

---

# Childbirth in the Global Village

---

Implications for Midwifery Education  
and Practice

Dawn Hillier

---

# Contents

---

<i>List of figures</i>	viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	x
<b>1 Women's stories, women's lives</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Four women's stories</i>	1
<i>Cultural messages</i>	8
<b>2 The global village</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>Symbolic exchanges</i>	14
<i>Reflexive modernity</i>	20
<i>Cultural types</i>	21
<i>Cultural theory and myths of childbirth</i>	24
<i>Conclusion</i>	25
<b>3 The nature of modernity: Society, development and risk</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>Social consequences of adjustment and restructuring</i>	28
<i>Public health: public trust</i>	32
<b>4 Experiences of childbirth in Africa</b>	<b>36</b>
<i>Characterising African rural and urban society</i>	40
<i>The reconstruction of childbirth in Africa</i>	45
<i>Penetrating the village: the extension of Western ideology in the practices of traditional midwives</i>	53
<i>Modern rituals and childbirth practices: ritual confusion</i>	54
<i>Conclusion</i>	56

<b>5 Experiences of childbirth in Malaysia</b>	<b>59</b>
<i>Persistence and change</i>	60
<i>The impact of modernity on Malaysian women in childbirth</i>	65
<i>Conclusion</i>	73
<b>6 Experiences of childbirth in America</b>	<b>74</b>
<i>American women's lives</i>	75
<i>The egalitarian struggle for authenticity</i>	77
<i>Fast birth: time as the dominant paradigm</i>	80
<i>Birth territory: where women birth</i>	81
<i>Concluding comment</i>	98
<b>7 Experiences of childbirth in England</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Hierarchical and egalitarian: opposing approaches to childbirth</i>	104
<i>Risk approach to childbirth: hierarchist model</i>	104
<i>Reconstructing relative risks</i>	109
<i>Why did childbirth have to change?: one woman's experience</i>	110
<i>Striving for egalitarianism</i>	113
<i>The beginnings of change</i>	115
<i>The changing experience of women</i>	115
<i>Symbolic exchanges: recreating childbirth and midwifery</i>	116
<i>Strategies of re-creation</i>	118
<i>Conclusion</i>	123
<b>8 Symbolic exchanges in childbirth: Reflections from the case studies</b>	<b>125</b>
<i>Symbolic exchanges in childbirth: the influence of science and medicine</i>	126
<i>Furthering the numerical paradigm: 'measuring' the risk of childbirth</i>	127
<i>The struggle for a place in the global village</i>	133
<i>The context of the global village</i>	136
<i>Traditional reliance on inherited and orally transmitted knowledge</i>	137
<i>Modernity: when non-traditional health, education and social supports are available and relied upon more than the traditional</i>	140
<i>Discussion</i>	143
<i>Conclusion</i>	146

<b>9 Cultural implications for midwifery education and practice</b>	<b>148</b>
<i>Global interconnectedness: local reframing</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>The cultural implications of modernity for the education and training of midwifery practitioners</i>	<i>149</i>
<i>Midwifery education and practice: sociocultural determinants</i>	<i>151</i>
<i>Making midwives: traditional birth attendant training</i>	<i>153</i>
<i>Knowledge production in development ideology</i>	<i>156</i>
<i>Making midwives in the modern world: cultural implications for professional programmes</i>	<i>161</i>
<i>Concluding discussion: in place of development: dialogue not training</i>	<i>162</i>
<b>10 The midwifery curriculum: A selection from culture?</b>	<b>164</b>
<i>Curriculum as a selection from culture: from content and hierarchist perspectives</i>	<i>164</i>
<i>The hierarchist model of education: curriculum as content: education as transmission</i>	<i>175</i>
<i>Reflecting on distance education</i>	<i>177</i>
<i>The case for indigenous knowledge</i>	<i>178</i>
<i>Curriculum as process and education as development: education through social action and interaction</i>	<i>179</i>
<i>Midwives' stories as vehicles for symbolic exchange: learning from situated knowledge</i>	<i>182</i>
<i>In summary</i>	<i>183</i>
<b>11 There and back again: The ripples on the pond</b>	<b>184</b>
<i>What do the stories tell us?</i>	<i>186</i>
<i>Concerning cultural types and myths of nature</i>	<i>189</i>
<i>Reflecting on the research</i>	<i>196</i>
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>199</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>223</i>