

SHARED QUESTION 1: HOW IS THIS PAPER TRANSNATIONAL?

IT INVOLVES RELATIONS
BETWEEN STATES AND SOCIETIES OF OTHER STATES
OR BETWEEN SOCIETIES

- This paper is about transnational politics, and it is widely understood to take place across national boundaries between states and societies governed by other states in the field of international relations.
- More narrowly, in terms of actors, transnational politics takes place “across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an international organization.” (Thomas Risse-Kappen, Bringing Transnational relations back in, 1995)
- From these viewpoints of international relations, since the field of science, technology, and society (STS) involves society, international studies of STS such as this paper is necessarily transnational.

SHARED QUESTION 2: WHAT MOTIVATES TRANSNATIONAL COMMITMENTS IN THIS STS PROJECT ?

A Science, technology, and society (STS) project on international issues such as the worldwide spread of a new disease or a pandemic must be transnational. Its commitments are motivated by the lessons we've learned from history that pandemics can change history and that they are too important to be left to the scientists.

Historical Lessons: the Plague and the Spanish Flu

1) The Case of the Plague in the 14th Century

- The bubonic plague hit Europe hard in the mid-14th century (1347-1351).
- It was after this worst plague in human history known as the Black Death hit the cities of Europe, Florence in particular, that the Renaissance was launched and the transition from the middle ages to modernity was made.
- The Black Death resulted in the deaths of 75-200 million people in Eurasia.
- The earliest instances of biological warfare had been recorded as the Mongolian army catapulted infested corpses of its own dead men into the fortified city of Kaffa in Crimea using the Black Death (1343-1345).

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Historical Lessons

2) The Case of the Spanish Flu in the 20th Century

- The Spanish flu, the deadliest flu in human history originating from a US army training camp in Fort Riley, Kansas rather than Spain, killed 20-50 million people during and after World War I (1918-20). That's more than the total number of people (17 million) killed in World War I itself (1914-18). (Evan Andrews, "Why Was it called the 'Spanish flu?," [History](#), 27 March 2020)
- The pandemic was misnamed because journalists from Spain—a neutral country during World War I—were the only ones who could report on the flu unlike others who were suppressed by wartime censorship in their countries. Consequently, those in the countries undergoing the media blackout incorrectly assumed that the flu originated in Spain since they could only read Spanish news sources about the pandemic. (IBID.)
- "An unusual characteristic of this virus was the high death rate it caused among healthy adults 15 to 34 years of age"—the prime generation of military service. (Douglas Jordan et al. "The deadliest flu: the complete story of the discovery and reconstruction of the 1918 pandemic virus," Centers for disease control and prevention website, 2018)
- It was later explained as the "cytokine explosion," an immune overreaction in healthy individuals, that can lead to severe inflammation and the fatal buildup of fluid in the lungs. (Dave Roos, "Why the Second Wave of the 1918 Spanish Flu Was So Deadly," [History](#), 29 April 2020)
- More politically, the spread of the Spanish flu during World War I and the aftermath of the War led to "the collapse of European domination" and the emergence of the United States as "the most powerful" nation in the world. (Adam Watson, [The Evolution of International Society](#), 1992/2009)