

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

The condition: Obstetric fistula is a birthing injury caused by prolonged obstructed labor that results in chronic incontinence. Although *fistula* technically denotes any abnormal pathway in the body, throughout this book, I use the term as shorthand to denote obstetric fistula.

The place: The country officially titled the Republic of Niger, I refer simply to Niger. Its citizens are Nigériens (or Nigeriens), not to be confused with their neighbors to the south, Nigerians.

The women: To protect individual identities and respect confidentiality, I use pseudonyms for all of my interlocutors (and identify them by age and ethnicity). In some cases, I recognize that the use of pseudonyms is more for effect—to uphold a principle—than it is effective. In the two quotes from media pieces (where women’s real names are used by journalists), I substitute pseudonyms as a nod to women’s privacy while recognizing that their identities can still be easily uncovered through an internet search. I have considered this in my decisions regarding what to reveal and conceal.

FISTULA POLITICS



Portrait of a Fulani woman in Niamey, Niger