Diminished Expectations:
Redistributive Preferences in Truncated Welfare States

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The relationship between income and support for redistribution is weak and variable in Latin America, despite the region's extreme income inequality. This article shows that these facts are rooted in the truncated structure of many Latin American welfare states. Heavy spending on contributory social insurance for formal-sector workers, flat or regressive subsidies, and informal access barriers mean that social spending does far less for the poor in Latin America than in advanced industrial economies. Using public opinion data from across Latin America and original survey data from Colombia, I demonstrate that income is less predictive of attitudes in countries and social policy areas where the poor gain less from social expenditures. Social policy exclusion leads the poor to doubt that they will benefit from redistribution and thereby dampens their support. This article thus reverses an assumption in political economy models that welfare exclusion unleashes demands for greater redistribution. Instead, truncation reinforces skepticism that social policy helps the poor. Welfare state reforms to promote social inclusion are essential to strengthen redistributive coalitions.

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I am grateful to Andy Baker, Sarah Berens, Charlotte Cavaillé, Emily Clough, David Doyle, Yanilda González, Frances Hagopian, Peter Hall, Torben Iversen, Kyle Jaros, Herbert Kitschelt, Steven Levitsky, Juan Pablo Luna, Brian Palmer-Rubin, Ben Ross Schneider, Hillel Soifer, Glen Weyl, Erik Wibbels, three anonymous reviewers, the editors of *World Politics,* and participants at workshops at Duke University, Harvard University, APSA, and LASA for helpful comments on previous versions. Sam Maeglin, Lucy Msall, and Madai Urteaga provided excellent research assistance. I thank the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) and its major supporters (the United States Agency for International Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, and Vanderbilt University) for making the data available and for a small research grant. A NSF graduate research fellowship (DEG 0644491) and dissertation improvement grant (1263778) supported the field research and data collection in Colombia.

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I. Introduction

The most basic assumption of redistributive politics is that the poor prefer social welfare spending and the rich resist it. It follows that income predicts support for redistribution, and the poor vote for politicians who champion it. Yet this theory of redistributive demands flops precisely in one of the most unequal regions of the world where it should operate most seamlessly, Latin America. Public opinion surveys show that the poor in Latin America are no more likely than the nonpoor to support government efforts to reduce inequality.[1] While inequalities in political power may explain why the poor are unable to enact welfare state expansions, such distortions cannot explain the underlying puzzle about social demands: Why don't the poor want to "soak" the rich? Or conversely, why do the rich support spending on the poor?

My argument is that it is only in the economic interests of the poor to support social expenditures in contexts where they *expect* policies to redistribute resources or risks in their favor. This condition is almost always fulfilled (to some degree) in advanced industrial democracies. It is not in much of the developing world. In Latin America, social expenditures historically have done little to aid the poor. Although governments have made important progress to provide a basic social safety net for their citizens, legacies of truncated welfare states persist. I define *truncated welfare states* as those that invest heavily in employment-based social insurance; provide flat or regressive transfers; and maintain informal access barriers that limit the benefits provided to the poor.[2] Social policy exclusion reinforces skepticism about state redistributive efforts among poor voters.

[1] Blofield and Luna 2011; Dion and Birchfield 2010; Kaufman 2009.
[2] On the idea of truncated welfare states, see Diaz-Cayeros, Estévez, and Magaloni 2016; De Ferranti et al. 2004; Skoufias, Lindert, and Shapiro 2010.

Rationally, the poor voice less support for redistribution when they do not expect to benefit. The rich express limited opposition when they too receive benefits and foot less of the bill.

Empirically, then, the relationship between income and support for redistribution is contingent on how benefits and access are structured in a country and policy area. Using public opinion data from across Latin America and an original survey in Colombia, I test the impact of welfare truncation in four ways. First, I demonstrate that the receipt of welfare benefits is associated with stronger support for redistribution across Latin America. Second, I show that countries with welfare programs that cover the poor have more polarized redistributive preferences. The poor support benefit expansions that the rich oppose. The third test holds constant broad features of the political environment that could confound the relationship between welfare state structure and preferences by looking across different social policy areas in Colombia. Income strongly predicts attitudes when respondents are asked about policies that target the poor, and weakly predicts attitudes when coverage is more limited. Finally, I probe expectations about welfare benefits. The majority of poor respondents do not think that they benefit from welfare programs writ large, or that the rich pay for them. Poor voters thus receive less, expect less, and demand less from the welfare state.

While an intuitive argument, this article reverses a critical mistake in how political economy models have been applied to developing countries. Canonical material interest models assume that redistribution and popular demands are substitutes.[3] In other words, the poor mobilize to demand greater expenditures in countries with inadequate welfare states and the rich strongly resist expansions. The empirical implication is that inequality is associated with more polarized preferences and more popular support for redistribution. Yet there is almost no relationship between inequality and the polarization of preferences across Latin America. Instead, I demonstrate

[3] Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Boix 2003; Meltzer and Richard 1981.

that welfare state truncation and the limited polarization of redistributive attitudes go together as political complements. In many unequal societies, important welfare programs exclude the poor, which dampens the poor's support for redistribution. I do not make a causal claim, but stress the reinforcing equilibrium created by truncated welfare policies. Limited coverage and access barriers lead the poor to doubt that redistribution will serve their interests (the welfare state structure causing preferences), and tepid demand for redistribution can reinforce the exclusionary nature of social policy (preferences causing the welfare state structure). One implication, to which I return in the conclusion, is that political parties that include outsides in the welfare state can stimulate societal demands and thereby strengthen redistributive coalitions.

A second contribution of this article is to offer a bridge between the often-divorced literatures on welfare regimes in developing and advanced economies. On the one hand, behavioral research on advanced industrial democracies recognizes that welfare program design shapes attitudes.[4] In a similar spirit to this article, Beramendi and Rehm show that variation in fiscal progressivity explains why income is a better predictor of attitudes toward redistribution in some European countries than others.[5] On the other hand, a growing literature on social policy in developing countries has documented the more limited scope and depth of formal welfare benefits.[6] This study explicitly connects differences in welfare state structure to their behavioral consequences in a context in which welfare state incorporation shows far greater variation. I stress the pivotal role of welfare truncation, operationalized by whether individuals receive any benefits from the welfare state. I also move beyond a focus on formal program design to consider informal access barriers that shape real and expected benefits in much of the developing world. The takeaway is that, even

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4 Beramendi and Rehm 2016; Gingrich and Ansell 2012; Korpi and Palme 1998; Moene and Wallerstein 2001, 2003; Soss and Schram 2007.

5 Beramendi and Rehm 2016.

6 For instance, see Díaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2009; Garay 2016; Holland and Schneider 2017; Haggard and Kaufman 2008; Huber and Stephens 2011; Pribble 2013.

unequal democracies characterized by clientelistic relations, informal labor markets, and weak political parties, have the standard income-based redistributive attitudes where social policies downwardly redistribute resources to the poor. The snag is that many developing welfare states do far less to aid the poor.

II. The Puzzle

The materialist model of preferences, as formulated by Meltzer and Richard, assumes that the gap between the median voter's preferences and mean income determines individual support for redistribution.[7] Scholars extend this intuition to the cross-national level to predict a larger welfare state in unequal democracies,[8] and to greater redistributive conflict in unequal societies.[9] Synthesizing, the model has three predictions: (1) that the poor support more welfare spending than the nonpoor, (2) that preferences are more polarized by income in unequal societies, and more tentatively, (3) that unequal societies support more redistribution on average than equal ones. These predictions should find clear support in Latin America, given that the income distribution is among the most unequal in the world. They do not.

First, the poor do not support more redistribution than the nonpoor in Latin America. The usual expectation is that regressing redistributive attitudes on income (plus a small set of controls like gender, education, and age) results in a negative coefficient, meaning that individuals with higher incomes have less support for redistribution. I refer to this quantity of interest as the *income coefficient,* and think of it as a proxy for the polarization of attitudes between the rich and poor. While some scholars find the expected negative income coefficients in Latin America,[10] several others find no

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[7] Meltzer and Richard 1981; also see, Romer 1975.
[8] Lindert 2004; Perotti 1996.
[9] Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Boix 2003.
[10] Gaviria 2008; Haggard, Kaufman, and Long 2013; Morgan and Kelly 2010.

relationship between income and preferences.[11] The inconsistency of these results contrasts with advanced democracies where a robust negative relationship (although varying in magnitude) between income and support for redistribution has been found.[12] Beyond statistical significance, the substantive effects of income usually are tiny in Latin America. Blofield and Luna conclude that, while income may predict attitudes in some models and datasets on Latin America, its "significance is less consistent across countries and over time, and the predictive power of the models is weaker overall" than in advanced industrial democracies. Indeed, as I explain below, I find that the income coefficient is positive in a fifth of Latin American cases (19 of 90 country-years), meaning that the rich actually support more redistribution than the poor.

Second, the Meltzer-Richard model predicts that the gap between the preferences of the poor and nonpoor should be larger in unequal societies. Quite simply, the poor want to soak the rich even more forcefully when income is concentrated at the top. Empirically, then, the income coefficient should be more negative in countries with high levels of inequality. The left panel of Figure 1 plots the level of inequality, measured by the Gini coefficient based on market household income (meaning before government taxes and transfers), on the horizontal axis. On the vertical axis, it shows the income coefficient for the most standard measure of redistributive attitudes, namely whether an individual agrees that the government should take action to reduce inequality. Against standard expectations, there is no relationship between inequality and the income coefficient across countries in Latin America.

[11] Cramer and Kaufman 2011; Dion and Birchfield 2010; Kaufman 2009.
[12] Bean and Papadakis 1998; Dion and Birchfield 2010; Beramendi and Rehm 2016.

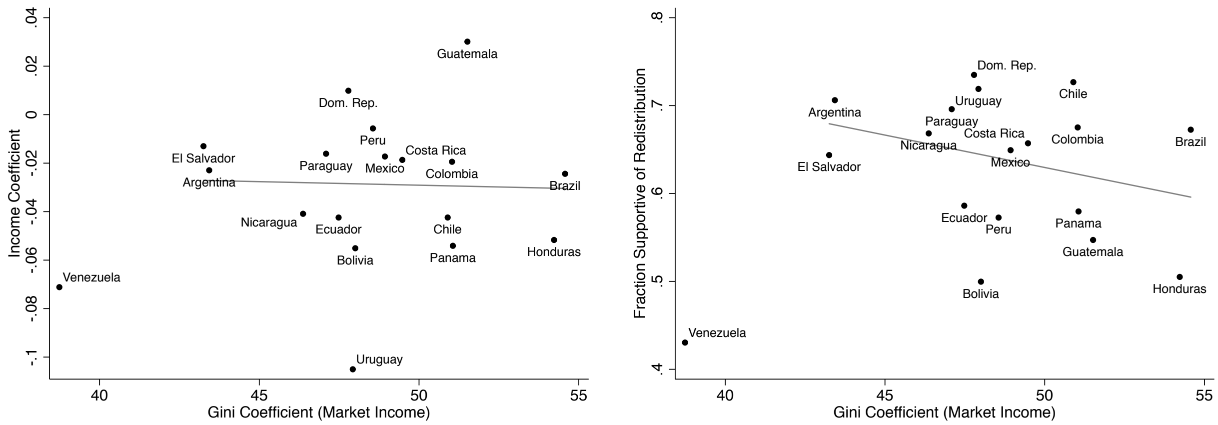

Figure 1. The Weak Explanatory Power of Inequality for Redistributive Preferences

Notes: Predicted income coefficient (left) and fraction supportive of redistribution (right) are based on pooled data from AmericasBarometer 2008-2016. Controls are education, gender, and age. Market inequality comes from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID, 5.1), averaged over 2008-14 (or available years) described in Solt 2016. Linear relationships are shown excluding Venezuela, which is an outlier, due to the unreliable nature of inequality statistics.

Third, the standard material interest model can be extended to predict that a larger fraction of the population supports redistribution in unequal societies. A mean-preserving spread in the market income distribution implies a larger poor majority stands to benefit from income redistribution. As Moene and Wallerstein sum up the intuition, "Welfare policy is expected to 'lean against the wind' in the sense that the greater inequality of income, the greater the electoral support for government policies that redistribute from rich to poor."[13] Some studies find larger fractions of the public support redistribution in Latin America than in Europe.[14] However, the results do not hold *within* Latin America. I measure the level of support for redistribution by looking at the fraction of the public in a country that agrees or strongly agrees that the government should take firm measures to reduce inequality. Against expectations, the right panel of Figure 1 shows that, when the outlier of Venezuela is excluded, there is a negative correlation between market inequality and the fraction of the population that strongly supports redistribution. Some of the most equal

[13] Moene and Wallerstein 2003, 486.
[14] Dion and Birchfield 2010; Gaviria 2008.

countries, such as Argentina and Uruguay, have the highest levels of support for redistribution, while the most unequal societies, such as Guatemala and Honduras, have the lowest.

These stylized facts lead many scholars to jettison material interest models. On the one hand, some scholars emphasize that the poor are uninformed about their material interests. Roberts, for instance, calls Latin America a region of "classless inequality."[15] Without the mobilizing power of unions and strong Left parties, the poor, and particularly those with informal labor contracts, struggle to understand their class interests.[16] Informal insurance systems through religious, clientelistic, or family networks also may dilute more programmatic welfare demands among poor voters.[17] Moreover, the poor in unequal societies can become naturalized to high levels of inequality.[18] Other scholars focus on the ways that ethnic divisions cleave the poor, leading poor whites to oppose redistribution to uphold their status.[19] If any of these explanations hold, then poor voters voice limited support for social expenditures of all types.

On the other hand, scholars have proposed that the rich have instrumental reasons to support redistribution, especially in unequal societies. The upper class may want to minimize societal conflict or crime, dislike living in unequal societies, or simply feel altruistic to the poor.[20] In weaker states, the rich also may be taxed less, boosting their support for expenditures for which they pay little.[21] Many developing countries fund the state in part through commodity rents that reduce the direct costs of social spending.[22] From this perspective, the elevated support of the rich explains the weak relationship between income and redistributive preferences in many developing countries.

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[15] Roberts 2002.
[16] Also see, Bradley et al. 2003; Huber and Stephens 2012; Morgan and Kelly 2017.
[17] De La O and Rodden 2008; Gough and Wood 2008; Kitschelt et al. 2010.
[18] Ansell and Samuels 2015; Cramer and Kaufman 2011; Kaufman 2009; Trump 2017.
[19] Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Kuziemko et al. 2014.
[20] Dion and Birchfield 2010; Feierherd, Schiumerini, and Stokes 2017; Morgan and Kelly 2010; 2017; Rueda and Stegmueller 2016.
[21] Kasara and Suryanarayan 2016; Soifer 2013.
[22] On the role of nontax revenues, see Morrison 2009.

I do not discount that these other factors shape redistributive politics. Rather, the goal of this article is to see how far material interest models can take us when properly applied. I return to a very simple point: material interest models assume that tax and spending policies are redistributive. Yet, as I turn to now, most Latin American countries failed to live up to this assumption for most of the twentieth century and still do much less to redistribute resources and risks than their counterparts in advanced economies. Informal barriers due to uneven state reach, documentation requirements, and bureaucratic obstacles further restrict the poor's access. Modifying the material interest model to allow for differences in the expected impacts of redistribution leads to a very different set of behavioral implications in developing countries.

III. A THEORY OF DIMINISHED EXPECTATIONS

Political economists make what Iversen and Soskice label a "nonregressivity assumption" that the rich always lose from welfare policies, whereas the middle class does less well than the poor but better than the rich.[23] Indeed, advanced democracies substantially favor the poor in their tax and transfer polices.[24] This logic holds for both redistributive transfers and social insurance spending. Moene and Wallerstein emphasize that social insurance programs draw stronger support from the middle class because they stand to lose more income in the event of a health shock or job loss.[25] However, Rehm, Hacker, and Schlesinger demonstrate that nonregressivity holds even when considering social insurance expenditures in advanced capitalist societies because low-income households face greater risks and pay less in taxes.[26]

The nonregressivity assumption is more tenuous in Latin America, and in most of the developing world. Figure 2 plots inequality against a standard measure of redistributive impact, the

[23] Iversen and Soskice 2006, 167.
[24] Mahler 2010; Milanovic 2000.
[25] Moene and Wallerstein 2001, 2003.
[26] Rehm, Hacker, and Schlesinger 2012.

change in the Gini coefficient through taxes and transfers (*absolute redistribution*).[27] Redistribution reflects both how much money governments spend (the size of the welfare state) and who pays and receives the benefits (the progressivity of the welfare state). What stands out is that Latin American welfare states do very little to reduce the gap between rich and poor. On average, taxes and transfers reduce the Gini coefficient by 18 points in Europe and North America, but only by 3 points in Latin America. Contrary to expectations, the relationship between inequality and redistribution is relatively flat in Latin America.

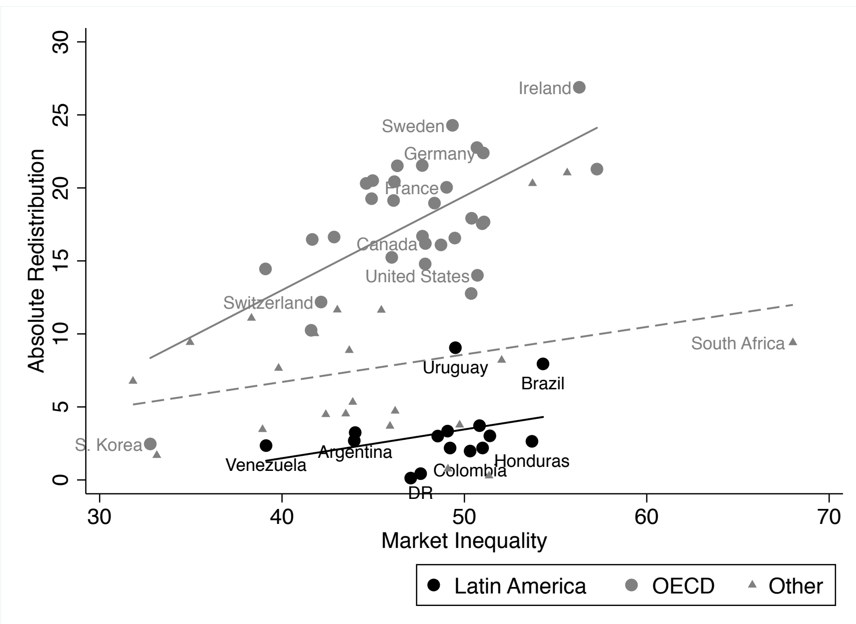

Figure 2. Redistributive Impact Compared across Latin America, the OECD, and Other Non-OECD Countries.
Source and Notes: SWIID 5.1. Chile and Mexico are in the OECD, but are plotted in the Latin American regional category.

Regional averages hide substantial variation in the redistributive nature of spending within Latin America. Government spending leaves inequality basically unchanged in Colombia and Guatemala, but improves the income distribution by 9 points in Uruguay. Redistributive impact also

[27] I use absolute redistribution, rather than relative redistribution, which measures the percent change in the Gini coefficient. The Gini coefficient is on a log scale so it is harder to reduce inequality by the same percent at higher levels of inequality.

differs by policy areas: public education and health provision have the greatest role in reducing inequality in Latin America, whereas pensions increase it.[28]

A related second assumption of material interest models is that welfare states begin with a commitment to the absolute poorest and differ in how they extend benefits *up* the income ladder. Pontusson captures the idea: "Means-tested social assistance constitutes the minimalist core of the modern welfare state—even the least welfare-oriented societies must somehow take care of the indigent—and it is the extent to which they have gone beyond the minimalist core that distinguishes the social market economies from the liberal market economies."[29] Put otherwise, the "minimalist core assumption" is that welfare states cover the poor and differ in their inclusion of the middle class, or what often is thought of as universalism in the European context.

Latin American welfare states did not originate with a minimalist core. Quite the opposite, most welfare states began in the early or mid-twentieth century with occupation-based social-insurance programs. The origins of social spending in protective schemes for public sector and organized workers are not unique to Latin America. As Esping-Andersen underscores, several European welfare states (most notably, Otto von Bismarck's Germany) began as conservative welfare regimes that linked welfare benefits to labor market status, and thus created stratified benefits.[30] But the small size of the industrial working class in Latin America meant that tying benefits to labor contracts left most of the population in the informal and rural sector without social protection.[31] In contrast to other parts of the developing world, however, Latin American governments provided substantial entitlements and labor protections to the industrial working class as they endeavored to promote domestic industry. Welfare states grew to be "deep but not wide,"

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[28] Lustig, Pessino, and Scott 2014.
[29] Pontusson 2005, 148.
[30] Esping-Andersen 1990.
[31] Huber and Stephens 2012, 22-24.

to use Haggard and Kaufman's phrase.[32] Historically, then, Latin American governments invested in social policies that provided benefits to those above a minimum level of income and risk, rather than below it.

Many Latin American countries still struggle to provide the most basic income and insurance to the poor. Countries differ in how far *down* the income ladder they have moved to extend benefits. Contrast the description of Latin America's welfare states by Díaz-Cayeros and Magaloni with the minimalist core assumption made about Europe: "Social policy in Latin America has traditionally failed to benefit the poor. . . Latin America's biggest social policy-challenge is to extend benefits to those who are now excluded from social-insurance programs—or in other words, to reach the poor."[33]

Particularly since the 1990s, Latin American countries have reformed and expanded welfare programs to cover poor majorities. Almost every government in the region now runs some form of means-tested income transfer program. Some governments also have moved to delink social insurance benefits from labor status and extended coverage through noncontributory pensions and healthcare.[34] Nevertheless, some countries and areas of social policy changed far less than others. Coverage and generosity vary dramatically. Consider the case of non-contributory pensions: while Brazil now covers a third of elderly households with monthly transfers of $328, the comparable program in Peru includes just 1.5 percent of the elderly and makes monthly transfers of only $46.[35]

Latin American welfare states remain truncated for three main reasons. First, the lion's share of the budget goes to contributory social insurance programs. The fraction of social insurance spending has remained stable over time, even through Latin America's economic liberalization, state

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[32] Haggard and Kaufman 2008, 17.
[33] Díaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2009, 36-7.
[34] For discussions of these reforms and their variation, see De La O Torres 2015; Garay 2016; Holland and Ross Schneider 2017; Huber and Stephens 2012; Levy and Schady 2013; Pribble 2013.
[35] Levy and Schady 2013, 201.

cuts, and full democratization.[36] Contributory social insurance policies concentrate benefits among relatively wealthy labor market insiders. Noncontributory social insurance programs that target the poor were layered on top of (and in some cases, even accompanied by expansions in) expensive contributory programs.[37]

Second, "redistributive" transfers do less to help the poor in Latin American welfare states. Subsidies for energy prices, higher education, and home mortgages constitute important parts of social assistance budgets in Latin America. Because richer households spend more in absolute value on these goods, these subsidies disproportionately benefit better-off households. For instance, subsidies for urban transport, gas, and electricity accounted for 10 percent of the total Argentine budget in 2010, and resulted in little downward redistribution.[38] Cash transfer programs for the poor are comparatively cheap, at just 2 percent of the annual budget.[39] Thus, a "conflicted mix" of transfers that help both the rich and the poor limits the progressivity of welfare regimes.[40]

A final challenge comes in what I call *informal access barriers*. O'Donnell first drew attention to the uneven nature of Latin American states, identifying "brown areas" where the state is territorially or functionally absent.[41] Rural residents often need to travel prohibitive distances to reach social services, leading to divergent life prospects within countries.[42] The poor also struggle to apply for benefits for which they are eligible. In innovative work, Hunter and Brill show that millions of Latin Americans lack birth certificates necessary to access social programs. Only with the extension of social protection since the 1990s have the poor started to seek such documentation.[43] Uptake also can lag due to difficult application processes. Each welfare benefit may require a trip to a different

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36 Wibbels and Ahlquist 2011.
37 Hunter and Sugiyama 2009; Holland and Schneider 2017.
38 Bril-Mascarenhas and Post 2014.
39 Levy and Schady 2013, 201.
40 Skoufias, Lindert, and Shapiro 2010.
41 O'Donnell 1993.
42 Diaz-Cayeros, Estévez, and Magaloni 2016; Otero Bahamon 2016.
43 Hunter and Brill 2016.

bureaucratic agency, complicated paperwork, and unclear qualifying conditions. Corruption and discretion in the application process can further reduce access.

Social work systems can overcome access barriers by making it easier for the poor to learn about and apply for benefits. To take a classic example, the American welfare state expanded its welfare coverage in the 1960s and 1970s through the establishment of public social work services. Piven and Cloward argue that direct outreach by social workers increased successful application rates and program coverage by helping individuals gain access to multiple programs at the same time.[44] As Latin American governments have moved to include labor-market outsiders in the welfare state, some have come to realize the importance of social workers to reach the poor. In particular, Chile's poverty-relief program (*Chile Solidario*) assigns households a "support worker" to provide integrated welfare assistance.[45] A creative field experiment shows that providing rural Mexicans a "facilitator" trained to assist individuals to apply for social programs increased the number of benefit claims through non-clientelistic avenues (Rizzo 2018).

The absence of social workers opens space for local politicians to act as welfare brokers. In contrast to the dominant view of political brokers as providing cash or handouts in exchange for votes, welfare brokers often provide information and bureaucratic assistance.[46] Brokers help voters to organize paperwork, get it to the right office, follow up on it, and accompany applicants who may feel stigmatized or overwhelmed interacting with bureaucrats. For instance, local politicians in Bogotá frequently describe their job as "guides" (*orientadores*) and "navigators" (*tramitadores*) of welfare bureaucracies. One city councilor captures a common view:

"People don't know what exists for them so you have to help…These programs also are difficult to apply for, and so you need to help people figure out what paperwork they need to bring, why they were denied benefits, which office can fix it, and how to get the benefits that they are assigned.

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[44] Piven and Cloward 1971, ch. 9.

[45] Barrientos 2010.

[46] Administrative favors can be a type of clientelistic inducement, see Mares and Young 2016, 271.

Many people, and especially the poorest, blame themselves if they hit an obstacle and just give up."[47]

Experiences of welfare state truncation—whether due to formal policy design or informal access barriers—have consequences for public opinion, as illustrated in Figure 3. It has become commonplace to argue that social policies unleash path-dependent dynamics in which beneficiaries organize to protect and defend tangible benefits that they receive.[48] In the context of benefit inclusion, the argument is a familiar one. But it is less clear what happens when individuals do not receive benefits. My argument is that experiences of welfare exclusion diminish the poor's material expectations about social spending. The poor doubt that they government will change the targeting or access so that they will benefit from future expenditures. Redistribution is understood as a distant policy for "someone else," rather than a visible and tangible way to reduce inequality.[49] To be clear, skepticism of welfare programs does not preclude the poor from making other demands, such as claims for local benefits,[50] discretionary transfers,[51] or forbearance towards legal violations.[52] My claim is that individuals who perceive a more limited stake in state redistribution have less motivation to support it. The most basic empirical implication, then, is that *individuals who access welfare benefits should be more supportive of redistribution than those who do not, all else equal.*

[47] Author interview, Felipe Rios, City Councilor, Bogotá, Colombia, August 8, 2011.
[48] For example, Pierson 1993.
[49] On distant policy, see Soss and Schram 2007.
[50] See Kruks-Wisner 2018 for a discussion of vibrant claims-making in India.
[51] For instance, Kyle 2018 shows that Indonesians resist shifts to universal-access social programs because they are concerned that programs will be run in a corrupt fashion that will reduce their effective access compared to existing subsidies.
[52] Holland 2017.

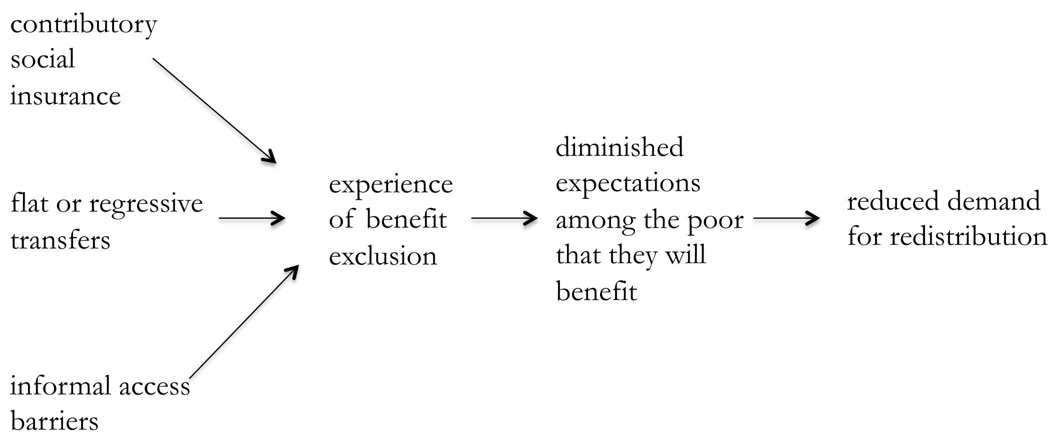

Figure 3. How Welfare State Truncation Affects Redistributive Demands

The coverage of welfare benefits also should affect the polarization of redistributive attitudes at the national level. As described above, the standard prediction of the Meltzer-Richard model is that income predicts less support for redistribution, leading to a negative income coefficient. Truncated welfare states have different implications. If the poor are excluded from coverage, and the upper class captures more of the benefits, then the link between income and preferences should be more tenuous. Put otherwise, *income is more strongly associated with preferences (the coefficient on income is more negative) in welfare states where social policies cover the poor.*

In emphasizing the material basis of welfare expectations, I depart from a literature that emphasizes generalized distrust of the state or confusion about material interests. If the poor believe that the state cannot run social programs that reach them, or they struggle to understand their material interests, then they should be less supportive of all types of social expenditures. Yet social policies vary dramatically in their coverage within the same country. If experiences of welfare state truncation shape attitudes, then *income is more strongly associated with preferences (the coefficient on income is more negative) in social policy areas that include the poor.*

Finally, I test the mechanism underlying my theory by looking at expectations of social policy benefits. There is little direct evidence of the causal pathway that leads from experiences of welfare state benefits (and lack thereof) to expectations about benefits and positions towards redistribution. My underlying claim is that *the poor, and especially those excluded from benefits, do not perceive themselves as the main beneficiaries of redistribution in truncated welfare regimes.* I also probe whether expectations about who benefits are associated with support for redistribution. If the poor have diminished expectations, it follows that *concerns that the poor do not receive benefits should be associated with less support for redistribution and named as the main risk to increased social expenditures.*

In short, Latin America's poor face variable—and sometimes very weak—material incentives to support redistribution, based on the welfare state structure where they live. Differences in the extent of welfare state truncation should shape the poor's expectations about future benefits and redistributive demands.

IV. PATTERNS OF REDISTRIBUTIVE PREFERENCES ACROSS LATIN AMERICA

In this section, I test my predictions about how variation in welfare coverage at the individual and national level impacts redistributive demands. To do so, I draw on five waves of survey data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project's (LAPOP) AmericasBarometer (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016).[53]

LAPOP uses the most common operationalization of redistributive demand, namely whether an individual agrees or disagrees that the government should take firm actions to reduce inequality. Responses are measured on a Likert scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7) (*Redistribution*). A drawback of this question is that it does not mention the policy's potential costs. It likely overstates the level of support that would obtain if, as often is the case, inequality reduction requires some costly tradeoff (either in the form of higher taxes or cuts in other parts of the budget). Ceiling effects also can occur in which most respondents agree to some extent with costless inequality reduction. Many scholars therefore recode this question to

[53] The survey has full regional coverage (18 countries), and each country survey uses national probability samples of adults.

differentiate between respondents who strongly support redistribution ("6" or above) and all others. I use the full coding here and show that the results are robust to a binary specification in the Appendix. I examine alternative questions that make the costs explicit in my original survey.

Given that questions about inequality reduction are framed in abstract terms, it may seem puzzling to argue that social policy inclusion shapes responses. Wouldn't individuals express their preferences about the policies that they would like to see enacted? I draw on Zaller and Feldman to suggest that the way that the public responds to survey questions—and even quite abstract ones—is shaped by the existing policy environment.[54] More concretely, respondents think about whether inequality reduction involves policies that benefit them or costs them money when they respond. Current policy inclusion matters because it anchors these interpretations.

The first implication of my theory is that respondents who receive social policy benefits should have higher levels of support for redistribution than those who do not. Each survey wave includes different measures of social welfare access, such as whether a household member receives a cash transfer (*CCT*), has health insurance (*Health*), or contributes to a pension plan (regardless of whether they draw on the benefits) (*Pension*). In 2014 and 2016, another item asks whether "you or anyone in your household receives regular assistance in money, food, or products from the government, without including pensions" (*Subsidy*). I collapse these questions into a single measure of benefit access (*Benefits*), which takes on a value of "1" if the respondent receives some government benefit and "0" otherwise. The intuition is that inclusion in any welfare program is likely to increase support for redistribution, so the coefficient should be positive.[55]

Redistributive attitudes are shaped by present benefit receipt, as well as expectations about access to future benefits. No question directly captures expectations about who will benefit, but one item in 2016 does measure the territorial reach of the social services. It asks how long it takes to

[54] Zaller and Feldman 1992.
[55] I show the results are unchanged by disaggregating the benefit measures in the Appendix.

reach medical attention (*State Reach*).[56] I expect that individuals with greater access to services should be more supportive of redistribution, resulting in a positive coefficient.

Benefit inclusion should matter holding constant an individual's socioeconomic position. In low-income countries, wealth indicators are more accurate than self-reported income because recall of volatile income flows can be inaccurate, households smooth consumption patterns, and response rates are higher. I therefore use a wealth-based measure, constructed by forming deciles from a principal-component analysis of durable items, as a proxy for income (*Income*).[57] I also include level of education *(Education*) as an additional measure of socioeconomic status and proxy for skill specificity (there are no occupational questions).

I include a standard battery of demographic controls. I control for gender *(Female*), given that some studies find that women are more supportive of inequality reduction than men.[58] I also include a measure of municipal size, ranging from small rural districts ("0") to large cities ("1") (*Size*). If cities have greater welfare access, then support for redistribution may increase with size.[59] Alternatively, individuals who live in small communities may be more supportive of redistribution because the beneficiaries are proximate.[60] Older respondents *(Age*) are more likely to draw on pension and health insurance policies, and therefore should be more supportive of redistributive spending. I also consider whether an individual self-identifies as indigenous, mulatto, or black (*Non-White*). Ethnic minorities may be more supportive of redistribution due to weaker status concerns.

Figure 4 visualizes the results from an OLS regression model, including year and country fixed effects to account for the differences across waves.[61] All independent variables are

[56] This item follows the methodology developed by Luna and Soifer 2017, but focuses on medical (rather than police) presence to match the social service context studied.
[57] The Appendix shows that the results are similar using self-reported household income.
[58] Linos and West 2001.
[59] Haggard, Kaufman, and Long 2013.
[60] Ferwerda 2015, ch. 3.
[61] The Appendix includes the coefficient tables and summary statistics.

standardized (except for indicator variables) so that the coefficients can be interpreted as the estimated change in redistributive support for a standard deviation covariate change. Model 1 reports the baseline results with standard demographic control variables. Consistent with my first hypothesis, benefit receipt is associated with more support for redistribution. Income also is associated with less support for redistribution in the pooled data, as predicted by standard models. Education is strongly associated with more support. Model 2 adds political controls for ideology, religiosity, unemployment, vote buying offers, corruption, and crime concerns. I am interested in whether the impact of benefit receipt persists once accounting for possible confounders so I do not plot the coefficients. The Appendix describes the variables and confirms much of what is known from the literature: identifying with the political left and unemployment are associated with more redistributive support. Exposure to vote buying, crime concerns, and corruption are correctly signed, but only statistically significant in some specifications. Model 3 adds the measure of state reach, which was asked in 2016. Individuals with greater access to health services are more supportive of redistribution.

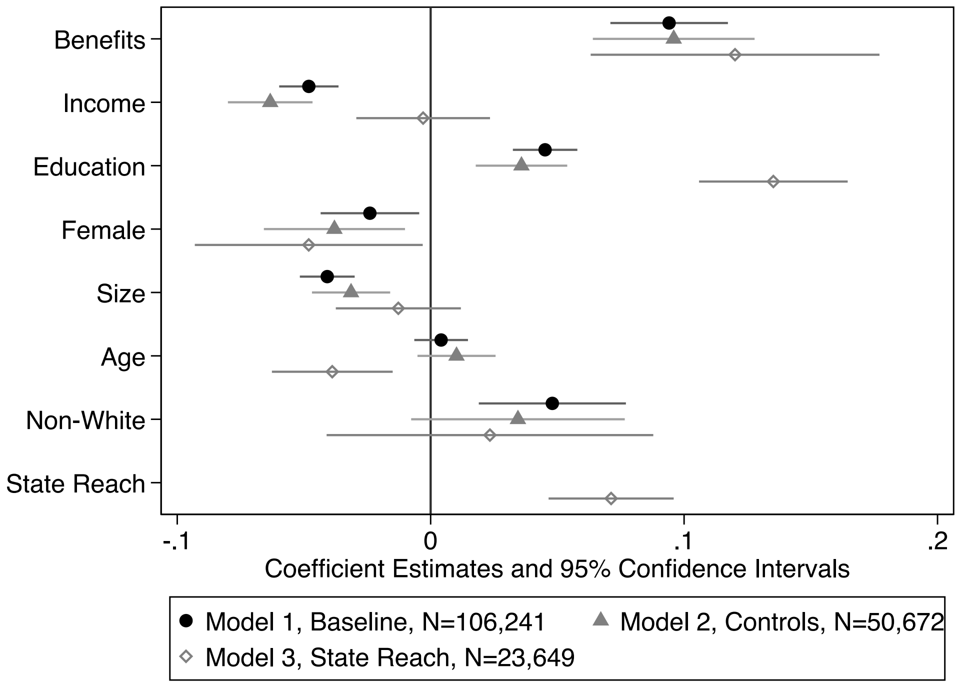

Figure 4. The Relationship between Benefit Receipt and Redistributive Preferences
Source and Notes: LAPOP 2008-16. Change in redistributive support for a standard deviation change in a covariate; year and country fixed effects, as well as political controls, are not shown.

To make these effects more concrete, consider the predicted probability of strongly supporting redistribution for a typical Guatemalan woman.[62] If she receives no welfare benefits, she has a 38 percent chance of strongly supporting redistribution. The predicted probability jumps to 43 percent if she receives some welfare benefit, but does not live near medical care. If she lives 10 minutes from medical care, she has a 50 percent chance of strongly supporting redistribution. The effects of benefit receipt and access are modest compared to the country where she lives. For example, an average Uruguayan woman who is covered by some welfare program has a 71 percent chance of supporting redistribution.

Next, I test the relationship between national welfare state structure and redistributive

[62] These probabilities are calculated using logit models for strong supporters. Logit models with fixed effects can be biased so I concentrate on redistributive support in a particular country for 2016.

support more systematically. The extent of welfare state "truncation" is my key national-level explanatory variable. Given no consensus on how to measure truncation, I consider several approaches and concentrate on the robustness of the results across specifications. Just as in the case of individual benefits, what I want to capture is a notion of coverage, or roughly the fraction of the population that receives *some* benefit from the welfare state. To do so, I use the percent of the population covered by social assistance or social insurance (*Coverage*) from the World Bank's ASPIRE database.[63] Efforts to extend health care, noncontributory pensions, and cash transfers all indicate greater effort to include the poor in the welfare state, and therefore should make redistribution more salient and the income coefficient more negative.

A second way to capture truncation is through the redistributive impact of taxes and transfers. Progressivity is an important proxy for the extent to which countries downwardly redistribute resources.[64] I consider the total inequality reduction through taxes and transfers from SWIID (*Absolute Redistribution*), as well as a measure of the extent to which social assistance and social insurance reduces inequality for the poorest quintile from ASPIRE (*Benefit Redistribution*). I expect these measures to capture the extent to which the poor benefit from the welfare state.

At the cross-national level, I expect that the coefficient on income will be more negative in countries that do more to include the poor and engage in more downward redistribution. To test this hypothesis, I estimate a hierarchical linear model predicting redistributive attitudes with income and a small set of controls (gender, education, and age), with random intercepts and random slopes. I then recover the country-specific income coefficients (and their standard errors) from best linear

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[63] I average social assistance and social insurance coverage levels in each country. Ideally, I would calculate the percentage of the population that receives either benefit. But I do not have the micro-level data to calculate whether an individual is covered by one or both spending types.

[64] Beramendi and Rehm (2016) similarly use progressivity to explain why income better predicts attitudes toward redistribution in some European countries than others. They disaggregate progressivity into benefit and tax concentration measures, but the micro-data are not available to make similar calculations in Latin America.

unbiased predictions (BLUPs). These income coefficients become my dependent variable, with more negative coefficients indicating greater class polarization in a country. I use the inverse of the standard errors as weights in a second-stage regression to account for the fact that the dependent variable is measured with error.

Before turning to the statistical results, I first verify that the basic hypothesized patterns exist in the data. Figure 5 plots the estimated income coefficients against the coverage and progressivity measures, revealing strong negative relationships in all cases. Countries with greater coverage and progressivity have a tighter relationship between income and redistributive support, as expected.

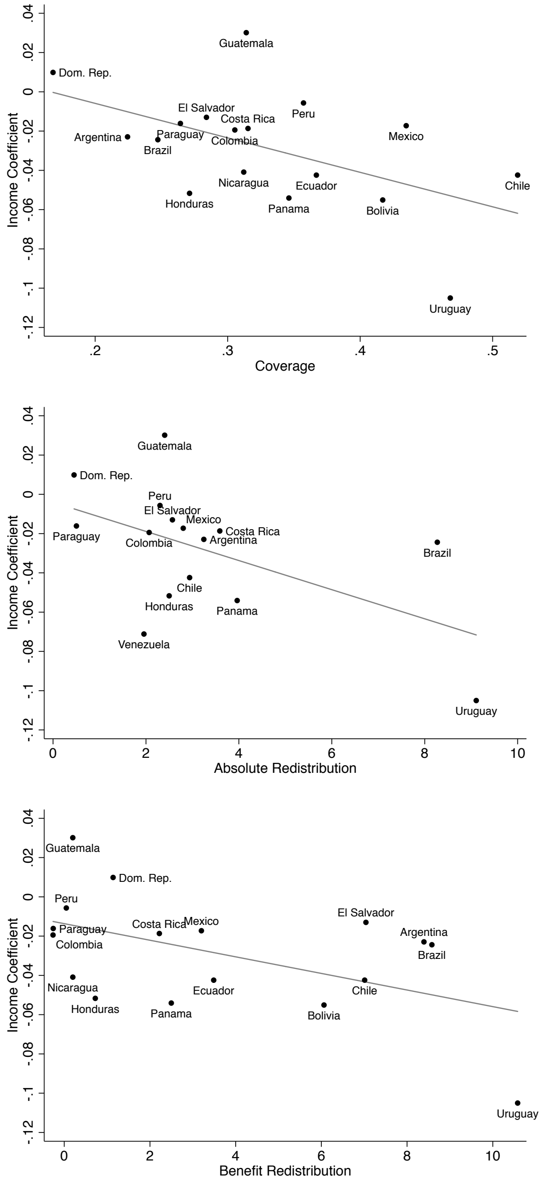

Figure 5. Welfare State Truncation and Income Coefficients

Source and Notes: LAPOP 2008-16; ASPIRE; SWIID 5.1. Income coefficients derived from multi-level models (with controls for education, age, and gender).

Many things cluster together at the national level and therefore it is important to control for possible additional and alternative explanations. Model 1 presents the most basic specification. First, inequality is thought to result in greater contestation between poor and rich. I use the market Gini coefficient to capture inequality (*Inequality*). Second, a larger welfare state may make redistribution more relevant to the lives of the poor (and costly to the rich) so should be associated with greater income polarization, just like coverage. I include a measure of social expenditures as a percent of GDP (*Social Exp*). Spending levels, however, say little about who benefits so I expect coverage and progressivity to retain independent impacts. Third, national wealth often is associated with stronger states and greater redistributive demands so I include log GDP per capita (*GDP*).

Model 2 adds additional measures of state capacity. State capacity only will affect the income coefficient if it has differential effects on the attitudes of the poor and the rich. While state weakness can reduce the benefits expected by the poor, it also may dampen support among the rich. Social welfare in weak state may be less likely to resolve externalities like crime, social unrest, and indigence. I use the World Bank's index of administrative quality (*Effectiveness*) as a crude measure of state capacity.

Model 3 considers the role of ethnic heterogeneity. More heterogeneous societies may divide along ethnic lines, reducing class polarization. I use the ethno-linguistic fractionalization index as a proxy for ethnic divisions *(Ethnicity)*, despite its known shortcomings, and consider an alternative measure of between-group ethnic inequality in the Appendix.

Model 4 turns to the role of taxation. Differences in redistributive polarization can result from the attitudes of the rich or the poor. I emphasize the poor's attitudes because the relative importance of receiving benefits is much greater for the poor than the tax burden is for the rich.[65] However, the fact that the rich pay less in taxes in countries with weak welfare states could strengthen their support and flatten the income gradient. Kasara and Suryanarayan, for instance, show that the political preferences of the rich and poor—measured in terms of support for different political parties—diverge less in places with weak fiscal capacity.[66] In a similar spirit, Mares argues

[65] Rueda and Stegmueller 2016, 474 make a similar point.
[66] Kasara and Suryanarayan 2016.

that doubts that governments will collect tax contributions reduces support for social insurance schemes even among workers who would benefit.[67] I consider the possibility that ineffectual taxation explains redistributive polarization through a measure of income taxation as a percent of GDP *(Income Tax*). A related concern, which I analyze in the Appendix, is that some countries draw on commodity rents to fund social programs without taxing the rich.[68] Both tax measures come from the IMF's World Revenue Longitudinal Data.

A final threat to inference is that welfare state structure has no independent relationship with preferences once we account for differences in left power. Left parties, as well as organized labor allies, can help frame redistributive choices and mobilize class identities. At the same time, Left parties have programmatic commitments to expand welfare state coverage.[69] To capture a power resources channel, Model 5 looks at the fraction of years that the executive has been from the Left between 1945-2008 *(Left Rule*) drawing on Huber et al.'s Latin America and the Caribbean Social Policy and Political Dataset. The Appendix tests alternative measures, such as union density and programmatic party structuration.

Table 1 displays the results for the predictors of the income coefficients. Again, for ease of presentation, I use the estimated income coefficients from the multilevel model as the endogenous dependent variable. My key explanatory variables—coverage, fiscal progressivity, and benefit progressivity—are associated with more negative income coefficients in all models. Countries that spend more on social welfare also have more polarized redistributive attitudes. Greater social expenditures may allow countries to expand coverage, much in line with my theory. The Appendix shows that the benefit redistribution results are very similar. It also includes cross-level regression models in which coverage and progressivity (and their interaction with income) are used as

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[67] Mares 2005.
[68] Morrison 2009.
[69] Huber and Stephens 2012, 240; Kitschelt et al. 2010; Pribble 2013.

independent variables to predict redistributive attitudes and confirms the two-stage results.

Table 1. Predicting Income Coefficients with Coverage and Progressivity

	Coverage					Absolute Redistribution				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Coverage	-0.096*	-0.102*	-0.092*	-0.095*	-0.094*					
	(0.029)	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.029)					
Ab. Redis.						-0.006*	-0.006*	-0.006*	-0.006*	-0.005*
						(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Social Exp	-0.006*	-0.006*	-0.006*	-0.006*	-0.006*	-0.005*	-0.005*	-0.004*	-0.005*	-0.005*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Inequality	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.002*	0.002*	0.002*	0.002*	0.002*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
GDP	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Effectiveness		0.004					0.003			
		(0.009)					(0.007)			
Ethnicity			-0.005					0.009		
			(0.015)					(0.023)		
Income Tax				-0.000					-0.001	
				(0.002)					(0.002)	
Left Rule					-0.017					-0.038
					(0.022)					(0.019)
R^2	0.435	0.436	0.436	0.435	0.439	0.512	0.514	0.513	0.513	0.539
N	85	85	85	85	85	75	75	75	75	75

Sources and Notes: LAPOP 2008-16, year-fixed effects not shown. Standard errors in parentheses, * p<0.05. Coverage data are unavailable for Venezuela; absolute redistribution data are unavailable for Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua.

Moving to the alternative explanations, the Appendix shows that countries with more effective bureaucracies and greater income tax collection do have more polarized redistributive preferences. However, the effects lose significance in most models once coverage and progressivity measures are included. Non-tax revenues have no clear association with the income coefficient. Ethnic cleavages are associated with a lower overall level of support for redistribution, but have no significant relationship with the income coefficient. Left rule, union density, and programmatic party structuration all are correctly signed, predicting greater class polarization as suggested by power resource theory. They fall short of statistical significance, however.

To summarize, countries with greater welfare state coverage and progressivity have more polarized redistributive preferences, even accounting for possible confounders. But the small number of countries and imprecise measures make it difficult to rule out other explanations at the macro-level. In the remainder of the article, I therefore look within a single country. This approach allows me to hold constant features of the political environment, and to probe the mechanisms that link benefit exclusion to redistributive attitudes.

V. Cross-Policy Preferences and Diminished Expectations in Colombia

No existing survey provides suitably fine-grained measures of attitudes toward a range of social policies. I therefore ran an original public opinion survey in Bogotá, Colombia. Colombia decentralized governance in the early 1990s, and social welfare programs vary in regional coverage. I therefore focus on Bogotá to maximize the comparability of responses. Although program quality and coverage can differ substantially across urban space, the assumption is that capital city residents have more similar experiences of welfare programs than those living in other parts of the country (and especially those affected by the civil war).

The survey was administered face-to-face to 900 voters by a respected polling firm. It was essential to conduct a household survey both to reach the poorest segments of society, which often are excluded from online samples, and the richest, which are difficult to contact because many live in gated condominiums. The survey uses a stratified sample with equal representation (300 respondents) of each major class group. This approach entailed oversampling upper-class groups, who are a small fraction of the city population. The Appendix summarizes the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents compared to the Bogotá population, and provides additional details on sampling procedures and response rates.

Government class stratifications provide a way to circumvent measurement problems with income data in Colombia. The Colombian government divides the population into six socioeconomic strata (where "1" is the lowest and "6" is the highest) based on household features. Statistical agencies consider Strata 1 and 2 to be "lower class," Strata 3 is "lower-middle class," and Strata 4 through 6 are "upper-middle class." Because strata are used to determine eligibility for service prices, households are very aware of their class strata.

Colombia exemplifies a truncated welfare state with formal and informal access barriers. While Colombia spends 14 percent of GDP on social expenditures (about average in the region), it only improves the income distribution by two points through tax and spending policies.[70] However, Colombia also illustrates the challenges of classifying welfare states as a whole. Social programs vary widely in their coverage and progressivity, as Table 2 demonstrates. I therefore asked respondents the standard question on inequality reduction, as well as questions about their willingness to pay to fund policies that differ in their beneficiaries, such as cash transfers, health insurance, unemployment insurance, and housing subsidies. I selected social policies to differ in their coverage and their insurance or income role. My expectation is that class attitudes should be more polarized with respect to policy areas that do more to include the poor, regardless of whether they serve insurance or income purposes.

Table 2. Tax and Benefit Structure in Colombia, Select Policies

	Share of Expenditures			Subsidy as % Income		
	Lower	Middle	Upper	Lower	Middle	Upper
CCT	44.9	16.1	1.3	7.6	0.6	0.0
Health	32.7	20.1	5.3	29.0	3.9	0.2
Primary Education	34.8	19.8	4.5	36.1	4.5	0.2
Pensions	0.1	2.3	86.3	0.2	1.9	11.0
	Share of Revenue			Taxes paid as % Income		
Income Tax	0.53	4.22	60.3	1.75	1.69	3.97
Consumption Tax	3.7	7.1	27.0	17.3	7.4	4.7

[70] Calculation from SWIID 5.1.

Sources and notes: Moller 2012 and Gran Encuesta de Hogares 2011. Benefits are calculated for the top, middle, and bottom quintile; taxes only are available for the top, middle, and bottom deciles. Consumption tax (VAT) is calculated with exemptions for basic goods.

At the progressive end, Colombia has implemented cash transfer and noncontributory health programs. The conditional cash transfer program (*Familias en Acción*) reaches 23 percent of households nationwide, and rates highly on means-tested implementation.[71] But benefits are small in size ($33 per month).[72] In 1993, Colombia also extended health insurance to the poor through a subsidized public option (*régimen subsidiado*). At the time, observers considered it "one of the most ambitious social reforms ever undertaken in Latin America."[73] Mayors initially retained discretion to select beneficiaries, which politicized the targeting.[74] Nevertheless, health coverage increased from 6 to 70 percent of poor households, and health outcomes improved.[75]

Income taxes also are highly progressive in Colombia. But they affect few individuals: less than 2 percent (640,000 of 37 million) of Colombia's adult population pays income taxes. Colombia collects most of its revenue through value-added taxes, which are regressive in relative terms because the poor consume more of their income.[76]

Progressive benefits have been layered on the existing contributory system. As Table 2 shows, pension payments overwhelmingly benefit upper-income groups. Less than a quarter of Colombians receive a pension, and the top quintile of the income distribution receives more than 86 percent of government pension subsidies. Pension expenditures consume 4 percent of GDP, compared to just 0.22 percent of GDP that goes to cash transfer programs.[77] Unemployment insurance similarly favors formal-sector workers; three-quarters of benefits go to workers enrolled in

[71] De La O Torres 2015.
[72] Levy and Schady 2013, 201.
[73] Gaviria, Medina, and Mejía 2006, 7.
[74] Ibid, 48.
[75] Gaviria, Medina, and Mejía 2006; Giedion and Villar Uribe 2009.
[76] Moller 2012, 8-12.
[77] DNP 2011; Levy and Schady 2013, 201.

a contributory pension fund.[78]

Transfer programs, such as housing subsidies, provide flat benefits. Colombia has a generous mortgage interest deduction to subsidize middle-class housing purchases. To help the poor, Colombia adopted a demand-subsidy model in the 1990s. Qualifying households receive a government subsidy, which they then complement with personal savings and bank loans to purchase a house. Yet half of Colombian households have no capacity to save. Among the income bracket eligible for housing subsidies, 70 percent do not have formal (or stable) labor contracts and thus struggle to access commercial bank loans.[79] As one woman living in a squatter settlement in Bogotá captured a common frustration: "Those programs aren't for people like me…they are for people with good jobs and savings."[80] Truncation thus can occur through more subtle access barriers: only creditworthy, and generally formal-sector employees, can access housing benefits.

My expectation is that class should be more predictive of social policy attitudes for *types* of expenditures and taxes that aid the poor, such as cash transfers, subsidized health insurance, and income taxes. It should be less predictive of attitudes towards unemployment insurance and housing benefits, as well as general questions on redistribution. To test this cross-policy hypothesis, Figure 6 plots support for spending on each social policy by class. The left panel shows the relationship between class strata and support for targeted expenditures. There are relatively sharp differences across class groups with roughly 80 percent of the bottom two class strata in support of increased expenditures on programs like noncontributory health care, compared to 55 percent of the top strata. Preferences over the tax code are the most polarized by class, with the rich strongly opposed to "paying more taxes to fund social expenditures on the poor" and the poor in strong support.

[78] Medina, Núñez, and Tamayo 2013.
[79] Gaviria and Tovar 2016, 86.
[80] Author interview with anonymous squatter, Bogotá, Colombia, September 5, 2012. The government moved to give away housing to the poor in 2013 after realizing these problems.

The right panel compares the structure of preferences for less clearly progressive policy areas, namely unemployment insurance, housing benefits, and the standard question about support for redistributive policies. Consistent with my theory, the slope on preferences is much flatter.[81] Inspecting Figure 6 also suggests that most variation in attitudes comes from the poor. The nonpoor's attitudes change little by type of expenditure, clustering around 50 percent supportive of additional spending regardless of type. The poor's support varies widely, from 53 percent supportive of unemployment benefits to 79 percent supportive of public health subsidies.

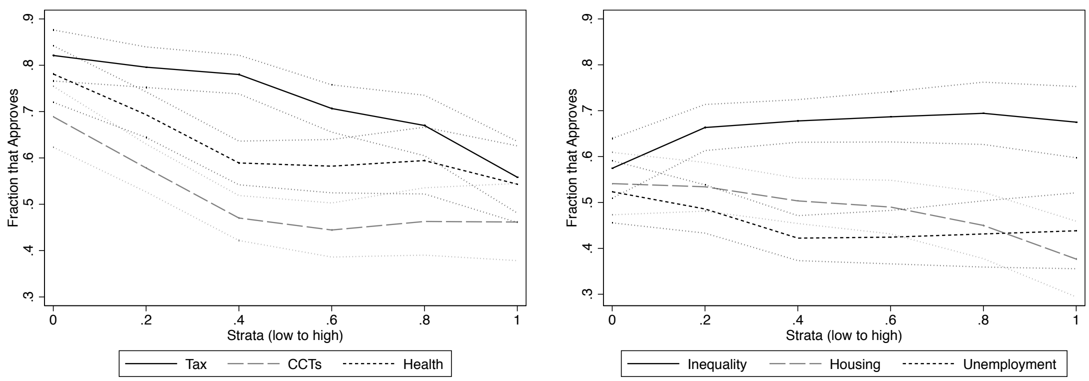

Figure 6. Support for Social Policy Across Domains by Class, Bogotá Survey

How spending is targeted seems to be more important than whether a policy insures against risks or provides income. Moene and Wallerstein emphasize that demand for insurance increases with income because wealthier households have more to lose in the event of a job loss or health event.[82] Social insurance spending thus may gain greater middle-class support. But, consistent with my theory, the slopes differ depending on whether the poor are included in insurance payments. The income coefficient is more than double (-0.17 compared to -0.06) for health insurance compared to unemployment insurance. Likewise, attitudes towards cash transfers are much more polarized (an income coefficient of -0.19) compared to housing subsidies (-0.09). These results are

[81] The inequality reduction item is plotted as strong agreement with the question.
[82] Moene and Wallerstein 2003.

hardly dispositive, but they are consistent with the idea that the exclusion of the poor helps to explain the weak salience of income for social policy preferences.

To test the mechanism behind these results, I asked questions about the perceived beneficiaries of welfare expenditures. One tricky part is that I did not want to induce a consistency bias by asking who benefits from a social policy and then asking about policy support. I therefore asked about perceived beneficiaries of social spending as a whole, probing which group gets "the majority of benefits from social expenditures, such as health, cash transfers, housing, unemployment insurance, and family benefits." Given the mixed incidence of social welfare programs, my expectation is that poor respondents do not perceive themselves as the primary beneficiaries. Respondents selected if they believe that most social benefits go to the "middle class" or to the "lower class." I also framed the item differently, asking respondents whether they believe that welfare expenditures benefit "people like you." To generalize beyond Bogotá, I compare these items to a similar question included on the 2016 LAPOP wave. Only in Colombia, LAPOP included an experimental question about "who receives the most state benefits" to half of respondents, and "who pays the most in taxes" to half of respondents. Individuals selected from (1) the lower class, (2) the middle class, (3) the upper classes, and (4) all classes equally. I recode these questions as the fraction of the population that believes that the lower class benefits the most from social expenditures and pays the most in taxes.

Figure 7 shows popular perceptions of progressivity plotted by socioeconomic class. The solid lines indicate the fraction of respondents who expect welfare expenditures to benefit the poor by class (strata and income deciles are rescaled from 0 to 1, with 1 being the highest). Overall, the most striking finding is how few respondents see the poor as the main beneficiaries of social welfare spending. Just 39 percent of respondents on my survey think that the lower class benefits the most from social expenditures. The results are similar on LAPOP's national sample: only 37 percent of

Colombians say that the lower class benefits most from social welfare expenditures, and 41 percent believe that they also pay the most in taxes. There also are clear class differences in views. Just 31 percent of the bottom quintile of the income distribution believes that the poor primarily benefit from social spending, while 46 percent of the top does. These judgments clearly diverge from the assumptions of political economy models that taxes and transfers are understood to be downwardly progressive.

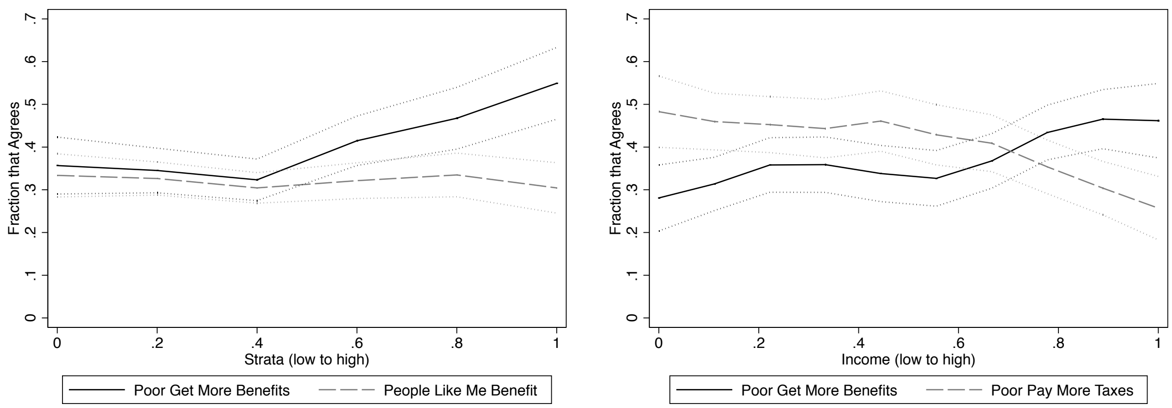

Figure 7. Perceptions of Beneficiaries and Taxpayers by Class, Bogotá Survey (Left) and LAPOP 2016 (Right)

Encouragingly, linkages exist between objective benefit receipt, expectations about who benefits, and redistributive attitudes. Benefit inclusion positively shapes expectations of benefits: individuals who receive cash transfers, health subsidies, or contribute to pensions are more likely to believe that redistribution benefits people like them. Furthermore, individuals who believe that they benefit are more likely to support redistribution, controlling for the same socioeconomic variables used in past models (see Appendix). The analysis thus is consistent with the theory that welfare state truncation dampens expectations of future benefits and redistributive support.

To further distinguish possible mechanisms, I probed popular concerns regarding social spending in a follow-up survey. The question read: "Many people want to improve the lives of the poor, but they see risks when the government tries to reduce inequality. What is the biggest risk that you see when governments reduce inequality?" Respondents then selected from the following choices (the order was randomized across questionnaires): (1) Social programs teach the poor to live off the hand of the state, (2) politicians manipulate social programs to win votes, (3) social programs do not reach the poor, (4) the government increases taxes on the middle and upper classes, and (5) other.

Figure 8 presents the responses by class. Consistent with my theory, more than half of low-income respondents worry that welfare benefits do not reach the poor. For the upper class, worries that benefits did not reach the poor (31 percent) were closely followed by concerns that welfare benefits make the poor dependent on the state and that politicians manipulate welfare programs to buy votes. Upper-income respondents were somewhat more concerned that taxes would increase than the poor, but this was a relatively uncommon response, confirming that tax fears are minimal. Admittedly, concerns that benefits do not reach the poor could extend beyond issues of targeting and access barriers. For instance, respondents may be most concerned about administrative corruption or fraud by welfare applicants. While the survey cannot distinguish these concerns, several respondents elaborated on their responses and underscored problems of informal access barriers. For example, one upper-income respondent notes: "State help is not taken advantage of by the poor due to lack of communication and bureaucracy that prevents these people from getting it. There's no initiative to teach these people to take state assistance."

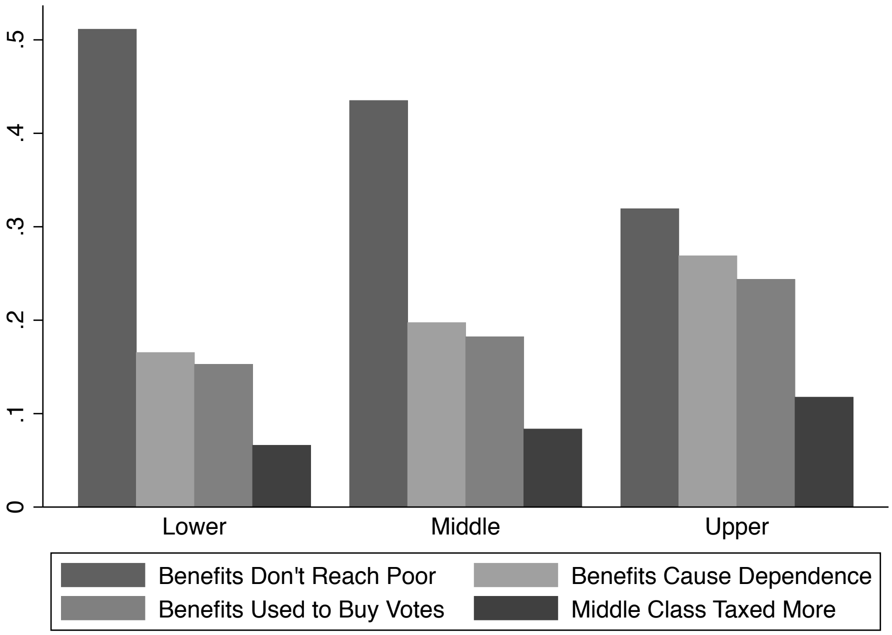

Figure 8. Concerns about Increased Social Spending by Class, Bogotá Survey

The study of Colombia bears out my theory that the poor have diminished expectations about redistribution. Just as support for redistribution is less polarized in countries in which spending is less progressive, support is less polarized in social policy domains in which formal and informal barriers exclude the poor. Respondents who do not receive benefits, and who do not expect to benefit, are less likely to support social expenditures. Tellingly, citizens name concerns about whether the poor will receive benefits as the main reason not to expand social spending.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Esping-Andersen famously argued that the amount of social spending is epiphenomenal to its content.[83] In some nations and policy domains, tax and spending policies do little to aid the poor. In other nations and policy domains, the welfare state is much more inclusive and progressive, both in terms of who pays and who benefits from state expenditures. These alternative scenarios, I argued, have very different implications for the structure of public opinion because they shape what

[83] Esping-Andersen 1990.

each income group expects to receive from the welfare state. When social expenditures actually redistribute resources, the preferences of income groups diverge sharply. When social expenditures are truncated through exclusionary formal designs or informal access barriers, the preferences of the poor and rich look similar. Several types of empirical evidence supported the argument: welfare beneficiaries are more supportive of redistribution across Latin America; income is more predictive of redistributive preferences in countries and policy areas with greater welfare state coverage and progressivity; and the poor do not expect to benefit on net from social expenditures.

These findings contribute to research on the political behavior of the poor. Since at least Marx, scholars have doubted the poor's ability to understand their class interests without mobilizing forces like unions and programmatic political parties. The collapse of these actors in many developing countries raises questions about the poor's ability to express and vote for their material interests. Yet such accounts overlook a much simpler explanation for the weaker relationship between class and redistributive preferences in developing countries. In Latin America, the poor often expect less from welfare states, and for good historical reason. Welfare states remain truncated due to their heavy reliance on social insurance, flat or regressive benefits, and informal access barriers.

Data limitations meant that I treated the relationship between public opinion and policy design as an endogenous one. Future work, especially as longitudinal public opinion surveys become available, may unpack this causal arrow to establish if welfare state inclusion leads to attitudinal change. If the poor's attitudes shift as social policies reach them, then substantial change is possible when political parties take the lead to expand social policy coverage. The rise of left parties, and extension of social programs to outsiders more broadly, may pave the way to more coherent class politics.

Second, this article's emphasis on how public opinion is structured by the coverage and progressivity of benefits provides a bridge to work on social policy preferences in Europe. There is even more meaningful variation in the extent of inequality reduction when looking beyond advanced industrial economies. Figure 9 provides a preliminary view of this variation, using a combination of data from the ISSP (which includes a small subset of Latin American and Asian countries), LAPOP (for waves that used the ISSP question formulation), and the Luxembourg Income Study (which measures fiscal progressivity). While Beramendi and Rehm show that income polarization is stronger in more progressive welfare states, this figure suggests that the relationship is stronger and clearer when the set of cases is expanded beyond advanced industrial economies.[84] The implication is that behavioral models developed for advanced industrial welfare states apply to developing countries that have moved farther to extend program coverage, such as Argentina and Uruguay, but their underlying assumptions are not met in truncated welfare states in the developing world, such as Guatemala and Peru.

[84] Beramendi and Rehm 2016.

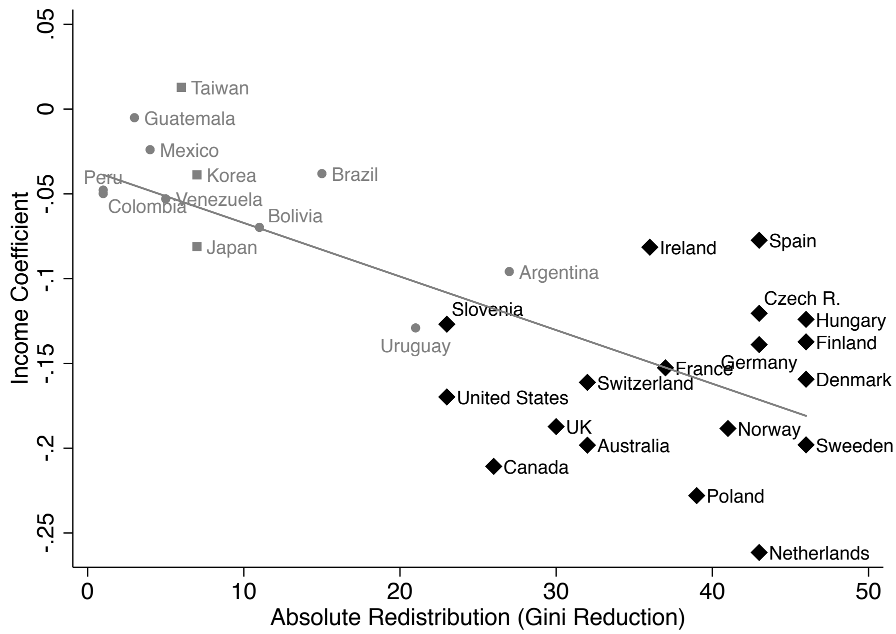

Figure 9. Income Coefficients, Support for Redistribution, and Fiscal Progressivity in Europe and Select Latin American and Asian Countries

Source: ISSP (2006), LAPOP (2010), and LIS Fiscal Redistribution Database (2011).

Finally, unlike many advanced industrial economies where the primary variation in progressivity stems from formal program design, I underscored the importance of informal access barriers in shaping welfare access. Social workers were central to the transformation of welfare states in advanced industrial economies, yet they remain understudied in developing countries. Their absence opens up space for local politicians to act as welfare brokers. Rather than directly controlling disbursements, politicians help poor voters learn about and navigate welfare programs that are in theory targeted or universal. Problems of uptake thus contribute to the truncated nature of welfare regimes in the developing world. Policy efforts that help the poor to access benefits, even without changes in formal program design, may be critical to raise expectations and cement redistributive support.

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