

# Crisisfication & Securitisation of the Pandemic

ESI Quick Bites November 2021

**A very warm welcome to our latest ESI Members: Ife Okafor-Yarwood and Sayra van den Berg!**

**Policing and governance in the pandemic**



For many people, the COVID-19 pandemic was not a mere health crisis, but it pervaded their lives to the extent that work, education, mobility and social bonding came under severe pressure. In a sense, COVID-19 can be characterised as a catalyst that brought to light several social tensions.

The authors first share their observations on the wide range of anti-COVID measures that were imposed on entire populations with a view to gaining control over the virus, including (technological) surveillance and monitoring. Secondly, they analyse the nature of the crisis itself by distinguishing some of its dimensions, including the “crisisfication” and the “securitisation” of the pandemic, with reference to the issue of leadership and governance and the way in which governmental authorities sought to manage the pandemic. Finally,

they evaluate whether and to what extent policing and security have been profoundly affected by the pandemic, even giving rise to the question whether we are witnessing a prelude to a paradigmatic shift in policing, and whether we are observing a transfer from policing by consent to top-down repressive policing.

Observing globally, the authors note that 'in autocracies and weak democracies there were instances of excessive violence by police and the use of coercive powers by security forces. Across the globe, governments reinforced the role of executive power, which seemed to be at the expense of parliamentary power as well as local civil power.

Police at times found themselves uncomfortably placed between the duty to enforce restrictions and an increasingly dissatisfied and frustrated public.

The authors conclude with a number of practical lessons of wide application with respect to the governance of security.

### **Full Paper Access**

#### **Articles That Caught Our Attention: Summaries**

### **Just Do It (ESI Member publication)**

'Our overexploitation of resources exceeds ecosystems' capacity to provide them or to absorb our waste. Society has failed to meet clearly stated goals of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change'. The authors propose that our biggest challenges are not technical, but social, economic, political and behavioural, and they recommend specific priority actions and resource allocations to avoid irreversible tipping points.

### **The value of seasonal forecasts in disaster risk management**

For a forecast-based system to demonstrate value, it needs to be used over a prolonged length of time. However, the issue of uncertainty is inherent to forecasts, and decision-makers must decide at what forecast probability levels to act upon, and what actions are appropriate.

The central section of the paper is necessarily highly technical and mathematical, but the final section sums up the process and the argument in less technical terms.

### **Cyberattacks in a 'developing' state**

South Africa now has the third-highest number of cybercrime victims in the world, costing about R2.2 billion (142 million USD) annually. This includes targeted ransomware attacks on critical infrastructure (freight rail and port terminals), on state training systems and on national Justice processes, affecting all of the department's electronic systems, including the courts.

### **Security in the Anthropocene: the Arctic**

The Arctic region's littoral spaces are dynamic and rapidly changing, and this paper provides a useful and detailed overview of the challenges to security policy, broadly understood, that are presented by a highly complex and constantly developing pattern of intersecting mobilities of ecosystems, peoples and economies.

## **Naming the Anthropocene**

At certain times, the act of naming may have a profound effect in bringing into the foreground an insight and a name that provides a timely focal point for our understanding of ourselves in the world: in this case, the 'Anthropocene'. This article is a reflection on the work of the late Paul Crutzen (ob. 28 January 2021) - who first proposed the name at a scientific conference in 2000 - and its continuing aftermath.

### **Books / Reports of Note**

**Anthropocene (In)securities:** Reflections on Collective Survival 50 years after the Stockholm Conference.

### **Standing Up for a Sustainable World**

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