2

The Danish Civil Society Elite 1910–2020: Continuity, Reproduction and Integration

Anders Sevelsted and Jacob Aagaard Lunding

Introduction

Several scholars have described how elites act *in* civil society. Elites engage with civil society to gain social capital through meeting places such as clubs or charities (Mills, 1999). The rich gain symbolic benefits by engaging in charity (Maclean et al., 2021), especially high-status causes like museums and universities (Monier, 2019; Ostrower, 1995). They also get to mingle with actors and celebrities (Brockington, 2014). Less attention, however, has been paid to the elites *of* civil society, that is, the elite that is defined by its leadership within civil society. As described by Michels at the start of the twentieth century (Michels, 1968) and in the introduction to this book, organised civil society tends to build its own elite.

Because these elites claim to be working on behalf of society and vulnerable groups, it is of both academic and public interest to understand who the leaders of civil society organisations (hereafter CSOs) are.

A. Sevelsted (✉) • J. A. Lunding
Lejre, Denmark
e-mail: ase.bhl@cbs.dk; jlu.ioa@cbs.dk

© The Author(s) 2024

H. Johansson, A. Meeuwisse (eds.), *Civil Society Elites*, Palgrave Studies in Third Sector Research, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-40150-3_2

Transparency and accountability are furthered by knowing this elite's descriptive characteristics (gender, age, education, class background, geography, etc.), the causes they support, their reproduction, and their integration with the rest of the elite.

In this chapter, we explore the causes, composition, reproduction, and integration of civil society elites in Denmark. We analyse the following questions: (i) What types of causes have Danish civil society elites historically been engaged in? (ii) How has the composition and reproduction of this elite changed over time? (iii) How integrated has the civil society elite been with the general elite and other sector elites in Denmark? These questions are answered by using historical data from three publications of the Danish Who's Who (1910, 1965, and 2020) and performing social network analysis (SNA).

We will first review the literature on civil society elites in general and the Danish and Nordic civil society elites specifically. We then introduce the characteristics of historical Danish civil society before we describe the study's operationalisation, method, and data. Then follows the analysis of causes, composition, reproduction, and integration of the historical Danish civil society elite before we conclude and discuss the findings.

Literature on Civil Society and Elites

The *elites of civil society* perspective focuses on the elite of the central organisations of the sector. Classically, Michels described the estrangement of the elite of political parties (Michels, 1968), and Mills portrayed union leaders as a sub-elite that stood between the elite and the masses (Mills, 2001). More recent studies have portrayed this elite as taking part in the general elite exchanges of economic and social resources (Gronbjerg, 1998; Ostrower, 1995; Useem, 1987, 1988), while others have found less integration through board interlocks than in other sectors (Moore et al., 2002).

In Denmark and Scandinavia, academic interest has overwhelmingly focused on the relationship between civil society and the state at the organisational or the sector level. This is perhaps unsurprising because from the perspective of 'crowding out' theories (Boli & Wuthnow, 1991) it constitutes something of a paradox that the emergence of large welfare states has not led to decreased volunteering or donations in social-democratic regimes. Quite the opposite has occurred, and when looking at the general population, the Nordic countries along with the Netherlands score the highest on these parameters (Henriksen et al., 2019). If one measures Nordic civil societies in terms of volume, organisational density, local organisational activity, and number of volunteers, the sector is large (Boje et al., 2006; Ibsen et al., 2008; Selle & Wollebæk, 2010).

The emergence of welfare states has, however, formed the opportunity structures for civic engagement. Whereas volunteering in the US is oriented towards the poor and people in need, Danish volunteering is oriented towards leisure activities and political engagement such as political parties or advocacy. Donations are typically small, and there is a high degree of gender equality (Henriksen et al., 2019). This also means that measured in terms of paid employees, the Nordic sectors are small when compared to Germany or France (Salamon & Anheier, 1998; Salamon et al., 2003).

Understandably, then, plenty of scholars have studied the development of the relations between Nordic civil society and the state in the past 150 years (Bundesen et al., 2001; Henriksen & Bundesen, 2004; Klausen & Selle, 1995; Kuhnle & Selle, 1992; Lundström & Svedberg, 2003; Selle & Wollebæk, 2010; Trägårdh, 2007a, b, 2010). This has, however, led to a neglect of relations to other sectors (Henriksen et al., 2019). Moreover, an elite focus is absent—probably due to the mostly egalitarian and negotiated character of the sector. A single study has shown the centrality of union leaders in the Danish elite network (Ibsen et al., 2021). Non-contentious third sector organisations are only represented to a very small degree in the Danish elite, with only a few umbrella organisations (Steinitz et al., 2019).

In the following, we sketch the historical development of Danish civil society before turning to issues of method.

Historical Danish Civil Society

Present-day Danish civil society is part of the Nordic welfare state regime. It has high public social welfare spending and a non-profit sector that is small in terms of employees but large in terms of volunteers. Volunteers are mostly engaged in sports and leisure activities (Henriksen et al., 2019). At the risk of oversimplification, this state of affairs can be boiled down to four key developments (Sevelsted, 2022). First, there is the influence of the traditional elites of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century absolutist state and emerging civil society. With the 1849 constitution that gave the vote to propertied men over the age of 40, the bourgeoisie came into power and were faced with a growing urban proletariat. Public and private relief were mutually constitutive in supporting, deterring, and disciplining the poor. 'Pioneer philanthropy' targeted disabled groups and health issues (Henriksen & Bundesen, 2004).

Second, there was the influence of the classic social movements of the late nineteenth century, especially the labour movement, but also the women's movement, the temperance movement, and religious revivalism. These movements form the basis of Nordic civil societies and have created a tradition for membership and volunteering. Denmark and the Nordic countries thus have both strong social movements and strong state traditions (Sevelsted, 2019).

Third, the mid-twentieth century saw the statisation of many areas and a concomitant change in professional dominance from the traditional elite (lawyers, theologians, and medical doctors) to new professions (social scientists and social workers). The social reform of 1933 meant increased centralisation of social services and regulation of the third sector. From the 1960s, social welfare was increasingly delivered by the public system through universalistic principles of eligibility, professionalisation, and specialisation of services and the decentralisation of services from the state to the municipalities.

Fourth, from the late twentieth to early twenty-first century there was a (neo)liberal rediscovery of the third sector and the dominance of the economist profession. The 'third sector' was praised for its flexibility and proximity to the recipients of benefits—in contrast to the bureaucratic state—and was probably viewed as a cost-efficient way of handling the perceived fiscal and legitimacy crisis of the welfare state (Sevelsted, 2020). Many organisations saw a decrease in membership and a move towards drop-in volunteers with no organisational affiliation, even if membership numbers continue to be high when compared to other countries (Henriksen et al., 2019). The period also saw the emergence of the so-called new social movements that focused on life politics rather than material interests—even though the causes of Greenpeace, Amnesty International, and the gay rights movement were hardly new (Offe, 1985).

Operationalisation and Method

In order to study the role and position of the elites of historical Danish civil society organisations within the broader elite settlement in Danish society throughout the twentieth century, we use three publications of the Danish Who's Who (*Kraks Blå Bog*).

Since the first edition in 1910, *Kraks Blå Bog* has provided the public with small biographical entries on notable and powerful individuals in Danish society. The book has been printed every single year with the exceptions of 1944 and 1945, which were the last two years of the Nazi German occupation (where the publishing house briefly discontinued the publication in response to the pressure from the Nazi German authorities in occupied Denmark to remove all Jews). The selection of individuals is made by the editorial team and a body of consultants. If we trust the sources (interviews and official statements), the method of selection has been fairly stable throughout the years. The editors survey the press to collect new names of importance, but they accept suggestions from external sources. In this way, the publishing house keeps a database of potential individuals covering different areas of society, and on that basis 35 (in 2013) voluntary anonymous consultants with knowledge of the different areas weigh in on the final selection. In that sense the sample of individuals is based on the reputational method (Hoffmann-Lange, 2018). Because the editors and consultants then select individuals based on their position within sectors and organisations, the selection criteria used by editors in practice is a combination of reputational and positional approaches, akin to the British Who's Who (Reeves et al., 2017). A downside of this method is that we are at the mercy of the editors' possibly changing inclusion criteria over time. These criteria have become more 'popular' over time and now include, for example, media personalities and top athletes.

From these biographies, we constructed a cleaned and matched list of organisational affiliations for each individual for each year. If a person mentions an organisational affiliation in the career or membership section of their entry—the biographies are fairly standardised across editions and individuals—a link between the individual and the organisation is made. This provides us with a two-mode 'career network' of individuals and the organisations to which they are or have been affiliated. This means that the 'projected' individual-by-individual or organisation-by-organisation networks are both ontologically ambiguous. That is, the ties can be either synchronous, social connections (for individuals the co-presence in the same organisations, and for organisation the simultaneous 'employment' of the same individual) or diachronic, symbolic connections (for individuals this means having careers through the same organisations, and for organisations this means having engaged the same individual at some point—and they are symbolic because individuals have not been employed at the same time). Given the ontological ambiguity of the ties, we propose a novel approach to network decomposition, which we call k-circle decomposition. Inspired by the 'minimum degree' based k-core decomposition (Seidman, 1983), this new approach is a minimal membership decomposition, suitable for two mode affiliation networks.

In practice, this means that we perform an iterative pruning of the network in order to maintain only the most densely connected affiliations and actors, that is the 'overlapping social circles' akin to those described by Mills (1999) in his studies of power elites. In each iteration, only the organisations with more than k linking members are retained, where a linking member is defined as an individual with affiliations (past or present) to at least j of the remaining set of organisations. In this analysis, we fix the threshold for linking individuals, j, at three.

Thus, in the first step, when we go from *k-score* = *1* to *k-score* = *2*, only organisations with at least two linking members are retained. In the next step, from $k = 2$ to $k = 3$, only organisations with at least two members among the remaining linkers (i.e. individuals with three or more affiliations in the remaining set of organisations) are retained, and so forth. Although j is a constant, the quality of being a linker becomes increasingly rare as the set of organisations becomes more exclusive.

This leaves us every year with a *k-score* for individuals and organisations, which is a measure of how many iterations they 'survive'. Thus, the k-score reflects the level at which the individual or the organisation is 'deleted'. In order to get a proper continuous centrality measure, we propose ranking the individuals by their *k-sum*—that is, the sum of k-scores of *all* of his or her affiliations minus the number of members. Similarly, the k-sum of an organisation is the sum of k-scores of all its members minus the number of members. In that way the decomposition results in two centrality measures (for individuals and for organisations) that reflect how well organisations are at integrating or tying up the careers of central individuals who, for their part, leave a connecting trace between the organisations they are involved with throughout their careers.

In order to find the group of individuals who can be described as the elite actors of and in civil society organisations, we take a two-step approach to finding (1) the right organisations and (2) the right individuals.

(1) From the k-circle decomposition described above, all organisations or entities in the entire corpus of the Danish Who's Who (1910–2020) have been assigned an annual rank based on their k-sum in the given year. Civil society organisations have been included on the basis of an adapted version of Salamon et al.'s coding schema (Salamon & Sokolowski, 1999). Specifically, we have excluded religious organisations, except for religious organisations devoted mainly to social work, as well as political parties, business and professional associations, trade unions, and other organisations primarily established to further their members' interests. We define the most central CSOs throughout the entire period from 1910 to 2020 by taking all the organisations that for at least one year are in the top 25 among the subset of organisations coded as civil society. This leaves us with a sample of 105 organisations (out of 2725, if the top 25 had been unique in being included every year in the Whos' Who).

(2) The text corpus of the 1910, 1965, and 2020 editions (~1000 pages each) provides us with a rich historical description of the career paths of a diverse set of elite individuals. In total, the corpus contains biographies on 18,767 notable individuals from civil service, politics, business, the judiciary, the military, culture, science, and civil society. From these individuals, we sample the individuals with a leading position (director, president, chair, etc.) in at least one of the 105 most central CSOs.

A Civil Society Elite Prosopography

Relative to the number of individuals portrayed in Who's Who, we find almost the same share of individuals with at least one leading position in a top CSO in each of the chosen periods. As seen in Table 2.1, the population develops from 2.2% (67 individuals) in 1910 to 2.5% (181 individuals) in 1965 to 1.7% (143 individuals) in 2020.

In the following three sections, we present three elements regarding historical changes in the prosopography of the civil society elite. Looking at the selection of CSOs represented in the three different editions of Who's Who by a past or present leader, we describe the representation of causes in the elite. In the next section, we focus on the social reproduction of the elite in terms of social background, demography, and gender. In the final section, we study the changes in the relationship between the civil society elite and the rest of the societal elite.

Table 2.1 Overview of Who's Who civil society elite

Year	Who's Who size	With any position in top CSO	With leading positions in top CSO
1910	3105	243 (7.8%)	67 (2.2%)
1965	7218	933 (12.9%)	181 (2.5%)
2020	8495	627 (7.4%)	143 (1.7%)

Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020,* Copenhagen: Gads Forlag

The Causes of Civil Society Elites

How has civil society elites' engagement in different causes changed over time? In order to answer this question, we have coded all CSOs in the sample according to their primary cause. We have coded according to ten categories (the adaptation of Salamon et al. 1999 mentioned above). Figure 2.1 depicts the relative ranking of categories based on the number of individuals engaged in the cause in the particular edition of Who's Who. Despite fundamental changes to Danish society over time, there is much continuity in the elite's engagement. This is evident when we take a look at the causes that have attracted the most individuals. Please note that one Who's Who individual may represent more than one organisation and thus more than one cause within and/or across categories.

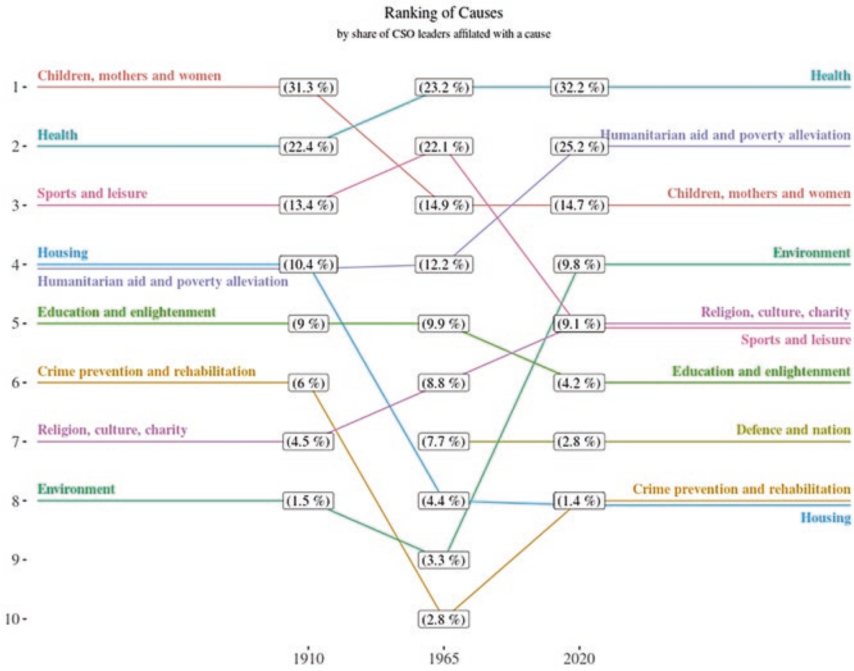

Fig. 2.1 Ranking of Causes, by share of CSO leaders affiliated with a cause. (Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag)

The three categories of 'Children, mothers and women', 'Health', and 'Humanitarian aid and poverty alleviation' are among the top causes throughout the study period.

The cause of 'Children, mothers, and women' (causes that were intrinsically linked in the beginning of the period, but are now more separate issues) is in the top three throughout the period. This is not least due to the Danish Women's Society (est. 1871) that from its founding worked for gender equality and spearheaded the struggle for women's suffrage. This speaks to elite continuity of the women's movement in Denmark at least at the organisational level.

In contrast, the organisations in the 'Health' category are replaced over time. Central health issues in 1910 were tuberculosis and temperance (each cause represented by four CSO leaders). In 1965, top health causes were polio and mental hygiene (as mental illness prevention was called at the time). In 2020, leaders of CSOs concerned with fighting cancer and heart disease were the most represented. In other words, the prominent health issues 'of the day' have always been a concern for the civil society elite.

Elite engagement in humanitarianism and poverty alleviation was dominated by the Danish Red Cross in 1910 and in 1965. However, in 2020 the organisation was overtaken by three other foreign aid organisations led by the umbrella organisation Danish Refugee Council.

The Danish elites have been engaged in organising the novel phenomenon of mass sports and leisure that emerged in the nineteenth century. In 1910, the national sports association and the YMCA/YWCA were present in the sample. In 1965, the YMCA/YWCA was by far the largest organisation with 20 leaders represented. In 2020, engagement in Sports and Leisure fell. In part, the fall is caused by a decline in religious engagement, that is, in individuals with ties to YMCA/YWCA. In part, elite sports seem to crowd out the traditional movement-based organisations—evidenced by the fact that the quasi-NGO Team Denmark that organises elite sports is present in 2020 with seven individuals. Team Denmark is not included as civil society because the organisation was founded by the central administration that still appoints half the board (while the other half is appointed by the Danish Sports Association).

Especially 'Housing' and 'Crime prevention and rehabilitation' stand out as causes that are falling out of elite grace. Housing drops from 10.4% to 1.4% during the period. The category is dominated by both bourgeois philanthropists and leaders of labour movement-related housing cooperatives. Two of the three organisations in 2020 are cooperatives. 'Crime prevention and rehabilitation' similarly drops to 1.4% from 6%. Also 'Education and Enlightenment' sees a minor relative drop (from 9% to 4.2%) during the period—even if they are relatively stable in absolute numbers. The beginning of the period contains leaders of philanthropic efforts to educate the working class. For the latter two periods, this sector is increasingly linked through representatives of the politically linked educational associations such as Folkeligt Oplysnings Forbund (FOF) and Arbejdernes Oplysningsforbund (AOF), connected to conservatives and the labour movement, respectively. Interestingly, 'Religion, culture, and charity' has steadily increased owing to the steady representation of the socially engaged revivalist milieu around the Copenhagen Home Mission as well as charitable foundations.

Finally, environmental issues have experienced the greatest relative rise over the period. The Danish CSO Animal Protection is represented throughout the period. In fact, in 1910 it was the sole representative of environmental issues among the CSO elite. In 1965, Animal Protection was joined by the Nature Preservation Association. In 2020, WWF joined in with 6 people, meaning that the cause is now quite well-represented among the elite with 14 CSO leader positions.

Some of these developments can be explained on the basis of the development of Danish civil society described above. Increased state involvement in education, housing, and rehabilitation of criminals has most likely 'crowded out' civil society elite engagement in this area. This is exemplified through the organisation Help For Mothers (*Mødrehjælpen*) that was established in 1924 as a philanthropic organisation, only to become part of the public system in 1939 and then closed down in 1976. Unlike many other organisations, however, this CSO then re-emerged in 1983 on the initiative of prominent left-wing public figures. The crowding-out thesis might also be supported by the observation of sustained engagement in sports and leisure as well as humanitarian aid. Elites may have looked to sports and leisure activities that continued to be organisationally independent of the state—despite being heavily subsidised by gambling taxes. Similarly, organisational elites in CSOs like the Red Cross may have looked to steer their CSOs' mission abroad as the public system increasingly cared for the national population.

Other trends run counter to the 'crowding out' thesis. For example, the elite has continuously been engaged in health care even though the public system has been heavily involved in this area at least since the 1960s. This may be an attractive area for elites to engage in because it is in a sense 'insatiable' and will as such always have a pioneer tinge—there are always new diseases, and new research is always needed to cure cancer, fight obesity, tackle mental illness, and so on. This also seems to be the case for humanitarian assistance. Here, the emergence of humanitarian state agencies has not meant the end of the need for assistance abroad. Seemingly, suffering beyond national borders cannot be crowded out. Environmental concerns also seem to provide continued positions at the top of CSOs. The current crisis is seemingly so deep that elites can continue to wield support for this cause, even as the cause is prioritised by political parties (at least rhetorically).

There does seem to be a development in the kinds of causes elites engage in. Whereas the elites of 1910 and 1965 were concerned with diseases and illnesses of the lower classes, today the focus of the elite is on diseases that can afflict all of the population. The elite thus seem to reflect the broader concerns of their time, which explains the decreasing engagement in defence and nationalist causes.

There might also be a mechanism of covariance between professional 'jurisdiction' (Abbott, 1988) and elite involvement meaning that when a lower-status profession takes over the leadership of organisations in certain causes (e.g. crime rehabilitation no longer being a cause for judges, but instead for semi-professionals), then these organisations are at risk of losing access to elite circles.

The Composition and Reproduction of Civil Society Elites

Before turning to the analysis of the changing composition of the civil society elites, let us reflect for a moment on a methodological difficulty that arises from the choice of taking not calendar years, but specific editions of the Who's Who, as the point of departure for the analysis. As a result of this, the elite group we identify for each period is made up of multiple generations. That is, they are in fact born in quite different times. The 1965 group, for instance, is composed of individuals born in the 1880s as well as in the 1920s (see Fig. 2.2).

To take this into account, in the following analyses of social background we split the results according to age (above vs below the median age) in order to distinguish between the 'older' and 'younger' generation within the period.

For the entire Who's Who population, we observe a decrease in elite reproduction—from around 48% to around 35% (with no significant generational differences). Comparatively, for the CSO elite we also observe a total decrease, but starting from a higher level and being less strong for the later period. Here, however, there are significant generational differences. For all periods, and especially in 1910 and 2020, the

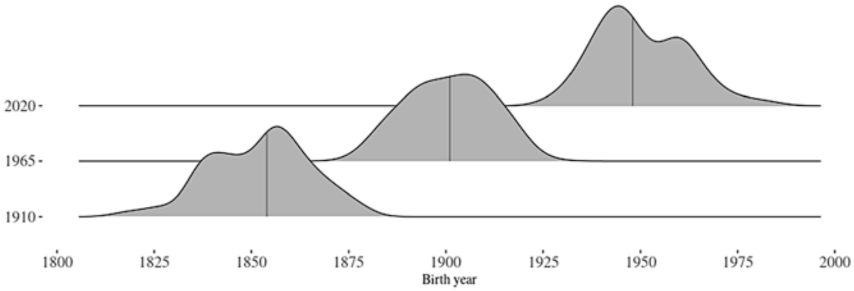

Fig. 2.2 Birth cohorts within the three periods. (Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag. Note: Horizontal lines represent the median birth year in each sample (1910, 1965 and 2020))

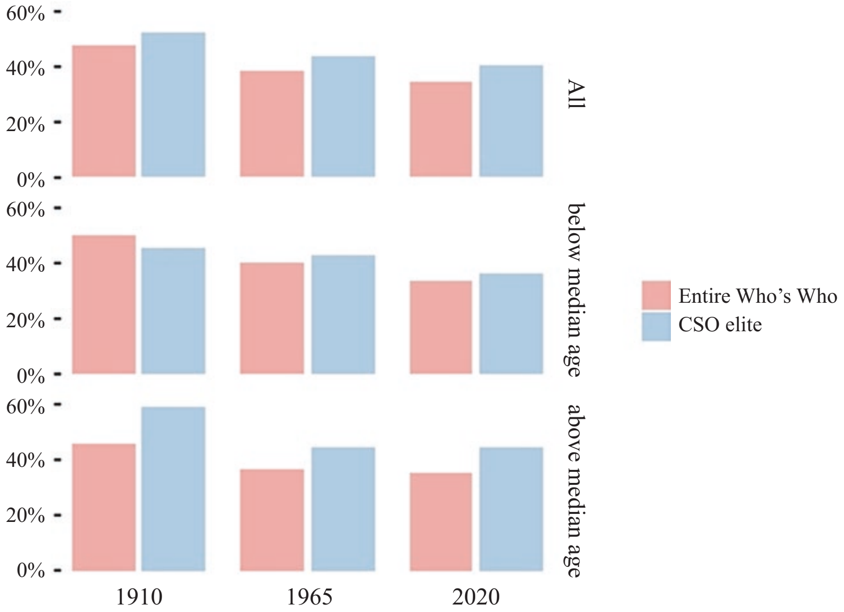

Fig. 2.3 Share with elite social background. (Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag)

level of elite reproduction in the older generation is much higher (Fig. 2.3).

That is, although the level of elite reproduction in the CSO elite has been in decline over the century, it has been less so, and from a much higher level and with stronger generational delay, than for the rest of the societal elite. This could be the result of a covariation in the social backgrounds of elites involved in civil society and most other established elite groups (e.g. medical doctors). It could also be the result of selection bias because we have selected the 'elite of the civil society elite', that is, only leaders and not ordinary members of CSOs in the Who's Who (Fig. 2.4).

Taking into account that social class is not just a hierarchy, but rather a field of class struggles (Bourdieu, 1984) stratified in terms of capital volume as well as composition, we rely on the Oslo Register Data Class Scheme (ORDC) in order to divide the elite into a cultural fraction, a

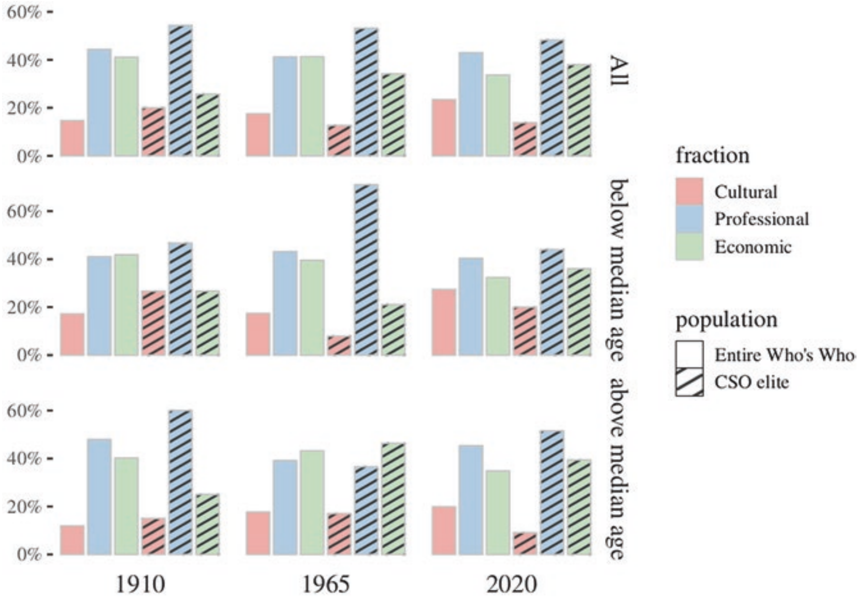

Fig. 2.4 Relative size of elite fractions. (Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag)

professional (balanced cultural and economic) fraction, and an economic fraction (Hansen et al., 2009).

A closer look then at the internal dynamics of elite reproduction reveals that those within the civil society elite whose parents were elite are predominantly from the professional fraction (i.e. their parents were, for example, high judges, politicians, higher civil servants, leading doctors, or military leaders). This is true for the entire period, although the size of the economic fraction increases at the expense of the cultural fraction.

Adding the question of generations, some interesting differences can be seen. While the elite background of the older cohorts of the 1965 sample resembles the overall Who's Who composition, with a slight overrepresentation of the economic fraction, the share of the 'younger' (born after 1901) cohorts of people from the professional fraction is very large. This is largely due to the fact that sons of the early twentieth-century judiciary at this point began to become engaged in CSOs. Of the 'elite-born' CSO leaders from the younger generation in the 1965 sample, 26% were sons of the judiciary.

In terms of inclusion of women, the CSO elite has been more open than the general Who's Who elite. Already in 1910 the share of women was higher, although still only around 10% for this particular elite (Table 2.2).

Geographically, we observe a similar development. From the outset the leaders of central CSOs are almost all Copenhagen live, predominantly in central Copenhagen. Also, although the centralisation of the capital city declines over the century, it does so more slowly and to a lesser extent than the broader elite. Following the trend of the elite in general, they are increasingly—and even more so—born in the upper-class and upper-middle-class suburbs north of Copenhagen (e.g. the municipality of Gentofte). At the same time, as a general observation over the entire period, we find much fewer foreign-born individuals in the civil society elite compared to the general Who's Who population.

Table 2.2 Gender and birth place

	Entire Who's Who			CSO elite		
	1910	1965	2020	1910	1965	2020
Gender						
Women	6.0	4.6	24.0	9.0	11.6	31.5
Birthplace						
Copenhagen area	76.9	64.5	57.1	88.1	80.7	70.6
Inner city	*67.4*	*28.3*	*25.6*	*77.6*	*41.4*	*30.8*
Upper-class suburbs	*7.3*	*26.8*	*19.9*	*7.5*	*29.3*	*22.4*
Middle-class suburbs	*1.7*	*7.4*	*8.8*	*1.5*	*8.3*	*14.7*
Working-class suburbs	*0.5*	*2.0*	*2.7*	*1.5*	*1.7*	*2.8*
Provincial cities	14.1	26.3	24.3	9.0	13.8	20.3
(+100,000 inhabitants)	*3.1*	*8.4*	*8.4*	*3.0*	*3.3*	*9.1*
(25,000–100,000 inhabitants)	*5.2*	*9.1*	*8.0*	*1.5*	*5.0*	*6.3*
(10,000–25,000 inhabitants)	*2.3*	*4.4*	*3.2*	*0.0*	*1.1*	*2.1*
(3000–10,000 inhabitants)	*3.4*	*4.4*	*4.7*	*4.5*	*4.4*	*2.8*
Rural (less than 3000 inhabitants)	*3.3*	*2.9*	*5.1*	*0.0*	*3.9*	*4.2*
Abroad	2.9	5.8	6.6	0.0	1.7	1.4
Unknown	2.7	0.6	7.2	3.0	0.0	3.5

Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag.

Overall, we see how the civil society elite in some respects follows the general historical trajectory of the Who's Who elite as such—fewer people have an elite background, more women are represented, and fewer individuals live in the capital city. However, it seems that the civil society elite is even more 'distinguished' than the elite in general: More people have an elite background and more live in the capital. Interestingly, the 'sons of the judiciary' have played a disproportionately large role in the Danish civil society elite.

The Integration of Civil Society Elites

As introduced in Chap. 1, the literature has described how CSOs become more professionalised (Skocpol, 2004) and more consolidated and how civil society is increasingly disconnected from party politics (Katz & Mair, 1995). How might these trends affect civil society elites? On the one hand, one could imagine a sector whose elite would be increasingly disconnected from other elites because they would be 'sectorially isolated'. On the other hand, one could also imagine further integration at the top, as CSO leaders would increasingly be recruited from outside the organisation—what has been described as 'diploma democracy' or the rule of an educated elite (Bovens & Wille, 2017). We cannot offer any definitive answer here as to the most viable hypothesis, but we can offer insight into changes in civil society elite integration in Denmark over time.

In the following, we show integration by looking at the share of positions that CSO leaders have held in the most central organisations in other sectors. Specifically, we have taken the same approach here, creating a list of the organisations in the top 25 within their respective sector for at least one year throughout the century. Affiliation with a sector is then defined as having one or more positions in a central organisation in a given sector.

The overall development points to an increasing integration with the rest of the elite from the beginning to the middle period, and then little change between the middle and latest period. In 1910, 24% had more than one position in another sector. In 1965 and 2020, 50% and 42% had more than one position in other sectors, respectively. Civil society has thus seemingly become more integrated at the elite level. Moreover, the biographies in 1910 were often shorter, which might be a part of the explanation of the lower share that year. There is, however, a quite uneven integration across sectors, as is evident in Fig. 2.5.

Throughout the period, there has been close integration with the state. Much of this integration has taken place through 'quangos' or quasi-NGOs such as commissions and other organisations with an advisory capacity. In the early period, this was the Tuberculosis Commission, and in 2020 the Refugee Council, Ethical Council, and UNICEF (United

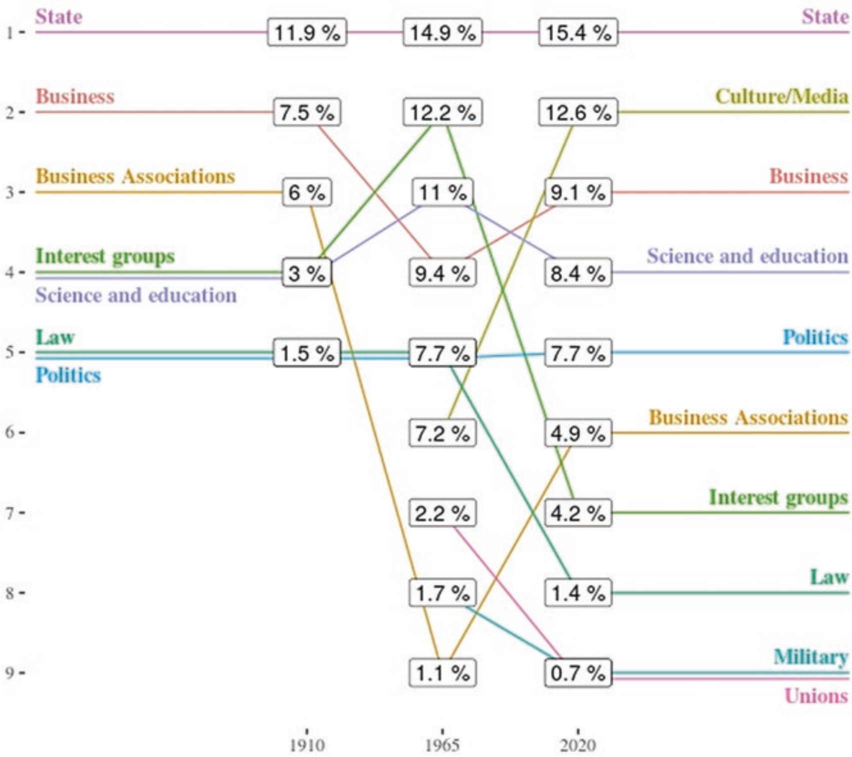

Fig. 2.5 Affiliations to other sectors, ranked by share of CSO leaders with more than one leading position in a sector. (Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag)

Nations Children's Fund) had this function. The national bank has connected the sectors throughout the period. This seems to indicate a career path of 'issue professionals' who are not concerned with sector borders, but who pursue careers across the public and third sector, for example in relation to foreign aid or diseases.

It is in this respect interesting to note that there is a lower level of integration of careers between politics and civil society. This integration has stagnated at 7.7%. To native Danes, this would probably seem surprising because a number of prominent politicians have taken up leadership positions in organisations such as Save the Children (Helle Thorning-Schmidt and Johanne Schmidt-Nielsen) and the Danish Society for Nature Conservation (Maria Reumert Gjerding). It thus seems that there is a 'publicity bias' at play here.

While the revolving doors are seemingly at a set pace between politics and the third sector, the mutual affiliations between civil society and science and education have risen from 3% to 8.4%. This could indicate that Denmark in some areas indeed has developed a kind of third sector 'diploma democracy' with a close relationship across sectors where individuals pursue careers across the public and the third sector in research, advocacy, and professional societies. More than 90% of the civil society elite have a university degree throughout the period. The diploma thesis is supported by the development of integration with unions. While union integration is consistently non-existent or very low throughout the period, the unions that integrate the elite change—from nurses' unions in the early period to umbrella organisations (the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions and the State Official's Union) in the middle period, and finally the Lawyers and Economists' Union (DJØF). This may indicate that issue professionals may have dominated the early period, while the later period is increasingly dominated by generalist professionals. It also appears that there is an inverse relationship between business associations on the one hand and unions and interest groups on the other that matches the waning and waxing of social-democratic ideology over the period. This could possibly indicate something about the hegemonic struggle between business elites and union elites.

The business sector is closely integrated with civil society throughout the period. Banking and insurance are present throughout, while the shipping giant Mærsk enters the scene in 2020. This could indicate a less-than-clear separation between business and philanthropy—or maybe a demand from the private sector for a certain kind of status and expertise.

The culture/media category is interesting. The category is the result of a complexity-reducing effort to have a manageable number of categories, and so it contains both media personalities and individuals involved in religious social work. Somewhat surprisingly, the category was absent in 1910, but rose to 7.2% in 1965 and then to 12.6% in 2020. This development seems to be driven by religious social work and museums in the middle period and by newspapers and television in the later period. In other words, within this category, there is a story of disintegration of the religious elites and an integration of news media elites. From the same starting point, the sector of law experienced its zenith in 1965, only to decline again in 2020. The category is dominated by individuals in relation to legal courts.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have described the historical trajectory of the *elites of civil society* in Denmark from 1910 to 2020 using data from the Danish Who's Who publications from 1910, 1965, and 2020. While most studies tend to focus on the elites *in* civil society, we have looked at the elites *of* civil society, that is, individuals in CSO leadership positions.

Throughout the period, civil society elites have constantly been involved in certain causes, and leaders of organisations dealing with health issues, children, mothers, and women, as well as humanitarian aid and poverty alleviation have been the best represented throughout the period. Other causes have been increasingly less represented by the elite. This goes for education, housing, and the rehabilitation of criminals. Possibly, there has been a crowding-out effect as the state has become the dominant provider. Alternatively, civil society elites may have focused on areas in which crowding out is not possible, and the sick at home and the poor and unfortunate abroad, and increasingly the degradation of the environment, seemingly provide endless opportunities for charity. A third interpretation could be that certain causes have experienced a loss of status as low-status professions have taken up leadership positions.

Interestingly, the composition and reproduction analyses show that the civil society elite on the one hand has historically been more distinguished than the rest of the elite: more people have an elite background and more live in the capital. There might be some selection bias involved. On the other hand, the civil society elite has included more women throughout the period. Like the rest of the elite, but to a lesser extent, it has become slightly less 'elite' over time. A particularly interesting finding is the 'sons of the judiciary' effect. This group became particularly dominant in the middle period.

This civil society elite has become more integrated with the elite of other sectors over the century. Throughout, the sector elite was closely connected with the state elite, testifying to this Nordic strong state/strong civil society tradition. Interestingly, the integration with politics has not been particularly strong, while the integration with education has strengthened. These trends may be indications of a continued 'issue professionalism' across state and civil society as well as a kind of 'diploma democracy' where educational credentials and positions become more important. The reproduction effect of the 'sons of the judiciary' and the strong state and educational integration fits with other findings that civil society elites are in fact rooted in a 'moral elite' inherited from the nineteenth-century absolutist state, thus organising across state and civil society spheres (Sevelsted, 2022).

Looking ahead, the study of elites beyond the political and economic spheres that have traditionally been the central focus of elite studies is a promising research avenue for understanding how old aristocracies are reproduced in new arenas. Future research questions should include: How have the children of the administers of the old societies (the absolutist state in the case of Denmark) found new functions in the new society? How have elite members of (relatively) declining sectors such as theological, judicial, and medical dynasties been reproduced in (relatively) ascending sectors such as the political system, civil society, the public sphere, and popular culture?

Acknowledgement This research was supported by DFF grant no 8019-00021B; Carlsberg Foundation grant no CF17-0386.

References

Abbott, A. D. (1988). *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*. University of Chicago Press.

Boje, T., Ibsen, B., & Fridberg, T. (2006). *Den frivillige sektor i Danmark: omfang og betydning*. Socialforskningsinstituttet.

Boli, J., & Wuthnow, R. (1991). *Sweden: Is There a Viable Third Sector? Between states and markets: The voluntary sector in a comparative perspective*. Princeton University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard university Press.

Bovens, M. A. P., & Wille, A. (2017). *Diploma Democracy: The Rise of Political Meritocracy*. Oxford University Press.

Brockington, D. (2014). The Production and Construction of Celebrity Advocacy in International Development. *Third World Quarterly, 35*(1), 88–108. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2014.868987

Bundesen, P., Henriksen, L. S., & Jørgensen, A. (2001). *Filantropi, Selvhjælp Og Interesseorganisering: Frivillige Organisationer i Dansk Socialpolitik 1849–1990'erne*. Odense Universitetsforlag.

Gronbjerg, K. (1998). Markets, Politics and Charity: Nonprofits in the Political Economy. In W. W. Powell & E. S. Clemens (Eds.), *Private Action and the Public Good*. Yale University Press.

Hansen, M. N., Flemmen, M., & Andersen, P. L. (2009). *The Oslo Register Data Class Scheme (Ordc), Final Report from the Classification Project. 1. Memorandum*. University of Oslo.

Henriksen, L. S., & Bundesen, P. (2004). The Moving Frontier in Denmark: Voluntary-State Relationships Since 1850. *Journal of Social Policy, 33*(4), 605–625.

Henriksen, L. S., Strømsnes, K., & Svedberg, L. (2019). Understanding Civic Engagement in the Scandinavian Context. In L. S. Henriksen, K. Strømsnes, & L. Svedberg (Eds.), *Civic Engagement in Scandinavia: Volunteering, Informal Help and Giving in Denmark, Norway and Sweden* (pp. 1–31). Springer.

Hoffmann-Lange, U. (2018). Methods of Elite Identification. In H. Best & J. Higley (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Political Elites* (pp. 79–92). Palgrave Macmillan.

Ibsen, B., Thomas, B., & Fridberg, T. (2008). *Det frivillige Danmark*. Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

Ibsen, C. L., Ellersgaard, C. H., & Larsen, A. G. (2021). Quiet Politics, Trade Unions, and the Political Elite Network: The Case of Denmark. *Politics and Society, 49*(1), 43–73. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329220985748

Katz, R. S., & Mair, P. (1995). Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party. *Party Politics, 1*(1), 5–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068895001001001

Klausen, K. K., & Selle, P. (Eds.). (1995). *Frivillig Organisering i Norden*. Tano; Jurist- og økonomiforbundets forlag.

Kuhnle, S., & Selle, P. (Eds.). (1992). *Government and Voluntary Organizations: A Relational Perspective*. Avebury.

Lundström, T., & Svedberg, L. (2003). The Voluntary Sector in a Social Democratic Welfare State–The Case of Sweden. *Journal of Social Policy, 32*(2), 217–238. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279402007006

Maclean, M., Harvey, C., Yang, R., & Mueller, F. (2021). Elite Philanthropy in the United States and United Kingdom in the New Age of Inequalities. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 23*(3), 330–352. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12247

Michels, R. (1968). *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. The Free Press.

Mills, C. W. (1999). *The Power Elite*. Oxford University Press.

Mills, C. W. (2001). *The New Men of Power: America's Labor Leaders*. University of Illinois Press.

Monier, A. (2019). *Nos Chers "Amis Américains": Une Enquête Sur La Philanthropie d'élite Transnationale*. PUF.

Offe, C. (1985). New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics. *Social Research, 52*(4), 817–868.

Ostrower, F. (1995). *Why the Wealthy Give: The Culture of Elite Philanthropy*. Princeton University Press.

Reeves, A., Friedman, S., Rahal, C., & Flemmen, M. (2017). The Decline and Persistence of the Old Boy: Private Schools and Elite Recruitment 1897 to 2016. *American Sociological Review, 82*(6), 1139–1166. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122417735742

Salamon, L. M., & Anheier, H. K. (1998). Social Origins of Civil Society: Explaining the Nonprofit Sector Cross-Nationally. *Voluntas International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 9*(3), 213–248.

Salamon, L. M., & Sokolowski, S. W. (Eds.). (1999). *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*. Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies.

Salamon, L. M., Sokolowski, S. W., & List, R. (2003). *Global Civil Society: An Overview*. Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies.

Seidman, S. B. (1983). Network Structure and Minimum Degree. *Social Networks, 5*(3), 269–287.

Selle, P., & Wollebæk, D. (2010). Why Social Democracy Is Not a Civil Society Regime in Norway. *Journal of Political Ideologies, 15*(3), 289–301. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2010.513872

Sevelsted, A. (2019). Degeneration, Protestantism, and Social Democracy: The Case of Alcoholism and 'Illiberal' Policies and Practices in Denmark 1900–43. *Social Science History, 43*(1), 87–111.

Sevelsted, A. (2020). Voluntarism. Promises of Proximity as Articulated by Changing Moral Elites. *Contributions to the History of Concepts, 15*(2), 80–104.

Sevelsted, A. (2022). Moral Elites and the de-paradoxification of Danish Social Policy Between Civil Society and State (1849–2022). *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-022-00509-z

Skocpol, T. (2004). *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*. University of Oklahoma Press.

Steinitz, S., Ellersgaard, C., & Larsen, A. G. (2019). *Personer forgår, magten består*. Hans Reitzel.

Trägårdh, L. (Ed.). (2007a). *State and Civil Society in Northern Europe: The Swedish Model Reconsidered*. Berghahn Books.

Trägårdh, L. (2007b). The State and Civil Society in a Historical Perspective: The Swedish Case. In *State and Civil Society in Northern Europe: The Swedish Model Reconsidered* (pp. 229–253). Berghahn Books.

Trägårdh, L. (2010). Rethinking the Nordic Welfare State through a Neo-Hegelian Theory of State and Civil Society. *Journal of Political Ideologies, 15*(3), 227–239. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2010.513853

Useem, M. (1987). Corporate Philanthropy. In W. W. Powell (Ed.), *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*. Yale University Press.

Useem, M. (1988). Market and Institutional Factors in Corporate Contributions. *California Management Review, 30*(2), 77–88. https://doi.org/10.2307/41166548

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.