In recent years, academics have investigated to what extent policy outcomes reflect the preferences of different income groups to draw conclusions about political inequalities stemming from the influence of money on political power. The pioneering researcher at that time, Martin Gilens, was the first to gauge the preferences of different income groups towards proposed policy changes based on large amounts of survey data. Specifically, he applied a quadratic logistic regression technique to estimate the preferences for the respondents at tenth, fiftieth and ninetieth income percentile towards 1779 proposed policy measures which he used as independent variables to explain whether or not a policy was adopted (Gilens, 2005). He found that whenever the preferences of different income groups diverge, policy outcomes strongly reflect the preferences of the rich whereas they hardly ever reflect the preferences of the poor or middle-income US citizens. In his consecutive work, Gilens and Page (2014) contrasted alternative theoretical traditions to assess which set of actors have how much influence over public policy. Him and his colleague found that economic elites and organized business oriented interest groups have substantial impact on U.S. policy outcomes, providing support for the Economic-Elite Domination and Biased Pluralism Theory and against alternative explanations such as Majoritarian Electoral Democracy or Majoritarian Pluralism (Gilens & Page, 2014). Whereas the authors primary objective of the paper is to empirically unravel unequal income policy responsiveness within the U.S., the authors also point towards potential mechanism that explain why policy outcomes disproportionately reflect the interest of the rich. Namely, the structural dependence of political parties to finance political campaigns leading to a dependence of policymakers on donors and interest group as well as the lobbying by corporations and corporate interests that seem to be more aligned to the preferences of the rich (Gilens & Page, 2014). These findings substantially question the political equality of citizens living in the United States, a fundamental principle of democracy that requires that each individual’s political influence to be equal, regardless of social status, income, educational degree, race, religion or any other characteristic. Political Equally is a necessary condition for ensuring that political power is fairly and justly distributed among all members of society and seen as essential for the functioning of democratic societies (QUOTE?)

Given the severity of these findings a new branch of research has recently evolved led by political scientist who applied different variations of Gilen’s methodological approach, correlating the preferences of various social classes towards political outcomes (Elkj & Iversen, 2020.; Elsässer et al., 2020; Lax et al., 2019; Lupu & Warner, 2022; Schakel et al., 2020). The new wave of research has put forward further evidence of unequal policy responsiveness enriching the literature in terms of breadth and scope. Several studies have contributed to the breadth of the existing literature by analyzing whether unequal policy responsiveness exists in various countries outside the U.S. (Lupue & Castro, 2022, Lupu & Warner, 2022; Peters & Ensink, 2015; Schakel et al., 2020, Elsässer et al., 2020; Schakel, 2021) whereas other studies broadened the scope of the unequal policy responsiveness literature by focusing on educational and occupational inequalities (Elsässer et al., 2020; Schakel & Van Der Pas, 2021).

Examining the impact of the preferences of different social classes on the likelihood of a policy being adopted in Germany, Elsässar et al. (2020) find a strikingly similar pattern that show how policy outcomes correspond to the preferences of the richest ten and one percent of the income distribution, whereas the preferences of the median and the poor do not seem to be statistically significant in deciding whether a policy is implemented or not. Equally, the authors show that the likelihood of policy implementation is significantly associated with the preferences of higher-grade employees, civil servants, and the self-employed, whereas the correlation between the policy preferences of unskilled workers and policy change is small and insignificant (Elsässar et al., 2020). The authors conclude that institutional differences such as private campaign finance and the direct influence of private money in politics cannot solely explain why policy outcomes disproportionately reflect the preferences of the rich, since political campaigns are largely publicly funded in Germany.

Therefore, the representational bias must go way beyond large private donations, as previously has been continually argued for the U.S. case (Elsässar et al., 2020).

Studies in other European countries including in Spain (Lupu & Castro, 2022) and in the Netherlands (Schakel, 2021) have found similar evidence that underlines the fact that

representational bias is not a U.S. specific phenomenon and questions private campaign finance as the main causal driver behind unequal policy responsiveness.   
  
All countries have completely different institutional characteristics of including income inequality   
  
*specific characteristics of the political syste*

Looking for explanations that could explain the somewhat similar findings in s

*Studies focusing on the link between constituents’ preferences and policy outcomes also*

*point to representational biases in Europe, but their findings do not allow for robust*

*conclusions about unequal policy responsiveness, either. Peters and Ensink (2015).*

*example, compare preferences on redistribution with aggregate levels of social spending*

*(as a percentage of GDP).*

*Yet, as indicators such as social spending are highly influenced*

*by factors beyond the immediate reach of political decisions – such as GDP growth or*

*the unemployment rate –, it is hard to distinguish whether a preferred change in social*

*expenditure was affected by responsive behavior or by exogenous factors.*

*Dependent variable problem.*