Public Health Care Strategies and Socio-Genetic Marginalization

The increased public and political concern about developments of new genetic technologies has led to an increased scrutiny of the role played by medical experts and public health authorities in this new health care system. Public discussion, recommendations of professional organizations, legislation, and related technological assessment are relied upon to prevent any adverse effects on society. It is also important to organize discussions on an international level. The aim of this ICAS panel, confined to developments in China, Japan, India, and Taiwan, is to make a contribution to that effect.

by Margaret Sleeboom

T he point of departure is the concept of socio-genetic marginalization in Asia. It draws attention to the consequences of the practice of relating the social to the (assumed) genetic make-up of people, even when the relevance of such a connection is doubtful. After all, it is from the cultural (including the spiritual), economic, and political context that we derive the sources that endow our interpretations of genetic information with meaning. The concept of socio-genetic marginalization, first of all, refers to the isolation of social groups and individuals as a consequence of discrimination on the basis of genetic information. With this in mind, my paper discusses the vulnerable position of ethnic groups in China, India, and Taiwan, when facing decisions about revealing their genetic identity. The concept of genetic diagnostic testing is closely related to issues of social and economic marginalization, because the genetic information which is encoded in the genome is not a neutral data, but also encompasses power and privilege. The genetic information which is encoded in the genome may for example offer people opportunities or power and privilege. The genetic information which is encoded in the genome may for example offer people opportunities or

by Juliette Van Wassenhove

Civil Society, Religious Affiliation and Political Participation in East Asia

T oday civil society is quite a fashionable notion, as attested by its wide resurgance in the academic and political worlds, since the dismantlement of the communist block. Bilateral multilateral agencies, never tired of emphasizing civil society’s discourse and organizations part in the 1980s-1990s political transitions, have turned civil society into a tool for democracy assistance programmes. Civil society has become a buzz word on the bureaucratic checklist of the righteous path to development. This evolvement is noticeable in the growing discourse on civil society, which tends to be both normative and deontic – casting non-governmental organizations, and associations as the incarnation of the virtuous populace. Analyses of religion have undergone an apparent evo

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