

Drama and Redistribution
The Impact of Telenovelas on Preferences for Redistribution in Latin America

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BACKGROUND: Inequality perceptions are crucial for understanding the demand for redistributive policies (Stantcheva, 2021). They often arise from exposure to inequality in everyday life and traditional media. However, little is known about how entertainment media influences attitudes toward redistribution, which may portray fictional or inaccurate view of inequality.

Redistribution = reduce the gap between the rich and the poor by taxing the rich to give to the poor or expand social programs

RESEARCH QUESTION: Does exposure to inequality in telenovelas affect an individual's preferences for redistributive policies?

INEQUALITY ON TELENOVELAS

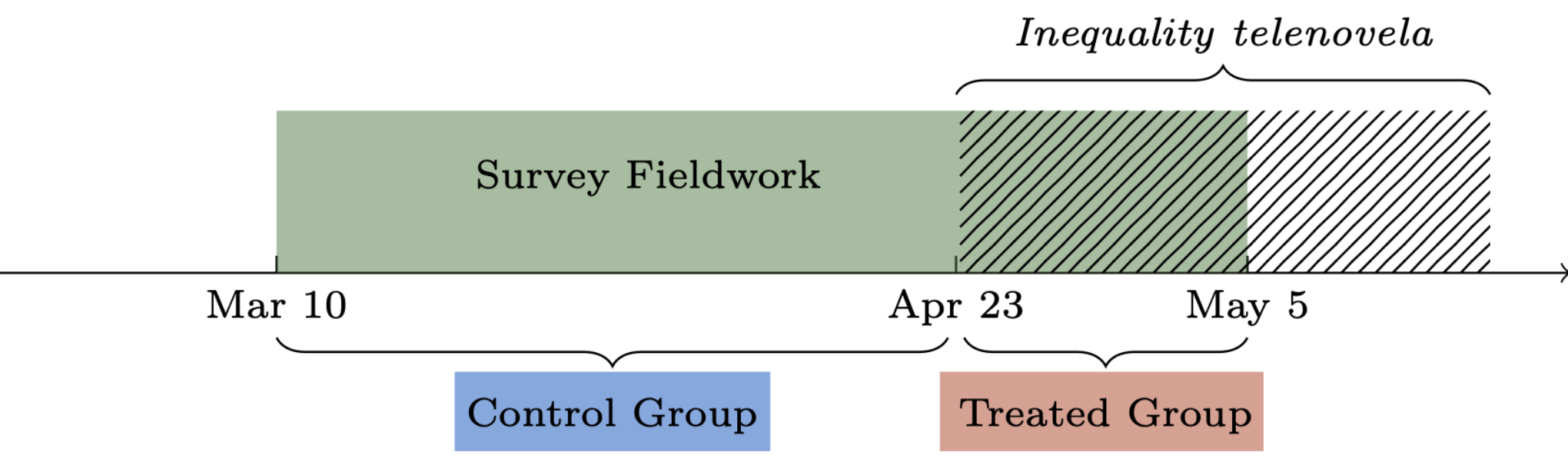


- IDENTIFY INEQUALITY TELENOVELAS: Process each synopsis (summary) using three methods:
- ConceptNet: inequality words count
- Vector Embeddings: similarity using transformers
- ChatGPT: directly ask models to identify inequality

Top words by method

economic, social, poor, rich, own, neighborhood
student, teacher, case, form, drug, doctor, group, hotel
poor, class, refuse, rich, humble, neighborhood, money

IDENTIFICATION STRATEGY



IDENTIFICATION CONCERNS

- Group imbalance
- ChatGPT's control group is poorer and more rural
- Categorization methods capture multiple concepts
- Telenovelas without inequality showed no effect
- No effect minorities to run for president
- Robust to small changes in the categorization algorithm

WHY A DECREASE IN SUPPORT?

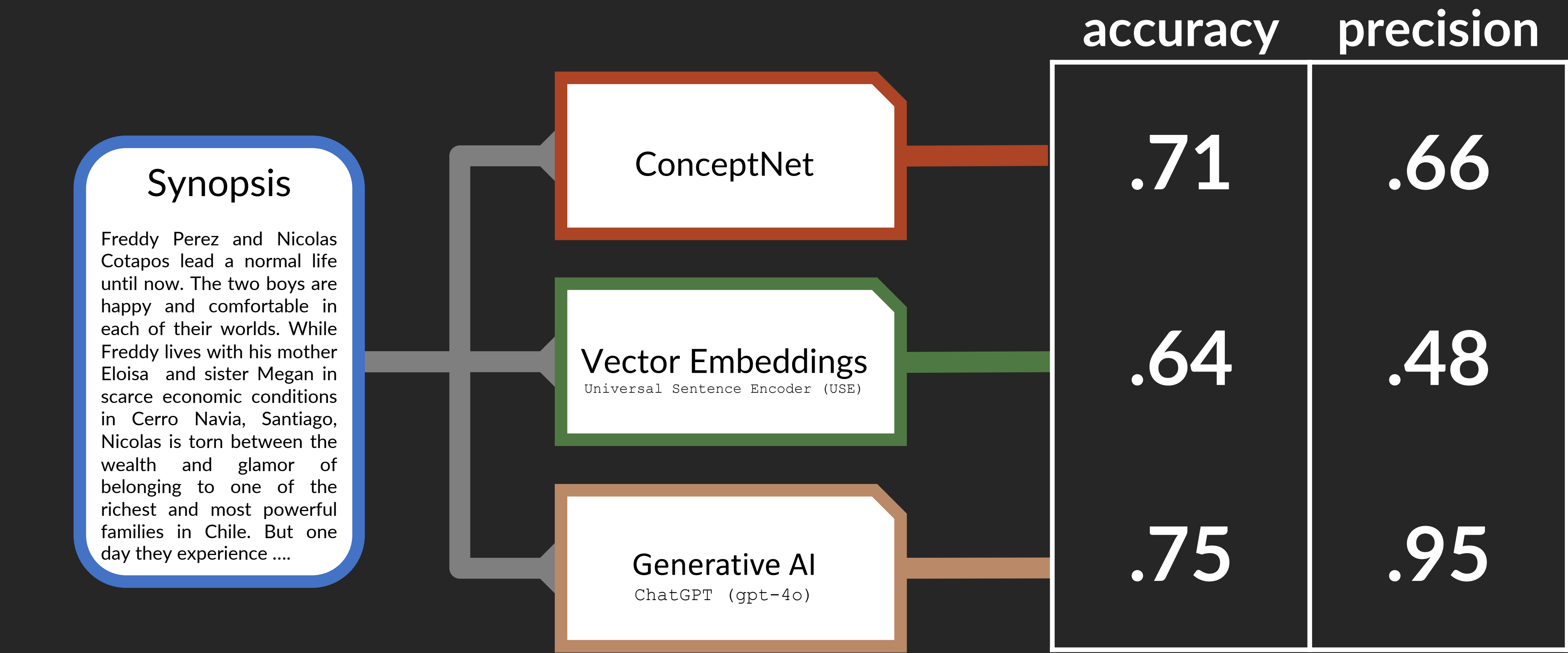
- Telenovelas downplay the problem of inequality
- "the poor and the rich can work together"
- Exposure leads to lower concerns of inequality
- High interest in politics eliminates the effect

Generative AI models excel at

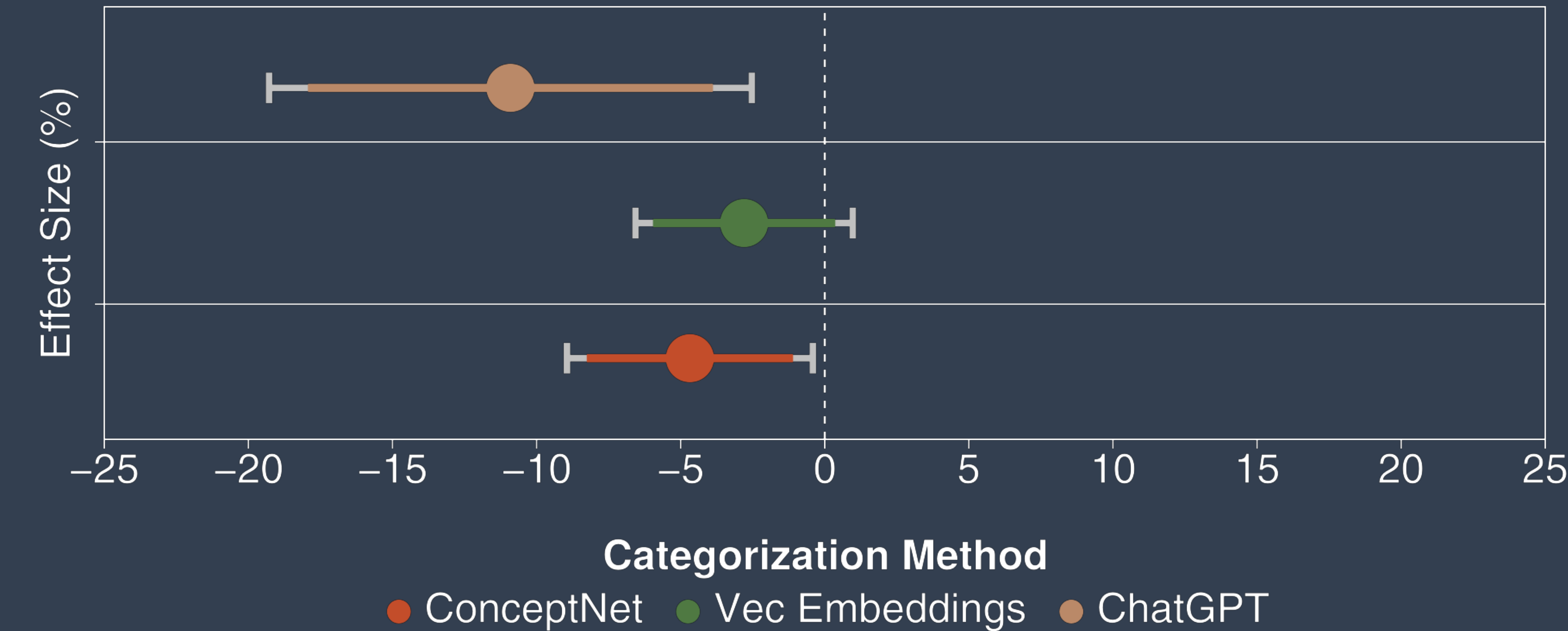
ChatGPT, Gemini, Anthropic or DeepSeek

Latin American soap operas

detecting inequality in telenovelas.



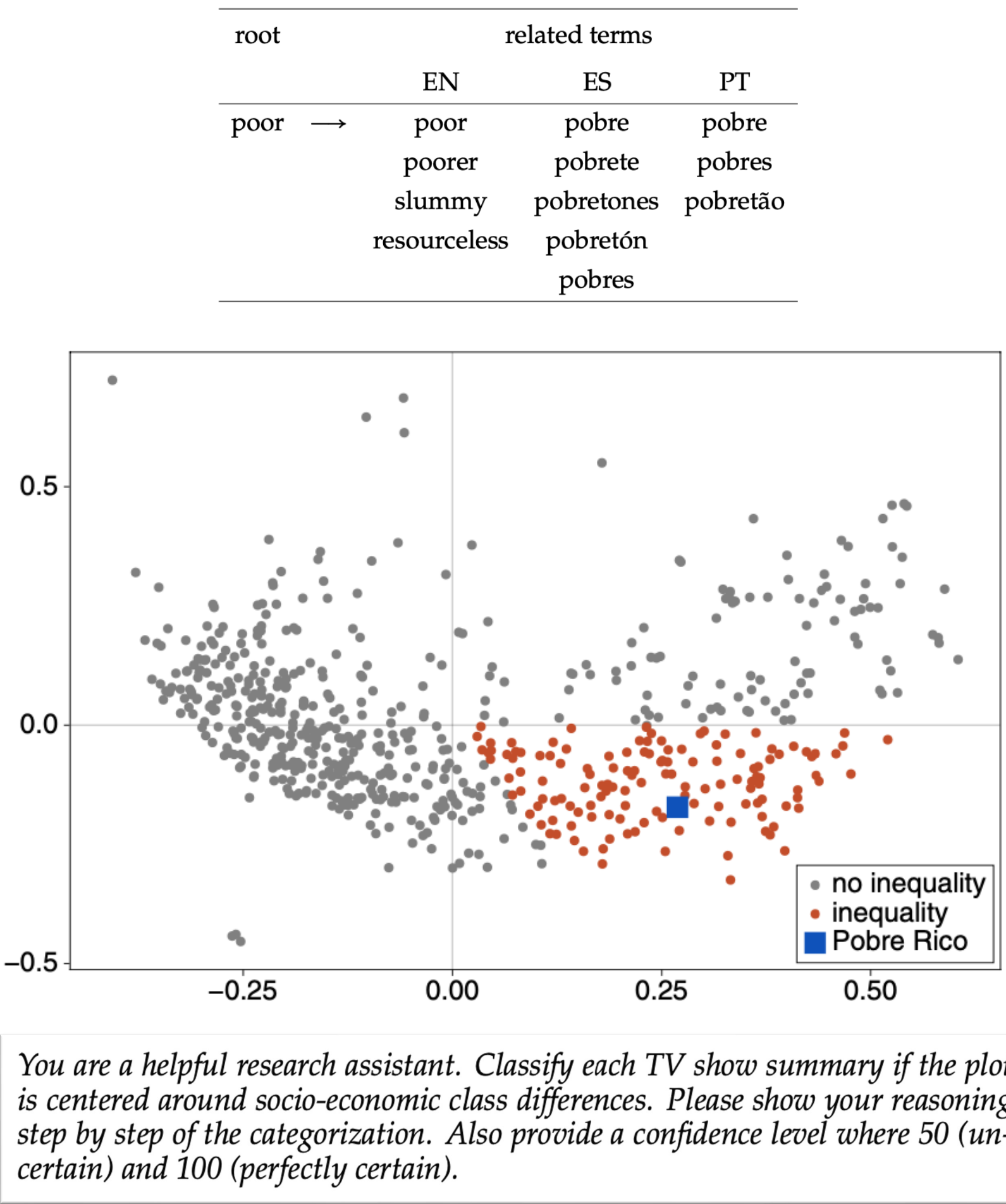
Exposure to inequality telenovelas decreases support for redistributive policies.



Note: This figure shows the effect size compared to the group's mean with no exposure to an inequality telenovela. The outcome variable is the individual's answer to the following statement: "The (Country) government should implement strong policies to reduce income inequality between the rich and the poor." An answer of 7 indicates strong agreement and 1 strong disagreement with the previous statement. Controls: gender, age, urban, employment status, education, religion, income, marital status, and time trend. Standard errors are clustered at the interview date level. The 10% confidence intervals are shown in the colored error lines, while the 5% confidence intervals are displayed in grey.

AMMO BAR

- ~2000 telenovelas collected covering Chile, Mexico, Brazil from 1960-present
- Measures for inequality and female representativeness in telenovelas



You are a helpful research assistant. Classify each TV show summary if the plot is centered around socio-economic class differences. Please show your reasoning step by step of the categorization. Also provide a confidence level where 50 (uncertain) and 100 (perfectly certain).

	mean	sd	min	max
Panel A: All telenovelas (N = 624)				
Drama (%)	36.86			
Air time	18:12	6:7	0:30	23:15
N of episodes	149	87	8	1018
Synopsis word count	2219	1791	66	20784
TV Rating	17.13	8.89	2.60	46.70
IMDB Rating	6.78	1.18	1.80	9.40
Panel B: ConceptNet (N = 182)				
Drama (%)	37.91			
Air time	18:11	6:11	0:30	23:15
N of episodes	150	98	12	807
Synopsis word count	2152	1737	342	14848
TV Rating	19.01	10.29	3.00	46.70
IMDB Rating	6.88	1.15	1.80	9.30
Panel C: Vector Embeddings (N = 135)				
Drama (%)	39.26			
Air time	18:24	6:24	16:15	23:10
N of episodes	153	82	12	604
Synopsis word count	1256	430	522	3438
TV Rating	17.24	8.82	2.60	46.70
IMDB Rating	6.63	1.16	3.60	9.40
Panel D: ChatGPT (N = 159)				
Drama (%)	37.74			
Air time	18:34	5:42	17:00	23:00
N of episodes	154	66	14	440
Synopsis word count	2959	2618	342	20784
TV Rating	22.60	10.50	5.70	46.70
IMDB Rating	6.84	1.06	2.10	8.80

Predicted condition		
Actual condition	Total population = P + N	
	Positive (PP)	Negative (PN)
	Positive (P)	True positive (TP) False negative (FN)
Actual condition	Negative (N)	False positive (FP) True negative (TN)

accuracy = (tp+tn) / (tp+fp+tn+fn); precision = tp / (tp+fp); recall = tn / (tn+fp); F = 2 \* (precision\*recall) / (precision+recall)

Panel A: Telenovela Statistics									
Title	Country	Year	Air Date	Episodes	Genre	Rating	ConceptNet	Vec Embeddings	ChatGPT
Os Dias Eram Assim	brasil	2017	2017-04-17	88	drama	x	x	x	x
Pobre Rico	chile	2012	2012-04-23	227	comedy	19.8	x	x	x
Tranquilo Papa	chile	2017	2017-04-10	187	comedy-drama	16.7	x	x	
Tengo todo excepto a ti	mexico	2008	2008-02-11	50	comedy-drama				
La fiscal de hierro	mexico	2017	2017-01-30	80	drama			x	

Panel B: One-sentence Summary

Os Dias Eram Assim In 1970s Brazil, a young idealistic doctor, Renato, falls in love with a wealthy girl, Alice, only to be separated by political turmoil and deceit, leading to years apart until their love reunites upon an unexpected reunion.

Pobre Rico Freddy and Nicolas, teenagers from different socioeconomic backgrounds, discover they were swapped at birth, leading to a legal mandate to switch lives with their biological families, as they navigate complex family dynamics and the pursuit of acceptance.

Tranquilo Papa The soap opera revolves around the unexpected friendship and connection between Dominga, a neglected company manager, and Pamela, a score-to-be bride who calls off her wedding to a sexist man, as they find solace in each other's company amidst the chaos of their personal lives.

Tengo todo excepto a ti Years after parting ways due to economic hardships, former lovers Carlos and Rebecca, now both married with competing families and magazines, reignite their past connection, leading to conflicts and suspicions of infidelity that unravel both their households.

La fiscal de hierro In "The Iron Prosecutor," Silvana Duran's relentless pursuit of justice against drug lord Diego Trujillo is marred by personal betrayals, including those of her own brother and the man she loves, yet she persistently seeks retribution for her father's death and the rampant corruption around her.

Y\_{icwt} = \alpha + \gamma InequalityTV\_{cwt} + \beta X\_i + \omega t + \delta\_{cw} + \epsilon\_{icwt}

Time trend

Country x wave FE

References:

- Stantcheva, S. 2021. Perceptions and Preferences for Redistribution. NBER working paper 29370.



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