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Representing the rich

Economic and political inequality in established democracies

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Appendix

Table A2.1: Summary statistics (chapter 2)

	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.	N
General preferences					
All respondents	29.79	24.27	-35.79	83.01	130
50th percentile	30.55	25.47	-37.45	87.45	130
Low income preferences					
5th percentile	39.00	20.84	-16.33	80.77	130
10th percentile	38.25	21.34	-18.53	82.64	130
Quintile 1	38.30	21.43	-17.12	83.72	130
Tercile 1	36.55	22.30	-23.09	86.90	130
High income preferences					
95th percentile	18.23	26.69	-52.94	71.30	130
90th percentile	19.79	26.63	-51.67	74.22	130
Quintile 5	18.47	26.87	-52.07	67.58	130
Tercile 3	20.95	26.45	-52.07	74.40	130
Policy outcomes					
Δ Generosity, t+1 – t+4	0.60	3.75	-22.50	12.61	130
Δ PC spending, t+1 – t+4	9.05	22.66	-41.91	141.17	130
Controls					
Generosity (t)	9.96	3.53	0	16.80	130
Per capita spending (t)	1562.44	1137.22	0	4927.20	130
GDP (t)	40965.32	14723.42	19427.19	89887.02	130
GDP growth (t)	2.38	1.34	-1.09	6.96	130
Unemployment rate (t)	7.19	3.47	3.35	22.14	130

Table A2.2: Country-years in survey and generosity data (chapter 2)

	ISSP I	ISSP II	ISSP III	ISSP IV
Australia	1986	1990	1997	2007
Austria	1986	.	.	.
Canada	.	.	1996	2006
Denmark	.	.	.	2008
Finland	.	.	.	2006
France	.	.	1997	2006
Germany	1985	1990	1996	2006
Great Britain	1985	1990	1996	2006
Ireland	.	.	1996	2006
Italy	1985	1990	1996	.
Japan	.	.	1996	2006
Netherlands	.	.	.	2006
New Zealand	.	.	1997	2006
Norway	.	1990	1996	2006
Portugal	.	.	.	2006
South Korea	.	.	.	2006
Spain	.	.	1996	2007
Sweden	.	.	1996	2006
Switzerland	.	.	1998	2007
United States	1985	1990	1996	2006

Note: ISSP = International Social Survey Programme

Table A3.1: Summary statistics (chapter 3)

	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.	N
Dependent variable					
Policy adopted	0.27	0.45	0	1	291
Independent variables (percent in favor)					
Income, P10	48.06	22.06	2.42	93.77	291
Income, P50	48.00	21.97	1.74	97.12	291
Income, P90	47.52	20.81	2.13	97.11	291

Table A3.2: Data sources for the survey questions, sorted by frequency (chapter 3)

Survey	Year(s)	N
EenVandaag Survey Panel	2006-2012	77
Cultural Changes in the Netherlands	1979-2012	61
NIPO Weekly Surveys	1982-1994	29
Centerdata Telepanel	1993-1999	25
Public Opinion on Social Security and Labor in the Netherlands	1995	21
Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies	1981-2012	19
LISS Panel	2008, 2010	16
Citizens' Outlooks Barometer	2008, 2012	11
International Social Survey Programme	2006	9
Individual Freedom of Choice in the Field of Social Insurance	2001	6
Eurobarometer	1984, 1991, 1993, 1996	5
Justice Criteria and Income Inequality	1987	4
Family Survey Dutch Population	2000, 2003	2
Income Inequality, Income Politics and Redistribution Preferences	1982	2
Socioeconomic Developments in the Netherlands	1998	2
European Values Study	2008	1
Sociocultural Developments in the Netherlands	1995	1

Table A4.1: Summary statistics (chapter 4)

	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.	N
Dependent variables					
Overall party attention, logged (t+1)	1.52	0.86	-0.95	3.70	493
Left party attention, logged (t+1)	1.39	1.28	-2.94	3.89	493
Right party attention, logged (t+1)	1.46	0.97	-1.59	3.77	473
Independent variables					
Overall preferences	23.14	27.31	-63.59	79.29	493
50th percentile preferences	23.32	27.97	-63.80	78.04	493
10th percentile preferences	24.29	26.91	-64.33	81.14	493
90th percentile preferences	21.61	28.13	-65.06	77.61	493
1st quintile preferences	24.34	27.00	-62.22	81.26	493
5th quintile preferences	21.52	28.07	-65.78	77.27	493
Control variables					
GDP per capita, logged (t)	10.20	0.69	8.25	11.41	493
GDP growth (t)	2.59	2.14	-2.87	10.88	493
Unemployment (t)	8.10	4.60	3.10	27.47	493

Table A4.2: Country-years in survey and manifesto data (chapter 4)

	ISSP I	ISSP II	ISSP III	ISSP IV	AB	CSES4
Australia	1986	1990	1997	2007	.	2013
Austria	1986	.	.	.	.	2013
Bulgaria	.	.	1997	.	.	2015
Canada	.	.	1996	2006	.	2011
Croatia	.	.	.	2006	.	.
Cyprus	.	.	1996	.	.	.
Czech Republic	.	.	1996	2006	.	2013
Denmark	.	.	.	2008	.	.
Finland	.	.	.	2006	.	.
France	.	.	1997	2006	.	2012
Germany	1985	1990	1996	2006	.	2013
Great Britain	1985	1990	1996	2006	.	2015
Greece	.	.	.	.	.	2013
Hungary	.	1990	1996	2006	.	.
Iceland	.	.	.	.	.	2013
Ireland	.	.	1996	2006	.	2011
Israel	.	1991	1996	2007	.	2013
Italy	1985	1990	1996	.	.	.
Japan	.	.	1996	2006	2003	2013
Latvia	.	.	1996	2007	.	2011
Mexico	.	.	.	.	.	2012
Montenegro	.	.	.	.	.	2013
Netherlands	.	.	.	2006	.	.
New Zealand	.	.	1997	2006	.	2011
Norway	.	1990	1996	2006	.	.
Poland	.	.	1997	2008	.	.
Portugal	.	.	.	2006	.	.
Romania	.	.	.	.	.	2013
Russia	.	.	1997	2007	.	.
Serbia	.	.	.	.	.	2013
Slovenia	.	.	1995	2006	.	2012
South Africa	.	.	.	2006	.	.
South Korea	.	.	.	2006	2003	.
Spain	.	.	1996	2007	.	.
Sweden	.	.	1996	2006	.	2014
Switzerland	.	.	1998	2007	.	2011
Turkey	.	.	.	.	.	2015
United States	1985	1990	1996	2006	.	2012

Note: ISSP = International Social Survey Programme; AB = Asiabarometer; CSES = Comparative Study of Electoral Systems

Table A5.1: List of abbreviations (chapter 5)

	Dutch	English
Political parties		
CDA	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Christian Democratic Appeal
D66	Democraten 66	Democrats 66
PvdA	Partij van de Arbeid	Labour Party
PVV	Partij voor de Vrijheid	Party for Freedom
SGP	Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij	Reformed Political Party
SP	Socialistische Partij	Socialist Party
VVD	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy
Employer organizations		
LTO Nederland	Land- en Tuinbouworganisatie Nederland	Netherlands Agricultural and Horticultural Association
MKB-Nederland	Midden- en Kleinbedrijf Nederland	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Netherlands
VNO-NCW	Verbond van Nederlandse Ondernemingen - Nederlands Christelijk Werkgeversverbond	Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers
Union federations		
CNV	Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond	National Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the Netherlands
FNV	Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging	Federation of Dutch Trade Unions
MHP	Vakcentrale voor Middengroepen en Hoger Personeel	Federation of Managerial and Professional Staff Unions

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English Summary

Political equality is one of the very foundations of democracy. It is simultaneously a justification for democratic governance and a goal towards which such governance strives. However, it is apparently not a particularly easy goal to achieve. Political equality, which I understand to mean the absence of systematic biases in policy representation, is seriously threatened by the existence of social and economic inequalities. One of these inequalities is based on income differences, and this is a particularly important form of inequality, given the flexibility with which money can potentially be converted into political influence.

Despite the importance of political equality, we know little about the extent to which it is realized in practice. It is certainly an oft-debated issue among citizens, politicians and scholars alike, with some arguing that a rich and powerful minority dominates the policy process and others insisting that policy is equally responsive to rich and poor. Until recently, however, much of this debate was conducted on the basis of little data and analysis.

This dissertation aimed to provide some of the missing information. It is part of a surging literature on the effects of income inequality on political representation. This literature has uncovered clear evidence that political outcomes are biased towards the preferences of the rich, but it is limited in several ways. The most important of these limitations is its

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This summary largely overlaps with chapter 6, section 6.1 of the main text.

geographical scope, with the vast majority of studies focusing on the very specific, most-likely case of the United States. I set out to move beyond this single case and to analyze unequal representation in a broader range of established democracies. Guiding my analysis was the following question: does government policy in established democracies respond more strongly to the preferences of high-income citizens than to the preferences of low- and middle-income citizens, and if so, how can we explain this unequal representation? To answer this question, I analyzed the effects of public opinion among different income groups on policy changes and party positions. I employed both cross-national (chapters 2 and 4) and single-country studies (chapters 3 and 5), and I combined various kinds of quantitative analysis (chapters 2, 3 and 4) with qualitative illustration and historical process-tracing (particularly chapter 5).

These analyses have produced three main findings. The first finding is the good news: that there is general responsiveness to public opinion in established democracies. There is clear evidence that public preferences – in the aggregate – are translated into policy changes (chapters 2 and 3). Moreover, responsiveness is also found in the election platforms of political parties (chapter 4). We can therefore say that policies and parties in established democracies generally represent the public will, which is good news to all those who consider this a key element of democracy.

The second main finding is the bad news: that policy representation is consistently and systematically stronger for high-income citizens than for low- and middle-income citizens. In short, the more money someone makes, the more likely it is that policy will follow their demands. This emerges from a comparative study of policy reform in the welfare state when using the most valid measurement of policy in the form of welfare generosity (chapter 2). It is also apparent in an analysis of a much broader range of policy issues in the Netherlands (chapter 3). The Netherlands is a least-likely case to find unequal representation due to its low level of income inequality, the small sums of money in politics and its highly proportional electoral system, yet even here, policy responsiveness is much stronger for the rich than for other income groups. While policy frequently takes the preferred direction of low- and middle-income citizens because this often overlaps with what high-income citizens want, the former have little to no independent influence on policy when they disagree with the latter. Furthermore, such disagreements are not marginal occurrences, especially on economic policies, which strongly divide rich and poor citizens. This means that unequal representation has tangible consequences for the policies that are adopted in established democracies.

The third finding concerns the more normatively neutral but politically crucial issue of

the causal mechanisms that bring about unequal representation, that is, the ways in which income can be converted into political influence. There are many potential mechanisms; the rich may be overrepresented because they donate more money to parties and candidates, because they participate in elections more often, because many politicians come from affluent backgrounds, because their demands are voiced more forcefully by organized interests or because they are structurally advantaged as investors and employers in economic life, to mention some prominent possibilities. My analysis of representation in the Netherlands revealed that policy responsiveness is stronger for voters than for non-voters at all income levels, meaning that differences in electoral participation between rich and poor contribute to unequal representation. At the same time, there is still a large gap in responsiveness between poor voters and rich non-voters, which suggests that other explanations are needed for a full account of the causal mechanisms (chapter 3). In addition, I found that the election programs of political parties – for a broad range of issues and a large number of countries – are biased towards the preferences of the rich, similar to policy changes. What is more, even the platforms of left parties do not represent the poor better than the rich; if anything, this is the other way around (chapter 4). Together, these findings suggest that the explanation for unequal representation cannot be placed solely at the demand side of electoral politics. That is to say, unequal representation is not just down to the fact that low- and middle-income citizens do not vote often enough, or perhaps do not vote in line with their policy preferences.

This dissertation's in-depth, qualitative case study of pension reform in the Netherlands expands on these insights (chapter 5). The analysis showed that, while there are clear differences between left-wing and right-wing parties, mainstream left-wing parties did not champion the demands of the poor, as these parties favored rapid increases in the retirement age. Furthermore, biases in the strength of organized interests – in particular, the weakness of labor unions – and the dominance of neoliberal ideas among political elites contributed to the passage of the policy. Support for another mechanism, based on the personal socioeconomic backgrounds of politicians, was more mixed, with a quantitative analysis finding no evidence for its importance (chapter 4), while a qualitative analysis found suggestive support (chapter 5).

In short, I conclude that there is general policy representation in established democracies, but this representation is starkly unequal, with the demands of high-income citizens receiving much more weight in the policy process than the demands of low- and middle-income citizens. I also conclude that this unequal representation in established democracies is a multifaceted phenomenon, with biases in organized interests, political participation, party politics, and dominant ideologies all likely to play a role in its creation.

The dissertation's findings have important implications for our understanding of the relationship between capitalism and democracy. In particular, the inequalities that are inherent in the former are at odds with the equality towards which the latter strives. To all those who value the ideal of political equality, this should provide an impetus to conduct additional analysis and consider political reforms to bring this ideal closer to reality.

Nederlandse Samenvatting

Politieke gelijkheid is een van de fundamenten van de democratie. Het is tegelijkertijd een rechtvaardiging voor democratisch bestuur en een doel waar het naar streeft. Het is echter niet een erg makkelijk doel om te bereiken. Politieke gelijkheid, wat ik zie als de afwezigheid van systematische vertekeningen in beleidsvertegenwoordiging, wordt ernstig bedreigd door het bestaan van sociale en economische ongelijkheden. Een van deze ongelijkheden is gebaseerd op inkomensverschillen, en dit is een bijzonder relevante vorm van ongelijkheid, gezien de flexibiliteit waarmee geld potentieel kan worden omgezet in politieke invloed.

Ondanks het belang van politieke gelijkheid weten we weinig over de mate waarin het in de praktijk wordt verwezenlijkt. Het is zeker een veelbesproken onderwerp onder burgers, politici en onderzoekers, waarbij sommigen beweren dat een rijke en machtige minderheid dominant is in het beleidsproces terwijl anderen volhouden dat rijke en arme burgers in gelijke mate worden vertegenwoordigd. Tot voor kort werd dit debat echter gevoerd op basis van weinig data en analyse.

Dit proefschrift had als doel om een deel van de ontbrekende informatie aan te vullen. Het is onderdeel van een groeiende literatuur over het effect van inkomensongelijkheid op politieke vertegenwoordiging. Deze literatuur heeft duidelijk bewijs gevonden van een

vertekening van politieke uitkomsten in het voordeel van de rijken, maar eerder onderzoek is in verschillende opzichten beperkt. De belangrijkste van deze beperkingen is de geografische focus, aangezien het overgrote deel van de studies zich richt op de specifieke, *most-likely* context van de Verenigde Staten. In deze studie heb ik verder gekeken dan deze ene casus en heb ik ongelijke vertegenwoordiging geanalyseerd in meerdere gevestigde democratieën. De leidraad van mijn analyse was de volgende vraag: reageert overheidsbeleid in gevestigde democratieën sterker op de wensen van rijke burgers dan op de wensen van burgers met midden en lage inkomens, en zo ja, hoe kunnen we zulke ongelijke vertegenwoordiging verklaren? Om deze vraag te beantwoorden ben ik nagegaan wat het effect is van publieke opinie onder verschillende inkomensgroepen op beleidsuitkomsten en partijposities. Ik heb zowel vergelijkende studies (hoofdstuk 2 en 4) als casusstudies uitgevoerd (hoofdstuk 3 en 5), waarin ik gebruik maak van zowel kwantitatieve analyse (hoofdstuk 2, 3 en 4) als kwalitatieve illustratie en *process-tracing* (hoofdstuk 5).

Deze analyses hebben drie hoofdbevindingen opgeleverd. De eerste bevinding is het goede nieuws, namelijk dat er in het algemeen responsiviteit is op publieke opinie in gevestigde democratieën. Er is duidelijk bewijs dat publieke voorkeuren gezamenlijk worden vertaald in beleidsveranderingen (hoofdstuk 2 en 3). Zulke responsiviteit is ook zichtbaar in de verkiezingsprogramma's van politieke partijen (hoofdstuk 4). We kunnen daarom zeggen dat beleid en partijen in gevestigde democratieën in het algemeen het volk vertegenwoordigen, wat goed nieuws is voor iedereen die dit ziet als een essentieel onderdeel van de democratie.

De tweede hoofdbevinding is het slechte nieuws: dat beleidsvertegenwoordiging consequent sterker is voor de hoge inkomens dan voor de lage en middeninkomens. Kort gezegd, hoe meer geld iemand verdient, hoe waarschijnlijker het is dat beleid diens wensen volgt. Dit komt naar voren uit een vergelijkende studie van beleidshervormingen in de verzorgingsstaat wanneer we gebruik maken van de meest valide meting van beleid in de vorm van de generositeit van sociaal beleid (hoofdstuk 2). Het blijkt ook uit een analyse van een veel breder scala aan beleidskwesties in Nederland (hoofdstuk 3). Nederland is een onwaarschijnlijke context om ongelijke vertegenwoordiging te vinden vanwege de lage inkomensongelijkheid, de kleine geldbedragen die omgaan in de politiek en het zeer proportionele kiesstelsel. Zelfs hier is beleidsresponsiviteit echter veel sterker voor de rijken dan voor andere inkomensgroepen. Hoewel beleid vaak aansluit op de voorkeuren van burgers met lage en middeninkomens, omdat deze voorkeuren vaak overlappen met wat de hoge inkomens willen, hebben de eerste twee groepen weinig tot geen onafhankelijke invloed op beleid wanneer ze het oneens zijn met de laatsten. Bovendien zijn dergelijke meningsverschillen verre van zeldzaam, vooral niet op het gebied van economisch beleid, waar rijke en arme burgers sterk verdeeld zijn.

Dit betekent dat ongelijke vertegenwoordiging concrete gevolgen heeft voor het beleid dat wordt gevoerd in gevestigde democratieën.

De derde bevinding betreft de normatief neutralere maar politiek cruciale kwestie van de causale mechanismen die tot ongelijke vertegenwoordiging leiden, dat wil zeggen de manieren waarop inkomen kan worden omgezet in politieke invloed. Er zijn veel mogelijke mechanismen; de rijken kunnen oververtegenwoordigd zijn omdat ze meer geld schenken aan partijen en kandidaten, omdat ze vaker stemmen tijdens verkiezingen, omdat veel politici een welvarende achtergrond hebben, omdat hun eisen beter worden vertolkt door belangengroepen of omdat ze structureel bevoordeeld zijn als investeerders en werkgevers in de economie, om enkele prominente mogelijkheden te noemen. Uit mijn analyse van vertegenwoordiging in Nederland bleek dat beleidsresponsiviteit sterker is voor kiezers dan voor niet-kiezers op alle inkomensniveaus, wat betekent dat verschillen in verkiezingsdeelname tussen rijk en arm bijdragen aan ongelijke vertegenwoordiging. Tegelijkertijd is er nog steeds een grote kloof in responsiviteit tussen arme kiezers en rijke niet-kiezers, wat suggereert dat er andere verklaringen nodig zijn voor dit fenomeen (hoofdstuk 3). Daarnaast vond ik dat de verkiezingsprogramma's van politieke partijen - voor een groot aantal beleidskwesties en landen – vertekend zijn in het voordeel van de rijken, vergelijkbaar met beleidswijzigingen. Bovendien vertegenwoordigen zelfs de standpunten van linkse partijen de armen niet beter dan de rijken; het omgekeerde lijkt eerder waar te zijn (hoofdstuk 4). Tezamen suggereren deze bevindingen dat de verklaring voor ongelijke vertegenwoordiging niet alleen aan de vraagzijde van de electorale politiek kan worden gelegd. Dat wil zeggen, ongelijke vertegenwoordiging is niet alleen te wijten aan het feit dat burgers met een laag of middeninkomen niet vaak genoeg stemmen, of misschien niet stemmen in overeenstemming met hun beleidsvoorkeuren.

Een diepgaande, kwalitatieve casusstudie over pensioenhervorming in Nederland bouwt voort op deze inzichten (hoofdstuk 5). Uit deze analyse bleek dat, hoewel er duidelijke verschillen zijn tussen linkse en rechtse partijen, de gevestigde linkse partijen zich niet inzetten voor de eisen van de armen, aangezien deze partijen voorstander waren van snelle stijgingen van de pensioenleeftijd. Bovendien droegen vertekeningen in de invloed van belangengroepen - in het bijzonder de zwakte van vakbonden - en de dominantie van neoliberale ideeën onder politieke elites bij aan de doorvoering van het beleid. Steun voor een ander mechanisme, gebaseerd op de persoonlijke sociaaleconomische achtergrond van politici, was gemengder, aangezien een kwantitatieve analyse hier geen bewijs voor vond (hoofdstuk 4), terwijl een kwalitatieve analyse suggestieve steun vond (hoofdstuk 5).

Samenvattend concludeer ik het volgende: er is algemene beleidsvertegenwoordiging in gevestigde democratieën, maar deze vertegenwoordiging is bijzonder ongelijk. De eisen van burgers met een hoog inkomen krijgen veel meer gewicht in het beleidsproces dan de eisen van burgers met lage en middeninkomens. Ik concludeer ook dat ongelijke vertegenwoordiging in gevestigde democratieën een veelzijdig fenomeen is, waarbij vertekeningen in de invloed van belangengroepen, politieke participatie, partijpolitiek en dominante ideologieën allemaal een rol spelen.

De bevindingen van dit proefschrift hebben belangrijke implicaties voor ons begrip van het verband tussen kapitalisme en democratie. De ongelijkheden die inherent zijn aan de eerste staan op gespannen voet met de gelijkheid waarnaar de laatste streeft. Voor iedereen die het ideaal van politieke gelijkheid belangrijk vindt is dit hopelijk een stimulans om aanvullende analyses uit te voeren en politieke hervormingen te overwegen om dit ideaal verder te verwezenlijken.