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Examining Capital Structures, Mobility Barriers and Mobility Trajectories in the Elites: the Case of Norway.

Concepts like power, class and elite are most often founded on an assumption that society, the positions an individual occupies herein and also the relations between individuals located in these positions, can be analysed as a multidimensional hierarchy. The correlative image of society is also a society that is divided into and structured by divisions between hierarchically ordered positions, between which people are more or less mobile. And while it is common to separate between different forms of power (as for instance military, bureaucratic, economic or symbolic power), it has also been common to separate between different types of elites, for instance political, administrative and economic elites (Scott (ed.)1990, Suleiman & Mendras (eds.) 1997). The criteria for the latter differentiation have usually been related to societal sectors, specific societal task, levels of power or to functional criteria.

Drawing inspiration from Bourdieu and Bourdieu & de Saint-Martin's work (in particular Bourdieu & de Saint-Martin 1978, Bourdieu 1989), in this paper, we will address this topic by focusing on three interrelated research questions:

- 1) What are the dominant oppositions of capital structures within the Norwegian field of power anno 2000?
- 2) What areas of this field are the most open with respect to educational mobility, and in what sectors is the intergenerational educational reproduction at its strongest?
- 3) In what areas of the field is the accumulation of personal and inherited *social* capital at its strongest? Can significant, group-internal differences between the different types of social capital be identified?

The analyses are based on data from a survey of 1710 persons in leading positions in the Norwegian society, performed by the Norwegian Power and Democracy Project during the autumn of 2000. The sample is in many respects unique, in that it includes both generals, bishops, leading university professors and administrators, higher civil servants, members of the parliament, party leaders, state secretaries, supreme court judges, leaders of NGO's and the CEO's, NCEO's and chairmen of the largest private and public companies, including the cooperatives.

Statistically, three statistical tools will be used complementarily:

- a) multiple correspondence analysis in the analysis of dimensionality of the field,
- b) loglinear/logmultiplicative models in the analysis of the mobility and homogamy patterns in the field.

c) latent class analysis in the analysis of the structures of personal and inherited social capital.

The results from a **multiple correspondence analysis** of 31 variables point in the direction of a tri-polar opposition in the Norwegian elites:

- the first axis is primarily an economic axis, and separates the business executives from the others.
- the second axis describes an opposition high and low volumes of personal and inherited educational and social capital. This is also an opposition between positions in politics/organisations and positions in higher education/the church/culture
- the third axis describes an opposition between high volumes of inherited social capital/low volumes of economic and educational capital vs. higher volumes of economic and educational capital. This opposition is also an opposition between political/organisational positions and judicial/military positions.

The results of the **loglinear analyses** of educational mobility and homogamy add further information to the above outlined structures.

a) the homogamy patterns are significant, both for the respondents and for their parents.

b) the intergenerational educational barriers are at their strongest at the top and at the bottom of the educational hierarchy.

In this way, the barriers between two of the sectors of the field, i.e. between the political and the cultural and educational positions, are further reinforced, making the passage between the two sectors even more laborious.

The results of the latent class analyses of the social capital structures, measured by the number and type of board memberships at national level held by the respondent, his/her spouse and his/her father/mother, add further details to this picture:

- a) The analysis of the *inherited* social capital assets (i.e. board memberships held by father/mother) yields a two-class solution between “have and the have nots”. There is no significant difference with respect to what type of social capital the respondent’s have inherited.
- b) A similar structure is revealed in the analysis of the *spouses’* social capital assets. The latent class probabilities are, however, different.
- c) At this stage, the *personal* social capital structure seem, however, to be more complex. In this analysis, a three-class model yields the best solution, separating most clearly between the “have nots” and the others. The two other classes are more complex in structure, and the clearest opposition is found between respondents with or without affiliations to managerial organisations.