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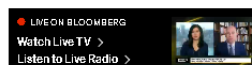
Economics

# Brazilians Grow Unhappy and Angry as Inequality Hits Record

By [Simone Preissler Iglesias](#)

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Brazilians haven't felt so bad in 15 years as social inequality hits record levels, with the pandemic hurting the job market and causing a large income drop for the poorest.

Brazilians' average income per capita fell to 995 reais (\$195) in the first quarter, the lowest in a decade and 11.3% less than the same period in 2020, according to research released by the Fundacao Getulio Vargas business school, or FGV, on Monday. It was a sudden drop: average income was the highest since 2012 just before the pandemic hit early last year.

The most vulnerable Brazilians have been the hardest hit, the data show: the poorest 40% of the country lost 20.81% of their income last year.

As a result, the country's Gini Index, a global measure of income inequality, reached 0.674 in the first three months, the highest mark since 2012, according to FGV's calculation. The scale ranges from zero to one; Closer to one means higher inequality.

### Sad and Mad

The pandemic's impact on the Brazilian labor market has left the population feeling more unhappy and angry than they have been in 15 years, said economist and research author Marcelo Neri, who heads the social studies center at the business school.

The average happiness of Brazilians, measured on a scale from zero to ten, reached 6.1 last year, which was 0.4 points lower than 2019 and the lowest point since 2006. The loss of happiness was detected most strongly among the poorest. For the 40% poorest, the drop was 0.8 points; while among the 20% richest, there was a slight increase of 0.1 point.

The study found that the feeling of anger also increased in Brazil from 19% in 2019 to 24% in 2020.

"Objective and subjective measures of social wellbeing walk relatively together at all times," Neri said. "When one rises, the other rises as well."