

KEHILLAH







The Summer of Paradox



Historians call the summer of 2020 the summer of paradox. During the summer of 2020, there was a stark contrast between the distancing and division that came with Covid-19 and the swelling of community support and massive protest gatherings that came with the BLM movement. The widely known Covid-19 virus actually began months before the summer had even begun. There were lockdowns all across the globe to “flatten the curve” of the growing coronavirus cases. The economy crashed as most businesses were forced to shut down. However, in the summer of 2020, city and state governments began to lift their lockdown regulations, allowing people to get back to their jobs and non-essential businesses in hopes of improving the economy. Unfortunately, wearing a mask and social distancing had become a highly politicized issue, even though there was concrete evidence proving that it would slow the spread of Covid-19. Cases spiked again, and non-essential businesses had to be closed once more.

Outside the US, the continued use of masks and social distancing in some countries had dramatically slowed the spread of the virus and they were able to open the 2020 school year somewhat normally. In the US, most schools opened entirely online, posing many technical difficulties as well as mental health challenges. In some states, the government threatened to reduce school funding if they didn't open in-person. Many children were forced to attend in-person school and risk their lives. Covid-19 spread like wildfire within the in-person schools, posing a risk to all of the families that had their children in school. Cases continued to spike drastically in the US, due to confusing guidance from the government. Many key government officials, such as the President at the time, Donald Trump, sent mixed messages on things like mask wearing and testing. It gave many citizens "permission" to break the mask wearing and social distancing rules. This had catastrophic consequences for the entire nation.

COVID-19 death rate in countries with confirmed deaths and more than 100 cases

COUNTRY	# CASES	# DEATHS	DEATH RATE
US	239	14	5.9% 
China*	80,679	3,034	3.8% 
Italy	3,858	148	3.8% 
Iran	4,747	124	2.6% 
France	577	9	1.6% 
Japan	381	6	1.5% 
Spain	360	5	1.4% 
UK	163	2	1.2% 
Netherlands	128	1	0.8% 
South Korea	6,593	42	0.6% 
Switzerland	214	1	0.5% 

Note: Data as of 11:30 am EST on March 6, 2020.

*Mainland China and Hong Kong

Source: Johns Hopkins

BUSINESS INSIDER

Woodward, Aylin. "One Chart Shows 11 Countries' Current Coronavirus Death Rates, Based on the Known Number of Cases and Deaths." *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 6 Mar. 2020, www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-death-rate-by-country-2020-3.

What made this summer such a paradox is that, as distanced and divided as America was because of Covid-19, many Americans came together for a common cause: Black Lives Matter, otherwise known as BLM. On May 25th, a black man named George Floyd was killed by police officers. The officer knelt on Floyd's neck for over 7 minutes, even as he said "I can't breathe." The video of this display of police brutality went viral on social media, launching the BLM protests that raged all summer. Black deaths from police brutality were highlighted over the summer, including key ones like George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Jacob Blake and Tamir Rice. Government emphasis on law enforcement was questioned as many called for defunding the police. Yet another paradox from the summer is how social media connected people more than ever even as they were more distanced as they had ever been. Since most people had cell phones, they were able to record showings of police brutality and discrimination/aggression towards BIPOCs and post them for the world to see in a matter of minutes. This allowed information to spread quickly, and people became more informed and aware of all of the microaggressions they commit everyday. Overall, the summer of 2020 was a paradox because while everyone was separated from Covid-19, many came together to support Black Lives Matter.



Audra D. S. Burch, Weiyi Cai, Gabriel Gianordoli, Morrigan McCarthy and Jugal K. Patel. "How Black Lives Matter Reached Every Corner of America." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 13 June 2020, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/13/us/george-floyd-protests-cities-photos.html.

Sources

McLaughlin, Elliott C. "How George Floyd's Death Ignited a Racial Reckoning That Shows No Signs of Slowing Down." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 9 Aug. 2020, www.cnn.com/2020/08/09/us/george-floyd-protests-different-why/index.html.

Matthew Perrone, Nicky Forester and Michelle Lui. "Coronavirus Testing in the U.S. Is Dropping, Even as Deaths Mount." *Time*, Time, 5 Aug. 2020, time.com/5876438/coronavirus-testing-dropping-deaths/.

Chavez, Nicole. "Some Students Already Started Classes. Here's What We Have Learned so Far about America's Schools in the Pandemic." *CNN*, Cable News Network, 15 Aug. 2020, www.cnn.com/2020/08/14/us/schools-reopening-pandemic-lessons/index.html.

Woodward, Aylin. "One Chart Shows 11 Countries' Current Coronavirus Death Rates, Based on the Known Number of Cases and Deaths." *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 6 Mar. 2020, www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-death-rate-by-country-2020-3.

Hatzipanagos, Rachel. "Analysis | What 'Defund the Police' Might Look Like." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 12 June 2020, www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/06/12/black-lives-matter-defund-police-is-country-ready/.