



9th International congress on Aids in Asia and the Pacific



HIV/AIDS and Security in PNG. Whose insecurity?

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THE PROBLEM

The discipline of International Relations obscures the impacts of HIV/AIDS on non-state actors. Yet, International Relations perspectives are extremely influential in the development of national, regional and international NGO policy on HIV/AIDS. So, if International Relations is to more accurately reflect the impact of the epidemic it must reflect on state, society and the individual. The conclusion may still be that the epidemic has very limited consequences on the existence of states, but at least a comprehensive account of its impacts will be undertaken and resources may be focused on areas most in need.



THE DYNAMIC

In International Relations the human security impacts of HIV/AIDS are sidelined by the focus on country, regional and global levels analysis.

The focus on country level statistics and epidemiological modelling further entrenches the bias in International Relations.

The focus on system-wide trends allows the broad transference of international experience and best practice with little reflection on its local applicability.

The impact of the epidemic on the state is perceived in very narrow terms (relating closely to the continued survival of the state, but not its flourishing).

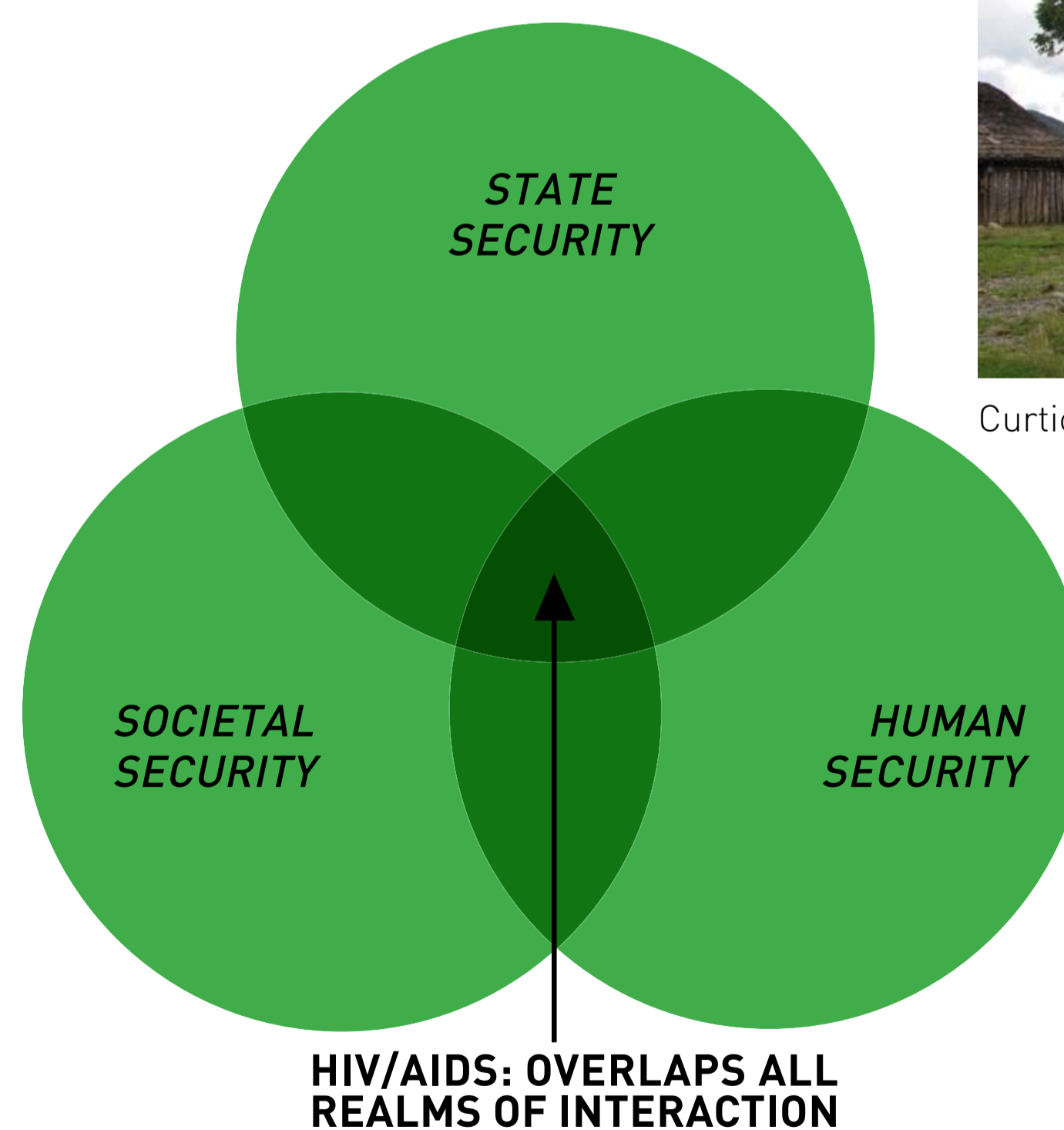
States are resilient and continue to exist in the face of many threats and crises. However, a state-focused perspective of security shrouds the very real impact of HIV/AIDS on society and the individual. And if prevention and treatment efforts are not prioritised then ultimately the human toll cannot but impact on the state.

THE STUDY METHOD

(a) The methods used to evaluate the impact of the epidemic on state security in Africa were interrogated and distilled.

(b) These lessons from Africa were applied to a regional (South Pacific) case study – namely PNG. This will test the applicability of these lessons for the region.

The available information on state and INGO activity in PNG was analysed in light of (a) and (b) above, and contrasted to the experience from Africa.



OUTCOMES

The epidemic poses a serious human security threat to Papua New Guineans, but not necessarily to the state. There are many reasons for this situation including the low state capacity in the absence of the epidemic and the very real impacts at the clan, village and individual levels.

As a consequence HIV transmission is likely to increase, and HIV programs will be further weakened.



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THE CONCLUSION

The results of the orthodox International Relations approach are twofold, (1) international 'lessons' of the impact of the epidemic are privileged over local perspectives; and (2) that impact on sub-state actors, such as kin groups or individuals, are devalued, ignored or marginalised.

The application of these preceding approaches in the Asia Pacific region requires caution and needs to be demonstrated and tested. The imbalance between international perspectives and country level impacts need to be adjusted to take more account of local conditions and trends. The success of prevention and treatment depends on local experience.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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