

# **Robustness and extent of support for global redistribution, a survey in high-income countries**

## **Extended abstract**

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An emerging literature documents widespread support for global redistribution. In particular, using representative surveys in 20 countries, Fabre, Douenne & Mattauch (*Nature Human Behaviour*, 2025) find strong and genuine public support for global climate and redistribution policies. Yet, according to some hypotheses, the public support for internationally redistributive policies observed in previous surveys might have been overstated. A first hypothesis is that the salience of global issues in the surveys may have created a context favorable to universalistic answers; we address it with our tests H1 (conjoint experiment) and H2 (budget allocation). Second, while previous surveys have tested benchmark global policies, the support may be lower in the likely case where some countries do not participate, or if the policies deviate from the benchmark and are either more realistic or more radical (H3, H4). Third, a large part of the population might support a policy of global redistribution only for as long as its implementation seems unlikely, and the support might dissipate when the prospect of the policy materializes or if the policy can be replaced by a less costly substitute with the same moral appeal (H5). To test these hypotheses, I conduct a new representative survey over 11,000 respondents in the U.S., Japan, Saudi Arabia, and seven European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, UK).

I am analyzing the results right now, and the full paper will be ready by September. Here are the main results over the whole sample (of 10 countries):

- **Global poverty seen as a big injustice but not a salient concern.** The survey starts with an open-ended field, which randomly asks either the respondent's concerns or what they deem the biggest injustice. Poverty and hunger are the most frequent injustices mentioned, and the international or foreign aspect is often made explicit. Meanwhile, global issues do not prominently appear in people's concerns, which mostly relate to their own purchasing power or the increasing cost of living. Results from another question confirms that most people attach value to global poverty reduction together while not making it their top priority. When asked how to allocate the revenue from a hypothetical global wealth tax, "Education, healthcare and renewable energy in low-income countries" is ranked last but still obtains an average of 17% of revenue allocated to it, while "Domestic healthcare and education" is ranked first with 26% of the revenue.
- **Cutting foreign aid is unpopular but foreign aid is not a voting priority, contrary to a wealth tax.** In a conjoint experiment, we find that a political program is not significantly more likely to be preferred if it includes a cut to foreign aid (it actually tends to be less likely to be preferred in all countries except Switzerland, though the effect is generally not significant). In contrast, a program is more likely to be preferred if it includes a global tax on millionaires financing low-income countries.
- **Support decreases only slightly and remains strong when international policies are not global.** While Fabre et al. (2025) found majority support for a Global Climate Scheme involving North-to-South transfers or a global wealth tax that would finance low-income countries, it remained to be studied how the support for these policies would change if their coverage was not global because some countries (such as the U.S., Russia or China) would not agree to them. The support for the

Global Climate Scheme is always higher when the participating countries are specified, at 70% to 75% depending on the country coverage, compared to 64% when the country coverage is not specified (as in Fabre et al., 2025, which implicitly convey that all countries participate).

Concerning a wealth tax, the support decreases from 76% when all countries participate to 68% or 69% in variants where several or countries participate but not others.

- **No evidence of warm glow.** Treated respondents who read information on current negotiations related to international taxation are 4 p.p. more likely (from 36% to 40%) to believe that substantial global redistribution will occur in the next fifteen years. If warm glow led respondents to support global policies for as long as they believe them unlikely, our treatment could reduce support for global redistributive policies. Despite a strong first, our treatment has no significant effect on the share of global policies supported (54%).

We also do not find evidence for another type of warm glow, where support for a just cause would be reduced if the respondent has just had an occasion to showcase their moral virtue. Respondents who are offered to donate part of a lottery prize to a reforestation NGO (should they win the prize) are not less likely to support the GCS.

- **People are ready for radical global redistribution.** We find majority support for all realistic global redistributive policies tested (the least supported one is “an international levy on carbon emissions from aviation, raising ticket prices by 30% and funding national budgets in proportion to population”, with 57% support, and the only one that does not garner majority support in every country). Most people also support more radical proposals. 70% prefer a scenario with costly decarbonization (with doubling prices for fuel heating, aviation and red meat) and international solidarity to a business-as-usual scenario. In all countries, a majority agrees that “governments should actively cooperate to have all countries converge in terms of GDP per capita by the end of the century”. There is majority support for much higher income taxes on the top 1% or top 3% of the world population, financing a redistribution of up to 5% of high-income countries’ GDP to low-income countries. 46% of people state they would be more likely (vs. 15% less likely) to vote for a party if it is part of an international coalition in favor of global redistribution. When asked for which reasons high-income countries should help low-income countries, most people state that this is their duty, few state that they have a historical responsibility or an interest to do so, and even fewer disagree with all reasons. Relatedly, a slight majority of respondents in former colonial or slavery state oppose reparations for colonization or slavery.
- **Saudis among the most progressist, Japanese people among the least.** When studying sociodemographic determinants of the support for global redistribution, the country is one of the key drivers, along with political leaning. Surprisingly, Saudis express strong support for global redistribution and climate policies, and are often the most supportive. Then come European countries, with some exceptions: Swiss and Polish people are generally as conservative as U.S. Americans. Overall, among the countries surveyed, Japanese are the least support of global solidarity.

All pre-registered tests reject hypotheses that could have explained away the strong stated support for global redistribution policies (through warm glow, a decreased support for non-global or for more radical policies, or a lack of majority support in countries not tested in previous surveys). Therefore, our results confirm previous results: there is strong and genuine support for global solidarity policies, even in high-income countries that would bear the burden.

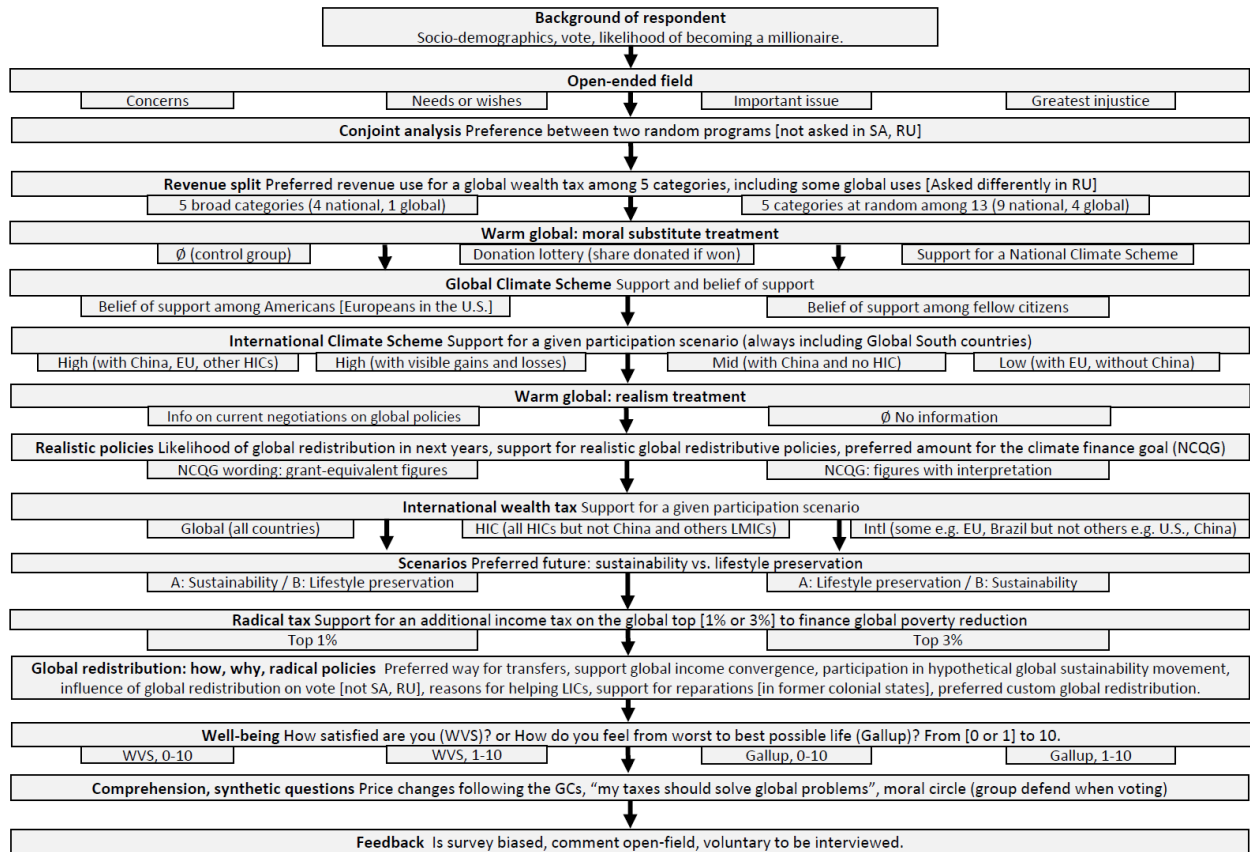


Figure 1. Survey flow