

The cost of winning

Why majoritarian electoral systems redistribute less

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Abstract

Majoritarian electoral systems are associated with lower levels of redistribution, but there is no consensus on the working mechanisms behind this. This thesis aims to provide a new explanation. We connect research on elections and individual policy preferences and develop a theory in which low levels of redistribution is explained by large shares of high income groups in the legislature in majoritarian states. We test our theory by looking at the share of highly educated people in the legislatures of seven countries. We find that majoritarian states have more highly educated members of parliament. However, we also see a reversed relationship when comparing winning and losing candidates in two of the countries. These inconclusive results lead us to believe that what might matter is the representation of the poor rather than the rich.

Key words: electoral systems, electoral campaigning, redistribution, policy preferences, funding of political parties

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1. Introduction

Are rich people's personal policy preferences the reason majoritarian electoral systems redistribute less?

A question that has been puzzling the field of electoral studies for many years is the one regarding the varying levels of redistribution spotted in different countries. Previous research within the field have concluded that majoritarian electoral systems are associated with lower levels of governmental redistribution, but there is no single conclusion about the working mechanisms behind this. Factors that have been looked at as possible explanations include the number of parties in a parliament, possibilities for forming coalitions as well as class interests among voters. The effect of class interests among politicians, the ones that actually formulate and push through policy, however, seems to have been overlooked. There is no apparent reason why the economic backgrounds of individuals would play a role in shaping their policy preferences only when they are voters, and not also when they are about to or have become politicians. This paper aims to provide a new complementary causal mechanism for the above-mentioned relationship between the electoral system and level of redistribution of a state. We begin by presenting and connecting four strands of research and presenting data on the members of parliament of seven countries.

Our literature review will focus on four different strands of research. One is related to the aspects a state that explains different levels of redistribution, the second is related to costs and consequences of electoral campaigning, the third is concerned with the public and private funding of campaigns, and the last addresses the relationship between individuals' economic backgrounds, their policy preferences and influence over policy. The field on electoral systems show us that there is a difference in the level of redistribution associated with the type of electoral system a state has. In general, states with a majoritarian electoral system redistribute less. On campaigning, previous research shows that campaigning costs more and has a greater effect on a candidate's electoral success in majoritarian systems. Interestingly, this has not led to party subsidies for political parties and electoral campaigning to increase. Instead, such state subsidies are more associated with proportional representation. Lastly, the research conducted on policy preferences clearly states that as the income of an individual rises, the preference for governmental redistribution falls, and that rich people in general have better and more direct political connections and consequently more influence in most democracies.

By connecting these strands of research, we develop our theory, which is based on the assumptions that winning an election requires campaigning and that campaigning requires economic resources. Moreover, we theorize that winning in majoritarian systems require both more campaigning overall, more expensive campaigning, and campaigning without public economic support. These factors explain why rich people would have an advantage over poor people in winning elections, and that this advantage is greater in majoritarian systems. Since research shows that rich people are less in favour of redistributive policies, this could help explain why majoritarian states redistribute less.

In this essay, we want to see whether the different level of redistribution can be explained by the composition of income groups in the legislature. We therefore try to measure the share of high income groups in parliaments in countries with different electoral systems. Since data on incomes are hard to find, we use the members of parliaments educational level as a proxy. Among the countries we look at, we find that those with a majoritarian electoral system have a higher share of highly educated people in parliament. However, this result can at most indicate a relationship that needs to be further considered with data on more countries.

This paper proceeds as follows. The first section presents the previous literature on the research fields mentioned above. Section two presents our theory. Section three describes what data we use to look at the educational level of the members in different parliaments, and how we use it. Section four presents the result of the data. The paper ends with a last section, that concludes the learnings of this paper, puts it into a broader perspective, and suggests a way forward.

2. Previous research

2.1 Levels of redistribution

What explains the different levels of redistribution among economically developed countries? In this section, we go through some of the previously presented answers to this question.

First, some research suggests that the structure of the current economic distribution among citizens is the explanatory factor. In a famous paper written by Meltzer and Richard, it is suggested that the level of economic governmental redistribution is decided by the preference of the voter with the median income (1981, 924). This preference is in turn decided by the distance between the mean income and the income of the median voter (*ibid.*, 916). This however, applies only to majoritarian electoral systems.

Lupu and Pontusson show that the level of redistribution depends on the structure of the inequality of a country (2011). If the gap between middle-income earners and low-income earners is small relative to the gap between middle-income earners and high-income earners, the middle-income earners will be more supportive of redistribution (*ibid.*, 326, 329). They acclaim this to social affinity, theorizing that people are altruistic to those with whom they share or could easily share lifestyle, and that income is one characteristic of such senses of group affiliation (*ibid.*, 318).

Other political scientists instead explain differences in the level of distribution between countries by the type of electoral system. Beginning in the original work of Duverger, the field exploring the differences between electoral systems have shown that majoritarian systems tend to generate only two parties (1959, 217). The proportional representation systems, on the other hand, tend to be characterized by multiple parties. This in turn partly explains the different policy outcomes of different electoral systems. Based on the assumption that majoritarian systems lead to single-party governments while proportional representation systems lead to coalition governments (Norris 1997, 308), the latter tend to have a higher spending on public goods and transfers due to the fact that the governing parties compete with each other for the voters by promising benefits to them (Persson et al. 2007, 10).

Another well-known theory on the area explains the outcomes on redistribution by the way different classes can organize and negotiate under different electoral systems. The middle class “either ally with the poor for the purpose of soaking the rich [...] or ally with the rich for the purpose of avoiding

being soaked by the poor” (Cusack et al. 2006, 167) Under majoritarian rule, there is a risk that the party of the poor or the party of the rich respectively, ignore the will of the middle class after the election (ibid., 168). Therefore, under such system, the middle class will ally with the rich not because they necessarily prefer it, but because they have less to lose from such coalition (ibid., 170). Since the rich are less in favour of redistribution, the majoritarian system consequently lead to lower levels of redistribution than the proportional one (ibid., 175). This theory does however oversee factors such as the possibility that either of the two parties in a majoritarian system could be controlled by the middle class, or that party formation in proportional systems tend to be far more fragmented and pluralistic than assumed.

Other explanations for the differences in public spending and economic redistribution between electoral systems, focusing not on the parties but the institutions themselves, have also been put forward. For example, Milesi-Ferretti et al. propose that the difference derives from the majoritarian system’s tendency to elect political representatives with greater local interest (2002, 610). Since the voters in this system can only elect one representative per constituency, voters tend to elect representatives with the same social background (ibid., 610). These predominantly locally based politicians tend to prefer public spending on specific, geographically defined projects over general transfers based on economic or social status (ibid., 617). This relationship holds even when the number of parties is accounted for (ibid., 640). This study is similar to ours in the sense that it also puts focus on politicians as a driving actor.

Of course, the relationship between redistribution and the level of proportionality in the electoral system could also be reversed. To analyze this, one must look at the adoption of electoral systems. Boix suggests that the shift from majority rule in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s can be explained by the rising of a strong socialist party in combination with a fragmented conservative and liberal side (1999, 612). In opposition to this proposal, Cusack et al. argue that shifts to proportional representation happened in countries where the right would benefit more from cooperation between unions and employer organisations than they would lose from the subsequent redistribution (2007, 378). The countries that kept a majoritarian electoral system did so because it would block the left from gaining power, which was especially important if the left was strong and/or the level of economic inequality was high (ibid., 374, 378). Thus, countries already economically equal and with coordination and cooperation between unions and employers, meaning with existing systems for redistribution or at least good possibilities for it, shifted to proportional representation.

There are of course important aspects that should not be overlooked in the field concerned with the adoption of electoral systems. However, the electoral system continues to have a shaping effect on society and therefore it is still imperative to look at the question of redistribution as an effect, rather than cause, of electoral systems.

2.2 Campaigning

This section treats the topic of the use of campaigning as a way to increase the possibility of becoming elected in a legislative body. It includes the costs of electoral campaigning, why campaign spending varies between countries, and why countries with a majoritarian system tend to have higher levels of campaign spending.

In the International IDEA Handbook of Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns, it is stated that money is an essential part of the process of competition for political power (Nassmacher 2003, 5). As such, the cost of campaigning is an important part to look at when discussing the ability of different candidates to win election. Despite the various difficulties within this field, a lot of effort has been put into studying the costs of electoral campaigning (Fleishman 1973; Strom 1990). The difficulties include the uncertainty of available data on parties' and candidates' campaign spending (Donnay and Ramsden 1995, 354; Pierre et al. 2000, 12), as well as the differentiation among views and estimates on the cost of different campaigning methods (Pinto-Duschinsky 2002, 82-83). For example, the estimation on the cost of capital versus labour intensive campaigning has previously been discussed within the field (*ibid.*, 82-83), where labour-intense campaigning includes, among other things, the mobilization of activists while capital-intense campaigning includes various, usually media-based, advertisements and professional services (Strom 1990, 576, 581). Moreover, the money that is transmitted to parties "legally or illegally" is done so in different ways: formal or informal, measurable or non-measurable, into the individual seat-holders, their administrations, party funds or activist associations (Nassmacher 2003, 4). In the past, these costs included formal costs for signing up as a candidate; a system that strongly favoured those with "personal wealth and affluent backers" (Fleishman 1973, 362). Now, non-required campaign related costs as these of the political landscape today, can still hinder poorer citizens from running for office (Pinto-Duschinsky 2002, 70).

Research has also been made on the effect of campaign spending on electoral success, and has included a comparison between the effectiveness of spending of both challengers and incumbents (Benoit and Marsh 2010, 159-160). The results have shown that challenger spending in majoritarian systems is effective while incumbent spending has little or no effect due to their comparative advantage in gaining and keeping voters' support. In proportional systems, or more specifically in the Irish election of 2002 to the lower legislative chamber, however, both challenger and incumbent spending had an effect on the candidate's probability of winning a seat. (*ibid.*) Following this observation, the authors mean that the driving force behind the variation in candidate spending is related to both supply and demand; "candidates with access to more funds can be expected to spend more" and "candidates will spend as the need arises" (*ibid.*, 163).

Related to this is research on variations in campaign spending by candidates, and what the conditions for a candidate to spend money on their

campaign are. By viewing an election as a simple tournament between the incumbent and the challenger, and using Lazear and Rozen's model proposed in 1981, Evans sets up the function for the candidate's probability of winning an election as dependent on their own effort and the opponent's effort (2007, 440). Campaign spending is used as a proxy for effort, and the probability of winning increases with increased effort, hence increased campaign spending, which is in line with other research on the positive relationship between spending and winning an election (Erikson and Palfrey 1998, 370-372). The model leads to the result that candidates that have equal ability and cost functions will exert the same amount of effort, i.e. campaign spending, and that this will lead to no change in impact of the effort exerted on the result (Evans 2007, 441). In other words, if candidates have equal resources to spend on campaigns, doing so will according to the model not influence their probability of winning. What we assume in our work is that candidates do not have equal resources, and furthermore choose to spend unequal amounts of money on campaign spending, and that this leads to the hypothesis that there is a bias in the distribution of income groups in parliaments.

However, some studies show results that oppose the previously mentioned findings. A study by Levitt suggests that when controlling for the quality of the candidate and the advantage of being incumbent, the impact of spending on election results shrinks drastically and is not statistically significant anymore (1994, 790). The explanations for this is that high quality challengers spend more simply because they are able to raise more, and that incumbent candidates spend more in response to a high-quality challenger's spending (*ibid.*, 778).

We have also looked into theories explaining the increase that has occurred in campaign spending by candidates in the U.S., a majoritarian system, recently. It focuses on the decline in partisan voters, and that a general increase in nonpartisan voters has led to a change of parties' policy platforms to more moderate ones. The closer parties are to each other, ideologically, the more effective will an increase in campaign spending be, while more polarized parties will decrease the cost of increasing one's valence. (Zakharov 2009, 349) Valence is defined as the characteristics of a candidate that a voter considers important other than the policy platform of the same candidate. Valence can in other words attract voters that "prefer the opponent's policy platform", and increasing one's valence is usually a main objective in campaign spending. (*ibid.*) Research has previously often not considered the importance of valence in candidates' probability of winning an election, and focused on their strategic placement of policy platform to achieve their office-seeking goal (Feddersen et al. 1990, 1008), while newer research considers the consequences of "persuasive campaigning" (Iaryczower and Mattozzi 2013, 745).

Another field of research explores the possible mechanisms in a majoritarian system that would require candidates to campaign more than in proportional system. The electoral system shapes the incentives of the politicians as the votes are transferred in different ways, meaning that the elected get different opportunities to carry out their policies. In majoritarian systems, a winner-take all system, the share the winning party gets in a parliament is disproportionate to the

vote share, while in a proportional system the votes are to be transferred more proportionally. (Norris 1997, 301, 303) Duverger early arrived at the theory that majoritarian systems, as a result of this, tend to generate a two-party system (1959, 217). The incentives generated by the electoral systems, intertwined with the number of candidates, where the proportional system favours more and majoritarian less, could also explain variation in campaign spending between the two systems. One article links the intensity of campaign spending to the number of candidates running for office, and explores how candidates in proportional systems spend less resources on campaign competition. (Iaryczower and Mattozzi 2013, 744) The explanation of the variation is according to them an interplay between the incentives generated by the electoral rules, Duverger's law, the ideological differentiation of the parties in the different systems, and the number of candidates competing in the electoral arena.

Whether candidates are elected on a personal or party basis is also related to campaigning, especially when this might affect which candidates are elected. Voting system and distribution of region-based support political support is one factor determining a campaign's centering around candidate or party (Nassmacher 2003, 2). Carey and Shugart suggests that it is the different electoral rules and dimensions that affect to what extent legislative candidates need to develop a personal reputation rather than rely on or contribute to a good party reputation (1995). Their work on the area shows us that Single Nontransferable Vote (SNTV) and Single Members District Plurality (SMDP), both with open lists, are systems that most enhances the development of personal reputations (ibid., 429-430). However, this does not automatically tell us what kind of candidates will benefit from the development of personal reputation, in our case, rich or poor ones. Shugart and Carey suggests briefly that systems of personal reputation might favour "insiders who have ready access to costly campaign resources", and that this might keep minorities out (ibid., 433). This idea about the safety of the "insiders" is confirmed by some research looking into the length of the legislative careers for elected politicians, suggesting that politicians in Single District Plurality systems have a lower risk of defeat (Habel 2008, 479-480). This is explained by the fact that although "the incentives to cultivate a personal vote in [cumulative voting] are directly comparable to those in SMDP, the capability of legislators to build personal reputations should differ" (ibid., 477). Carey and Shughart also mentions that the ratio between campaign funds spent privately and campaign funds spent from the party might tell us something about the weight of the personal reputation, but they emphasize the uncertainty on the available data due to different countries' different policies on the funding of political campaign (1995, 433).

2.3 Funding of electoral campaigns

The third strand of research that we base our theory on is concerned with the funding of the electoral campaigns, both through public and private means. The cost of campaigning poses an obvious threat to basic democratic values of equal

participation in elections (Fleishman 1973, 350). As a result, numerous and cross-country varied policies on campaign spending have been implemented all over the world ever since the 1950s (Pinto-Duschinsky 2002, 78; Pierre et al. 2000, 6). These include mainly two types of arrangements; subsidies and regulations (Fleishman 1973, 366; Pinto-Duschinsky 2002, 75), both aiming to give all candidates and/or parties a more equal economic ground to stand on. The democratic aim is to prevent a situation where the cost of political campaigning keeps the non-wealthy candidates or the candidates preferred by non-wealthy voters out of the political arena (Fleishman 1973, 364).

However, the extent and form of public subsidies vary greatly across countries (Pinto-Duschinsky 2002, 78). For example, the extent to which the budgets of the political parties rely on public funding varied from over 80 % percent in Finland in 1989 to 25 % in Austria the same year (Pierre et al. 2000, 14). When looking at the percentage of total campaign spending derived from governmental contributions, countries such as the UK and US are in the very low with only 2-3 % while Sweden ends up at the top with 65 % (Pinto-Duschinsky 2002, 78). In the US, the public funding is targeted specifically towards candidates rather than parties, enhancing their personal campaign culture (Pierre et al. 2000, 8, 9). In general, and for what is of interest in this thesis, public subsidies are “strongly associated with proportional electoral systems” (Pinto-Duschinsky 2002, 75).

However, the public funding accounts for only a part of the total funding of political parties and electoral campaigns and thus we must also look into the private funding of electoral campaigns. In the more extreme cases, as the US, private individual contributions accounted for over 90 percent of the total funding (Fremeth et al. 2013, 170). Despite this, only a small minority of the citizens can generally be said to participate in political activity through the donation of economic means (Nassmacher 2003, 6). Further, as Pinto states it, both when public subsidies are small and when they are large, candidates and parties still seek other financing in order to “outspend [...] political opponents” (Pinto-Duschinsky 2002, 78).

Party subsidies sometimes emerge specifically to make parties less dependent on financing from other interest groups (Pierre et al. 2000, 4-5). These can either be firms or consist of “small elites”, despite claiming to represent a “public interest” (Pinto-Duschinsky 2002, 85).

It is not hard to believe that affluent individuals make more private campaign contributions. They might not be bigger relatively the income of the individual, but the total sum given is higher (see for example Fremeth et al. 2013, 175), making candidates depend more on contributions from rich individuals, something we will return to later in the section on affluent individuals’ influence over policy.

2.4 Rich people's policy preferences and political influence

An important field of research for our theory have been the one examining the relationship between individual economic background and preference for redistribution. Dion and Birchfield proves via cross-country surveys on opinions about government's responsibility for enhancing equality that "both education and income are negatively associated with support for redistribution" (2010, 323). This effect of individual-level income on support for distribution is also stronger in more economically developed and equal countries (ibid., 328). However, Dion and Birchfield points out that the findings differ across regions and that geographic and cultural contexts play a big role in shaping preferences for redistribution (ibid., 329). It is therefore important to keep in mind that electoral systems do not alone explain why some countries redistribute more than others because of who gets elected to the legislative body, but that the electoral system of a country might help bring forth the individual-level preferences for redistribution that stems from the financial background of the elected member of parliament.

In a Canadian two-wave longitudinal study from the early 2000's, it is examined whether self-interest or political ideology explains attitudes towards state intervention via welfare programs (Jaeger 2006). The study tests previous assumptions about these two causes and finds a negative relationship between income and support for redistribution, as well as for the individual level of education and support for redistribution (ibid., 330-331). Some support is also found for the notion that the attitude is explained by political ideology, although notably not as strong as for the self-interest explanation (ibid., 331, 333). It is also worth noting that the self-interest could be what originally determines the political ideology, a deliberation which, although not mentioned by Jæger, has been addressed previously by other researchers in the field (Hasenfeld and Rafferty 1989, 1030-1031; Emerson and Vanburen 1992, 505-509).

Other studies on the attitudes towards support for the unemployed have shown that self-interest, as in being unemployed at the time of answering the question, enhances the chances of being positive of such state interventions (Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003, 421). The stronger enhancing mechanism is however not related to the situation for the individual but the employment situation in the nation as a whole, showing us that "high unemployment triggers some changes in public attitudes toward the welfare state" (ibid., 424). The explanation for this is suggested to be that individuals then become more aware of the risk of becoming unemployed, hence enforcing the self-interest argument (ibid., 424).

Cusack, Iversen and Rehm provides evidence that those exposed to higher risks at the labour market and those with lower incomes favour redistribution more (2006, 373). This supports the claim of self-interest as the explanation for political preferences for economic redistribution. It is worth noting that the difference between the chances for *strongly opposing* redistribution of a person with high income and low risk exposure and a person with low income and high risk is much

smaller than the difference in chances of these two *strongly supporting* redistribution (ibid., 375). It might therefore not be the case that elected candidates with higher incomes would work *against* distribution more than elected candidates with lower incomes, but rather that the lower income candidates are much more likely to work *for* redistribution. The authors also shows that a person's redistributive preferences strongly influences their political preference for a specific party (ibid., 377-378). Since parties are strongly linked to political ideologies, and since it is the income and unemployment risk that, among other things, determines a person's preference for redistribution, this link of redistribution preference and partisanship could give some support for our conjecture that the ideology explanation for preferences for redistribution might in fact still be an explanation of self-interest.

In the book "Unequal Democracy" by Larry M. Bartels, there is an attempt to discover what influences politicians' policy choices. His aim is to provide evidence or examples of the links between campaign contribution by high-income earners and presidential and party voting behavior. He has found that there is a "relationship between the incumbent party's spending advantage and income growth at the top of the income distribution" (Bartels 2008, 117). His explanation for this is that the most significant campaign contributions come from the people earning the most, and if the income growth for this income group has been better during election times, then campaign contributions are expected to be higher (ibid., 116).

Moreover, his analysis show that the effect is much stronger for when the Republican party is the incumbent than the Democratic party, supporting his other findings that the Republican party receives more campaign support and therefore spends slightly more than their opponents (Bartels 2008, 122). Since studies of the entire American electorate has suggested that there is a significant effect of campaign spending on voters' choice (ibid., 120), the result is that the Republican presidential candidate's probability of winning increases as an indirect consequence of the party's economic policies favouring more affluent voters.

Supporting this, Bartels has also looked at the American Senate and analyzed how the voting behavior of the elected politicians corresponds to the preferences of the voters. By dividing the voters by income groups, he aims to show that high income voters are more politically represented and that the constituents are more responsive to their preferences than to the preferences of other, lower, income groups. (ibid., 268) To explain this, he dismisses explanatory theories of how voter turnout among affluent versus low-income voters plays a part in the senator's voter behavior, and also that affluent voters might be more informed about politics and can therefore be more influential. Instead, he has find some statistical significance on how campaigning support given by middle- and high income voters to politicians increases their political influence, but this relationship is more indirect. (ibid., 280-281) He brings up the idea that "the fact that senators are themselves affluent, and in many cases extremely wealthy, hardly seems irrelevant to understanding the strong empirical connection between their voting behavior and the preferences of their affluent constituents" (ibid., 281).

Complementary to Bartels theory on how politicians are more responsive to certain income groups in their constituencies is research explaining the effect of political connections between candidates and firms. Firms supporting candidates with political capital related to congressional committees responsible for government spending has shown to lead to increased future sales for the supporting firms, and that the “results are not simply capturing politicians’ preferences for enacting policies that are favourable to certain industries or their constituents” (Akey 2015, 3190). Other research related to this field contradicts these results, showing that firm donations are often a result of agency problems within the company, leading to a loss of returns (Aggarwal et al. 2012, 5).

Regardless of the resulting returns for firms after their campaign donations, it is questionable to what extent a candidate’s ability to raise funds from for example firms or individuals is a mechanism determining their probability of getting elected. An article bringing forth the explanation that women are underrepresented in the American Congress because of their unequal chances of building up donor networks, despite raising as much funds as their male counterparts (Thomsen and Swers 2017, 450), indicates that there are other factors that explains why some groups are elected and others are not.

There are also questions arising from Bartels’ theory. Although he suspects there is a link between the senators’ backgrounds and policy preferences, he does not theorise this or show empirical findings that supports it. As he explores how campaign support from voters might shape the electoral outcome and therefore also the policies made, we build our theory on the reversed part, that the members of parliament themselves have varying policy preferences based on their pre-election incomes.

3. Theory

To explain the different levels of economic redistribution in different countries, we now develop a theory tying together the strands of research from the literature review. We know that states with a majoritarian electoral system redistribute less, and what we want to do here is help explain why that is.

Despite its simplicity, we first need to make a very basic, logical premise.

(P1) *Rich people have access to more economic resources*

By definition, rich people have both more personal wealth and higher incomes. Furthermore, they can be expected to have access to networks where more money can be obtained. Rich people also tend to have more flexible jobs, where time can be disposed more as the employee wishes. They are also more secured against a temporary loss of income.

We now move on to making two basic assumptions.

(A1) *In order to win an election, candidates need to campaign*

Incumbent candidates facing challengers in a new election need to campaign in order to keep the trust and electoral support from the public. Challenging candidates need to gain trust and support in order to win the seat. This is done by campaigning. Both classic methods like door-knocking, distribution of flyers, old-media advertisement and live debating, as well as newer methods like advertisement on TV, debating, and support gathering from social media are used by parties and individual candidates. (Bartels 2008; Erikson and Palfrey 1998)

(A2) *Electoral campaigning has an economic cost*

All methods described above have a cost, albeit to a varying degree. Traditional methods can be cheaper in the sense that they rely more on volunteering from supporters. The newer methods have the possibilities of reaching a broader mass at once, which drives up their prices. Campaigning is also costly to the individual candidate, as well as the volunteering supporters, in the sense that they might need to take unpaid leave from their current occupations. Distribution of advertising material, whether directly, digitally or by traditional media, comes with a cost in both production and printing. (Donnay and Ramsden 1995; Fleishman 1973; Pierre et al. 2000; Pinto-Duschinsky 2002; Strom 1990)

A1 and A2 leads us to our first implication.

(I1) *Rich people have a comparative advantage in electoral campaigning*

Rich people have a direct advantage in both the access to more resources to spend on campaigning, and an indirect advantage in deciding whether to run or not. In the deciding to run, all candidates calculate the costs and probability of winning. As the probability of winning sinks, the costs rises in the sense that it will not have been worth it. This pushes uncertain candidates that are poor out of the game completely, leaving more rich people running, consequently increasing the probability of a rich person winning a seat.

We then turn to three factors that differentiates campaigning in the two electoral systems.

(F1) *The amount of electoral campaigning required in majoritarian systems is greater*

Theoretically, it should be harder to win in a majoritarian system. One reason for this is that the effective threshold is much higher. In a single-member constituency, the only candidate that gets elected is the one who got the most votes. A candidate must therefore reach up to 50% of the cast votes. In a multi-member constituency, on the other hand, the electoral threshold for an individual running candidate is much closer to the electoral threshold in the system as a whole. Even though the candidate in a proportional system theoretically could need to still attain more votes in absolute terms than in a majoritarian system, the election is in and of itself relative, since seats are always given to the top candidates no matter how low the participation in the election might be. This competition between candidates requires heavy campaigning.

(F2) *Electoral campaigning is more expensive in majoritarian systems*

In majoritarian systems, the campaigning puts more focus on the individual rather than the party. Secondly, there is only one candidate per party and constituency that can be relevant for the voters. In a multi-member constituency, the party can produce more campaign material for a lower cost because they can campaigning for several candidates within the same constituency. Single-member constituencies are also smaller than what they would be if they were a multi-member constituency. This means they might be less likely to correspond to a local TV-channel or newspaper, making mass advertisement harder. Cost per candidate can therefore be assumed to be lower in multi-member districts. (Iaryczower and Mattozzi 2013)

(F3) *Majoritarian systems have less public funding for electoral campaigns*

Public funding of political parties is primarily associated with proportional systems. This money is sometimes earmarked for electoral campaigns or can be relocated by

the receiving party for that purpose. Since so much of the political activities requires legislative power, public party funding flows into electoral campaigning. (Nassmacher 2003)

From P1 together with the made assumptions A1 and A2 and with regards to the relevant factors F1 through F3, the second implication gives:

(I2) *Rich people's comparative advantage in electoral campaigning is greater in majoritarian systems than in proportional systems.*

This implication is the first main conclusion.

Lastly, we move on to a factor that binds the previously implication I2 to the main field we are looking at, which is the level of redistribution among countries.

(F4) *Rich people are less prone to favour governmental redistribution*

We know that the self-interest and ideology of rich people is not one that favours redistribution. Because rich people both contribute more to the governmental body and receives less from it, they do not benefit as much as poor people from it. Rich people are also less likely to hold beliefs on the government's responsibility for equalizing people's' incomes as well as ensuring a decent living standard for the poor, which both are examples of the outcome of redistribution. (Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003, Cusack et al. 2006, Dion and Birchfield 2010, Jaeger 2006) This holds for people in general, and there is no logical explanation as to why this would not hold for politicians as well.

Lastly, we can now clearly see the second main conclusion, formulated by this last implication:

(I3) *States with a majoritarian electoral system redistribute less because their members of parliament are richer*

4. Research strategy and data

In order to see if there is a variation in the amount of rich people in the parliaments of countries with majoritarian versus proportional representation electoral systems, we would ideally want to look at member of parliaments' incomes and personal wealth before elections, during the time the campaigning took place. Since this data is difficult to attain due to the fact that most countries do not collect and/or publicly supply their citizens' information on income or wealth, we have aimed to get around this problem and find the best possible way to test our theory.

A lot of research has been made on the effect of education on an individual's income level, and found that there is a positive correlation (Dolan et al. 2008, 100; Kotakorpi and Poutvaara 2011, 878). Besides the results of increased national income levels following higher marginal productivity due to education (Breton 2013, 121), another mechanism is that "education allows individuals to become (or at least, be "perceived" as) more efficient and productive in the labor market, leading them to earn more than their less educated counterparts" (Powdthavee et al. 2015, 11). In light of this, we have chosen to use the educational level of the candidates as an operationalisation of their pre-election income.

Using education as a proxy for income has its limitations. First of all, education is not the only factor impacting one's income or wealth, and can therefore give a misleading picture of the candidates' ability to campaign. A person might have a lot of money, acquired or inherited, or have a high income despite not having a high level of education. Second of all, people with many years of education can still have a low income. However, we hope that the collected data for all the member of parliaments in the various countries looked at will give an *indication* of whether our theory has some substance or not. Many occupations require at least some years of post-secondary studies, and include jobs where the income level is still low. We have tried to account for this by only looking at the members with at least three years of post-secondary schooling, an undergraduate degree or more, or only tertiary degrees when these categories are specified. When looking into different countries, this has been one of the factors leading us to either include or exclude them as units of analysis. From now on we use "higher education" to refer to the categorization we have made.

If our assumptions are true, then we expect to find variations in the composition of the educational level of the elected members in the parliaments. More specifically, we expect that majoritarian systems will have a higher percentage of members with a higher level of education than proportional systems. This would be what we expect to observe from the implication that people with higher incomes have a greater probability of winning an election in a majoritarian system.

In order to test our theory, it is more relevant to look only at affluent countries, as we want to limit the ways in which other factors such as a country's stability, level of democracy, or educational level among the population in general distort the results. We have also limited ourselves to look at countries which have been used in previous research dealing with how electoral systems shape a country's redistributive politics.

First, we look at several countries to see if we can find a pattern between the countries with a majoritarian system and countries with a proportional system. Based on the accessibility of information on members of parliaments educational level as well as their categorization of the level, we have found data from four countries with a majoritarian system and three with a proportional system. The countries with a majoritarian system that we have found have available and appropriate information on their legislators' educational backgrounds are Australia (Lumb 2013), Canada (Samson 2015), the UK (vanHeerde-Hudson and Campbell 2015) and the US (Manning 2016); for countries with a proportional representation system we have found Finland (Finland 2015), Norway (Stortinget 2012) and Sweden (Statistiska centralbyrån 2015).

As mentioned, we have only included the percentage of members of parliament with an undergraduate or bachelor's degree or more, three years of post-secondary education or more, or a tertiary degree or more. The countries have sometimes used different definitions of educational level in their collection of data. We have handled this by using only the data from countries where the definitions, although different, correspond to each other and can consequently be compared. Since the selection of the units of analysis is in no way random, nor can the data be expected to follow a normal distribution, using the results for statistical analysis is not preferred. Instead, by using the percentage of MPs with these levels of education, we can look at the distribution and see if there is a reason to believe that our hypothesis is supported or dismissed or whether further research on the topic would be desirable.

After that, we want to control for the possibility that the countries compared have a more highly educated population as a whole, and include the percentage of highly educated people aged 25-64 for each country chosen.

We then proceed to present the percentages found in Sweden and the UK, the countries where the data was the most explicit and easily comparable. The following section consequently deals with a comparison between the winning and losing candidates in Sweden and the UK, creating a basic "probability of winning" related to the level of education of the candidates.

Further, we look at the educational level among the two major left and right wing parties in Sweden and the UK. This is followed by a comparison of the percentages of MPs with an educational level of secondary school or less. The last part shows the percentage of MPs with primary school or less over time in Sweden.

5. Result

5.1. General comparisons

The educational level of the members of parliament of the countries we have studied differs greatly. The percentage of highly educated MPs spans from just below half in Sweden to more than 9 out of 10 in the United States. The lowest is found in a proportional system and the highest in a majoritarian. The general pattern from what we can see now, is that our expectations seem to be confirmed.

Table 1. *Percentage of highly educated legislators in each country, and their electoral system.*

	Australia	Canada	UK	US	mean M	Finland	Norway	Sweden	mean PR
Percentage of members with higher education	79	67.2	81.8	94	80.5	67.9	57.1	46.8	57.3
Electoral system	M	M	M	M		PR	PR	PR	

Calculating the mean in the four countries applying a majoritarian system gives an average percentage of 80.5% highly educated legislative members. The mean of the three countries applying a proportional system gives an average of 57.3% highly educated legislative members. Comparing these show that from our results, the majoritarian countries have overall a higher share of highly educated elected members. As mentioned before, the collection of the data does not allow us to do tests on the significance of these results, but serve more as an initial indication on whether our theory is worth exploring further.

A problem with the collection of the data is that all of the percentages are aggregated. With the exception of the data collected from the UK, where we received information on each individual candidate (that both won and lost the 2015 election), all the other countries gave us the total percentages of each educational level. If we had data on an individual level, we could have done statistical tests comparing the groups between the countries.

Table 2. *Percentage of highly educated legislators in each country and percentage of the population with the same level of education.*

	Australia	Canada	UK	US	Finland	Norway	Sweden
Percentage of members with higher education	79	67.2	81.8	94	67.9	57.1	46.8
Percentage of population with higher education	43	55	43	45	43	43	40
Difference between the members and the population	36	12.2	38.8	49	24.9	14.1	6.8
Electoral system	M	M	M	M	PR	PR	PR

An important factor that might explain differences among the percentage of highly educated members of parliament is the percentage of highly educated people in the population. Most countries that we have data on have an overall level of 40-45 %. Sweden, who scores the absolute lowest regarding the educational level of the members of parliament, also show the lowest percentage of highly educated in the population. The US, on the other hand, have the absolute highest percentage of highly educated members of congress, while still having only 45 % highly educated citizens.

One country stands out, which is Canada, with as many as 55 % of the population being highly educated. This is interesting, because Canada is also the country with a majoritarian electoral system that have the lowest level of highly educated members of parliament. Canada even scores below Finland, a country with a proportional electoral system. We would expect this relationship to be the reversed, showing us a very high percentage of highly educated people in the parliament of Canada.

5.2. Comparison Sweden and the United Kingdom

Table 3. *Percentage of highly educated legislators in Sweden and the UK.*

	Sweden	UK
Percentage of members with higher education	46.8	81.8

A comparison between the elected members of parliament in the most recent elections in Sweden and the UK shows a clear difference in the proportion of highly educated people. In the UK, 81.8 % of the members have an undergraduate degree, compared to only 46.8 % in Sweden. These results might of course not stem only from the countries' different electoral system. Factors such as political culture, public party funding and economic inequality also differentiates the countries.

5.2.1. Winning and losing candidates

Another interesting aspect to look at when trying to determine the effect of income on campaigning and winning in an election, is the education level of losing candidates contra the winning candidates.

Regarding Sweden, the data we have is from the national statistical bureau, and it comes from official records. It covers all running candidates. From the UK, this information has only been collected via a survey and is therefore self-estimated. Consequently, we can expect this information to be skewed in the sense that people hold a prestige bias when answering questions about education. In this data, we also lack answers from 56 % of the losing candidates. As a result, highly educated people are likely to be overrepresented among the people who answered. Despite this, the data gives us the chance to compare the share of people with high respectively low educational level before and after the elections.

Table 4. *Percentage of candidates with higher education among winners and losers.*

Percentage of members with higher education	Sweden	UK
Winning	46.8	81.8
Losing	44.1	84.3

Table 5. *Percentage of candidates with secondary education or less among winners and losers.*

Percentage of members with secondary school or less	Sweden	UK
Winning	28.2	8.9
Losing	32.5	8.7

In Sweden, 44.1 % of the losing candidates had studied three years or more beyond secondary school. As expected, this number rises when looking at the winning candidates, then being 46.8%. Similarly, the candidates who had only graduated

secondary school or less constitutes 32.5 % of the losing candidates and a little less, 28.2% of the winning candidates.

Now, this is expected from our theory, despite Sweden applying an electoral system of proportional representation. However, we would next expect the UK to have even higher differences between the losing and winning candidates.

From the data we have, this is not true. Instead, the result is the reversed. The UK data show us that 84.3 % of the losing candidates held an education of an undergraduate degree or more while even less, 81.8 %, among the winning candidates did. Similarly, the percentage of people with a graduation from secondary school or less rises from 8.7% to 8.9 % when shifting from losing to winning candidates.

Like mentioned before, this might be explained by the data being skew. Another reason might be that the individual calculation of the cost that is made before deciding to candidate keeps the less affluent out of the game from the start. In Sweden, the share of highly educated people among all running candidates is 44.3 %. In the UK the share is 84 %. Thus, the whole pool of candidates is more highly educated in the UK, indicating that less educated people simply do not run for office at all.

Unfortunately, all countries with proportional representation that we have managed to gather data from are Scandinavian. This means that we might accidentally compare Scandinavia to the Anglo-Saxon orbit. The reason the Scandinavian countries have a high representation of less educated people might be due to the history of strong labour unions and high welfare benefits, giving more people the ground and tools for extensive political activity.

5.2.2. Partisanship

As mentioned earlier in the literature review, there are studies that explain the varying redistribution between countries with different electoral systems with the fact that more left-wing governments tend to form in proportional representation systems than in majoritarian (see Iversen and Soskice 2006). We have looked at the two major left and right wing parties in Sweden and in the UK to see how their percentages of low and highly educated members of parliaments differ. In Sweden we look at the Swedish Social Democratic Party (S) and the Moderate Party (M); in the UK we look at the Labour Party (L) and the Conservative Party (C). Table 6 shows the percentage of members of parliaments with secondary school or less, and we see that there is not much of a difference between the UK parties, but a greater difference between the Swedish parties. Table 7 shows the percentage of members of parliaments with higher education, and here there is also a much greater difference between the Swedish parties than in the UK ones.

Table 6. *Percentage of elected representatives with secondary education or less in the major left and right wing parties in Sweden and the UK.*

Percentage of members with secondary school or less	Sweden	UK
Socialdemokraterna/Labour	8.8	8.4
Moderaterna/Conservatives	1.2	8.3

Table 7. *Percentage of elected representatives with higher education or the major left and right wing parties in Sweden and the UK.*

Percentage of members with higher education	Sweden	UK
Socialdemokraterna/Labour	33.6	84
Moderaterna/Conservatives	58.3	82.9

What this could imply is that in the UK, a country with a majoritarian electoral system, it is equally expensive to candidate in a leftwing party as it is in a rightwing party. For Sweden, a country with a proportional representation system, the opposite holds. As seen, the rightwing party has a much greater percentage of highly educated elected members of parliaments and a much lower percentage of elected members of parliaments with secondary school or less.

5.2.3. The least educated

The results presented so far are somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, there is a slight indication of a generally larger representation of highly educated people in the parliaments of countries with a majoritarian electoral system. On the other hand, the case comparison between Sweden and the UK does not indicate that highly educated people have a higher chance of winning the election in majoritarian systems.

Table 8. *Percentage of members of parliament with secondary education or less in Sweden and the UK.*

	Sweden	UK
Percentage of members with secondary school or less	28.2	8.9

Previous research shows us that people with high incomes and low risk of unemployment does not differ significantly from others on being *strongly against* redistribution. Instead, it is the people with low incomes and high risk of unemployment that differ greatly from other on *strongly supporting*. (Cusack, Iversen, and Rehm 2006, 375) If redistribution is driven by the active will to redistribute, what we should try to measure is not the representation of high income groups in the legislature but rather that of low income groups. A comparison between Sweden and the UK on the educational levels, show us a higher representation of less educated people in Sweden. In the UK, only 8.9 % of the people elected in 2015 had secondary education or less, while at least 28.2 % of the Swedish elected members of parliament in the election in 2014 had the same level of education.

Table 9. *Percentage of members of parliament in Sweden with primary education or less, 1991-2014.*

Year	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014
Percentage of MPs in Sweden with primary school	15.5	12.0	9.5	8.0	5.5	4.0	4.6

Still, the representation of the very least educated is even smaller, and as it turns out, it has constantly been shrinking since the 90's. In 1991, 15.5 % of the elected members of parliament in Sweden had only primary education or less. In 2014, the percentage is only 4.8 %. This is well in line with Sweden's fast growing inequality during the same time (OECD 2015). This indicates that future research could benefit from investigating the electoral system's effect on the percentage of low income groups in the legislature, rather than high income groups.

6. Conclusion

The field of electoral studies is widely explored in political science. It focuses on the origins, role and impact of electoral rules and institutions and brings forward important explanations of differences around the world of stable democracies and well-developed economies. The most prominent comparisons are usually made between majoritarian electoral systems and those of proportional representation. This discussion is also held outside of academia, with movements fighting for a change in the electoral system of their country as well as academics openly promoting one electoral system over the other, especially in times of rapid social and economic change.

It is well established that majoritarian electoral systems redistribute less than proportional representation systems. Research has tried to explain this by the number of parties the different systems generate, the way classes can negotiate before and after election, as well as coalition bargaining between parties. None of these theories brought forward can be seen to alone explain the different redistributive outcomes.

This thesis has turned to the politicians as individuals to find another mechanism behind the relationship. We have tried to look at the representation of high income groups in parliaments, a group that which previous research has shown usually hold political preferences against redistribution. We believe that campaigning costs more in majoritarian systems than in proportional ones, and that rich people therefore have an advantage in the former. This leads to a higher representation of this group in parliaments, explaining the less redistributive policies.

However, our results are inconclusive. In using education as a proxy for income, we have been unable to find data to a satisfying degree. We show that among the countries we have data on, there is some support for our general claim on the representation of highly educated people in the legislature. However, other results, such as the educational level of winning contra losing candidates, indicate the opposite relationship.

Since we expect the rich to have a greater influence over policy, we have, like many before us, had an unproportional focus on this group. Instead, we believe that future research would do well in adopting a focus on the representation of the poor. Their influence over policy, especially when coordinated, is likely to have been underestimated. In fact, the poor are the ones who strongly favour redistributive policies while rich people are not generally strongly against. Rich people are just not strongly in favour of it. Therefore, a new theory developed from ours could state

that the lower campaigning costs in proportional representation systems favours the representation of the poor, and that these consequently promote and implement policies of redistribution. Such studies would contribute not only to the field of electoral studies, but also to that which addresses the interests, lives and opportunities of the poor.

7. References

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