

MIGRANTS IN SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS RELATED POLICIES IN SWEDEN: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Background

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) policies might play a crucial role in shaping migrants' SRHR outcomes. The purpose of the study was to critically examine: a) how migrants were represented in the discourses embedded within Swedish SRHR-related policies, and b) how migrants' SRHR-related issues were framed and addressed within these discourses.

Methods

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to analyze a total of 54 policy documents. Following Jäger's approach to CDA, discourse strands and entanglements between different discourse strands were examined.

Results

Migrants' representation in Swedish SRHR-related policies is often associated with the concept of vulnerability, a concept that can hold negative connotations such as reinforcing social control, stigma, and disempowerment. Alongside the discourse of vulnerability, the discourse of otherness appears when framing migrants' SRHR in relation to what is defined as honor-related violence and oppression. Furthermore, migrant SRHR issues are occasionally conceptualized as structural issues, as suggested by the human rights-based approach embraced by Swedish SRHR-related policies. Relevant structural factors, namely migration laws and regulations, are omitted when addressing, for example, human trafficking and HIV/AIDS.

Conclusions

The dominant discourses seem to favor depictions of migrants as vulnerable and as the Other. Moreover, despite the prevailing human rights-based discourse, structural factors are not always considered when addressing migrants' SRHR issues. This study calls for a critical analysis of the concept of vulnerability in relation to migrants' SRHR. It also highlights the importance of avoiding othering and paying attention to the structural factors when addressing migrants' SRHR.

Keywords: Sexual and reproductive health and rights, migrants, critical discourse analysis.

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