Covid-19 Outbreak Role in the Development of Societies: Questions and Inconsistencies

Karin C. VanMeter1, Sucharit Bhakdi2, Reverend Father Antony P. Gerilovych3

Karin C. VanMeter, PhD, Lecturer, Austrian Biotech University of Applied Sciences (Tulln), University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria (Hagenberg) Austria

Sucharit Bhakdi, PhD, Emeritus Professor, Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Visiting Professor, Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel, formerly Head of the Institute for Medical Microbiology and Hygiene, Germany

Rev Fr Antony P. Gerilovych, PhD, Dr habil (Veterinary), Professor, Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences of Ukraine, Deputy Director for Scientific Research, Institute for Experimental and Clinical Veterinary Medicine, Ukraine

Article No / Номер статьи: 011040018

For citation (Chicago style) / Для цитирования (стиль «Чикаго»):
VanMeter, Karin C., Bhakdi, Sucharit, and Rev Fr Antony P. Gerilovych. 2020. “Covid-19 Outbreak Role in the Development of Societies: Questions and Inconsistencies.” The Beacon: Journal for Studying Ideologies and Mental Dimensions 3, 011140018.

1 Please send the correspondence to e-mail: kcvanmeter54@gmail.com.
2 Please send the correspondence to e-mail: sbhakdi@uni-mainz.de.
3 Please send the correspondence to e-mail: antger2011@gmail.com.
**ABSTRACT**

Karin C. VenMeter, Sucharit Bhakdi, Rev Fr Antony P. Gerilovych.

Covid-19 Outbreak Role in the Development of Societies: Questions and Inconsistencies. This Letter is composed from answers to the certain questions on COVID-19 role in the development of societies, posed by an Editor. Three scientists pay attention to the epidemiological dimension of the development of global society that came into closest contact with what we call “nature,” as well as to the role of “natural” factors in reconsidering the societies by the political elites.

**Key words:** COVID-19, social policy, epidemiology, development of society, role of viruses

---

**REЗЮМЕ**

Карин К. ВенМетеръ, Сучарит Бакди, его преподоб iе отецъ Ан-тонiй П. Гериловичъ.

Роль вспышки Covid-19 въ развитіи обществъ: Вопросы и противоречія. Это письмо составлено изъ отвѣтовъ на нѣкоторые вопросы о роли COVID-19 въ развитиi сообществъ, поставленные редакто-ромъ. Три ученыхъ обращаютъ вниманіе на эпідеміологическое измѣреніе развитія глобальнаго человѣческаго общества, которое пришло въ тѣсное соприкосновеніе съ тѣмъ, что мы обыкновенно называемъ “природой”, а также на роль “природныхъ” факторовъ въ переосмысленіи обществъ политическими элітами.

**Ключевыя слова:** COVID-19, соціальная политика, эпідеміологія, развитіе общества, роль вирусовъ
From the Editor:

As the corona crisis exacerbates, it is becoming evident that its role in the development of all societies will be enormous, from restricting personal freedoms to revising constitutions, from transforming open and democratic communities to the worst Orwell’s nightmares, from acceleration of digitisation processes to possibly total control over population – sooner or later, if we as rational beings would not oppose (Bhakdi 2020; Bhakdi and Reiß 2020). All this will be accompanied by even larger growth of humanity, at least to thirteen-fifteen billion by year 2050 and, therefore, erasing the edge between “society” and “nature,” whom the modern green political parties strive to “protect” (Donskikh 2019; Sassin 2019). Due to occupying territories that some time ago were deemed natural reservoirs, humanity will be coming to a closer and closer contact with animal world – intensified in terms of quantity and quality – which means, to the world of microorganisms, protozoa, bacteria, fungi and viruses (Gerilovych et al. 2014; Glaubrecht 2019, 35, 526–528, 844). SARS-CoV-2 is only the beginning of a long chain of epidemiological disastrous events that human beings will face during the nearest decades due to unprecedented growth of world population. Will we learn anything from the lessons and opportunities that have been given to us so far, including the lesson of COVID-19?

The Beacon Editor addressed three renowned scientists with a set of pressing questions on SARS-CoV-2 and corona crisis on the whole. Their responses are provided below.

Editor: What could be the main reasons of the vast case mortality rate range from 0.2-0.3% in Germany and Switzerland to 10-12% in Italy?

Prof VanMeter: Italy has an older general population than Germany and Switzerland. Additionally a lot of Chinese workers still where flying in from the infected areas AFTER it was known that there was already an epidemic in China – not a good idea. Furthermore, the health care system in Italy is not comparable to the one in Germany or Switzerland.

Prof Bhakdi: Many underlying reasons probably converge to explain the apparent high mortality in Italy (and, now Spain). For example: a) high air pollution (Northern Italy) b) incorrect categorizing: virus is passed on to bed-ridden individuals and patients by healthy, infected relatives and friends during their visits. The virus is detected when they are admitted to the hospital or even post-mortem elsewhere, and is immediately incorrectly assigned as the cause of death. Also, the ailing health care systems in both countries break down completely because of the imposed senseless preventive measures (patient isolation, personel quarantine, etc), which leads to restricted attention of patients in general and accounts for the higher numbers of deaths in general (March) in these countries.

Prof Gerilovych: This difference may result from the difference in laboratory test protocols for COVID-19 in different countries. In Italy, the virus is “searched” through cohorts of suspected individuals, obviously ill and deceased patients. The PCR test applied for detection of pathogen – polymerase chain reaction – does not allow to say whether the coronavirus caused a death. Carriers who have died for another reason in Italy joined the ranks of “deaths from coronavirus infection,” that generates pseudo-mortality of COVID-19.
Editor: SARS-CoV-2 and SARS-CoV, its closest genetic relation, share nearly 80 per cent of their genome (Baranov et al. 2005; Moreno-Eutimio et al. 2020; Severe acute... 2020; Van Dorp et al. 2020). Then why does COVID-19 spread around the world is completely different from that of SARS atypical pneumonia in 2002-2004?

Prof VanMeter: In my personal opinion COVID-19 is a coronavirus that might have been genetically modified – I do not have any evidence for this, just my opinion because of its unusual behavior for a coronavirus.

Prof Bhakdi: Because SARS was an infection of the deep respiratory tract and transmission only possible by close contact, whereas COVID also infects the upper respiratory tract and is highly contagious. AND because COVID 19 is mainly non-dangerous, it spreads without being noticed, whereas SARS caused life-threatening disease that could quickly be detected and confined.

Prof Gerilovych: The epidemic was not effectively contained due to the transport and logistics activity of the Chinese, (who did not close international airports at the beginning of the outbreak but closed domestic airports from Wuhan – Editorial comment), and the slow epidemiological response at the beginning (possibly).

Someone, apparently, benefits from the current panic. But this is not a question for scientists. Speaking objectively, making a vaccine or therapeutic serum is not a problem. In comparison, Ebola fever is impossible to effectively treat/prevent, so the biological risks associated with it, are much higher.

Editor: Lockdown measures implemented by administration of many countries throughout the world, are obviously excessive, if not extreme. In comparison with Ebola, Nipah or H5N1 viruses, SARS-CoV-2 is definitely a low-hazardous one. What measures could you propose to counteract the panic in mass media and general public in different countries?

Prof VanMeter: a. If China and the WHO would have been honest, the epidemic would have been isolated within China and would not have become a pandemic. b. The media are a big problem in the whole situation because of providing opinions of the journalist instead of just providing correct information – thus the politicians felt obligated to do something. Strange enough without having enough data.

Prof Bhakdi: International effort to tell the world population that the virus is a spook and no real danger.

Prof Gerilovych: Theoretically, quarantine measures can be effective, but in practice there is a question: will it be economically justified? With negligible mortality, to paralyse the economies of entire regions and then have an increase in criminal or social mortality in significant advantages?.

Editor: World Health Organisation insists on providing online counters “Confirmed cases,” “Confirmed deaths,” and “No of countries infected.” To what extent do these counters reflect the real situation with SARS-CoV-2 spread around the world?
Prof VanMeter: The WHO is lying in this case – how can they support statements that are not true?

Prof Bhakdi: The WHO is mainly to blame again for the whole fiasco. The most important measure is to implement that registration as “Corona death” is not allowed unless it is established that the virus was a major cause of death.

Prof Gerilovych: Perhaps, WHO should develop criteria for evaluating diagnostic reports that are common to all and then consider the sick / dead in the same in every country. Again, this is a somewhat philosophical question. There are only two known direct causes of death, cardiac arrest and respiratory arrest. Whether COVID-19 was the main reason of death, or the virus just came into view during the mandatory post-mortem analysis, it must be very carefully examined.

Editor: How did one manage to contain H5N1 epidemic in 2002-2004? In terms of contagiousness, it is a much more dangerous virus than SARS-CoV-2. How can it be controlled now? Are there any measures for epidemiological control in poultry populations in Asia?

Prof Gerilovych: The H5N1 avian influenza virus caused a series of deaths in humans in China precisely due to poor sanitation and close contact between people and birds, which led to deaths due to the high virulence dose of infection. Bird flu occurs once every 5-10 years. Among animals, it occurs in the form of panzootic (an analogue of a pandemic, but in animals). Effective control is achieved by eradication of diseased birds. Alternatively, vaccination may be used. Effective vaccines exist, and as for humans, they are adjusted seasonally depending on the circulating strains of the virus.

Editor: “Swine flu” H1N1 is another strain of the pathogen of the Spanish influenza, which claimed up to 150 million lives a hundred years ago. In what do you see the reason that in 2009–2010, mortality from this virus was approximately 1%, and from the Spanish influenza up to 25%? If humanity has improved the healthcare system to such an extent for this hundred years, why is the current spread of SARS-CoV-2 around the world (speed, regions, contagiousness) alike that of Spanish influenza (of course, without its mortality)?

Prof Gerilovych: At the time of Spanish influenza, the world did not know the means of effective antiviral therapy. Accordingly, mortality from these similar diseases is so different. Typhoid fever (salmonellosis), or, say, plague (yersiniosis) destroyed entire cities and countries before the advent of antibiotics. However, with the advent of targeted treatment (aimed at the pathogen), they became only dark pages of the history of mankind.

The spread of SARS-CoV-2 in the modern world is not surprising because of 1) the “novelty” of the pathogen (it was not immediately recognised) and 2) globalisation (the speed and intensity of traffic in the modern world accelerated the spread of the pathogen. It instantly expanded to a global scale.
Conflict of interests: None declared.

REFERENCES

Baranov, P.V., Henderson, C.M., Anderson, C.B., Gesteland, R.F., Atkins, J.F., et al. 2005. “Programmed ribosomal frameshifting in decoding the SARS-CoV genome.” Virology. 332, no. 2: 498–510. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.virol.2004.11.038

Bhakdi, Sucharit. 2020. Offener Brief von Professor Sucharit Bhakdi an Bundeskanzlerin Dr. Angela Merkel. https://swprs.org/offener-brief-von-professor-sucharit-bhakdi-an-bundeskanzlerin-dr-angela-merkel

Bhakdi, Sucharit, and Karina Reiß. 2020. Corona Fehlalarm? Zahlen, Daten und Hintergründe. Zwischen Panikmache und Wissenschaft: welche Maßnahmen sind im Kampf gegen Virus und COVID-19 sinnvoll?: Daten, Fakten, Hintergründe. Berlin: Goldegg Verlag.

Donskikh, Oleg A. 2019. “Horror Zivilisationis, oder Horror der Subjektivität.” Beacon: J. Stud. Ideol. Ment. Dimens. 2, no. 2: 020110205. In German. https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12656/thebeacon.2.020110205

Gerilovych, A. P., Stegniy, B. T., Stegniy, A. B., et al. 2014. Comparative study of highly pathogenic avian influenza strains isolated in Ukraine in 2005 and 2008, Agricultural Science and Practice 1: 68–71. https://doi.org/10.15407/agrisp1.01.068

Glaubrecht, Matthias. 2019. Das Ende der Evolution: Der Mensch und die Vernichtung der Arten. München: C. Bertelsmann Verlag. In German.

Moreno-Eutimio, M.A., López-Macías, C., Pastelin-Palacios, R. 2020. “Bioinformatic analysis and identification of single-stranded RNA sequences recognized by TLR7/8 in the SARS-CoV-2, SARS-CoV, and MERS-CoV genomes.” Microbes Infect. Apr 30. pii: S1286-4579(20)30076-9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.micinf.2020.04.009

Sassin, W. 2019. “Deja Vue?” Beacon J. Stud. Ideol. Ment. Dimens. 2, no. 2, 020210216. https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12656/thebeacon.2.020210216

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 isolate Wuhan-Hu-1, complete genome. NCBI Reference Sequence: NC_045512.2. Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nuccore/1798174254#sequence_NC_045512.2

Van Dorp, L., Acman, M., Richard, D., Shaw, L.P., Ford, C.E., et al. 2020. “Emergence of genomic diversity and recurrent mutations in SARS-CoV-2.” Infect Genet Evol. May 5:104351. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.meegid.2020.104351
Authors / Авторы

Karin C. VanMeter,
Austrian Biotech University
of Applied Sciences (Tulln),
Konrad-Lorenz-Straße 10,
3430 Tulln an der Donau, Austria

Sucharit Bhakdi,
Visiting Professor,
Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel,
Christian-Albrechts-Platz 4,
24118 Kiel, Germany

Rev Fr Antony P. Gerilovych,
Institute for Experimental
and Clinical Veterinary Medicine
of the National Academy
of Agrarian Sciences of Ukraine,
83 Pushkinska st,
Kharkov 61023, Ukraine

© Karin C. VanMeter; Sucharit Bhakdi; Rev Fr Antony P. Gerilovych
Licensee The Beacon: Journal for Studying Ideologies and Mental Dimensions

Licensing the materials published is made according to Creative Commons Attribution 4.0
International (CC BY 4.0) licence