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Pathways to the Power Elite - Career trajectories in the core of the Danish Networks of Power

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This paper explores the career trajectories of the 423 individuals identified as the power elite in the core of the Danish Elite Network (Ellersgaard 2015; Larsen 2015) through sequence analysis. We identify patterns in four distinct sequences - sectorial, occupational, organisational and geographical - enabling us to explore the relationship between career path and current position within the different sectors of the power elite. The four sequences are used to explore how elite cohesion and oppositions are created through four different mechanisms: 1) inter-sectoral mobility 2) career slope 3) character formation through organisational adaptation and 4) location in relation to the national and international power centers.

Methodologically, we identify career segments based on optimal matching (Abbott & Hrycak 1990; Blair-Loy 1999) of the career trajectories in the four different types of sequences mentioned above of the 423 individuals in the core of the elite network. We investigate the alignment between these multiple sequences. Furthermore, we identify other social characteristics of the segments such as their gender, social background and educational profile. Finally, we explore the relationship between cohesion based on social ties and cohesion based on similarities in career trajectory through distances in sequence patterns and sociometric geodesics derived from the network database (Ellersgaard & Larsen 2015). This analysis serves to explore cohesion and fragmentation across the elite based on career trajectories within the type of sequences.

The inter-sectoral mobility is analysed to discuss to what extent career path reflects current sector affiliation. Michael Hartmann (2010: 292) defines inter-sectoral mobility as the degree to which elite individuals have careers that span several of the key sectors in a society, which in turn creates larger homogeneity among the individuals at the very top. These patterns of revolving doors described by Mills (1956: 287) as 'the heavy traffic between the ... structures, often in very intricate patterns' or 'the interchangeability of positions' add to the cohesion of the power elite. The exchange of a key position within one field to a key position in another has also been described through the term *pantouflage* by Pierre Bourdieu (1996). Furthermore, we assess the flow - and the direction of the flow - between sectors (Denord, Lagneau-Ymonet & Thine 2011:34). The Danish case is particu-

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larly interesting as it is expected that there is comparatively little inter-sectoral mobility (Hartmann 2010).

The career slopes for each individual towards the position at the apex of the elite network is used to assess the velocity of career ascent. By identifying which occupational position and the hierarchy of promotions needed, the career progression of elite individuals can be compared across sectors. Again following Hartmann (2000) and Mills (1956) this may be tied to socialization within the same classes as dominate the sector or field, the elite individual is rising though. Furthermore, career slopes reveal the average time investment need to achieve a dominant position in the sector or field (cf. Bourdieu 1986).

The organisational adaptation follows the number and type of organisations within the career trajectories of elite individuals. We explore whether individuals are shaped by the same type of organisations, i.e. banks or the ministry of justice, thus creating a similar life experience, outlook and character within this group (Mills 1956). In particular, we investigate the importance of career positions in academies (Cappelli & Hamori 2005: 25), that is, certain firms or institutions endowing their former employees with an aura of excellence such as consulting giant McKinsey & Company or the grand corps in France (cf. Bourdieu 1996). Furthermore, we investigate how indicators of involvement in the political or organisational field may later lead to entry in these sectors.

The movement towards the power centre follows the location of employment of the elite individuals. Two different aspects are of interest here. First, the dynamics between center and periphery within Denmark. Who have to move around in the provinces before returning to the power centre of the capital and who manage to enter the elite network without having geographical ties to the capital. Second, to what extent have individuals gathered cosmopolitan capital (Weenink 2008, Bühlman, David & Mach 2013). By looking at the specific area of employment or education abroad we differentiate between the status of areas based on their position in world system theory (Chase-Dunn, Kawano & Brewer 2000) and in the World City System (Alderson & Beckfield 2004).

In conclusion, we compare segments derived from each of the four types of sequences and discuss how the current sector affiliation of the elite individual is reflected in his or her career trajectory. Do careers and experiences intertwine, creating potential for shared understandings, personal ties and thus even stronger cohesion within the core group of the Danish elite network or do careers follow distinct paths in different sectors.

Our preliminary analysis suggests that career patterns overlap substantially with the current sector affiliation of the members of the elite networks. This even applies to careers within the very same organisations in these sectors. In particular,

the senior civil servants, the chief executives of the largest corporations, the scientists and the union leaders follow distinct paths. However, two groups appear to deviate from the sector specific career patterns. First, managers of organisations that themselves cross between sectors such as state-owned enterprises, national research centers or university based tech corporations. Second, a small group of multipositionals (cf. Boltanski 1973) bridge between the distinct career patterns found in different sectors. This group is further characterized by also holding the most central network positions, having attended the most typical university programmes for the elite and a having long careers. Thus we find a core within the core (cf. Denord, Hjellbrekke et al 2011) who holds the most senior positions within the field of power and both through current and former ties are well-connected to all key sectors within the Danish welfare state.

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