
Don't let the pandemic ravage our brain!

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Should I buy toilet paper? I still have two at home. In normal times, these two are enough for me, but now...I bet I am not the only one ruminating on these and other concerns while standing in line to be served in a market. I am pretty sure I am not the only one scolding herself for pondering these kinds of thoughts on my mind triggering one necessary question: And coronavirus, what does it have to do with toilet paper?

But we are not the only ones. *BBC Mundo* has also raised the same question: Why do so many people desperately buy toilet paper in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic? A very well-founded concern that could be read in a headline of the British newspaper on Monday. There is actually a hidden mystery when in Australia, last week, the police department was notified that a person pulled out a knife to claim his/her toilet papers.

The psychologist consulted by the BBC said that it was an “obviously irrational” phenomena, and a crystal-clear example of a sheep mindset promoted in social networks and news coverage. The need to accumulate items triggered by the crisis, and a false precaution, from the fact that “if my neighbor is buying it, there must be a good reason. Hence, I need to get involved,” are probable causes, according to another highly qualified specialist, Professor Nitika Garg, from the University of New South Wales.

Perhaps this shopping spree is the result of a certain anxiety to do something, anything, or the fear to the probable deterioration of the situation and the possibility to buy basic necessities, a fact that has hit nations like Italy and Spain. However, Cuba is not even close. Therefore, my suspicions on toilet papers are not excusable.

Then I think: if it comes the time the situation worsens in Cuba, I am quite sure that not only toilet paper, but also soap, chlorine, and anything else, would be sold with standard regulations in Cuba's points of sales, CDR (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution), schools, workplaces, or clinics.

Then I realize, lines in Cuba for toilet papers are not really linked to coronavirus. It is just that there was some product shortage and now people want to make the most of it. To be on the same page that Europe and the U.S., we need to accumulate and empty shelves in markets. Make no mistake! The crusade against scalpers in Cuba led by Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel began days before the introduction of Covid-19 on the island.

Being in style, the irresponsible imitation, are not learning signs. If everything ends with the toilet paper issue...but things are going south. Driven by either good or evil intentions, Cuba is always asked to imitate measures, models, in order "to be in harmony" with the rest of the world. But some overlook if those models are actually effective or if there are objective conditions here — even when most of the world seem to be selfish and cruel. No nation is similar to the other.

Professor Garg explained in *BBC Mundo* that in China, for instance, there was a greater need to stock up white clothing because "they believe toilet papers can be replaced by Kleenex and paper napkins to make improvised masks." However, the same media highlighted that people in other countries just bought driven by fear.

What is the truth behind all of this? We must face this pandemic focused on our weaknesses and strengths or just imitate those who are dominated by fear.

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