

Conclusion

This book has concentrated on two major concepts in sociology: culture and power. We began by looking at the way in which power has been analysed in sociological thought and at the way cultures are constructed. We hope to have illustrated that both play a major part in the way in which women both as mothers and as midwives are perceived by society.

We next looked at social policies and their impact on women and families. It is important to remember that social policies do not 'just happen', they are the product of social structures and processes. Social policies have had a significant effect on the lives of everyone and especially upon women. To an extent the framing of policies is structured by both cultures and power structures.

When looking at the effect of policies on the working practice of midwives we have concentrated very much upon the concept of professionalisation but it is important to remember that other power structures are now in existence which threaten the whole structure and culture of professions.

The original meaning of midwife was 'with woman' and we hope that this book will play a part in enabling this supportive relationship to be improved by a wider knowledge and analysis of the social world which both now inhabit.