

Redefining freebirth as a reproductive justice issue.

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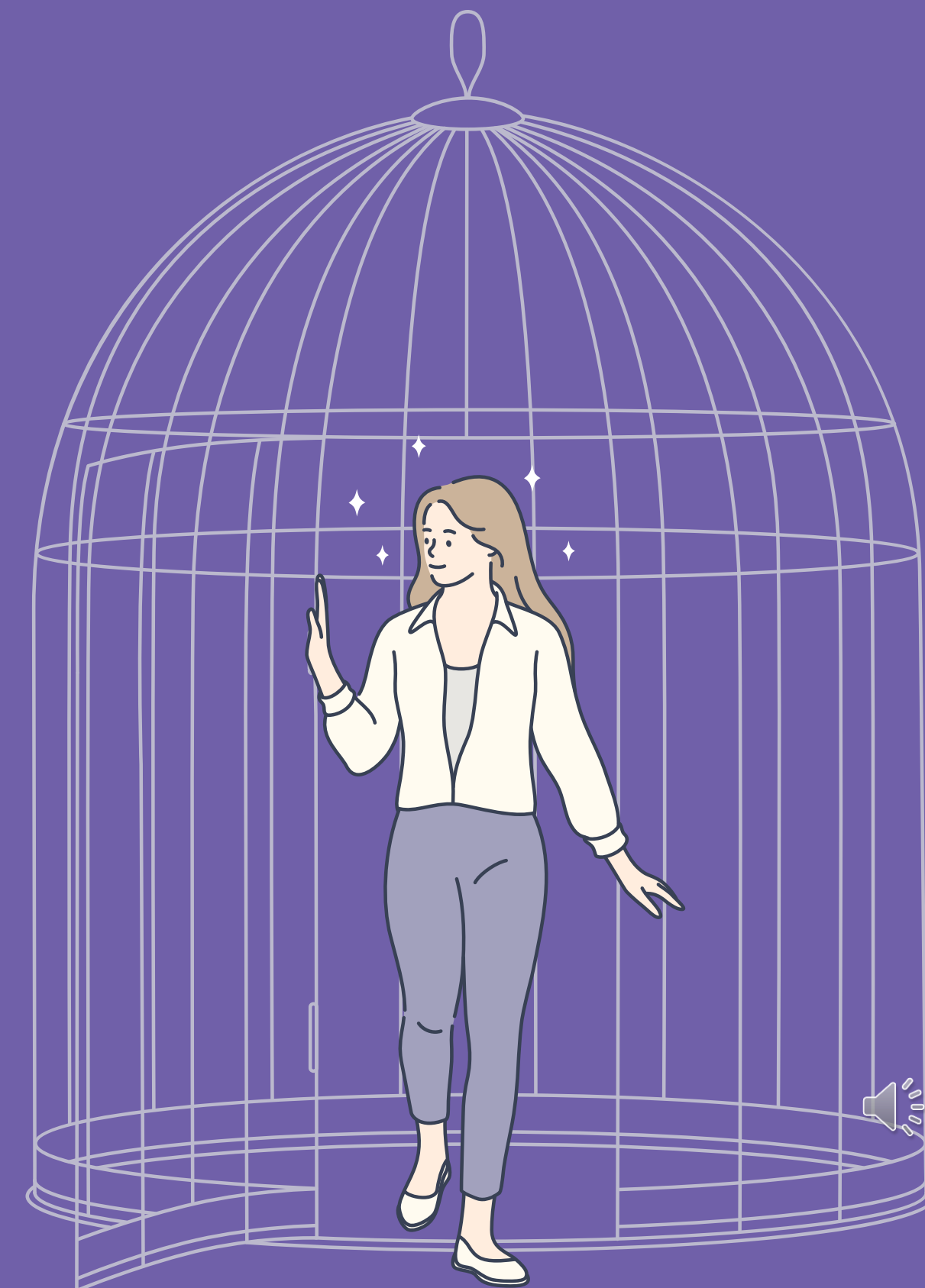
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Redefining freebirth as a reproductive justice issue



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Introduction

Freebirth is the deliberate decision to give birth at home without a regulated healthcare professional in countries where maternity care facilities are available and easily accessible



Unknown prevalence, but increasing?



Ethical debates on women's autonomy and moral accountability for the unborn baby

Why?

Research to date mostly focused on understanding women's motivations

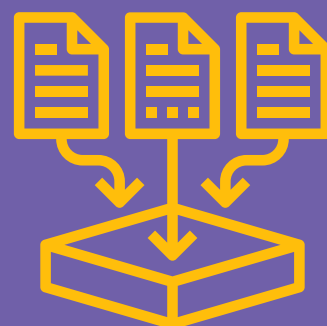




Methods



What factors influence women's choice to freebirth?
How do women who freebirth perceive maternity care?
What is the care experience for women who freebirth?



- CINALH
- PubMed
- Intermed
- MIDIRS
- Scopus
- Ethos
- EBSCO Open dissertations
- Manual citation chasing

Searches were carried out
in May 2022 and updated in
Aug 2023



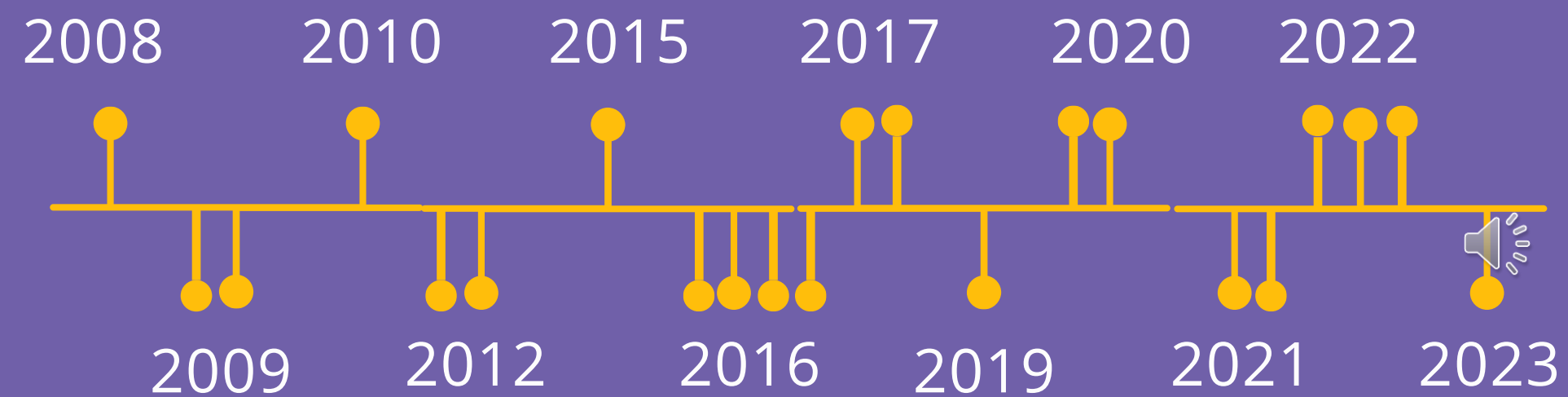
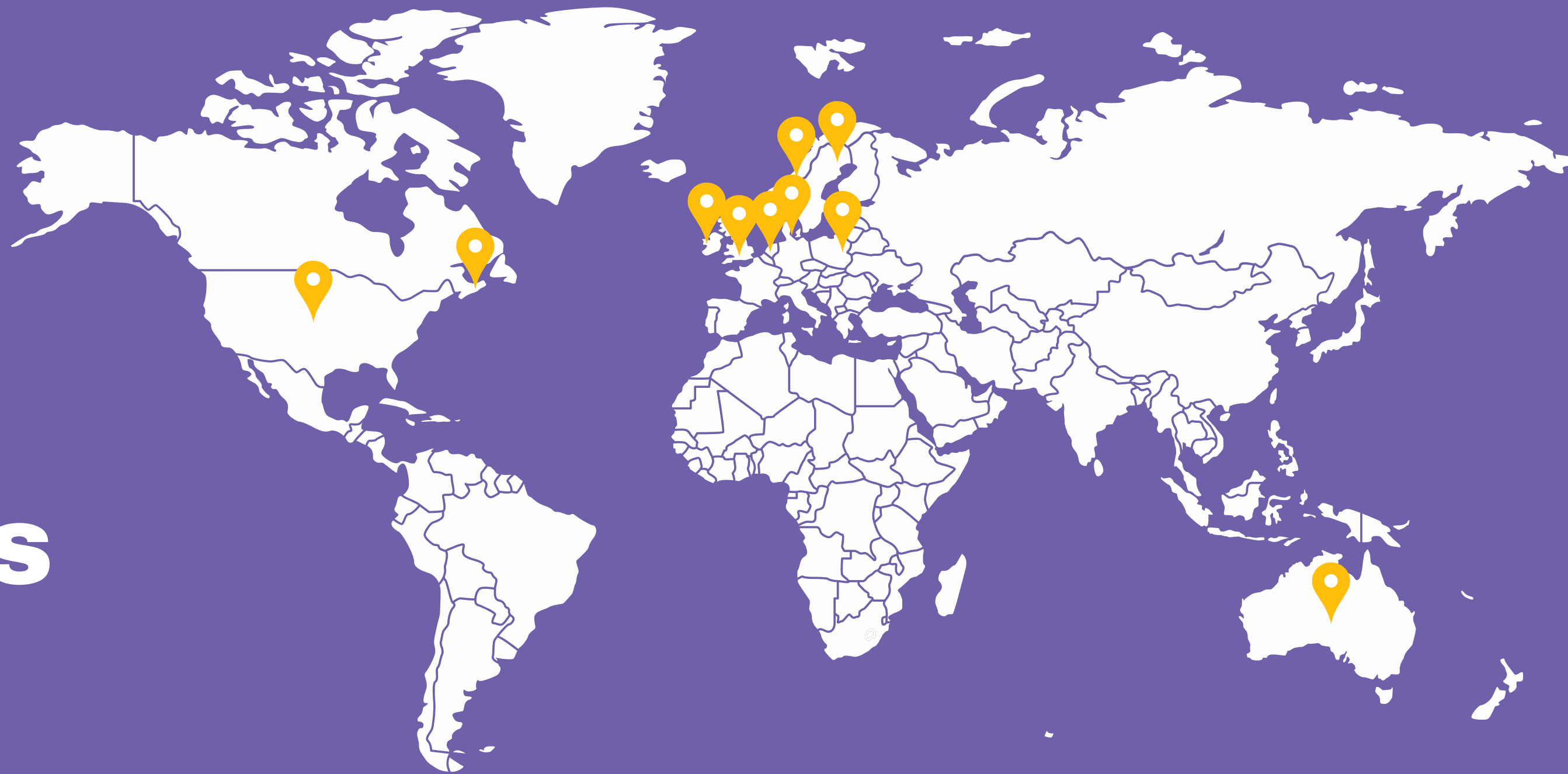
- Jan 2007 - Aug 2023
- High-income countries
- Qualitative or mixed methods
- Primary studies or dissertations
- Written in English



Thematic synthesis, underpinned
by a feminist standpoint, was used
to analyse the data.



Results





Findings



A quest for a safer birth



Powerful and powerless midwives



Rites of self-protection



A quest for a safer birth



Previous negative
or traumatic
experiences of
care

Previous very fast births
Previous positive births



Barriers to access wanted care

- No midwifery
- Inflexible policies
- Strict regulation of midwifery practice
- Inadequate midwifery availability





Powerful and powerless midwives

Previous power struggles
with care providers

Authoritative and
medicalised practice



Restricted by policies,
employers or indemnity
regulations

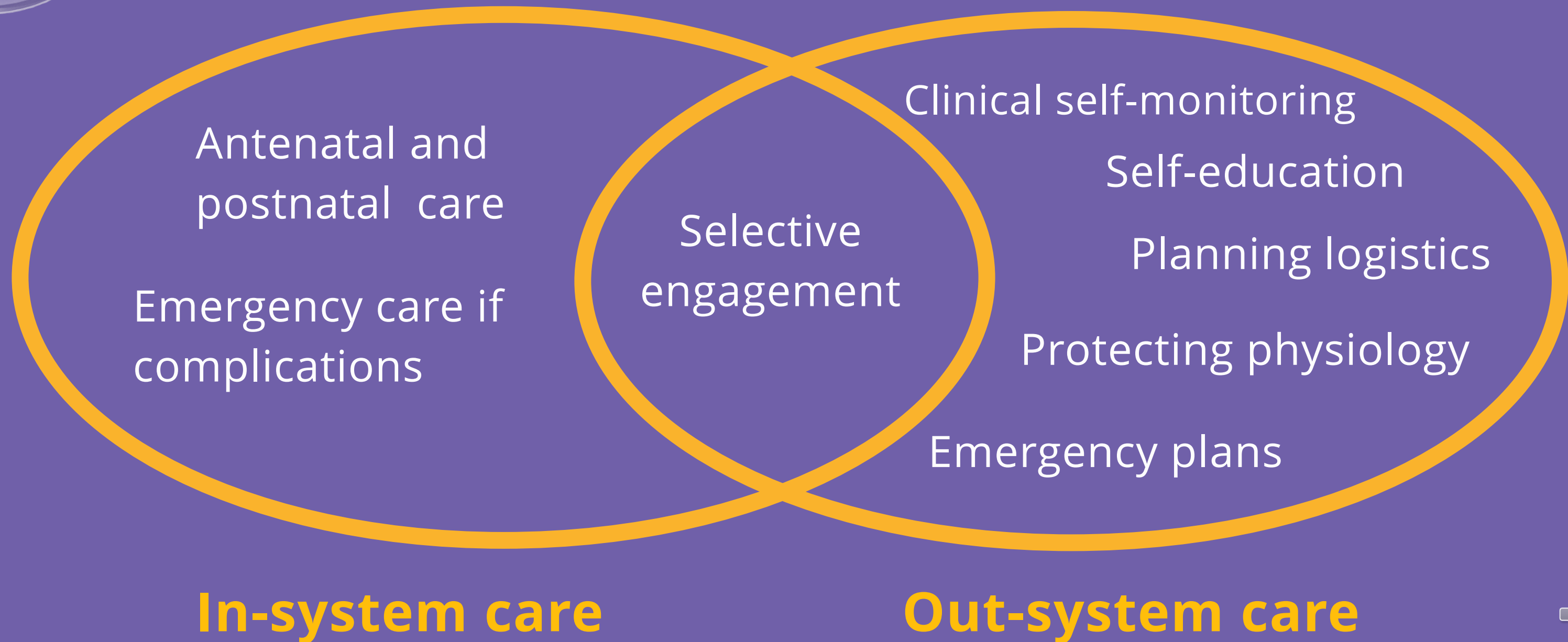
Fear of bad outcomes and
litigation

Fragmented and depersonalised care





Rites of self-protection





Discussion



**A broken system
creates reproductive
injustice**

Structural barriers

- No homebirth
- Restricted midwifery
- Biomedical hegemony

Relational barriers

- Shattered trust
(prev. trauma)
- Lack of continuity
- Disrespect and abuse

**Reproductive
self-
determination**

protects

Freebirth as self-care

- Peer support
- Self-education
- Selfcare agency
- Life affirming care

threatens





NEW

Freebirth is the practice of self-care during birth in contexts where emergency maternity care is readily available.

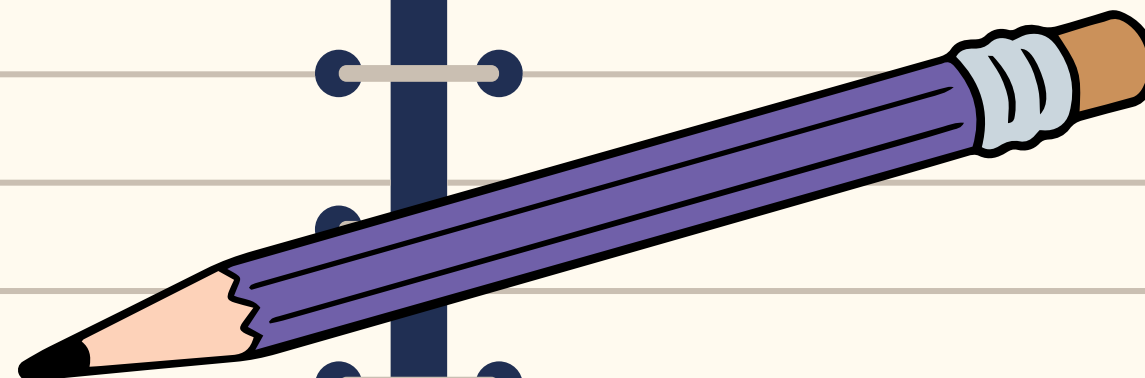


Strenghts

- ✓ Most comprehensive review to date with 22 publications
- ✓ Redefinition of freebirth as self-care practice in response to reproductive injustice
- ✓ Use of feminist lens to guide interpretation of data

Limitations

- ✗ Limited to high-income countries only
- ✗ Sample featured mostly White, heterosexual, highly educated women.
- ✗ Limited data on primiparous women



Get in touch



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More on my PhD study here

