

## **Abstract and Key Words**

This research examines the cosmology of home birth midwives in the context of California. This study aims to address a gap in the fields of Religion and Philosophy on the topics of alternative spirituality and home birth. In the current context of mainstream birth practices, there has been an increasing rise in the use of medical intervention during childbirth, resulting in the creation of an alternative home birth subculture that aims to safeguard the natural process of birth. To investigate the cosmology of this movement, informal interviews were conducted with four Licensed Midwives who attended home births and two home birth mothers. Additionally, key texts relevant to the discourse were examined, including midwifery books, birth manuals, and medical journals. The findings highlight themes that comprise the California home birth midwife cosmology including medical knowledge, holistic practices, spiritual awareness, ecological attunement, and feminist ideology. It traces the historical development of midwifery in contrast to obstetrics, the resurgence of home birth practices in the 1970s, and the integration of holistic healing modalities. The study emphasizes home birth midwifery's perception of birth as a sacred transcendental and liminal event that can evoke an altered state of consciousness. The cosmology lends itself to particular practices of mother-centered care, such as the Mother's Blessing ritual, intuition, and a non-invasive approach to birth.

**Keywords:** midwifery, home birth, California, holism, spirituality, alternative medicine