

## Whose Preferences Matter for Redistribution? Cross-country Evidence

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### **Abstract:**

We use cross-sectional data from 93 countries to study the relationship between how much redistribution citizens of different socioeconomic status want and how much the government actually redistributes. We focus on redistribution because it is an outcome for which there is a natural class conflict over policy choices, allowing us to examine whose preferences are best reflected in policy formulation. Contrary to the most straightforward notions of political influence, we find that the bottom, rather than the median or upper, socioeconomic group's preferences are most predictive of realized redistribution --- a result that stands in contrast to predictions from both leading experts and regular citizens.