

Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker

Brazil's Subnational Policy Response

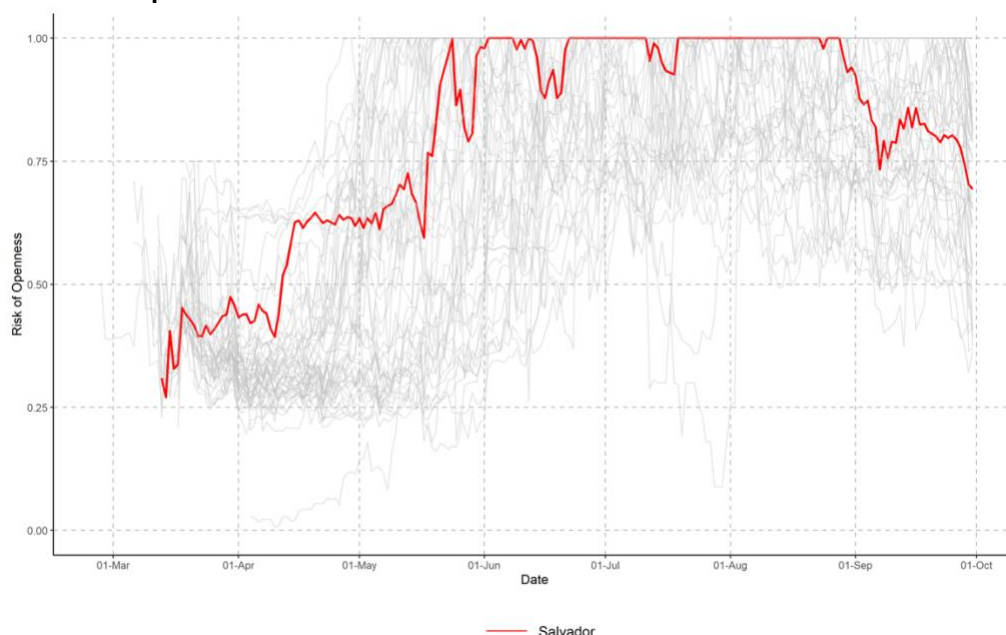
Policy note – Salvador/Bahia



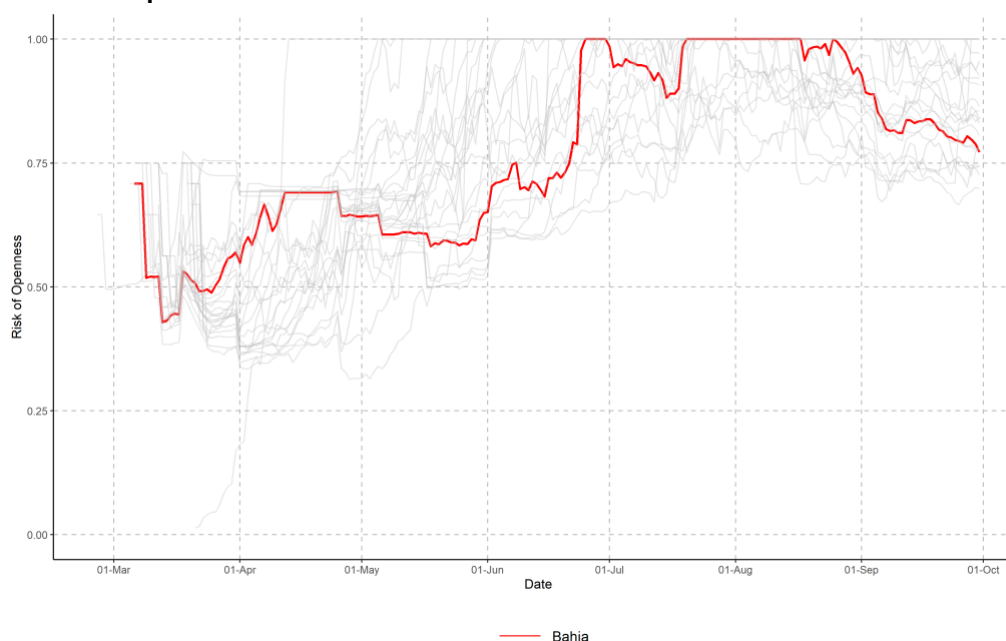
Region	Salvador, Bahia
Period	June to October 2020
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Figure BA.1 – Risk of Openness Index (RoOI)

A. Risk of Openness Index in Salvador



B. Risk of Openness Index in Bahia



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State and city government responses

Figure 1 shows how the Risk of Openness (RoOI) went up over the reported period and, despite a slight fall in September, remained high in Salvador and Bahia.

On 1 October, the state of Bahia registered 2,098 cases and 45,6 deaths of Covid-19 per 100,000 inhabitants. Preventive and social distance measures, adopted since the beginning of the pandemic, continued to be implemented by the government of Bahia and the city of Salvador. The use of masks became mandatory for all people outside the home in the municipalities in which a State of Public Calamity had been declared, as defined by state law in force since 7 May. The mayor of Salvador announced the launch of the “Salvador Protege” program on 6 June, an initiative that required the tracing and monitoring, through telemedicine, of contacts made by someone with a confirmed diagnosis after being attended at a Basic Health Unit (UBS, in the acronym in Portuguese). In order to reduce the transmission rate of Covid-19, the State government anticipated two holidays for the 25 and 26 May and recommended the city halls to anticipate municipal holidays for 27 May — a measure adopted by the mayor of Salvador. The state government also determined the closure of all but essential services on 28 and 20 May in the nine cities with more than one hundred confirmed cases, drastically reducing the economic activity on this week.

A night time curfew, initially issued for the cities of Itabuna and Ipiaú, was adopted in several other cities from June on, according to the disease situation in each municipality. The measure prohibited citizenships of these places to leave their homes between 6 pm and 5 am — with some variations in each city — and required the suspension of all commercial activities, with the exception of pharmacies, during this period. For some municipalities, in addition to night circulation impediment, it also required the closure of all non-essential establishments during the day. This regionalised policy lasted until August, when the last decrees that determined the curfew were issued.

After the alignment between the state and municipal government, the municipal government of Salvador announced, on 7 July, a reopening plan of the city's economy. Divided in three phases, the plan considered the occupancy rate of ICU beds for Covid-19 patients for five consecutive days, in order to decide whether or not to ease measures as scheduled by each stage. On 24 July, the first phase started (occupancy rate below 75%), authorising the opening of shopping centres, street commerce with an area over 200 m² (smaller than that was already authorized), religious temples and churches. From 10 August, the city moved to the second phase (occupancy rate of ICU beds below 70%), allowing gyms, beauty salons, museums, culture centres, bars and restaurants to reopen. The third phase (occupancy rate below 60%) was gradually implemented: from 29 August sportive and social clubs were allowed to operate, and on 11 September cinemas, theatres and events centres opened their doors again. On 18 September, some beaches were also reopened for sea bathing, hiking and individual or double sports activities, however, the use of chairs and umbrellas on the shore remained prohibited, as well as any street selling on the beach. With the taking up of non-essential activities, the municipal government began to progressively introduce back the normal public bus fleet, which had been reduced by 30%.

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As this article is being written, on 1 October, measures are still in force in all the state of Bahia establishing the closure of schools, zoos, museums, theatres and related activities, as well as the suspension of public events. The limit of 50 people for meetings was broadened to 100 from 1 September onwards. Intermunicipal and interstate buses were authorised in all cities of Bahia on 28 September, after a long period in which the state government periodically updated a list indicating which cities could open its bus terminals, according to local epidemiological conditions.

The municipal government of Salvador regulated the reopening of activities through specific sanitary protocols for each sector, aiming to keep social distance and avoid environments that would favour the spread of the virus. City inspectors supervised establishments and interdicted the ones that were not following the rules. When the second phase completed one month, on 10 September, the municipal government had closed 123 establishments for not complying with security measures, mostly bars and restaurants.

Even during the implementation of the reopening plan, restrictive measures for neighbourhoods with a high incidence of Covid-19 cases — adopted since the beginning of May — continued to be issued on a regular basis by the municipal government, demanding that all services, except the most essential to close, and blocking nonresidents from entering these areas of the city. However, from September, these regionalised measures had become more flexible, defining that non-essential services of these neighborhoods could operate between 10 am to 4 pm, instead of being required to close completely. Since the end of the same month until the moment this article was being written, the municipal government has not issued any more municipal decree determining regionalised actions. The entire city of Salvador was under the third phase of the reopening plan, with no distinction whatsoever. The only economic activities that remained suspended at the time of writing were the ones that lead to big agglomerations, and the Municipal Market of Itapuã and Municipal Market of Antônio Lima (Liberdade).

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

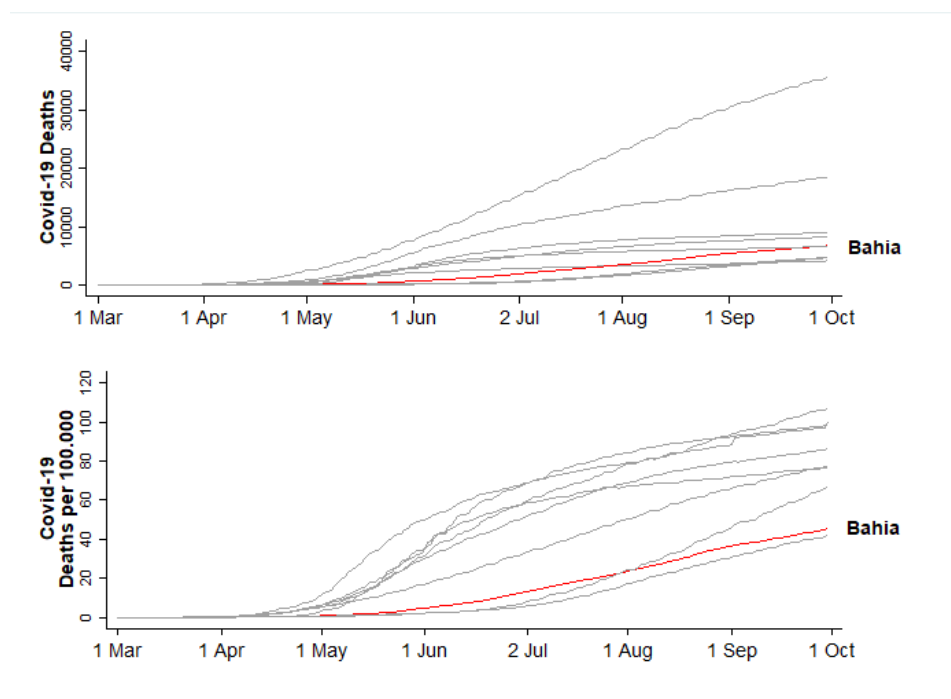
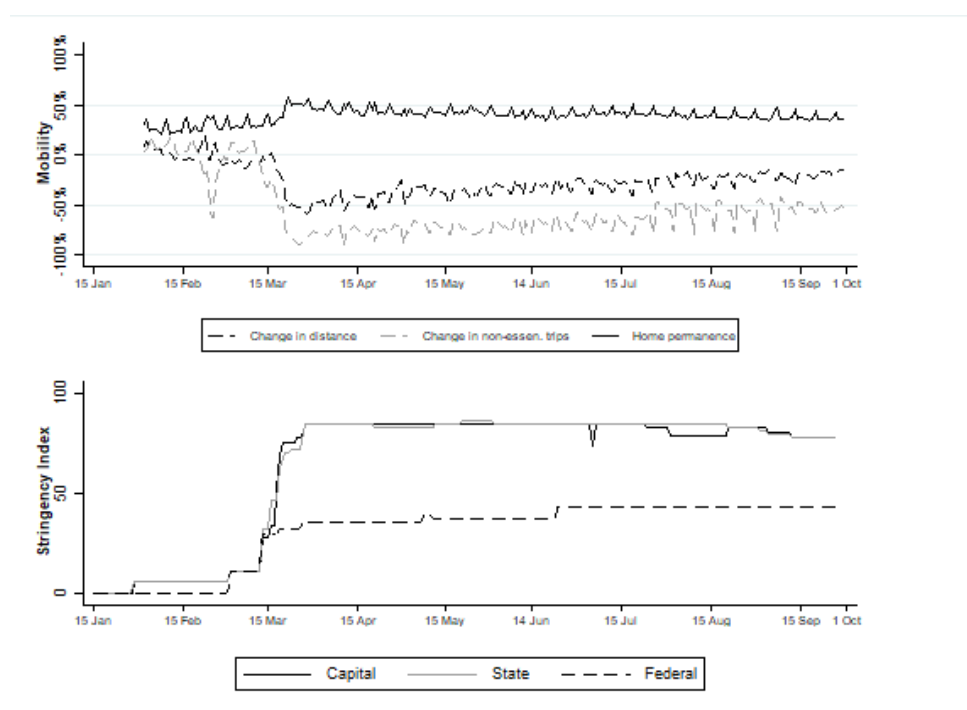


Figure BA.3 – Mobility indicators for Bahia and the OxCGRT stringency index for different levels of government



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Salvador Survey Results

Salvador is the third most populous municipality in Brazil, home to 2.9 million inhabitants, 9% of whom are above 60 years of age. Its HDI is 0.759, making it the 11th most developed state capital in Brazil (among 27 cities).

In Salvador, 15% of people did not leave their homes during a two-week period from 22 April and 13 May, compared to 8% during a two-week period from 13 July to 18 September. Those who ventured out did so on average on 5.4 days during the second period, in comparison to 4.7 days in the first period. As elsewhere, most people in the first round (68%) left home for essential tasks, such as going to the supermarket, pharmacy or bank; 29% of all respondents reported leaving home to go work during the fortnight (compared to 62% who reported going out to work in February). In the second round, in turn, 71% left home for essential tasks, 29% reported leaving home to go work during the fortnight (compared to 66% who reported going out to work in February). In both rounds, those who went out estimated, on average, that 80% of people on the street were wearing masks. Ten percent of respondents reported having had at least one Covid-19 symptom in the week prior to the first interview, compared to 26% in the second. Nine percent of people reported having been tested in the week prior to the first interview, compared to 25% in the second. Whereas 1% stated that they had tried to get tested without success in the first round, 2% reported in the second.

Reductions in public transport prevented 19% of people in the first round from going about their intended activities, compared to 13% in the second. Just less than a quarter of people in the first round (22%) stated that they had used public transport during the previous two weeks, while 56% said they used it in February. In the second round, almost a third (32%) reported that they had used public transport during the previous two weeks, while 48% said they used it in February.

The vast majority of people in Salvador (81% and 76% in the first and second round, respectively) see Covid-19 as much more serious than a common flu. The average score for knowledge about Covid-19 symptoms was 83 and 82 out of 100 in the first and second round, respectively, while that for knowledge about the meaning and practices of self-isolation was 45 and 48 out of 100 in the first and second round, respectively. (See the results section of the main paper for an explanation of these scores.)

The main source of information about Covid-19 were TV news shows (62% and 64% in the first and second round, respectively) and newspapers and newspapers websites (18% and 14% in the first and second round, respectively). As many as 71% and 76% in the first and second round, respectively, of respondents reported having seen government information campaigns, which is above the average across the eight cities surveyed (65% and 68% in the first and second round, respectively). Of those in the first round who had seen public information campaigns, 68% said they thought they had seen a campaign from the state government, 25% said they thought they had seen one from the federal government, and 58% from the municipal government. In the second round, of those who had seen public information campaigns, 64% said they thought they had seen a campaign from the state government, 27% from the federal government, and 58% from the municipal government.

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In the first round, around 56% of people in Salvador reported reductions in household income, 42% said they had lost at least half of their income since February, and 9% had experienced a complete loss of income since February. In the second round, in turn, around 37% of people in Salvador reported reductions in household income, 23% said they had lost at least half of their income since February, and 2% had experienced a complete loss of income since February.

Only 37% of first-round respondents in Salvador reported believing that the public health system in their region is either well prepared (20%) or very well prepared (17%) for the outbreak. As many as 85% of people stated that they were either worried (11%) or very worried (74%) that there might be insufficient medical equipment, hospital beds, or doctors to with the outbreak in their region.

Nonetheless, most first-round respondents in Salvador (65%) assessed the policy responses adopted to fight the spread of Covid-19 as adequate. Just over a quarter (26%) considered the policies to be insufficiently strict, while only 9% considered them too stringent. In the second round, 60% deemed the policies as adequate, 27% considered to be insufficiently strict, while 13% considered them too stringent. Most respondents in the first round thought that these policies will be removed gradually, with only 17% saying they thought they would all be removed at once. On average, first-round respondents in Salvador believed it would take 4.6 months for Covid-19 response policies to be completely removed, compared to 7.9 months in the second round.

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Figure BA.4 – Social distancing, knowledge and testing in Salvador

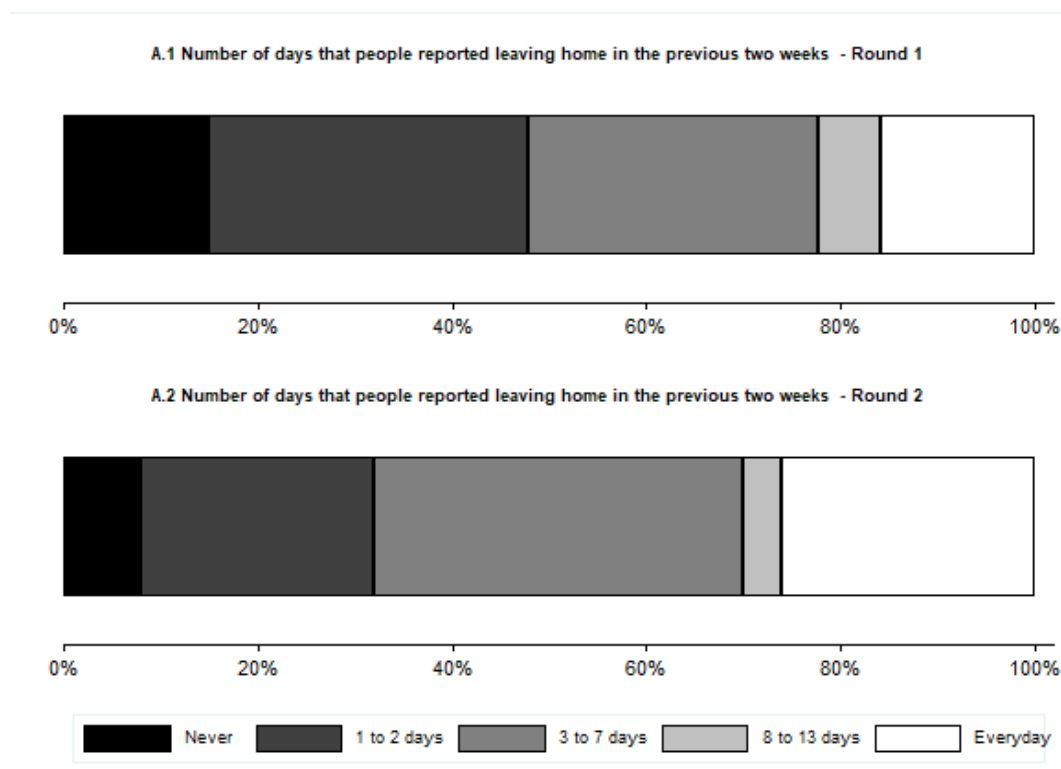
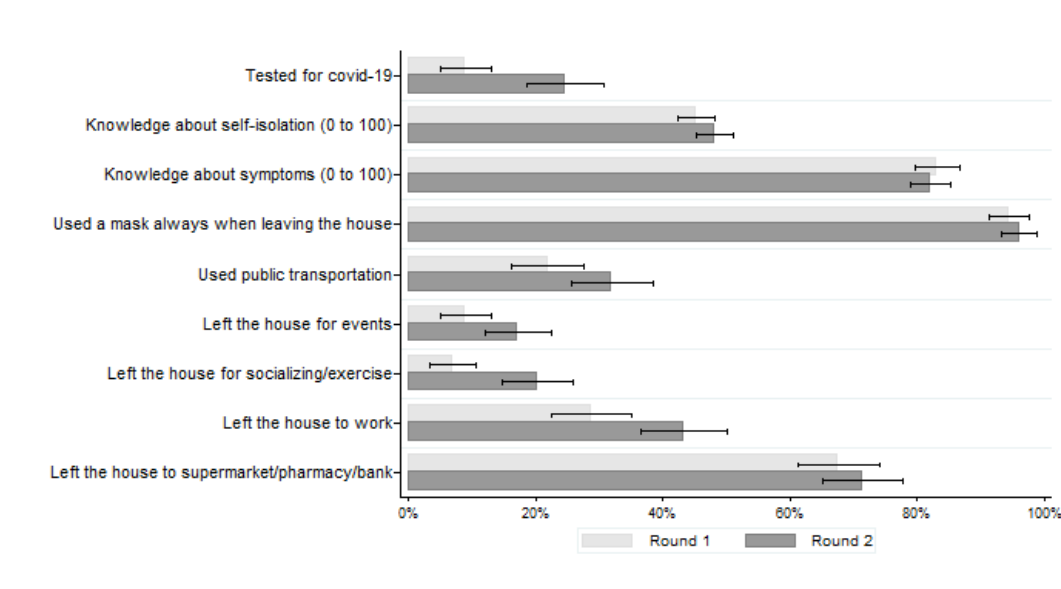


Figure BA.5 – Testing, knowledge, mask use, and reasons for leaving home



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