

Environmentalities of Health Security

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Discourses of Global Health Security are saturated with buzzwords like “holism”, “comprehensive approaches”, or “systems thinking”, and increasingly push concepts that make a strong case about the ecological and environmental aspects of health, like “Planetary Health” or “One Health”. Concerns about the circulation of antibiotics through sewage systems and soils, the proliferation of vector populations due to rising temperatures, or the conveyance of “invasive species” through logistical infrastructures are just some cases that point to what we observe as a rearticulation of health threats in environmental terms. In our panel we would firstly like to deepen the understanding of such a (re-)actualized environmental orientation, and secondly do so by investigating how it corresponds with transformations of the security apparatus designed to tackle health crises. We suggest focusing on the governmental, technical and scientific means that address disease emergencies as a matter of ecology. Correspondingly, we invite papers to address the following questions: How do techno-political devices and legal protocols transcribe the changing spatio-temporal constitution of disease into an administrative topology? What calculative machineries, such as seemingly trivial paperwork technologies, sensing devices or computer simulations draw together epidemic environments and enact ecological concerns for health security? What techno-scientific interventions, from outbreak research on vaccines, over epidemiological sentinel systems to microbial engineering, are put to the field? Using these questions for investigating a broad range of phenomena, we hope to clarify whether and how contemporary apparatuses of health security intertwine with an ecosystem view on disease.

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