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PROJECT

Inhospitable Medicine: Homosexuality, Medical Discrimination, and the Precarious Life in Cameroon

In general, this ethnographically grounded research addresses the problem of medical discrimination based on stereotyped sexual and gender identity, which is a central problem in the public health system in Cameroon. It places emphasis on the moralizing rhetoric as well as the stigmatising attitude many healthcare providers are increasingly adopting towards LGBTIQ patients. The research aims to shed light on the complex ways in which the country's medical order has been dealing with patients with non-conforming sexual and gender identities since the country's enactment of anti-homosexual legislation in 1965. Specifically, it aspires to produce ethnographic data on the changing situation of LGBTIQ people in public medical institutions in Cameroon: initially as "invisible patients" whose sexual identity was ignored, and since 2006 as radical "sexual others" whose access to healthcare is increasingly denied. The research will also examine the various (ideological, cultural, and political) justifications for the current alienation or "othering" of some LGBTIQ patients in the country's medical institutions.

It will be therefore demonstrated that the growing stigmatization of suspected or self-identified homosexual people in numerous public healthcare centres in Cameroon coincides with a particular moment when the country's medical order increasingly regards homosexuality as a major medical and social issue. Moreover, the research contends that the politics of blame and guilt plays a crucial role in the stereotypical view of LGBTIQ patients, as well as in the discriminatory care many encounter in a number of the country's medical institutions. In this regard, the case study of a few homosexual patients will show how the country's medical system increasingly moralizes its medical practices and discourses, and at times does not hesitate to saturate the medical personnel with these ethics.

Recommended Reading

Ndjio, Basile (2016). "Nation and its Undesirable Subjects: Homosexuals and Alien 'Others' in Cameroon." In *The Culturalization of Citizenship: Belonging and Polarization in a Globalizing World*, edited by Jan Willem Duyvendak, Peter Geschiere, and Evelien Tonkens, 115–136. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

– (2020). "Death without Mourning: Homosexuality, Homo Sacer, and Bearable Loss in Central Africa." *Africa* 90 (5): 852–869. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972020000613>.

– (2023). "Coronavirus, Imagined Location, and Disenchanted Home in Africa." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 23 (1): 92–110. <https://doi.org/10.3138/diaspora.23.1.2023.02.14>.