

## **Home alone 2.0: Relation between coronavirus pandemic and Kevin McCallister**

### **Thieves after toilet paper and hand sanitizer instead of technology**

Have you ever thought about relations between the film “Home Alone” and the recent outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic? No, me neither, until yesterday, when I reviewed the film and found some parallels in our life now.

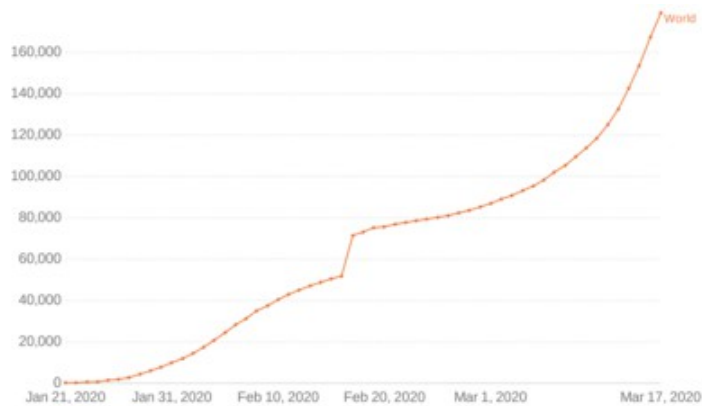
Looking at the outbreak of the virus in China in early January, I first thought that the virus would stay in China as first, the whole region of Hubei and later the whole country was in quarantine and in a total lockdown. It felt surreal that the virus would have such a heavy impact on one’s daily routine.

Now that Europe has become the new epicenter of the virus, the majority of Europeans remain in fear of getting infected. As this situation is new to the grand majority, people feel unsure about what to do, so do the politicians.

After the first reported case of the virus in Wuhan, Hubei, China, in early December, politicians were keeping details about the virus under wraps and let the population in the dark.

After the number of reported cases increased significantly in early January, the Chinese government put the province of Hubei under quarantine and complete lockdown.

An investigation found out that the virus was transmitted from animals to humans on the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, and spread into the world from there.



<sup>1</sup>When the virus reached Germany, everybody was curious about the further spread of the respiratory disease, so my family was checking the news app multiple times a day.

The increasing numbers of reported cases in mid-February led to many people stockpiling items of daily needs, such as Germans hoarding toilet paper, tissues, flour and hand sanitizer; Americans queueing for guns; Dutch people lining up outside their coffee-shops and Italians buying endless amounts of espresso, cigarettes and grappa.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320\\_coronavirus\\_pandemic#/media/File:Total-cases-covid-19-who.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320_coronavirus_pandemic#/media/File:Total-cases-covid-19-who.png) (last checked 18.03.2020)



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Every nation is setting different priorities on how to prepare best, but those people who are stockpiling forget that there are other families, elderly and the deserving poor who are also in need of basic items of the daily life.

Therefore, it is most probably going to happen that unlike in Home Alone, thieves will be more and more after toilet paper, flour and hand sanitizer than technology.

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2 Source:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320\\_coronavirus\\_pandemic#/media/File:Dried\\_pasta\\_shelves\\_empty\\_in\\_an\\_Australian\\_supermarket.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320_coronavirus_pandemic#/media/File:Dried_pasta_shelves_empty_in_an_Australian_supermarket.jpg) (last checked 18.03.2020)

3 Source: [https://i.dailymail.co.uk/1s/2020/03/04/16/25535350-8073105-image-a-43\\_1583339122126.jpg](https://i.dailymail.co.uk/1s/2020/03/04/16/25535350-8073105-image-a-43_1583339122126.jpg) (last checked 18.03.2020)

All this just because of shortages caused by people believing that five packages of toilet paper is an average weekly consumption in a four-people household, completely forgetting about elderly, other families and those in desperate need also being in demand of such goods.

Shortly after the wide coronavirus spread in Italy, the situation and spread of the virus was out of control. Hospitals are running over-capacities, Italy as a whole is in a lockdown and people are only allowed to leave the house for shopping and doctor's appointments.

This led to a high mortality rate due to the virus and doctors having to decide who to help just because of the patient's age and physique. Elderly lying in hospital on the edge of life, begging to see their families have become a popular image on the news feed.

In the United States of America, the response to the outbreak of the coronavirus resulted in American households starting to stockpiling goods and queueing outside gun shops. As of this moment, there are over 6,000 reported cases in the US present in all 50 States.

President Donald Trump announced travel suspension for Europe (14.03.), especially the Schengen area (11.03.) and declared national emergency due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

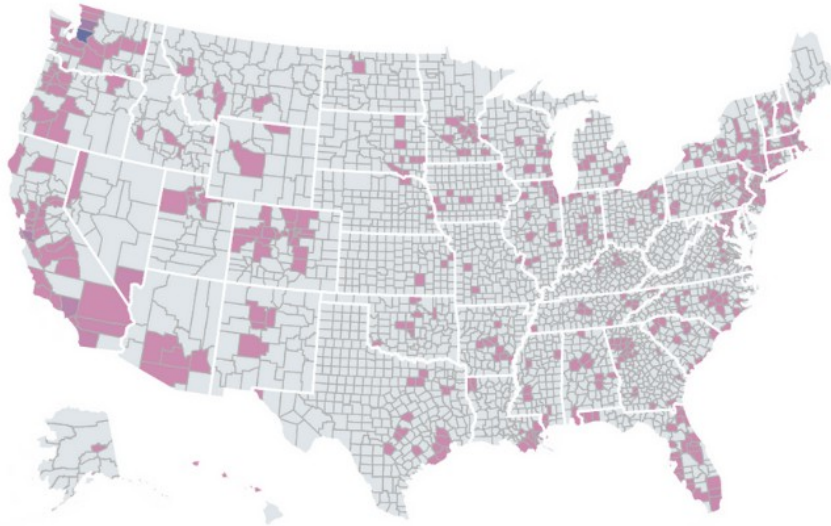
However, these travel restrictions do not apply to green card holders, US citizens or those travelling with a certain kind of visa<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, the White House has been accused of allegedly covering up information in order to limit the nation's response to the pandemic<sup>5</sup>.

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4 Source cited: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-suspension-entry-immigrants-nonimmigrants-certain-additional-persons-pose-risk-transmitting-2019-novel-coronavirus/> (last checked 18.03.2020)

5 Source: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/coronavirus-news-cdc-testing-website-us-cases-a9371276.html> last checked 18.03.2020)



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As the number of reported cases has been constantly rising, especially in Europe, the WHO (World Health Organization) declared Europe to be the new epicenter of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

<https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/coronavirus-karte-101.html><sup>7</sup>

Shortly after, the German government has announced some regulations for the citizen's daily life. In addition, the German states have announced to shut down schools, universities, nursery schools and educational institutions in general until the end of the Easter holidays.

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6 Source:

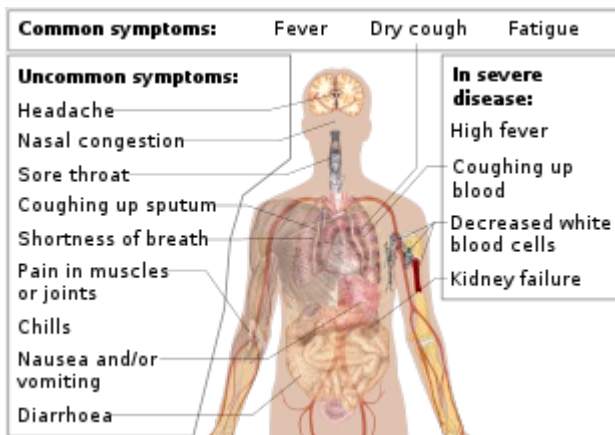
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320\\_coronavirus\\_pandemic#/media/File:Coronavirus\\_in\\_US\\_Counties.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320_coronavirus_pandemic#/media/File:Coronavirus_in_US_Counties.png) (last checked 18.03.2020)

7 Source: <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/coronavirus-karte-101.html> (last checked 18.03.2020)

On top of that, there are several regulations for shops, restaurants and health care institutions which remain open under application of special hygiene regulations, regulations of space in restaurants and limiting the number of visitors. Sports facilities, theatres, museums, cinemas, clubs and bars have to shut down<sup>8</sup>.

People are advised to stay at home and practice social distancing, which means to avoid social contacts, doing home office and only leaving the house for necessary purposes.

It also means to protect oneself from getting infected and lowering the risk of spreading the virus by cleaning one's workplace, home and other communal spaces faithfully and frequently. In addition, people are strongly reminded to be mindful of their hygiene routine, washing hands and disinfecting on a regular basis, as Dr. Susy Hota, an Infectious Diseases Specialist and Hospital Epidemiologist tells TIME<sup>9</sup>.



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8 Source: <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/hg-corona-kabinett-101.html> (last checked 18.03.2020)

9 Source: <https://time.com/5800442/social-distancing-coronavirus/> (last checked 18.03.2020)

10 Source:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320\\_coronavirus\\_pandemic#/media/File:Symptoms\\_of\\_coronavirus\\_disease\\_2019\\_2.0.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320_coronavirus_pandemic#/media/File:Symptoms_of_coronavirus_disease_2019_2.0.svg) (last checked 18.03.2020)

Country-wide school closures have led to a tremendous rise of digitalization, as the only possible way of continuing with lessons is given via the internet.

Scholars receive tasks from their teachers online that have to be completed at a certain point.

By using programs such as Microsoft Teams and OneNote, students are able to hand in homework, keep in touch with their teachers and work on projects together without having to meet up in real life, which facilitates transposing the regulations set by the German government and social distancing.

For myself, my daily life has changed significantly; it feels weird to not getting up at 6am and leave for school soon after, in fact, I get up at 8am every morning and start working shortly after. In the afternoon, I'm not meeting up with friends as per usual as I don't want to get infected, we do video calls instead.

My sports routine is reduced to a minimum in going out for a run into the forest alone twice per week as there is not handball training anymore and playing the French horn and practicing the scores I was given during rehearsals recently.

Even though individuals might argue that the socialization process may be disrupted, it is not the case. In times of schools shutting down due to coronavirus, it becomes very important to be integrated into the community in order to prevent the virus from spreading by employing social distancing.

In order to secure this, adults should act as a role model towards their children by employing social distancing towards their social groups and social categories. If they do so, it will be easier for children to practice these measures. Instead, they can make sure that their children understand why these actions have to be taken and how important it is.

Although children and adolescents will spend a lot of time in front of their phones, tablets, laptops and computers, there should not be many regulations made by parents for digital media.

By using social media and keeping in touch with friends from school and maybe making new friends online, it is good to see that friendships are still being cultivated and that there is a shared interest of taking care of each other and showing responsibility for each other.

Parents should be delighted by the fact that their children use technology to keep in touch rather than playing games online.

However, the problem with these regulations is that nobody cares about them. Even adults, who should act as a role model towards their children, still meet up in large groups and let their children throw parties and get together as if everything is normal and there is no pandemic that could kill half of the population if the situation got out of control.

If the population does not employ the restrictions given by the German government, there will either be a significant increase of confirmed cases, resulting in up to 70% of the whole population getting infected, which will be around 58 million people out of 82 million people in total<sup>11</sup> or a first state-wide, later nation-wide curfew<sup>12</sup>.

If the restrictions continue until the summer break, it is my advice to focus on school work as this will take up a big amount of time. For the rest of the time, I personally

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11 Source: <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/corona-rki-101.html> (last checked 18.03.2020)

12 Source: [https://rp-online.de/panorama/coronavirus/corona-krise-in-nrw-land-bereitet-sich-auf-viele-schwerkranken-infizierte-vor\\_aid-49621619](https://rp-online.de/panorama/coronavirus/corona-krise-in-nrw-land-bereitet-sich-auf-viele-schwerkranken-infizierte-vor_aid-49621619) (last checked 18.03.2020)



would get organized for school, organize my room, play games with my family and do workouts in order to keep up my endurance, strength and flexibility.

In general, I would do where I have not found the time to do yet and just enjoy the rare time with my family.

Of course, it is difficult for adolescents and younger children to stay inside and not meet their friends, but by bringing social distance between oneself and close people, there is less probability that the virus will spread, as Denise Rousseau, Professor of organizational behavior and public policy remarks<sup>13</sup>.

People should learn to respect the limited impact of SARS-CoV-2 on elderly if they employed social distancing. It is about respecting each other, showing responsibility for each other and by practicing social distancing, surviving together.

It is negligent to still go out in public with friends.

It is negligent to just carry on as per usual and potentially infect others.

It is negligent to not optimize one's daily routine to reduce the risk of infection.

It is negligent to not practice social distancing.

It is the most negligent to not wanting to co-operate with the world as a community to prevent the spread of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 worldwide.

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<sup>13</sup> Source: <https://time.com/5800442/social-distancing-coronavirus/> (last checked 18.03.2020)

We stay home, just like Kevin did, because by doing this and obeying the rules set by the government, we ensure that the pandemic will be gone more quickly due to a lower infection rate. In addition, we can make sure that nobody steals our toilet paper and hand sanitizer.

The impact of the coronavirus on our lives is related to the responsibility that we show towards the regulations. Obey those rules and we will soon have a fairly normal life again. It is all about us, the population.

Sources cited:

a) Images

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b) Text

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(All last checked 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020)