

Frédéric Keck, «Anthropological hypotheses on the Biopolitics of Virus Hunters: From Cynegetic Power to Cryopolitics»

Abstract: For the last fifty years, following the paradigms of ecology of infectious diseases and “One Health”, virologists have collected samples from non-human animals to anticipate spillover events causing pandemics among humans. This daily work of monitoring, moving between farms, markets, borders and laboratories, has introduced animals in human communities as sentinels perceiving early warning signals, by contrast with spectacular killings of suspicious animals which redraw the boundaries between humans and animals. This talk will ask what kind of biopolitics emerges from such a surveillance of animals for pandemic preparedness. Discussing thinkers such as Chamayou, Mbembe, Descola and Povinelli, it will test the hypothesis that modernity is a shift not only from sovereign power to biopolitics, but also from cynegetic power to cryopolitics. If the subject of cryopolitics is not populations but collection, what kind of emancipation can be conceived for this new form of biopolitics?