



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 2, 2020

Why Coronavirus Might Not Hit the U.S. as Hard as China: Hygiene

“In San Francisco in the 1970s and 1980s, it was routine to see men from China spit in the streets, blow their noses in their fingers and then wipe their hands on anything nearby, and generally violate American hygienic norms,” [writes](#) commentator Andrea Widburg. “Outside the tourist zones, Chinatown’s restaurants and grocery stores also suggested resistance to American hygiene.” This is unsettling news that, with the current situation, is good news — it explains why the coronavirus may not be as severe in the United States as in China.



Hygiene matters because the spread of all communicable disease is *behaviorally influenced*. Thus does culture matter because different cultures have different hygienic standards. Just consider how — with California’s leftist culture creating via policy a Third World environment in which homelessness is institutionalized and rats and fecal matter on sidewalks are rife — medieval diseases such as typhus and tuberculosis are [reemerging](#).

While it’s not politically correct to discuss (the Truth often isn’t), China’s culture — and its culture of corruption — likely played a large role in coronavirus’s emergence and spread. For starters, assuming the disease originated with the [consumption of wild animals](#), it could not have happened if such creatures weren’t sold in open-air markets (often being mishandled) with very little, if any, cleanliness standards and eaten or used for medicine in the first place.

Then there’s the expert who theorized that *if* coronavirus did originate in a Chinese bio-weapons laboratory, it could be because corrupt “Chinese researchers are in the habit of selling their [perhaps infected] laboratory animals to street vendors after they have finished experimenting on them,” as WND.com [related](#) last week.

But while that’s mere conjecture (that’s oft scoffed at), the hygienic realities are indisputable. As Widburg [wrote](#) last Thursday, “Speaking of filthy, one of the problems with coronavirus is that, even though it’s an upper respiratory disease, it’s also [spread by fecal matter](#). It will be a disaster in places that don’t have good fecal matter control: China (**primitive toilets and no culture of hand-washing**); India (which is [working hard to bring toilets to people](#), but it’s slow going); Africa ([a world drowning in fecal matter](#)); and San Francisco ([also drowning in fecal matter](#)).”

Even more compelling, however, is a blog post by Regie Hamilton, who has spent time in China. As he [wrote](#) last Thursday of his time there in “BIRTH OF A VIRUS” (As presented by Widburg at *American Thinker*):

When my wife and I got off the plane, 18 years ago, to adopt our first daughter, we were taken aback by the split pants. Split pants are (or at least were, back then) pants the children wear that are open in the crotch area. That allows them to urinate or defecate unobstructed, onto the street



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or wherever they may be. The theory is that eventually they will learn to “aim it at the toilet” or something to that effect.

Either way, I distinctly remember my brand new Nike slip-ons (probably made not far from where I was standing) sloshing into a mix of urine and who knows what else, and continuing to do so for the next three weeks.

... Over the next several days and weeks, we would experience the amazing culture of China, in several different cities. But some things stood out to this germophobic American. I watched a man hock up something from his chest and spit it on the floor, right next to us, in a restaurant. No oysters for me, thanks. I’ve suddenly lost my appetite.

We visited a Hutong (inner city — where the locals live) and saw raw chickens, skinned and bleeding, just laying on the floor, waiting to be thrown on a restaurant grill ... for public consumption. No FDA or USDA or food inspectors or “codes” to comply with, here.

Even without federal regulatory agencies (which are actually unconstitutional), it is doubtful that any American would accept such poor cleanliness standards.

Having traveled the world a bit, I can report that “Western” hygiene standards are, well, characteristically Western (with notable exceptions). In fact, people in much of the world act as if they’re back in the Middle Ages and don’t know that germs, bacteria, and viruses exist.

I remember, for instance, observing a Moroccan street vendor preparing a sandwich. After cutting the bread, he placed it *on the ground* while he prepared its filling (counter space was limited). Such things matter when a highly contagious disease is afoot. Hence the saying, “Cleanliness is next to godliness.”

But then there’s the filth that is tyranny. Hamilton wrote of this, too, explaining that China’s poor hygiene standards, contaminated foods, and dirty hospitals are partially explained by despotism. He writes:

I was witnessing the kind of maximum, almost brutal efficiency a society must develop when the state is the master and the individual is merely a subject. Why would a Communist country not have an effective FDA? Because who are you going to complain to if you get tainted food? The government? They don’t answer to you. The press? They are owned by the government. And again, they don’t answer to you.

So what if you don’t like the conditions in the hospital? Where else are you going to go? This hospital is the last (and only) stop. You can’t opt for another place and then just pay out of your own pocket. The government has capped financial upward mobility. There is now “income equality.” And that means nobody has the means to buy their way into a different (or better) situation. And even if you could, one doesn’t exist. The state provides it all. You’re stuck.

So what can we learn regarding coronavirus? The disease certainly is nothing to sneeze at (okay, that was bad); it’s akin to the flu, which has been one of history’s [most deadly diseases](#), with the Spanish flu pandemic in 1918 [killing](#) 20 to 50 million worldwide. Nonetheless, some [experts estimate](#) that coronavirus’s mortality rate will be two percent or lower, with the elderly, very young, or otherwise immuno-compromised most vulnerable.

Yet since people can die, there are measures we must take. Below is a short video of Fox News medical contributor Dr. Marc Siegel providing advice on avoiding infection. Note that most of his prescriptions apply anytime you’re out and about.



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Then, remembering again that all *disease transmission is behaviorally influenced*, the following should be common practices whether a pandemic looms or not:

- Keep hand sanitizer on you and use it whenever you're out and about making contact with objects many others have touched.
- Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects in your home or workplace.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unsterilized hands. Clean them with soap and water or sanitizer first.
- Avoid shaking hands when a pandemic threatens.
- If possible, stay home when you're sick; if you must go out, consider wearing a mask to avoid infecting others. In the least, sneeze and cough into a tissue (then discard it) or, at worst, into your upper arm's shirtsleeve. Also, don't forget to wash your hands and use sanitizer frequently when *you're* ill to minimize the chances of spreading disease.

The above may enable us to, without knowing it, save the life of an elderly, very young, or otherwise vulnerable person. And that certainly is next to godliness.

Image: AlexRaths via iStock / Getty Images Plus

Selwyn Duke (@[SelwynDuke](#)) has written for The New American for more than a decade. He has also written for The Hill, Observer, The American Conservative, WorldNetDaily, American Thinker, and many other print and online publications. In addition, he has contributed to college textbooks published by Gale-Cengage Learning, has appeared on television, and is a frequent guest on radio.



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