Comparative Analysis of the US COVID Pandemic Response

Nikita Karpunin
Introduction

● The situation at hand
● Common basis for individual perspectives
● Relationship between our experiences and the world at large
● Comparative Analysis
Background

- 12/31/2019 - China informs WHO of an outbreak of “Pneumonia of Unknown Cause”
- 1/3/2020 - Head of the US CDC informs the HHS secretary about the outbreak
- 1/4/2020 - WHO announced a cluster of mysterious pneumonia cases in Wuhan
- 1/6/2020 - China ignores US CDC offer to send team. CDC issues level 1 travel watch
- 1/7/2020 - CDC sets up a structure to address the outbreak
- 1/10/2020 - Genome of new Coronavirus made public
- 1/11/2020 - First confirmed death from COVID-19
Background (II)

- 1/13/2020 - A traveler returns to the US from Wuhan with COVID-19
- 1/14/2020 - The HHS's assistant secretary instructed subordinates to draw up contingency plans for enforcing the Defense Production Act
- 1/18/2020 - The HHS Secretary calls President Trump to discuss the new virus
- 1/21/2020 - CDC announces first confirmed US Case and its own development of a virus test, raises travel health warning to level 2 for travelers to Wuhan
- 1/23/2020 - 11 million people quarantined in Wuhan
- 1/24/2020 - CDC enacts level 3 travel notice for Wuhan, level 1 warning for the rest of China
- 1/27/2020 - CDC enacts level 3 travel notice for all of China
Background (III)

- 1/29/2020 - President Trump announces COVID-19 Task Force
- 1/30/2020 - State Department issues highest travel warning: “Level 4: Do Not Travel to China”
- 1/31/2020 - Trump Administration announces restrictions on travel from China
- 2/6/2020 - CDC begins distribution of tests to state-run labs in the US
- 2/12/2020 - CDC Announces the tests it shipped to State Labs are unreliable
- 2/21/2020 - White House Task Force Members consider recommendation of social distancing
- 2/22/2020 - CDC tells state officials to limit tests
Background (IV)

- 2/24/2020 - US stock market drops
- 2/25/2020 - CDC warns of belief that COVID-19 is spreading, officials warn of severe possible disruptions to everyday life
- 2/29/2020 - Washington State declares a state of emergency
- 3/2/2020 - Vice President Pence says that mitigation, not containment, is now the focus of the response effort
- 3/4/2020 - The State of California declares a state of emergency
- 3/6/2020 - President Trump signs $8.3 Billion Emergency Response Bill
- 3/7/2020 - New York State declares a state of emergency
- 3/8/2020 - Italy locks down large portions of the country
- 3/10/2020 - New York State declares containment zone around New Rochelle
- 3/12/2020 - US stock market plummets
Background (V)

- 3/13/2020 - President Trump declares a national emergency
- 3/16/2020 - White House announces voluntary guidance to slow spread of COVID-19
- 3/19/2020 - Governor of California orders citizens to stay at home
- 3/21/2020 - HHS orders large numbers of N95 masks
- 3/24/2020 - India announces national lockdown after recording about 500 confirmed cases
- 3/25/2020 - US Senate passes CARES act
- 3/26/2020 - US reports more confirmed cases than any other country

[https://www.pogo.org/analysis/2020/05/the-first-100-days-of-the-u-s-governments-covid-19-response/]
Federalism

● Division of power between national and state governments
  ○ Division of authority between national and state governments
  ○ Division of pandemic response between national and state governments
  ○ Federal government effectively lacked power to coordinate a unified response *
    ■ Power of enacting and enforcing quarantine is generally within state and local authorities
    ■ CDC tasked with “hard science, data collection, and surveillance” - but lacks power for enforcement of health measures

● States responded differently
  ○ Parts of states responded differently

● States responded at different times
  ○ Parts of states responded at different times

● Different outcomes arose

● Absence of Coordination

[https://jamanetwork.com/channels/health-forum/fullarticle/2766033]
State Difference Visualization

Differences in Response Policy
https://www.multistate.us/research/covid/public

Differences in Response Outcome
https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/
“Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic from both the federal and state governments have been described as inconsistent and uncoordinated, and this is particularly due to the overlap in jurisdiction and competing authorities. Muddling the situation even more is the fact that our nation’s primary defense against the virus is divided among 2,684 state and local public health departments.”

“Although the federal government can and has issued health guidelines, states retain the choice to ignore those guidelines or impose more drastic measures. Such flexibility makes creating a national strategy all the more unattainable.”
Relative Efficacy

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<th>Overall Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Pandemic Performance</th>
<th>COVID-19 Fatalities per Million</th>
<th>Excess Deaths per Million</th>
<th>Lockdown Stringency</th>
<th>Global Integration/Isolation</th>
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Taiwan’s Response

Taiwanese Foreign minister Joseph Wu:

“We have been planning for any kind of pandemic that may affect Taiwan … because back in 2003, Taiwan was hit very hard by SARS”

“Seventeen years of pandemic planning … We will not stop”

Professor Robert Brook:

“It’s a combination of courage and innovation … just say ‘we really don’t have any time to waste - we’re in this together”
Taiwan’s Response (II)

- Public health disaster command center
  - Plan existed for pandemic management
- Stockpiles of protective gear
- Early warning to populus - January
- Universal healthcare system
  - Records kept for every resident
  - Records kept of immigration data
- Free, rapid testing
- Frequent checking of temperatures, mask mandate
- Enforcement


Japan’s Response

● Nationwide campaign warning to avoid the “Three Cs”
  ○ Enclosed spaces with poor ventilation
  ○ Crowded places with many people
  ○ Close contact settings such as face-to-face conversations

● Non-enforceable state of emergency declared April 7
  ○ Requested people to stay home, if possible

● Public health system
  ○ Patient triage
  ○ Contact tracing
  ○ Testing

● Cultural differences

Norway’s Response

- Lockdown introduced March 12th
- Sovereign wealth fund used to maintain public spending, welfare
- Success Attributions
  - Trust in government
  - Trust in public health authorities
  - Cultural concept of “dugnad” - voluntary and collective work
- Controversies with respect to rule of law and human rights
Norway’s Response (II)

● Emergency Powers Bill
  ○ Transfer of power from parliament to executive powers
  ○ Checks and balances controversy
  ○ Strongly amended bill came into force March 27th
  ○ Extended in April through May 27th

● Numerous restrictions
  ○ Freedom of association
  ○ Freedom of movement
  ○ Social rights

● Tracking app - ‘civil duty’

[https://blog.petrieflom.law.harvard.edu/2020/06/01/norway-global-responses-covid19/]
Sweden’s Response

- Controversy
- State epidemiologist warning of heading in the ‘wrong direction’
- Initially, increase present in other Western European countries was avoided
- Cases rising at the moment
- Guidelines were being followed
- Developing situation
- Cases rising

Britain’s Response

● Logistical, Political similarity to US situation
  ○ Resource mismanagement
  ○ Degradation of pandemic preparedness
  ○ Lack of confidence in science

● Failure to take initial action
● Initial pursuit of herd immunity strategy
● Failure to support healthcare

[https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/uk/ ]
Conclusions

- Lack of initial preparedness
  - Logistics
  - Leadership
- Inadequate response to emerging information
- Delayed response
- Decentralization of response
Works Cited

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