

Juliet Rayment

UK midwives' strategies for managing ideological conflict and distress in the workplace

This research will be of interest to:

- ★ Researchers in:
 - Nursing and midwifery studies
 - Labour Studies
 - Gender Studies
 - Medical Sociology
- ★ Midwives
- ★ Clinical managers



An ethnographic study exploring the ways in which midwives minimise distress and loss of dignity in the workplace in order to remain working in the NHS. Taking place during a well publicised 'crisis' in maternity care, the project seeks to understand the strategies midwives employ in order to negotiate the often conflicting demands of their profession and their employer.

Key Issues

The maternity service in the UK is undergoing an **acute shortage of midwives** due to the numbers leaving the profession or choosing to work part time.



These departures have been attributed to a **bullying culture**, **burnout**, a **lack of professional autonomy** and an **ideological conflict** between doing 'good midwifery' and the demands and/or restrictions of the NHS as an employer.

These factors contribute to midwives' experiences of **moral distress** and a **loss of dignity** at work.

Research Methods

Comparative ethnographic study of a consultant-led maternity unit and a midwifery-led unit:

- ★ Observation of midwives at work;
- ★ Walking interviews in the units;
- ★ Face-to-face discussions.

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