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THE EFFECTS OF *EL PARTO VERTICAL* ON MATERNAL HEALTH IN PERU, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF NGO RESPONSE TO THESE TRENDS

Sarah Wang

Mentor: Bradley Stoner

El Parto Vertical, roughly translated into English as “Vertical Delivery,” is the Peruvian traditional form of giving birth. Considered as a more natural form of delivery, *el parto vertical* involves the mother giving birth in a squatting (supported or not), kneeling, and/or standing position. The benefits of *el parto vertical* [B3] have already been well-established around the world, including that the squatting position opens up the pelvic opening to facilitate with birth, that the force of gravity helps the baby descend into the birthing canal with decreased pressure on the mother to push, and countless others. However, Peru continues to be one of the leading countries in maternal mortality. The methods by which I conducted the research included individual interviews, surveys/questionnaires, and participant observation. The primary collection of data consisted of ethnographic field notes. In this research project, I was able to examine and observe the effects and consequences of *el parto vertical* on maternal health in Peru. After spending four weeks in Peru actively pursuing answers to the questions listed above, I found that after giving birth in the hospital, with the option of the position *el parto vertical*, the maternal mortality rate greatly decreased.