

Abstract

This thesis is a final report from a qualitative study focused on vegetarian parents, who also lead their children to vegetarianism. The main purpose of the study was to examine in what ways the parents interpret and analyse their position in society, which often views the children vegetarianism as a controversial issue. The theoretical part of the work describes the background, which is relevant to the topic and help us to put the situation of vegetarian parents into a necessary context. The general information about (childhood) vegetarianism, health and social issues linked to it, are presented. The factors underlying the “family vegetarianism” - cultural relativity and symbolic of meat and nutritional discourse in combination with the ideology of motherhood, are also discussed. An entire section of the study was given to qualitative analysis of the half-structured interviews with eight vegetarian parents. The decision about the meatless diet of their children is not always accepted by general society or by their extended families and parents also often face moral judgments rather than medical problems. Therefore parents have to (re)interpret their parental identity in accordance with the positive ideology of parenthood, for example by pointing out the medical advantages of vegetarianism or by emphasizing the harmfulness of meat and other meat products. This study emphasizes the parent’s need of affirmation about their choice of upbringing their offspring and acknowledges the original research on this topic. The last section of the study addresses the practical problems resulting from the unconventional alimentation lifestyle.