

dietsector was een liberale creatie – en in het onderwijs met de wet Van Humbeeck. De ijver van bepaalde liberalen voor de invoering van de persoonlijke dienstplicht kan gezien worden als de emanatie van dit liberaal etatisme dat als doel had de staat te versterken en individuen aan de staat te binden en zo een tegengewicht te vormen tegen de verdelende verzuiling die in de late negentiende eeuw vorm kreeg en waarin de liberalen een zwakkere partij waren. Tekenend in dit verband is het verzet van de liberaal Lemonier tegen subsidiëring van verenigingen om pre-militaire trainingen te organiseren, omdat dat het verzuilingsproces stimuleerde. Versterking via het leger kon het liberale karakter van de staat bevestigen en continueren.

De sociologie van de persoonlijke dienstplicht had beter geduid kunnen worden. Slagen voor een korporaalexamen kon de dienstplicht inkorten. Ook werd gedacht aan het invoeren van een pre-militaire training op school: in het Brusselse stadsonderwijs zou die cursus worden verstrekt aan 15 tot 19-jarigen in de vorm van avondonderwijs. Dit is enigszins paradoxaal omdat lager onderwijs pas in 1914 een wettelijke verplichting werd. Dit impliceert dat minstens een deel van het debat over de dienstplicht een specifieke sociologie had en de lagere middenklasse betrof, wat op zijn beurt dan weer de grote betrokkenheid van radicale liberalen mee zou kunnen verklaren: het leger kon deel worden van een project van individuele sociale mobiliteit.

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Olav Korsnes, Johan Heilbron, Johs. Hjellbrekke, Felix Bühlmann and Mike Savage (eds.), *New Directions in Elite Studies* (Abington: Routledge, 2018). 321 p. ISBN 9781059191.

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The Italian economist Pareto, a founding father of theories on elites, defined elites as people with quality. The meaning of the word elite has changed and has become a term for incumbents of powerful positions. Many of these powerful persons tend to think that might means right. Today, words like elite or elitist are often used to slander unspecified groups. Such populist bashing is not helpful to understand the phenomenon of elites or superrich. The super-rich certainly should be the subject of scholarly studies, or rather there should be research on why some societies make it possible that some people become superrich, whereas the skewness of the wealth distribution is far less extreme in other countries. As Thomas Piketty argues in his book *Capital et idéologie*

(Paris 2019) inequality in wealth is a political choice, and not necessarily caused by new technology or the destructive outcomes of globalization. Dodging tax by the superrich can easily be redressed according to Piketty by introducing more severe tax laws. But maybe that is not enough.

The chapters of this expensive edited volume cover several northern European countries. Great Britain is also included. In their rather perfunctory introduction, the editors see (p. 1): 'The renewed attention given to "elites" as perhaps the most salient consequence of the financial crises (2007 – 2009) and the Great Recession that followed it.' Perhaps. The journal *Socio-Economic Review* 2 (2018) recently devoted a special issue on elites. A decade before, another journal also published an issue on elites. In the meantime, a wide range of serious studies on elites have been published, certainly in France and Germany. The editors praise the work of economists on inequality. But economists tend to overlook other inequalities, according to the editors. The book therefore focuses on inequality of education, gender, social and symbolic capital, but also on wealth.

Two developments are seen by the editors as new. They recommend a new multi-dimensional technique developed by French scholars. The new method certainly produces informative two-dimensional plots. The technique reminds me of its distant relative, good old factor analysis. The problem with this type of analysis remains the same: how to interpret the dimensions created by the statistical method. Rob Timmans and Johan Heilbron offer an insightful chapter where they apply the new technique. The editors also refer to an older method to research elites, network analysis. My impression is that network analysis is an analytic tool to study a different research question, namely the overall structure and cohesion of a network generated, for instance, by interlocking directorates. The two methods can supplement each other, as the chapter by Anton Grau and Christoph Houman Ellersgaard on the Danish elite networks shows. The editors rightly notice another development: the collection of huge datasets that make it possible to research long-term developments in the composition of elites.

In the most consistent section, The myth of a global business elites, Timmans and Heilbron discuss the degree of trans-nationalization of the Dutch business elite. They show that a large percentage of Dutch CEO's is still firmly embedded in the Dutch national economy. Nevertheless, an 'international capital dimension' can be identified. Research by the prolific German sociologist Michael Hartman using a rich dataset of the German business elite shows that the international orientation of the German business elite is limited. But to understand his full argument and method of data collection, I refer to Michael Hartman's excellent *Die Globale Wirtschaftselite. Eine Legende* (2016).

In the third chapter Pedro Araujo argues in the same vein about the careers of Swiss bankers over the last forty years. Unfortunately his figures 4.1 and 4.2 offer only fifty shades of grey. Together the chapters offer convincing counter-arguments against the popular idea of one global super elite. Of course, such international plutocrats might exist on a small scale but local backgrounds and national orientation still dominate.

Hjellbrekke and Kornes present a chapter on the symbolic capital hierarchies as indicated by the sitting order at the annual dinner of the Norwegian central bank. These sitting arrangements are public and have a large symbolic meaning, indicating inclusion and exclusion. As they explain (p. 93), 'Such official dinners can also be arenas of consecration – arenas where existing social inequalities are symbolically recognized and confirmed (...)'. The smaller tables indicate the highest places in the hierarchy. The authors collected personal information of all the guests at the dinner in the year 2012. Hjellbrekke and Kornes provide a large number of plots generated by the new statistical technique mentioned in the introduction. That there is an economic capital dimension (p. 105) is no surprise, but they also find a seniority dimension. The dimension suggests that there is a large element of honouring the elder, maybe no longer active, managers. They conclude (p. 111) that '(...) the annual dinner may contribute to the consecration and legitimation of these persons' status as "insiders" in the Norwegians field of power.' Unfortunately, the researchers do not elaborate on the question whether the guests are a sample of a wider circle of financial and business elites. If so, what people are not invited and why?

Gender is addressed in two very different chapters. The sociologists Maren Toft and Magne Flemmen offer a quantitative analysis based on a general survey among the Norwegian population. Their chapter on the gendered reproduction of the upper class assesses the question (p. 129) 'whether upper-class recruitment may follow a specific gendered logic that enables or restrains the abilities to both transmit and make use of familial resources.' They address the situation in Norway. The researchers use Bourdieu's concepts of economic and cultural capital to differentiate resources. Toft and Flemmen conclude (p. 130) '(...) both cultural and economic capital appear to stratify daughters' mobility chances to a greater extent than sons'. Urban anthropologist Luna Clucksberg argues that 'gender, women and their labour are key to the production of elites. Her chapter presents fascinating anthropological fieldwork about young women who participate as hostesses in London clubs for businessmen only. They are not paid and sex is excluded. Their manifest task is to animate the male visitors to spend lots of money. Their latent function is to facilitate male bonding, making business negotiations easier. Clucksberg (p. 231) approvingly quotes Bourdieu (*The state nobility. Elites schools in the field of power* (Cambridge

1996) 281), 'Admitting into the family only these who are capable of embodying and inculcating respect for bourgeois virtues (...) fulfils a function entirely similar to the one that leads to the choice of private educational establishments and highly selective meeting places.' But while Bourdieu discusses the transmission of bourgeois values, Clucksberg writes about young women who create the right atmosphere for male bonding. That is not the same.

Gustavson and Melldahl offer a long-term perspective (1914 – 2006) on wealth holders in Stockholm. After an interesting discussion on class and elite, they summarize that their approach (p. 179) is '(...) more class-oriented and focused on durable economic resources than elite-oriented (...)'. They refer extensively to the work of Piketty. The researchers collected an impressive dataset. As data on wealth are public in Sweden, the recent years were easy to find on a public website. For the early decades printed sources were processed. One result is (p. 193), 'that a large proportion of the owing class (about 70 per cent) is in fact old money originating from wealthy families.' A further conclusion (p. 194) is that 'on a class level, the reproduction strategies of the capitalist class therefore appear to have been highly successful.'

Waitkus and Olaf Groh-Samberg investigate the wealth accumulation in the German upper class. They lean on various types of capital, as introduced by Bourdieu: economic capital (income and wealth) and cultural capital. Germany shows the highest wealth inequality among the eurozone countries. According to the authors this can be explained by the low home-ownership rate. For their research the authors use data from household panels. A period of ten years is taken to investigate developments over time. Using advanced statistical techniques, the authors conclude that their research reveals (p. 216) the relevance of a rather traditional economic upper-middle class in Germany. They also suggest two basic strategies of wealth accumulation: one based on risky investment and one that is more secure and slower, based on highly qualified employment. As the researchers suggest (p. 217), '(...) the social strategies of status reproduction have indeed become more similar in the upper classes'. A combination of economic and cultural capital has become more important.

Many articles in this volume present interesting approaches to research elites although there is sometimes more attention to wealth inequality than to elites. Savage and Nichols in their concluding chapter (p. 312) see two approaches: a focus on elites as constellation and on the dynamics of accumulation. The long-term perspective as presented in several chapters clearly breaks new ground. They show convincingly how important a long-term perspective on elites is. Anybody who is interested in what is going on in modern research on elites should look at this book

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