HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC WILL RESHAPE OUR CITIES

LBJ In the Arena On the Frontline: Restarting Our Cities

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Takeaways

The effects of COVID-19 will be nuanced and complicated

• Our great cities will survive
• What can we learn from the past?
• How will communities be reshaped?
• What factors leave cities more vulnerable or protected?
• How do we prepare cities to reopen?
We’ve had worse pandemics than this before

**Spanish Flu of 1918-1920:**

- Urbanization a greater force than infectious disease
- Little impact on geography
- NYC, London, and Tokyo all maintained dominance
- Smaller cities like Pittsburgh took a hit
- Cities roared back, becoming engines of the recovery
COVID-19 will likely reinforce winner-take-all urbanism

No death to density; it will remain a key economic driver

- Big superstar cities and tech hubs will recover
- Likely to reinforce geographic divides
- Accentuate “winner-take-all urbanism”
Class divide makes some more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others

Our equity challenge is exacerbated by this public health crisis

- Affluent professional workers can work remotely and isolate safely using delivery
- Frontline service workers are exposed and use transit to get to work
Some places are more vulnerable than others; density is just one factor

Class
Education and income

Religion and Social Capital
Religion social capital have impact too

Childlessness
San Francisco and Seattle have been condemned as being “childless,” but this may work to their advantage

Health and Fitness
Levels of health and fitness plays a role too

Red vs. Blue America
Blue States and cities are taking social distancing and stay-at-home orders more seriously
How can we prepare now and plan for a recovery?
Prepare for a period of adjustment as we reopen

Pandemics occur in waves

New York
452 Deaths per 100,000

San Francisco
673 Deaths per 100,000

New York City began quarantine measures very early—11 days before the death rate spiked. The city had the lowest death rate on the Eastern Seaboard.

After relaxing social distancing measures, San Francisco faced a long second wave of deaths.

Source: National Geographic

- 12-18 months before we get to something normal
- Some trends will stick; others will go away
Four Key Dimensions to Consider

- Temperature Checks
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Design for Social Distancing
- Personalized Service Provision
# Action Plan

#1 Pandemic-proof airports, arenas, stadiums, convention centers, and civic assets

#2 Engage anchors for a COVID-19 reality

#3 Embrace and promote remote work

#4 Reimage public space, active mobility, and how we connect with one another

#5 Ensure Main Street and the creative economy survives

#6 Protect service workers and under-served communities
Discussion