



# Obstructed Labour: Race and Gender in the Re-Emergence of Midwifery

*Sheryl Nestel*

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*Obstructed Labour* analyzes how the movement to legalize midwifery in Ontario reproduced racial inequality by excluding from practice hundreds of professional midwives from the global south.

Sheryl Nestel traces how racist exclusion operated to produce the Ontario midwifery movement and the bureaucratic structures that superceded it, as all-white spaces. Examining global macroprocesses of power, institutional forms of racist exclusion, and interpersonal expressions of racism, Nestel shows unequal relations between women to underlie the successful challenge to patriarchal medical authority mounted by provincial midwifery activists.

*Obstructed Labour* offers a disturbing but fascinating counter-history of the re-emergence of midwifery, a feminist project that represented itself as fundamentally concerned with social equity. It also offers a timely illumination of the ways in which Canadian society squanders the much-needed expertise of internationally-educated professionals. *Obstructed Labour* should be read by those who want to understand how racism works in both policy and everyday practice as well as by those interested in pursuing equity in the struggle for women's reproductive rights.



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