

Abstract

Pregnancy is currently a highly monitored condition, and also, as a result of the strong discourse of healthy lifestyle, certain demands are placed on a pregnant woman's diet. However, the topic appears also in culturally framed advice and expectations, which often contradict the medical community's directions. With this work, for which my main question is how the perception of the body and fetus affects a woman's diet during pregnancy, I aimed to enrich this discussion with the perspective of pregnant women and their perception of the needs and tastes of their body and fetus. I base this work on authors such as Merleau-Ponty, Young and Bourdieu, and on data from 15 semi-structured interviews supplemented by 5 diaries kept during pregnancy. My research shows that pregnant women perceive their body and the fetus as actors that influence their eating, because through tastes, nausea or movement they perceive the communicated needs of the body and the fetus. The influence of eating and the perception of the body and the fetus, however, turned out to be mutual, because eating also has a significant influence on how women perceived and communicated with her body and fetus and perceived its individuality. With this research I therefore expand the current understanding of pregnant embodiment, medical anthropology and the anthropology of the body.