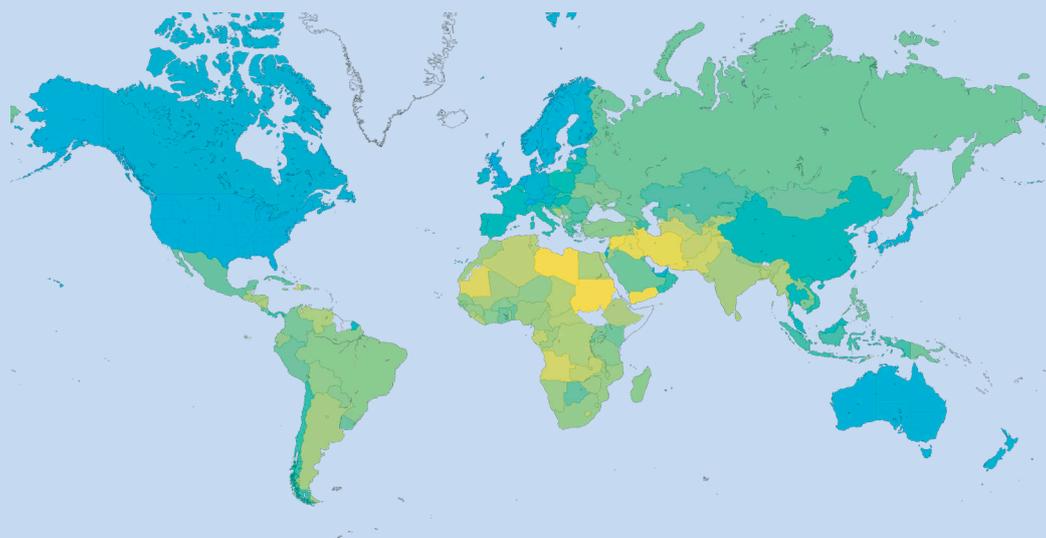


This PDF includes a contribution from the following book:

# ELITE QUALITY REPORT 2021

Better quality elites have protected their countries  
against COVID-19

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## 1.1 Better Quality Elites have Protected their Countries Against COVID-19

Were better quality elites more capable of protecting their countries from the worst ravages of COVID-19? The short answer is an unambiguous ‘yes’. They reduced COVID-19 excess deaths as a percentage of the total population as well as overall COVID-19 fatality rates. What follows is a deep dive into the relationship between the family of EQx COVID-19 Indicators and Elite Quality constructs to gain novel insights into how national approaches to the management of the pandemic affected outcomes and provided solutions.

Verifying the conclusions made is not straightforward because the countries with better elites tend to have a high proportion of their populations above the age of 65—the critical age threshold for high COVID-19 mortality. Indeed, in every country, the great majority of COVID-19 deaths involved people over the age of 65. Hence, without correcting for demography, the results would be misleading. For instance, considering data from 2020, a country like India (whose median population age is 29.4 years) would have fewer deaths per capita than Italy (with a median age of 47.3).

We circumvent this problem simply and transparently: we divided the excess death numbers by the fraction of the population aged 65 and over in each country. The resulting EQx Indicator is *COVID-19 excess deaths, age-adjusted* (COV, iii.7). We do the same for the fatality rate—the percentage of people who became infected with COVID-19 and subsequently

died—obtaining a fatality rate Indicator for the over 65s that we call *COVID-19 fatality rate, age-adjusted* (COF, iii.7).

After adjusting for age, Visual 1.1 plots the EQx Country Score and the Indicator for *COVID-19 excess deaths, age-adjusted* (COV, iii.8) and illustrates that countries with higher levels of Elite Quality have experienced lower excess death rates. Similarly, Visual 1.2 shows that these countries have also had a lower *COVID-19 fatality rate, age-adjusted* (COF, iii.7)

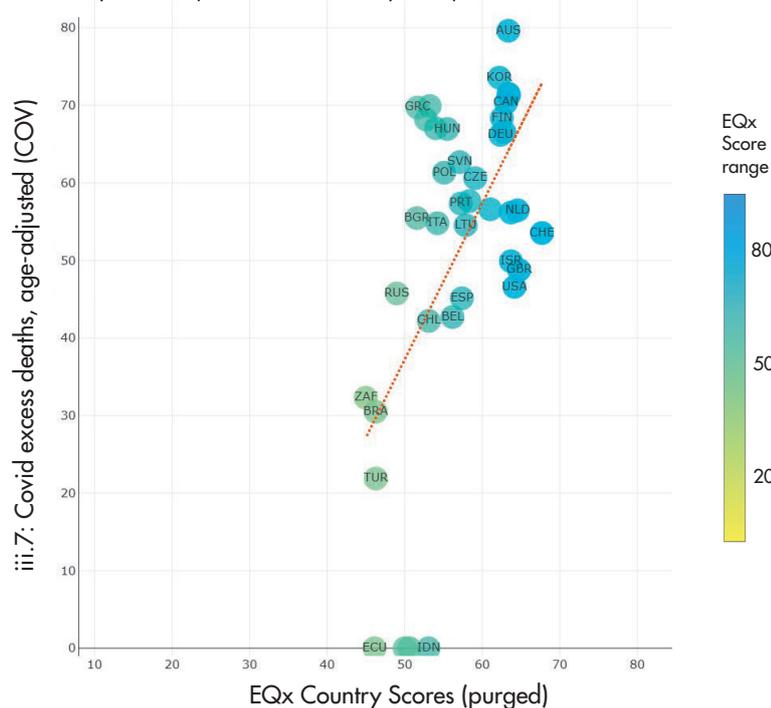
Delving into the details, both Value and Power Index Area scores reduce excess deaths and fatality rates. That is, they raise the COV and COF Indicator scores. Let us now examine the importance of each Indicator. Quite predictably, a high score in the *Health Efficiency Index* (HEI, iv.10) helps to mitigate the *COVID-19 fatality rate, age-adjusted* (COF, iii.7). The correlation coefficient (c.c.) between the HEI and COF rankings is 0.50 and between the HEI and *COVID-19 excess deaths, age-adjusted* (COV, iii.8) the c.c. is 0.49.

Quite strikingly, a country’s ranking in the *Health Efficiency Index* (HEI, iv.10) has the highest correlation with the ranking for the *COVID-19 lost schooldays* Indicator (CLS, iii.7; – HEI and CLS c.c. 0.47), which suggests that sacrificing the education of the younger generation is a suboptimal response to health system flaws. Instead, countries with better healthcare systems could also afford the risk of keeping schools running.

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**Visual 1.1:** COV Indicator and EQx Country Scores (purged)

Note: Orange dashed line indicates a fitted regression line. Adjusted R-squared: 0.32  
Random selection of country codes are printed in case of country overlaps



Success in preserving the education system in the pandemic is also proof of the long-term orientation of the ruling elites. A clear confirmation of this comes from the second most CLS-correlated indicator, the *Network Readiness Index* (NRI, iii.7). NRI measures not just the presence of physical network infrastructures that digitally connect a country, but also how well-prepared individuals, businesses, and institutions are to make effective use of these technologies. A well-networked education system guarantees better education management, online learning, digital learning, and pandemic resilience. A striking finding is that extractive elites are more likely to reduce value for the young generation. For instance, they prevent *Social mobility* (MOB, i.1), which the EQx measures as educational mobility. MOB correlates positively with performance in *COVID-19 lost schooldays* (CLS, iii.7; c.c. 0.19) and *COVID-19 excess deaths, age-adjusted* (COV, iii.7; c.c. 0.48). Elites with a smaller *Top 10% share of pre-tax national income* (INE, iii.8) are also more protective of education (c.c. 0.29), as are those more *Open to business* (OFB, iv.19; - c.c. 0.25). Even more striking is the stark correlation with the *Homicide rate* ranking (HOM, iii.8; - c.c. 0.41); elites who deny public security to their citizens and thus deprive them of their very lives also deny students their education. Unsurprisingly, elites who allow a high *Homicide rate* (HOM, iii.8) also appear to have allowed high *COVID-19 excess deaths, age-adjusted* (COV, iii.7; - c.c. 0.53) and an excessive *COVID-19 fatality rate, age-adjusted* (COF, iii.7; - c.c. 0.34).

We also see a strong positive connection between a country's *School life expectancy* (EDU; iii.7) and a lower level of *COVID-19 excess deaths, age-adjusted* (COV, iii.7; - c.c. 0.29) and *COVID-19 fatality rate, age-adjusted* (COF, iii.7; - c.c.0.67). A more educated population is probably more careful in effectively containing the virus by following the advice from governments and health professionals.

The *COVID-19 fatality rate, age-adjusted* (COF, iii.7) is also massively reduced in countries that have a high level of *Political globalization* (PGL, i.1; - c.c. 0.75), who are able to provide affordable food security as mapped by *The Global Food Security Index – Availability, quality and safety* (FSQ, iii.7; - c.c. 0.71), and rank well in the *Environmental Performance Index* (EPI, iii.9; c.c. 0.69).

To sum up, better quality value creating elites around the world prepared their countries for the pandemic more effectively and intelligently coordinated their resources to mitigate its worst effects.

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**Visual 1.2:** COF Indicator and EQx Country Scores (purged)

Note: Orange dashed line indicates a fitted regression line. Adjusted R-squared: 0.312  
Random selection of country codes are printed in case of country overlaps

