



**UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)**

**Secret strategies: Women and abortion in Yoruba society, Nigeria**

Koster, W.

[Link to publication](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Koster, W. (2003). Secret strategies: Women and abortion in Yoruba society, Nigeria Amsterdam: Aksant

**General rights**

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

**Disclaimer/Complaints regulations**

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

# CONTENTS

**PREFACE** VII

**PROLOGUE: TOYIN** I

- 1 **INTRODUCTION** 3
  - Study rationale 3
  - Induced abortion 5
  - Contraception 13
  - Study objectives and research questions 16
  - Theoretical concepts 17
  - Content of chapters 26
  
- 2 **STUDY METHODOLOGY** 29
  - Premises 29
  - Exploratory research 34
  - Surveys 37
  - Participatory action research 48
  - Case histories 57
  - Data analysis 59
  - Limitations 60
  - Reflections 61
  
- 3 **YORUBA SOCIETY** 63
  - History and religions 63
  - Economy 72
  - Education 75
  - Family ties 77
  - Children 89
  - Social and ethical values 93
  - Sexuality 97
  - Health-care providers 101
  - Conclusion 108

- 4 **ABORTION, RULE AND REALITY** 109  
Public opinions about abortion 110  
Prevalence of abortion 125  
Background of women aborting 127  
Proportion of unsafe abortions 129  
Abortion complications and deaths 131  
Conclusion 134
- 5 **ABORTION BY SINGLE WOMEN** 137  
Reasons for resorting to abortion 138  
Coping with unwanted pregnancy 143  
Abortion methods and providers 151  
Unsafe abortion 161  
Facing complications 171  
Abortion deaths 177  
Conclusion 183
- 6 **MARRIED WOMEN AND ABORTION** 187  
Three case histories 188  
Reasons for abortion 191  
Coping with unwanted pregnancy 198  
Abortion methods and providers 200  
Unsafe abortion 204  
Coping with complications 205  
Death from abortion 208  
Conclusion 212
- 7 **PREVENTING UNWANTED PREGNANCY** 215  
Contraceptive services 218  
Ideal childbearing 223  
Dominant rules about abstinence 225  
Perceptions of modern contraceptives 227  
Contraceptive use 232  
Contraceptive use and abortion 242  
Premarital abstinence 250  
Conclusion 257

- 8 **INFERTILITY** 261  
    Sympathy and accusations 263  
    Prevalence of infertility 267  
    Looking for a cause 270  
    Coping with infertility 274  
    Reactions of husbands and in-laws 284  
    Infertility and abortion 289  
    Conclusion 293
- 9 **EXPOSURE OF SECRET STRATEGIES** 295  
    The reality versus the rules 295  
    Abortion decisions in the socio-economic context 297  
    Abortion services' context 299  
    Coping with an emergency 300  
    Abortion and contraception 301  
    Abortion and infertility 303  
    Conclusion: Female agency and secret strategies 304  
    Recommendations 308  
    Finally 312

**NOTES** 315**APPENDICES** 337

Appendix A: Profile of study populations 337

Appendix B: Data collection tools 343

**REFERENCES** 357

List of tables 369

List of figures 371

List of boxes 371

Abbreviations 372

Glossary 373

**AUTHOR INDEX** 375**SUBJECT INDEX** 378**SUMMARY** 387**SAMENVATTING** 394

