

Oxford, 24 November 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brazil's subnational-government policies remain effective, while the risk of openness is still high across the country

A Oxford University, EBAPE-FGV and University of São Paulo report assesses Brazilian subnational COVID-19 response policies

The University of Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government, and partners in Rio de Janeiro's EBAPE-FGV and the University of São Paulo, have published a report assessing public policy responses to COVID-19 for different levels of government in Brazil.

This report "Brazil's fight against Covid-19: risk, policies, and behaviours" presents an index of the "risk of openness" for states and state capitals in Brazil, as well as an assessment of how citizens' behaviours have been changing over time in response to Covid-19 response policies. It uses data collected by 77 volunteers, who have coded policies that have been put in place by different levels of government in Brazil.

The report finds that the risk of openness, which is roughly the risk of completely removing closure and containment policies, has remained high in recent months. Policies continue to influence how much citizens stay at home, make non-essential trips and how far they travel. Over time, however, the extent to which policies affect behaviour wanes. This new report is the team's follow-up to one that was published in June, entitled "Do Brazil's COVID-19 Government Response Measures Meet the WHO's Criteria for Policy Easing?"

The report also presents the results of a second-round survey. These prompt several policy recommendations, listed below. The survey collected data in nine state capitals—Belém, Fortaleza, Goiânia, Manaus, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, São Paulo.

The Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker's subnational data is freely available online for the Brazilian federal government, state governments and state capitals and second cities of each state. The Tracker subnational data will continue to be updated, refined and improved throughout the crisis. The data can be downloaded here: <https://github.com/OxCGRT/Brazil-covid-policy>

Several recommendations emerge from the survey results:

1. **Public information campaigns:** There has been little to no improvement since May in citizens' understanding that self-isolation means you should stay at home without going out, even to shop for essential items. Public information campaigns that target this misunderstanding, and explain that going out even when wearing a mask is incorrect behaviour if you are contagious, may lead to reductions in disease spread. TV appears to be the best vehicle to reach the greatest number of people.
2. **Testing:** Being wealthy has recently been an even stronger predictor of receiving a test than it was in May. Policymakers should think about how to improve rates of testing among poorer people.
3. **Education:** Although private-school students have seen improvements since May in the quality of education that they have receive when studying at home, public-school students have not. Public-school teachers should be supported in efforts to directly provide study materials to their students.

Anna Petherick, Departmental Lecturer in Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government

and lead for this project, said: “It’s truly exciting to launch this new, real-time data source that tracks the public policies of 53 cities in Brazil. We have a wonderfully committed team of volunteers who have worked and continue to work hard to provide this resource to researchers and policymakers in Brazil.”

Beatriz Kira, a Senior Research and Policy Officer at the Blavatnik School of Government, said: “The results of this study suggest that the risk of openness is still high across the country. As a Brazilian citizen, I am motivated to make sure that policymakers understand this, and to produce research that supports them in reducing this risk over time.”

Maria Luciano, OxCGRT Research Assistant for the Brazil subnational section of the project, said: “Trustworthy and up-to-date information such as the OxCGRT database is essential to tackle this crisis through evidence-based policies. I hope that many people use the data.”

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Notes to editor

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- The coronavirus outbreak has forced governments to put in place policies to contain the spread of the disease among their population. The Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker collects publicly available information on 18 indicators of government response. Eight of the policy indicators record information on containment and closure policies, such as school closures and restrictions in movement. More information on the methodology is available on the project page on the Blavatnik School website www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker
- Government responses vary significantly from one subnational unit to another, and like any policy interventions, their effect is highly contingent on local political and social context. The COVID-19 Government Response Indices, like all aggregate indices which combine different indicators into a general index, should not be interpreted as measuring the appropriateness or effectiveness of a government’s response.
- With the rapidly evolving situation, the data collection is live and ongoing. The project team welcomes specific feedback on both data and analysis. Please visit the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker project page on the Blavatnik School website www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker to fill in a feedback form.

About the Blavatnik School of Government

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