

Securing cities against global pandemics

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AIM investigating how cities in the West securitise against global pandemics, focusing principally on the social implications that arise.

Pandemics pose new and **difficult challenges**, not least in relation to **mapping and controlling contagion** beyond the immediate locations of disease outbreak. The unfolding of the Ebola crisis, the 2002-3 SARS epidemic and the 2008-9 H1N1 flu pandemic illustrate some of the implications and added complexities of **increased connectivity**.

Initially discussed as a humanitarian health crisis, the Ebola pandemic was rapidly re-framed, in media and policy discourse in the West, as primarily a **security threat** (President Obama's speech, Reuters, 16th September 2014). In the West risks associated with the spread of pandemics generate **intense and high-profile speculation in the media**. **Crowded cities and large airports** are seen as significantly increasing the risk of contagion beyond initial outbreak locations, however geographically remote. Critical studies of security contend that cities respond to a wide range of threats by **embracing pre-emptive strategies**.

Much research and financial investment is devoted to **medical treatment, humanitarian aid**, and the pursuit of innovation (especially aiming at developing viable vaccines). A considerable body of medical knowledge is accumulating on individual pathogens, and great effort is placed on **tracking and modelling the spread of pandemics**. Alongside these initiatives, in the West governments and a wide range of non-governmental bodies, from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control to the World Health Organisation, actively endorse prevention and preparedness responses. They **diffuse best practice for containment, quarantine and securitisation** of Western sites designated as vulnerable.

Yet little sociological attention has so far been paid to the social, ethical and legal implications of these measures.

Mixed Methods

- **analysis of media archives**
- **semi-structured and elite interviews** with experts, policy advisors and practitioners
- **site visits** (incl. in Singapore & Hong Kong)
- **ethnography** (e.g. observation of simulation of outbreaks)
- **desk-based research** (review of international and national policy guidelines, measures and technologies deployed during previous and current pandemics)

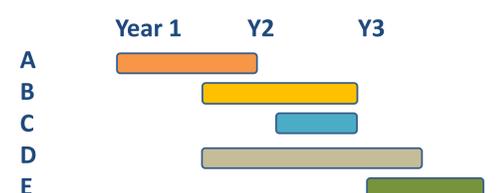
A. How is pandemic risk framed in media and policy discourse in the West?

E. Vaccines: role of vaccine research in the securitisation of Western cities

B. What protocols and best practices are circulated in the West?

D. Technoscience: role of technology in securitising Western cities against pandemics today

C. Smarting up cities: lessons from other cities (e.g. Singapore and HK). Implications for implementation in the West



Outputs & Impacts

- **book contract**
- **peer-reviewed articles in impactful outlets** (e.g. BioSocieties; Science Technology & Human Values Sociology, Information Communication & Society)
- **non-academic briefing** for practitioners and research participants
- **conference presentations, seminars, talks at non-academic events** (for the public, policy makers and/or practitioners, or co-organised by NGOs)
- **workshop** to launch findings