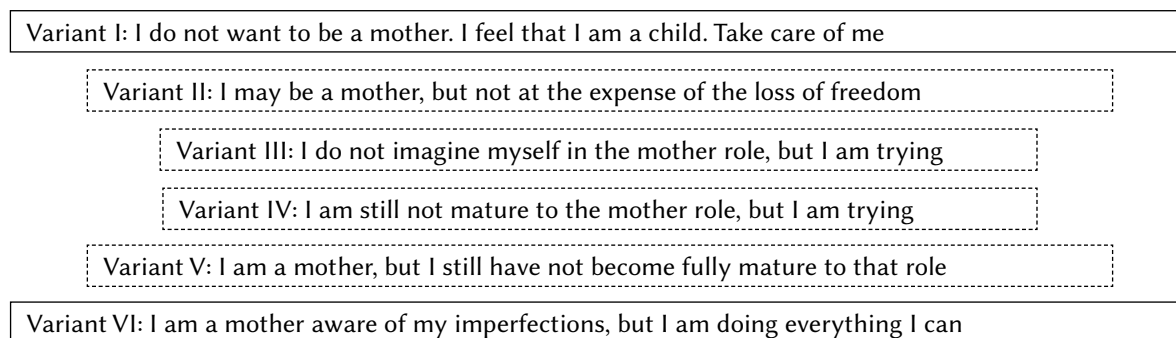
Figure 5. Variants I-VI: transformations in experiencing and the realization of teenage motherhood.

Ewa Rzechowska,
Monika Dacka

their daughters and contacted them frequently). The support provided by them was of a gradually reduced character: involvement was gradually replaced by revealing their readiness to help. The female teenagers themselves reacted to the first symptoms of the pregnancy with fright, nervous breakdown and tears. They were embarrassed in front of their parents because of their motherhood. They felt guilty for having disappointed them. The acceptance of the pregnancy by the parents and the partner alleviated the first shock, shame and the feeling of guilt.

The period of pregnancy. After the first shock, peace and joy became the dominant attitudes. Female teenagers felt proud. They displayed the changes occurring in the outside appearance of them. The first movements of the child were referred to by them as 'a wonderful experience'. Since the beginning, they had been treating their child as an individual: (1) they provided care (by undergoing medical checkups, looking after health and proper nutrition motivated by concern about their child); (2) they cherished feelings (love, joy and acceptance) for them, and also attention and care about the development of them (they imagined the child, 'read' to them and played music); (3) they 'talked to the child' (stroking their belly and engaging in pseudo-dialogues). The emotional support of their near family and relatives was insignificant in reducing fears connected with the future of the child: the near one (the state of health of the child, giving birth safely), and the distant one (for example, continuing education in order to provide the child with decent conditions). Fears relevant to the child were accompanied by anxieties connected with the mother's own ability to cope with the new role, bringing the child up and the future of the child.

Care after giving birth to the child. The most important thing is contact with the child (kissing, hugging, dialogues: 'I tell her/him that I love her/him' and playing), skilfully combined with performing a number of necessary tasks connected with: (1) the child (all activities in the scope of nursing and caring and medical checkups), (2) the members of the family or the partner (doing the cooking and cleaning), (3) studying and work. In spite of the fact that the responsibilities in the scope of looking after the child were shared with their partners, the mothers performed the majority of the activities on their own. They took advantage of the help of their parents infrequently and when it was necessary.

Motherhood: experiencing and activities

'Me' in the mother role. They felt they were good mothers, and in the detailed descriptions made by them care and love for their child were dominant. They assessed their own performance in the mother role with criticism, and placed emphasis on their insufficient maturity: (1) in relationships with their

child ('I was initially frightened and lost. Now, I have grown up and I am caring'), and also (2) in the undertaken activities ('I am trying to be mature, caring and patient'). Ultimately, they formulated the following assessment which failed to reflect the enormous scale of their involvement: 'I am an ordinary individual, having weak and strong points'. Female teenagers described their motherhood as an event which significantly accelerated their development. Thanks to that event, they discovered unconditional love ('I have been given a great child', 'I have somebody to love'), became more responsible and independent, and felt appreciated ('I feel that I am needed and irreplaceable'), noticed new qualities (patience and ability to express love), and started to act more effectively ('I have a lot of power and energy', 'I manage my time better'). Defining the negative aspects of premature motherhood, they indicated the burden-imposing character of that role ('never-ending vigilance', lack of sleep, the high level of mobilization), brushing aside plans and passions, and also the lack of financial independence. The lack of time for oneself was of secondary significance. Undertaking responsibilities was referred to them as 'the loss of youth'. However, they did not express much regret when mentioning other 'losses': giving up going to parties and meetings with acquaintances.

'Me' in the world changed by motherhood. Changes in defining the self. In the utterances of young mothers, there are, formulated on their own initiative, the definitions of motherhood ('motherhood is a gift and a joy'; 'a child is the meaning of life'). Simultaneously, they approach the new role rationally ('there are no perfect mothers'). As the approximate example to be followed, they indicate their own mother: loving, providing care, patient, understanding and passing on 'the best values' to the child.

The time of waiting for the child to be born and undertaking to look after the child were for female teenagers a period of accelerated development. Prior to the pregnancy, they referred to themselves as daughters and as school attendees. In the course of pregnancy, the first position was still assigned to 'being a daughter', even though they simultaneously felt that they were 'future mothers' and a friend. The role of a school attendee became the one of secondary significance. After giving birth to the child, they felt, first and foremost, that they were mothers and wives, and a friend, but that role was a secondary one. 'Being a daughter' lost some of the significance which it had previously had as the principal role.

Female teenagers referred to themselves from the period prior to becoming pregnant as light-hearted, independent, sociable and having a positive attitude to life. Referring to the time of pregnancy, they ascribed the following qualities to themselves: patience, peacefulness, responsibility, ambition, being concerned about the future of herself and of the child. Simulta-

neously, they felt guilty and ashamed. After giving birth to the child, they perceived themselves as open, helpful, responsible, 'confronting obstacles', patient and having a positive attitude to life. They referred to themselves as women rather than as teenagers or girls.

The directions of transformations briefly referred to above would indicate the transformation of the constructions of the social world of young mothers and the building of the new system of reference by them. That hypothesis would be confirmed by the application of the broadened definitions of the self (the pronoun 'we' is applied to refer to the child or to the close family and friends; own activities are treated as 'collective' – 'providing the means of sustenance for ourselves').

The perception of changes in oneself: independence, responsibility and reflective attitude. Still prior to becoming pregnant, female teenagers had felt that they were independent. After giving birth to the child, they made it more precise what their independence was expressed in. They associated it, first and foremost, with finding a job, even an odd one. They felt more responsible, and changes occurred in the following order (a) prior to the pregnancy: adherence to the agreements regulating daily life (the time of coming back home and household responsibilities; understanding the expectations of parents), (b) in the period of pregnancy: feeling that they had disappointed their parents, and also the awareness of the need to 'grow up rapidly and accept responsibility for the child', until the stage of (c) actually accepting responsibility for the child: both for the current daily activities in the scope of care and upbringing, and also for activities intended to achieve financial independence. Undertaken activities resulted, among others, from willingness to provide the child with good conditions and pass on 'the best values' to the child. Simultaneously, young mothers felt responsible for organizing and performing some of the household activities, and also for continuing education and finding a job. Increasing ability to gain insight into oneself made it possible for them to notice changes in their own functioning ('I noticed my own emotionality', 'I learnt how to express love', 'I can be responsible for someone', 'I can cope with responsibilities'). The broadened temporal and personal perspective ('we') and referring to one's own hierarchy of values become the foundation of the building of a personal vision of the world and performing assessments which are made impartial. The critical assessment of 'being a mother', and simultaneously being aware of the direction of further activities, are the symptoms of forming a reflective attitude.

I do not imagine myself in the mother role, but I am trying (Variant III)

The supporting environment. The girls from Variant III are provided by their parents with the means of sustenance (parents also make sure that the needs of daily life are fulfilled), and also accommodation which their children share with them. Mothers, both prior to female teenagers becoming pregnant, and in the following period of time, are more involved in contacts with their daughters than fathers. They engage in conversations with female teenagers which are supportive and alleviate emotions. In the period of pregnancy, they care about the health and mental state of their daughters, and they spend a lot of time with them. After the birth of the child, they devote less time to the daughters themselves, willingly engaging in looking after their grandchild. Fathers in the period of female teenagers' pregnancy frequently talk with them and provide help. The girls do not describe precisely what kind of help is provided. After giving birth to the child, the level of interest of fathers in the issues exerting an influence on their daughters decreases. After their grandson/granddaughter has been born, half of men withdraw from active contact with their daughter. Together with mothers, the fathers of the children/the partners of female teenagers are those who support them. They are in a formal relationship with the mothers of children (sometimes, living with them at the same place), or, alternatively, maintain contacts with the mothers because of the children. Only a small number of female teenagers are provided with support by their peers.

Entering the mother role

Reaction to the pregnancy. In the case of the mothers of the girls, the news of their daughters being pregnant causes shock, anger and sorrow at the first moment after it is revealed to them. Gradually, their attitude to the situation which has occurred changes, replaced by acceptance, which can be observed together with conversing and various forms of support. The fathers of female teenagers initially react with anger and fear. The situation makes them experience negative or ambivalent feelings. Afterwards, the following attitudes appear: acceptance, and sometimes joy. The reactions of partners/fathers of the children were diverse. Only half of them reacted positively to the information about pregnancy, whereas all of them offered support. The reaction of female teenagers to the first symptoms of pregnancy included shock, tears and fright. They looked for support, and obtained it, first and foremost, from their mothers.

The period of pregnancy. In the case of the majority of teenagers, a radical change of habits was observed to occur (they stopped smoking and drinking alcohol). They cared about their health and adhered to the physician's recommendations. These steps were motivated by, first and foremost, being concerned about themselves. In the first half of pregnancy, female teenagers experienced ambivalent feelings for their child. The acceptance of the situation which

had occurred was accompanied by content, joy and happiness ('initially, I hated, afterwards, I talked to (the child) and stroked my belly'). Some of the girls declared that they loved their child as soon as during the period of pregnancy. In their case, feeling the movements triggered reactions such as stroking the belly, and, infrequently, imagining the child or engaging in 'conversations' with them. A small number of the girls 'thought' about the child, but they do not describe precisely what that 'thinking' involved. The majority of the girls neither felt that they were mothers nor imagined themselves in this role. They did not express any concerns about the future.

Providing care after the birth of the child. It was only after giving birth to the child that all the mothers representing Variant III declared their love for the child. They hugged and kissed the child. Half of the girls recognised the needs of the child. All of them placed emphasis on their own involvement in performing responsibilities connected with looking after the child (washing, feeding, lulling and changing napkins). They like spending time with their children, and playing with them. They engaged themselves in household chores infrequently. Actual looking after the child was provided by the mothers of female teenagers because the studied individuals continued their education.

Motherhood: experiencing and activities

'Me' in the mother role. Female teenagers described themselves as fulfilled in the mother role. In the majority, they felt happy, caring, attentive, and loving towards their child. They placed emphasis on the effort made in connection with looking after the child. Simultaneously, they noticed their lack of experience and abilities ('I was getting by somehow, it was difficult at the beginning, and I needed help'). Some of the girls assessed their performance in the mother role as adequate. Indicating the positive aspects of being a mother, they concentrated on the emotional aspect of motherhood: 'being loved' or loving. In both of these cases, their own needs were predominant, and the object of feelings was treated in a way which was rather instrumental ('Finally, I have someone for myself, who I can love'). Simultaneously, they arrived at the conclusion that they were more mature, more resourceful, and that they had acquired a more accurate knowledge about themselves. More attention was devoted by them to the presentation of the negative aspect of motherhood. As one of the inconveniences of being a mother, there were daily responsibilities, enumerated in detail, and activities in the scope of nursing. Young mothers felt that they had lost their freedom in connection with it being necessary to give up social meetings and parties, and, in the case of some of them, also with discontinuing their education. They mentioned difficulties in being

patient and responsible for the child. They avoided formulating non-ambiguous assessments.

'Me' in the world changed by motherhood. Changes in defining oneself. Female teenagers did not apply the word 'motherhood'. They referred to 'being a mother'. The perfect mother was described by them as caring, attentive, patient, loving, cordial, willing to look after child, and having time for the child. They expressed a firm conviction that there were no perfect mothers. Half of them considered their own mothers to be an approximate role model. The majority of the girls had not felt that they were mothers prior to giving birth to the child.

The egocentrism of motherhood in the case of the girls from Variant III was reflected in the way in which they described the roles fulfilled by themselves. Prior to becoming pregnant, the girls had identified themselves with the roles of a school attendee, a female teenager or of a daughter. In their description of the period of pregnancy, there was one more phrase that was applied, namely 'being a woman'. After giving birth to the child, female teenagers referred to themselves as to 'daughters', and only after that did they apply the words 'mothers' and 'partners'. The remaining roles had diminished in significance even further.

Changes in major features which they ascribed themselves in the period prior to pregnancy, in the course of it and afterwards, are compatible with the direction of changes in identification briefly referred to in this paper. Female teenagers described themselves from the period of time prior to the pregnancy with the application of major features compatible with the traits suitable for the period of adolescence ('crazy', sincere and self-confident), and also traits appreciated at school (being intelligent, persistent and ambitious). In their own behaviours in the course of pregnancy, they noticed obstinacy and nervousness. After giving birth to the child, there appeared, together with frankness and obstinacy, the major features in which the way of realization of the mother role was reflected, namely sensitivity, a caring attitude and responsibility.

Noticing changes in oneself: independence, responsibility and reflective attitude. Prior to becoming pregnant, only half of the studied individuals had felt independent. In the course of pregnancy, and after giving birth to the child, all ascribed independence to themselves. They interpreted it as adulthood. Becoming a mother was to constitute a pass to gaining more freedom. Female teenagers ascribed responsibility for the child to themselves, even though they devoted most of their time to learning, and their own mothers were charged with work connected with the child. The majority of the studied individuals reported 'thinking' about the child, but only half of them made those declarations more precise in some parts. In the utterances of female teenagers, there are no

traces of a reflective attitude to what has already happened, or to the future.

I do not want to be a mother. I feel I am a child. Look after me (Variant I)

The supporting environment. Female teenagers were receiving support principally from their parents providing them with accommodation and the means of sustenance. Their mother was described as an advisor and as a helper. However, female teenagers appreciated more the involvement of the father and the support received from him. The girls were also provided with support by their peers. They were reluctant to discuss the issue of the fathers of their children. Only half of the partners reacted positively to the pregnancy, and a small number remained in their relationships.

For the parents, the premature pregnancy of their daughter constituted a source of shock and negative reactions. Those were rapidly replaced by acceptance of the situation, positive emotions, help, support and conversing. The mother became involved in helping to look after the child (or actually took upon herself the responsibility of looking after the child). A surprising fact was increase in the involvement of the fathers of female teenagers in the lives of their daughters after the birth of a grandson/granddaughter.

Entering the mother role

Reaction to pregnancy. For female teenagers, news about the pregnancy was a shock. They were afraid of the reaction of their parents, and the self-composure of the latter alleviated the emotions experienced by the girls. The emotions experienced in that period were described by the girls as acceptance, love and joy. The images of themselves, of motherhood and of relationships with other people drawn up by the girls are full of contradictions.

The period of pregnancy. Pregnancy partly changed the lifestyle of female teenagers: they started to look after themselves, they adhered to the physician's recommendations, and changed their habits. However, they placed emphasis on the joy resulting from the first movements of the child and love accompanying that joy ('I started to love when I felt the first kick'). They thought about the pregnancy and the child sporadically. They did not express concerns about the child, or about the way in which they would deal with their new role. They strongly opposed regarding the child as the source of happiness.

Providing care after the birth of the child. In the descriptions of motherhood, contact with the child is mentioned as the most important issue. It was no sooner than after giving birth to the child that the majority of the studied individuals felt love. However, they did not feel concerned about the child. Female teenagers presented themselves as mothers dedicating the entire day to looking after their child. The majority of them claimed that they were coping with necessary activities (washing clothes, bathing, feeding and walks) well, and recognizing the needs of the child. They declared that they liked spending time with the child, whereby, as it is indicated by other utterances, they had on mind their own pleasure rather than something else. They felt fulfilled in the mother role, and they felt that they were aware of the essence of motherhood. They assessed themselves positively. They were convinced that they provided their child with care on their own. Simultaneously, as it is indicated by their other utterances, the girls took advantage of the various forms of help provided by their parents and friends every step of the way. In spite of the strongly supportive milieu and relatively a lot of freedom in the scope of time management, half of the girls concluded that looking after the child was very difficult.

Motherhood: experiencing and activities

'Me' in the mother role. Motherhood, as it is understood by female teenagers from Variant I, is composed of the intertwining egocentrism of female teenagers on the one hand, and the awareness of social expectations and standards concerning looking after the child on the other hand. In the utterances of the girls, there emerges the surprising vision of motherhood and the mother role, constructed on the basis of the experiences of female teenagers in two types of relationships: relationships with their mothers, and relationships with their children. They expressed their opinions about motherhood in the context of their relationship with their mother, adopting the position of a child for themselves. They did not identify themselves with being the mother for her own child. They emphasized the role of feelings which were presented by them from the perspective of their own needs. They emphasized the role of feelings which were presented by them from the perspective of their own needs. They did not mention the major characteristics significant from the point of view of looking after a young child. On the other hand, they accentuated the parallels between the roles: of their own and of the mother (they were both mothers!). Then, they identified themselves with their mother, whom they considered to be a role model, but not an authority.

Defining motherhood in an unclear and incoherent way occurred together with difficulties in formulating utterances referring to the mother role. Only a small proportion of the female teenagers noted the positive and/or negative aspects of being a mother. They identified them with 'being loved' and 'possessing' someone to love ('Finally, I have someone who I can love'). More frequently, they redefined the question by indicating the developmental traits which made them 'bet-

ter' mothers: 'I am young', 'I have a lot of strength and energy to provide care'. These declarations were not reflected in their actual behaviours. As the negative aspects of motherhood, female teenagers mentioned the necessity of giving up parties and social meetings (which failed to prevent them from participating in them), the lack of time for friends and for themselves, the need to be responsible ('I cannot be careless as I used to be'). On the other hand, in the case of it being necessary to give up going out, they did not protest, nor did they perceive it as a loss. They did not mention, as the girls interviewed before them had, a loss of freedom, changes in plans, etc.

'Me' in the world changed by motherhood. Changes in defining oneself. Young mothers representing Variant I adopted the position of a child themselves. They did not identify themselves with motherhood and being a mother. From the major features, there emerges a vision of an immature female teenager who essentially does not change in the situation of a motherhood imposed by circumstances. The crucial role at the moment of becoming pregnant was the role of a school attendee. That role will remain the axis of the construction of the activity of a female teenager in the period of pregnancy and after giving birth to the child when their activities will be concentrated upon school-related responsibilities. In turn, 'being a female teenager' will disappear. After giving birth to the child, they identify themselves with the roles of a mother and a school attendee. The first of them is of a declarative character.

Changes occurring in the way of defining oneself are reflected in major features ascribed to themselves. Prior to the pregnancy, female teenagers had regarded themselves as spontaneous, temperamental, having their dreams and plans for the future. In the period of pregnancy, and after giving birth to the child, nervousness and impatience (the necessity of 'keeping one's temper') were the dominant emotions. After giving birth to the child, the girls, together with nervousness and becoming impatient, mentioned incidentally 'being a mother', which they strongly contradicted elsewhere.

Noticing changes in oneself: independence, responsibility and reflective attitude. From the information presented in this paper, there emerges the vision of female teenagers well acquainted with social expectations and – at a declarative level – identifying themselves with the new role, but at an executive level sabotaging that role completely. The behaviours of parents were not conducive to entering the role in a more mature way. They took responsibilities upon themselves, requiring from their daughters, first and foremost, that they would study, and occasionally participate in looking after the child. Giving birth to the child did not change the position of the girls in the family. In turn, they constituted a point in favour of 'being an adult' willingly resorted to by them, and also

a pretext to make parents consent to 'non-maternal', egocentric behaviours. Teenage mothers had (prior to the pregnancy) and still have a high level of independence. They seem to identify themselves with exerting an effective influence on the milieu in accordance with their own interest. That interpretation would be confirmed by young mothers' not feeling obliged to accept actual responsibility for the child. Even those few who while pregnant had imagined the child and declared experiencing love did not show a higher level of responsibility after giving birth to the child. In that context, caring about own health in the period of pregnancy should be regarded as a way of alleviating anxiety connected with infringing upon – at a physical and mental level – the previously existing order and/or subordinating oneself to the requirements of the parents. As the only example of their own lack of responsibility, teenage mothers regarded their way of approaching school-related responsibilities in the period preceding pregnancy (playing truant and treating attending school as an unwanted duty). After giving birth to the child, they felt responsible and mature. They put emphasis on the fact of 'being independent'. They treated it as natural that they charge parents with looking after the child, making various people complete their own tasks, and they retained the roles of a child and a school attendee. They did not feel obliged to care about the child and the future of the child. In their utterances, frequently contradictory, declarations and facts were mixed, and they seemed not to notice that.

MODEL OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PHENOMENON

The period of adolescence is a time of significant changes in the ways of defining oneself and the world, and also relationships between 'me' and the world. The maturity of female teenagers prematurely entering the mother role makes them different in the aspect of the ways of experiencing early motherhood (compare: pseudomaturity: Galambos et al., 2003). The results presented above give rise to the vision of the six paths of the realization of teenage motherhood, the arrangement of which reflects the transformation of the personal development of female teenagers the function of which is the character of the involvement of young mothers and their parents in looking after the child. The obtained results indicate that early motherhood may constitute both a delaying and a stimulating, or, quite the opposite, dramatically accelerating, factor in terms of the development of girls (Buchholz & Gol, 1986; Thompson & Wood, 2012; Duncan et al., 2010).

For all parents and female teenagers, the news about pregnancy was connected with difficult experiences. After the first shock, parents assumed

Ewa Rzechowska, Monika Dacka

complete control over female teenagers (Variant I), or supported them, with differentiation of the character and the degree of involvement in the course of pregnancy and after the birth of the child (Variants III and VI). The analysis of the internal structure of separate variants, and also the content-related and structural relationships of them, made it possible to reconstruct a hypothetical sequence and the ways in which changes occurred: evolution to ever more advanced forms of motherhood (compare: Figure 5).

Below, selected fragments of the transformation in progress, based on different mechanisms, the most and the least developed paths of entering the mother role (Variants VI and I), and, subsequently, the intermediate form (Variant III), including elements of both of them, and revealing the specific character of the transition, are presented.

Variant VI constitutes an example of experiencing and the realization of teenage motherhood in the most mature form of it. It is already the first reaction of the girls to the news about pregnancy that revealed the first symptoms of their maturity: they did not experience the childlike fear of parents (Variants I and III), but shame and the feeling of guilt in connection with having disappointed them. The supportive reaction of parents initiated concentrating the attention of the girls upon the child. From that time on, the child's well-being will determine the directions of activities undertaken by female teenagers. The early acceptance of motherhood by them assumed a form which was less or more mature: they paid attention to themselves by displaying the changing body shape, but also by the large number of references: to the child, to oneself and to motherhood. Those references were relevant to various temporal perspectives: 'here and now', and also the future, both less and more distant. News about pregnancy triggered changes in defining oneself (moving from the perspective of 'me' to the perspective of 'we'), and in undertaken activities (child and relationship became the points of reference; the needs of the child were concentrated on, with activities directed towards ensuring that those needs are fulfilled). Apart from that, young mothers undertook, and skilfully organized, activities for the benefit of the members of the family and/or partners, combining them with studying, and frequently with working. Their responsibility acquired a broadened dimension. They felt responsible: for themselves, for the child, for the relationships formed with the child and/or the partner, and/or parents. Deepening self-awareness made it easier for them to notice transformations taking place in them, the realistic assessment of their own capabilities, and willingness to overcome limitations. The activities and declarations of female teenagers have, as the major features, cohesiveness and consistency.

The opposite end of the spectrum is constituted by the way of realization of motherhood by the girls representing Variant I. The unexpected pregnancy intensified egocentrism, which was connected with their current age, resulting in the infantilization of their behaviours: extricating (from duties and responsibilities), demanding that the sphere of their freedom be extended, and persistent emotions: becoming impatient and angry. Pregnancy and giving birth to the child infringed on the previously existing order, making those girls (the only duty of whom had previously been connected with school-related responsibilities) face the necessity of assuming new roles. The immature reactions of daughters assuming the position of a child and expecting to be taken care of, and also the lack of real involvement of their partners, made parents inclined to assume the entire set of responsibilities. They started to look after their daughter and her child. They expected of the daughter, as it had earlier been the case, that she would comply with school requirements. In a situation defined in this way, the child became for teenage mothers one more task, and they could decide themselves whether to complete it, not being held accountable for that. The behaviours of the girls suggest that they were well acquainted with social expectations concerning mothers. In numerous declarations, female teenagers claimed to be substantially involved in maternal activities and the broad scope of undertaken activities. They failed to notice the incoherence between declarations and the actual state of affairs; nor did they notice the differences in expressed judgements, assessments and emotions.

The analysis of Variant III revealed a dual organization of the behaviours of teenagers: prior to the pregnancy and after giving birth to the child. The period of pregnancy was revealed to be the time of infringing upon egocentric regulations (compare: Variant I) and the appearance of the first signals of change. In the course of pregnancy, the girls did not identify themselves with their new role. Giving birth to the child initiated a change; it activated the female teenagers, who had hitherto been egocentric, to make attempts to fulfil their new responsibilities. The activities of teenagers constituted an example of, not yet perfect, motherhood, which was restricted to simple activities in the scope of caring, with the dominance of 'Me' (the child being of secondary significance), and with the presence of a constantly supporting mother, who was watching over everything. Female teenagers felt, however, responsible for the child, even though responsibility was identified by them with the successful completion of school education (implicitly: with becoming financially independent). The girls were aware of their own imperfections. They admitted to be taking advantage of the help of mothers, not downplaying the contribution of the latter to caring for the child. Simultaneously, they noticed changes taking place in themselves: increasing self-confidence, maturity and responsibility. Even

Ewa Rzechowska,
Monika Dacka

though the changes they referred to were not always reflected in actual activities, there was a clear qualitative change in the behaviours of female teenagers.

The analyses presented in this paper reveal the internal structure of the process of experiencing and the realization of premature motherhood. The empirical reconstruction of the process reflecting the increasing complexity of entering the mother role as a teenager and the gradually reduced character of parental help opens the space for further investigations. They may develop in the direction of theoretical conceptualizations of the phenomenon, taking into consideration its developmental-contextual determinants, and also constitute the basis for putting forward competing hypotheses in reference to more general issues (for example, the identity of adolescents in the context of shame and the feeling of guilt: Czub, 2013). The proposed approach and obtained results will be particularly useful in developing diagnostic procedures, as well as individualized supportive strategies, taking into consideration the personality-development major features of female teenagers and the specific character of the milieu in which they spend the time of their motherhood.

Endnotes

1 The terms: 'individual paths of life' and 'paths of entering motherhood' are applied alternatively.

2 Postulates of changes in methodological workshop, in particular, in the case of the phenomenon of substantial diversity and changeability over time, have been proposed by, among others, Werner, Sander, Wygotski, and Duncker (cf. the review of research in, among others: Rzechowska, 2008; Arnett, 2004; Fischer & Bidell, 2006; Molenaar, 2004).

3 The theoretical foundation of the search was constituted by potential conceptualization of development (Rzechowska, 2004). Development is defined here as the process of constructing the activity of a subject in the active context. The active context is composed of those constituents of a situation which the subject is sensitive to. Different individuals are sensitive to different constituents of a given situation.

4 Cf. proposed divisions: Frankowicz-Gasiul et al., 2008; Królikowska, 2011).

5 The procedure of data processing was presented by Rzechowska, 2010, pp. 55–71.

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Experiencing and the realization of motherhood by teenage mothers

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Ewa Rzechowska, Monika Dacka