

## THE ETIOLOGY OF THE EMERGENCE OF COVID-19 IN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

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With every event affecting humanity, there are conspiracy theories, messages and hypotheses promoted by politicians, the military, intellectuals and clerics in societies and countries. There are many hypotheses about the source of COVID-19. The aim of this article is to identify the alleged origin of this virus. The article examines the main sources of the emergence of COVID-19 and sheds light on the opposing opinions regarding the outbreak of the virus in question. A significant number of Arabic and English sources have been introduced into scientific circulation, which clarified the origins of this epidemic. Due to a number of reasons for the emergence of a pandemic, the author will divide them into several groups, which will contain a certain hypothesis considered from different points of view.

**Keywords:** COVID-19; coronavirus; conspiracy theories; 5G; vaccines; Wuhan.

## ЭТИОЛОГИЯ ПОЯВЛЕНИЯ COVID-19 В РАМКАХ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ ТРАНСФОРМАЦИИ

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Каждое событие, затрагивающее человечество, ведет к появлению теорий заговора, сообщений и гипотез, продвигаемых политиками, военными, интеллектуалами и священнослужителями в обществах и странах. Существует множество гипотез об источнике COVID-19. Цель данной статьи заключается в выявлении предполагаемого происхождения этого вируса. Исследуются основные источники возникновения COVID-19 и освещаются противоположные мнения относительно вспышки данного вируса. Значительное количество в научном обороте источников на арабском и английском языках прояснили происхождение этой эпидемии. Автор делит причины возникновения пандемии на несколько групп. Относительно каждой из них будет выдвинута определенная гипотеза, рассматриваемая с разных точек зрения. Следует отметить, что о каждой из этих групп будут высказаны противоположные мнения.

**Ключевые слова:** COVID-19; коронавирус; теории заговора; 5G; вакцины; Ухань.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit almost the entire planet, infecting millions of people around the world. As of November 2020, there have been 46 840 783 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 1 204 028 deaths,

reported to World Health Organisation (WHO)<sup>1</sup>. While countries and scientists have been making efforts to produce a vaccine against the coronavirus, its origins are still undetermined. The aim of this article is to

<sup>1</sup>WHO coronavirus disease (COVID-19) dashboard [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://covid19.who.int/> (date of access: 04.09.2020).

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identify the alleged origin of this virus. For a better understanding, the author will divide the origins of COVID-19 into a number of groups.

Thus, in the first group, plenty of Western and Eastern writers, journalists and doctors view COVID-19 as a biological weapon. For example, the Egyptian journalist Shaima Shaaban maintains, the virus that has recently hit the world is undoubtedly manufactured with high technology. That let us come to the conclusion that the next war will not be conventional by launching missiles, artilleries, warplanes, wearing military uniforms rather a biological battle in which science, modern technologies and scientific researches seem to be its tools in destroying the economy<sup>2</sup>.

A similar opinion was echoed by journalist Ayman Hussein, noting that it is likely that the American special services were involved in creating the epidemic<sup>3</sup>. The British journalist Abdel al-Bari Atwan confirms, the USA is the only country in history to have used nuclear bombs in Japan. Based on that, it is not excluded the US will be the first in the world to use the “coronavirus bomb”, and biological weapons, as long as they have stood behind all wars<sup>4</sup>.

In the same context, the Egyptian security expert, Amr El-Zayat, believes that what has been circulating about the coronavirus, it is an American biological warfare in an attempt to stop China’s development<sup>5</sup>.

It is worth mentioning, that few Arab analysts dismiss these kinds of theories. For instance, the economic analyst Talal Abu-Ghazali rules out America’s involvement in the spread of the coronavirus in China<sup>6</sup>. From the perspective of the Palestinian writer Muhammad Amin, the feeling of uncertainty and loss of control make us more inclined to believe conspiracy theories. The COVID-19 is not a nuclear or biological cosmic conspiracy. The two superpowers, America and China, have been affected by the virus. Currently, America is

being leading the world in the number of casualties, so is that possible the US is conspiring against itself. If so, why, then, did not America create the antidote and give it to the American citizens? Moreover, how come Donald Trump create a plot that would minimize his chance of being a reelected president and destroy his own country’s economy? Muhammad Amin asks<sup>7</sup>.

In the framework of the second group, scholars and clerics maintain that there is a link between installing 5G antennas and the spread of the virus. As an example, the American scientist Thomas Cowan claims that the coronavirus does not exist at all. According to him, more than one hundred thousand satellites have been installed in the sky. These satellites send out electromagnetic vibrations much higher than that can be tolerated by human bodies. He explains, as we know, the human body works at two and a half gigahertz, but the fifth-generation technology emits six gigahertz. Besides the electrification of the planet, the cells inside the human body have started to release toxic substances. Furthermore, the scientist points out that the rapid spread of the virus in the world indicates that it is not transmitted from person to person as it is alleged but rather it is electronic radiation from the satellites. The evidence of that, COVID-19 has reached out to very far apart regions of the world at the same moment<sup>8</sup>.

Another statement on the same issue was made by the former Grand Mufti of Egypt and the famous Islamic scholar Ali Gomaa during the interview. Lunching hundreds of thousands of satellites to get the fifth-generation antennas operated, has prepared the atmosphere for the outbreak of the virus due to the change in the electromagnetism of the Earth, he underscored<sup>9</sup>.

In addition to this, the Arab doctor Violet Dagher connected the spread of the Spanish flu with launching radar around the world, also, she linked the outbreak of Asian flu to the emergence of the internet and the

<sup>2</sup>Coronavirus: between the economic repercussions and conspiracy theories [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/inthepress-51406492> (date of access: 09.07.2020).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Atwan Abdel al-Bari. China accuses America of “officially” inventing the coronavirus and spreading it in Wuhan [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.raiayoum.com/index.php/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D8%A7-%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88/> (date of access: 14.07.2020).

<sup>5</sup>America’s influence will weaken, and China, Russia, India and Egypt will enter the arena [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://arabic.rt.com/middle\\_east/1102921-%D8%AE%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%86%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B0-%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D8%A7-%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B6%D9%81%D8%B9-%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%86%D8%AF-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1](https://arabic.rt.com/middle_east/1102921-%D8%AE%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%86%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B0-%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%83%D8%A7-%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B6%D9%81%D8%B9-%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%86%D8%AF-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1) (date of access: 01.09.2020).

<sup>6</sup>Abu Ghazali T. Coronavirus is not an American production [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.jfranews.com.jo/post.php?id=260572> (date of access: 14.07.2020).

<sup>7</sup>Amin M. The conspiracy is a theory, not nonsense, and this is the evidence [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://blogs.aljazeera.net/blogs/2020/4/3/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%B1-%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%88%D9%87%D8%B0%D8%A7-%D9%87%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%84> (date of access: 01.09.2020).

<sup>8</sup>Dr Thomas Cowan on COVID-19 from 5G [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://sites.google.com/a/wabiz.org/www/Home/news/drthomascowanoncovid-19from5g?overrideMobile=true> (date of access: 04.09.2020).

<sup>9</sup>Coronavirus: controversy after the former Mufti of Egypt, Ali Gomaa, linked the pandemic to the “fifth generation network” [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/trending-52272623> (date of access: 14.07.2020).

spread of COVID-19 with the rollout of 5G<sup>10</sup>. Irrespective of these claims, the WHO has confirmed that viruses cannot be transmitted via radio waves or mobile phone networks. COVID-19 has spread in many countries, such as Iran, the Netherlands, and Britain, where there are no fifth-generation mobile phone networks, it stated<sup>11</sup>.

At that point, the website "Fatabyyano", which fights fake news, clarifies that the theory of the fifth-generation networks is baseless, as mobile communication technology does not use satellites to send data at all, but rather the fiber-optic cables are used because they are more efficient, faster and less expensive. Furthermore, the website indicates that the number of satellites orbiting the Earth does not exceed 2 500 in contrast to what some think<sup>12</sup>.

In addition, the professor of microbiology at the University of Reading in England, Simon Clark, describes that electromagnetic waves can damage the body's organs by increasing its temperature and weakening the immune system, but the energy levels of the fifth-generation electromagnetic waves are very small and they cannot have sufficient power to have an effect on the body<sup>13</sup>. The professor of pediatrics, Adam Finn, affirms the 5G waves cannot cause infection. The current epidemic's reason is a virus transmitted from one infected person to another<sup>14</sup>.

In terms of the third group, a number of thinkers, such as the Venezuelan thinker Naim Moise, who does not rule out that, in the future, historians will consider the current epidemic as one of the climate-related that rocked the planet<sup>15</sup>. Likewise, Thomas Jefferson, the senior researcher at the Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine in Oxford, points out that environmental

changes have triggered the emergence of the virus. Based on the evidence from various countries, the scientist refers, in March 2019, 9 months before the outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan (China), the virus was detected in wastewater samples in Barcelona (Spain). In December 2019, the coronavirus was, also, found in samples taken from Turin and Milan (Italy). In his view, the virus was everywhere. Perhaps it was a dormant virus activated by environmental conditions. As an example, he cited an infection case, which had emerged on board the ship traveling from South Georgia Island in the South Atlantic Ocean to the Argentine capital Buenos Aires. The case was confirmed on the eighth day of the voyage when the ship was crossing the Weddell Sea, Thomas Jefferson underlined<sup>16</sup>.

He compared the coronavirus to the Spanish flu epidemic that took the lives of about 100 million people around the world in 1918–1920, noting that about 30 % of the Samoan population died because of the flu, however, they had no contact with the outside world. He added, that viruses always exist, but there is something that makes them active at a certain moment, perhaps population density or environmental conditions could be<sup>17</sup>.

For that matter, the Lebanese doctor Violet Dagher says that the bewildering question is how to explain that 940 captains out of 2 300 contracted the virus on the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, at a time when it was in the sea for a long time without any contact with the world. According to her, that could mean the virus had spread before it was officially announced<sup>18</sup>.

As far as the fourth group is concerned, several doctors assume the wet markets in Wuhan (China) are responsible for the outbreak of the virus. They suppose

<sup>10</sup>Dagher V. About the book that predicted coronavirus [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.almayadeen.net/articles/blog/1392872/%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B0%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%82%D8%B9-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7---%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B0%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%8A> (date of access: 12.08.2020).

<sup>11</sup>5G technology is not linked to the spread of COVID-19 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.covid19facts.ca/en/fact-checked/5g-technology-is-not-linked-to-the-spread-of-covid-19> (date of access: 04.09.2020).

<sup>12</sup>Where is the truth? Coronavirus conspiracy and 5G [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://fatabyyano.net/%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7-%D9%88-%D8%B4%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%A7%D9%85/> (date of access: 04.09.2020).

<sup>13</sup>Science Media Centre [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.sciencemediacentre.org/expert-reaction-to-peoplewho-think-5g-causescoronavirus/> (date of access: 04.09.2020).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Naim M. Coronavirus and global warming. Where is the world heading for? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/politics/2020/5/4/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%88%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7-%D9%88%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%89-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A3%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85> (date of access: 12.08.2020).

<sup>16</sup>Burki T. The origin of SARS-CoV-2 [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(20\)30641-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(20)30641-1/fulltext) (date of access: 04.09.2020).

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Dagher V. About the book that predicted coronavirus [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.almayadeen.net/articles/blog/1392872/%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B0%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%82%D8%B9-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7---%D8%A8%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B0%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%8A> (date of access: 12.08.2020).

that COVID-19 may have been carried to humans through a mediator. Professor Stanley Perelman, the pioneering immunologist at the University of Iowa and the expert on previous coronavirus diseases coming from animals, presumes that an animal could have served as a mediator, but it has not yet been proven that pangolins are the “main mediator”, although they are one of the possibilities<sup>19</sup>. Regarding the pangolins, the International Union for Conservation of Nature states that pangolin is the most illegally traded mammal in the world. Because of their meat and the supposed medicinal benefits, they are prized.

In this connection, some doctors suggest it is very likely that the virus came from bats, but it had passed through an intermediate animal in the same way that another coronavirus – the SARS virus breaking out in 2002 – passed from a horseshoe bat to a cat-like civet before it infected humans. For example, Michael Baker, the immunologist at the Australian Research Centre that does researches on viruses in bats, clarifies, that we do not really know the accurate origin of COVID-19. It is somehow related to the market in Wuhan, and people who went there got infected. From his perspective, the very likely scenario is that the virus originated in a bat, but we cannot be sure about it because the Chinese workers cleaned up the market very quickly<sup>20</sup>.

In point on a mediator, the professor Edward Holmes, from the University of Sydney, emphasises that the identity of the species that acted as an intermediate host for the virus remains uncertain. The idea of interacting the person with the animal carrying COVID-19 in the market is just a possible speculation about the emergence of the coronavirus. Another possible scenario is that the virus could have developed after being transmitted to humans from one person to another, he adds<sup>21</sup>.

The next set of hypotheses on the emergence of the epidemic centres around the laboratory in Wuhan. Whilst most scientists believe, the source of COVID-19 is the wet markets, US channel “Fox News” published,

Beijing deliberately blamed the market in an attempt to dispel doubts about the involvement of the laboratory that gave rise to the disaster. It was said that there were never bats on the market<sup>22</sup>. According to the American newspaper “Washington post”, in 2018, after many frequent visits of American diplomats to the Chinese research institute, they sent two warning messages to Washington, stating that safety measures were insufficient in the laboratory. The diplomats expressed their concerns about weaknesses in safety and management procedures at the Institute of Virology in Wuhan. The research conducted by the laboratory on the coronavirus in bats could lead to a new widespread disease similar to the SARS epidemic<sup>23</sup>.

In response to that, Yuan Ziming, the director of the Institute of Virology in Wuhan, has accentuated, that it is impossible that the virus originated from the laboratory<sup>24</sup>. In the same context, the Chinese foreign ministry speaker, Gao Li Jin stated, WHO officials made it clear that there was no evidence that the new coronavirus was created in the laboratory<sup>25</sup>. WHO spokeswoman Fadela Chaib said that it is probable, likely, that the virus is of animal origin<sup>26</sup>.

Yet, the presence of the Institute of Virology close to the market in question has raised speculations about releasing the virus from these sensitive facilities.

It is noteworthy that the Institute of Virology in Wuhan, which has been carrying out researches on coronavirus in bats, is well known. These tests have been legal and published in international journals. In this regard, in 2020, the American channel “Fox News” issued an exclusive report on the coronavirus. It was said that COVID-19 was not a biological weapon used by China, but rather it was a part of Beijing’s plans to demonstrate its efforts in the field of viruses’ detection and fighting them. Additionally, China has been trying to prove that it has not been less powerful and even has surpassed the United States. According to the network, the virus leaked by mistake from the laboratory in Wuhan during a virus testing process. Fox News referred that Ameri-

<sup>19</sup>The coronavirus may not have originated in China, says Oxford professor [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.sciencefocus.com/news/the-coronavirus-may-not-have-originated-in-china-says-oxford-professor/> (date of access: 04.09.2020).

<sup>20</sup>How did coronavirus start, and did it really come from the Wuhan market? The story of the pandemic from the beginning until now [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://arabicpost.net/%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AD%D8%A9/2020/04/13/%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A3-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%8C-%D9%88%D9%87%D9%84-%D8%A3%D8%AA%D9%89-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%82-%D9%88%D9%88%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%A7/> (date of access: 04.09.2020).

<sup>21</sup>Nature medicine [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0820-9> (date of access: 04.09.2020).

<sup>22</sup>Sources believe coronavirus outbreak originated in Wuhan lab as part of China’s efforts to compete with US [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/coronavirus-wuhan-lab-china-compete-us-sources> (date of access: 11.09.2020).

<sup>23</sup>Rincon P. Coronavirus: is there any evidence for lab release theory? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-52318539> (date of access: 11.09.2020).

<sup>24</sup>The Chinese laboratory, accused of causing the spread of coronavirus, is breaking its silence [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://arabic.rt.com/world/1105604-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AE%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%AE%D8%B1%D8%AC-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%B5%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%87/> (date of access: 07.08.2020).

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation report-94 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200423-sitrep-94-covid-19.pdf> (date of access: 04.09.2020).



ca always helped China to conduct experiments in the field of viruses detection and control before the Chinese scientists set out to study this virus on their own in the laboratory<sup>27</sup>. As for “patient zero”, the newspaper outlined that it belonged to a researcher working in the laboratory. While testing for the virus, she accidentally contracted an infection that caused the virus to spread outside the laboratory a few days before her death<sup>28</sup>.

Some scientists mentioned that the Chinese government knew about the virus. As an example, in December 2019, the virologist Li Mingyan working at the school of public health at the University of Hong Kong, unveiled some details about the emergence of the coronavirus, confirming that the authorities deliberately hid the information on the virus. At the beginning of the outbreak of the epidemic, her bosses tried to silence her when she was warning them of the dangerous virus, she added<sup>29</sup>.

For its part, the University of Hong Kong denied Li Mingyan's statement, affirming that she has never studied the transmission of COVID-19 from one person to another and, therefore her claims were not based on any scientific ground<sup>30</sup>.

With reference to the next group, there are religious explanations behind the spread of the virus. Many opinions have been circulated in the Islamic world indicating that coronavirus is a divine punishment for China for its treatment of the Uighurs in China. Yet, some Arab journalists, such as Muhammad Amin, considers that such interpretations and linking them to religion are an offense to it. If the coronavirus was a divine punishment against China and “the countries of the infidels”, why, then, did it strike Muslim countries? Does the epidemic differentiate between followers of different religions? The journalist asks<sup>31</sup>.

On the other hand, the intrusion of religion in explaining the phenomenon is not only restricted to

Muslims. In this regard, the British journalist Mahdi Hasan highlights the attempts of anti-Islam fanatics to use the coronavirus situation to demonise Muslims. For example, in India, supporters of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party called the spread of the virus corona jihad. They claimed that the epidemic was a conspiracy by Muslims to infect and poison Hindus. The Indian government attributed the infection of about a third of the confirmed cases of COVID-19 to a gathering held by a conservative Islamic group in Delhi known as the Tablighi Jamaat<sup>32</sup>.

Furthermore, Mahdi Hasan cites the words of the American authour and radio presenter Neil Bortz, who published on Twitter: “Do you think COVID-19 is so bad? Wait until the Muslim population reaches a critical number in America. Then we will look nostalgically to the old days in which we are living now. From Mahdi Hasan's standpoint, we may succeed in defeating the coronavirus in the near future, but we will need a very long time to overcome "Islamophobia"”<sup>33</sup>.

Within the last group, the coronavirus is a hoax, as it was manufactured to sell vaccines with which the population would be controlled by artificial intelligence technologies. For instance, David Icke, an English conspiracy theorist, considers that the virus is a conspiracy and a game run by a “behind-the-scenes world sect” to bring about their economic and financial plans applying artificial intelligence technologies<sup>34</sup>. In fact, since the beginning of the pandemic, dozens of rumors have been circulated in many languages on the social networks targeting members of this sect, such as Bill Gates. He has been accused of exploiting the COVID-19 vaccine to get a handle on people by implanting a subcutaneous chip along with the vaccine. These chips will be linked to the individuals' social media profiles in order to control them via the fifth-generation communication technology. These theories

<sup>27</sup>Sources believe coronavirus outbreak originated in Wuhan lab as part of China's efforts to compete with US [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/coronavirus-wuhan-lab-china-compete-us-sources> (date of access: 11.09.2020).

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>We may disappear. A fugitive Chinese scientist explodes a surprise about coronavirus [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.alarabiya.net/ar/medicine-and-health/2020/07/11/%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%B5%D9%8A-%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%AC%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%AD%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7-%D9%81%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D9%8A> (date of access: 20.08.2020).

<sup>30</sup>The University of Hong Kong responds to a virologist who claimed China's reluctance to announce the outbreak of coronavirus [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://arabic.rt.com/world/1133841-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%87%D9%88%D9%86%D8%BA-%D9%87%D9%88%D9%86%D8%BA-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D8%B4%D8%A3%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1-%D9%81%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%82%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%B4%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7/> (date of access: 20.08.2020).

<sup>31</sup>Amin M. The conspiracy is a theory, not nonsense, and this is the evidence [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://blogs.aljazeera.net/blogs/2020/4/3/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%B1-%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%88%D9%87-%D8%B0%D8%A7-%D9%87%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%84> (date of access: 01.09.2020).

<sup>32</sup>Hasan M. The coronavirus is empowering islamophobes – but exposing the idiocy of islamophobia [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://theintercept.com/2020/04/14/coronavirus-muslims-islamophobia/> (date of access: 14.08.2020).

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Coronavirus: conspiracy theories about the fifth generation and microchips are spreading globally [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/world-53206583> (date of access: 12.08.2020).

have also contained claims that Bill Gates' aim is to get rid of 15 % of the world's population through the vaccines, which Bill Gates has invested in<sup>35</sup>. In this regard, the journalist Faisal al-Qasim says, people, who have doubts about the conspiracy theory, they argue that the epidemic has hit the most powerful countries, so how come they kill themselves! To his opinion, in the game of chess the player considers all stones as his children, including the small pawns, but when he starts playing, he begins to sacrifice his stones in order to keep the king alive and win the game. America destroyed the twin towers in New York just to justify its subsequent projects internally and externally. Taking that into account, COVID-19 is a part of the game, the journalist confirms<sup>36</sup>.

However, Bill Gates has expressed his confidence that the truth will out and these conspiracy theories will disperse. He has also stressed that the spread of such misinformation would make people reluctant in taking the COVID-19 vaccines. From his point of view, if that happened, the situation would get much worse in poor countries, which are in dire need of vaccines and, therefore, they would face a catastrophic fate<sup>37</sup>.

In conclusion, although there are a number of hypotheses accounting for the emergence of COVID-19, none of the groups mentioned above allow us to reveal how and where it stemmed from. On one hand, the author can come to terms that a few hypotheses may uncover the reasons for the outbreak of COVID-19 to some extent. For example, the environmental, climate

changes, and the 5G technology's impact might give a logical explanation of how people got infected while they had been isolated or unconnected, or how some countries have been hit by the virus. In addition to this, based on the low safety and management procedures at the Institute of Virology in Wuhan, the author cannot rule out the prospect of the unintended leakage of this plague from the laboratory in Wuhan (China) or its emergence in the wet markets there. Concerning the hypothesis on being COVID-19 a biological weapon, it calls into question. However, given the history of using biological and nuclear weapons by some countries, particularly, the United States, this possibility is allowed. On the other hand, the author asserts that religion-based explanations and rumors around Bill Gates' role are nothing but a media epidemic. Undoubtedly, this kind of misinformation, fueled by conspiracy theories, could have potentially serious effects on the individuals and society if they took a lead over evidence-based guidelines. Having said that, the international agencies, governments, and social media must track and deal with the "information epidemic" to avoid the circulation of such kind of misinformation. Also, individuals should have an active part to play and be mindful not to automatically share what they receive at the moment. The author would stress, that COVID-19 has changed the world and will therefore have geopolitical repercussions that could lead to a reformatting the world order. This topic will be the author's next article titled "International transformation in the context of COVID-19".

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<sup>35</sup> A new conspiracy theory: Bill Gates is behind the origin and spread of the coronavirus [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://arabic.rt.com/society/1104324-%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%AA%D8%B3-%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%A3%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3-%D9%83%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7/> (date of access: 30.07.2020).

<sup>36</sup> Faisal al-Qasim. Horrific and confusing theories about corona virus. Whom does we believe? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://shaamtimes.net/231291/%d9%81%d9%8a%d8%b5%d9%84-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%82%d8%a7%d8%b3%d9%85-%d9%86-%d8%b8%d8%b1%d9%8a%d8%a7%d8%aa-%d9%83%d9%88%d8%b1%d9%88%d9%86%d9%8a%d8%a9-%d9%85%d8-%b1%d8%b9%d8%a8%d8%a9-%d9%88%d9%85%d8%ad%d9%8a/> (date of access: 01.07.2020).

<sup>37</sup> Bill Gates denies conspiracy theories that say he wants to use coronavirus vaccines to implant tracking devices [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/22/bill-gates-denies-conspiracy-theories-that-say-he-wants-to-use-coronavirus-vaccines-to-implant-tracking-devices.html> (date of access: 11.09.2020).