

My reference to the German epidemiologist Dr Wolfgang Wodarg two days ago seems to have been right on the mark. Another video interview he gave, not the one that I transcribed, but an interview with the journalist Preradovic has "gone viral" (as they say) in Germany and provoked a lot of strong reactions.

This interview is shorter than the one I linked to (a little over 15 minutes without the introduction) and Dr Wodarg explains his thoughts more precisely and in more detail than in the other interview. The interview can be heard at the following link.

### [Ein Gespräch zwischen Punkt.Preradovic und Dr Wolfgang Wodarg](#)

I have transcribed the relevant passages and they can be found in a PDF at the foot of this commentary. Dr. Wodarg seems to be making an enormous personal effort. He has made quite [a professional video](#), translated into English, which is now making the rounds in the USA. The channel [Amazing Polly](#) linked to it in her recent programme on the Corona Virus.

Amongst the many negative reactions to Dr Wodarg`s arguments was a video posted by Karl Lauterbach. Karl Lauterbach is the health spokesman of the German SPD, a doctor and a political colleague of Dr Wodarg, who also represented the SPD in the German Parliament.

### [Karl Lauterbach: Wolfgang Wodarg erzählt "blanken Unsinn" zu Corona](#)

Now, one may disagree with Dr. Wodarg`s statements, but to describe them as "total nonsense" is itself a nonsensical statement.

The questions posed by Dr Wodarg are clear and can be given clear answers. Hundreds of millions of Europeans are confined to their houses, many have lost their jobs, many more fear they will lose a significant part of their income, all of them are thinking about what is going on, why it is happening and what will happen in the future.

In her television address, Chancellor Merkel said the following:

"Dies ist eine dynamische Situation und wir werden in ihr lernfähig bleiben, um jederzeit umdenken und mit anderen Instrumenten reagieren zu können. Auch das werden wir dann erklären. Deswegen bitte ich Sie, glauben Sie keinen Gerüchten, sondern nur den offiziellen Mitteilungen. Wir sind eine Demokratie, wir leben nicht von Zwang, sondern von geteiltem Wissen und Mitwirkung."

"This is a dynamic situation and we will learn from it, so that at any moment we can change our opinions and react to the crisis with different tools. And we will explain those changes as well. I therefore ask you not to believe rumours, but only official statements. We are a democracy, we do not work on the basis of compulsion, but through shared knowledge and participation."

Praiseworthy words indeed. If we are to learn from the changing situation, then we need information, that is not only reliable, but also informative. Incomplete and badly defined statistics will in the medium term, perhaps even in the short term, lead to confusion and distrust.

Angela Merkel's appeal to believe only what is reported by official sources is sadly naïve and inadequate. In an age in which every individual can access the statistics of the World Health Organisation, Euromomo and national health ministries, in an age of citizen journalism, in an age in which people instantly exchange personal thoughts, analyses and, yes, rumours, without any regard to "official statements" over social media, such a statement is divorced from reality. We are not living in communist China, after all has been said and done.

What is of course absolutely essential, is that in an age of social media conversations and citizen journalism the statements made by the representatives of government and state should be beyond reproach.

Responding in detail to the questions raised by people such as Dr Wodarg and rebutting his claims that the virus is more harmless than we are being told is the way to deal with such matters.

We all have the right to question what is going on. Our paid officials and our elected representatives have an obligation to provide serious and helpful answers to such questions.

Dismissing such concerns as "utter nonsense" is a waste of time and possibly the worst thing such public representatives can do.

What then are the matters raised by Dr Wodarg and others like him. Essentially, he makes the following claims and raises the following issues:

1. The 2020 Covid 19 is a new variant of the Corona Virus family. Corona Virus is not new, it has been around at least since the SARS epidemic 2003.
2. The "flu", as it is popularly called, is caused not only by the influenza virus, but in 5 to 15% of cases by a Corona Virus. If you test "flu" sufferers for corona virus, you would expect to find at 5 to 15% of them with a Corona Virus infection.
4. The number of people dying of pneumonia in 2020 is not higher than the average of the past 10 years.
3. The test results are influenced by the demographics of the people chosen to be tested. If you test for heart disease in a cardiac department of a hospital, you will find that almost 100% of patients have a heart problem. This does not mean that heart disease is a threat to the general population. If you test people being treated in hospitals for lung disease to see if they have a Corona Virus, you would expect to discover that this is the case in a high proportion of the patients. That does not mean that if you were to test the entire population, that you would get the same result.
4. Who is actually being tested? What criteria does someone have to fulfil in order to be tested?
5. What are the tests looking for? What do the results mean? Are the criteria used in all the countries of the world the same?
6. Is it true that those who design Covid 19 tests are making money from selling them?
7. Is it true that the WHO is funded by private interests?

8. Is it true that the WHO changed the definition of a pandemic to describe a situation that is not necessarily dangerous to the health of the general population?

7. The situation in Italy is not typical. Is it possible that there are reasons for the high death rate in Italy which have nothing to do with Covid 19?

It does not seem to me that official sources have adequately answered these questions.

I would like to emphasize again that I consider Covid 19 to be dangerous. Some weeks ago a Chinese student I was talking to told me that Covid 19 destroys the lungs. His parents were confined to their apartment in Guangdong Province for 50 days. They were only allowed out for a few minutes a day to go shopping and even then they had to wear not only masks but also goggles to shield their eyes.

The statistics show that the situation in Northern Italy is a catastrophe. We must avoid something similar taking place in other countries.

Part of doing that is to follow Chancellor Merkel's advice to share knowledge and to cooperate. I hope that official sources will help to give us all a clearer picture of what is going on.

Otherwise in some countries an economic and health crisis might well mutate further into a crisis of public trust and public order.

The disastrous economic and social consequences that might result from unnecessary policy mistakes makes this dialogue between the public and their political representatives a matter of absolute necessity.