

IFS Deaton Review on Inequalities

Political Inequalities

December 2nd, 2022

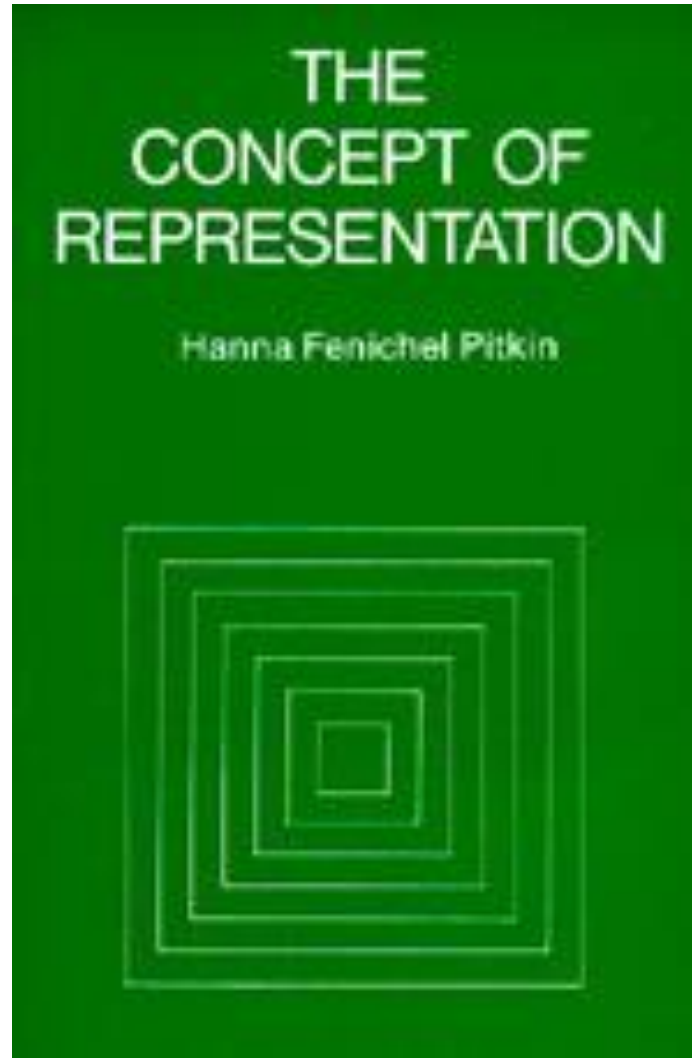
Julia Cagé

Political inequality: reasons for optimism?

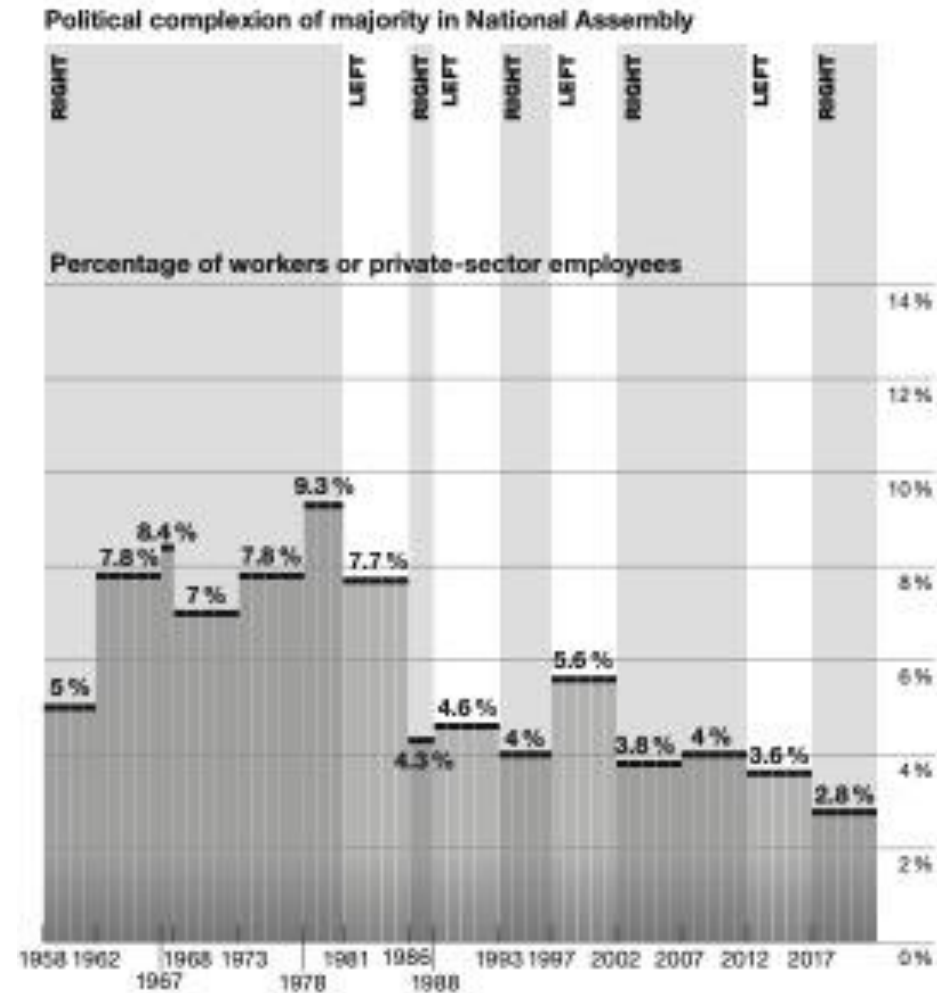
- Thanks for giving me the opportunity to review and comment the great chapter written by Ben Ansell and Jane Gringrich: “Political Inequality.”
- Great discussion of the concept of **political inequality**.
- Super interesting empirically investigation of the relationship between political inequality and economic inequality over the past few decades in the UK.

→ I learnt a lot!

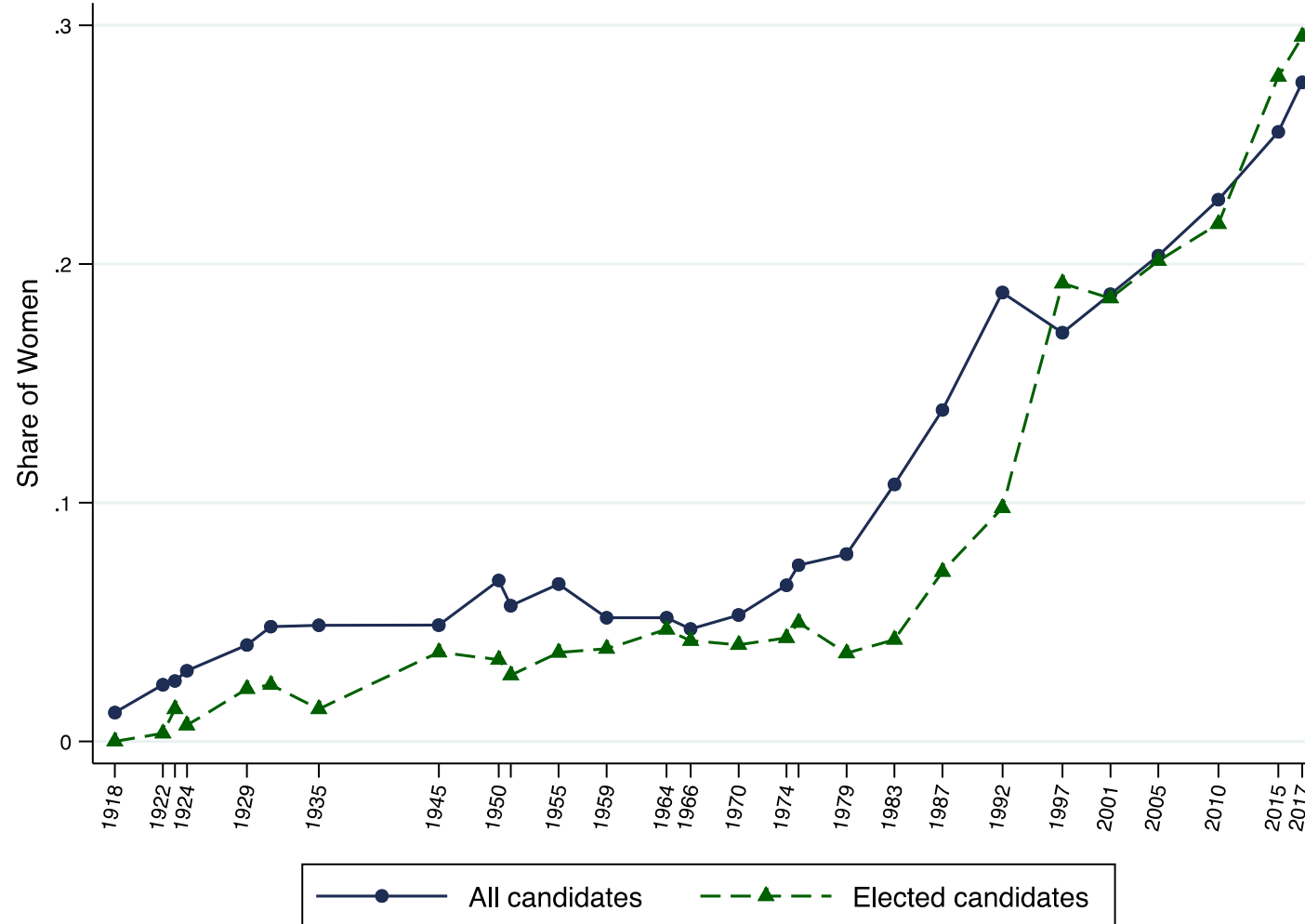
The importance of unequal descriptive representation
Who politicians are



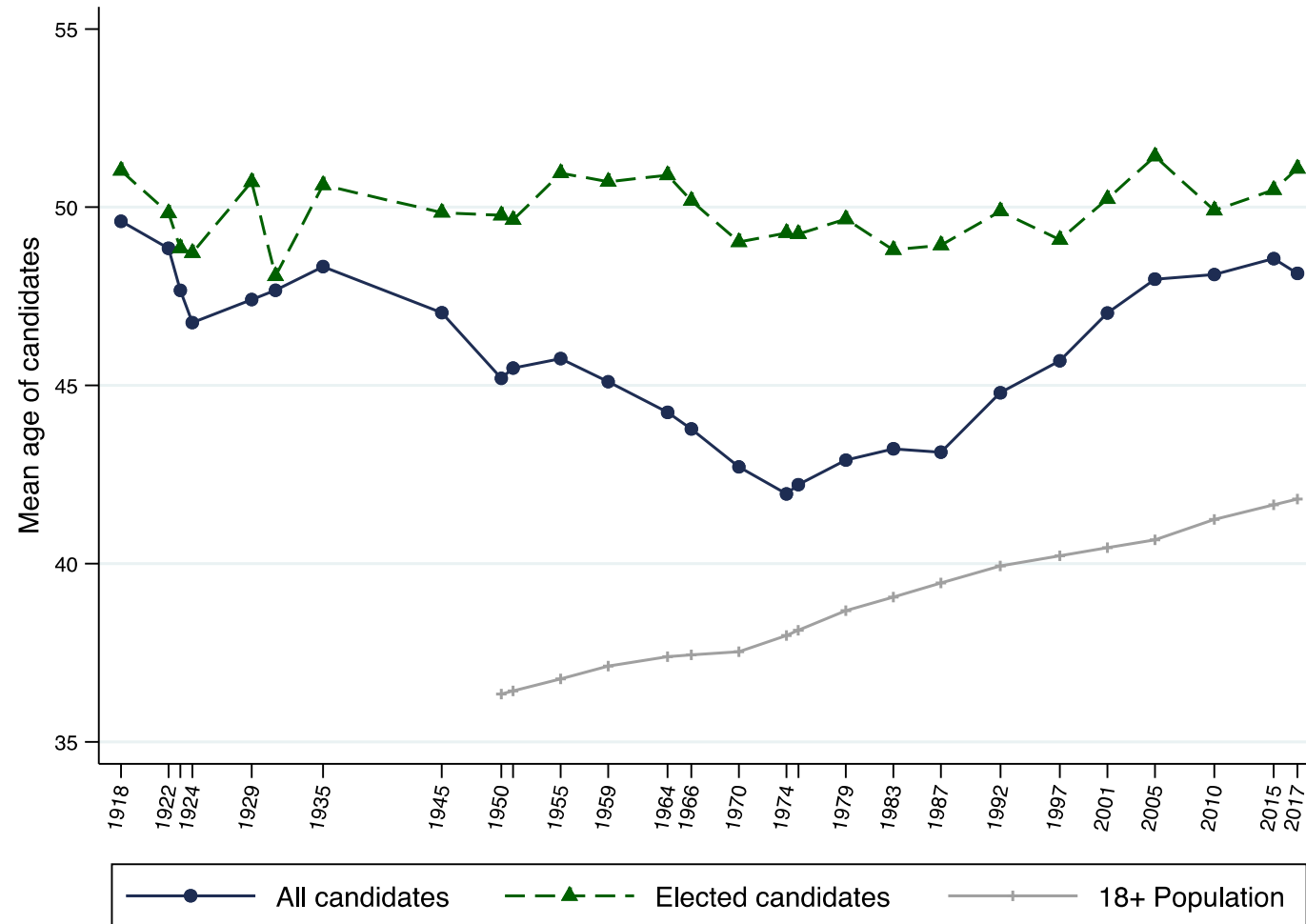
Beyond the UK: Evidence from France



Taking into account the politicians... but also **the unsuccessful candidates**



Taking into account the politicians... but also the unsuccessful candidates

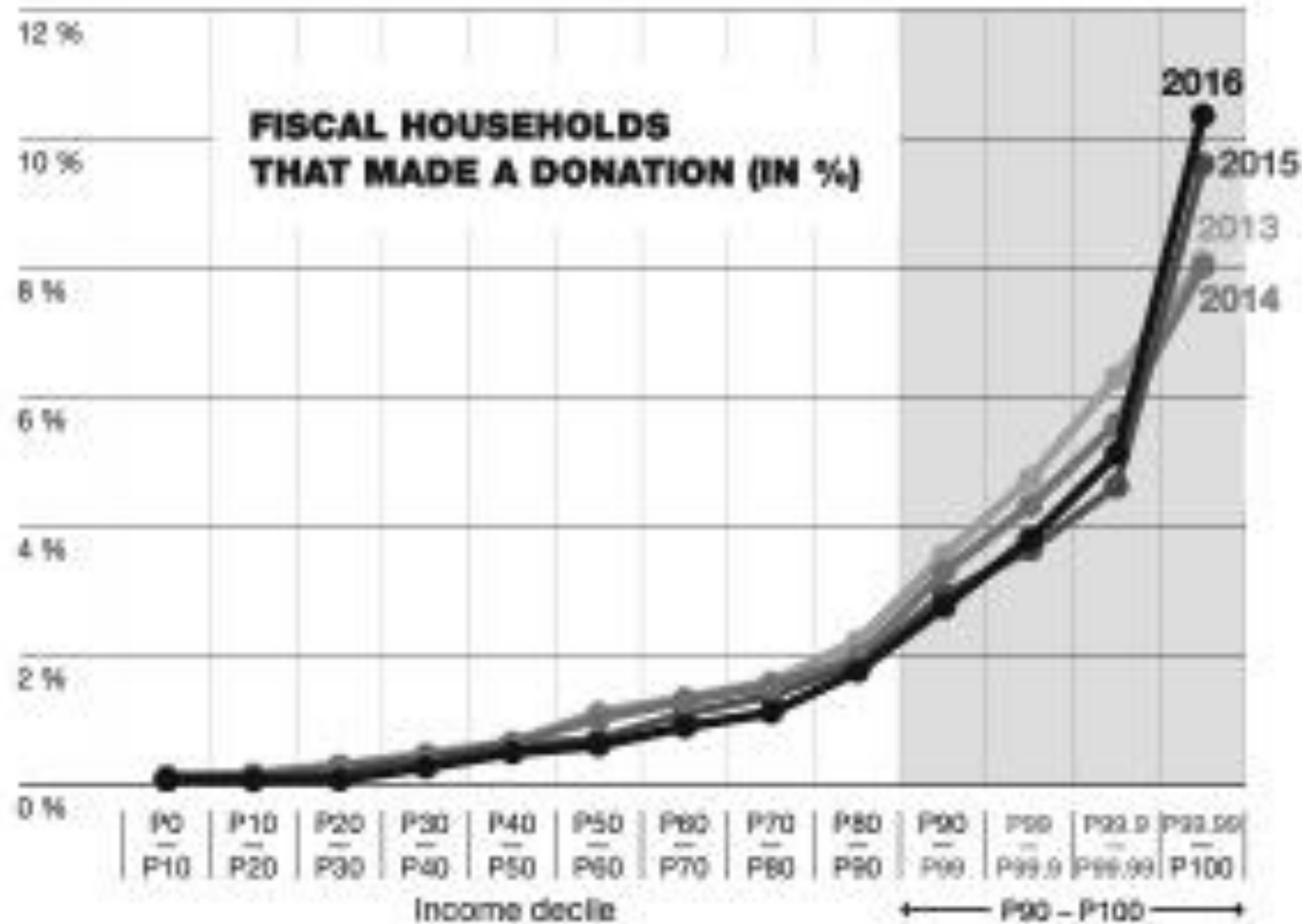


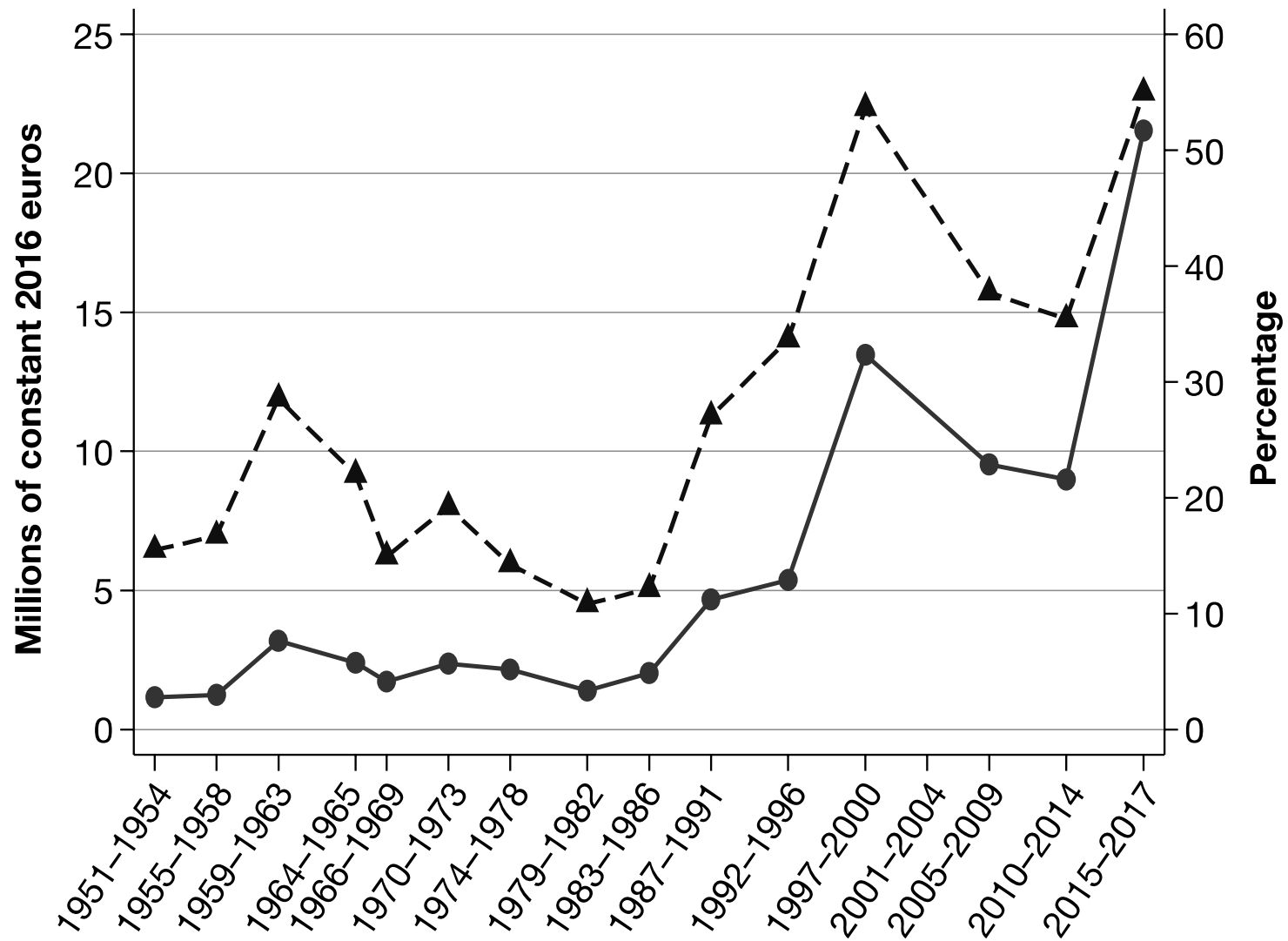
Why should we care about descriptive representation?

- Because political inequality comes at a **cost**.
 - Everything else equal, people vote less when they are faced with a set of “unrepresentative” candidates (Cagé and Dewitte, 2022, using 100 years of data for the UK).
- Might also explain rise in **far-right parties**.
 - Evidence of Dal Bò *et al.* (2022) on the Sweden Democrats’ voters.

The unequal funding of democracy

Economic inequalities \longleftrightarrow political inequalities





● Total amount recieved by the Labour Party in donations (left axis)
 ▲ Donations as a percentage of all donations and contributions (right axis)

Conclusion

- Even if we learn a lot from Ansell and Gingrich, a lot still need to be done to better understand **political inequality!**
- Unequal **descriptive representation** and unequal **funding of democracy** are two dimensions that we should take into account, but other factors are at play!
 - E.g. the ownership of the media.
- The good news is that solutions can be found – and need to be evaluated:
 - Implementing new forms of affirmative actions.
 - Regulating the power of private money in democracies.
 - Implementing democratic equality vouchers, etc.