

# The Spanish Flu of 1918 and Coronavirus: A Look At the Humanitarian and Economic Implications

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### Humanitarian Implications

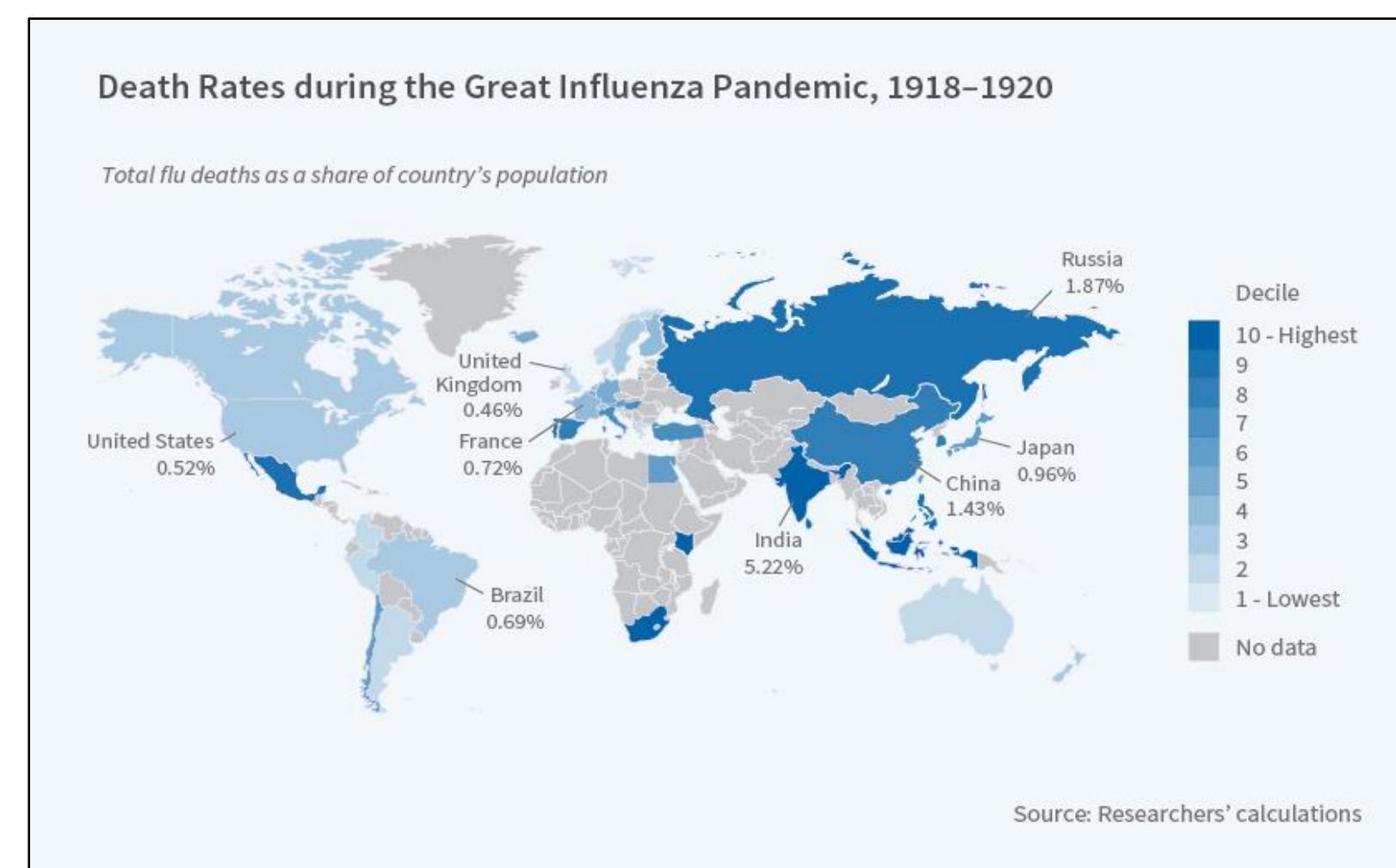
Though the emergence of the Coronavirus is considered a novelty, historically speaking, it has a precedent in the "Spanish Flu" and the worldwide pandemic of 1918.

- Estimated 500 million people contracted the Spanish Flu
- Between 17 and 50 million people died

"The flu spread in three waves: the first in the spring of 1918, the second and most deadly from September 1918 to January 1919, and the third from February 1919 through the end of the year. The first two waves were intensified by the final years of World War I." (Maas, 2020) Due to the poor hygiene from WWI, people from all ages were uncharacteristically susceptible to the virus. Many scientists believe this is one of the main contributors to the high mortality rate for young adults.



Because of the large numbers of people contracting the influenza, makeshift hospitals had to be constructed in warehouses.

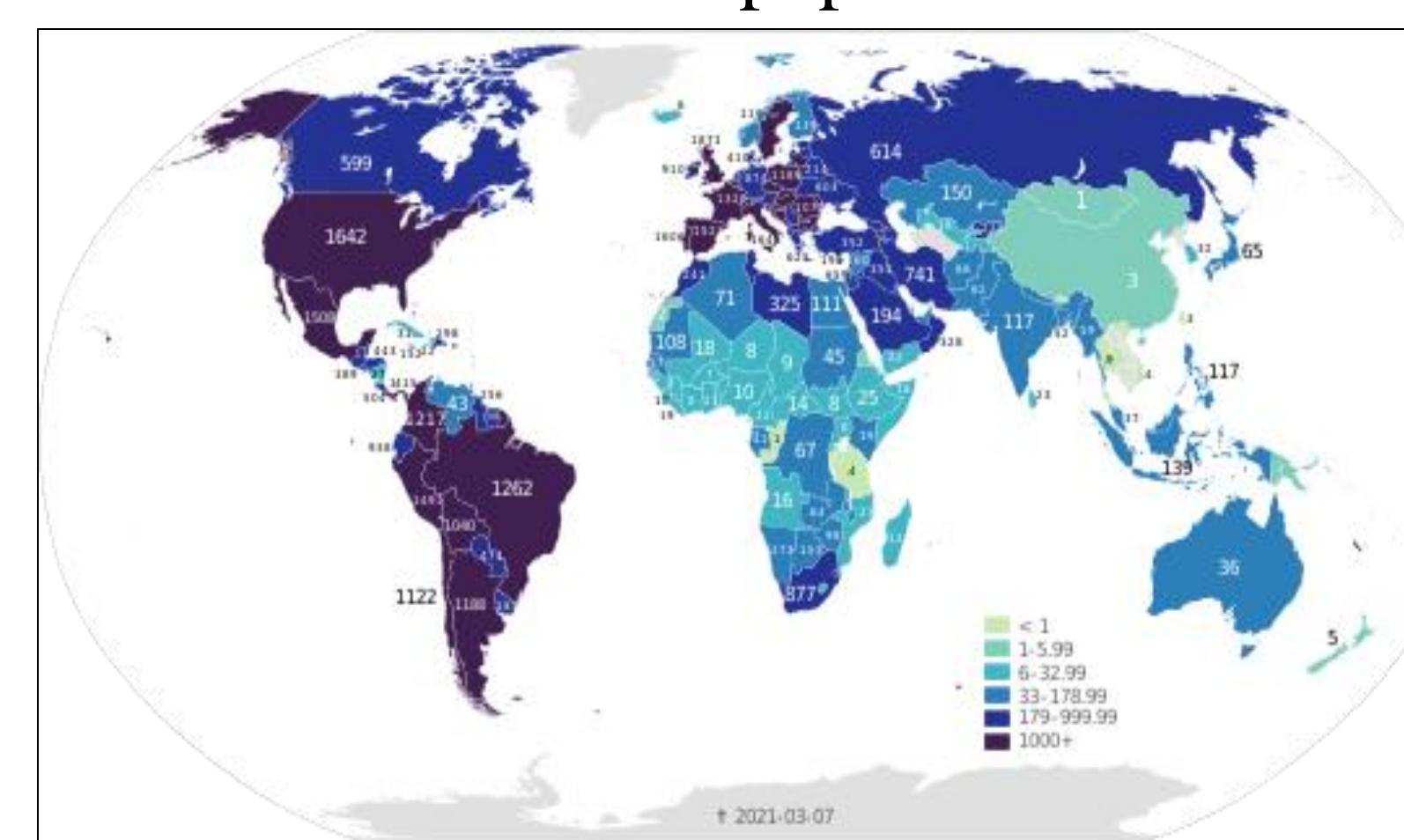


The graph shows death rates in comparison to a country's population. Darker shaded countries are equivalent to more deaths.

As a whole, the number of worldwide cases for coronavirus are at 136 million, with an estimated number of deaths at 2.94 million.

The mortality rate equaling about 0.02% of the world's population.

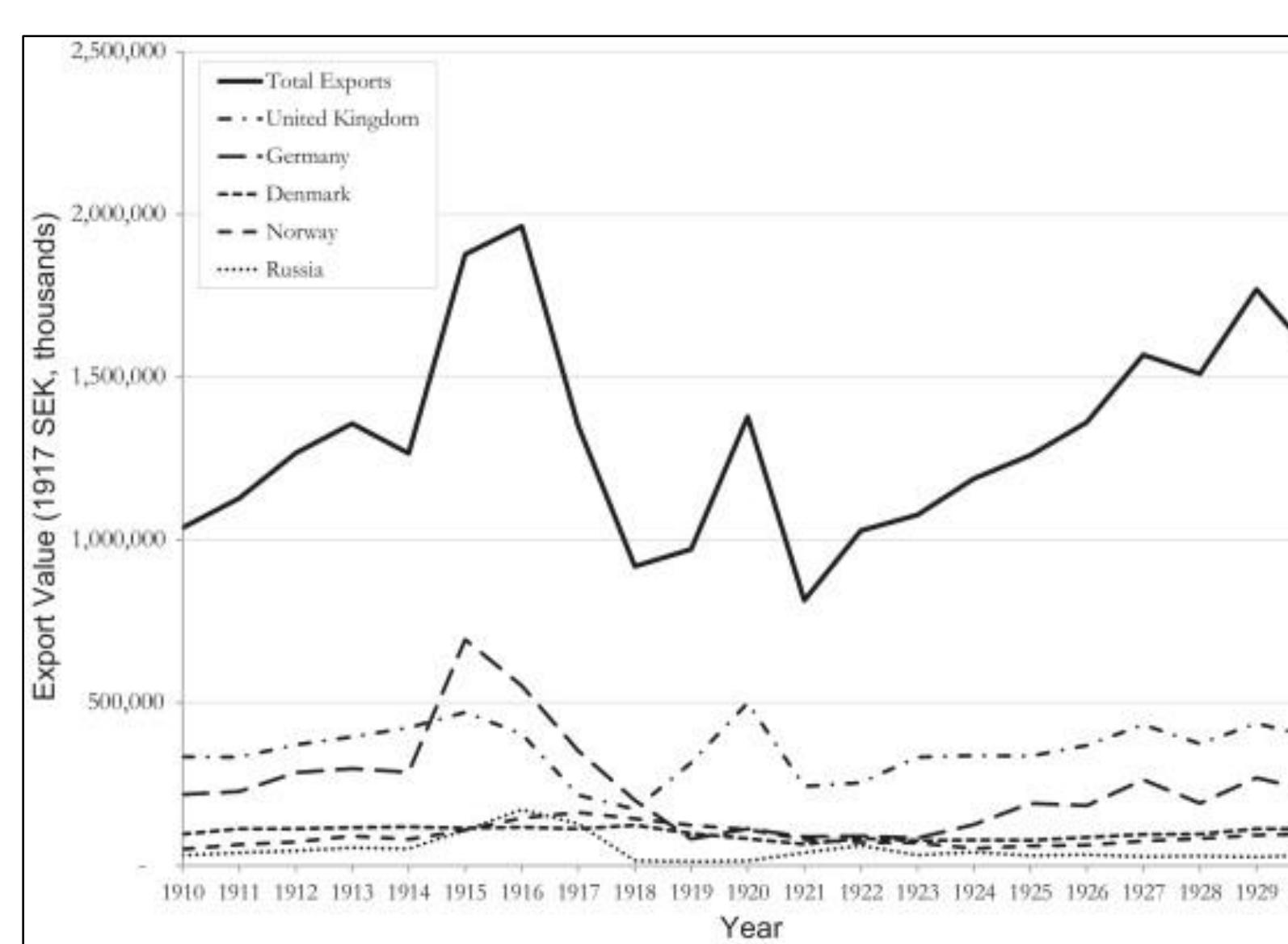
In perspective, the mortality rate of the Spanish Flu claimed between 0.034% and 0.10% of the world's population.



The graph shows the number of covid-related deaths per country. The higher the mortality rate, the darker the color.

### Spanish Flu: Economic Implications

- The U.S. GDP declined by 1.5%
- U.S. consumption declined by 2.1% (Maas, 2020)
- UK estimated a drop of 6% in real GDP (Clark, 2020)



The graph above shows the impact on the value of exports for several European nations, in addition it shows the overall impact to exported goods.

### Coronavirus: Economic Implications

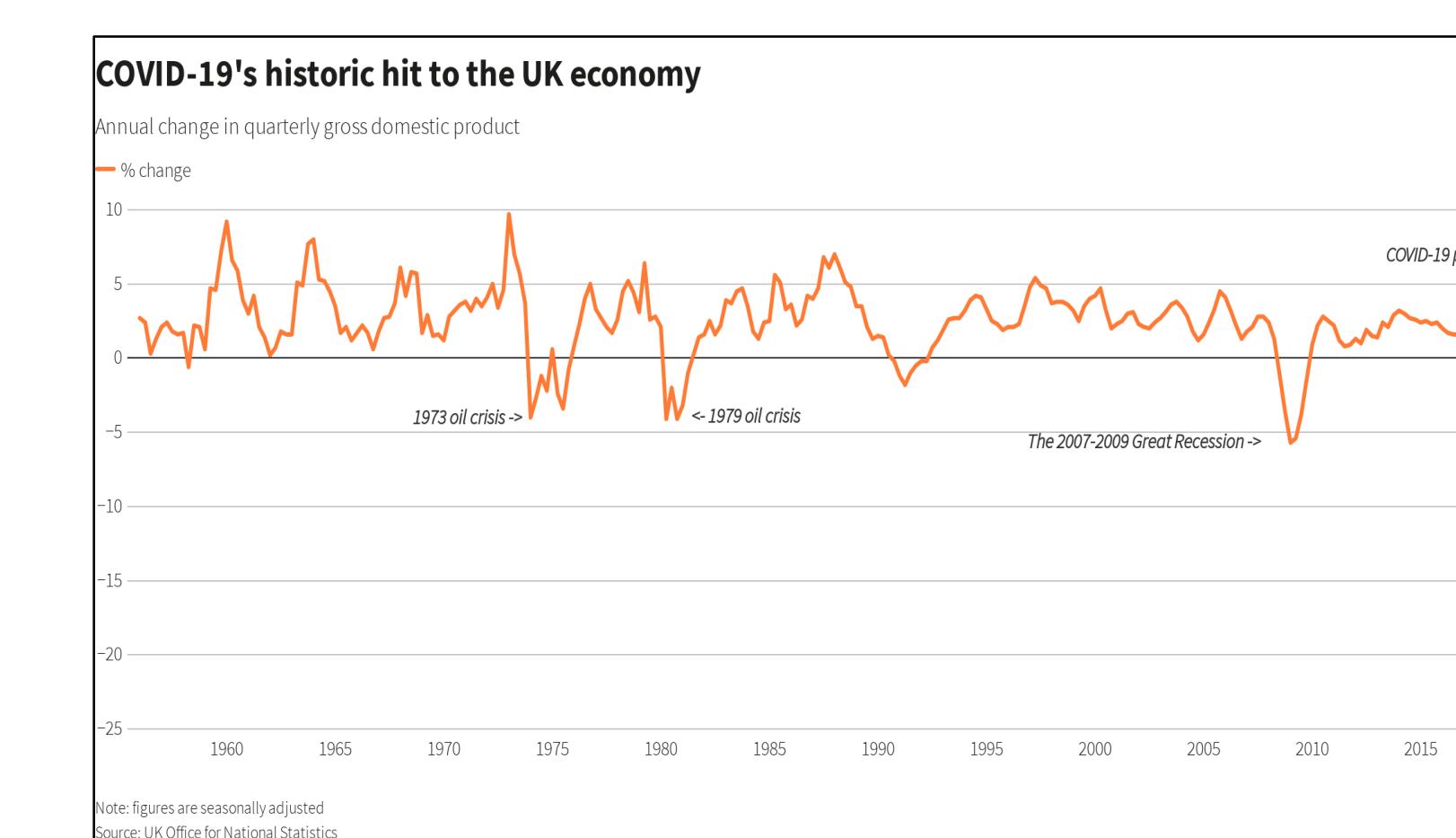
- U.S. Real GDP decreased by 3.5% due to the impact of the coronavirus.

"The decrease in real GDP in 2020 reflected decreases in PCE, exports, private inventory investment, nonresidential fixed investment, and state and local government that were partly offset by increases in federal government spending and residential fixed investment." (Mataloni, 2021)

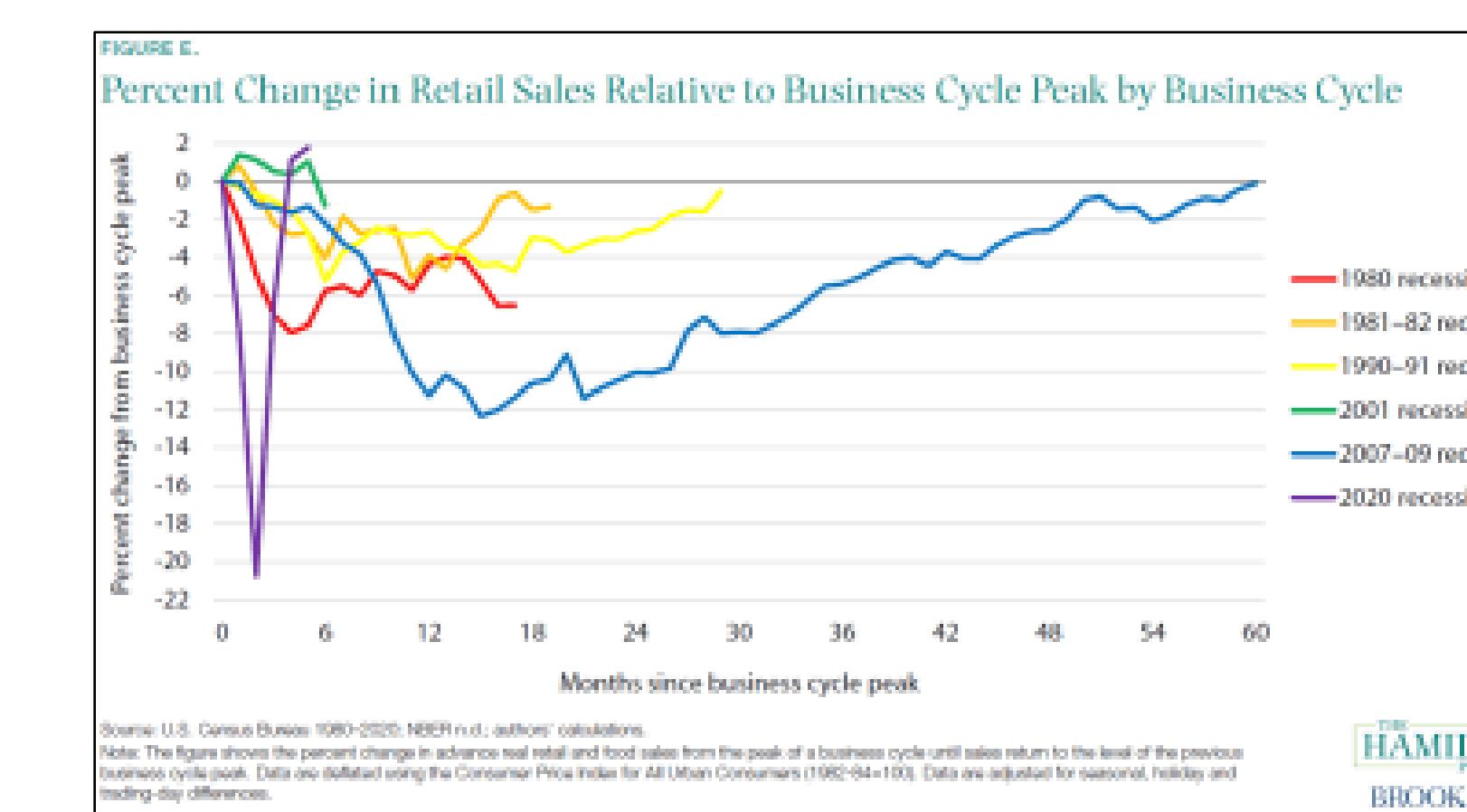
### U.S. Economy Sees Sharp Downturn Amid COVID-19 Crisis



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The graph shows how coronavirus has impacted the UK's economy.



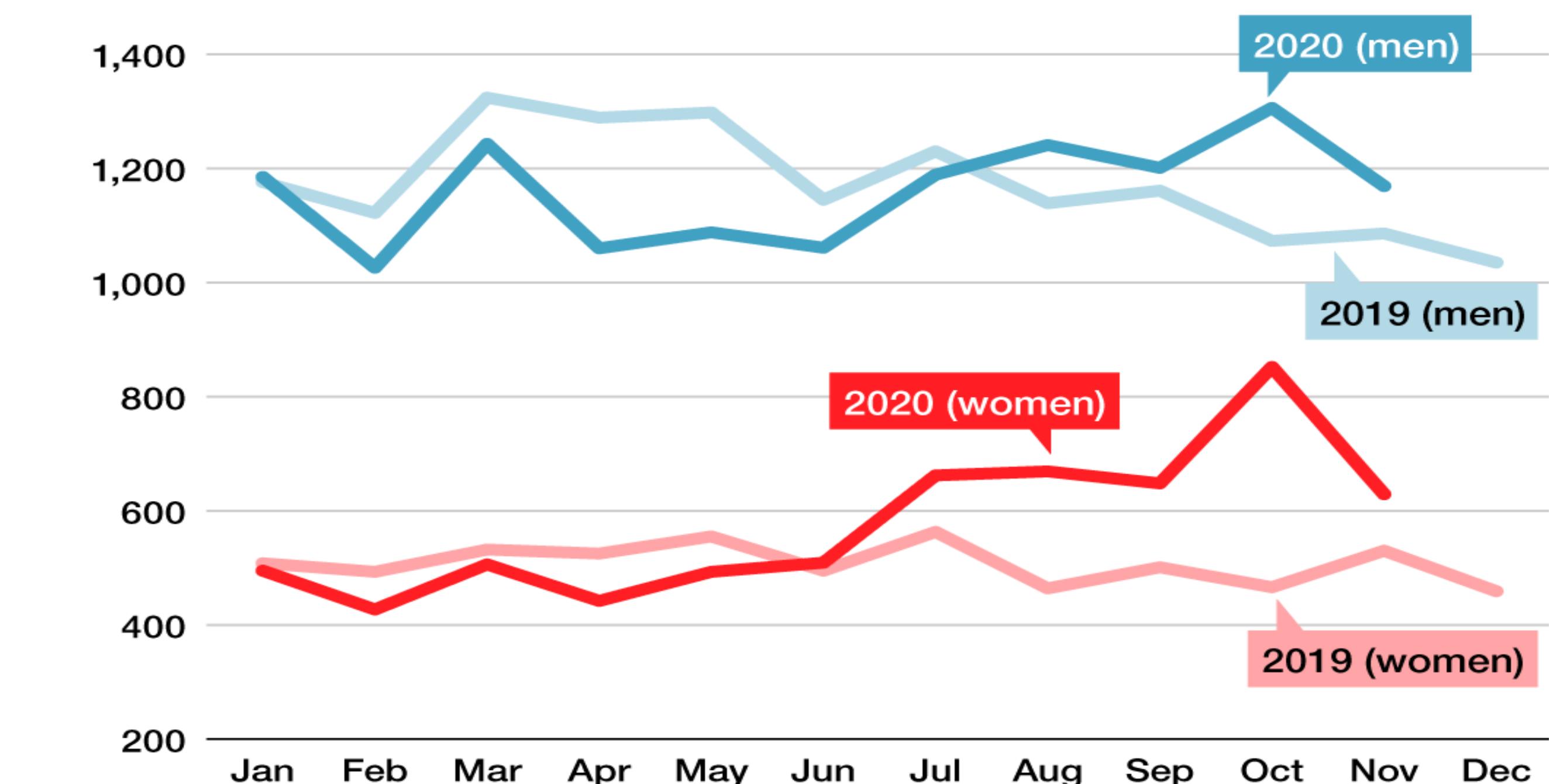
This graph gives further evidence of the implications that coronavirus has had on the US economy, particularly the retail sector.

The effects from the Spanish Flu were enormous. The disproportionate amount of young adults who succumbed to the virus left the world in tatters.

Despite the high survival rate of coronavirus, there have still been many problems that country leaders have had to face. Namely, the negative economic effects on GDP. The regulations put into place in the name of "safety" and "stopping the spread" has given rise to numerous humanitarian issues, such as suicide, hatred and violence towards particular people groups, and the overall mental health of people from all age, economic, and social backgrounds.

"... suicide rates predicted increases ranging from 1% to 145%..." (John, 2020)

### Male and Female Suicides by Month



nippon.com

### Works Cited

- Clark, Robert. "COVID-19 and Economic Lessons from Previous Pandemics." *British Politics and Policy at LSE*, LSE BPP, 19 Apr. 2020, [www.blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/covid-19-and-economic-lessons-from-previous-pandemics/](http://www.blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/covid-19-and-economic-lessons-from-previous-pandemics/).
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- Maas, Steve. "Social and Economic Impacts of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic." *NBER*, 5 May 2020, [www.nber.org/digest/may20/social-and-economic-impacts-1918-influenza-epidemic](http://www.nber.org/digest/may20/social-and-economic-impacts-1918-influenza-epidemic).
- Mataloni, Lisa, and Jeannine Aversa. "News Release." *Gross Domestic Product, 4th Quarter and Year 2020 (Advance Estimate) / U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)*, 28 Jan. 2021, [www.bea.gov/news/2021/gross-domestic-product-4th-quarter-and-year-2020-advance-estimate](http://www.bea.gov/news/2021/gross-domestic-product-4th-quarter-and-year-2020-advance-estimate).