

International Attitudes Toward Global Policies

Responses to the Editor and Reviewers

August 22, 2024

Editor's comments Dear Dr Fabre,

Thank you once again for your manuscript, entitled "International Attitudes Toward Global Policies", and for your patience during the peer review process.

Your Article has now been evaluated by 3 referees. You will see from their comments copied below that, although they find your work of potential interest, they have raised quite substantial concerns. In light of these comments, we cannot accept the manuscript for publication in the current form, but we would be interested in considering a revised version if you are willing and able to fully address reviewer and editorial concerns.

We hope you will find the referees' comments useful as you decide how to proceed. If you wish to submit a substantially revised manuscript, please bear in mind that we will be reluctant to approach the referees again in the absence of major revisions.

In particular, as Referee #2 says, it will be important to revise the text to transparently acknowledge and clarify the relationship of this manuscript to the Dechezleprêtre paper which has been accepted at AER, and to avoid presenting any results here which are also presented in Dechezleprêtre et al. (e.g. Fig 1 here appears to be the same as Fig A20 in the AER paper).

Reviewer #1: *This is an interesting study on an important topic, with some novel features. These major upsides are, however, to a large extent overshadowed by a confusing study design and exposition of the results. The study needs a major (structural) cleanup and is often sorely missing in justification for design choices made.*

The study analyses the results from one 20-country 40k respondent survey, and three "complementary" surveys – one for four European countries, and two (with different sample sizes and questions) for the US. 1) What is the rationale for conducting one large multi-country study, and then follow it up with a more "detailed" study in some countries?

2) When the larger survey is global in scope, why focus only on Western countries (for which public support has been much more extensively studied) in the "complementary" surveys? And given that you chose Western countries, why exactly these five?

3) In the "complementary surveys", why do you focus in greater detail on the fee-and-dividend scheme and not one of the other policies?

4) What is the rationale for having 3000 respondents across four European countries plus 3000 in the US in one survey and then an additional 2000 in the US in a second survey? While I do of course understand budgetary constraints (referred to in the pre-registration), why make a different choice for the US than for the European countries? Why not focus for example on two countries and run the exact same study design in those two countries?

A number of other design choices are also simply presented with no justification or discussion. Examples include: • How did you select the four policies you focus on in the global survey? (I.e., why these policies and not other policies?).

- For the “complementary surveys” it is unclear how the “other global policies” were selected.

- For the “complementary surveys”, why do you ask about a national redistribution scheme targeting the top 5% in the US, but the top 1% in Europe?

- Why is the “maximum wealth limit” also (hugely) different, at USD10 billion in the US and USD 100 million in Europe.

- Why did you elicit underlying values focusing on “universalistic values” instead of for instance Schwartz Value Survey or cultural worldviews?

- For the section on “robustness of support”, which is novel, why did you pick certain strategies and not others?

Other things are quite simply unclear: “We survey respondents to gather their perspectives... utilizing either an open-ended or a closed question”. What does this mean? Do half the respondents get the closed and the other half the open-ended question, or is this done in some other way?

When it comes to analyzing the results, I’m not sure it is appropriate to group answers across countries/surveys when the details of the questions differ (e.g. for the national redistribution scheme), as done in Figure 2. A similar concern applies to the comparisons in “2.3.4 Prioritization” where direct comparisons are made between outcomes from the different countries, yet only “non-republicans” were surveyed in the US (as far as I can gather from Figure S6).

I also find the overall structure a bit confusing. For example, after discussing the findings on support for the “other global policies”, it’s back to the global climate scheme, but this time to focus on how robust the support is. (I believe what is now section 2.2.2 should be followed immediately by section 2.3, and not “interrupted” by 2.2.3-2.2.5).

Before these overall (structural) issues are addressed, I find it difficult to go into details on the individual analyses conducted, in particular with regard to such questions as what data can and should be pooled, and what should not (e.g. questions asked only to non-Republicans in the US).

In my opinion a major revision is clearly required, but also desirable as there are important and novel ideas contained in the manuscript – they just need to be brought out in a much more structured and understandable manner. One potential idea is to simply drop the 20-country survey, and focus only on what is labeled the “complementary surveys (a term that somewhat diminishes its importance). I also believe some kind of map/visual illustration of the structure of the surveys would be helpful for the reader (especially to understand the

“branches” of the analyses). (Appendix D contains something like this, but it should be shortened and made much more visually appealing).

Reviewer #2: *This paper presents evidence from various surveys on attitudes towards global policies, in particular climate change and poverty. The main finding is that a global carbon price funding a global basic income (CGS) is strongly supported by respondents from 20 countries. Additional complementary findings from four country samples report similar support, and discuss methodological concerns, how electoral candidates would win votes endorsing these policies and further support in favour of wealth tax and foreign aid.*

I think the main message of the paper – widespread support for climate and redistributive policies – is both interesting and important; but has been reported in a companion paper already. I list my main comments in the following.

1. *I was surprised to see that the main finding from Figure 1 “Relative support for global climate policies” has been shown in the authors’ companion paper (Dechezlepre^tre et al. 2022). In the latter paper, Figure A20 presents the exact same figure. (The only difference is that in that figure the authors report “absolute” not “relative” support, which was confusing to me because for the first four questions in the first block, numbers are actually exactly the same; in blocks 2 and 3 numbers are higher in the “relative” presentation in comparison to “absolute”.) In any case, I think Figure 1 is the main insight of the paper and has been reported before. Maybe I have overlooked it but I think that the authors are not fully transparent about this fact, and I had to double check. In fact, they write in the introduction that “other (!) questions from these surveys are analyzed in a companion paper”, which I read as saying that the questions analyzed in Figure 1 have not been reported previously.*

2. *The paper is a bit difficult to read and lacks focus. It would be good to structure the paper better and to summarize the findings in a more concise way. In its current form, too many details and findings are presented in a somewhat disconnected way. What are the key findings and what are supporting/supplementary findings? Perhaps it would make sense to focus on GCS only (including robustness), and move all other findings to a separate section? Likewise, the introduction is a bit “all over the place”, perhaps you could relegate some parts to the discussion section.*

3. *Data come from a “Global Survey” and “Complementary Surveys”. It is not obvious to me how the two data sets relate to each other. Are you replicating the findings from the global study in the four countries from the complementary survey? Are results consistent between both data sets?*

4. *I found the term “relative support”, which seems to include “indifferent” responses, misleading. For a better understanding, I would prefer Figure 1 to show actual “support” for the respective items. Also, the authors report both “absolute” and “relative” support in different parts of the paper. To me that was confusing. I would stick to one definition of support throughout the paper.*

5. *The first finding, that local policies receive least support is interesting. I wonder if this has to do with an aversion against being the “only one who contributes”. The notion of conditional cooperation, i.e., the willingness to contribute if others contribute as well, is*

one of the most important motives to cooperate. Federal or even global policies reduce the likelihood/fear of being the “sucker”, i.e., the guys who have to pay. Perhaps you may want to mention that.

6. How did you choose the global policies, in particular in sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4? The collection of items reads a bit arbitrary. For example, why is the question about minimum wage in all countries included? Or the democratisation of institutions, etc.? Where are specific numbers in these items coming from? Is there a conceptual framework or is the selection of items based on some higher order principles? More guidance would be good.

7. I like the results from section 2.3 and I believe they strengthen the paper. However, I would tone this down a bit. Many potential objections remain of course, and framing an answer in terms of a real-stake petition is not the same as asking participants to actually pay, for example. Also, the description of the various experiments (list, petition) was lacking details and it was therefore difficult to understand what exactly was done.

8. What exactly is the purpose of the conjoint analysis in section 2.3.3 and the prioritization in section 2.3.4? How convincing are the results from section 2.3.5? Is it possible to simulate a public debate? What exactly can we learn from the exercise?

9. I don't think section 2.4 adds much, if anything.

10. I read your results on beliefs in section 2.5. a bit different. To me there is strong support for a systematic underestimation in all countries (both for GCS and NR) with the exception of the US.

11. Figure S6 should be translated.

Reviewer #3: *This is a bold paper on the important topic of international public opinion on global governance reforms to address some of the most pressing global challenges, in particular, climate change and world poverty. The schemes it considers seem well-considered and a particular strength of their paper is that they go into a lot of the practical details how such reforms could be implemented. I would recommend its publication in Nature Human Behaviour, but subject to some substantial revisions.*

Major points:

1. One of the main issues is the anchoring of the specific proposals that the authors test in academic or policy debates. To what extent do they reflect such debates, or how do they deviate from them? In their current form, the proposals seem somewhat detached from existing debates (e.g. the idea of population-proportional voting, line 2030), which may limit their appeal in the eyes of some readers and relevant audiences. Better anchoring would be key here.

2. While the authors cannot change their country sample anymore, it would be important that they elaborate on their choice of countries and provide better justifications for their concentration on Western countries and bigger countries from the global South. They should also reflect on and analyze to what extent these design choices might be impacting their results, e.g. the greater concern for climate rather than poverty (page 5, line 143-144).

3. Since Political Scientists are presumably an important target audience for this article, I was a bit struck by the relative lack of conceptualization and theory in the article. While

it is not an essential part for articles in Nature Human Behaviour, I would still expect a Political Science piece to offer more in terms of concepts and theorization – at least in the appendix.

4. *One of the main issues of the article lies in its presentation. The authors show us a lot of survey results, but readers are not adequately led through them or presented with accompanying information such that they can easily grasp what is going on. It would be good to start off with a few punchy headline findings, then structure the paper along those headlines, and always offer all necessary information for readers to grasp what is going on without having to go to the appendix. For example, in Figures S1 and S2, the authors don't provide the questions, but just reference them. In Table S2, it is not clear what the "open-ended field" is referring to. It would be useful to always cite the questions in the figures (like they do in Figures S27, S28, and S46, for instance). Sometimes such omissions are in the way of understanding the figures, and force readers to go to the questionnaire (e.g. Figure S37). For instance, what is the unit in Figure S25?*

5. *The quality of online survey samples should not be overstated. While the samples may reflect population proportions along certain criteria, they don't do so along others – as evident in your own data (e.g. see the voting preference splits in Tables S9 and S10). You should tone down claims to the representativeness of your sample (line 598), acknowledge sample imbalances more clearly, and provide some discussion of opt-in online sampling vs. traditional random sampling methods (including research that specifically explores biases in online panels).*

6. *Excluding inattentive respondents is not best practice, as that can lead to additional biases in your data. At the very least, you should keep that data for robustness checks of your main results.*

7. *Some questions appear somewhat leading (e.g. the phrase "democratise" on line 2030), and indeed many respondents (albeit no majorities) seem to agree (Figure S45). It would be good to discuss such potential shortcomings, at least in the appendix.*

8. *From Figure S48 it seems like the order of survey blocks was not randomized, right? If so, you should try to justify why that does not affect your substantial results, as there may well be unexpected effects due to block sequence, respondent fatigue, etc.*

Minor points:

9. *Consider a punchier title than the current one. Something like: "International majorities of citizens support strong global governance to combat climate change and world poverty".*

10. *The exclusion of indifferent/neutral answers (e.g. page 9, line 263) is understandable, but should be justified better. Also, results should always be presented in full as well, including such neutral answers, at least in the appendix.*

11. *Clarify line 272-273.*

12. *Clarify what you mean by "absolute" and "relative" support (e.g. page 14), as you don't seem to be referring to absolute and relative majorities.*

13. *Don't overstate the stakes of your real-world petition (p. 17).*

14. *Use Figure S24 for a plausibility check on Figure S23.*

15. In Tables S14 and S15, you should state what the bracket below the coefficient shows.