

Summaries

Deborah Posel

The HIV/AIDs Controversy in South Africa:

Reflections on the Politicisation of Sexuality Post-Apartheid

Since 1994, South Africans have witnessed the unexpected and enigmatic politicisation of sexuality to an unprecedented extent. This paper attempts to demonstrate, and make sense, of this phenomenon. It is structured in two parts. The first part considers „how sex is brought into the realm of discourse“, as Foucault put it, and how this discursive constitution of sexuality is informed by wider dimensions of the post-apartheid social order – in particular, the acceleration of the country’s HIV/AIDS epidemic, on one hand, and the generational shifts associated with the emergence of new black elites, on the other. Drawing on this discussion, the second part proposes a reading of the so-called „HIV/AIDS controversy“ which has come to summarise Thabo Mbeki’s presidency in many national and international circles, and which has generated more political division, conflict, uncertainty and anger than any other issue since the inauguration of the post-apartheid state. I argue that this „controversy“ – although immediately concerned with questions of science and drugs – is more fundamentally a struggle over the discursive constitution of sexuality, in a form which dramatises the enmeshment of the manner of sexuality with the politics of nationalism, and the inflections of race, class and generation within it.

Elizabeth Colson

AIDS and behavioral Change: Gwembe Valley, Zambia

Knowledge of risk is no guarantee of risk avoidance. Zambia has one of the highest rates of HIV infection in the world. Over the last two decades the Zambian government and international agencies have made major efforts to inform Zambians on how AIDS is transmitted. This article examines what Gwembe Tonga know about HIV transmission, and what they do with that knowledge as evidenced by behavioral change using data from a longitudinal study of Gwembe Tonga initiated in 1956. Knowledge that HIV is sexually transmitted is publicly demonstrated during funerals by the adoption of alternatives to sexual intercourse with surviving spouse to cleanse survivors of death pollution. That knowledge may then be ignored when behavior is not subject to public scrutiny and counsel but is motivated by immediate desires.

Catrine Christiansen

Rearing the Future Society of Uganda: Childcare in the Era of AIDS

Currently more than half the population of Uganda is 18 years or below a demographic division caused by civil war, poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Drawing upon ethnographic research in south-eastern Uganda the study analyses the difficulties of integrating rising numbers of orphans and other vulnerable children in the Ugandan society. While aid organisations and researchers in general agree that the extended family should be given first priority to take care of orphans and other vulnerable children and institutional care is viewed as the last resort, this article rises some strong questions against this common perception. The author argues that understanding consequences of childcare must take point of departure in the interpersonal relationships between care-giver(s) and care-recipient(s) and cultural notions of childcare. By focussing on children's position in society, patterns of parental relations, leviratic practices, and importance of land and education the author provides an understanding of the complexity and changing patterns of childcare relations. Patterns which she argues calls in question whether family care taking continually should be given preference to institutional care.

Matthias Rempel

"This is my house" – Heidimbi's Childhood, or: About the Horror and the Necessity of new Institutions in Times of AIDS in Namibia

Namibia has one of the highest HIV infection rates world-wide – more than 23% of the adult population is estimated to be HIV-positive. It is crucial for the understanding of the pandemic, to investigate further the social conditions that provided AIDS with favourable conditions to spread. One can argue that the high infection rates are a direct outcome of different processes of modernisation that have dominated Namibian life over the past 150 years. The transformation and disruption of traditional patterns of social and economic life have led to a high susceptibility for the epidemic spread of the disease. On the other hand it can be observed, that the existing social figurations are of an enormous capability. Within the networks of extended family lies still an admirable capacity and willingness to care. However, the burdens are growing rapidly with increasing numbers of ill, dying and remaining orphans, emerging the question if there are new institutions, that can convert or strengthen the extended family networks.

Suzette Heald

Reflections on Anthropology and AIDS Policy and Practice in Africa

This paper addresses the issue of the relative absence of anthropologists in the formulation of HIV/AIDS policy and research in Africa. Initially, taking an historical

perspective, it looks at the development of the main policy-making forums in the USA before turning to the more recent establishment of UNAIDS and its dominant role in setting the agenda for Africa. The implications for anthropological research are then considered in order to shed light on the reluctance which can be discerned in the discipline to get involved in research on AIDS. Turning to specific case material, the paper then examines AIDS educational strategies in Botswana to provide an illustration of the potential insights anthropology can bring to explain the success or failure of such campaigns. Stressing the importance of the cultural constructions of the disease, it shows how the western AIDS message is interpreted by local populations not as neutral scientific „fact“ but as an aspect of political and ideological domination. In turn, this discussion raises the issue of the coexistence of different belief systems, especially in the sphere of medicine, their interrelations and the social contexts in which response to western messages is antagonistic as opposed to complementary.

Lars Kohlmorgen

Global Health Governance and UNAIDS – Elements of a Global Mode of Integration?

This article puts HIV/Aids in a broader context: On the background that globalisation causes social problems and a greater interdependence in the world and infectious diseases in developing countries are seen as a danger also for the industrialised countries, this article asks if the global politics on HIV/Aids and especially the Joint UN-Programm on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) perform as elements of international efforts to mitigate inequalities, poverty and conflicts. UNAIDS is described and analysed in the context of „post-fordist“ globalisation and structures of „global health governance“. UNAIDS can be defined as a kind of typical post-fordist actor, because it tries to foster the fight against poverty related infectious diseases in developing countries on a global scale and in cooperation with non-governmental organisations and public-private partnerships. However – and this is the main thesis of this article – because of powerful nation states and their interests and because of other powerful international organisations (like the World Bank), UNAIDS is a weak actor of global health governance and the evolving global mode of integration.