

Research Project

Dynamics of social relations and sexual practices in the context of HIV/AIDS in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (working title)

Project funded by own resources

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Status Completed

Although West Africa has remarkably low prevalence rates, AIDS is a burning issue to the population in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso (national HIV prevalence 1.6%). HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns are based on Euro-American representations of the body and society with the corresponding biomedical terminology and social and moral concepts. Due to a multitude of additional actors (NGOs, religious communities, media) providing information, interpretations of HIV/AIDS are manifold and influence the ways in which people think and speak about and act in view of this illness. This project examines and compares urban dwellers' narratives about sexual relations from generational and gender perspectives, paying particular attention to the ways in which these perspectives are shaped by scientific, developmental and popular discourses on HIV/AIDS.

First findings show that several popular narratives about sexual relations coexist in the study area called "Secteur 29". Elderly people refer to pre-colonial or "traditional" institutions controlling premarital adolescent sexuality. They complain about the decline of these institutions when talking about current sexual practices of adolescents in the city, and blame especially young girls. Most old people believe the decline of these institutions is responsible for the spread of HIV.

The narratives of young girls and boys express a quest for new representations of femininity and masculinity. Living multiple and concurrent partnerships, they reinterpret "traditional" institutions of polygamy and other forms of socially acceptable extramarital relationships.

Of particular interest to public health are narratives about condom use. A reluctance to use condoms seems to be widespread and fuelled by fears about the negative effects of this preventive measure on men's health and masculinity as well as on the joy of sexual experience.

The thesis will be written in French with the working title "Dynamiques des relations sociales et pratiques sexuelles dans le contexte du VIH/sida à Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)".

Keywords medical anthropology, urbanization, societal change, gender, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), HIV/AIDS

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Add publication**Published results**

1555472, Schwärzler, Patricia, Sex and the city : Erzählungen alter Männer und Frauen über jugendliche Sexualität und AIDS in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), 978-3-631-57839-1 ; 3-631-57839-3, Publication: ConferencePaper (Artikel, die in Tagungsbänden erschienen sind)

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