

American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (AJHSSR)

e-ISSN : 2378-703X

Volume-6, Issue-10, pp-83-93

[www.ajhssr.com](http://www.ajhssr.com)

Research Paper

Open Access

## SOCIAL LOGICS OF THE ADOPTION OF TECHNIQUES BODY SLIMMING.

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*Case of young girls from Cocody (Abidjan) who have become overweight*

**ABSTRACT:** The qualitative study by an inductive approach on the weight loss of young girls is part of a social context marked by the appearance of the cult of thinness among young girls in Côte d'Ivoire. Two essential ideas stand out, namely: the buxom body is perceived as the dominant beauty standard among the female population in Côte d'Ivoire on the one hand and on the other hand, the recourse to slimming diets by certain young girls in the commune Cocody (Abidjan) having become overweight. Also, the adoption of slimming diets by young girls who have become overweight is in contradiction with the social construction of the buxom body as the dominant beauty norm among the female population in Côte d'Ivoire. Thus, the objectives of the study aim to describe the body weight loss techniques used by young girls in Cocody who have become overweight; to show how systems of representation of bodily beauty lead to the adoption of body slimming techniques by young girls in Cocody who have become overweight; to identify the mechanism by which the social relations within the groups to which they belong structure the adoption of techniques for slimming the body by the young girls of Cocody who have become overweight; and to define the issues associated with the adoption of body-slimming techniques by overweight young girls in Cocody.

**Keywords:** weight loss, body, social construction, young girl.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The ideal of beauty among young girls is part of the Ivorian context and revolves around two (2) elements. On the one hand, the identification of size as the dominant beauty standard among the female population in Côte d'Ivoire. On the other hand, the appearance of the cult of thinness among young girls in Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, according to Atsé et al. (2016), in Côte d'Ivoire, the figure of *wholesale* as a social norm has long been the distinctive feature of elitist social classes. Being overweight was considered a sign of wealth, beauty, power and even health. Therapeutic and dietary practices were used to communicate to the body this socially accepted ideal form, that is to say the size.

The body thus served as communication. It made it possible to transmit a message, to express a certain standard of living (Boëth, 2003). In this perspective, for certain ethnocultural groups, in this case among the Akan (Ebrié, Akyé, Aboué, Adjoukrou, etc.), the thin nursing woman was perceived as an economically weak person. In addition, eating in quantity and quality to gain weight appears to be a way of refusing the status of "poor" in the economic approach to the term (Atsé, 2013).

This ritual practice, translated through specially therapeutic and dietary actions, has gradually been implemented in social representations and the consciousness of populations to the point that it continues to be valued today. We are therefore witnessing a social reproduction of Ivorian society in the light of this representation of the body. However, we see specifically among young girls who have become overweight, the appearance of the cult of thinness as another trend aimed at the transformation of the body. During the last decade, we observe a transformation of the normative framework structuring the representation of the body in the Ivorian urban environment. Opulence or size "as a metaphor" for wealth, beauty and power partly loses its symbolic relevance in favor of "thinness" (Fischler, 2001) which has become the ideal of beauty.

This trend reversal now gives way to thinness as a sign of integrity and elegance (Poulain, 2009), of performance, dynamism and efficiency (Parquet, 1997), of health (Détrez, 2002). In other words, this shift in the standard of beauty towards thinness goes hand in hand with a change in the representations of fat and thin bodies (Etien, 2009).

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In Côte d'Ivoire, and particularly in the economic capital (Abidjan), one can notice that the cult of thinness has become a fashion among the female population. Indeed, all categories of women are interested in practices and advice leading to slimming. At the same time, it is gradually developing in certain residential areas, particularly in the municipality of Cocody, affiliated slimming practices (diet institute, sports or fitness centres) or separate from pharmacies. That said, before being a social object, the body is above all biological in nature and as such is left to biologists and doctors (Saint de Pol, 2010). These specialists or "slimming advisors" provide advice on the practice of sport and even on the use of pharmaceutical products that promote weight loss. Therefore, the body is maintained, repaired and cared for by weight-loss diets which are used by certain actors who consider themselves overweight in order to be less exposed to health risks such as nutritional pathologies (diabetes, arterial hypertension, cancer). Also, other young girls who have become overweight maintain their bodies in order to lose weight and build their own body. Every society attaches great importance to the body. Indeed, some ethnic groups in Africa prefer women who have a buxom body. The woman who makes the earth tremble when she walks, such is the image of the "true" African woman popularly described in Africa. As such, we can see various beauty contests organized to enhance and promote the beauty of the voluptuous African woman. Examples include Miss Awoulaba<sup>3</sup> in Ivory Coast, Miss Diongoma in Senegal, Queen Hanan in Benin (Rev Med Switzerland, 2014).

**Figure 1: Miss Awoulaba, beauty ideal in Côte d'Ivoire.**



Source: (LiveCI)

In Côte d'Ivoire, there are several peoples who celebrate beauty. Among these peoples, the study identifies the AKAN people who celebrate feminine beauty called *the Awoulaba* and designating the queen of beauty. The *Awoulaba* pageant is an example of the dominant beauty standard being women with lumps. Indeed, *the Awoulaba* was created in 1980 in order to allow women with abundant flesh to promote Ivorian African beauty. Miss *Awoulaba* is therefore chosen on the basis of the good preservation of her beauty after several pregnancies and the curves she has such as: the strong chest, the enlarged pelvis. From then on, this contest was perpetuated until our days. Indeed for Ivorians, to be beautiful, you must have a beautiful pool, observes Sarah, a 34-year-old trader. "*Men prefer women with a little buttocks*". Because curves are a sign of opulence and "good health", explains political scientist Jean Alabro. They are also pledges of "glorious maternities", of which "the buttocks are the seat". Alongside this, it should also be noted that since the 20th century, there has been a race to develop breasts, buttocks and pelvis. This race concerns women of all social categories. This phenomenon of size was born precisely in the 2000s with the development of a lexicon, clothing, urban musical rhythms, the *offbeat cut*, *mapouka*<sup>4</sup>, *bobaraba*<sup>5</sup>, *bôchô*<sup>4</sup>, advertising posters promoting curves. This promotion of curves as the ideal of beauty in Côte d'Ivoire will lead to the development of the sale of various products in order to satisfy women who want to have curves (Lognon and Andoh, 2019).

<sup>3</sup>Miss. "Awoulaba"; Miss Diongoma, Queen Hanan: Beauty pageant for busty women with well-developed, plump buttocks. "Awoulaba " Diongoma " Hanan " "is a term taken from the ethnic group of each country that are Ivory Coast; of Senegal and Benin which designates the buxom woman.

<sup>4</sup>Traditional dance from the south-east of the Ivory Coast modernized by urban artists around the end of the 1990s. The choreography of this dance consists of moving the generally voluminous buttocks

<sup>5</sup>Dance and musical rhythm which means in the Malinké language of northern Côte d'Ivoire "big buttocks" "borabara": buttocks and "ba": big; "bôchô": big buttocks

This tendency to appear beautiful, attractive by having curves, encouraged certain young girls to use products in order to possess them. Thus, this desire to possess curves has led to the development of the market for products to have curves. This phenomenon of the search for curves is becoming more and more widespread in the commune of Cocody, confirms Aicha, a seller of products to have curves: " *Since I was little I sold with my aunt, I was little, from my childhood here was not like that oh we weren't like that much until today, I'm here a long time ago so my aunt gave me this place she sells in there; in the market so I am selling for myself here now.* "

There are several types of products to have curves: " *the tablets all that there we mix to give to people. That same morning, I did to give to a client* " . The products are of various orders. " *I sell everything. You see syrup we call dynewell , tough . You saw this tablet, it's for the buttocks, there are also three days, all that there too we put in there, there is one there we call malocénie with fish with liver oil, there is another which are going to take a shot (injection)* " . The images below are for illustration.

**Figure 3 : Produits de grossissement des fesses et seins.**



Source : (Google.com)

**Figure 4 :injection pour le grossissement des fesses.**



Source : (Google.com)

other hand, in recent years, a new phenomenon has been observed in the municipality of Cocody: that of the use of weight-loss diets (RA) and the attendance of fitness centers by young girls who have become overweight. Indeed, it should be remembered that the history of the use of slimming diets dates back to the 1930s in Europe, with the birth of the first paid holidays and therefore beach holidays. During this period, women "bare themselves", exposing themselves in bikinis by the sea to reveal the navel. Most of the women who did it were slender, thin, had generous breasts, luscious, sensual lips, with a flat belly without roundness in order to attract the gaze of others. This is the beginning of the cult of thinness. We must be slender, because to be elegant, we must be slender. So, thinness becomes a fashion phenomenon, the body must be very thin. This desire to have a perfect slender body is spreading all over the world with the publication of books serving as "slimming guides". They show in detail diets and techniques for losing weight, give light recipes, sometimes even a program to follow, as well as the publication of video games. Losing weight by playing video games is indeed possible. The sport even reaches the living rooms, we see appearing more and more video games devoted to sport, diets, and balance. They offer many exercises, such as fitness, dance, other games offer not sports, but cooking lessons. Many offer 'slimming' or 'line' recipes to make. The weight-loss diet market is therefore experiencing incredible success in the world, and particularly in Africa. Indeed, Côte d'Ivoire and precisely the economic capital (Abidjan) does not remain behind this new trend. We note that the cult of thinness through the use of weight-loss diets (RA) is becoming a practice that young Ivorian girls regularly indulge in. From young girls, to elderly women and adults, all are interested in practices and advice leading to slimming.

Generally, because of motherhood, adult and older women resort to body slimming techniques aimed at reducing the overload accumulated during the years of childbearing. On the other hand, followers of slimming diets in Cocody are generally young girls whose age is between 18 and 24 years old, who have not known maternity, who have become overweight and who devote themselves to weight-loss diets such as: sports, pharmaceutical products, dietary restrictions and rub shoulders with dietitian-nutritionists to provide them with advice, clothing aimed at weight loss, as well as food supplements. What are the social logics of the adoption of body slimming techniques by young girls in Cocody who have become overweight in a social context where the buxom body is perceived as the dominant beauty norm among the female population?

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Cocody, one of the large municipalities in the district of Abidjan. Indeed, Abidjan is the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire. Two reasons justify the choice of this municipality. On the one hand, the rapid development of sports centers commonly called fitness centers and diet centers. On the other hand, the interest of the inhabitants of Cocody in slimming diets to the point where every weekend, the sports halls are filled with people in particular, young girls being the most numerous to indulge in it. This situation caught our attention and motivated us to choose the commune of Cocody as the research investigation site. Young girls between the ages of 18 and 24, who have not yet had a mother, who have become overweight and who are adopting weight-loss techniques were our main target.

The actors to whom the interview guides were submitted are from three categories of actors who reside in Cocody, namely the expert population, the control population and the target population. The expert population is made up of health professionals working in the municipality of Cocody, such as: sports coaches and nutritionist dieticians. The interviews with these actors focused on the different weight loss techniques used by young girls in Cocody and the normative framework that structures the use of these techniques. As for the control population, it consists of sellers of weight-loss products. The exchanges with these individuals made it possible to know the age group in which the practitioners of slimming diets are registered and to know the extent of this phenomenon in the commune of Cocody.

The target population consists of young girls from Cocody registered in the age group of 18 to 24 years, who have not yet experienced motherhood and who have become overweight constitute the target population. Discussions with these social actors made it possible to identify the motivations underlying their adoption of weight-loss techniques. The choice of this group of actors is explained by the fact that it allows us to understand the stakes and the social representations of the actors faced with this practice and to better understand the phenomenon.

**Table 1: Summary table of sample size**

| CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS | NUMBER OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| HEALTH PROFESSIONALS                  | 02                           |
| SELLERS OF WEIGHT LOSS PRODUCTS       | 02                           |
| PARTICIPANTS OF WEIGHT LOSS DIETS     | 08                           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                          | 12                           |

Source : Aboutou Marcelle, field survey (2019)

The sample size is 12 individuals questioned. This sample size is justified by the fact that no new information was added to the data collection. The same information was repeated, which is why data collection was stopped.

### 1. THE BODY WEIGHTING TECHNIQUES ADOPTED BY THE YOUNG GIRLS OF COCODY

This chapter is devoted to the description of all the body weight loss techniques (TAC) mentioned and adopted by young girls in Cocody who have become overweight. Indeed, the young girls of Cocody who have become overweight believe that beauty depends on the body being maintained and cared for by body slimming techniques. The adoption of these techniques is due to the fact that they consider that their bodies do not meet the bodily criteria they aim for. This is one reason why they implement several processes or make use of various products that have an impact on weight loss and their inclusion in the framework of bodies that are socially constructed as beautiful. These practices or products aimed at reducing their body mass are of two types: practices or products called natural because of their biological compositions and those called artificial because of their chemical compositions

#### .1.1 Social practices and natural products

Several natural techniques are used for weight loss. The study identified three (3) namely decoctions or lemonades, diets and the practice of sport.

#### 2. herbal decoctions

The decoctions are juices that some young girls obtain after mixing several plants that they have prepared themselves. The juice serves them as a drink at any time of the day. The verbatims below give an account of the procedures for making said decoctions.

*"First even there, I took the senna leaves here is as you see I have the senna leaves, I prepare I put in water, now to lose weight there I cut lemon I have put in so I drink, but it must be said that it makes my stomach sink. Well that's what I'm taking now. (Kady 22 years old)*

*“Generally, uh, we take plant-based products. We were advised to take ginger for those who want to have a flat stomach, to lose weight, the ginger you prepare, you take the ginger juice you drink by adding a few drops of lemon, either you take the simple ginger raw you also crush and you extract the juice, you mix with the lemon and you drink it”. (Emmanuela 23 years old)*

*“I use lemon, and I make still lemonade to drink on an empty stomach. (Sandrine)*

It emerges from the speeches of certain young girls that the decoctions are a natural technique which enables them to transform their body, to lose weight. In addition to decoctions, they also follow diets.

### 3. - diets

To lose weight and especially to have a body of their own, the young girls of Cocody who have become overweight follow diets. This consists, for these young girls, in reviewing their diet by consuming mostly foods with low energy density: fruits and vegetables and especially eating at times recommended by the diets. One of them describes her experience in these terms: *“ When I started I ate apples; bananas ; papayas all that is fruit in the morning now at noon I eat properly but without oil and no soda and at 4 p.m. when I'm hungry I drink tea or I still eat fruit now in the evening I quak without added sugar or oil-free spaghetti too. It's the diet”* ( Christelle, 19 years old ).

In addition, the use of teas or herbal teas contribute in turn to the reduction of the weight of the followers.

### 4. - teas or herbal teas

*“ I also used Aloe Vera slip teas, I took but it didn't work. There are several teas I've used but I can't remember their names. ( kady 22 years old).*

**Figure 5: Slim aloe vera**



Source: ABOUTOU MARCELLE (2019)

*“Currently I am looking for another product, the name of the tea is: green coffee ”* ( Affoue 24 years old)

Finally, the practice of sport is the ultimate process to which the young girls in study have recourse in order to attain the idealized silhouette. However, they associate it with the so-called natural techniques mentioned above.

### 5. - The practice of sports

There are a variety of activities included in sports to lose weight such as running, abdominal exercises, walking on treadmills, dancing etc. Young girls in Cocody who have become overweight choose what they want to do according to their expectations. Specifically, some young girls choose to practice activities related to running and abdominal exercises as corroborated by the following verbatim:

*“I do sports, I do practical abs activities and some stretching at the beginning for fat loss and everything ”* ( Affoufé 24 years old )

*“ When the young girls who come either they do exercises, that is to say that we have the machines; treadmills; bicycles; rowers on which they will just try to walk, to work just 20 minutes; 30 minutes sometimes 1 hour right after they try to do exercises just on the floor. (Coach Habib )*

*“When I go to fitness sports with the coach, we start by running around the field according to our rhythm for 20 minutes. And when we were used to it, I could do several laps in 20 minutes, after that we do the stretching to relax the muscles, then we move on to jumping rope then dancing with the music, the goal is to sweat; you feel like you're not doing sports so you're burning fat unknowingly and we end up with abdomens. ( Christelle 19 years old )*

In addition to the so-called natural techniques, the girls under study adopt artificial techniques. This in order to lose weight quickly and effectively.

## 5.2 THE SO-CALLED ARTIFICIAL PRODUCTS

Generally, artificial techniques are based on chemicals. We note: cid vinegars, fat burner accessories (belts, clothes) and food supplements that aim to reduce body weight.

### 6. - cider vinegar

Apple cid vinegar is an aqueous solution with a low acetic content which is mainly used in human food as a condiment and food preservative. It is also a fat burner. It is used by young girls from Cocody to lose weight. The verbatim below corroborates this.

" *There is also vinegar, what do you call it? There is a vinegar that makes cid vinegar lose weight* " (Affoué, 24 years old)

Then, we note the belts and clothes as accessories used by the young girls of Cocody who have become overweight.

#### **7. - fat burner accessories (belts, clothes )**

The young girls in the study wear fat burner accessories. These accessories consist of clothing and belts. They usually wear them on the hip and these accessories have been designed specifically to burn fat. Indeed, to produce the expected effects, these accessories must be in contact with the part they wish to reduce . Slimming belts burn belly fat by targeting the abdomen and waist instantly. In addition, they tone the muscles. Sandrine's assertion highlights the mechanism: "*There are so many slimming products. There are belts, there are slimming clothes that you wear. You put under your jeans or under everything you wear, these are fat burners, you wear them at specific times and you wear them for 5 hours and then you take them off*" (Sandrine)

Ultimately, the study identified dietary supplements.

#### **8. -food supplements**

Young girls in Cocody who have become overweight take capsules as weight-loss food supplements. These capsules are made up of nutritional substances whose purpose is to supplement the diet. They help oxidize stored fat and lose weight. These dietary supplements are constructed as not being drugs. They would therefore not exert a therapeutic action and would not be intended to prevent diseases. An interviewee signifies this in her words:

" *There are also others who proceed with food supplements, there are tablets that are said to be weight- loss because when you take it, you don't need to eat. For a week, two weeks you can lose weight* » Corine (22 years old).

In conclusion, it should be noted that the weight-loss techniques adopted by the young girls in the study and described in this chapter do not differ from the techniques noted in the work of Atsé et al. (2016). Indeed, these authors show that for weight loss the young girls of Cocody having become overweight, they submit to slimming diets where, contrary to their previous lifestyles, they consume less fat, practice sports such as jogging, walking and racing.

### **9. THE INCOMPLETENESS OF THE BUSTY BODY, AN IDEOLOGICAL RESOURCE OF LEGITIMATION OF THE ADOPTION OF THE TAC BY THE YOUNG GIRLS OF COCODY**

The young girls of Cocody who have become overweight justify the adoption of weight loss techniques by the incompleteness of the buxom body. The analysis of the corpus of data made it possible to identify various systems of representation associated with this dissatisfaction with their body shape. Indeed, we note the differentiated perception of the dimensions of beauty, the slender silhouette as a social desirability of followers of the cult of thinness and the strong social acceptability of the cult of thinness as a response to the associated health risk. with a buxom body .

#### **10. 2.1 The differentiated perception of the dimensions of beauty, a social logic of the adoption of TACs by young girls in Cocody**

For young girls adopting weight loss techniques, physical or bodily beauty takes precedence over inner beauty. For them, a beautiful woman is one who presents herself well, with a beautiful face, a beautiful shape, the way of dressing. She is a woman who stands out for her physique and who attracts everyone's gaze, to the point where we cannot do without admiring her.

"*For me, a beautiful woman is first of all about her physique, a beautiful face, a beautiful complexion, beautiful teeth, she must have her hair done well, when we see you we have to say wow what a beautiful woman! Because your physique attracts that's how I conceive beauty the physique attracts for me physical beauty takes precedence over inner beauty. When a man comes to court you it's because he saw that your physique is pretty that he came so he was attracted by the physique.* ( Excerpt from interview with Kady 22 years old)

"*The conception of beauty is relative, huh, but in my humble opinion a beautiful woman is the one who harmonizes the colors of the clothes she wears, all types of clothing styles suit her, she is the one who make-up that puts on foundation, lipsticks, this type of make-up, we've called it make-up since 2019, it's a trend that's in full swing and makes women even more sublime. For me; physical beauty is a criterion of attraction and after comes inner beauty which is nothing but respect, courtesies etc.* » (excerpt from interview with Emmanuela 23 years old)

The aforementioned verbatim accounts for a differentiated appreciation of so-called physical beauty and so-called inner beauty. The social actors who adopt slimming techniques with a view to transforming their bodies are part of an exercise in reinterpreting the expectations of their courtiers. According to these young girls, the romantic feelings felt by courtiers towards them are based on the symbolic dimension of their beauty and not on its immaterial dimension. Indeed, the symbolic dimension is marked by the shape of the silhouette while the immaterial dimension is characterized by moral values. Thus, in the ideological sphere of love, we identify the

primacy of the symbolic dimension of love over its immaterial dimension. The following point highlights the nature of the value associated with this differentiated perception of the dimensions of beauty.

### 10.2 The slender silhouette, a social desirability of followers of the cult of thinness

In the social imaginations of beauty among followers of the cult of thinness, the valuation of bodily beauty appears as a social desirability and refers to the slim and slender physique. It must however be pointed out that the cult of thinness as practiced by the young girls of Cocody is different from that of northern societies where the weight loss targeted by Westerners reveals their bones. The cult of thinness in which the young girls of Cocody indulge, it is just to lose weight in order to obtain a flat stomach and bring out their silhouettes. The following verbatim reflects this.

*"For me, a beautiful woman is a woman who has a flat stomach, very flat, who has buttocks that are not too big, buttocks that are plump like mine and above all a flat stomach; I am very attached to a flat stomach because a flat stomach gives a woman a beautiful silhouette. So a beautiful woman right away isn't the one with the most beautiful face, it's the one with a beautiful shape; a flat stomach, you see the shapes of the misses there it's true that among the one who presents herself there for Miss Côte d'Ivoire there are girls in shape but there are some who stand out that's it of this kind of forms there, they are thin, slender. That's what kind of shape it's all about. I have a friend, MF, who has a very good shape, she has gunslingers but her stomach is very flat, so it's very pretty with her. For me, that's a beautiful woman."* (Interview excerpt with Affoué 24 years old)

*"In my opinion, a beautiful woman is a woman who takes care of herself; in the sense that it takes care of its form; she follows her diet well; she also does sports to be able to maintain her shape as well, that is to say thinness, not to let her belly, buttocks and other fat grow. she must know how to take care of herself, having a beautiful silhouette being well represented, that's what I'm talking about the stomach, you have to have a very flat stomach, that is to say when she dresses she has no complex. Excerpt from interview with KADI 22 years)*

Thus, for the young girls under study, the bodily form is the visible aspect of the sublimity of beauty. And since they perceive their silhouettes as not conforming to social expectations, they adopt weight loss techniques. The appreciation of the slender figure that is underpinned by the cult of thinness accounts for a social desirability understood in the case of this study as a diverted enhancement of her body by subjecting it to the dominant standard of beauty. This transformation of her body in reference to idealized beauty therefore has the purpose of wanting to present herself in a favorable light to her suitors. Indeed, the young girls of Cocody who have become overweight devote themselves to thinness cults because for them, thinness is the new ideal of beauty in Côte d'Ivoire. Thus, this new ideal of beauty targeted by young girls takes on its full meaning, because to be recognized as such, you must have the assets desired by all. In this sense, they are implementing strategies to achieve this new objective. Being beautiful at all costs and according to the norms structuring their social imaginations of beauty pushes them to practice the cult of thinness. The following point highlights the health dimension of the cult of thinness.

### 10.3 The strong social acceptability of the cult of thinness, a response to the health risk associated with the buxom body

The young girls of Cocody claim to practice body transformation techniques in order to reduce the risk of suffering from chronic diseases such as: diabetes, cerebrovascular accidents (CVA), cancers. Indeed, the prevalence of these pathologies among the obese, produced at the level of the girls of Cocody having become overweight in the face of the health risks to which they would be exposed. As a result, there is a strong social acceptability of the cult of thinness among the latter in the sense that they give their assent to this social phenomenon and to the constraints it imposes. Among these constraints we note the practice of sport, the follow-up of a diet low in fat, the wearing of fat-burning clothes and the regular consumption of lemonades. Moreover, young girls who consider themselves overweight say they submit to these practices in order to lengthen their life expectancies and live as long as possible as a couple. The transcripts below illustrate these ideas.

*"I decided to lose weight because it's tiring, when you're overweight you can't move physically, it also creates opportunistic diseases at any time, you're fragile by the way. , but when you decide to do sport it allows you to keep in shape and then to be in good health. Not that the sport is withering away but to keep in shape, that's keeping in shape and being healthy, that's why I practice sport. ( Excerpt from an interview with Emmanuela, 23)*

*"It 's the health component here today we are talking about hypertension, diabetes everything and everything so it is to reduce the risk of having heart disease as much as possible. So I decided on a product so that I wouldn't be a poof, as they say. "* (Excerpt from an interview with Affoué 24ans)

*"Well fitness centers are uh if I can say in quotes emerged, came out of the ground just because there was a certain point when people started dying from ( CVA) cerebral vascular accidents and minor illnesses of tension and consort which frightened no one so they all just got into sport because they wanted to run away from this kind of illness and also preserve their romantic relationship. ( Excerpt from interview with Coach Habib )*

The results obtained go in the same direction as those of our predecessors in particular ( Atse , et al., 2016). According to these authors, sport and food restriction ensure the development of the heart and the functioning of the body. These practices are more aesthetic than biomedical. In the study, young girls believe that the cult of thinness involves issues including fashion and beauty aesthetics. Fashion, the cult of thinness are the extension of beauty and the young girls of Cocody generally materialize this social norm most often by following slimming diets and by sports activities.

However, other authors such as Lognon and Andoh (2019) demonstrate in their work that the transformation of the body through the adoption of magnification techniques is social deviance. The perspective of these researchers goes beyond our results. For them, the transformation of the body is part of a freeing of the body from norms in order to build a body of its own. Through the various techniques for reducing body weight, women free themselves from traditional and religious conceptions of the body presented as "natural", "gift of God" and sacred. This physical liberation of the body is correlative with a contempt for taboos, representations and knowledge. It is a recovery of her body and her silhouette. We can speak of a mistrust of nature to build a body of one's own. A body different from the imperfect body received from nature which has not been "generous" towards them. These women adopt a posture of *designers* of their appearance. The will to build a personal identity in conformity with the dominant standards incorporated and the practice contributes to the individualization of the body. ( Lognon and Andoh , 2019)

Along with the systems of representation legitimizing the transformation of the body through the adoption of weight loss techniques among the young girls of Cocody, the following point highlights the relational framework as an operator structuring the said practice .

#### **11. THE NEED FOR SOCIAL RECOGNITION, AN OPERATOR STRUCTURING THE ADOPTION OF TAC BY YOUNG GIRLS IN COCODY**

The transformation of the body through the adoption of weight loss techniques stems from a lack of social recognition in the sense of stigmatization and the weakening of the relationship within the groups to which they belong, such as the family and friendship networks. . Thus, the desire to lose weight among young girls in Cocody who have become overweight is a result of the weakening of the ties of belonging to the pair group . Consequently, the transformation of the body through the adoption of slimming diets must be interpreted as a process aimed at obtaining social recognition. This social recognition is therefore dependent on a social gain which passes through the reinforcement of the rational structures in disintegration. The points below make it possible to grasp the quintessence of the analysis made.

##### **3.1 Stigma, a structural element in the adoption of weight-loss techniques by young girls in Cocody**

The adoption of weight loss techniques by young girls in Cocody who have become overweight is punctuated by the stigmatization of their physique which would have stored an excess of fat. They are regularly singled out and subject of demeaning conversation. As a result, young girls position themselves in an inferiority complex coupled with frustration. Indeed, the demeaning, mocking gaze of the entourage of the young girls under study is a trigger for the adoption of body transformation techniques. Thus, the adoption of weight-loss techniques can be seen as a means of integration and acceptance by those around them. Which is corroborated by the verbatim below : *"I started to put on weight and gained a lot of weight; you really feel your belly in the dress and it's really embarrassing, I say to myself eh when I pass and then my belly is there and then people see good she has a beautiful shape but if she could break her belly a little it what do I say to myself eh so that makes me a little complex"* ( excerpt from interview with Affoue 24 years old)

*"The weight gain was starting to increase as those who saw me before in first year say that every time you get fat, everywhere, when they meet me everywhere, everywhere, you get fat, you get fat, he doesn't 'There's nothing new, it's always the same sentences. ( Excerpt from interview with Ahou 20 years old )*

*"My twin like that when she wears the clothes I think it fits her like a glove, it draws her guitar shape well. Yet when I wear I find that I am too fat. Me ; I think I have a big belly, I'm not quite pretty"* ( excerpt from interview with Christelle, 19).

#### **12. 3.1 The adoption of weight-loss techniques, a social response to the weakening of romantic relationships**

The weakening of romantic relationships is another cause why young girls in Cocody who have become overweight adopt weight-loss techniques. The adoption of these techniques aims from this angle to strengthen the links that have been weakened with their partners. The fragility of the romantic relationship is perceived by the depreciatory judgments coming from their partners and whose physique considered to be overweight is the object. It is the negative which is related to the physique of the blow, their various partners did not find them more beautiful, attractive, sexy. This negativity on their physical becomes for them, an obstacle which weakens more and more their romantic relationships. In addition, knowing that the marriage market is a competition, they adopt weight loss techniques to stabilize and tighten ties in order to avoid possible conflicts within couples for infidelity due to their complexes and to satisfy their partners by having the dream body they want. Ultimately, the analyzes of the corpus of data show that the adoption of body slimming techniques by the



young girls of Cocody is a social response to their stigmatization, frustration and feeling of rejection. Indeed, for young girls, the gaze of others, the judgment passed on their physique has a detrimental effect on their self-esteem.

*“ My overweight more or less affects my relationship; the moment someone says to you, sir , you've gained too much weight, you know that he actually wants you to lose weight, because he thought you were a bit thin. ( Excerpt from interview with Emmanuela 23 years old)*

*“When your husband is going to tell you that I did n't know you like that all that, you have to try to put that away because I find you sexier uh well it's clear that you're going to start playing sports to do everything what you have to do so that you have a really beautiful shape all that there and then you start to take care of yourself. ( Excerpt from interview with Corine, 22 years old)*

*“Ah my darling; because he told me he hates fat women. He says you're getting fat here I'm not stopping you from getting fat eh it brings out your curves I like it but the fact that the belly is there is a bit embarrassing, it's embarrassing you're going to have to break it can” ( excerpt from interview with Affoue 24 years old)*

The results to which the chapter of the study refers corroborate the conclusions of Lognon and Andoh (op.cit.). For these authors, the looks, the mocking speeches and the disparaging remarks on women with small buttocks somehow create in them an inferiority complex and frustration due to the stigmatization. Thus, the adoption of body transformation techniques aimed at obtaining buxom buttocks appears as a social response to the lack of social recognition.

### **13. THE ELANCED SILHOUETTE, A SYMBOLIC CAPITAL WITH STRONG MATRIMONIAL RETURNS**

The slender figure targeted by the adoption of techniques for slimming the body constitutes for young girls a symbolic capital with strong matrimonial returns. Indeed, the slender silhouette appears as a symbolic capital which, once obtained, produces various social gains in this case: the positioning of young girls on the marriage market and the strengthening of their sexual performance.

#### **4.1 Positioning on the marriage market, a social gain linked to the transformation of the body**

Weight-loss techniques are resources used by the young girls of Cocody to seduce and have the possibility of being in a romantic relationship. This is demonstrated by the following verbatim:

*“Generally good, they want to get into their best clothes, that's what I tell myself, they want to look beautiful too like their comrades who don't have a belly, that's why they all take up sport. ( Excerpt from interview with Habib sports coach)*

*“The majority are women, the female sex, they are doing so much dieting. You know we women out there like me to look good so much; please men. So for the sake of beauty and let's say class, women follow diets to the point of being well seen by others, of looking good. That's it, we are led to always take care of our bodies. ( Excerpt from interview with Corine, 22 years old)*

Indeed, this seduction goes through the maintenance of one's body through diets aimed at weight loss in order to bring out the silhouette. It should be noted that image and appearance are important elements in the game of seduction or attraction. The essential objective for the young girls in the study being to attract more male gazes, they sculpt their appearance in the light of the target beauty ideal. This in order to seduce men and have the chance to be in a relationship. Moreover, this trend can be seen with the development of the media (the women's press, television reports), information and productions disclosed on the Internet. It is not surprising to perceive that looking beautiful or appearance is very important for many young girls in Cocody.

In short, it emerges from this point of the results that weight loss and beauty are directly associated with seduction and an increase in the possibility of enrolling in a marital relationship for young girls in Cocody who have taken overweight .

#### **13.2 Strengthening sexual performance, an advantage linked to the adoption of weight-loss techniques**

The adoption of weight-loss techniques by overweight young girls in Cocody appears to be a strategy aimed at consolidating the couple relationship. Indeed, they resort to this strategy in order to first obtain more stamina during lovemaking with their partners. Then, in order to adopt all the sexual positions requested by them. Finally, the slimming of the body allows them to assert themselves during sexual intercourse. Indeed, young girls from Cocody who have become overweight explain that their partners are unable to satisfy themselves during sexual intercourse. This insofar as these provide more energy relative to them which remain in a disconcerting immobility. The fact that they are not resourceful during lovemaking constitutes a cause of the disintegration of the romantic relationship. Consequently, the fear of seeing the couple's relationship crumble leads the young girls in the study to adopt weight-loss techniques. The verbatim statements below give an account of the analysis carried out .

*“You also lose your beauty when you put on too much weight, you're obese, you're always out of breath, you can't manage to practice physical effort on all sides. In terms of intercourse, you can't satisfy your man during intercourse because you get tired quickly and there are movements you can't perform, so you have to control your morphology”*

( Excerpt from interview with Emmanuela 23 years old)

*“My husband always complains, all the time when we're having sex, I ride, I'm not even hard I'm tired, I'm choked, I say ah; he says I have become lazy, it is your weight, you are overweight. It's not like that you were”* (excerpt from interview with Kady 22 years old)

*“It affected my relationship to the point where I felt smothered; I was not productive, I couldn't do anything oh, it was my partner who did everything during our sexual relations; so he asked me to exercise to improve my stamina. ( Excerpt from interview with Affoué 24 years old)*

In the logic of wanting to consolidate their couple relationships, young girls also use subordination as a means to achieve their goals. The adoption of weight-loss techniques is in fact a product of the inclusion of young girls who have become overweight in a conjugal relationship of submission to the man. That is to say, the spouse by virtue of his position of dominance requires that his spouse practice weight-loss diets. Indeed, the attitude of the man is oriented by the respect of his authority because he conceives this respect as guarantor of his virility. From this angle, the opinion of the man in a relationship can upset the relationship or consolidate it. The young girls in the study are therefore in a relationship of submission vis-à-vis their partner for fear of seeing their life as a couple diminish.

*“ My overweight more or less affects my relationship; the moment someone says to you, sir , you've gained too much weight, you know that he actually wants you to lose weight, because he thought you were a bit thin. ( Excerpt from interview with Emmanuela 23 years old)*

*When your husband is going to tell you that I did n't know you like that all that, you have to try to put that away because I find you sexier uh well it's clear that you're going to start playing sports to do all this what you have to do to get yourself in really good shape and then you start taking care of yourself. ( Excerpt from an interview with Corine, 22 years old)*

In short, the transformation of the body through the adoption of weight-loss techniques constitutes for the young girls in the study a strategy for positioning themselves on the marriage market and for consolidating couple ties. The transformation of the body through the use of weight loss techniques aims to stabilize and strengthen the bonds of couples. Indeed, the young girls in the study consider that having a slender figure will prevent their spouses from courting other girls. The marriage market is very competitive in the sense that there are so many women who tend towards the ideal of beauty. So considering themselves in permanent competition, they consider that they must respect the dominant standards of beauty for fear of seeing their relationships crumble. Thus, the results corroborate the conclusions of the work of Lognon and Andoh (op.cit.). For these authors, a desire for seduction and male conquest is very often at the origin of the adoption of body transformation techniques.

### III. CONCLUSION

This study focused on the adoption of weight loss techniques by young girls in Cocody who have become overweight, and aimed to understand the logic of this body transformation. The first result is a description of all the body slimming techniques mentioned and adopted by young girls. The second result stated the fact that the young girls in the study justify the adoption of weight-loss techniques by the incompleteness of the lavish body. The third result shows that the transformation of the body through the adoption of weight loss techniques stems from a lack of social recognition. This, in the sense of the stigmatization and the weakening of the relationship within the groups of belonging that are the family and the networks of friendship. Finally, the fourth result shows that the slender silhouette obtained by the adoption of techniques for slimming the body constitutes for the young girls in the study a symbolic capital with strong matrimonial return.

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