

## SHI Book Prize Winner 2008

Corinne Squire. [HIV in South Africa](#). (Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2007).

Nominated by Dr Molly Andrews

South Africa has 5.5 million HIV positive citizens - the highest national total in the world. Despite its relatively powerful economy and infrastructure, it has been dramatically affected by the HIV pandemic, and its political responses to the epidemic produced worldwide controversy.

HIV in South Africa is the first book to analyse detailed personal, and often very moving, accounts from the South African epidemic, and to link individual experiences to this epidemic's wider social and political context. Drawing on interviews with 37 South Africans infected or affected by HIV, across a three-year study, the book attempts to answer the following questions in particular:

- How are people in South Africa finding ways to live with, speak about and resist HIV?
- What resources - from, for instance, religion, politics and medicine - are people drawing on to confront the virus, and how are they changing those resources in the process?
- What is the significance of gender, 'race' and class in HIV's South African context?
- How is South Africa's HIV epidemic affected by the broader African and international politics of HIV and development, by activism, and by the country's apartheid and post-apartheid history?

HIV in South Africa offers an overview of the South African epidemic within the HIV pandemic, and reviews the controversial history of HIV and responses to it in South Africa. Using a narrative approach to analyse and understand South Africans' accounts of the epidemic, Corinne Squire then examines the impact of HIV on people's everyday lives in the country. The book describes how people living with the virus manage to find and use conventional and traditional medical treatments, deal with issues about their partners' and children's HIV status, and tell their family and friends. It examines the close relationship between personal accounts of living with HIV, and wider medical, religious and political representations of HIV. It highlights the significance of class, race and gender for individuals' experiences. It argues that the South African epidemic serves as an example of many HIV issues worldwide, in developing and developed countries alike, at a time when global HIV treatment and prevention are medically and socially possible, politically endorsed, but often poorly implemented. And it suggests that in situations of social stigmatisation, self-silencing and political neglect, speaking out' about this epidemic, the 'big thing,' can have an important role in living with the condition and its effects, and in building action for prevention and treatment.

The book is being widely used in sub-Saharan African countries - for instance, Ghana and Ethiopia - by researchers, graduate students, and nongovernmental and community-based organisations. It has been made available free to education and nonprofit organisations in countries on the United Nations Human Development Programme's Human Development Index of Medium and Low Rankings; it is the first book to be treated in this way by its publisher. It has led to 19 invited talks in Europe and the US as well as Africa.