

**Panel Proposal for the AEGIS 3rd European Conference on African Studies
(EACS 3), 4-7 June 2009, Leipzig**

Title:

Counselling Africa: Speech and Contestations over Family, Sexuality, Health and the Body

Organizers:

Dr. Rijk van Dijk, African Studies Centre Leiden

Marian Burchardt, Department of Cultural Studies/University of Leipzig

Abstract:

This panel explores the growing importance of counselling in Africa in contexts of AIDS, trauma and violence. As a social technology of behavioural change and practical advice, counselling impacts upon social practices, ethics, and identity formation. The panel investigates how counselling reconfigures the boundaries between *public* and *private* and engages in cultural contestations.

Description:

In recent years, historical forms of counselling in Africa such as advice by the elderly, chiefs and healers have been complemented and partially replaced by professionalized types of expertise offered by NGOs, churches and state apparatuses. This raises questions as to the bodies of knowledge that are contested, promoted and disseminated, and to the domains of privacy individuals are invited to disclose in counselling. The panel aims at critically examining how in the operations of local and trans-national networks new concepts of 'expertise' are established and how they are linked to constructions of speech and consultation in the face of social problems and suffering. Moreover, the panel asks how counselling settings take shape as micro-political spaces for articulating cultural critiques.

We invite scholars to draw attention to four domains for which counselling has become pivotal:

1. **Family:** How does counselling affect relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, orphans and foster parents?

2. **Sexuality:** How is counselling involved in the production of new notions of responsible and ethical sexual practice, especially in the context of HIV/AIDS?
3. **Health:** What is the place of counselling within regimes aiming at the remaking of healthy citizen-subjects in areas such as reproductive health technologies, dietetics or substance abuse?
4. **Body:** Counselling aims at, and effectively shifts, culturally mediated constructions of the human body, bodily practices and embodiment. How does counselling affect the agency of the body within social practices? How does it mediate violence, trauma and understandings of bodily well-being?

Programme:

Terapia do Amor: Brazilian Pentecostal counselling in Mozambique

Linda van de Kamp
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VU University Amsterdam, department of social and cultural anthropology
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The “invention” of discursive praxis on sexuality: counselling praxis of two Pentecostal Charismatic Churches in Kumasi, Ghana

Astrid Bochow, University of Bayreuth

Producing sexual ethics in counselling for Positive Living : Experiences from Catholic HIV/AIDS interventions in Central & North-Western Uganda¹

Paper for the 3rd European Conference on African Studies, University of Leipzig 4-7 June 2009.

By Louise Nygaard Rasmussen, PhD student, Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen

VCT and Provider-Initiated Testing and Counseling (PITC) at Kenyatta National Hospital: A Case Study

Eileen Moyer (University of Amsterdam)

¹ Please note that this paper has been written while still on fieldwork in Arua. As such, it is very much an empirical discussion, which is yet to be theorised and conceptualised more.

Emmy Kageha (University of Amsterdam)