UNEQUAL DEMOCRACIES

Working paper n°10

October, 2019

Real But Unequal Representation in Welfare State Reform

W. Schakel (Leiden University and University of Amsterdam)
w.schakel@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

B. Burgoon (University of Amsterdam)
b.m.burgoon@uva.nl

A. Hakhverdian (University of Amsterdam)
a.hakhverdian@uva.nl

FACULTÉ DES SCIENCES DE LA SOCIÉTÉ
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE

ABSTRACT:

Scholars have long debated whether welfare policymaking in industrialized democracies is responsive to citizen preferences, and whether such policymaking is more responsive to rich than to poor citizens. These debates have been hampered, however, by difficulties in matching data on attitudes towards particular policies to data on changes in actual policy generosity. This paper uses better, more targeted measures of policy change that allow more valid exploration of responsiveness for a significant range of democracies. It does so by linking multi-country and multi-wave survey data on attitudes towards health, pension and unemployment policies, to data on actual policy generosity, not just spending, in these domains. This reveals that attitudes strongly correlate with subsequent changes in welfare generosity in the three policy areas, and that such responsiveness is much stronger for richer than for poorer citizens. Representation is likely real but also vastly unequal in the welfare politics of industrialized democracies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

This paper was presented at a workshop held at the University of Geneva on June 25-26, 2019, made possible by funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement no. 741538). This is the penultimate version of a paper that will be forthcoming in *Politics and Society*. Previous versions were presented at the University of Amsterdam, University of Bergen, Uni-versity of Tokyo, the Vienna University of Economics and Business and annual meetings of the Council for European Studies (2018), European Political Science Association (2018) and the Mid-west Political Science Association (2018). For comments and suggestions, we thank Wouter van der Brug, Ursula Daxecker, Luc Franssen, Theresa Kuhn, Sijeong Lim, Mike Medeiros, Daphne van der Pas, Thomas Plümper, Philipp Rehm, Gijs Schumacher, Seiki Tanaka and Vera Troeger, as well as the Editorial Board of Politics and Society. This research for the paper was supported by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, grant number 406-15-089.

1. Introduction

The quality of democratic representation in policymaking, including in welfare state policymaking. remains a source of enduring and fundamental controversy in developed democracies. One key debate involves the extent to which attitudes of citizens on issues of welfare state reform actually constrain or impel policymakers to alter existing social policies in line with citizen wants. Some studies have found solid links between opinion and policy,[1] while other studies have found links to be unclear due to either data limitations constraining causal inference about such links, or to be weak due to real politics blocking any simple aggregation of citizen preferences into policy change.[2] A second, related debate concerns inequality in political representation, where recent studies focused particularly on the United States have found that the average voter and certainly poor citizens have much less influence on subsequent policy changes than do wealthier citizens.[3] The principal controversy, here, is whether such unequal democracy applies to key features of the welfare state and extends to settings outside of the United States, where traditions and more inclusive institutions of governance might yield more equitable political representation.

Both debates about representation in welfare policymaking remain unresolved, in part due to serious empirical constraints. Among the most significant has been the difficulty of matching valid and systematic measures of citizen attitudes towards particular social policy reforms to enough measures of downstream changes in social-policy regulations to support meaningful causal inferences about representation. The most careful of existing studies have linked patterns of attitudes of particular groups to changes or incidence of policy in subsequent years.[4] But even these studies work with very rough measures of policy change, such as changes in government spending. Such measures are likely to suffer from what has become known as the "dependent variable problem," where spending metrics do not fully coincide with regulatory and legislative changes in social policies about which citizens

---

[1] E.g. Clem Brooks and Jeff Manza, *Why Welfare States Persist: The Importance of Public Opinion in Democracies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. Mackuen and James Stimson, *The Macro Polity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Stuart N. Soroka and Christopher Wlezien, *Degrees of Democracy: Politics, Public Opinion, and Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[2] Lane Kenworthy, "The Effect of Public Opinion on Social Policy Generosity," *Socio-Economic Review* 7, no. 4 (2009): 727–40.

[3] Larry M. Bartels (2015), *The Social Welfare Deficit: Public Opinion, Policy Responsiveness, and Political Inequality in Affluent Democracies*, online at http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/files/Bartels2015.pdf; Larry M. Bartels, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Martin Gilens, *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); cf. Joseph Daniel Ura and Christopher R. Ellis, "Income, Preferences, and the Dynamics of Policy Responsiveness," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 41, no. 4 (2008): 785–94.

[4] E.g. Bartels, *The Social Welfare Deficit*; Soroka and Wlezien, *Degrees of Democracy*.

actually express preferences. Large shifts in spending per capita can and do swing free of actual policy changes – for instance, when entitlement spending goes up with higher take-up during economic downturns.

In this paper we partly overcome such empirical challenges by matching attitudes of (various) segments of a population regarding social policy to better estimates of change in the actual generosity of such social policy. The former we accomplish by focusing on several waves of the multi-country International Social Science Program (ISSP) and its questions about social policy provisions with respect to unemployment assistance, pension provisions and healthcare assistance. These data provide leverage to validly and reliably measure support for these features of the welfare state, across the spectrum of respondents' household income for a considerable cross-section of countries and period of time. Equally important, we match these data to measures of changes in the programmatic generosity of these same policy areas, relying on generosity measures from the Comparative Welfare Entitlements Database (CWED).[5]

Based on such empirical improvements, our principal expectations are two-fold. First, we expect that attitudes on average are associated with measures of subsequent policy generosity, even if such attitudes might be less associated with subsequent spending. Second, we expect that wealthier citizens more strongly influence actual social policy development than do poorer citizens, on grounds that wealthier citizens can find both formal and informal footholds to pressure policy change. Our study finds support for both of these findings in a range of models, specifications and estimators linking individual attitudes to subsequent changes in unemployment-, pension- and healthcare-related generosity. We provide evidence that citizen preferences are not expressed in vain, tending to show up in subsequent shifts in the policy provisions of welfare states. However, not all citizens are equal in such political expression: the poorest tend to have no statistically significant influence on subsequent policy changes, whereas the wealthiest do. Hence, the political economy of welfare state reform in industrialized democracies can best be characterized as manifesting real but unequal representation for its citizens.

2. (Unequal) Representation in Welfare State Policymaking?

There is long-standing debate among policymakers, activists and academics of all disciplinary and methodological stripes about the degree and character of political

[5] Lyle Scruggs 2014, *Social Welfare Generosity Scores in CWED 2: A Methodological Genealogy*, online at http://cwed2.org/Data/CWED2_WP_01_2014_Scruggs.pdf.

representation of broad publics and citizen attitudes in actual development of the welfare state. The debate involves two related controversies.

One major controversy concerns the extent to which policymaking is responsive to political demands of citizens.[6] In developed democracies, some modicum of representation should be broadly present, but in welfare state policymaking and elsewhere this turns out to be far from obvious. On the one hand, plenty of research supports the intuition that public opinion tends to translate into policy change. Stimson, Mackuen and Erikson, for instance, highlight two electoral mechanisms linking citizens preferences and policy outcomes: electoral turnover, an indirect pathway flowing from citizen preferences to election outcomes, and from election outcomes to policy; and political actors anticipating electoral defeat and adapting to public preferences so as to avoid such sanction.[7] Beyond the electoral arena, organized interests like unions, employer associations, non-governmental organizations and civic associations can serve as channels through which public attitudes influence policy outcomes.[8] These mechanisms can give life to the role of the median voter in spatial theories of voting[9] or to various strains of pluralism in policymaking.[10] Empirically, many scholars have found evidence of such representation. For many polities and policy areas, studies have unearthed (causal or associational) links between public opinion and aggregate policy outputs in democracies.[11]

---

[6] We interpret responsiveness as synonymous with substantive representation, though we recognize the complexity of representation and of paths through which preferences shape policy (cf. Nadia Urbinati and Mark E. Warren, "The Concept of Representation in Contemporary Democratic Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11, no. 1 (2008): 387–412).

[7] James Stimson, Michael B. Mackuen, and Robert S. Erikson, "Dynamic Representation," *American Political Science Review* 89, no. 3 (1995): 543–65.

[8] Martin Rama and Guido Tabellini, "Lobbying by Capital and Labor over Trade and Labor Market Policies," *European Economic Review* 42, no. 7 (1998): 1295–1316; Anne Rasmussen, Brendan J. Carroll and David Lowery, "Representatives of the Public? Public Opinion and Interest Group Activity," *European Journal of Political Research* 53, no. 2: 250–68 (2014); Anne Rasmussen, Lars Kai Mäder and Stefanie Reher, "With a Little Help From The People? The Role of Public Opinion in Advocacy Success," *Comparative Political Studies* 51, no. 2 (2018): 139–64.

[9] Anthony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy," *Journal of Political Economy* 65, no. 2 (1957): 135–50.

[10] Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets: The World's Political-Economic Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Elmer Eric Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (Boston: Wadsworth, 1960).

[11] Brooks and Manza, *Why Welfare States Persist*; Paul Burstein, "Bringing the Public Back in: Should Sociologists Consider the Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy?" *Social Forces* 77, no. 1 (1998): 27–62; Erikson, Mackuen, and Stimson, *The Macro Polity*; Sara B. Hobolt and Robert Klemmensen, "Government Responsiveness and Political Competition in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 3 (2008): 309–37; Lawrence R. Jacobs, *The Health of Nations: Health Policy and Public Opinion in the U.S. and Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy," *American Political Science Review* 77, no. 1 (1983): 175–90; Anne Rasmussen, Stefanie Reher and Dimiter Toshkov, "The Opinion-Policy Nexus in Europe and the Role of Political Institutions," *European Journal of Political Research*, online first (2018); Soroka and Wlezien, *Degrees of Democracy*. For

On the other hand, substantial scholarship has questioned these findings. Some scholars have judged citizen attitudes as so diffuse and vague, or vaguely known, as to be very blunt instruments in policymaking.[12] Major critiques of pluralism, further, have articulated why popular positions are blocked, where politics is instead the province of organized special-interest groups, lobbies and elites in policy areas including social policymaking.[13] A related view emphasizes the relative autonomy of the state, where citizen-voter pressures for welfare-state policies are eclipsed by the prerogatives of state actors and state institutions.[14] Consistent with these voices is empirical skepticism towards any association between citizen attitudes and aggregate policy outcomes as (spurious) correlation rather than causation.[15]

A second and related debate concerns whether there is income inequality in representation. A long tradition of Marxian and other left-wing critiques of pluralism, for instance, has explored the extent to which wealth confers political privilege.[16] Welfare-state scholars have long studied how economic privilege can increase political influence, a view that sits comfortably with the power-resources tradition of welfare-state research.[17] Most

---

connections to welfare-state politics, see Evelyne Huber and John D. Stephens, *Development and Crisis of the Welfare State: Parties and Policies in Global Markets* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Peter Taylor-Gooby, "What Citizens Want from the State," In *International Social Attitudes: The 10th BSA Report*, eds. Roger Jowell, Lindsay Brook, and Lizanne Dowds (Brookfield: Dartmouth Publishing, 1993).

[12] Pierre Bourdieu, "Public Opinion Does Not Exist," In *Communication and Class Struggle: An Anthology in 2 Volumes*, eds. Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegelaub (New York: International General, 1979); Susan Herbst, *Reading Public Opinion: How Political Actors View the Democratic Process* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[13] Cf. Fred L. Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State," *Socialist Revolution* 33, no. 7 (1977): 6–28; Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro, *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Theodore J. Lowi, *The End of Liberalism: Ideology, Policy, and the Crisis of Public Authority* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969).

[14] Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds, *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Margaret Weir, Ann Orloff and Theda Skocpol, "Introduction: Understanding American Social Politics," In *The Politics of Social Policy in the United States*, eds. Margaret Weir, Ann Orloff, and Theda Skocpol (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[15] Kenworthy, "The Effect of Public Opinion on Social Policy Generosity"; John Myles, "Comment on Brooks and Manza: Welfare States and Public Opinion," *American Sociological Review* 71, no. 3 (2006): 495–98. In their influential recent book, Achen and Bartels write that any correlation between the "policy choices of legislators" and the preferences of their constituents are "primarily of descriptive interest – that is, not causal" (Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 313).

[16] G. William Domhoff, *The Powers That Be: Processes of Ruling-Class Domination in America* (New York: Random House, 1978); Thomas Ferguson, *Golden Rule: The Investment Theory of Party Competition and the Logic of Money-Driven Political Systems* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956).

[17] James P. Allan and Lyle Scruggs, "Political Partisanship and Welfare State Reform in Advanced Industrial Societies," *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 3 (2004): 496–512; Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Politics*

important, perhaps, has been work focused on dis-functions of democracy in the United States, including the pioneering work of Martin Gilens, Larry Bartels, and others, who have found evidence that attitudes of the wealthiest citizens are reflected in subsequent policy shifts more than are attitudes of median or poorer citizens.[18] Here we see that the rich (e.g. 90th percentile in the income distribution) get their way more than do poor (e.g. 10th percentile) or middle-class citizens (e.g. 50th percentile) in many policy areas, including social policy. Sources of such political inequality can be structural[19] or more instrumental,[20] including: money in electoral politics;[21] breakdown of public organized interests, particularly organized break up of unions;[22] and underrepresentation of lower class interests in political office/elite positions.[23] Other scholars have found income-based inequalities in representation in cross-national contexts, though the evidence is still scarce.[24] And recent work has explored how attitudes across the income spectrum relate to subsequent changes in welfare state spending, revealing in a cross-section of countries modest skews in favor of the wealthiest citizens.[25]

Some scholars, however, contend that the wealthiest citizens are not necessarily better represented in social policymaking than their poorer counterparts. The pluralist perspective expects that policy can be influenced by most any segment of the income spectrum, by virtue of political engagement of particular groupings like religious organizations, unions, or other poor-people's movements.[26] Recent empirical research suggests, further, that middle-class,

---

Against Markets (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Walter Korpi, *The Democratic Class Struggle* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983).

[18] Bartels, *Unequal Democracy*; Gilens, *Affluence and Influence*; Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens," *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 3 (2014): 565–81.

[19] Block, *The Ruling Class Does Not Rule*.

[20] Ferguson, *Golden Rule*.

[21] Elizabeth Rigby and Gerald C. Wright, "Political Parties and Representation of the Poor in the American States," *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 3 (2013): 552–65.

[22] Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, "Winner-Take-All Politics: Public Policy, Political Organization, and the Precipitous Rise of Top Incomes in the United States," *Politics & Society*, 38, no. 2 (2010): 152-204.

[23] Nicholas Carnes, *White-Collar Government: The Hidden Role of Class in Economic Policy Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Geoffrey Evans and James Tilley, *The New Politics of Class: The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[24] Wouter Schakel, "Unequal Policy Responsiveness in the Netherlands," *Socio-Economic Review*, advance online publication; Yvette Peters and Sander J. Ensink, "Differential Responsiveness in Europe: The Effects of Preference Difference and Electoral Participation," *West European Politics* 38, no. 3 (2015): 577–600; Jan Rosset, Nathalie Giger and Julian Bernauer, "More Money, Fewer Problems? Cross-Level Effects of Economic Deprivation on Political Representation," *West European Politics* 36, no. 4 (2013): 817–35.

[25] Bartels, *The Social Welfare Deficit*.

[26] E.g. Dahl, *Who Governs?*; Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage, 1979); David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process: Public Interests and Public Opinion* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1951).

median-income citizens often agree with their richest counterparts, producing a portrait of less unequal representation.[27]

Progress or partial resolution to both debates is constrained by important limits in empirical work informing these debates. A first problem is that the research designs linking survey-data to data on policy outcomes have limited degrees-of-freedom and over-time variation that severely hamper causal inferences about representation. For instance, an attractive strategy has been to pool many surveys within a single country, linking variation in opinions across time and issues to subsequent policy changes. But this limits variation in welfare-state policymaking and between polities – beyond the United States with its distinctive institutions and historical legacies. And yet, cross-national comparisons have focused on (at most) country-year observations and policy output in levels, in very limited pairings that prevent sufficient control for inferential threats like endogeneity and omitted variable bias.

The endogeneity problem is particularly problematic in such research.[28] There are strong theoretical and empirical reasons to expect welfare policy outcomes to influence attitudes towards welfare states, and not just the other way around.[29] Specifying the dependent variable in levels allows only very summary techniques to redress possible reverse-causation (e.g. through Hausman tests like Brooks and Manza,[30] and modeling some lag between attitudes and subsequent policy output). By this logic, a few scholars have provided significant improvements by focusing on multi-country and survey material matched to subsequent spending changes,[31] including welfare spending.[32] But this does constrain the observations available to estimate within and between correlation between attitudes and policy change.

A second empirical shortcoming involves the weak concordance between the substance of attitudes and of political outcomes. Some studies look for correlation between

[27] J. Alexander Branham, Stuart N. Soroka and Christopher Wlezien, "When Do the Rich Win?" *Political Science Quarterly* 132, no. 1 (2017): 43–62; Peter K. Enns, "Relative Policy Support and Coincidental Representation," *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 4 (2015): 1053–64; cf. Martin Gilens, "The Insufficiency of 'Democracy by Coincidence': A Response to Peter K. Enns," *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 4 (2015): 1065–71.

[28] Brooks and Manza, *Why Welfare States Persist*; Kenworthy, "The Effect of Public Opinion on Social Policy Generosity"; Myles, "Comment on Brooks and Manza".

[29] E.g. Jane Gingrich and Ben Ansell, "Preferences in Context: Micro Preferences, Macro Contexts, and the Demand for Social Policy," *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 12 (2012): 1624–54; Jæger, Mads Meier, "Welfare Regimes and Attitudes Towards Redistribution: The Regime Hypothesis Revisited," *European Sociological Review* 22, no. 2 (2006): 157–70.

[30] Brooks and Manza, *Why Welfare States Persist*.

[31] Christopher Wlezien and Stuart N. Soroka, "Political Institutions and the Opinion–Policy Link," *West European Politics* 35, no. 6 (2012): 1407–32.

[32] Bartels, *The Social Welfare Deficit*; Bartels, *Unequal Democracy*.

attitudes about broadly-described welfare provisions and policy efforts – say total social expenditures and transfers. Given the differences in politics governing different welfare-state policies, say pensions versus unemployment insurance, such combinations are very rough.

A bigger problem, however, is that even the best studies matching attitudes to particular social-policy efforts have focused on spending measures of such effort. This allows substantial coverage over time, countries and social-policy dimensions, but suffers from what social policy literature has dubbed "the dependent variable problem."[33] This problem is "a noticeable absence of reflection on how to conceptualize, operationalize and measure change within welfare states."[34] As Esping-Andersen bluntly put it, "it's difficult to imagine that anyone struggled for spending *per se.*"[35] Indeed, even citizens saying they want to increase spending on social policy protections are in all likelihood saying they want to improve the level of social protection. Changes in spending reflect many developments other than the generosity of such protection, for instance higher unemployment in downturns that can increase spending even where actual protection and insurance stay the same or drop. As Allan and Scruggs point out, "[a]s long as the percentage growth of dependents in a program (e.g., the unemployed) exceeds the percentage per-capita reduction in benefits, aggregate social spending will be higher."[36] The problem is doubly perverse for studies looking at spending as a share of GDP, where macroeconomic downturns mean a drop in the denominator of measures of welfare effort.[37]

More direct measures of benefit generosity would make much more sense. One might focus on net replacement rates, as in data gathered by the OECD and elsewhere,[38] or

[33] Allan and Scruggs, "Political Partisanship and Welfare State Reform in Advanced Industrial Societies"; Jochen Clasen and Nico A. Siegel, eds, *Investigating Welfare State Change: The "Dependent Variable Problem" in Comparative Analysis* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2007); Christoffer Green-Pedersen, "The Dependent Variable Problem within the Study of Welfare State Retrenchment: Defining the Problem and Looking for Solutions," *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 6, no. 1 (2004): 3–14; Stefan Kühner, "Country-Level Comparisons of Welfare State Change Measures: Another Facet of the Dependent Variable Problem Within the Comparative Analysis of the Welfare State," *Journal of European Social Policy* 17, no. 1 (2007): 5–18; Sabina Stiller and Kees Van Kersbergen, "The Matching Problem within Comparative Welfare State Research: How to Bridge Abstract Theory and Specific Hypotheses," *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 10, no. 2 (2008): 133–49.

[34] Clasen and Siegel, *Investigating Welfare State Change*, 4.

[35] Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 21. He also observes, more fully, that "expenditures present a circumspect and possibly misleading picture of welfare-state differences" (p. 106).

[36] Allan and Scruggs, "Political Partisanship and Welfare State Reform," 498.

[37] See Peters and Ensink, "Differential Responsiveness in Europe."

[38] Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (2005), "OECD Pensions at a Glance," online at http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/finance-and-investment/oecd-pensions-at-a-glance-2005/replacement-rates_pension_glance-2005-6-en; Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (2014), "Tax and Benefit Systems: OECD Indicators," online at http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/benefits-and-wages.htm; Olaf Van Vliet and Koen Caminada, *Unemployment Replacement Rates Dataset Among 34 Welfare States, 1971-2009: An*

composites that also gauge other aspects of generosity, such as eligibility, waiting times and duration. Such measures, in fact, exist, such as Esping-Andersen's "de-commodification" measures[39] or the more refined composites developed by Scruggs and colleagues in the Comparative Welfare Entitlements Database (CWED).[40] To date, however, such measures have never been explored in relation to gauging political representation.[41]

3. Approach and Hypotheses

We address major shortcomings in the study of policy responsiveness by matching high-quality survey data gauging support for particular welfare policies to high-quality country-year data on such policies in subsequent years. These data provide improved leverage to address controversies about both general representation and unequal representation in social policy spending *and* generosity. To guide our analysis, we focus on four hypotheses.

Our first two hypotheses concern whether citizen attitudes in the aggregate influence welfare policymaking. While changes in public sentiments may require significant time to play out in political life, the many mechanisms linking citizen wants to legislative and executive functions in any democratic party-system ought to yield a positive connection between public opinions and subsequent policy changes.

Hypothesis 1a: *The mean or median level of citizen support for a given aspect of welfare policy reform in a given country and year should correlate positively with subsequent policy change in that country.*

The focus here is on subsequent *change* in policy effort, as opposed to levels of policy outcomes, since we want to gauge whether citizen support for more or less protection yields subsequent retrenchment or expansion in policy provisions. What "subsequent" means is an uncertain empirical issue of how long it takes for citizen sentiments expressed in a given year to percolate into political pressure and policy change. Note also that the hypothesis encompasses all democratic settings and all social policy dimensions. One might expect

---

Update, Extension and Modification of the Scruggs' Welfare State Entitlements Data Set (NEUJOBS Special Report No. 2, Leiden University, 2009).

[39] Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*.

[40] Lyle Scruggs, Detlef Jahn and Kati Kuitto, *Comparative Welfare Entitlements Dataset 2: Version 2017-09* (University of Connecticut and University of Greifswald, 2017).

[41] A partial exception to this can be found in Lyle Scruggs' own work (Allan and Scruggs, "Political Partisanship and Welfare State Reform"; Lyle Scruggs and Thomas J. Hayes, "The Influence of Inequality on Welfare Generosity: Evidence from the US States," *Politics & Society* 45, no. 1: 35-66). However, the link with public preferences remains implicit in this research.

public attitudes to correlate with policy developments more strongly in some countries than others, or with respect to some faces of social policy more than others. But in the present analysis we do not have strong theoretical priors on these issues, and treat differences across countries and aspects of social policy as empirical questions.

What is crucial to this hypothesis (and those below) is that we compare attitudes on a given policy and country to *subsequent changes within that same policy and country.* Indeed, attitudes might vary across faces of social policy in any given country and at any given time. For instance, in a given country and year, citizens might support increased or more generous unemployment-related social benefits but then the opposite with respect to pension benefits. Our first Hypothesis then implies policy expansion with respect to unemployment-related benefits, and the opposite with respect to pension benefits. These results can also be pooled across policy areas, such that Hypothesis 1a predicts a general pattern of (net) representation.

Our second expectation is that a distinction should be made between subsequent change in social-policy spending as opposed to change in measures of generosity. Citizen attitudes are likely to be more vague and less strongly felt with respect to broad spending measures than with respect to actual generosity in policy-program benefits; recall Esping-Andersen's quip that no one agitates for spending per sé. In any event, changes in spending reflect economic and conjuncture-related developments that are separate from the substance of social-policy benefits; as noted above, there are many macroeconomic conditions where spending on a program will rise or fall even if the substantive benefits provided do not change or are altered in the opposite direction to spending shifts. In contrast, changes in substantive policy generosity directly capture provisions and benefits that can be accessed (or not) by citizens, and should reflect, in a way less muddied by background economic developments, citizen attitudes about and policy choices toward social policy. Such reasoning supports a second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1b: *The mean or median level of citizen support for a given aspect of welfare policy reform in a given country and year should correlate more positively with subsequent change in benefit generosity than in spending in that country.*

The remaining hypotheses concern our second controversy about inequality in political representation. We take seriously the unresolved character of this controversy, but we expect some inequality in representation in line with earlier scholarship on the best-studied patterns in U.S. experience. Differences in political system and representation in non-

US political systems might dampen the kinds of differences in representation based on income that have been unearthed in the U.S. context. But even in more inclusive democratic systems conferring better representation in social-policymaking, wealthier citizens have more information, cognitive advantages in engaging politics, ties to elite networks, and structural power as investors and employers.[42] These considerations underlie our main expectation of income inequality of representation in social policymaking:

Hypothesis 2a: *Support among high-income citizens for a given aspect of welfare policy reform in a given country and year, should correlate more positively with subsequent change in that country than does support among low-income citizens.*

This Hypothesis does not specify "high income" and "low income." We treat these also as empirical questions, focusing on various measurements as explained below. The hypothesis also does not specify *a priori* that high- and low-income citizens should take different positions. Of course, high-income citizens are usually disproportionate net *contributors* to social policy, and low-income citizens disproportionate net *beneficiaries*, such that wealthier individuals likely prefer less expansion and more contraction in welfare generosity than do their poorer counterparts.[43] But this is orthogonal to our focus on actual representation – that the attitudes of the rich should get more policy traction than do the attitudes of the poor. More relevant is that differences in representation might show-up only when rich and poor attitudes clearly diverge, a possibility we explore empirically below.

As with the first two Hypotheses, we expect that representation of high- and of low-income citizens play out differently for spending than for benefit generosity. We expect some inequality in political representation, however welfare effort is measured. But for the reasons articulated above – that attitudes focus more on substance of benefits than on spending per sé, and that spending reflect macroeconomic shifts as much as such benefit substance –

[42] Block, *The Ruling Class Does Not Rule*; William K. Carroll, Meindert Fennema and Eelke M. Heemskerk, "Constituting Corporate Europe: A Study of Elite Social Organization," *Antipode* 42, no. 4 (2010): 811–43; Sofie Marien, Marc Hooghe and Ellen Quintelier, "Inequalities in Non-Institutionalised Forms of Political Participation: A Multi-Level Analysis of 25 Countries," *Political Studies* 58, no. 1 (2010): 187–213.
[43] Pablo Beramendi and Philipp Rehm, "Who Gives, Who Gains? Progressivity and Preferences," *Comparative Political Studies* 49, no. 4 (2016): 529–63; Lane Kenworthy and Jonas Pontusson, "Rising Inequality and the Politics of Redistribution in Affluent Countries," *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 3 (2005): 449–71; Allan H. Meltzer and Scott F. Richard, "Tests of a Rational Theory of the Size of Government," *Public Choice* 41, no. 3 (1983): 403–18; Benjamin I. Page, Larry M. Bartels and Jason Seawright, "Democracy and the Policy Preferences of Wealthy Americans," *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 1 (2013): 51–73.

inequalities in representation should show up more strongly in subsequent changes in social-benefit generosity than in spending. Hence our final hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2b: *With respect to reform or change in benefit generosity more than in spending, support among high-income citizens for a given aspect of welfare policy reform in a given country and year should correlate more strongly positively with subsequent change in that country than does support among low-income citizens.*

Hypothesis 2a and 2b are, like 1a and 1b, general with respect to the timing of "subsequent" change, or the countries or aspects of welfare-state policy where unequal representation is hypothesized to emerge. Differences across time-lags in policy change, between countries, or across faces of social policy are empirical questions for our analysis.

4. Data and Methods

To analyze the hypotheses above, we combine multiple datasets on citizen attitudes to multiple datasets on policy changes. The combination reveals matched empirical variation in both attitudes towards welfare state development, and in closely related policy outputs with respect to spending and generosity – all across distinct topics or aspects of welfare policy, across a substantial cross-section of countries, and across multiple periods of time. Such data allow us to explore the association between a particular group's expressed preference for more or less of a particular aspect of welfare policy in a given country and year on the one hand, and the subsequent change in policy generosity for *that same* aspect of policy within the same country-year on the other hand.

Independent variables: citizen support for welfare state provisions. Citizen attitudes are gathered from a single multi-country, multi-wave dataset, the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) time-series cross-section data, in particular the ISSP's repeated Role of Government modules, included in four waves so far (in 1985, 1990, 1996 and 2006). These modules contain questions on social-policy preferences. The most useful, repeated questions ask respondents whether they want to see more or less government spending in different areas of welfare policy protection.[44] From this, we use the questions focusing on three areas in particular: pensions, unemployment and healthcare.

[44] The specific wording is: "Listed below are various areas of government spending [health / old age pensions / unemployment benefits]. Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say 'much more', it might require a tax increase to pay for it."

These repeated questions have several benefits for our exploration. They yield broad coverage spanning a relatively long period of time encompassing substantial trends in welfare-state policymaking, and spanning a range of democratic polities in North America, Europe and Asia. In addition, they address well-defined arenas of social policy about which citizens can be expected to have opinions, and they are phrased in terms of changes relative to a status quo: whether respondents want more or less spending on unemployment, pension programs or health. While a nominal focus on spending is ambiguous, it connotes level of generosity (even if actual changes in spending need not co-vary with actual policy generosity in terms of accessibility or benefits provided). This is the most likely interpretation by lay-citizens confronted with such a survey question, for whom more complicated fiscal calculation is much less likely than simple judgment of whether the substantive program should be more or less generous in terms of benefits and conditionality provided by a given program relative to existing generosity of benefits. If so, the survey questions gauge support for generosity/program-size *relative* to the *status quo ante*, and can be matched to subsequent *changes* in actual spending or metrics of generosity.

To gauge preferences for increased or decreased welfare provisions at different levels of the income distribution, we first recoded the answer categories so that strongly agreeing to an increase in spending got a score of 100; agreeing became 50; neither agreeing nor disagreeing became 0; disagreeing became -50; and strongly disagreeing became -100.[45] Since the precise position of "low-incomes" and "high-incomes" is somewhat arbitrary, we focus on four different but common conceptions of "low versus high" income: the 1st versus 3rd terciles; the 1st versus 5th quintiles; the 10th versus 90th percentiles; and the 5th versus 95th percentiles.

Our measurement of attitudes across levels of income relies on ISSP measures of household income. These income measures are not without their problems, mainly arising from varying question wording across participating countries. Some countries ask for gross income while others ask for net income; some ask for monthly income while others ask for annual income; and some describe sources of income in the question while others do not.[46] This diversity complicates comparing the same income groups across countries. For the study of inequalities in representation, however, this is a modest obstacle, because we compare rich and poor *within the same country in a standardized way* – a comparison that should not be

[45] See also Wlezien and Soroka, "Political Institutions and the Opinion–Policy Link".
[46] Jürgen H.P. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik and Uwe Warner, *Harmonising Demographic and Socio-Economic Variables for Cross-National Comparative Survey Research* (New York: Springer, 2013).

biased by differences in the income question. We expect the measure to systematically and meaningfully capture how different income segments in a country-year perceive social policy relative to one another.[47]

To gauge general spending preferences, we focus on two measures: the preference of respondents at the 50th income percentile and the average preference of all respondents combined, the latter not dependent on the survey's income measures. For our measures across the income spread of the ISSP samples, we calculate scores at the various percentiles by regressing the recoded questions on household income and its squared term (using probability weights) and taking the resulting predicted scores at the indicated points in the income distribution. This approach follows Gilens[48] and addresses the fact that different ISSP countries have different income categorizations.

To give a descriptive overview of our opinion measures, Figure 1 presents the sample means for the 10th, 50th and 90th income percentiles pooled across all sampled countries. This reveals clear and expected differences between low and high incomes: low-income respondents want more generous social policies than do high-income respondents. Also, general demand for increased welfare effort is most pronounced for healthcare and pensions. In the case of unemployment, high-income respondents wish to see slightly *less* spending or welfare effort; low incomes wish to see slightly more; while the mean for the 50th percentile (as well as the overall mean) is close to zero. Comparing the different policy areas also shows that the differences between low and high incomes are largest for unemployment (28 percentage points between the 10th and 90th percentiles) and pensions (23 percentage points), and smaller for healthcare (13 percentage points).

Dependent variables: changes in spending and in generosity outcomes. Our dependent variables consist of policy changes regarding the welfare state. One set of measures involves *changes in government spending* on healthcare, pensions and unemployment – *measured separately* so as to be matched to the specific breakdown of the ISSP questions – and with the spending measures taken per capita.[49] We focus on public and

[47] Roughly one-in-six respondents have a missing value on household income. These respondents tend to be slightly less educated and less likely to be employed than non-missing counterparts. Hence, household income of these respondents is likely below average. But spending preferences of those with missing values are almost identical to the sample as a whole. So we do not expect non-response to bias our results, except attenuation bias by constraining the sample's full income variation (results available upon request).
[48] Gilens, *Affluence and Influence*, 61-62.
[49] Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (2016), "Social Expenditures Database (SOCX)," online at https://www.oecd.org/social/expenditure.htm.

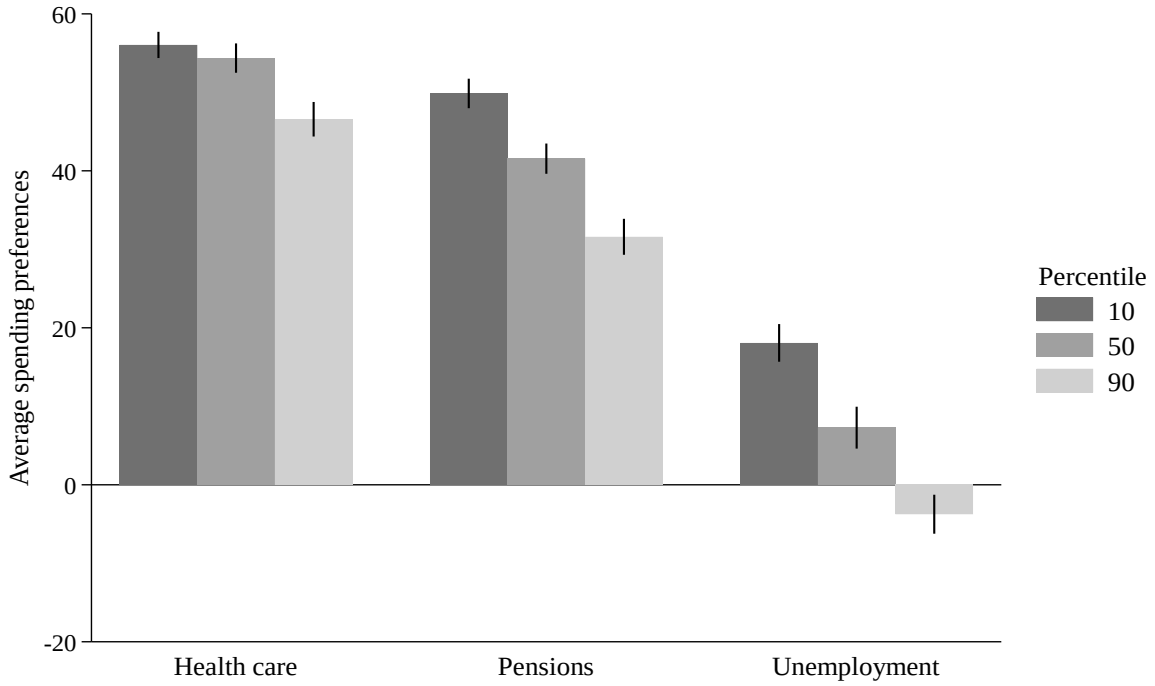

Figure 1: Mean Spending Preferences of Low and High Incomes by Policy Area (Error Bars Indicate One Standard Error Above and Below the Mean)

mandatory private spending in 2010 U.S. dollars and purchasing power parity. Our second set of measures focuses on substantive policy generosity based on the Comparative Welfare Entitlements Dataset (CWED).[50] The CWED contains several measures of welfare-state replacement rates, benefit duration, benefit eligibility and coverage or take-up rates with regard to sickness, pensions and unemployment. Improving upon Esping-Andersen's concept of "de-commodification," the CWED combines these measures into indices of welfare-state generosity for each of three policy areas: pensions, unemployment, and sickness. We focus on precisely these policy-specific measures of generosity, because they parallel the spending measures and can be matched to the ISSP-questions about pensions, unemployment and healthcare provisions. The fit between the ISSP survey topics and the CWED generosity topics are one-to-one for pensions and unemployment assistance. But the overlap is less one-to-one for healthcare/sickness: The ISSP questions focus on healthcare, while the CWED focuses on sickness provisions – the former being a broader palette of provisions than just sickness-related benefits tied to employment. Still, sickness benefits are an important component of healthcare and can plausibly proxy for the broader health realm of policy. But our analysis, both pooled and disaggregated by topic, allows us to explore these issues empirically.

[50] Scruggs, Jahn, and Kuitto 2017, *Comparative Welfare Entitlements Dataset 2*.

We operationalize policy outcomes by focusing on *changes* in spending and in generosity for these particular policy areas that can then be paired to the ISSP-questions about healthcare, pensions and unemployment. We focus on changes rather than levels of policies because we are interested in how attitudes about reform relate to subsequent reform, both involving changes not levels. In particular, we are exploring whether the political system is responding to attitudes about welfare-policy change (our explanatory variable of interest), not attitudes about a general level or kind of social policy form. And gauging whether there is responsiveness to such attitudes should be gauged not in terms of the *status quo ante* level of policy but in terms of how a reform, expansion or retrenchment takes place relative to a *status quo ante* – a *change*, hence.

Therefore, if respondents express a preference for increased spending, and in the years after the survey was conducted the policy becomes more generous, then we take this as evidence of representation for that group or person. Equally, we see representation in situations where a group expresses preference for decreases and policy becomes less generous in subsequent years. As discussed above, we have no strong *a priori* reasons to presume a particular time it takes for public positioning to translate (or not) into actual policy-political changes. The baseline models focus on the average change in the four years following the survey for each feature of social policy. For unemployment insurance (UI), for instance, the baseline measure of average change is: $((UI_{(t+1)} - UI_t) + (UI_{(t+2)} - UI_t) + (UI_{(t+3)} - UI_t) + (UI_{(t+4)} - UI_t))/4$.[51] As robustness checks, we consider other time periods.

The correlation between changes in spending per capita and changes in generosity is not strong – not surprising given how spending patterns reflect not just substantive policy orientation but also macroeconomic developments with no clear relation to such orientation. The overall correlation is 0.20, varying from 0.08 for healthcare to 0.50 for pensions. The correlation between *levels* of spending and levels of generosity is not much higher (r = 0.26).[52] According to the CWED-based measures, the most generous countries in terms of levels of benefits are those where the welfare state is known to be extensive: Norway and Sweden, followed by countries like the Netherlands and Finland. The Anglo-Saxon and Asian countries are at the bottom. On the other hand, the Scandinavian countries are in the middle of the pack when we look at changes in spending per capita, joined by the United States and

[51] We lose a dozen observations measured during the first three years following the survey but not the fourth. We include these by calculating the average for the first three years for these observations.
[52] Both spending per capita and generosity are clearly related to spending per beneficiary, for which data is too limited to be useful as a dependent variable.

Japan. For any judgment of representation over modest periods of time, however, it is changes in generosity or spending that matter, not simple background levels.

Focusing on such changes, Figure 2 provides a snapshot of the country-means of the average change in generosity in the four years following the survey.[53] This smooths over all the variation across time and across issue areas (unemployment, pensions, healthcare/disability), but it summarizes the substantial variation between countries. The welfare state clearly becomes more generous in some countries (South Korea, Portugal) and less generous in others (Sweden) by the CWED benefit-generosity metric. The trends broken out by policy area (not shown) vary somewhat, underscoring the importance of estimating not just the pooled composite but also area-specific models.

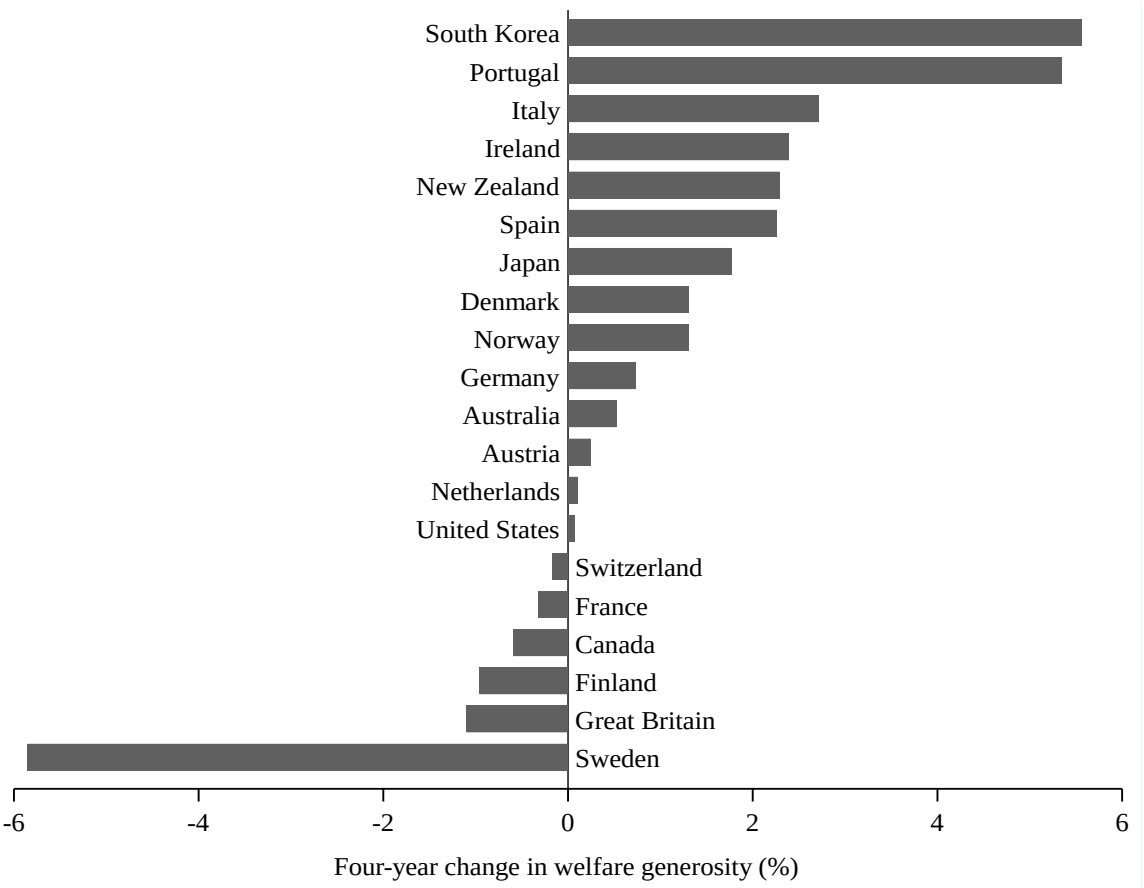

Figure 2: Average Change in Welfare State Generosity in the Years Following the ISSP

Bringing the above data together to match measures on attitudes to those on policy changes allows judgment of the extent to which citizen support for welfare expansion (retrenchment) gets translated into actual policy expansion (or roll-backs). This can be

[53] For countries in multiple ISSP waves, Figure 2 shows the average of (t+1)-to-(t+4) changes after each wave.

imagined in terms of broad country-level differences in a given policy area, where one looks at, say the attitudes of the wealthiest 90th percentile towards unemployment protection, in relation to subsequent policy change in such protection.[54] For our full exploration, however, it is the more fine-grained character of our data that we want to exploit: valid measures of attitudes towards welfare policy change and actual subsequent policy change for a given *country-topic-year*. This means that we can measure policy attitudes and subsequent policy change for a citizen group (e.g. median income group vs. poorest vs. richest) in a given *country* with respect to a given *welfare-policy topic* for a given *year*. This provides substantial leverage to gauge policy responsiveness to group demands on issues of welfare policymaking.

To get the most out of this leverage, our baseline analysis focuses on a pooling of all this information for a given *country-topic-year.* This is possible so long as we focus on how the expressed attitudes for a given country-topic-year relates to subsequent policy change for *that same* country-topic-year. And such pooling is meaningful because the policy measures are based on standardized measures of group attitudes and of subsequence policy development. The attitudes are gauged by standardized survey answers within a single survey instrument (ISSP), and the outcomes are focused on standardized changes in spending or generosity: for spending, we focus on changes in expenditures per capita; and for generosity, we focus on changes in z-score composites of generosity. Hence, one can compare the existence of an association (or lack of association) between group attitudes and subsequent policy for a given group-country-topic-year with the association (or lack of association) between group attitudes and policy for another group-country-topic-year. The principal advantage of such pooling is two-fold: that it allows us to paint the overview-portrait of responsiveness in the welfare state, and that it yields sufficient degrees-of-freedom to be able to include substantial country-year controls without excessive collinearity, thereby facilitating more valid econometric estimation of responsiveness.

While the full pooling of our observations provides the most complete view of representation in social policymaking, one can also look at particular subsets of the data. This is meaningful, however, only to the extent that the data includes sufficient variation on a given dimension to allow comparisons and statistical control without excessive multi-collinearity between parameters estimated. Within such constraints, our data provide

[54] Descriptively, Figure A1.1 in Supplementary Appendix 1 provides a snapshot of such relationships bringing together our matched data for unemployment policy. This reveals that the measures of attitudes and subsequent change correlate weakly positively, modestly significantly for the generosity measure and insignificantly for the spending measure.

sufficient country-year variation to allow meaningful analysis of responsiveness with respect to individual topics or aspects of social policy – i.e. judging the extent of representation for either unemployment insurance, or pension provisions, or health/sickness (where the unit of analysis, hence, is country-year for each of these policy areas). The downside of this focus on a given policy realm is that the data is more constrained in degrees-of-freedom, but there is enough variation to yield meaningful analysis (without excessive multi-collinearity) to clarify how responsiveness might vary by aspect of social policy. Unfortunately, the data is more constrained for exploring variation within a particular country. Ideally, one would could also focus on topic-year variation within a given country – but unfortunately such variation is modest enough as to generate prohibitively high multicollinearity between variables in any study of variation across topics and years within a given country. In other words, in the currently available data that is comparable, the "between" variation across countries and topics is much more substantial than the "within" data across time (or across topics within a given country). This means that one can say less than one would like about the role of institutions where most of the variation is between rather than within countries. Nonetheless, our analyses below do consider and discuss such specifications focused on institutional and other possible country-level factors. And more fundamentally, all the models presented below consider country-level clustering, such as through either country-level random intercepts and/or country dummies.

Focusing on either the full country-topic-year variation or the country-year variation for a given topic, hence, we follow an estimation strategy to generate valid inferences about how attitudes relate to subsequent policy reform. This strategy involves estimation of representation that controls for possible confounding factors – factors that correlate with both the measured citizen attitudes *and* changes in welfare state effort. These controls include the *ex ante* level of social policy generosity (matched to each country-topic-year), to control for the "thermostat-model" possibility that past policy may influence subsequent attitudes.[55] Other controls include GDP per capita (measured in constant 2010 U.S. dollars) in a country,

[55] Soroka and Wlezien, *Degrees of Democracy*. More fully, controlling for *ex ante* levels of generosity effectively rules out two channels of endogeneity, whereby existing generosity influences subsequent changes in generosity as well as preferences towards such changes (for instance, through regression to the mean). The same applies to spending. We also explicitly examined this thermostat issue, focusing on how previous-year (or previous four years) of spending or generosity affects subsequent attitudes in the ISSP data. This yields significant associations for the spending measures, but not for the generosity measures. Controlling for such simultaneity is hence particularly important for our spending-based estimations, less so for our generosity-based estimates. Nevertheless, we accounted for endogeneity in additional analyses where we center the independent variables within each country-year-issue. Doing so shows that median and high income preferences still have significant, positive effects on changes in generosity, while this is not the case for low income preferences. Full results of these analyses are available upon request.

annual growth in GDP per capita per country, unemployment rate and dummies for both the policy area and survey wave. To address omitted variable bias, our baseline focuses on these controls measured at time "t" rather than later periods. Descriptive statistics for the dependent, independent and control variables are presented in Supplementary Appendix 1, Table A1.1, while Table A1.2 lists the countries and years used in the analysis.

Equally important, our specifications in terms of estimators and clustering support meaningful causal inferences about general and unequal representation in light of common threats to such inference. To highlight such inferences, we focus on three sets of specifications. The first set pools the three areas of policy (unemployment, pension and healthcare), focusing in our baseline on two-level random intercept models, country-topic-year (level 1) and country (level 2) – thereby explicitly taking account of the possible country-level clustering of policymaking experience. For these models, we include dummies for survey waves and the policy topics (health policy as excluded dummy).

The second set of baseline specifications disaggregates the three policy topics, focusing on two-level random intercept models (country-year (level 1) and, again to address the country-level clustering, country (level 2)) for each policy area. For both the pooled and disaggregated models, we test for general representation by focusing on the median or overall opinion (in separate models). And we test for unequal representation by focusing in our baseline estimations on the roles of low- and of high-income attitudes in a single model, so as to consider their relative correlation with subsequent policy change. This is the simplest way of addressing how rich versus poor might have distinct effects – with the one having an association, controlling for the influence of the other.[56] For all these models, further, the coefficients are ordinary least squares, with robust-cluster standard errors (clustered by country, the level 2 variable) to further address remaining country-specific correlation of errors and heteroskedasticity of errors.

Finally, a third set of specifications focuses on important alternatives to these pooled and disaggregated baseline models. These alternative specifications include, importantly, different measures of unequal representation, such as direct measures of arithmetic differences between rich and poor attitudes. But the alternative models also include different specifications with respect to controls, embedding of the multi-level data, and alternative estimators.

[56] This is preferable, hence, to models that take rich and poor attitudes separately, without controlling for the others' influence. And it yield less collinearity than models combining median-income attitudes with high-income or low-income attitudes – generating prohibitively high multi-collinearity (with variance inflation factors between 17 and 26).

5. Findings: Real and Unequal Representation

We present our findings, taking each of the three sets of estimations in turn. We shall devote the most attention to our first set of estimates, the baseline pooled results, laying out in our discussion not only the basic quantitative results (Section 5.1) but also offer some historical case examples drawn from those results (Section 5.2). Given space constraints, however, our discussion of the remaining two estimation steps involves minimal in-text discussion of the policy-specific sub-samples (Section 5.3) and of various alternative specifications (such as addressing additional country-level controls) (Section 5.4). We hence signal the basics and relegate the fuller results to supporting material.

5.1. Baseline Pooled Results. Table 1 presents the results of pooled estimation (country-topic-year) of changes in CWED generosity of unemployment, pensions and health/sickness provisions. The random intercept models use as the dependent variable the average change in welfare generosity in the four years following the survey – allowing direct testing of Hypothesis 1a and 2a. Before turning to the variables of interest, note that most control variables have little discernible effect on changes in welfare-state generosity, though such controls do perform in expected directions and are close to significance in some specifications (e.g. focusing on unemployment and pensions, as opposed to also healthcare). The most significant controls are the dummies for the different policy areas (unemployment and, to a lesser extent, pensions), suggesting that the four-year change in generosity was more positive in these areas than for healthcare. The dummy for the second wave of the ISSP (around 1990) also has a significant, positive effect, while the generosity level has a slightly negative effect.

Most importantly, the main results corroborate Hypotheses 1a and 2a. With respect to Hypothesis 1a on general representation, both measures of overall preferences – the median and full-sample mean – have substantial and significant positive effects on changes in welfare state generosity. For instance, an increase in overall spending preferences by one standard deviation (24.44) increases the change in generosity by 1.29 points, about a third of its standard deviation. Welfare reform is clearly, by this reckoning, anchored in citizen demands.

With respect to Hypothesis 2a, models 3 through 6 suggest a clear pattern of unequal representation: each low income measurement (the 5^{th} percentile, the 10^{th} percentile, the lowest quintile and the lowest tercile) has a negative but generally insignificant association with changes in generosity, while each high income measurement (the 95^{th} percentile, the 90^{th} percentile, the highest quintile and the highest tercile) has a positive and significant effect.

For instance, an increase in the spending preferences of the 90th income percentile by one standard deviation (26.57) increases the change in generosity by 1.59 points, about forty percent of its standard deviation.

Table 1: Random Intercept Models of Changes in *Welfare State Generosity* (Average of Change from T+1 to T+4 Relative to T)

	Model 1 (All)	Model 2 (P50)	Model 3 (P5 / P95)	Model 4 (P10 / P90)	Model 5 (Quint. 1 / 5)	Model 6 (Terc. 1 / 3)
Overall / median preferences	0.052*** (0.018)	0.051*** (0.017)	-	-	-	-
Low income preferences	-	-	-0.036 (0.041)	-0.041 (0.043)	-0.013 (0.030)	-0.057 (0.043)
High income preferences	-	-	0.078*** (0.029)	0.084*** (0.032)	0.059*** (0.020)	0.099*** (0.036)
Generosity (t)	-0.133 (0.082)	-0.133* (0.081)	-0.141* (0.083)	-0.141* (0.083)	-0.135 (0.084)	-0.136 (0.084)
Logged GDP (t)	-2.174 (1.724)	-2.235 (1.732)	-1.844 (1.573)	-1.850 (1.581)	-1.945 (1.648)	-1.963 (1.646)
Growth (t)	-0.055 (0.214)	-0.056 (0.210)	-0.045 (0.213)	-0.047 (0.210)	-0.051 (0.216)	-0.065 (0.213)
Unemployment (t)	-0.034 (0.167)	-0.033 (0.165)	-0.021 (0.141)	-0.021 (0.142)	-0.020 (0.148)	-0.030 (0.141)
Pension policy (ref. = health)	1.208* (0.677)	1.260* (0.695)	1.488** (0.661)	1.523** (0.674)	1.359** (0.640)	1.507** (0.688)
Unemp. policy (ref. = health)	3.029** (1.213)	3.057** (1.237)	3.282*** (1.170)	3.370*** (1.195)	3.162*** (1.207)	3.314*** (1.246)
Wave 2 (ref. = wave 1)	1.209** (0.568)	1.239** (0.567)	1.117** (0.479)	1.117** (0.472)	1.078** (0.496)	1.079** (0.425)
Wave 3 (ref. = wave 1)	0.580 (1.217)	0.582 (1.207)	0.558 (1.166)	0.553 (1.164)	0.475 (1.173)	0.522 (1.131)
Wave 4 (ref. = wave 1)	0.289 (1.146)	0.272 (1.121)	0.230 (1.094)	0.209 (1.081)	0.139 (1.112)	0.156 (1.049)
Constant	21.949 (18.168)	22.570 (18.322)	19.775 (16.411)	19.729 (16.531)	20.376 (17.323)	21.144 (17.331)
Wald χ^2	57.16	46.63	51.09	49.12	71.92	55.44
N	130	130	130	130	130	130

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

Figure 3 displays the predicted values of our dependent variable by spending preferences of the 10th, 50th and 90th income percentiles, corresponding to models 2 and 4 in Table 1.[57] Other variables are held at their means. This shows that preferences of low-income respondents have no discernable effect on the dependent variable, while the preferences of median and high-income respondents *do* have an effect. Figure 3 illustrates that the standard errors are substantial, where the limited number of observations yields large confidence intervals. While this highlights the need to consider other specifications before drawing conclusions, it is clear that the most general baseline estimates focused on generosity support the view from Hypotheses 1a and 2a that welfare policymaking entails real but unequal representation.

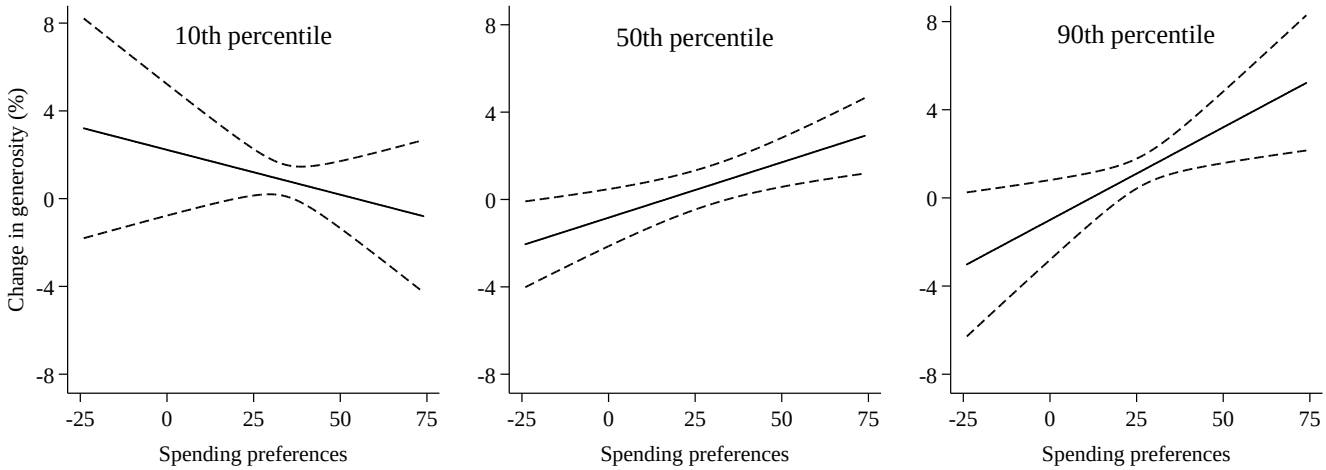

Figure 3: Predicted Values of Changes in Welfare State Generosity By Preferences of Low, Median and High Incomes (Dotted Lines Indicate 95% Confidence Intervals)

This support for Hypotheses 1a and 2a contrasts with what we see if we turn our focus to spending patterns. Table 2 presents how attitudes correlate with our second measure of policy change: *spending per capita*. We run random intercept models using as the dependent variable the average change in spending in the four years following the survey. The first two models again contain measurements of overall opinion, first via the average preferences of all respondents and the second via preferences at the 50th-income percentile. Models 3 through 6 then focus on the various measures of low and high incomes.

[57] As the summary statistics reveal (Supplementary Appendix 1, Table A1.1), the range of 10th-percentile preferences extends above that shown in figure 4, while the range of 90th-percentile preferences extends below it. For comparability, we show a common range for all graphs, thereby excluding a handful of observations.

Overall, low-, median- and high-income preferences never have a clear or significant effect on change in spending. This would imply that income groups are equally ignored in their views towards the welfare state. These patterns go against Hypotheses 1a and 2a, and tell a different story than that of the generosity measures, even when controlling for conditions that might underlie the biasing effects of the spending-based measure (e.g. unemployment rates). But, of course, this contrast with the results focused on generosity measures is very much in line with our expectations captured by Hypotheses 1b and 2b. We expect macroeconomic conditions and substantive policy interest of citizens to render a weaker link between citizen attitudes and spending than that between citizen attitudes and substantive policy generosity. The contrasting patterns in Tables 1 and 2 support this view.

A final point based on the baseline results is that they harbor an important pattern of (unequal) representation being symmetrical, relevant not only to welfare state expansion but also retrenchment. Supplemental analysis shows, more generally, that in the cases when the wealthy and poorer respondents significantly differ in their positions, the wealthy tend to win-out. In the 27 country-years of unemployment insurance cases in which the 90th income percentile was mostly in favor of *less* unemployment protection, the average change in generosity is -0.63%. And in the 16 country-years of unemployment insurance observations where the 90th percentile is mostly in favor of *more* unemployment protection, generosity increases on average by 3.64%.[58] The full picture from our data, hence, suggests real but unequal representation in social policy generosity, though not so much manifested in spending patterns.

5.2. Historical Examples drawn from the Baseline Statistics. These various baseline results can be made more concrete by looking briefly at particular historical examples from our data. Given space constraints, we focus on but three examples, but these illustrate unequal representation across countries (United Kingdom, South Korea and Sweden), across social-policy areas (unemployment insurance and pensions), and across directions of substantial reform (policy retrenchment and expansion).

The first example from our dataset is the highly salient and major retrenchment of unemployment insurance (UI) in Great Britain in the 1980s. Recall our dataset's coding of attitudes towards increased unemployment insurance – "strongly supporting" scored as 100;

[58] See Supplementary Appendix 3, Tables A3.13 and A3.14 and accompanying text for a more elaborate overview.

Table 2: Random Intercept Models of Changes in *Spending Per Capita* (Average of Change from T+1 to T+4 Relative to T)

	Model 1 (All)	Model 2 (P50)	Model 3 (P5 / P95)	Model 4 (P10 / P90)	Model 5 (Quint. 1 / 5)	Model 6 (Terc. 1 / 3)
Overall / median preferences	0.184 (0.131)	0.160 (0.125)	-	-	-	-
Low income preferences	-	-	0.278 (0.317)	0.289 (0.343)	0.207 (0.295)	0.321 (0.343)
High income preferences	-	-	-0.018 (0.203)	-0.041 (0.233)	0.008 (0.195)	-0.088 (0.248)
Per capita spending (t)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Logged GDP (t)	-2.992 (8.064)	-3.333 (7.952)	-1.874 (8.429)	-2.139 (8.345)	-2.711 (8.062)	-2.487 (8.210)
Growth (t)	-0.616 (0.922)	-0.604 (0.923)	-0.716 (0.978)	-0.708 (0.976)	-0.655 (0.940)	-0.667 (0.958)
Unemployment (t)	-1.044** (0.415)	-1.035** (0.414)	-1.076** (0.474)	-1.075** (0.475)	-1.096** (0.455)	-1.075** (0.475)
Pension policy (ref. = health)	2.584 (1.930)	2.535 (2.019)	1.694 (1.785)	1.776 (1.823)	1.996 (1.752)	1.971 (1.795)
Unemp. policy (ref. = health)	2.711 (6.155)	1.848 (6.217)	3.542 (5.247)	3.252 (5.486)	2.657 (5.169)	2.800 (5.395)
Wave 2 (ref. = wave 1)	17.250*** (6.150)	17.505*** (6.037)	16.615*** (6.332)	16.790*** (6.261)	17.086*** (5.941)	17.039*** (5.937)
Wave 3 (ref. = wave 1)	-0.282 (4.413)	-0.169 (4.410)	-0.478 (4.325)	-0.416 (4.331)	-0.162 (3.988)	-0.111 (4.093)
Wave 4 (ref. = wave 1)	9.545** (3.733)	9.736*** (3.667)	8.983** (3.973)	9.095** (3.924)	9.454** (3.731)	9.340** (3.845)
Constant	41.539 (82.622)	45.879 (81.408)	25.208 (89.570)	28.292 (88.651)	36.476 (84.778)	32.317 (86.713)
Wald χ^2	98.86	90.75	110.37	107.59	104.31	105.83
N	130	130	130	130	130	130

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

"agreeing" scored as 50; "neither agreeing nor disagreeing" 0; "disagreeing" -50; and "strongly disagreeing" -100. With such coding, the 1985 ISSP survey for British respondents revealed big differences in the attitudes of poor, median and rich respondents: the 10th percentile scored 36.7 (constituting substantial support for increased UI); the 50th percentile scored a mere 13.9 (still on balance wanting more UI, though less than did the poorer counterparts); and the 90th percentile scored -5.2 (wanting on average a *decrease* in UI). As for actual policy change in Great Britain, our dataset shows that the subsequent four-year period was marked by a 3.1%, decrease in UI, among the three biggest single-period decreases in unemployment generosity in our data.

To put a bit of historical flesh on these bones, recall that this quantitative pattern is describing a major episode in Thatcher-era British welfare retrenchment. Building on reforms that started in 1980 but continued throughout the 1980s, the Thatcher government took advantage of what Paul Pierson's seminal treatment called "a considerable gap in between the lowest and top income groups in support for unemployment benefits," where wealthy party backers and Tory elites widely embraced the idea that unemployment insurance "produced a 'why work?' question" and needed to be scaled back.[59] The Thatcher government used its substantial parliamentary majority and executive authority to repeatedly retrench benefits – among other roll-backs phasing-out earnings-related supplements in 1980 and 1988, lowering replacement rates in 1986, extending disqualification periods in 1986, tightening contribution conditions in 1988, and shifting long-term unemployed to the means-tested Supplementary Benefit by 1989. As Atkinson and Micklewight noted, by the late 1980s the Conservative government had adopted no fewer than seventeen significant changes in the Unemployment Benefit, almost all unfavorable to benefit-recipients.[60] Linking this historical interpretation to our statistical analysis, we have a stark case where the rich, in their clear preference for UI retrenchment, enjoyed a level of Thatcher-government representation not afforded to the median and, particularly, the poorer electorate who wanted continued or expanded UI benefits. In terms of policy generosity, hence, British unemployment policymaking was marked in the 1980s by clear unequal representation. Also interesting for our analysis, and in line with our statistical support for Hypotheses 1b and 2b, the pattern in *spending* in the early-to-mid 1980s would suggest a different story. As Allan and Scruggs note, rising

[59] Paul Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State? Reagan, Thatcher and the Politics of Retrenchment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 105–107.
[60] Anthony B. Atkinson and John Micklewright, "Unemployment Compensation and Labor Market Transitions: A Critical Review," *Journal of Economic Literature* 29, no. 4 (1991): 1679–1727. See also Table 5.1 of UI benefit reforms in Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State,* 107.

reliance by the growing legions of unemployed citizens on whatever UI was available in the period meant that "social spending grew during the British recession of the early 1980s, even though the Conservative government slashed entitlements."[61]

A second historical snapshot from our dataset concerns unemployment-insurance *expansion* in South Korean UI in the 2000s. The 2006-South Korea-UI data point in our dataset reveals support for UI expansion that was 29.0 for the lowest 10th percentile, 25.9 for the 50th percentile, and 16.5 for the richest 90th percentile. Note, hence, that while there is clearly a familiar skew across the income spectrum in respondent support for UI expansion in the 2006 South Korean population, even the wealthiest respondents preferred UI expansion rather than retrenchment. As for actual policy development, South Korean UI started even in 2006 from a very low level of UI-benefit generosity based on the CWED data, but experienced no less than an 11.1% increase in the generosity score for UI in the period between 2007 and 2010 (t+1 to t+4 for 2006), among the highest single-period increases in the dataset.

Making such policy changes more concrete, the South Korean Ministry of Employment and Labor reports major legislative changes in UI in the period between 2006 and 2011, for instance: after 2006 self-employed people were allowed to join the Employment Insurance programs for income protection and job skills development, and premiums were increased from 0.9% to 1.1% in 2010-11.[62] This pattern reveals a distinct South Korean story of representation, and in this particular case not necessarily a highly unequal one, but certainly one where the substantial increase in South Korea's UI generosity was subsequent to the expression of support for expansion by not only the median and poorer citizens but also the wealthiest 90th percentile (and, for that matter, the wealthiest 95th percentile of the Korean population). This pattern comports with the history of legislative and regulatory reform politics underlying the changes, originating from within the labor and finance ministries, not just from the social actors. And the chaebol-based employers associations recognized that the vulnerabilities of their workers might necessitate some government support. For instance, employers sparked and tolerated calls for expansions in

[61] Allan and Scruggs, "Political Partisanship and Welfare State Reform", 498.
[62] South Korea Ministry of Employment and Labor. *Employment and Labor Policy (Report 2012)*, online at https://www.moel.go.kr/english/pas/pasPubli_view.jsp?idx=963.

unemployment insurance, in part, as the price of their explicit lobbying in favor of labor-market deregulation.[63]

A third and final historical example drawn from our baseline models concerns Swedish pension-system retrenchment in the 1990s. Our data-point for 1996 Swedish pensions captures positive citizen support – that is, a preference for expansion in the pension system – across the entire income spectrum of Swedes. But the level and unanimity of support was sharply declining with respondent income, with a score 40.5 for the poorest 10th-percentile, and 16.1 for the 90th-percentile (11.7 for the 95th-percentile). As for outcomes, our baseline estimate shows that the subsequent four years yielded a substantial 7.4% decline in CWED-measured generosity of pensions, among the largest pension retrenchments in our dataset. As this retrenchment goes against general citizen support for pension expansion, it rates as policy non-representation, mainly for the poorer Swedes most supportive of expansion.

In actual policy history, however, this episode mainly provides further illustration of a pattern of unequal representation. The policy reforms after 1996 involved a major retrenchment of the Swedish pension system, particularly through the legislated move from a flat benefit system (FB) and earnings-related supplement (ATP) towards a defined-benefit pay-as-you go system.[64] In the details, the reform was regressive beyond what our own data captures: whereas pre-reform pension contributions were borne by employers, post-reform they were evenly divided between employers and employees; and two thirds of Swedes, particularly those working fewer than 40 years, would be losers of the new index rules, yielding substantial reduction in redistribution.[65] As such, the reform clearly did not go against the (more tepid pro-expansion) wishes of the wealthiest citizens as much it did against the (more unanimous and strong) wishes of the poorest. In the Swedish political history, the mobilization behind the pension reform involved a grand coalition among social actors and parties. The Swedish Employers Federation (SAF) had been calling for some years for radical pension reform on grounds that the old system eroded national savings, inflated nonwage

[63] See, for instance, Ito Peng, "Dualization in Japan and South Korea," In *The Age of Dualization: The Changing Face of Inequality in Deindustrializing Societies*, eds. Patrick Emmenegger, Silja Häusermann, Bruno Palier, and Martin Seeleib-Kaiser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[64] See, for instance, Annika Sundén, "The Swedish Experience with Pension Reform," *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 22, no. 1 (2006): 133–48.
[65] See p. 1079 of Karen M. Anderson, "The Politics of Retrenchment in a Social Democratic Welfare State: Reform of Swedish Pensions and Unemployment Insurance," *Comparative Political Studies* 34, no. 9 (2001): 1063–91.

labor costs, and reduced incentives to work.[66] And beyond the sustained support from the center-right and (neo-)liberal Moderate Party, Centre Party and Liberals, also the center-left Social Democratic Party (SAP) and union federation (LO) accepted the reforms as painful necessity. With the costs of the pension system becoming onerous – growing from 4.3% of GDP in 1965 to more than 12.2% in 1992 – the SAP saw that "retrenchment was a painful necessity brought on by the economic crisis and an opportunity to preserve the basic structure and scope of the pension system by correcting its perceived weaknesses."[67] These politics may constitute some non-representation generally, but they are certainly consistent with our hypothesized unequal representation: with the lower support for pension expansion among the wealthy compared to the poor constituting a permissive condition for reforms skewed in favor of the demands and interests of wealthier Swedes.

These three historical examples provide only the briefest illustration of the broader statistical patterns of unequal representation (illustrating Hypotheses 1a and 2a), mainly with respect to generosity rather than spending measures (illustrating further, hence, Hypotheses 1b and 2b). They also highlight the importance of considering details in the specification of the relationships between income and welfare reform – starting with the story of each welfare-policy realm separately.

5.3. Disaggregated Results by Policy Area. We now turn, hence, to the fuller disaggregation of the three policy realms underlying these pooled results. We focus on the generosity-based results, summarized in Tables 3–5: unemployment (Table 3), pensions (Table 4) and healthcare/sickness (Table 5). These are based on the same specifications as in the pooled results of Table 1, though here the data structure is country-year for each issue area and to conserve space we do not report the results for the controls.

The disaggregated results broadly corroborate the pooled generosity-based results on the inequality of representation, but they do reveal meaningful cross-issue variation with respect to general representation. The differential in responsiveness to low-income versus high-income groups shows up for each of the three social-policy areas. A noteworthy difference is that the coefficient for low-income preferences is significantly negative in some models for sickness/healthcare (Table 5). The modest degrees-of-freedom demand extra caution in drawing inferences, but such a pattern suggests that policymaking yields healthcare

[66] See Svenska Arbetsgivareföreningen, *Marknad och Mångfald–SAFs Program för 90-Talet* [Markets and Multiplicity–SAF's Program for the 1990s] (Stockholm: Author, 1990), cited in Anderson, "The Politics of Retrenchment," 1077.
[67] Anderson, "The Politics of Retrenchment," 1077.

changes in the opposite direction to that embraced by the poorest citizens. Whatever the interpretation, the analysis suggests unequal representation favoring the rich over the poor across the distinct social-policy realms of pensions, unemployment and healthcare.

Table 3: Random Intercept Models of Changes in *Pension Generosity*, T+1 to T+4

	Model 1 (All)	Model 2 (P50)	Model 3 (P5 / P95)	Model 4 (P10 / P90)	Model 5 (Quint. 1 / 5)	Model 6 (Terc. 1 / 3)
Overall / median preferences	0.103** (0.048)	0.093** (0.046)	-	-	-	-
Low income preferences	-	-	-0.105 (0.073)	-0.121 (0.081)	-0.050 (0.070)	-0.121 (0.090)
High income preferences	-	-	0.163** (0.070)	0.182** (0.079)	0.115** (0.055)	0.186** (0.079)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	28.440 (26.214)	32.234 (27.122)	36.141 (25.500)	36.020 (24.887)	32.113 (26.368)	36.276 (26.437)
Wald χ^2	22.53	23.66	39.23	42.20	36.67	35.70
N	42	42	42	42	42	42

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

Table 4: Random Intercept Models of Changes in *Unemployment Generosity*, T+1 to T+4

	Model 1 (All)	Model 2 (P50)	Model 3 (P5 / P95)	Model 4 (P10 / P90)	Model 5 (Quint. 1 / 5)	Model 6 (Terc. 1 / 3)
Overall / median preferences	0.075** (0.030)	0.073*** (0.028)	-	-	-	-
Low income preferences	-	-	-0.061 (0.067)	-0.069 (0.072)	-0.030 (0.068)	-0.098 (0.073)
High income preferences	-	-	0.125** (0.051)	0.135** (0.057)	0.101** (0.051)	0.165** (0.068)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	28.323 (35.550)	28.478 (35.592)	26.211 (33.790)	26.008 (33.980)	27.704 (34.413)	29.332 (34.395)
Wald χ^2	60.18	61.23	46.88	48.14	40.83	47.74
N	44	44	44	44	44	44

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

Table 5: Random Intercept Models of Changes in *Healthcare Generosity*, T+1 to T+4

	Model 1 (All)	Model 2 (P50)	Model 3 (P5 / P95)	Model 4 (P10 / P90)	Model 5 (Quint. 1 / 5)	Model 6 (Terc. 1 / 3)
Overall / median preferences	-0.014 (0.030)	-0.013 (0.030)	-	-	-	-
Low income preferences	-	-	-0.094** (0.048)	-0.105** (0.053)	-0.087** (0.040)	-0.133** (0.062)
High income preferences	-	-	0.065** (0.033)	0.074** (0.037)	0.063** (0.028)	0.098** (0.041)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	7.430 (14.969)	7.349 (14.974)	3.650 (16.254)	3.942 (16.210)	2.526 (15.436)	5.843 (15.767)
Wald χ^2	15.98	16.46	20.99	21.26	21.12	26.01
N	44	44	44	44	44	44

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

The disaggregated results also suggest that the effects of overall or median preferences are stronger for pensions and unemployment (Tables 4 and 5, respectively), and weaker or non-existent for healthcare (Table 3).[68] This may reflect measurement shortcomings discussed above: that our ISSP measure of healthcare attitudes does not match-up as fully with the policy-change measure (focused on sickness generosity) as applies to pension and unemployment measures. However, the weaker correlation between general attitudes and subsequent healthcare-related policy change might reflect substantive differences in politics across the issue areas. For instance, health-benefit politics may be subject to less mass-politics mobilization aggregating public opinion, and/or to *more* interest-group lobbying that dampens the influence of public opinions than applies to unemployment or pension policymaking.[69] Or perhaps the difference in responsiveness reflects variation in salience across issue-country-years proportionate to how much a political system responds to

[68] Pooling country-topic-years involving pensions and unemployment insurance only, otherwise following our results in Table 1, yields stronger support for Hypotheses 1a and 2a than pooling all three policy realms.

[69] For instance, Grossman's meta-history of healthcare and broader social-welfare reforms (among other policy realms) between 1945 and 2004 suggests that healthcare-policy struggles have been subject to less-focused media attention and less political reference to public opinion than other social-welfare policy reforms, while being subject to roughly the same level of interest-group lobbying (see Matt Grossmann, "The Variable Politics of the Policy Process: Issue-Area Differences and Comparative Networks," *Journal of Politics* 75, no. 1 (2013): 65–79.

public opinion pressures.[70] Unfortunately, our dataset has too-limited coverage to allow exploration of these and other explanations, something we leave to future research.

The spending-based specifications generally yield non-significant results for each of the policy areas that are very similar to Table 2's pooled results, so we shall not dwell upon these.[71] But it is worth reporting that with respect to pensions we do see a pattern of real and unequal representation – where attitudes among those in the 50th income percentile correlate with spending changes in pension programs, and where the 90th percentile correlates particularly strongly (statistically and substantively) while the 10th percentile does not. This pattern applies to both spending per capita and spending in percentage of GDP. This pattern, importantly, also reflects that pensions are the policy area where the change in spending is correlated most strongly with the change in generosity. These findings add up to marginally stronger support for Hypotheses 1a and 2a, but also further support for Hypotheses 1b and 2b.

5.4. Alternative Specifications. Our last set of results involve the most important robustness and sensitivity checks: (1) alternative measures of policy changes as dependent variables; (2) different measures of support for social policies and inequalities in representation; (3) additional and alternative controls that might distinguish the politics of representation between countries; and (4) alternative estimators and embedding of the analysis of such representation. We summarize only briefly the most important alternatives, relegating fuller discussion and detail to online Supplementary Appendices.

A first set of alternative specifications explores different generosity measures, and different combinations of years of policy change. Most noteworthy is that the baseline results, both pooled and disaggregated, hold up to specifications of policy generosity focused only on replacement rates of unemployment, pension and sickness provisions – the components of CWED generosity measures that maximize coverage in terms of country-years matched to the ISSP data waves (yielding 161 country-topic-years, instead of 130 in the pooled baseline).[72] Also, changing the time period of change to three or five years does not substantially change

[70] E.g. Jeffrey R. Lax and Justin H. Phillips, "The Democratic Deficit in the States," *American Journal of Political Science* 56, no. 1 (2012): 148–66; Laura Morales, Jean-Benoit Pilet and Didier Ruedin, "The Gap Between Public Preferences and Policies on Immigration: A Comparative Examination of the Effect of Politicisation on Policy Congruence," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41, no. 9 (2015): 1495–1516; Rasmussen, Mäder, and Reher, "With a Little Help from the People". Wlezien and Soroka have found stronger correlations between public opinion and policy (in their case, already established policy) across issue areas in the U.S. when the policy is more salient (Wlezien and Soroka, "Political Institutions and the Opinion–Policy Link"). In 2007 CSES data compiling "most important issue" identified by publics, unemployment has higher salience than healthcare in eight of these twelve countries (results available upon request).

[71] See Supplementary Appendix 2, Tables A2.7-A2.9.

[72] See Supplementary Appendix 2, Tables A2.2-A2.5.

the effects, the former slightly decreasing the effect-size of high-income preferences and the latter increasing it.[73]

A second set of tests explores alternative approaches to measuring low-versus-high income attitudes of citizens and the responsiveness of subsequent policy change to such attitudes. One alternative approach to the models above involves looking at the share of respondents who support more spending minus the share of respondents who support less spending, for different income groups. The resulting variables correlate strongly with our main independent variables (r = .99) and yield very similar results, important to address the possibility that our reported models might inappropriately presume equal distances between answer categories. Another measurement approach for our independent variables would estimate separate models for low and for high incomes. This produces results where we see representation of general or median attitudes, more strongly for high-income preferences than low-income preferences – though in some specifications low-income attitudes also have significant (if lower) influence.[74] Unlike the baseline, of course, such results take no account of the attitudes of low- *relative to* high-income respondents.

Yet another alternative specification deserves a bit more attention, because it more fully addresses collinearity without throwing-away information on low- relative to high-income respondents: *Rich-minus-poor,* in a given country-topic-year. Here, more positive (more negative) values capture situations where high-income voters want more (less) welfare expansion than do low-income voters. The measure provides leverage to test Hypothesis 2a, that rich be more influential than poor respondents. If so, higher (lower) values of *rich-minus-poor* – where wealthier respondents want more increases (lower increases or more decreases) in welfare generosity than do their poorer counterparts – should correlate *positively* with actual change in generosity. Our final Table 6 summarizes results of testing this possibility. Each cell captures the key result for distinct econometric models (to conserve space, full results are not shown).[75] The odd rows show results of substituting this difference-parameter for the low- and high-income parameters in the otherwise identical specifications from Tables 1 and 3-5. The even rows show results of such substitution plus controlling for median-

[73] See Supplementary Appendix 2, Tables A2.10-A2.13.
[74] See Supplementary Appendix 3, Tables A3.1 and A3.2.
[75] See Supplementary Appendix 3, Tables A3.3-A3.10 for full results.

income voters' support for increased generosity. The results broadly corroborate our previous findings that unequal representation shows up more for generosity than spending measures.[76]

Table 6: Rich-Minus-Poor Support and Change in *Welfare State Generosity*, T+1 to T+4

	P5 / P95	P10 / P90	Quint. 1 / 5	Terc. 1 / 3
Pooled (N = 130)				
Rich minus poor	0.073***	0.082***	0.054***	0.100***
(baseline specif.)	(0.027)	(0.031)	(0.021)	(0.034)
Rich minus poor	0.054*	0.060*	0.041**	0.081**
(+ median pref.)	(0.030)	(0.034)	(0.020)	(0.036)
Pensions (N = 42)				
Rich minus poor	0.160**	0.180**	0.112**	0.193**
(baseline specif.)	(0.066)	(0.074)	(0.050)	(0.075)
Rich minus poor	0.141**	0.159**	0.092	0.164**
(+ median pref.)	(0.069)	(0.078)	(0.057)	(0.082)
Unemployment (N = 44)				
Rich minus poor	0.109**	0.123**	0.089	0.146**
(baseline specif.)	(0.053)	(0.059)	(0.057)	(0.070)
Rich minus poor	0.086	0.097	0.071	0.132**
(+ median pref.)	(0.054)	(0.060)	(0.051)	(0.066)
Health (N = 44)				
Rich minus poor	0.063**	0.071**	0.064**	0.088**
(baseline specif.)	(0.031)	(0.034)	(0.027)	(0.035)
Rich minus poor	0.078**	0.088**	0.072**	0.107**
(+ median pref.)	(0.037)	(0.042)	(0.030)	(0.046)

Note: each cell represents the key result of a separate regression estimation (controls and full results not shown). "Baseline specification" is the same specification as in Tables 1 and 3-5; "+ median preference" is the baseline specification plus extra control for country-topic-year preference of median income respondents.
* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

A third set of alternative specifications concern the controls in our analysis. Our baseline controls capture the most theoretically relevant sources of omitted variable bias. But we have considered other specifications in terms of measures, lags and timing, and also extra controls relevant to such bias – such as share of the population over 65, *ex ante* level of

[76] See Supplementary Appendix 3, Tables A3.11 and A3.12. Supplementary Appendix 3 also explores particular country-topic-years where the rich and poor take the most starkly contrasting positions on welfare generosity, and the wealthier positions in such situations carry the day. See discussion and Tables A3.13 and A3.14.

general spending, and citizen support for the welfare state generally and/or austerity.[77] None of these dampen the reported effects of overall and high-income preferences. Another category of controls involves country-level political conditions potentially relevant to representation of citizen attitudes about welfare policymaking – beyond the country-level factors (e.g. GDP per capita) and country-level clustering in all of the specifications discussed in Tables 1-6. These extra controls include age and quality of democracy; institutions regulating electoral representation (e.g. proportional representation); the strength of left or right parties; and of organized social actors (e.g. union density). While these often display little over-time variation, we considered them as extra controls and in interactions to judge whether any of these conditions might alter the degree to which citizen attitudes influence policy change. None of the runs achieved statistical significance. This can be interpreted as a substantive result, where our evidence for real but unequal representation holds regardless of political-institutional settings. But more likely, as discussed at the outset of the study, the modest over-time variation per country makes these very weak tests of institutional and political conditions in the politics of representation in welfare policymaking.[78, 79]

A fourth and final set of alternative specifications involves alternative estimators. These include random intercept models with alternative embedding: alternative two-level models using country-topic and country-wave as clusters; and three-level models involving country, topic and year.[80] We also considered random slope models (with attitude variables as the random coefficients) and ordinary least squares models with fixed effects and/or with jackknifed standard errors. While outlier analysis suggests that outliers are not influential, we also consider jackknife analysis to exclude particular country-topic-years, country-years or even countries.[81] All these specifications yield stable support for Hypotheses 1a and 2a with respect to generosity-based but not spending-based measures, and also therefore support for Hypotheses 1b and 2b.

[77] Bartels, *The Social Welfare Deficit*, 13–14. Full results of these analyses are available upon request.
[78] Supplementary Appendix 4, Tables A4.2 and A4.3, shows results for electoral systems, age of democracy, the effective number of parties, the Gallagher index of disproportionality, the cabinet composition on a left-right scale, the percentage of left-wing parties in government, the percentage of right-wing parties in government, an index of federalism and union density. Tables A4.4 and A4.5 show, in addition, the (non-significant) interactions between attitudes and these political-institutional parameters.
[79] Also see Rasmussen, Reher, and Toshkov, "The Opinion-Policy Nexus in Europe and the Role of Political Institutions".
[80] Supplementary Appendix 5, Tables A5.1-A5.5, summarize the results from the multi-level models with alternative specifications for the random intercepts and clustering.
[81] Supplementary Appendix A5, Table A5.6, shows the main results from the jackknife analysis.

6. Conclusion

This paper has explored representation and its equality in welfare state development. Our analysis has provided somewhat mixed but broadly supportive evidence for our central hypotheses that public opinion guides political outcomes, and that the preferences of the rich receive more weight in the policy process than the preferences of the poor. Applied to measures of welfare *spending*, we find only weak support for our hypotheses, the support most visible with respect to pension spending. On the other hand, our analysis of the benefit-generosity measures unearths a stark pattern of real but unequal representation in welfare state reform. As argued throughout this paper, we believe that the results for benefit generosity are likely to be the more inferentially valid, as they better capture the regulatory and legislative program changes that citizens have in mind when they express support for more or less welfare-state effort. Our evidence, seen from this point of view, is strong and important. But since spending measures are also relevant gauges of welfare-policy effort, we take seriously the mixed results in these specifications, and hence frame our end-judgments as qualified support for the view that welfare policymaking in advanced democracies involves real but unequal substantive representation.

Further research can test and extend these findings to clarify politics of representation. This should include improving and expanding the data's leverage to explore (inequalities in) representation between countries, time periods and policy areas. We are particularly interested in differences across institutional and welfare state settings – such as between proportional-representation and majoritarian systems, or between liberal and more social-democratic welfare-state systems. We are also interested in exploring mechanisms that produce unequal representation, something our data cannot clarify and that remains hotly contested.[82] Finally, we should explore and compare unequal representation with respect to other kinds of inequalities distinct from income inequality, such as educational inequality.[83] In the meantime, the present study provides more valid and broader evidence than existing work has led us to believe, that we can expect genuine but also unequal representation of citizen attitudes in the development of welfare states in industrialized democracies.

[82] Martin Gilens and others stress money-in-politics, while others point to a lack of descriptive representation of poor, working-class, or lower educated citizens (Gilens, *Affluence and Influence*, cf. Carnes, *White-Collar Government*; Evans and Tilley, *The New Politics of Class*).

[83] Mark Bovens and Anchrit Wille, *Diploma Democracy: The Rise of Political Meritocracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).