



“For our mothers”



“Preventing violence is a shared responsibility”; “Stop the violence”; “No to impunity”; “Stop the femicide”

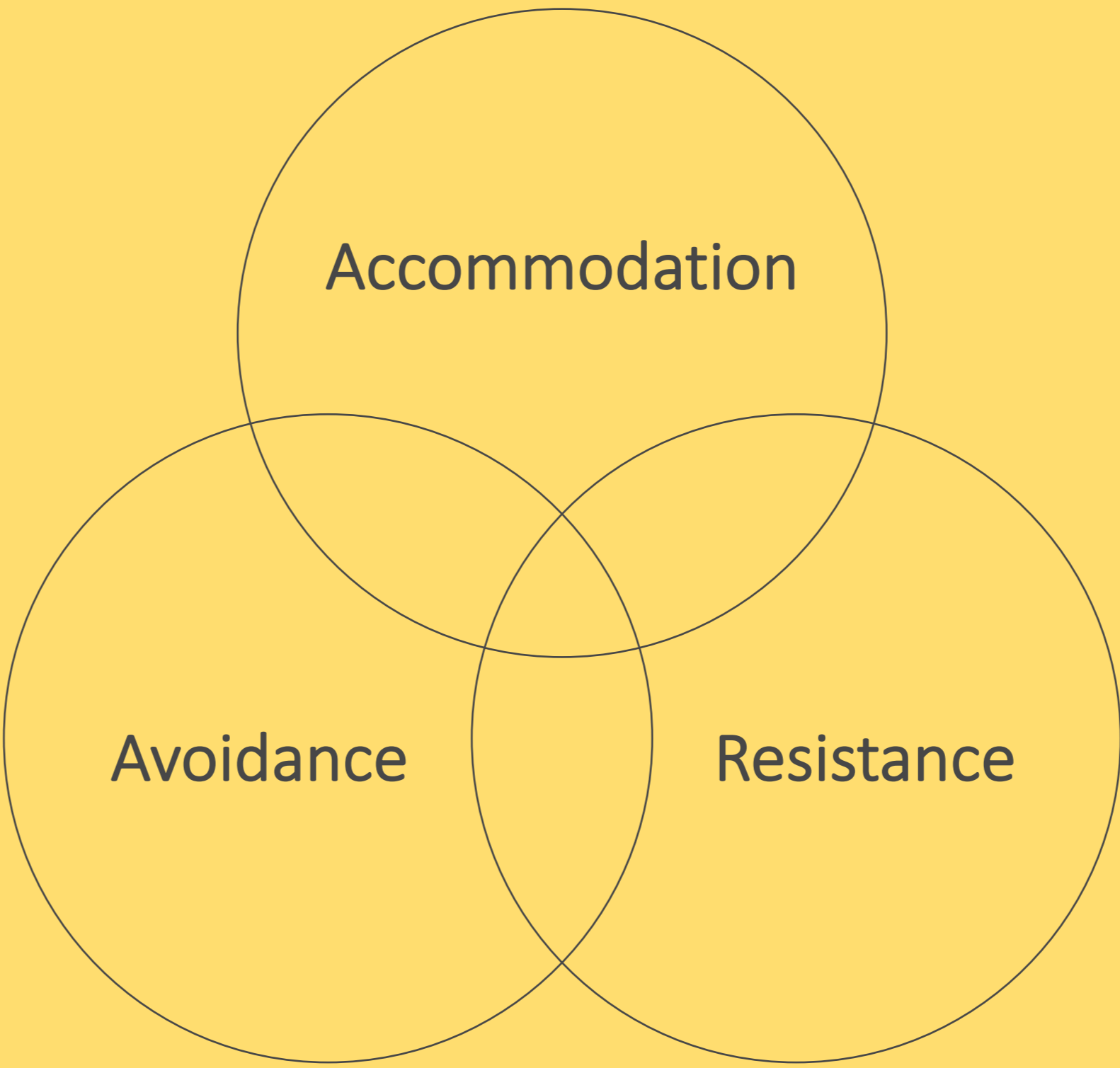


“We speak out for our sisters who have no voice”

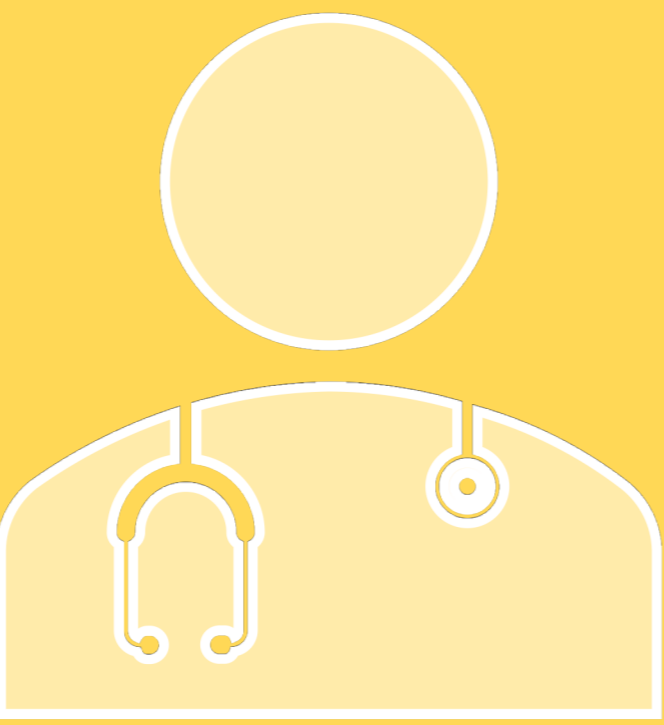
# In response to mistreatment during maternity care



# the agency of women in El Alto, Bolivia



# is influenced by



The authority ascribed to medical knowledge over a woman's own embodied knowledge and experience





The inadequacy of resources available to women, particularly a lack of information and qualified midwives



The vulnerability of the maternity experience

*“I escaped from the hospital; I went out so quietly”*: Women’s use of agency in response to mistreatment during maternity care in El Alto, Bolivia

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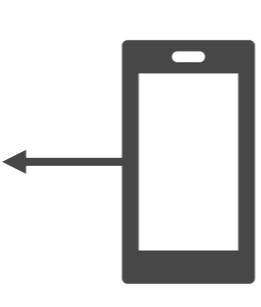
The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that influence women’s agency in response to experiences of mistreatment during maternity care in El Alto, Bolivia.

- Mistreatment during maternity care is a violation of women’s human rights.
- But, it is prevalent in maternity settings worldwide, including in Bolivia.
- In Latin America the development of the term ‘obstetric violence’ has defined hitherto hidden and normalised treatment in health centres as forms of structural violence.
- Accounts of women’s agency are missing from much of the literature on the topic.

**Exploratory qualitative framework:**  
Semi-structured interviews with 20 women aged 18-50 who gave birth in the last 5 years and experienced maternity care in El Alto, Bolivia.

- Policy recommendations:**
- Educating women and families on their rights and choices in pregnancy and childbirth can be an important means of empowering them to claim their rights to have safe and positive experiences.
  - **Woman-centred care** by integrating trained midwives into the health system who can act as advocates for women and an intermediary between the medical care and childbirth as a normal life event.
  - **Recognition of the role of the state** in mistreatment during maternity care and to develop implementation plans to ensure policies and laws are translated into concrete protections of rights.

Expands the discussion beyond ‘what it is’ and ‘why it happens’ to consider ‘how is it experienced and negotiated’.



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