

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines narratives of C-section experiences to understand the personal perspective of a national conversation on medicalized birth. Birth statistics, child health, and reproductive rights, are often the focus of C-section studies. However, these approaches often exclude the perspectives of those experiencing the C-section. By centering narratives, we regain an understanding of what it means to experience a C-section in a system of medicalized birth. The analysis includes authoritative knowledge, self-education, and becoming a mother. Using narrative as an anthropological tool allows us to enlighten a topic that is so heavily studied through lenses of observation and data collection.

CENTERING C-SECTION NARRATIVES IN BIRTH DISCOURSE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Existing C-section Discourse.....	12
Understanding Narrative.....	23
Authoritative Knowledge in Narratives.....	33
Self-Education in Narratives.....	52
Becoming a Mother.....	60
Conclusion.....	78
References.....	82

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humanized and embodied. This aligns with the goal of my project, where I argue that C-sections are often studied through data and observation, and women's perspectives are left out. Narratives are powerful because they are relatable, and we must use them carefully as to humanize medicalized birth, without ignoring the strength of larger structures (hospitals).

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to give an overview of the ways narratives have been studied and how I will use them in my own analysis. I tried to show how various authors (Frank, Klass, and Davis-Floyd) used the concept of narrative to understand people interacting with medicine. These frameworks and usages of narratives show me what already exists, this allows me to build from them and situate my own narratives. Many aspects of Frank's and Davis-Floyd's narratives are reflected in my participant's narratives. My C-section narratives are enough like illness and medical narratives to find similarities, but they are also their own entity. I will also show the ways my narratives move outside of these molds, and hopefully can add to the existing analytic tools for understanding narrative.

how they can be analyzed anthropologically to add to the existing discourse on birth in the United States.

