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# Preferences for income redistribution in unequal contexts: Changes in Latin America between 2008 and 2018

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*Submitted to Journal:*  
Frontiers in Sociology

*Specialty Section:*  
Migration and Society

*Article type:*  
Original Research Article

*Manuscript ID:*  
806458

*Received on:*  
31 Oct 2021

*Revised on:*  
10 Jan 2022

*Journal website link:*  
[www.frontiersin.org](http://www.frontiersin.org)

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### *Conflict of interest statement*

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest

### *Author contribution statement*

GF: literature review, data manipulation, estimation of statistical models, discussion.

JC: introduction, discussion, conclusions, GitHub.

### *Keywords*

Redistributive preferences, Income, Inequality, Economic Development, Latin America

### *Abstract*

Word count: 197

In a developing and highly unequal region like Latin America, it is crucial to understand the determinants that affect people's support for redistribution of resources from the state. A series of theories focused on self-interest have continuously established a negative link between people's income and their support for the reduction of inequalities through redistribution. Despite this, the evidence is scarce and sometimes contradictory while its study in Latin America is almost non-existent. Using data from the LAPOP Survey between 2008 and 2018, a longitudinal dimension is considered for the first time in the measurement of Latin American redistributive preferences, using hybrid multilevel regression models. In contrast to the evidence from studies conducted in other regions, the results reveal that in Latin America it is not possible to detect a clear association between income and redistributive preferences at specific times, but it is possible when changes occur in countries' levels of inequality and economic development. Likewise, other elements that consistently affect preferences are evident, such as educational level, political ideology, and confidence in the political system. In light of this evidence, comparisons are made with previous research findings in industrialized countries, challenging rationalist theories of justice and solidarity.

### *Contribution to the field*

This research has a series of implications for the study of redistributive preferences, considering their limited development in Latin America and the absence of studies from a longitudinal perspective. The results question the hegemonic approaches to preferences for redistribution, based on self-interest as well as their universalist pretensions. Unlike what has tended to be stated in other contexts, such as Europe, in Latin America it is possible to observe an absence of a relationship between people's income and their agreement with the application of public policies to reduce inequalities. Within the region, the economic stratum to which individuals belong is not associated with changes in redistributive preferences. Contrary to what is commonly postulated by classical economic theories, in the region people's redistributive preferences are not guided by a direct cost-benefit relationship based on the objective economic position of individuals. This lack of relationship may be due to the low implications of the economic stratum in the configuration of preferences or to the lack of knowledge that people have regarding their objective position as has been seen in other research in developed countries.

### *Funding statement*

The research for this paper was supported by the National Research and Development Agency (ANID) under FONDECYT Grant number 1160921 and the Centre for Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies (ANID/Fondap-15130009).

### *Ethics statements*

#### *Studies involving animal subjects*

Generated Statement: No animal studies are presented in this manuscript.

#### *Studies involving human subjects*

Generated Statement: No human studies are presented in this manuscript.

#### *Inclusion of identifiable human data*

Generated Statement: No potentially identifiable human images or data is presented in this study.

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