

# Political Inequality

Prof. Dr. Armin Schäfer

Summer term 2019

Veranstaltungsnr.: 66068

Uhrzeit: 8am to 10am

Raum: SCH 100.107

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Sprechstunde: Thu, 2-3pm

Büro: SCH 100.203

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## Overview

The principle “One person, one vote” lies at the heart of democracy. Despite large differences in income and wealth, education and capacities, democracies grant everyone the same number of votes. However, political equality demands more than just formal equality. Citizens’ voices must be heard equally and must they stand the same chance that politicians consider their interests. However, a growing literature shows that this is not the case. Against the background of rising social inequality in most advanced democracies, there is a renewed interest in the old question whether and how socio-economic differences translate into unequal political power. Focusing on different aspects of political inequality, a growing body of literature has empirically demonstrated that those with less economic resources are (increasingly) excluded from political representation across many liberal democracies, which manifests itself in different dimensions of representational inequality. Not only do the poor participate increasingly less in elections and other forms of political activities—people from lower socio-economic strata are also rarely present in the legislative bodies. In terms of substantial representation, we see little or no systematic relationship between the policy preferences of lower income and occupational groups and the actual decisions taken by parliaments or policymakers. Low and even middle-income groups seem to have no influence once their preferences diverge from those of top income groups. These biases in policy responsiveness have been demonstrated both for the US and European countries.

In this seminar, we will look at empirical studies that investigate the degree of political inequality in advanced democracies. These studies use a host of different methods, analyze trends over time or across countries. Taken together, recent political science scholarship paints a bleak picture of the realization of political equality in unequal societies.

## Course Requirements

This probably goes without saying, but I mention it nonetheless: you can't learn in a class if you don't show up. You should attend every meeting having completed the readings, that is, you should be ready to discuss, ask good questions, and share any difficulties you have encountered.

### Credit points

1. Basic requirement (**Studienleistung**)
  - a. You give a 15 to 20 minute presentation about the supplementary text, in which you summarize the main findings. Supplementary texts are listed as the second or third text of a given seminar session below. OR
  - b. You write three short, two page summaries of the respective required reading (the first text listed for a session). This summary has to be uploaded in **Learnweb** *before the session*, in which we discuss the paper.
2. Advanced requirement (**Prüfungsleistung**)
  - a. You write a term paper, which meets the specifications of your particular course of studies. OR
  - b. You give a presentation (see above) and take an oral exam at the end of the course.

## Course Schedule

### April 4: Introduction to the course

### April 11: Democracy and the Market

- Merkel, Wolfgang (2014): Is Capitalism Compatible with Democracy? In: *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 8, 1-20.
- Streeck, Wolfgang (2015): Comment on Wolfgang Merkel, 'Is Capitalism Compatible with Democracy?' In: *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 9, 49-60.

### April 18: More democracy, more equality—and vice versa?

- Muller, Edward N. (1988): Democracy, Economic Development, and Income Inequality. In: *American Sociological Review* 53: 50-68.
- Timmons, Jeffrey F. (2010): Does Democracy Reduce Economic Inequality? In: *British Journal of Political Science* 40: 741-757.

### April 25: Income inequality and political inequality

- Solt, Frederick (2008): Economic Inequality and Democratic Political Engagement. In: *American Journal of Political Science* 52, 48-60.
- Ritter, Michael; Solt, Frederick (2019): Economic Inequality and Campaign Participation. In: *Social Science Quarterly* 17, 1-11.
- Scervini, Francesco; Segatti, Paolo (2012): Education, Inequality and Electoral Participation. In: *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 30, 403-413.
- Solt, Frederick (2010): Does Economic Inequality Depress Electoral Participation? Testing the Schattschneider Hypothesis. In: *Political Behavior* 32, S. 285-301.

**Mai 2: Unequal turnout and the rise of inequality**

- Mahler, Vincent A.; Jesuit, David K.; Paradowski, Piotr R. (2014): Electoral Turnout and State Redistribution. A Cross-National Study of Fourteen Developed Countries. In: *Political Research Quarterly* 67, 361–373.
- Chong, Alberto; Olivera, Mauricio (2008): Does Compulsory Voting Help Equalize Incomes? In: *Economics & Politics* 20, 391–415.

**Mai 9: The participation gap**

- Schlozman, Kay; Brady, Henry; Verba, Sidney (2018): *Unequal and Unrepresented. Political Inequality and the People's Voice in the New Gilded Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 83-93.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman; Verba, Sidney; Brady, Henry E. (2010): Weapon of the Strong? Participatory Inequality and the Internet. In: *Perspectives on Politics* 8, 487–509.

**Mai 16: Is the participation gap widening?**

- Armingeon, Klaus; Lisa Schädel (2015): Social Inequality in Political Participation: The Dark Sides of Individualisation. In: *West European Politics* 38: 1–27.
- Dalton, Russell J. (2018): *The Participation Gap. Social Status & Political Inequality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, ch. 9.

**Mai 23: Unequal representation**

- Bovens, Mark A.P.; Wille, Anchrit (2017): *Diploma Democracy. The Rise of Political Meritocracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 111-135.
- Carnes, Nicholas (2012): Does the Numerical Underrepresentation of the Working Class in Congress Matter? In: *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 37, 5–34.

**Juni 6: Opinion congruence between parliament and the better off**

- Schakel, Wouter; Hakhverdian, Armen (2018): Ideological congruence and socio-economic inequality. In: *European Political Science Review* 10, 441–465.
- Giger, Nathalie; Rosset, Jan; Bernauer, Julian (2012): The Poor Political Representation of the Poor in a Comparative Perspective. In: *Representation* 48, 47–61.

**Juni 27: Unequal responsiveness**

- Gilens, Martin (2005): Inequality and Democratic Responsiveness. In: *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69: 778–96.
- Elsässer, Lea; Hense, Svenja; Schäfer, Armin (2018): Government of the People, by the Elite, for the Rich. Unequal Responsiveness in an Unlikely Case. In: *MPIfG Discussion Paper* 18-5.

**Juli 4: Why do citizens accept inequality?**

- Trump, Kris-Stella (2018): Income Inequality Influences Perceptions of Legitimate Income Differences. In: *British Journal of Political Science* 48, 929–952.
- Mijs, Jonathan J. B. (2019): The paradox of inequality: income inequality and belief in meritocracy go hand in hand. In: *Socio-Economic Review* 108 (online first).
- Roex, Karlijn; Huijts, Tim; Sieben, Inge (2019): Attitudes towards income inequality: ‘Winners’ versus ‘losers’ of the perceived meritocracy. In: *Acta Sociologica* 62, 47–63.

**Juli 11: Why has democracy failed to stop the rise in income inequality?**

- Shapiro, Ian (2002): Why the Poor Don't Soak the Rich. In: *Daedalus* 131, 118–128.
- Bonica, Adam; McCarty, Nolan; Poole, Keith T.; Rosenthal, Howard (2013): Why Hasn't Democracy Slowed Rising Inequality? In: *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27, 103–124.