

Hills, J., Bastagli, F., Cowell, F., Glennerster, H., Karagiannaki, E., and McKnight A.

Wealth in the UK: Distribution, Accumulation and Policy

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The book by Hills *et al.* is an empirical account of the evolution of wealth in the UK over the recent decades. The aim of the book is to provide a comprehensive study of the distribution of wealth, the trends in wealth accumulation and the developments in wealth-holding policy based on the Wealth and Asset survey conducted by ONS in 2006-08 and 2008-10, official data from HM Revenue and Customs and the British Household Panel Survey.

The book is divided into three parts. The first one details the patterns of wealth distribution across various social groups over time. It outlines the pitfalls in the empirical analyses of wealth and describes the trends in wealth distribution over the past decades according to different concepts of wealth (e.g. financial, property, pension wealth) and social classifications (by age, occupational status etc.). The main finding is that absolute gaps in wealth-holding between the top, middle and bottom population terciles have become much more pronounced than relative inequality (Chapter 2). Moreover, in an international comparison with Sweden, Canada and USA based on the Luxembourg Wealth Study data, the UK consistently emerges as one of the least unequal countries under different definitions of wealth (Chapter 3).

The second part discusses the sources of personal wealth accumulation and its long-term impacts. Chapter 4 identifies the declining share of financial wealth and greater contribution of housing as the main determinants of the disparate trends in absolute and relative inequality examined in Chapter 2. The analysis reveals, however, that the catch-up of the middle-tercile wealth has been driven nearly entirely by the property price boom. It also establishes a significant influence of housing tenure and education on the level of wealth-holding. Consequently, patterns of inheritance and its long-term impact on life opportunities of the future generations are explored in Chapters 5 and 6. The authors find that while inheritances have been highly unequal, they did not contribute to wealth concentration at the top in general. Nevertheless, disparities in inheritance did generate long-term advantages in economic as well as non-economic wellbeing for inheritors in wealthier households.

The third part concludes with the analysis of the past and future trajectories in the British wealth policy. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss the tensions and contrasting aims characterising the conservative and radical traditions in wealth-holding policy associated with different British governments. By

analysing the taxation attitudes towards different types of wealth and the impact of asset ownership on social policies, the authors provide an exhaustive account of the contradictions between specific policy goals adopted over the past decades. The final chapter links these inconsistencies in wealth policy with the analyses of distribution and accumulation of wealth presented in the first two parts of the book, providing a 'dream' checklist of potential policy reforms best able to address the current issues in the UK wealth distribution.

The book clearly achieves its aim to draw an inclusive picture of the situation in UK's wealth distribution, accumulation and policy. One of its greatest advantages is its clear discussion of the characteristics and issues present in the available data sources as well as clarity in defining different concepts within wealth. This is of particular importance in understanding the dynamics of change and the determinants of wealth distribution, which are often sensitive to the definition of wealth and various assets and tend to be biased by data-specific problems such as non-response or under-reporting of certain social groups.

One weakness of the book is its insufficient exploration of institutional factors other than policy underpinning the analysed trends in the accumulation and distribution of wealth. Parallel processes occurring in the economy over the past decades, particularly those associated with financialisation, are likely to have significantly affected the dynamics and determinants of wealth concentration. However, their explicit examination is absent at this stage of authors' analyses. On the whole, the study forms an excellent resource and reference point for researchers investigating the dynamics of wealth accumulation and distribution and their interaction with socio-economic phenomena.

Joseph A. Schumpeter
Treatise on Money
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The publication of the English translation of Schumpeter's *Treatise on Money* should be of considerable interest for scholars of monetary theory. The newly published volume may be viewed as the missing link between two of Schumpeter's other key works: *Theory of Economic Development* ([1938] 2008) and *Business Cycles* ([1939] 1964). The latter volume, published three years after Keynes' *General Theory*, was dismissed by Schumpeter's student Hyman Minsky: 'The crisis of capitalism produced a magnificent theoretical response from Keynes; Schumpeter's was banal.' (Minsky, 1983, p. 1). Minsky's dissat-