



“Grieving for my sick city”

By Michelle Goldberg, The New York Times, March 17, 2020

“Many thousands of people all over the world are mourning dead loved ones. I’m lucky; I’m just mourning the city.

“To live in a city like New York, where I’ve spent most of my adult life, is to trade private space for public space. It’s to depend on interdependence. I don’t have a dining room, but I’ve been able to eat in thousands of restaurants. I have no storage space, but everything I needed was at the bodega. I don’t have a home office, but I could work at coffee shops.

“The coronavirus disaster is going to devastate communities all over the country, ... but it poses particular challenges for urbanites.

“Social distancing is brutal for everyone, but it’s particularly difficult for people in cities, especially those who live alone and those packed into tiny spaces.

“And where you’re isolated matters. ‘It’s going to be a fundamentally different experience if you’re able to stroll around your 10-acre farm and pick the produce you’ve been growing,’ said Steven Taylor, a University of British Columbia professor and author of [The Psychology of Pandemics: Preparing for the Next Global Outbreak of Infectious Disease](#), than if you’re ‘living in a one-bedroom apartment with your three roommates.’

“When this emergency is over, people are likely to emerge into fundamentally changed cities, with economies in crisis, and beloved restaurants, businesses, and cultural institutions gone for good.

“I wonder if our cultural romance with urban living will recover. In recent decades, millennials, who tend to be more averse to suburbia than their parents and grandparents, have helped [fuel an urban resurgence](#). If the shock of the coronavirus is devastating enough, that could change, as more people seek their own personal bunkers.

“Maybe when this ends, people will pour into the restaurants and bars like a war’s been won, and cities will flourish as people rush to rebuild their ruined social architecture. But for now, it’s chilling to witness an entire way of life coming to a sudden horrible halt.”

[Read the full op-ed here.](#)