

Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker

Brazil's Subnational Policy Response

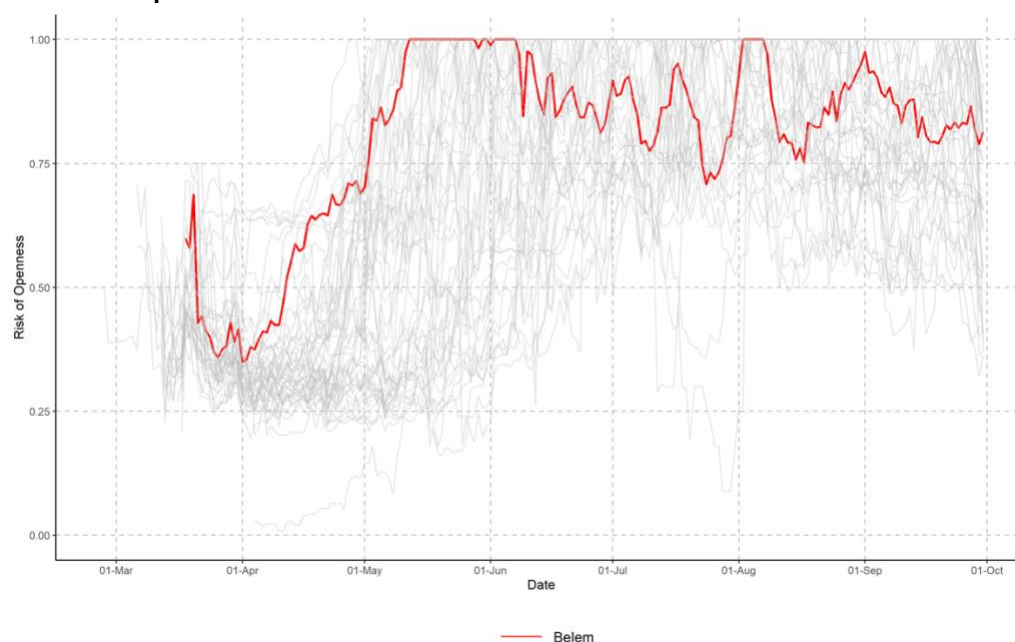
Policy note – Belém/Pará



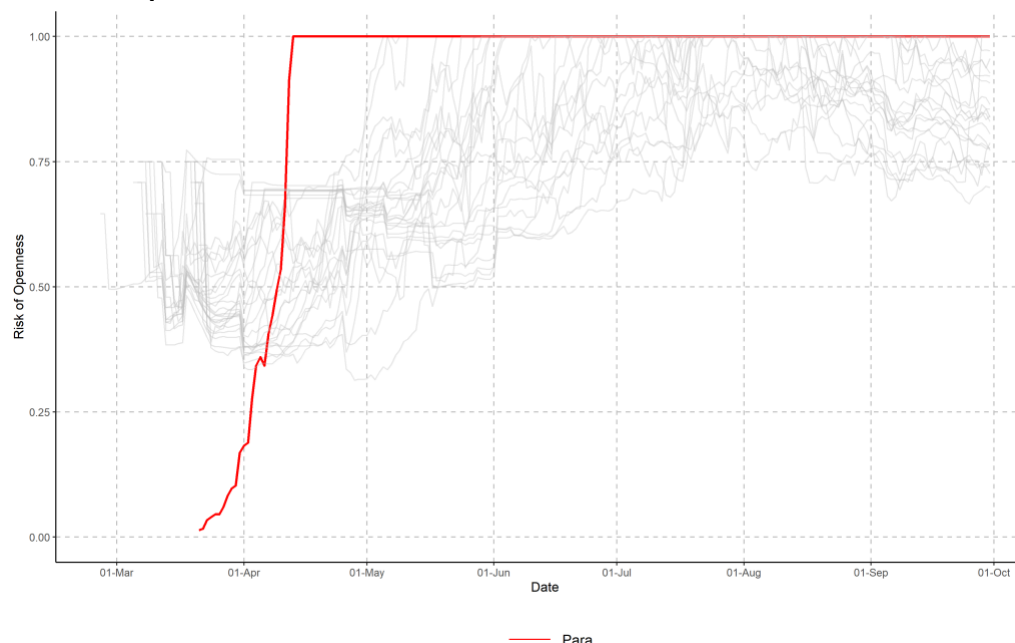
Region	Belém, Pará
Period	June to October 2020
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Figure PA.1 – Risk of Openness Index (RoOI)

A. Risk of Openness Index in Belém



B. Risk of Openness Index in Pará



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State and city government responses

Figure 1 shows how the Risk of Openness (RoOI) went up in all states and cities over time and, despite a slight fall in some states in September, RoOI remains high in both the city of Belém and the state of Pará.

On 16 March, the government of the state of Pará (the second largest state in the country in territorial extension) announced a state of public health emergency of international importance, even before the first case of Covid-19 was detected. The first case was confirmed on 18 March, in the following day, the state had its first death, that took place in the tourist village of Alter-do-Chão, located near Santarém. Since then, the number of cases and deaths increased to 234.884 cases and 6.614 deaths on 5 October, according to the secretary of public health of Pará.

The state and municipal governments acted quickly. Decrees were signed with response measures to the spread of Covid-19, including restrictions on gatherings, cancelation of public events, closure of public transport, and closure of schools. Civil servants were authorised to work from home and health control measures were adopted in ports and airports under supervision of ANVISA (National Health Surveillance Agency) and SESP (State Secretary of Public Health). On 18 March the mayor of Belém, capital of the state, as well the state government suspended all classes in both municipal and state schools, initially until 5 April (but later extended). In 23 March, interstate transportation, apart from freight transport, was suspended.

On 6 May, when the state had confirmed 375 deaths by Covid-19, the state government adopted more strict measures in some cities, what was considered the imposition of a lockdown. The new measures restricted the circulation of people outside the home and only allowed essential services to operate in the following cities: Belém, Ananindeua, Marituba, Benevides, Castanhal, Santa Bárbara do Pará, Santa Izabel do Pará, Vigia (northeast), Santo Antônio do Tauá (northeast of the state) e Breves (Marajó Island). All of them were selected because they had more than 80 cases per 100 thousand inhabitants. On 16 May seven more cities went into lockdown: Cametá, Canaã dos Carajás, Parauapebas, Marabá, Santarém, Abaetetuba and Capanema. The lockdown was in force until 24 May 24, when restrictions started to be lifted.

The more restrictive measures aimed to increase social distancing, measured through mobility indicators. The rate mobility decreased, but it did not reach the target of 70% less than the baseline, as recommended by World Health Organization. According data provided by the state, the highest level of social distancing was recorded on 17 May 17th, at 54,17%.

On 20 April the city of Belém declared the use of face mask mandatory for all people in the city, according to the recommendations of the Ministry of Health. The text also establishes that commercial, industrial and service establishments, as well as public transport companies, must provide and require the use of masks, and should not allow in people who refuse to wear face coverings. On 24 May the state government also made the use of mask mandatory in public places and inside vehicles, including public transport and ride-sharing cars. The measures are valid to all cities, and each municipal government should define the penalties that would be applicable.

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A gradual process of reopening started after the end of the lockdown period. The state government published the plan “Retoma Pará”, which divided the state in zones from 0 (more restricted policies apply) to 05 (normal activities). On 31 May, several regions in Pará were classified as zone 1, where events remained forbidden, meetings, both private or public, with more than 10 people were banned, non-essential services and schools remained closed, as did inter-city public transportation. On the same day, the metropolitan region of Belém, western Marajó, low Tocantins and Araguaia were classified in zone 3 (orange flag).

With the beginning of the easing of measures in Belém, on 6 July, shopping centres, beauty space, gym and the non-essential shops could reopen. On 18 July, according to the classification of the “Retoma Pará” plan, only Araguaia was in zone 2 (red flag) and only the northeast of the state was in zone 4 (yellow flag), the rest of the state was in zone 03 (orange flag). Social events were authorised in the city of Santarém on 15 August, as well others cities in Pará. On 10 August, the state government authorised some education activities to resume, including health and public safety courses. On 21 September, a new academic year started at the University of the State of Pará, with a mix of in person and online activities.

State and city government had public information campaigns since march. However, since 8 July Belém's official communication channels about Covid-19 have not been updated. Similarly, in the city of Ananindeua there has been no updates on the official channel regarding the pandemic since 5 July. This is also true for Santarém city, which has not updated Covid-19 information since 21 August.

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Figure PA.2 – Accumulated number of deaths and deaths per capita for Pará and the eight other states surveyed

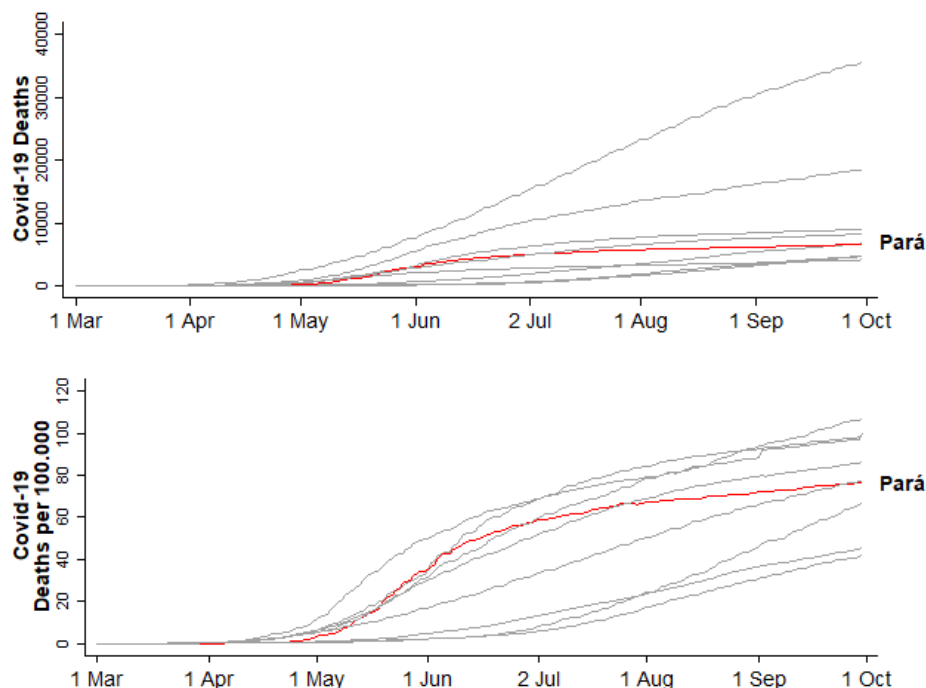
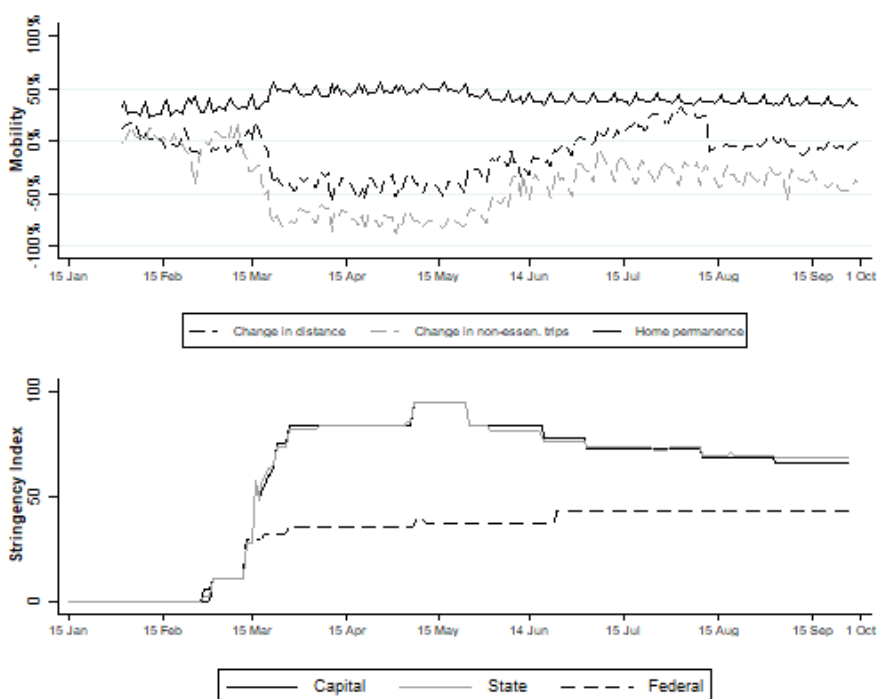


Figure PA.3 – Mobility indicators for Pará state and the OxCGRT stringency index for different levels of government



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Belém Survey Results

Belém has 1.5 million inhabitants, with 9.3% of the population over 60 years of age. Its HDI is 0.746, making it the 15th most developed Brazilian capital (out of 27).

In Belém, 22% of people did not leave their homes during a two-week period prior to the interviews, that took place between 27 July to 2 October. Those who ventured out, did so on average on 8.2 days during that period. As elsewhere, most people (58%) left home for essential tasks, such as going to the supermarket, pharmacy or bank; 39% of all respondents reported leaving home to go work during the fortnight (compared to 50% who reported going out to work in February). Those who went out estimated, on average, that 71% of people on the street were wearing masks. Thirty-nine percent of respondents reported having had at least one Covid-19 symptom in the week prior to interview. Nineteen percent of people reported having been tested, and 4% stated that they had tried to get tested without success.

Reductions in public transport prevented 12% of people from going about their intended activities. A quarter of people (25%) stated that they had used public transport during the previous two weeks, while 38% said they used it in February. The average score among respondents in Belém for knowledge about the symptoms of Covid-19 was 74 out of 100. The average score for knowledge about the meaning and practices of self-isolation was 45 out of 100 (see the results section of the main paper for an explanation of these scores).

The main sources of information about Covid-19 for the residents of Belém were TV news shows (51% of respondents said that they received most of their information about the disease from this source), and newspapers and newspapers websites (20%). Sixty-three percent of people stated that they had seen a public information campaign, with 84% of these people reporting seeing one on TV, 24% in newspapers, 32% on Facebook or Twitter, 25% on WhatsApp, and 16% on blogs. Of those who had seen a public information campaign, 66% recalled seeing a state-government campaign, 53% reported seeing a federal-government campaign, and 22%, a city-government one.

Twenty-seven percent of people in Belém have seen their income reduce since February. Seventeen percent said that their income had been cut in half, or worse. Four percent of the population reported that they no longer had any income.

Eighty percent of Belém residents perceived Covid-19 to be much more serious than a common flu. The public measures adopted to fight the spread of the disease were assessed as adequate by 40% of respondents in the city, as insufficiently stringent by 55%, and as too stringent by only 5%. People in the city generally understand that lifting these restrictions will be a gradual process: they think it will take on average 6.4 months for measures to be removed.

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Figure PA.4 – Social distancing, knowledge and testing in Belém

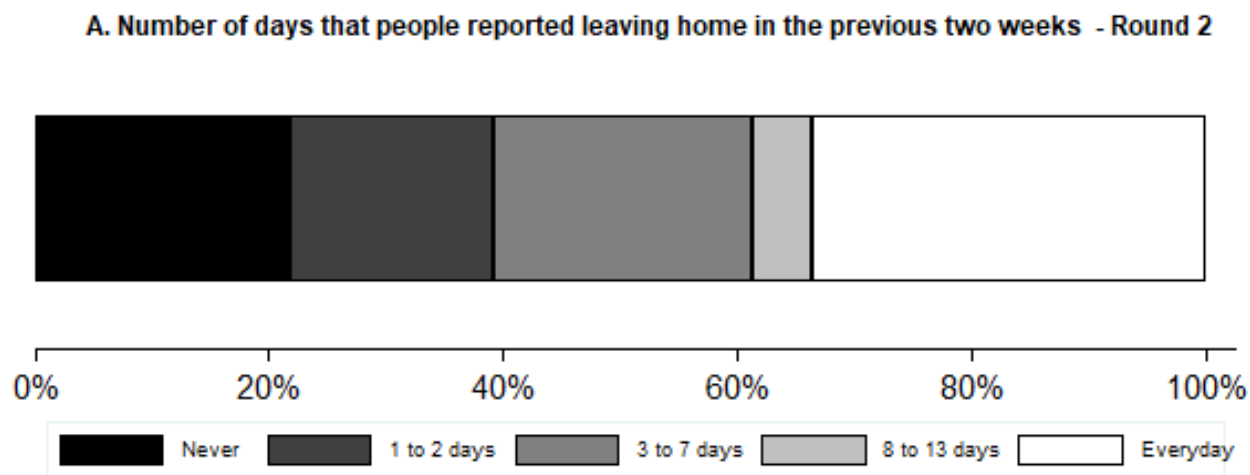
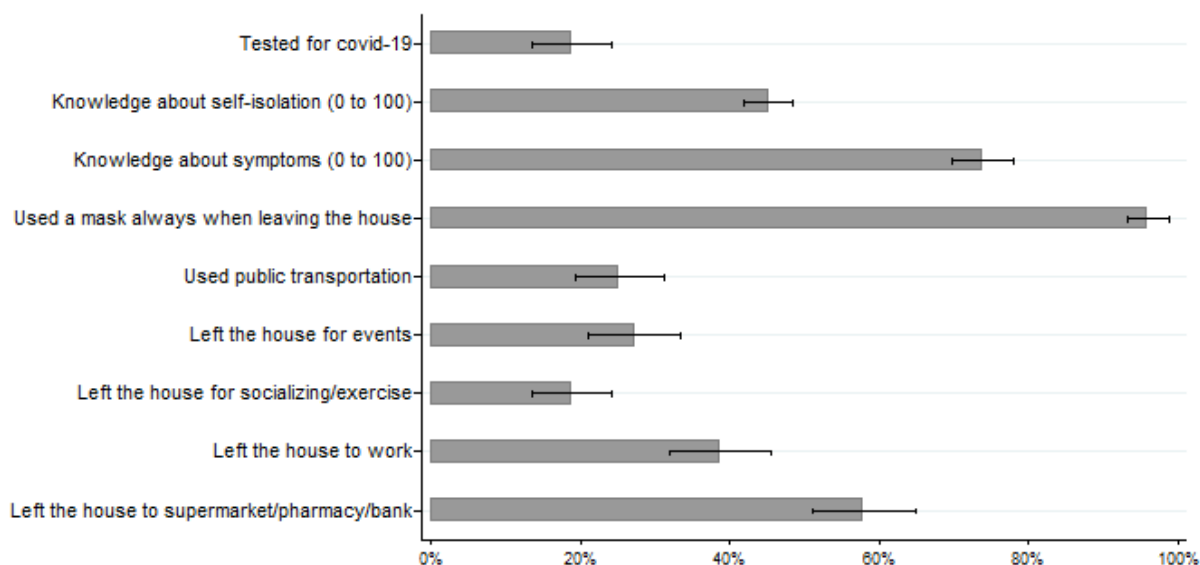


Figure PA.5 – Testing, knowledge, mask use, and reasons for leaving home



Data available at: <https://github.com/OxCGRT/Brazil-covid-policy>