

HIV/AIDS RISK AS GLOBALIZING ‘DEMOCRATIC DISCOURSE’? FOUCAULT ACCOUNT OF GOVERNMENTALITY PERSPECTIVES.

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ABSTRACT

One of the fundamental characteristics of contemporary societies – modern , liberal , Globalized – is the generalization and expansion of ‘Social risk’ in which a variety of socio-psychological analyses coincide as a byproduct of economics and cultural transformations that taken place in the recent times (Rosan vellan ,1995 , Lash 1997 , alexgender2000). Risk in general and HIV/AIDS related risk in particular becomes an organizing principle of social organization. Risk, then, is a relative concept that necessarily makes use of a reference in order to define itself. Risk is a social configuration that acquires individuals’ experiences of uncertain, temporarily distancing the experience of uncertain expectation in democratic Discourse manner. Above all, Risk is a ‘Social Fact ‘. The rationality of risk as a conceptualized by governmental studies in which individuals attributes disappear into large statistical distribution.

Keywords: *HIV/AIDS , Risk, Democratic Discourse , Foucault , Governmentality Perspective.*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of HIV/AIDS related risk has become a central characteristic of contemporary society by product of re-emergence of liberalism from the 1980 and the condition of high/late modernity through discourse of Homosexuality. Social theorists such As Beck’s „Risk Society“ thesis suggests „risk may be defined as a systematic way of dealing with the hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself“ (1992: 21). To put it as simply as Young (2007: 59) we now live in a society where “anything might happen“. As the dominance of risk discourses specific to science and technology (as Beck begins) filter into the public domain (predominantly via the media, Furedi 1997) the preoccupation with this concept widens. Such a preoccupation now stretches in breadth to include associated concepts (hazard, fear, harm, uncertainty; concepts used now interchangeably, Chadee, Austen, Ditton 2006) and diversifies into most areas of social life. Thus, today’s increased concern with safety and risk has little to do with the advance of technology and science. After all, it is not just the outcome of technological and scientific developments which provokes anxiety and fear. (Furedi 1997: 7) The apparent

realist position of Beck would seem to place risks and hazards at odds with subjective feelings of anxiety and fear. This contradiction, noted by Beck himself, (Flynn 2006) highlights the directions of alternative risk theorists, such as Mary Douglas et al (1966, 1980, 1992) who promote the appreciation of socially constructed risk agendas. Furthermore, there are those who suggest that the separation of actual (objective) and appraised (subjective/perceived) risk is „illusionary“ (Chadee, Austen, Ditton 2006). Therefore, by accepting this premise, it is the social construction of living at risk and taking risks which becomes the focus for investigation. The apparent risk-chic environment has become more diverse, not just as part of our everyday lives, but embedded within political rhetoric and policy initiatives. Grand theories on the topic of risk have infiltrated many discourses of which the risk management of young people is one example. In the years since the „Risk Society“ thesis was delivered its influence on late modern theorizing is to be admired. However, in recent years scholars have become critical of the dominance and use of this thesis (Mythen & Walklate 2006) and ultimately the supposition that it encapsulates the sentiments and experiences of all. In response to this critical reaction, this paper focuses on the applicability of the „Risk Society“ thesis to the lives of young people. For this approach a literal appreciation of the key texts of these theorists is not sufficient and broader interpretations (such as Furedi's above) are required. Whereas both Beck and Giddens link the preoccupation with risk to a decline in the conditions of modernity specific to technological change, Jackson and Scott suggest „that the anxieties specific to childhood are part of a general sense that the social world in itself is becoming less stable and predictable“ (1999: 88). What distinguishes this period of social change from previous eras is the diversity of risk applicability. Beck himself acknowledges that risk is not a new concept. However, the social conditions in which risk occurs have changed dramatically to the point that risks „endangers all forms of life“ (1992: 21). In response to the perception of living at risk, risk taking (where risk is perceived by both the risk taker and the observer) was once necessary for survival. Now risk taking is much more diverse, not centered on survival but pleasure and the relief of boredom. In this sense risk taking is now regarded as fun, a way of coping with the increased instabilities and uncertainties of living at risk. As Lupton (1999: 115) suggests „young people now, compared with 20 or 30 years ago, are faced with a greater range of uncertainties and choices to make about how to conduct their lives“. This consideration identifies the notion of being „at risk“ („uncertainties“) and „risk taking“ („choices“) during childhood. The contradiction that this highlights is the reflection of young people „as active, knowing autonomous individuals on the one hand and as passive, innocent dependents on the other“ (Jackson & Scott 1999:91). This paper attempts to critique the „Risk Society“ thesis in consideration of this contradiction. Contextualizing the risk debate The literature discussed in this section is organized around the paper's three central themes; 1) risk is a negative concept, 2) risk is aligned with uncertainty and worry, and 3) those living in the „Risk Society“ have become skeptical of expert opinions. Probably originating from the Spanish maritime word meaning „to run into danger on a rock“, the term risk first appeared in the English language in the seventeenth century (Giddens 1990: 30). Furthermore, historians also relate the

traditional use of the term to the religious notion of sin and an explanation of misfortune (Luhmann 1993: 8). The incline towards negative consequences, distinguishes a specifically biased outcome (Furedi 1997: 57). Adams' particular description of risk highlights the creation of such via a mathematical calculation. a numerical measure of expected harm or loss associated with an adverse event...the integrated product of risk and harm is often expressed in terms such as cost in pounds, loss in expected years of life or loss of productivity. (Adams 1995: 8) In light of such biased definitions, it is unsurprising that a society preoccupied with risk should be theorized by Beck in such a negative light suggesting „one is no longer concerned with attaining something good, but rather with preventing the worst (Beck 1992: 49). As Wilkinson suggests „he [Beck] seeks to draw a firm analytical distinction between an industrial society which was hitherto blind to the uninsurable risks of modernization, and an emergent „Risk Society“ which is being forced to negotiate with a future which imposes the threat of self annihilation upon our lives“ (1997: 3). There are those who have chosen a distinctly different interpretation, opting instead to reflect on risk as the „double edged character of society“ (Giddens 1990: 7), in which a world enriched with opportunities can also harbour danger and insecurity. Or rather there are those academics, such as Wildavsky who simply state that the negative assumptions of Beck are exaggerated or not evidenced (Adams 1995: 195). This most prominent criticism stems from the over-interpretation of the negativity of risk, in a thesis which repeatedly stresses danger, harm and uncertainty. It is to this extent that Adams reflects on such work as „one-sided“ in favor of „its doom-laden view“ (1995: 182). Adhering to this distinctive approach the suggestion of Short (1984: 711) seems appropriate; that the definition of risk need not be negative so that „a more neutral definition simply specifies that risk is the probability of some future event“. Does it follow then that society has adopted Beck's pessimism and has a distinctly negative connotation of risk? Lupton suggests that the negative relationship between risk and pleasure can be conceptualized by the response of academic literature and expert opinion, and that of popular culture (1999: 149). To take unnecessary risks is commonly seen as foolhardy, careless, irresponsible, and even „deviant“, evidence of an individual's ignorance or lack of ability to regulate self. (Lupton 1999: 149) Academic discourse and theoretical debate in the 1960s and 1970s did much to strengthen this negative image, specifically using the phrase „problem behavior“ to relate to concepts now aligned with the term risk.[ii] For example, Goffman conceptualized such behavior as „action, consequential for the individual, that has problematic outcomes, and that is undertaken for its own sake“ (1967 cited in Lyng 1990: 862). Examples used include „high risk occupations and leisure activities, combat experience, drug use and the like“ (ibid). The media also play a significant role in the problematization and demonization, by which many in society equate „problem youth“ with drugs, alcohol, violence and anti social behaviour (Miles 2000: 71). The media are challenged for creating „youth“ at a time of negative behaviour, and young people, particularly young males (Pearson 1994 in Croall 1998: 132, Loader 1996: 24), are often stereotyped as doing the same Thus it is noted that in many situations „to be young in itself constituted a reason for being regarded as one of the „usual suspects“

(Pearson 1994 in Croall 1998: 123). In recent years some risk researchers have started to acknowledge a division. For example, Benthin et al. (1993), separate their list of adolescent activities into „problem behaviours“ (such as drugs, alcohol, binge eating, and sex) and „other behaviours“ (riding motorcycles and bicycles, skiing and sunbathing), which shows at least an acknowledgement of a possible distinction. However, the preoccupation within risk discourse with the „governance of risk“ (Rothstein 2006) has meant that the terminology is now applied to most spheres of daily life, including the full range of children’s daily „play“ and outdoor activities (Jenkins 2006). Thus, although academia is starting to acknowledge the functions of adolescent risk taking (see Parker and Stanworth 2005), or potential problems of over-regulating „exposure to adversity“ (Jenkins 2006: 380), it may be overshadowed by the perceptions of the lay population. The negativity of the „Risk Society“ suggests that society is inherently worried about the proliferation and negotiation of „actual“ risks. Such an outlook aligned with „preventing the worst“, stressed by the discussion on the negativity of risk, is now an accepted part of contemporary society. If we think negatively, or that the worst could happen, then it follows that we become anxious. The presentation of risk information, predominantly via media discourse, has been criticized for promoting negativity and contributing to an increased sense of anxiety. The influential work of Kasperson et al. regards this situation as the „social amplification of risk“, providing an account for how expert risk assessment can be amplified [iii] within society (Kasperson et. al 2003: 15). Such transformations can increase (...) the volume of information about an event, heighten the salience of certain aspects of a message, or reinterpret and elaborate the available symbols and images, thereby leading to particular interpretations and responses by other participants in the social system. This most common association with amplified anxiety or worry in contemporary society is the emotive response of fear. The promotion of fear and the propagandist manipulation of information is often justified on the grounds that it is a small price to pay to get a message across to the public ...rather than provide people with the information to make an informed choice, everyone is warned that they are at risk. (Furedi 1997: 25) The above rationale applies to young people who must be, and are, educated about the risks inherent to their life stage. There are essentially more risks applicable to them, thus the intensity of education is much greater, and stems from a variety of sources. But does it follow then that such anxiety or worry is found within the younger generation? This question will be directly addressed by the findings presented in this paper. Integral to the negotiation of risk is society’s debated exposure to hazards, and a feeling that “suddenly everything becomes uncertain” (Beck 1992: 109). Uncertainty can be understood as the cause of worry, coupled with negative thinking. Uncertainty creates feelings of worry via the thought that the outcomes of hazards are unknown, coupled with the preoccupation that these outcomes will be predominantly negative. Marris (1996) suggested that the way society deals with uncertainty is to constantly search for answers (knowledge) not just from our own private emotions, but within the public sphere (health warnings etc). Such a search for information helps us deal with possibly uncertain consequences. Considering notions of calculation and probability, Marris also suggests that however small or

large, the notion of uncertainty is always uncomfortable. It is not unsurprising then that Burgess notes „the sociological interest in mistrust and uncertainty appears in much contemporary risk analysis and has been absorbed into the language of official scientific reports and institutions“ (2006: 332). In a society which is preoccupied with risk, the discourse of risk information creates a considerable challenge for the lay person. Which risks should we take, which should we avoid, who is presenting the „facts“, and who is going to protect my interests? Beck“s conclusion to such questioning is a state of anxiety, skepticism of expert opinion, and diminished trust in both professionals and established institutions (1992). Given that the „Risk Society“ stresses the negativity of risk situations, it follows that we would critique our risk knowledge and asks; how certain are we that we know the worst that could happen? Experts, and expert systems, whether labeled or socially constructed, are synonymous with ideas of knowledge, skills, problem solving and application. The perspective of the experts when it comes to risk is often taken at its word, reinforced by statistical assessments . As Lupton comments “in the „Risk Society“, the assessment of risk is subject to a high degree of ambivalence, due to the complexity of scientific and technical knowledge” (1999: 64). It is hardly surprising, given the tensions between protecting children and permitting their autonomy, that parents should look to „experts“ for a set of rules which, having external authority, may lend a sense of certainty to decisions parents make...Such guidelines tend to bureaucratize decisions in relation to children, producing standardized responses without regard for the social context or life experience of individual children. (Jackson & Scott 1999: 94) However, studies involving the psychometric paradigm show that „ordinary people...use a broader definition of „risks“ than experts when making judgments about which ones are of most concern to them“ (Marris 1997). Experts rely on statistics such as fatalities whilst lay people consider a host of qualitative characteristics. Yet we seem to have a reliance on this expert knowledge, even if our judgment, and more importantly our experience, tells us otherwise. Natalier (2001) claims Beck and Giddens argue that „we live in an age where we rely on experts to manage and make sense of risks that are unknowable through lay knowledge“ (2001: 66). And yet, as Giddens (1990: 91) proposes, experts in many fields, (including health and safety policy) continue to fail to control and regulate the possibility of negative outcomes. Due to expert disagreements, resulting in a loss of authority, society begins to question the validity of assessments, a concept Giddens referred to as „doubt“ (1991: 3). Doubt, Giddens suggests, leads to contestability, revision and possibly abandonment. Consequently, knowledge overlaps with experience as people, especially adolescents, accept these warnings but search for their own alternative knowledge base – that of trial, and possibly error. In many cases as Luhmann (1979 in Boyne 2003: 86) suggests, trust, rather than dealing with the complexities of mistrust, is the easier option. How does one cope with the insecurities of the „Risk Society“, coupled with the impossibility of analyzing every shred of information? The answer is we couldn“t and we don“t. Therefore such management demands that all our relationships (with individuals or systems) start with trust (ibid.), a concept which is debated specifically by Beck“s social theory.

II

Risk discourse, as scientific idiom, dominates the public definition and treatment the social issues like, HIV/AIDS and related risks, new techno-scientific trajectories. This risk discourse in modern societies is automatically imposed as the natural and universal objective representation of public issues as their socio-cultural meaning, which, it is implied; all proper citizens would recognize and accepted. with alone the social , meaning of what we call Risk as an object of risk assessment and management always open to social definition and construction (Brunk et.al, 1991). This basic epistemic and social contingency is obscured by the dominant scientific cultural reification of risk as if we're and independently existing object with it own autonomous meaning , to be revealed , analyzed and controlled as such by the scientific discipline . thus institutionalized risk discourse reifies its constructed object twice over : once in defining the objectives and universal meaning of public issues as risk issues , then in pursuing the selective definition of what is to count scientifically as risk are objective public meaning also involve a corresponding projection of the public as a supposedly free subject of the meaning . The way in which risk and uncertainty are defined in institutional cultural and its discourse impose a further tacit and unaccountable protection of people and their social capacities , and the ways in which they relates to contingency , lack of control and responsibilities. Thus, there is an apparently unseen but extensive openness of meaning underlying the self –consciously scientific public discourses of risk issues, and there are immense pressure to routinized and reify a supposed unambiguous objects in the face of deep ambiguities as two what the objects of attention and meaning should be. Karnik (2001) about her research on HIV/AIDS and India, she is intended to explore the meaning, and try to understand how cultural meaning of HIV/AIDS have been constructed and transmitted globally through the democratic scientific engagement. Two aspects of her analysis are especially interesting here. The first is that , in her account , the social categorization of risk such as „High Risk Groups“ which shape HIV medical and social research and policy practice in India were taken uncritically from western practice , and then it is where , tautologically confirmed themselves as meaningful categories for India too. Others possible social categories of High risk , deriving from different possible contributory causes of HIV under specifically Indian conditions Thus dominant hegemonic discourses of risk embody tacit power and cultural relation , and transmit these through their global scientific status and through the consequent international networks of training , recruitment and accreditation . And how the public participation may inadvertently obstruct richer discourses of the meaning of such public issues like HIV/AIDS identity and its related risk. *Karnik* argues that activity groups have positively obstructed the articulation and uptake of richer discourses of HIV/AIDS issue which might link it as a biomedical reality in its context to such broader human issues such poverty, genders politics history and cultural . In India adopted explicitly critical discourses that

uncritically reproduced the basic categories of HIV/AIDS risk as developed in western societies, and excluded any analysis of the connections between the local widespread poverty and destitution, disease and weak immune system performance, and HIV.

Social research on HIV/AIDS characterize as a more enriched kind of science , which reflected and embodies less hegemonistic , more contingent diversities of human –cultural narrative, . In this regards, Karnik , describes for a risk oriented scientific medical programme –HIV/AIDS in democratic manner . As she puts it:

It is possible to continue to recognize the important of AIDS as a single pathogenic disease and also recognized that the term itself, along with its related conceptual bagged (High risk groups, vectors) is historically and culturally contingent Such a view makes the world at once smaller, brings people together while also enabling us to see the very important differences of class, gender, race/ ethnicity , and sexuality , that separate us . It is an understanding that allows medical practice and science to open themselves to new ideas , instill a notion of self reflexive rigor , and try to grapple with a complex world in a more complex way(2001:344).

III

The govern mentality perspective makes a significant contribution to the sociological study of the HIV/AIDS related Risk and its governance process. It highlights the key role of medical professions, such as medicine, have played in the governance the population in general and HIV/AIDS patients in particular. It adopts a similar critical view of the emergence of professionalism as a form of regulatory control as a neo-weberian perspective. For neo-liberal mentalities of rule“ are concern with the conduct of the conduct as they seek to promote the autonomous self actualized enterprising subjective who, as an active citizen of a modern democracy , recognized they are responsible for themselves . This means that modern government must seek to govern through the freedom and aspiration of their –citizen –subjects so that they come to recognized and self regulated their activities in such a way that naturally align with broader social , economic and political objectives . This requirement has lead to a critical reconfiguration of the legitimate grounds on which „Good Governance“ can be practiced. With the field of medicine becoming more than ever before simultaneously governed and self – governing as a consequence. As example by the re-appropriation by medical elites of an emergent rationalistic – bureaucratic discourses of outcome based stander setting and performance appraisal in the face of its increasing used by outsiders, such as hospital management, to monitor the activities of doctors.

Foucault notes that two others forms of power, Sovereignty and discipline, are tied up with the development of power of a population focus form of governance, with its concern for the , to enable the promotion of the security , health wealth and happiness of the individuals subject citizens . Sovereign command power to exercise over subjects through the juridical and executive arms government. Historically, sovereign power related to monarchical rule, with its executive mechanism of constitutions“, laws and parliaments . As Foucault noted in Discipline and Punish (1979) , Disciplined individuals have acquired habits of action and thought which enable them to act appropriated and expected ways and to do through the exercise of self – control . Foucault argues that the power of governance does not replace the power of discipline or sovereignty. Indeed Foucault argues that:

We need to see things not in terms of the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a disciplinary society and the subsequent replacement of a disciplinary society by a society of government ; in reality one has a triangle , sovereignty- discipline-government, which has a its primary target the population .

Governance retains and utilizes the techniques, rationalities and institutions characteristic of both sovereignty and discipline, but it also departs from them seek into rein scribe them. The new object of government, by contrast , regards these subjects and the forces and capacities of living individuals as members of a population , as resources to be fostered , to be used and to be optimized (Dean , 1999).

Thus , Govern mentality functions to maintain the security of the population developing and employing forms of knowledge relating to the population such as statistics , economics criminology , public healthy and more . Foucault stresses that the governmental forms of power does not point to linear historical development and does not displace sovereignty or disciplinary power. More , specifically , however, it is constitutions of population as new field of intervention . Thus viewing risk as a government , and following from Foucault“s concept of power , Francois Ewald made the famous assertion that :

Nothing is a risk itself; there is no risk in reality. But on the other hand, anything can be risk; it all depends on how one analyzes the danger , considers the events. As Kant might have put it , the category of risk is a category of the understanding , it cannot be given in sensibility or intuition. (Ewald, 1991:199)

Risk then, is both features of governments and a way of thinking about government (O“Malley, 2008:56). In this sense, it is not a unique mechanism of power,. Risk dose, however, have specific attributes that set it apart from others practices of government. According to PatO“Mally,

'Risk is a statistical and probabilistic technique, whereby large numbers of events are sorted into a distribution, and the distribution in turn is used as a means of making probabilistic predictions . In this process , the particular details of each individuals case which have the focus of disciplinary technologies are submerged or stripped away and only certain recurring characteristics attended to '.

In this regards, Mitchell Dean, Risk as a governmental rationality of ordering reality in calculative terms, not significant itself. It's significant lies with what it gets attached to ,": the moral and political programs in which it is developed and used . (Dean, 2010:206). Thus, Risk is a name given to a set of practice that are meant to render certain aspects of an uncertain present day and future reality legible by calculative means and makes them governable.

IV

Final Remarks : socially contracted or mediated HIV/AIDS related risk appears here as a condition that is no longer found exclusively in nature but also in human freedom , rights , dignity , conduct , behaviors relationship , organization but society in itself . Establishing itself as a crucial lens through which to read contemporary modernity. For this focus , risk is the „Condition „ of modern man (Beck1998) , an inherent aspects of this phase of the capitalism(Sennet200) . So HIV/AIDS related risk is more reflexive than the instrumental insofar as it represent an expansion and proliferation of option and decisions. Simultaneously risk facilitates a departure from the idea of individual culpability, because it allows for the collectivization and universalization of the consequences of bad behaviors (causes for HIV/AIDS). So HIV/AIDS related risk temporal zed as a cultural representation of the destanderdization of the social acceptance. However, HIV/AIDS related risk and uncertainty are both concepts that are closely related with each others with the notion of time framework. , particularly future time, where uncertainty concern s the essential unpredictability of the future, while risk is grounded in a faith in its predictabilities and social control of Serious illness like HIV/AIDS is disruptive of everyday life , normality and time simultaneously closely associated with the loss of control over routines . Sometimes framing the meaning of HIV/AIDS related risk or its beyond science imposes in a quite undemocratic way issue framing and meaning and corresponding public health models , which have enjoyed more democratic accountabilities and negotiation .

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