

This thesis presents data gained from qualitative research that took place in Czech Republic in 2007. Based on in-depth interviews with women who experienced health complications during their pregnancy or whose pregnancies were classified as high-risk it analyses how the discourse of risk influences their subjective experience of pregnancy and how it affects the ways they talk about their motherhood and how they experience it. In the theoretical part of this thesis I highlight the approaches that conceptualize risk as a phenomenon that is socially constructed and mediated. I stress the relationship between the notion of risk and the way pregnancy has been constituted in the medical discourse. In the next part I focus on pregnancy as an embodied experience that is at the same time closely embedded in the gender relations and notions about women's bodies and their reproductive role. The second part of this thesis is based on data gained from the narrative interviews. The first chapter outlines the role that prenatal testing played in the narratives of my informants and analyzes the relationship between prenatal testing and the construction of authoritative medical knowledge as well as women's reasons for refusing the testing. The next chapter outlines ways the presence of risk influence women's conceptualization of motherhood.

Key words:

Body, embodiment, gender, medical authority, motherhood, pregnancy, prenatal testing, risk