



WESTFÄLISCHE
WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNSTER

Institut für Ethnologie

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Geschäftsführender Direktor

– VORTRÄGE AUSWÄRTIGER GELEHRTER –

**Auf Einladung des Instituts für Ethnologie
der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität**

spricht

Prof. Dr. em. Anke Niehof

**Wageningen University, Department of Social Sciences – Sociology of Consumers and
Households**

zum Thema

Sociological and anthropological perspectives on HIV and AIDS in Africa

**am Mittwoch, den 23. Oktober 2013, 16.00 Uhr
Institut für Ethnologie,
Stadtstraße 21, Raum STU 105 (2.10)**

Zu diesem Vortrag sind alle Interessierten herzlich eingeladen.

Die Rektorin
der Universität
Prof. Dr. U. Nelles

Der Dekan
des Fachbereichs
Prof. Dr. J. Heidrich

Institut für Ethnologie
Prof. Dr. H. Basu
Prof. Dr. J. D. M. Platenkamp
Akad. Rätin Dr. A. Schneider

Sociological and anthropological perspectives on HIV and AIDS in Africa

Prof. Dr. em. Anke Niehof*

According to UNAIDS (2012), in 2011 of the estimated 34 million of people living with AIDS 23.5 million (69%) were living in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2011, there were 1.8 million newly infected people in this region, 72 per cent of the global figure. But HIV/AIDS is not just about facts and figures. HIV and AIDS are also afflictions that are “awash in significance”, to quote Susan Sontag in her book *Illness as Metaphor* (1978).

In this lecture I will discuss the multi-layered significance of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. I will do so by tracing the HIV-AIDS trajectory, starting from the upstream vulnerability to HIV infection, through the factors that affect midstream vulnerability when people who are infected start to develop AIDS, to the impacts of AIDS in communities with high proportions of people living with AIDS. At all phases of its course, this trajectory is intersected by social inequalities and cultural notions, many of them relating to poverty and gender. Around these intersections debates and discourses have developed, at the emic levels of people’s own explanatory models and interpretations, and at the etic levels of biomedical and sociological explanations and interventions.

Apart from drawing on the large body of literature on HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa I will also use findings of the AWLAE project (2002-2011), an interdisciplinary project that was funded by the Netherlands Government of which I was the coordinator. In the framework of this project 20 African women did their PhD studies at Wageningen University on topics relating to impacts of AIDS on the role of women in food and livelihood systems in Africa.

* *Dr Anke Niehof* studied anthropology at Leiden University and demography at Groningen University and obtained her doctorate in 1985 at Leiden University based on a PhD thesis entitled *Women and Fertility in Madura, Indonesia*. She now is emeritus professor Sociology of Consumption and Households at Wageningen University, the Netherlands, and fellow of the Wageningen research school for the social sciences WASS. She publishes on domestic life, food security, care, reproductive and maternal health, and on HIV/AIDS. In 2010 she published a comprehensive volume on HIV/AIDS in Africa: Niehof, A., G. Rugalema & S. Gillespie (eds), *AIDS and Rural Livelihoods. Dynamics and Diversity in Sub-Saharan Africa*. London: Earthscan.