International Attitudes Toward Global Policies

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**Major sustainability objectives could be achieved by global approaches to mitigating climate change and inequality. For instance, a global carbon price funding a global basic income, called the “Global Climate Scheme” (GCS), would be an effective way to jointly combat climate change and poverty. Yet, few prior attitudinal surveys have examined support for global policies. To explore relevant public attitudes, we survey over 48,000 respondents from 20 high- and middle-income countries. We find that there exists substantial support for global policies addressing climate change and global inequality, even in high-income countries. The GCS is supported by three quarters of Europeans and half of Americans. Further responses reveal strong support for global redistributive policies, including a global wealth tax aimed at financing low-income countries. We test whether support of the expressed preference is sincere: A list experiment shows no evidence of social desirability bias in survey responses, majorities are willing to sign a real-stake petition, and global redistribution ranks high in the prioritization of policies. Conjoint analyses reveal that a political platform is more likely to be preferred if it contains the GCS or a global tax on millionaires. In sum, our findings indicate that global redistributive policies are genuinely supported by a majority of the population, even in wealthy nations that would bear a significant burden.**

Major sustainability objectives could be achieved by global approaches to mitigating climate change and poverty. For example, an equal per capita dividend of carbon pricing achieiving climate targets revenues implies that achieving a 2 °C target can improve well-being and reduce inequality and poverty at a national level. Global carbon pricing is even more redistributive. However, disagreements on burden-sharing, differing priorities, and lack of institutional capacity are commonly seen as obstacles to effective global collaboration on these objectives. We examine a key condition for the success of global cooperation, neglected in social science research so far: the support of citizens in affluent countries for globally redistributive climate policies

Recent surveys administered to over 40,000 respondents from 20 high- and middle-income countries reveal substantial support for those policies, especially global climate policies and a global tax on the wealthiest aimed at financing low-income countries (other questions from these surveys are analyzed in a companion paper1). In particular, a global 2% tax on individual wealth in excess of $5 million would effectively reduce poverty as it would increase low- income countries’ national income by 50%, if merely 35% of the revenue were allocated for this purpose. Surprisingly, even in wealthy nations that would bear a significant burden, majorities of citizens express support for such globally redistributive measures.

To gain insights into the factors shaping public support for global policies in high-income countries, we conducted complementary surveys among 8,000 respondents from France, Germany, Spain, the U.S., and the UK. The focus of our approach is a specific policy aimed at addressing both climate change and poverty, referred to as the “Global Climate Scheme” (GCS). It implements a cap on carbon emissions to limit global warming below 2°C. The emission rights are auctioned each year to polluting firms and fund a global basic income, alleviating extreme poverty. Although the GCS may seem idealistic, we focus on this policy as its key features allow us to expose respondents in a concise and simple way with the key trade-off between the costs and benefits of globally redistributive climate policies. By employing a list experiment, a real-stake petition, and conjoint analyses, our study indicates genuine and robust support for the GCS among respondents. For example, the conjoint analyses provide evidence that political parties would not lose vote intention by endorsing the GCS.

These findings underscore a strong demand for globally redistributive climate policies, even in the absence of significant policy proposal. In our discussion we offer potential explanations behind this policy implementation gap, indicating that public opinion does not seem to be the reason that they are rarely mentioned in public debates

**Literature.**  A wealth of studies have examined public support for national carbon pricing policies. Yet, few prior attitudinal surveys have examined policies for global redistribution. […]

Discussion:

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Our point of departure are recent surveys conducted in 20 of the largest countries, as they reveal robust majority support for global redistributive and climate policies, even in high-income countries that would financially lose from them. The results from complementary surveys conducted in the U.S. and four European countries reinforce these findings. We find strong support for global taxes on the wealthiest individuals, as well as majority support for our main policy of interest – the Global Climate Scheme (GCS). The GCS encompasses carbon pricing at a global level through an emissions trading system, accompanied by a global basic income funded by the scheme’s revenues. Additional experiments, such as a list experiment and a real-stake petition, demonstrate that the support for the GCS is real. Such genuine support is further substantiated by the prioritization of the GCS over prominent national climate policies and aligned with a significant portion of the population holding universalistic values rather than nationalistic or egoistic ones. Moreover, the conjoint analyses indicate that a progressive candidate would not lose voting shares by endorsing the GCS, and may even gain 11 p.p. in voting shares in France. Similarly, a candidate endorsing the GCS would gain votes in a U.S. Democratic primary, while in Europe, a progressive platform that includes the GCS would be preferred over one that does not.

What could explain the gap between sincere support of citizens and the scarce mention in public debate? First, there may be pluralistic ignorance among policymakers regarding universalistic values, support for global redistribution, or the electoral advantage of endorsing it. Second, people or policymakers may believe that globally redistributive policies are technically impossible or politically infeasible in some key (potentially foreign) countries. Third, political discourse centrally happens at the national level, shaped by national media and institutions such as voting. National framing by political voices may create biases and suppress universalistic values.

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