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Social expenditure in Latin America during the twentieth century: A new database

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ABSTRACT

The historiography of social expenditure in Latin America presents limitations because there are not comprehensive long-term expenditure series like those available for richer welfare states. To fill this gap, we build series of non-educational social expenditure and its beneficiaries for 18 Latin American countries, categorizing it by its destination and source of funding. By assembling data on social expenditure for the whole twentieth century, we can identify broad patterns and contribute to several debates: we observe the timing and scope of welfare dualization across the region, we discuss the existence of welfare regimes with different spending priorities and their relationship to different development strategies, and we compare the evolution of Latin American social policies with that of richer welfare states at similar levels of GDP per capita.