

## **CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING EARLY PARENTHOOD IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: LIFE STRATEGIES OF PREGNANT WOMEN AND MOTHERS UNDER THE AGE OF 20**

### **Abstract**

*The data gathered in the qualitative study by 58 semi-structured interviews with pregnant teenage girls or teenage mothers were used to describe relatively large scope of life circumstances connected to early pregnancies. The author examines what was the reason for becoming pregnant, how the teenagers' decision about how to respond to getting pregnant was made and how their life strategies changed under the pressure of this unpredictable event. Studying sexual behavior of adolescent mothers the author placed emphasis on partners' communication connected with first sexual intercourse and the increased risk of sexual abuse among the observed population. Furthermore, the role of "sexual socialization" in the family of origin was discussed. Concerning decision-making process- "keeping the baby or not", the main emphasis was placed on the social support networks and their influence on pregnant women's decisions. Very important issue analyzed in this part of the study is phenomenon of „wishing to have a baby“. Another topics covered are the family formation process and housing conditions after opting for motherhood, in particular, the importance of marriage and the partner's presence for pregnant teenage women in such an important life transition period. In addition, the study presents the adolescent mothers' views and attitudes towards parenting skills and their perception of newly gained responsibility. Change of life style associated with parenthood was discussed even in the light of educational and professional aspirations.*

**Key words:** qualitative study, adolescent pregnancy, adolescent reproduction strategies, adolescent parenthood, adolescent sexual behaviour, social support, opting for motherhood, family formation, child care