Protestors Exploit Health Crisis

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If Richard Nixon had his “silent majority,” Donald Trump has his “noisy minority.” The vast majority of Americans are staying at home (80%) and do not want the country to open prematurely (70%), as is being done by several Republican governors in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee. By contrast, a minority are in the streets protesting against their governors—both Republican and Democratic—who have decided to keep their states locked down.

These governors are being cautious and careful, erring on the side of safety. Unlike the protestors, who are not following the President’s very own taskforce guidelines, they understand that taking to the streets is
far more than a risk to the health of those who gather in public—it is a risk to the health of others in those states.

Admittedly, none of us likes being told to stay at home. Nevertheless, most Americans accept the fact that what’s best for all is what is demanded; after all, we all are part of a larger us.

As a scholar of political communication, what I find noteworthy from a rhetorical perspective is that many if not most of those protesting are Trump supporters who are following the discourse of the President who applauds, encourages and incites their behavior. Just like Trump in his daily briefings, they are using the coronavirus pandemic as a rhetorical opportunity—a way to create a media spectacle. Put simply, following the lead of the President, protestors are exploiting a health crisis to stage campaign rallies.

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