

# **Le capital politique. Éléments de sociologie des ressources, actifs et espèces de capital<sup>1</sup>**

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Communication présentée au 13ème Congrès de l'Association française de science politique  
(ST 19: "La profession politique aujourd'hui: comment sociologiser les transformations  
récentes du champ politique?"),  
Aix-en-Provence, 22-24 juin 2015

## **RÉSUMÉ**

Comment est-ce que les agents accèdent pour la première fois au champ politique en obtenant une première position électorale ou un premier poste par la voie de la nomination? Est-ce simplement une affaire de recrutement et de sélection d'individus habiles et vertueux? Est-ce que les mécanismes institutionnels qui conduisent à une première élection ou nomination expliquent totalement l'accès au champ politique? Afin de répondre à ces questions, cette communication prend appui sur la prémisse selon laquelle ce qui importe ce sont aussi bien les agents eux-mêmes que les ressources sociales qu'ils apportent avec eux au moment d'entrer dans le champ. Pour ce faire, la communication aborde théoriquement la notion de "capital politique", ainsi que certaines espèces de capital qui sont importantes pour pénétrer les barrières d'entrée au champ politique. C'est à travers d'actes d'investissement –qui sont loin d'être le simple résultat de calculs utilitaires– que certains agents entrent dans le champ et cherchent à y rester. Quelles sont les conséquences, pour le champ politique, que certains types d'agents et certaines espèces de capital soient dominantes? Pour répondre, l'auteur plaide pour une représentation dynamique du champ politique et des espèces de capital qui s'y trouvent, en l'observant idéalement sur la longue période, c'est-à-dire historiquement.

## **ABSTRACT**

How do agents access the political field for the first time obtaining their first elected or appointed position? Is it a matter merely of the recruitment and selection of skillful and virtuous individuals? Do the institutional mechanisms that lead to a first election or appointment fully explain access to the political field? In a bid to answer these questions, this article is based on the sociological premise that the agents themselves matter as well as the social resources they bring with them when entering the field. To this end, the article examines theoretically the notion of "political capital" and some species of capital that are relevant for breaching the entry barriers to the political field. It is through acts of investment - which are far from a mere reductionist result of utilitarian calculations - that certain agents enter the field and seek to remain in it. What are the consequences for the political field of the predominance of certain types of agent and certain species of capital? In order to answer this question, the author advocates a dynamic representation of the political field and the species of capital found there, ideally observed over a long period of time or, in other words, from an historical perspective.

Key words: Political capital – Types of agent – Political field – Social Closure

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<sup>1</sup> This research was supported by FONDECYT grant 1130054 and is included in the FONDAP project 15130009 ("Center for Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies", COES).

<sup>2</sup> Although based on definitions different to those I will formulate below, Bennister, T'Hart and Worthy

The term “political capital” is widely used by politicians and journalists as if its meaning were self-evident. In just one example, Meghan Fohley recalled that Hillary Clinton, as well as being the only first lady to run for the presidency of the United States, has always been criticized for “drawing heavily on her husband's legacy for her political capital” ([www.cheatsheet.com](http://www.cheatsheet.com), April 6, 2015) while, on the same day this report about Clinton's bid for the Democratic nomination was published, BBC Mundo carried a report about the political-financial scandals affecting the inner circle of Chile's President Michelle Bachelet, indicating that “in this rarefied political climate, Bachelet's political capital also shows the impact of 12 months of intense debate about the implementation of the reforms in her program of government” (Paula Molina, “Why Bachelet's popularity has collapsed in Chile”, 6 April 2015, [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)). In both cases, “political capital” is used as if understood by all in the same way. But when we talk about “political capital”, what exactly are we referring to? Are its meaning and associations so self-evident? It is precisely these questions that the first part of this article addresses before going on to look at different aspects of the theory of capital and the political field.

### **From social representation of the word to the sociological category**

At first sight, the notion of political capital has all the appearance of being to the advantage of those who hold it - a source of power used by powerful agents who have apparently invested “something” valuable that they possess in exchange for some sort of return or gain about which we are assumed to know. It is these social assumptions that allow us to understand each other in practical terms without feeling a need to clarify the term and its uses. Moreover, we not only consider it self-evident that certain agents “possess” political capital that allows them to influence political life, but we also know that other agents have “sufficient” political capital to dominate the political field. This objectivist language with its material conception of political capital should properly be used only once its assumptions have been deconstructed so as to permit its use to explain how powerful political agents (presidents, prime ministers, ministers, undersecretaries, senators and lower house representatives, which are the posts we will focus on here or, in other words, those that form the structure of the “central political field”: Gaxie, 2003) breach the barriers of entry to the political field and occupy objectified positions of power. “Political capital shares with other forms of capital the quality of being productive”, while making possible “the realization of interests” (Nee and Oppper, 2010, p.2107). That is clearly so but Nee and Oppper are also right in asserting that, unlike social capital which has a relational origin and is based on ties of trust (Putnam, 1993 and 2000), “political capital has the additional feature of being linked to the positional power of the politician, and thus it is rooted in institutional structures of the political order” (Nee and Oppper, 2010, p.2107). If there is any sense in talking about political capital, it is, therefore, because it is a set of resources that can be invested in a structured field of posts and positions or, in other words, the political field. This is not to say that holding a post or occupying a position in the political field based on the possession of political capital (as we will define it) implies the idea of “having” power, exercising it and producing effects on reality. It is merely a resource that can allow agents who possess it in one of its forms to enter the political field and hold a post or position in it and, from there, act, influence and create the belief that their actions

produce reality both within and outside the field, not as the result of an act of purchase (which is what the notion could suggest) but as a result of the investment of a resource that, in the field, serves as a tool and allows the agent to fight and compete to dominate or exist<sup>2</sup>. This is the way in which beliefs about what political agents “are worth” and how much they “weigh” and “count” are created. It is the sociology of political capital that can throw light on this intuitive and practical accounting.

How can we explain why a handful of individuals become heads of government and representatives? Is it merely a matter of vocation and virtue? Is it simply because these politically successful agents are driven by ambition and, as is often said, a desire for power not found in ordinary people? In contrast to subjectivist explanations, success and failure in politics needs to be understood in terms of resources and, more precisely, the capital these agents possess - we will see below in what form - and invest in the political field. In the case of the political field, it suffices for the moment to say that it is a place of competition differentiated from others, with a logic of increasing autonomy and agents specialized in the representation of interests who struggle among themselves to conquer positions around issues (*enjeux*) that are specific to the field (Bourdieu, 1984). However, the political field is also a space that passes through different historical states where positions have not always been so institutionalized and not just any type of capital is suitable for creating belief in the value of the individual who possesses and invests it. Part of the explanation of the origin of the value and power attributed to agents who hold posts and positions in the political field lies in the history of each post and position (for example, the Interior Ministry<sup>3</sup>). However, a fuller explanation requires deconstruction of the notion of “political capital” so as to understand the sources of power and, more specifically, the value of agents who have earned the trust of a president or prime minister or the electoral support required for an elected position.

The notion of “political capital” is characterized by its ambiguity. That is, firstly, because it conjures up the idea of a resource with its origin in the activity that takes place in the political field that, once accumulated and appropriated by institutions and individuals, is invested by the latter in a bid to remain, progress or simply exist in this political space by occupying socially embedded or, in other words, objectified positions. Secondly, since it is a resource that is recognized as being valuable, it is quite plausible and - under certain conditions - possible that capital with its origin in other fields and non-political situations can be transformed into political capital by the agents in whom it is embodied or who receive it from institutions (in which case the resource exists in objectified form) so as to invest it as a means of entering the political field. One case of capital that was incorporated by an agent (or, in other words, hoarded personally by the individual and, because it is the result of actions that produce value through that

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<sup>2</sup> Although based on definitions different to those I will formulate below, Bennister, T’Hart and Worthy (2014) suggestively propose distinguishing between “leadership capital” and “political capital”, with the former understood as “the aggregate of a leader’s political resources” (“skills”, “relations” and “reputation”) which can only be exercised from “leadership positions” (p.2) while the latter is related (in an explicit interpretation of Bourdieu) to “horizontal bonds of networks, relations and trust that are inherited, hoarded and often cultivated to gain vertical political credit” (p.4), or, in other words, power. This gives rise to the relevance of distinguishing between “being in office and being in power” (p.1).

<sup>3</sup> For an example of the different definitions and redefinitions of the Interior Ministry from the start of the dictatorship in Argentina in 1976 and during the transition to democracy, with the resulting redrawing of the political and social contours of its occupants, see Canelo (2014).

individual's own outstanding performance, is non-transferable<sup>4</sup>) outside the political field is celebrity capital (Driessens, 2013). In this case, the notoriety or fame may have its origin in competitive sports, the cinema or the stage and the common denominator is the famous person's constant presence in the media. Similarly, an example of a resource objectified and hoarded by an institution external to the political field is associative capital as in, for example, its trade union version. In this case, the institution transfers the capital to the individual for reasons such as trust, merit or retribution for services rendered.

A third cause of the ambiguity of the notion of political capital lies in the fact that it can and often is confused with attributes of a more subjective nature whose value is instantaneously or rapidly apparent and are of almost immediate use. This is the case of the reputation associated with a brand (for example, a name) or a skill perceived as talent (oratory, astuteness or courage which an essentialist reading of Weber associates to individual "charisma"). Although this involves personal attributes that are often perceived as being exceptional and do, indeed, have value in the eyes of the inhabitants of the political field (probably as a result of its long history and the hyper-mediatization of the political struggle), we will consider these attributes as assets which, like money in the economic space or the liquidity an investor may enjoy, are surface resources that can be rapidly invested in the political field even when those investing them... lack political capital<sup>5</sup> - courage, wisdom or beauty, as Weber said, but also negotiating skills, contacts and networks.

We will, therefore, define political capital as a varied set of resources that have their origin both within and outside the political field, are recognized as valuable by political agents and political analysts (from their *petite histoire* to great events) and can be invested in the political competition. Understood in this way, political capital is the fruit of work by individuals or institutions, often over a very long period, in acquiring and hoarding it and increasing its value. However, political capital cannot be observed directly, precisely because it is the fruit of an agent's trajectory; it is an intangible good. When we say that an agent possesses political capital, we are, therefore, implicitly referring to recognition of the agent's value due to his trajectory both within and outside the field. Political capital is expressed as a belief. This type of capital exists in embodied or objectified form and, if originating outside the political field, can be transformed into political capital by the holder, although this does not mean that any type of resource can be converted into capital suitable for inhabiting and, eventually, dominating the political field. In contrast to the reciprocal convertibility of currencies (where one can be transformed into another, conserving part of its original value), not all resources have value in the political field just as the different types of political capital cannot be mechanically converted into resources with value in other fields.

How can we explain that a type of capital (for instance the celebrity capital) that is valued in one country's political field may not be valued in that of another country? The reason lies in the history of political and social struggles and the memory of these struggles that each political field inherits, reproduces and transforms. If, for example,

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<sup>4</sup> This is the form of acquisition and appropriation of capital that Bourdieu (1986) has in mind when he refers to its embodied "form" together with the objectified and institutionalized nature of capital.

<sup>5</sup> This is the sense in which French understands as political capital what we consider an asset or set of assets (but not capital): "political capital is constituted by the store of mostly intangible assets that politicians use to induce compliance" (French, 2011, p.215).

student struggles have historically been important in the political life of a country, increasing the dynamism of the political field and, therefore, its recruitment of personnel, it is easy to understand the transformation of student (university) leadership capital into political capital<sup>6</sup>. However, the value of this resource is not the same across countries nor is there any guarantee that it will remain constant over time, independently of the spirit of the time or current events. The different value or recognition that different types of political capital have in the political fields of one country or another and at different points in history is a result of the dependence of a resource's value on not only the importance of social struggles and the specific local characteristics of political struggles but also on the different varieties of capitalism, which determine the prestige of certain professions and types of expertise, redefining the notion of “merit” (Sennet, 2006, p.165).

This leads to a preliminary and evident conclusion: if the value of national currencies and their convertibility depend on the trust that economic agents and credit rating agencies have in a particular economy and its Central Bank's regulation of macroeconomic and monetary policy, there is, in the case of political capital, no equivalent to determine the value of its different forms nor to express a judgment about confidence in the political field (for example, the legitimacy of its institutions). Although what stands out in both situations is the importance of trust and, more precisely, beliefs about what has and is expected to have value, fluctuations in the value of different types of capital in the political field are generally the result of long and, above all, slow historical processes. Apart from the case of charismatic capital, which has its origin in a context of instability or a crisis of institutions (which explains why Weber (2013) insists so much on its revolutionary nature), other types of political capital come to be valued over the relatively slow history of their political fields (which is what allows the capital to be accumulated by institutions and, at the level of personal biographies, by individuals).

### **Entry barriers: social and economic fundamentals of the political monopoly**

In formal terms, democratic theory maintains that access to a position of representation is open to any citizen who shows virtue and vocation to represent interests. This assumption and its related rhetoric underpin the justification for electoral competition based on the verdict of universal suffrage. However, this same assumption does not have the same meaning when an individual benefits from appointment to a “position of trust” or, in other words, when the appointment is the result of trust on the part of an individual authority (a president or prime minister) or a collective authority (a legislative chamber) with the legitimacy of the popular vote. In this case, it is assumed that the appointing authority is capable of detecting individuals’ virtues or has simply opted to be guided by a political party’s endorsement of some “exceptional” man or woman.

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<sup>6</sup> The regular historical importance of student movements is particularly clear in Argentina and Chile (where, in the parliamentary election of 2013, several presidents of university student federations were elected to lower house seats as “independents” or in association with parties).

However, these assumptions have very little power to explain why an individual achieves elected office (as, for example, a lower house seat) or is appointed to a post (for example, as a cabinet minister). How then can we explain how a handful of individuals are able to surmount the entry barriers to the political field and legitimately attain an institutionalized position of power? How can we explain election victories or the conquest of the favor of the prince which result in a “selection of those who possess the highest level of the personal qualities that are on average most important to ensure victory over the course of the struggle” (Weber, 1995, p.75)? Part of the answer lies in Weber's own assertion about the agents' qualities which serve to set them apart because they imply either assets or capital (in the sense in which we have defined them here) that can be invested in order to triumph or exist in the political field that these agents aspire to enter. The scientific literature has long been interested not only in the institutional logic of the selection and recruitment of candidates but also the mechanisms through which certain agents obtain positions of trust or, in other words, the legal processes and forms adopted by institutions to give legitimacy to an election or appointment. However, this has had a high cost in terms of ignoring agents' sources of power *before* they achieve important positions in the political field. If access to the political field is possible for reasons other than the logic of institutions, the forms which processes take and the willpower of agents who are “interested politically” and “not materially” (Weber, 1995, p.375), it is because these agents possess a stock of political capital that is valued by the field or, in other words, is the economic reflection of a feeling of political competence to represent interests (Joignant, 2007; Gaxie, 2007).

The political field is characterized by innumerable forms of closure and, therefore, exclusion, even at such particular historical moments as a change of regime (Bermeo, 2002; Higley and Gunther, 1992). Changes of regime are, however, particularly useful in understanding how, especially during periods of transition to democracy (O'Donnell; Schmitter and Whitehead, 1986; Przeworski, 1991), the political field opens its doors when the first elections and the first appointments to government positions of trust take place but then closes in on itself (albeit without implying that, during the transition, any type of agent could have obtained access to it)<sup>7</sup>. In this way, it is possible to understand the paradox of regime changes which has rarely been analyzed by transitology (for two approaches diametrically opposed to transitology but, in this case, similar in their silence on this paradox, see Schmitter and Karl, 1994; Bunce, 1995). The “renewal of political elites is inevitably followed by a closure of the political class” (Best, 2003, p.20). When this closure has occurred, one of its first signs is the appearance of ever more autonomized political competition, an aspect that was

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<sup>7</sup> There are different types of regime change and, therefore, different classes of agents who gain entry to the field through elections and appointments: former *guerrilleros* who become candidates and win elections (from the first Sandinist government in Nicaragua and its slow democratization to the gradual formation of the FMLN party in El Salvador) or former members of paramilitary organizations who undergo a similar transformation (typically when armed conflicts lead to regime change as a result of the collapse of a revolutionary movement or the slow democratization of the field); negotiated transitions from the old regime (with former members of the armed forces and civilian politicians who gradually or abruptly move from clandestine activity into the democratic political game); military conflicts in the form of wars which, once concluded, permit the transformation of resistance fighters, partisans, members of the armed forces or politicians in exile into the agents of a field that is built or rebuilt (countries that were occupied during World War II like France). In all these cases, the resources invested when the political field is inaugurated had their origin in non-democratic situations or in a combination of heroic assets and capital that had acquired value before the armed conflict or the dictatorship (especially when there is a relatively brief period between the old democracy that have rise to the dictatorship or the eruption of a violent conflict and the opening of the political field at the start of the transition to democracy).

early addressed by Bourdieu (1981) who analyzed it using a general theory of fields, albeit in the historical context of an autonomized political field in an already stabilized democratic regime). Certainly, we find differences and variations between countries' political fields, reflecting their historical construction and their different institutional choices. Here, transitology once again offers important lessons. In the case of institutional elections and, particularly, first definitions on electoral systems, incompatibilities and recusals, the effects on the political field's degree of openness and the social standing of posts are considerable. The chronological precedence of these first institutional elections has an impact by producing winners and losers and, therefore, tends to freeze the political game and shape the logic of the way the field works, establishing barriers to new entrants based on both the strategic and practical behavior of the winners. The political field in a country that forbids re-election of lower house representatives (as, for example, Mexico) will not be the same as in countries that neither set limits on mandates nor forbid their accumulation at different levels (as, for example, in France with the *accumulation des mandats*). Depending on these institutional choices, the political field will be more or less competitive and open.

Once the first institutional elections have taken place and the democratic regime has achieved stability, the dynamics of the political field become conservative and the origin of entry barriers has a different logic. In the case, for example, of barriers based on gender and their exclusion effects, Fox and Lawless (2004) showed how gender differences operate at the start of political careers. Through a survey of 3,765 people (1,969 men and 1,796 women) from the three professional fields most likely to produce political candidates in the United States (law, business, and education), the authors found that the gender gap is present at the start of the process of candidates' emergence and not at subsequent stages. This means that the entry barrier operates with all its force at the moment of the initial decision to run for elected office, a gender bias that subsequently dissipates to the point that "only the very end of the electoral process may be gender neutral" (Fox and Lawless, 2004, p.275).

Although prestigious educational credentials can help to overcome these cultural barriers to women's access to parliament, some studies have identified forms of institutional inertia and resistance which affect even those women with important levels of cultural capital. This entry barrier is, in fact, seen at a more micro level in France's prestigious *École Nationale d'Administration* (ENA) which claims to be an exclusive access route into the political field for its most prominent students...except women students. How can this be explained? After recalling ENA's sexual democratization of recruitment, Achin and Levêque (2007, p.28) show how the problem of access to the political field lies in "the connection between leaving the school and entering politics". They studied the careers of nine exceptional women (in the sense of their rarity) who managed to enter politics and, in several cases, remained there for a long time, holding important positions (as ministers, undersecretaries or lower house representatives). It is no accident that these nine notable women surmounted cultural entry barriers by drawing on capital, whether inherited or collective or based on expertise, that was also exceptional and available or, in other words, on scarce resources available only to a handful of agents who were socially selected quite a long while before they entered the political field.

However, the closure of the political field is also social in nature. It is inhabited by agents who differ from each other as regards their social origins and educational

credentials, their wealth, age or professional trajectories. These differences may be evident *between* countries but it is often forgotten that they can also be found in the *same* country at different historical moments or are not reflected in the same way in the country's different arenas<sup>8</sup> (for example, in the lower house as compared to the senate in two-chamber systems, a political geometry that reflects what could be their members' different social origins as well as rival social definitions of what is meant by representation). In this sense, it is not trivial to compare the social or racial composition of a ministerial cabinet or legislative chamber in the same country at different moments of time or between countries since this will determine the *social* nature of the closure of the political field. It is, moreover, not trivial if this is approached from the perspective of the capital, unequal by definition (Joignant, Perelló and Torres, 2014), with which agents enter the political field and make their careers there. In what does this political inequality of capital consist and how is it expressed? Firstly, as seen above, it reflects the fact that the capital which can be invested in gaining entry to the political field is not only economic. The resources at agents' disposal are of different types, which we will now refer to as "species" of capital of which agents can hold different amounts and different combinations. Secondly and precisely because the notion of "political capital" is ambiguous in that it suggest homogeneous composition, the different species of capital that it comprises can be invested in accordance with each one's amount relative to the others, forming a particular structure of individual political capital which, as we will see below, typifies their holders, making them different from each other and unequally powerful. Moreover, the distribution of these species of capital across all the agents who make up an arena at a particular point in time determines the arena's structural representation which may differ from the logic with which capital is distributed in other arenas. The literature has looked particularly at agents with political careers that have been successful in terms of leading to some type of position in the field but access to a political position, however modest, is itself an exceptional event in the sense that "actual recruitment is a highly improbable event" (Best and Cotta, 2000, p.11).

Agents who have become professionals in the political field, remaining there and living, according to Weber "of" and "for" politics, are clearly very different from ordinary citizens. They are, however, also different from those individuals who aimed but failed to enter the political field, suffering an electoral defeat or failing to gain the trust of the prince. The mere fact of standing as candidates or aspiring to be part of the prince's chosen circle indicates that they had sufficient capital to compete, but not to triumph. This stock of capital as well as their feeling of being competent sets them apart from ordinary citizens. We know very little about these thwarted candidacies and frustrated ambitions since political science and the more positivist political sociology focus on victories and only rarely take defeats into account. However, those agents who are successful in gaining access to the political field and put down roots there also differ *among themselves* in that they do not draw on the same resources. It is, therefore,

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<sup>8</sup> "Arena" is understood here as a differentiated space of competition within the political field. It may be institutionalized (and possibly governed by precise rules as is typically the case of the regulation governing legislatures or the statutes regulating party congresses) or it may be weakly regulated and lack forms but still be the place where positions of power and interests are at stake (as, for example, for the leadership of a current within a party). In all these cases, the arenas may differ in the extent to which they are objectified but are recognizable by the agents in competition. A very important contribution as regards use of the notion of arena was made by Collier and Collier (2002).

important to explain the nature of the capital that lies at the origin of careers in this field.

Methodologically, in order to fully explain these careers, we should look at the history of agents before entering the political field and across it, examining their career paths which may be ascending or descending, sideways into other arenas (from the government to parliament or the reverse) with temporary exits from the field but also painful exclusions and, in some cases, even expulsions. In order to explain all these possibilities, it is, in turn, necessary to look at the capital these agents invested. Depending on the history of these arenas and the typification of the agents who inhabit them, the species of capital invested are geared to achieving access to the field and making gains in it (in the form of posts and positions). The extent to which the arena is institutionalized may, however, mean that the species of capital invested are very different since agents must tailor the capital they invest to the logic of the way each arena works (which, in turn, makes political arenas similar to the political field in which they are located). These aspects determine not only the shape of agents' early career paths but also plausible and other improbable trajectories, depending on the nature of the resources and their value at a specific point in the history of the field. Clearly, the study of those agents who finally achieved political careers is to focus on the handful of individuals who surmounted the entry barriers to the field and to ignore the existence of veritable cemeteries of individuals who, at some point, were interested in a political career but failed in the attempt.

Entry barriers establish limits that, unlike borders between countries, can always be challenged. In the case of the political field, the barriers are codified (candidates to elected office must, for example, comply with legal requirements such as age, education and nationality) but tend to be structured in such a way as to exclude agents not recognized as peers by those already inhabiting the field. There is, however, no guarantee, beyond the legal requirements, that they will always prevent the entry of individuals considered politically undesirable by those already in the field since, providing they possess the right species of political capital, agents interested in entering the field have investment strategies at their disposal.

Sociologists have highlighted both the importance and relative effectiveness of barriers that impede access to social fields, particularly when their boundaries have been codified and their agents have become professionalized. It is in Bourdieu that we can find an early sociology of fields and their boundaries where access is less a matter of "vocation" than of resources and dispositions tailored to the logic of each field (Calhoun, 1993; Joignant, 2012)<sup>9</sup>. However, if access to the field in the face of entry barriers calls for capital and a practical sense of the game or, in other words, rare and scarce attributes, their unequal distribution in society constitutes a root barrier that is tacitly recognized in the codification of those fields such as the political field that establish legal entry requirements but also, and above all, social conditions - from way of talking to bodily *hexis* - that are definitions of the work of representation by those who have lastingly inhabited the field. This is not because the agents have always been the same as individuals but because, among the agents who have historically dominated the field and who benefited from the first institutional choices that shaped it, we find

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<sup>9</sup> As seen in the dossier on the notion of "field" published in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* in 2011, Bourdieu's seminars of the mid-1970s showed early concern about the problematic idea of limit and this was the reason he preferred the notion of "boundary" of the field (Bourdieu, 2013, p.17).

similar situations, elective affinities, predominant capital investment strategies and a collective habitus (in the sense of *esprit de corps*) that persist over time<sup>10</sup>. Much of the effectiveness of entry barriers is, indeed, explained by this inertia of the political field.

However, access to the political field also has an economic logic. It was economists who were the first to show interest in the economic logic of its closure<sup>11</sup>. Tullock (1965), for example, used the notion of “entry barrier” to describe democracy as a type of auction mechanism for periodically allocating monopoly rights favoring those who hold power in some political arena (government, parliament, etc.) on the basis of the exclusive majority principle. If we can talk of “barriers”, it is because majority rule allows the beneficiaries to enjoy a political monopoly, constituting an economic entry barrier in that “we can have only one cabinet, governor, mayor, president, or majority in a legislature” (Tullock, 1965, p.464). Although these economic barriers may be more or less categorical (depending, for example, on the nature of electoral systems, with a greater entry barrier in first-past-the-post electoral systems than proportional systems), Tullock is right when he asserts that majority rule tends to generate winners and produce the conditions of political monopoly. Moreover, once established, a political monopoly tends to reproduce itself and, therefore, exclude. Wohlgemuth (1999) returned to this problem, explicitly prolonging the debate started by Tullock several decades previously. The peculiarity of political competition lies in the rules of the game, which are produced and changed by the very players who are already competing, thereby making the political game an essentially self-regulated competition in that it does not lead to an “excessive opportunism of incumbents” as a result of which they manipulate the rules at their whim and in order to increase their own chances of victory (Wohlgemuth, 1999, p.181). Why? Because, in the end, all the players exercise reciprocal control and are periodically subject to the verdict of the ballot box which gives a “temporary license to govern” (Wohlgemuth, 1999, p.181). As a result, entry barriers to the political field bear little relation to deliberate closure strategies on the part of the agents who already dominate the field. Barriers of this type may exist (Wohlgemuth refers to them as “strategic barriers”). However, they are much less effective than “innocent barriers” or, in other words, obstacles to entry to the field that reflect inertial advantages of an almost factual nature that arise merely from being an incumbent or having invested capital (in one of its species) *before* other competitors (Wohlgemuth, 1999, p.184-185). In other words, entry barriers are effective to the extent that the agents who inhabit and dominate the political field establish and embed social definitions of who should govern and represent interests, thereby consecrating their own value without self-praise or self-justification. In any case, both Tullock and Wohlgemuth show simply and concisely how and through which economic mechanisms the political field produces conditions of closure and exclusion.

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<sup>10</sup> This does not mean that the political field does not undergo internal changes (for example, regulatory reforms) or is not affected by transformations in society (from demographic changes to the effect of an ever more educated electorate) or that it is not influenced by battles over ideas and ideological struggles (on the understanding that, if a book does not itself produce revolutions (Chartier, 1990, p.99 and following.), ideas similarly do not autonomously have consequences: Riese-Kappen (1994)). My argument is that the inertia of the political field is extremely deep, particularly if viewed from an historical perspective and, without revolutions or regime changes, its structural continuity prevails even when it is possible to see secondary modifications in the political composition of assemblies and specific aspects of its institutional order.

<sup>11</sup> Although Schumpeter (1990) also looked at this aspect of the functioning of the political field, he focused on the elections that take place in this space.

There are also restrictions on access that are of an institutional nature but, unlike the first institutional choices discussed above, they are not imposed coercively but with the agreement of all politically interested agents, whether within or outside the political field. In an institutional closure whose effectiveness does not depend on “conscious” forms of adherence or obedience to the rules (although these may be followed for a wide range of reasons: Taylor, 1993, p.45-60), closure is a result of the practices of the agents themselves who, when competing in accordance with the field's logic, reproduce its organization and order, not because its rules are spontaneously considered valid but because they are accompanied by incentives that make sense to all the agents and by forms of social control that are exercised collectively, factually reproducing the rules and their function as entry barrier. This is probably the principal cement of the field since barriers have their origin in the complicity of all. In this sense, Wohlgemuth (1999) is right when he asserts that continuity in the political field and its monopoly structure are explained by mechanisms of self-regulation and coordination.

It is, therefore, necessary to characterize the scarce resources that some agents have at their disposal at the time of their entry into the political field and, above all, of their permanence there in front-line government posts or elected office in congress or parliament. In contrast to subjectivist and heroic approaches which explain entry into the political field and success there in terms of agents' “motivation” and skills<sup>12</sup>, it is their capital and strategies for investment and occupation of the field as well as the logic of appropriation of the political space which we need to understand.

### **Species and origin of capital and types of agent: theoretical and comparative basis**

In contrast to the view taken by Bourdieu (1986), who saw the different “types” of capital as resources to be traded rather than invested, there is no doubt that access to the political field through elected office or an appointed position and *a fortiori* permanence there for long periods of time are the result of investments of capital that may or may not lead to a political career. The capital available to agents interested in a political career is always scarce and the agent's political existence depends on the return on its investment. As discussed above, political capital or the species of capital that are suited to competing for an institutionalized position in an arena of the political space may have their origin within or outside the political field and take on an embodied or

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<sup>12</sup> According to Besley (2005, p.48), “political competence is probably a complex mix of skills” (which may be “innate or acquired”), ranging from “intangible leadership skills, like persuading others in debate or inspiring trust”, to “more standard analytical” talents such as “spotting flaws in policy proposals”. In this example, it is evident that the emphasis is on agents' virtuosity which is what mechanisms of “political selection” primarily seek without paying attention to the social logic found in the origin of the skills that are naively celebrated. In this respect, the language of capacities and skills often used by the literature is mistaken since it suggests that the success of the investment and, therefore, the importance achieved by the agent are comparable to the case of artists. Talent, skill, intelligence and, in some cases, genius are attributes that tend to be used to explain success in politics, ignoring the fact that they are merely superficial descriptions that conceal the capital that agents bring with them and invest, the nature of which may be very heterogeneous. Exceptional talent and genius may, of course, exist (Elias, 1993; Bourdieu, 2014), but there is no guarantee that agents who are geniuses in some aspect and a particular field can access the political field. When it exists, it is precisely this genius that needs to be explained, without succumbing to the magic of talent which, in itself, explains nothing.

objectified form. It is these species (and, to a lesser extent, individual assets), which are by definition very unequally distributed among agents, that produce belief in the value of the individuals who inhabit and act in the field (or aspire to do so) and whose indexation with the ordinary functioning of the political field results in lasting definitions of the work of representation.

There is important evidence of the existence of species of capital which are developed *outside* the political field but can be transformed into capital that is valued inside it. As discussed above, they include the notoriety acquired through participation in certain areas of activity (competitive sports, cinema or television) which produces what some authors refer to as “celebrity” capital (Matichescu and Protsyk, 2011; Driessens, 2013), the notable actions in critical situations that generate “charismatic” capital (Weber, 1995 and 2013; Kershaw, 1995; Andreas, 2007; Bernadou, 2007), the prestigious academic credentials that certify a skill or expertise (Whitehead, 2012; Grindle, 1977), and the reconversion of individual resources with their origin in business (for example in Russia: Lallemand, 2008). If it is possible to talk about “species” of capital, it is, therefore, in order to underline the great variety of resources that can be invested in the political field by agents who are, in turn, also extremely diverse. In order to analyze this variety of resources and distinguish between different types of agents, it is useful to typify the species of capital that are present at the start of individuals' political careers.

If we can talk about different species of capital, it is, therefore, because from a genetic perspective we observe different species of resources whose variability is naturally historical (depending on the time, the forms of capital that predominate in a particular party will not be the same<sup>13</sup>) and political (a particular party will receive more or less investments of capital of, just to cite two examples, the “militant” or “pragmatic technocratic” species<sup>14</sup>). The common denominator of capital with value in the political field is the trust and worth with which its holders are credited. In this sense, it is possible to see a fiduciary logic in any type of capital whose investment is relevant in the political field. At the same time, however, the differences start in the origin and typification of the different species of capital and, subsequently, in the ways in which such or such species of capital generates value once invested in the political field. These range from the slow creation of value when the resource invested falls within and limits with the field's boundaries (militant capital, immersion in causes, etc.) to the relatively rapid reconversion of capital that had its origin outside the field, particularly when as a result of the “homologies [that] exist between fields” the dominant agents in one of the fields “share similar dispositions” with the hegemonic agents in other fields (Harvey and MacClean, 2008, p.107)<sup>15</sup>. Nonetheless, it is also possible to think that political

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<sup>13</sup> For example, objectified political capital (in institutions, objects and rules) will predominate when it is the party that prevails over the subordinated value of its members and leaders: Offerlé (1987). As shown by some monographs (for example, on Chile's right-wing Independent Democratic Union (UDI) party), the party was initially formed on the basis of a convergence of important stocks of individual capital (embodied), held by politicians with prestigious names, networks of contacts and business support, and the collective legacy of Pinochetism (named after dictator Augusto Pinochet who governed Chile between 1973 and 1990). Two decades later, however, it is the value of the party brand, its traditions and historical figures or, in other words, objectified capital that is appropriated by the new generations of lower house representatives: Joignant and Navia (2007).

<sup>14</sup> See the work of Offerlé (1987).

<sup>15</sup> This is one of several possible logics of reconversion of capital generated and accumulated outside the political field. It is, indeed, possible to imagine forms of reconversion based on similarities of position

skills (in the sense of assets given to this notion above: negotiating skills, the ability to build alliances, etc.) and the value of its agents could be redefined through the importation of skills from other fields (for example, the economic field and its colonization of the political field: Dulong, 1996).

Political capital is, however, also and above all accumulable within the political field. Once access to the political field has been gained by holding a position, the cards of the production and reproduction of the political capital so acquired are played strategically. This is, for example, the case of those lower house representatives who bring their capital into play when voting specific bills (*roll call*). As López (2002, p.218) has pointed out, each vote is “a means of accumulating political capital” whose nature is subjective since “a roll call decision may impart political capital to one legislator but not another”. It is precisely for this reason that the value of political capital, like that of economic capital, depends on the strategic investment decisions taken, particularly when the legislator’s vote is of a high order. It is hardly necessary to point out that this example is only one of several in the political structure of production of the value of political capital. Indeed, how can we ignore the fact that the political capital effectively held by an agent suffers fluctuations in its value depending on his or her strategies where nothing ensures the success of the investments?

The capital at an agent’s disposal is naturally subject to constant threats of depreciation and obsolescence, which can result in exits from the political field. Ideally, depreciation of political capital should be studied by examining cases of candidates who suffer electoral defeat and the agent’s quest for reconversion within the field and subsequent elimination. However, it can also be analyzed by looking at cases of agents or groups of agents seeking to enter the field whose strategies for the investment of a species of capital fail and their efforts to reconvert this devalued species into another one which does allow them to penetrate the political space. This explains the interest of the initiative for the collective construction of political capital mounted by the French group “Questions socialistes” led by Julien Dray. After years of student struggle and investment of militant capital, this group of young socialists seemed at one point to lack the possibility of progressing within the socialist party. If this situation had persisted, it would have meant the total depreciation of both the group and its individual members. The fact that this risk was finally averted was due to work through which the militant capital that, for years, had been invested in the universities was reconverted in a different sphere, that of the struggle against racism in the mid-1980s (*SOS-Racisme*). This gave the group notoriety and capacity for mobilization and allowed several of its members to enter the political field (Juhem, 2001).

If the value of capital invested in politics is more variable than constant, this reflects its properties, correctly described by Savage, Warde and Devine (2005, p.40) as

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and, above all, of dispositions of agents in different fields (for example, the similarity of dispositions in the economic field at the level of company boards and their possible reconversion in the political field in state enterprises, in economic areas of the government or in parliamentary commissions on economic or financial matters). However, it is also possible to imagine cases of reconversion of capital and their agents in the absence of similarities of position or conditions between different fields. In these cases, understanding how and why a species of capital acquired outside the political field (for example, as a successful local businessperson with an international reputation or the capital of seriousness gradually built up by an intellectual such as Brazilian sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso who became his country’s President) can be reconverted into political capital and permit entry to the field is an area of research in itself.

“flexibility, fungibility, contextual dependence and alienability”. All these properties are, indeed, factors in the fluctuations of capital precisely because its value lies less in its intrinsic nature than in the political and social conditions in which it is used. This is the reason for examining agents’ investment and reconversion strategies, some of which will be successful while others will fail.

If the common denominator of politicians is that they inhabit the political field thanks to investments of capital that allow them to enter the field and remain there, developing more or less successful careers, this should not blind us to the deep differences among agents. It is important to bear in mind and develop the idea that capital not only produces social inequalities between citizens, contenders and winners but that political inequality of capital also differentiates agents within the political field. Beyond the party labels that generally accompany the vast majority of political agents, it is possible to distinguish between agents (even within the same party) on the basis of their capital. One political agent will differ greatly from another depending on the volume and structure of his starting capital. If a long career (for example, in a party) has allowed an agent to hold different positions (the idea of *volume* of resources) and accumulate different species of capital as a result of having held different types of position (in, for example, what Gaxie (2003) refers to as “peripheral political markets” or, in other words, sub-national elected spaces), it is possible to infer the *structure* of resources at that agent’s disposal. The stylization of the different types of capital that can be invested in the political field as ideal types allows us to define them as “species” and associate each with an ideal type of agent. Using this *static* or photographic form of observation, we can identify differences between political agents as regards their starting capital and possible pathways to a particular arena of the political field (table 1). As will be shown below, the combination of species of capital during agents' careers in the field can be used to arrive at a *dynamic* representation of both their careers and the capital they hoard, implying that they can be typified differently in later periods of their careers.

**Table 1.- Theoretical species of capital and hypothetical types of political agent**

Species of Capital		Types of Agent	Pathways to Power
Family		Heir	Government; Congress or Parliament; Mayorship of mid-sized or large municipal district
University		Student leader	Congress or Parliament
Political	Subspecies: militant	Party man	Government; Congress or Parliament; Mayorship of mid-sized or large municipal district
	Subspecies: oligarchic	Professional politician	Government; Congress or Parliament; Mayorship of large municipal district
Technocratic	Subspecies: pragmatic	Pragmatic technocrat	Government
	Subspecies: political	Political technocrat	Government
Technopolitical		Technopol	Government
Notoriety		Celebrity	Government; Congress or Parliament; Mayorship of large municipal district
Charismatic		Charismatic leader	Government; Congress or Parliament; Mayorship of large municipal district

There are only a finite number species of political capital that can be invested. This is borne out by monographic and comparative research on elites and political careers in countries such as the United States (Swenson 1982; Diermeier, Keane and Merlo 2005; Feinstein, 2010), Mexico (Grindle 1977; Centeno and Maxfield 1992; Ai Camp 1982, 1985 and 1995), Brazil (Marenco dos Santos 2004; Whitehead 2009; De Almeida 2010), France (Gaxie 1980 and 1983; Gaïti 1990; Mathiot and Sawicki 1999a and 1999b), and Chile (Joignant 2011a; Delamaza 2011; Dávila 2011; Silva 2008 and 2011).

One of these species is “inherited” and we will refer to it as *family capital* so as to take into account processes of transfer between parents and their children (and, in some cases, between grandparents and grandchildren or a combination of situations typical of families and *a fortiori* of political dynasties) as regards not only political sympathies but, and above all, networks, reputation, clienteles, connections with donors of campaign financing, etc. (Mendoza et alii, 2013; Dal Bó, Dal Bó and Snyder, 2009). The importance of this species of capital, however, varies widely between countries and arenas, ranging from its considerable influence in the parliamentary arenas of countries such as Japan (Smith, 2012), the United States (albeit decreasingly so: Feinstein, 2010; Crowley and Reece, 2013), Thailand (Ockey, 2015) and Chile (Joignant, 2014) to its much lesser importance in the parliamentary arenas of most European countries (except Ireland and Greece: Patrikios and Chatzikonstantinou, 2014). This is the only species of capital which does not need to be actively acquired by an agent (except in the extreme case of deliberately calculated matrimonial strategies). This type of agent will be referred to as *heir*. Depending on the assets transferred (connections, money, reputation, etc.) and the positions that have been occupied by other family members (in the legislature, executive or local elected office), the heir may enter parliament or the government or become mayor of an important municipal district.

A second species of capital that, for a significant number of leaders, is probably at the origin of their party membership is *university capital*<sup>16</sup>. Although the importance of this resource varies across countries and within countries, depending on the historical context, it is within the perimeter of student political organizations that early forms of political leadership are acquired or developed. Depending on the country, this is a resource that can be accumulated early in life (for example, in the context of federations of secondary school students in Chile) and, more generally, while at university (by leading faculty student unions or student federations). It also often explains access to party membership and its value may subsequently be recognized by the party. As is readily imagined, recognition of this resource cannot be too long delayed since its value lies precisely in its early investment and use by the agent who must, therefore, soon be perceived as important for the party organization from which he or she can access the political field. The type of agent who holds this capital will be referred to simply as *student leader*. Examples of student leaders in different countries such as Argentina and Chile suggest that parliament is the first arena entered after investing this species of capital (Lobos, 2014).

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<sup>16</sup> Although this species of capital could have been included in one bringing together the attributes of leadership acquired in social organizations and movements, we opted to treat it as a species in its own right since this is more commonly used in the literature and is, above all, more precise (given the breadth of what could be vaguely termed associative capital which could refer to a trade union leader, the head of a neighborhood association or the president of some other type of association).

There then follows a specifically political species of capital which can be divided into two subspecies, both of which have their origin in the political parties. There is, first, the subspecies of *militant capital* (Matonti and Poupeau, 2004) or, in other words, the resources that agents acquire through immersion in party life over long periods but without this necessarily being reflected in positions of leadership within the organization. Bearers of this subspecies of capital will be referred to as *party men* (Joignant and Navia, 2007; Offerlé, 1987; Pudal, 1989). The second subspecies corresponds to *oligarchic political capital* (Michels, 1971; Borchert, 2003) and consists in the acquisition of knowledge and skills with their origin in periods of party membership that are not necessarily prolonged but do lead to front-line positions in the organization. These agents will, therefore, be termed *professional politicians* (Alcántara, 2012; Offerlé, 1999). Both subspecies may lead to positions in government or parliament or as mayor of an important municipal district (the country's capital or capitals of its regions).

A further species of capital, very much in fashion in Latin America after the wave of economic liberalization reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, is of a technocratic nature and also falls into two subspecies. One of these is the *pragmatic technocratic* subspecies (Centeno, 1993), associated with very prestigious academic credentials and political independence. The other is the *political technocratic* subspecies referred to by Grindle (1977) and Ai Camp (1995) which also implies high-level qualifications from leading universities but, in this case, can be accompanied by more or less active forms of party membership. These subspecies give rise to the *pragmatic technocrat* and the *political technocrat*, respectively, who are found mostly in government posts.

These two technocratic subspecies of capital should not be confused with *technopolitical capital* (Joignant, 2011a and 2011b) since this latter resource simultaneously brings together both an important endowment of cultural capital in the form of prestigious degrees and an important stock of party capital. This combination of resources is reflected in agents who tend to exert dominance within certain disciplines in the social sciences (particularly economics and, to a lesser extent, political science and sociology) and to have considerable power within the parties to which they belong (through front-line positions in the party). Agents who hold this capital are widely referred to as *technopols* (Heclo, 1978; Williamson, 1994; Domínguez, 1997; Wallis, 1997 and 1999; Dézalay and Garth, 2002) and tend to hold government posts.

Two additional species of capital mentioned above have been the object of far less attention and research, despite the fact that their bearers can play decisive roles in political life. One of these is *notoriety* capital acquired outside the political field, whose bearers are referred to as *celebrities* (Driessens, 2013). The other is *charismatic capital*, a resource that, in the common sense view, tends to be associated with the outstanding and innate personalities and capacities of certain leaders, which serve as assets (in the sense given here to this notion). This view is, however, based too closely on Weber's methodological text on types of domination (Weber, 1995) and ignores the fact that charisma is a resource that emerges in specific situations such as moments of crisis. A resource as revolutionary as it is valuable, it is characterized in its purest form by its instability (Weber, 2013) and the historical context of its acquisition. Bearers of this capital can be termed *charismatic leaders*. These two species of capital are most commonly used to obtain elected office in parliament or, possibly, as mayor of an

important municipal district and only more rarely to obtain positions of trust in the executive.

These are the finite species of capital identified in the literature and are the resources that can be held (in one or more of their species) by an individual before entering the political field through an important post or position in government or parliament. The definition of each of these species of capital is, of course, of an ideal-type nature and they are rarely observed in their pure form (and, in some cases such as charisma, never directly<sup>17</sup>: Jaeger, 2011). This implies that the species which were stylized using ideal types are found in an empirical state in which the pure form coexists with the hybrid condition of capital produced by the investment of assets (oratory, wisdom, strategic skill, etc.) and/or the simultaneous possession of other species of capital. It is important to emphasize that, before entering the field, an individual can indeed possess one of the species of capital combined with assets or other species but, after obtaining access to the political field, accumulate two or more species of capital and undergo a metamorphosis (from student leader to political technocratic agent). These different possible combinations and typifications of agents are shown in the table of theoretical combinations and the resulting career paths (table 2):

**Table 2.- Probable career path and possible transformations of original capital**

Original Species of Capital		Type of Agent	Structure of Capital
Family		Heir	University
			Militant
			Oligarchic
			Pragmatic
			Political technocratic
			Technopolitical
University		Student leader	Militant
			Oligarchic
			Political technocratic
			Technopolitical
Political	Subspecies: militant	Party man	Oligarchic
	Subspecies: oligarchic	Professional politician	Political technocratic
Technocratic			Subspecies: pragmatic
	Subspecies: political	Political technocrat	Pragmatic
Technopolitical			Technopol
	Notoriety	Celebrity	
Charismatic			Charismatic leader

The possible combinations between species of capital are numerous and varied but, given that not all combinations are possible, not infinite. We insist that these combinations are theoretical and their hybrids simply logical consequences of the

<sup>17</sup> This implies tracing it through the footprints and clues that charisma leaves. For an ingenuous approach to charisma as if this can be .... measured!: Merolla and Zechmeister (2011).

agent's subsequent career path. For the agent whose career in the field starts on the basis of *inherited family capital*, there is a wide range of reconversion options and we only rule out, for strictly logical reasons, charismatic and celebrity capital since they correspond theoretically to starting capital and not to capital that is acquired subsequently. This means that the possible mutations of the agent who inherits family capital are also very varied but, once the agent has started his career, they will depend on his own educational qualifications, professional trajectory, the importance both initially and subsequently of the parties in the primary political socialization process, etc.

Albeit to a lesser extent, the options for the reconversion of *university capital* are also quite varied. As discussed above, this species of capital calls for rapid investment so as to avoid the accelerated depreciation that occurs when the agent leaves university. Given the assets which may be present in this species of capital (which the ideology of modern capitalism refers to as “soft skills”: empathy, horizontality, reliability), the natural arenas for transformation of this leadership are the political party and elected office. It is here that former student leaders can reconvert themselves, either by founding a new organization (when they will tend to accumulate oligarchic capital) or by joining an existing party (in which case they will cultivate both militant and oligarchic capital). Depending on their educational qualifications, it is, however, also conceivable that they will accumulate political technocratic capital. However many technical skills they have acquired, politics will never be completely absent in these individuals (although, in this case, their exercise of political activity would be through a hybrid of political and technical resources)<sup>18</sup>.

The range of reconversion options narrows significantly when, at the start of their careers in the political field, agents acquire militant or oligarchic forms of capital in parties. When militant capital predominates, the agent's penetration of the field is explained fundamentally by the party's recognition in the form of nomination as a candidate or proposal for a ministerial position. There are many possible reasons for this recognition - abnegation, loyalty to the party or those who control it, the quota of a particular political current in the cabinet, etc. This implies that, in order to become a minister, it is not always necessary to have held a position of national leadership in the party or, in other words, of control of federations or the central apparatus (two traits typically associated with the party professional who has accumulated oligarchic resources). These two species of capital do not, therefore, have to be sequential (as, for example, in the case of militant capital slowly accumulated by a party man which then almost naturally leads to the acquisition of the oligarchic capital of party professionals and professional politicians) since, depending on party and national traditions, the *cursus honorum* may or not exist. The logical reconversion options for the party man are limited to the acquisition of oligarchic capital (and, less commonly, political technocratic capital, depending on the agent's professional qualifications) while, in the case of professional politicians, the accumulation of ministerial posts and/or elected positions builds and consolidates their oligarchic capital (although a move to technocratic forms of political capital cannot be ruled out).

The reconversion options for technocratic species of capital are similar in scope to those of militant and oligarchic capital but different in direction. Pragmatic

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<sup>18</sup> The work of Lobos (2014) provides interesting examples of former student leaders in Chile who became political technocrats.

technocrats aspire only to serve governments, regardless of their ideological position (due to what Centeno (1993, p.312 and following) terms an “ideology of method” which means that the agent constantly accumulates the same species of capital). Similarly, political technocrats may indefinitely reproduce the same species but may also choose to become professional politicians, taking advantage of their prestige to become a national party official or leader, and, in this case, may also go on to obtain elected office or positions of trust to which access would not otherwise have been possible.

The technopol, a strange word coined by Heclo (1978) and subsequently popularized by Williamson (1994) and Domínguez (1997), is described and presents himself as an agent who simultaneously dominates two fields - the academic field in one of the social sciences and the political field (by holding or having held positions of party leadership at a national level). This makes these agents doubly powerful, with a hybrid condition that is scarce by definition and, above all, highly valued during periods of transition or modernization of the economy. It is the simultaneous possession of both “tech” and “pol” resources that leads to ministerial appointments and even successful bids for president (as demonstrated in the cases of Presidents Lagos and Cardoso in Chile and Brazil, respectively). In this sense, the question of technopols' reconversion is complex since their power has its origin in two different spaces and reproduces itself as long as they have the trust of presidents or primer ministers (or as long as they remain in office). If the general rule is that “capital goes to capital”, technopolitical capital is geared fundamentally to its own reproduction. When this ceases to be possible (for example, due to the loss of the possibility of being a minister as a result of changes of power or having left the academic field), technopols may seek to reconvert to the holding of elected parliamentary office, using primarily the “pol” dimension of their resources (which turns them into professional politicians).

Finally, both notoriety and charismatic capital need to be supported by and reconverted into other species, thereby producing the conditions for the agent's mutation. This is particularly apparent in the case of the charismatic leader whose capital is deeply subversive but also unstable since its effectiveness depends on the capacity to confirm its validity. Notoriety capital can permit access to the political field, thanks to reputation or name recognition acquired outside the field, but needs to achieve institutionalization and become a valuable resource, erasing the memory that the famous agent's value does not have its origin in the field. This is why the original fame can lead the agent to join or form parties as a platform from which to build oligarchic capital or shift towards the exploitation of political technocratic capital, when this is permitted by the previous history of the notoriety, through strategies that vaunt the harnessing of technical capabilities to “public service” or, in other words, the importance of doing “well” the things that interest people. Charismatic capital is different in that its origin lies in a crisis which the leader not only survived but was also able to interpret, creating a significant new order. As such, it is a resource that is closely related to the crisis and, therefore, the leader and is not directly transferable. Its stabilization calls for objectivation of the leader and his “charisma of the moment” in, for example, the party which the leader and his followers often form (as in the case of Perón and the Justicialist Party in Argentina) or becomes an apology for technical capabilities that mutates into ideology. While the party produces oligarchic capital, the one-time charismatic leader transforms his political power into the magic of technical capabilities whose secrets are the property of the political technocrat.

These possible combinations of different species of capital are only theoretical possibilities or conjectures. They must be verified or invalidated by empirical analysis of trajectories and political careers as the only way to identify not only general patterns but also the biases and deviations that are natural given the univocal rationality of ideal types. If, over a significant number of cases and in different countries, these deviations are found to be marginal and also occur on the same scale, then we have sufficient theoretical resources to address the elusive nature of “political capital”. What remains to be answered is the question of the applications of the theory of political capital and, particularly, the effects (for example, monopolistic) of the possession of one or another species of capital for attaining positions in the political field.

**From investment of capital  
to market concentration:  
the case of family capital**

Agents with similar species of capital also tend to be similar in the way they inhabit the political field. In other words, homology of the capital invested may result in elective affinities between agents, particularly if they are in identical arenas and similar positions, regardless of whether they belong to different parties and ideologies. Moreover, elective affinities may be more (or less) marked if these agents' socialization occurred in the same or similar schools (for example, Catholic schools) and they forged their first tools in the same universities or *grandes écoles* (and, with a high degree of certainty, if they are of the same generation). Individuals who, on entering the political field, invested similar or identical species of capital may, therefore, have many things in common, particularly if their previous social histories were similar. A research lead may be provided by analysis of networks showing coincidences in the people with whom apparently different individuals relate as well as by personal histories and prosopographical analysis (Stone, 1971) of important universes of agents.

The attainment of a leading position in the central political field implies a certain investment of capital. If it were possible to identify a time zero in the field's history, we would be able to identify the different volumes of species of capital invested at the start of careers as well as the field's initial structure. The closest approximation to this time zero can, as discussed above, be found in cases of regime change and, particularly, transitions from authoritarianism to democracy. In such a situation, the notion of “political market” allows us to explore the monopolistic results of the investment of a certain species of capital and, in this way, describe the field's initial capitalistic structure. This analysis can be carried out at the political field's time zero or, in other words, when elected positions that will be obtained through the investment of political capital are put to the vote for the first time. This explains why it is interesting to analyze the first general elections that take place during a transition to democracy.

This original distribution of the different species of capital and the resulting representation of the political field may, of course, be profoundly influenced by the political context that exists at time zero in terms of institutional restrictions, limits imposed by the authoritarian regime on who can participate in the first elections, the construction of the first offer of candidates from the opposition to the old regime based on the species of capital that were relevant for clandestine activity or tight political

control, etc. This explains why it is possible to put forward the hypothesis that, at time zero, the structure of the political field is unstable since, during the transition process and the gradual normalization of democracy, it will be possible to observe (or not) diversification of both species of capital and the types of agent who inhabit and, in a handful of cases, dominate the political field.

The difficulties start when we move away from time zero and the first attainment of a position or, in other words, when agents begin to move between positions and, even more so, when they begin to move between arenas, not only from the executive to the legislature (or the reverse), from the lower house to the senate or from undersecretary to minister but also when a lower house member becomes head of a party or when the head of a party who sits in the lower house is appointed to a ministerial post. The combinations and possible moves are numerous. In each position, agents may increase their political capital thanks to the exploitation of a same species or may accumulate different species, defying the taxonomy of types of agent.

In order to analyze all these possibilities, particularly when individual data is available for large universes of agents and over several elections, measurement tools are required to take into account both the distribution of the different species of capital at different moments of time and the diachronically observed capitalistic structure of the political field. A first way of achieving this is to measure the percentage variation of each species of political capital in a particular arena (for example, the government or a house of the legislature) between two different points in time (for example, two elections). In order to do this, it is necessary to specify what is understood by each species of capital as precisely as possible (table 3):

**Table 3.- Typification of species and subspecies of capital according to types of answers to survey questions<sup>19</sup>**

Species of Capital		Questions
<b>Family</b>		<b>1)</b> Party membership of father and mother. <b>2)</b> Political sympathies of father and mother defined as left/right. <b>3)</b> “Did your father or mother hold any of the following positions (posts) during their lives?” <b>4)</b> “Did any of your grandparents hold important public or private posts?” <b>5)</b> “Did your father-in-law or mother-in-law hold important public or private posts?” <sup>i</sup>
<b>University</b>		<b>1)</b> Party membership (whether in force or not at the time of the interview). <b>2)</b> Has held one or more positions of leadership in a student organization.
<b>Political</b>	<b>Subspecies: militant</b>	<b>1)</b> Party membership (whether in force or not at the time of the interview). <b>2)</b> Has held one or more positions of party leadership at <i>local</i> or <i>regional</i> level (only).
	<b>Subspecies:</b>	<b>1)</b> Party membership (whether in force or not at the

<sup>19</sup> Charismatic and notoriety capital are not included because they cannot be tracked using survey questions.

	<b>oligarchic</b>	time of the interview). 2) Has held one or more positions of party leadership at <i>national</i> level.
<b>Technocratic</b>	<b>Subspecies: pragmatic</b>	1) Without party membership. 2) Answers that appointment and/or election was result of “previous professional trajectory”. 3) Holds master’s degree or PhD.
	<b>Subspecies: political</b>	1) Party membership (whether in force or not at the time of the interview). 2) Belonged to a research center or think tank before first appointment or election. 3) Holds master’s degree or PhD.
<b>Technopolitical</b>		1) Party membership (whether in force or not at the time of the interview). 2) Has held unipersonal posts at national level in the party (president, vice-president or secretary general) or in the organization’s most important collective body. 3) Holds master’s degree or PhD in economics, political science or sociology (or, otherwise, has numerous publications in one or several of these disciplines).

Table 3 shows only one example of ways of researching species of political capital, in this case using survey questions. The information required can also be found in open sources, ranging from the official biographies of ministers and lower house representatives (with their hagiographic nature as the principal drawback) to necrology in the case of earlier universes as well as journalistic portraits, interviews with authorized biographers, non-authorized biographies and the strategies agents themselves deploy to promote themselves (Goffman, 1973) in different contexts, etc. The key lies in the definition of each species, not because this fully reflects what each resource really is but because the methodological definition of capital permits analysis of its uses, agents' careers and the different forms that the structure of the political field can take.

This can be illustrated by the case of family political capital when this is invested at the time when the central political field takes on the configuration of a market of elected positions. This is the time when it is possible to observe not only the investment of different species of capital (in this case, family capital) but also its effects in terms of possible market concentration. Two strategies of analysis can be adopted to examine the importance of investments of family political capital - the study of a single day on which one or more elections took place so as to determine synchronically how many candidates with family ties competed and were elected and, on the other hand, the study of several elections, ideally identifying the year of creation of dynasties and investment of different species of capital which, as from the subsequent election, may diachronically be transformed into family political capital through the candidacy of heirs. For the purposes of this article, I opted for the first strategy, taking Chile as a case study.

I operationally define family political capital as a candidate's possession of at least one family tie to an agent who holds a position of political power at the national

level (as president, minister or undersecretary) or an elected position (senator, lower house representative, mayor, municipal or regional councilor) or held such a position between 1990 and 2013 (in other words, during the transition to democracy after the Pinochet dictatorship and the consolidation of the new regime). When two family ties are present as, for example, between a father who is or was a member of the lower house and a son who is a mayor, I will refer to this as a dynasty on the assumption that the relationship (by blood or marriage) entails advantages for the person who inherits it or receives it as a transfer, particularly when the electoral districts coincide.

**Table 4. Number of candidates and seats by type of election in Chile in 2013**

Position	Seats	Candidates
President	1	9
Senator	20	67
Lower house representative	120	470
Regional councilor	278	1.382
TOTAL	419	1.928

Source: Author's calculations based on National Electoral Service (SERVEL).

For the purposes of analysis, I will work only with the elections for senators, lower house representatives and regional councilors that took place in Chile in 2013 in which there were a total of 1,919 candidates. As can be seen in table 4, there were an average of just over three candidates for each senate seat, almost four for lower house seats and just under five for seats on regional councils. This could theoretically be explained by the respective cost of each election, with a positive correlation between this and the seat's hierarchy. I will omit here details of the search strategy for biographic information<sup>20</sup>.

In November 2013, four types of election took place simultaneously in Chile - presidential, senate (half the seats<sup>21</sup>), lower house<sup>22</sup> and for 278 regional councilors (elected for the first time by universal suffrage on a provincial basis, “biting into” senate, lower house and municipal districts in varying proportions) and a total of 1,928 candidates competed. In these elections, family political capital was one of the species often invested and this affected the field's monopolistic structure. In order to analyze this, we use the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI), a statistical measure of concentration (Rhoades, 1993) whose principal use in the case of political markets is to provide information about possible monopolies between two or more elections. The HHI has a controversial intellectual history due to an early dispute about its paternity which resulted in a very short and little known article by Hirschman (1964). In this article, the author of *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* recalled the reasons for the controversy due to the popularity of the Gini index and the existence of a very similar concentration index whose authorship was attributed to Herfindahl, concluding that “well, it's a cruel world” (Hirschman, 1964, p.761). Beyond this controversy, however, the uniqueness of this index, whose paternity was finally shared, lies in its inclusion of the relative size of a firm or company in the control of a variable fraction of the market and it is interesting

<sup>20</sup> This is set out in detail in Joignant (2014).

<sup>21</sup> Half of Senate seats come up for election each four years, with senators sitting for eight years, with no limit on re-election. In 2013, 20 senators were elected out of a total of 38 seats.

<sup>22</sup> All of the 120 lower house seats came up for election. As in the case of the senate, seats are for binominal districts (M=2) in which a party or list of candidates needs to double the vote of the next party or list in order to take both seats.

because it permits representation of a more or less concentrated market at two different points in time. In this article, I do not compare the same market of elected positions between two different elections and, instead, use the index to compare it at the time when candidates invest their family political capital in a campaign and the hypothetically concentrated result (measured as the number of candidates with family political capital who are elected).

This implies that the HHI for 2013 at the level of candidates (understood in this case as expressions of the offer of political goods to voters who may eventually be interested in them) is merely by way of a snapshot representation of the control exercised by possible political dynasties over a market (in this case, a house of the legislature which they are seeking to access) at a specific point in time. The index takes a maximum value of 10,000 when a monopoly situation implies that a single company or firm controls 100% of the market or, in other words,  $HHI = (100)^2 = 10,000$ . The perfect opposite of this monopoly would be a fragmented market where 100 companies each have a 1% share or  $HHI = (1_1)^2 + (1_2)^2 \dots (1_{100})^2 = 100$ . Table 5 shows the aggregate family distribution of candidates in two markets (the senate and the lower house) by party.

**Table 5. HHI for senate and lower house *candidates* with family political capital, by party**

	Total senate candidate s	Senate (candidates with family political capital) (N=17)	HHI (for total senate candidate s)	Total lower house candidates	Lower house (candidates with family political capital)	HHI (for total lower house candidates)
UDI	8	4		56	13	
RN	7	3		50	16	
PS	6	1		24	7	
PRSD	-	-		12	2	
PRO	-	-		51	-	
PRI	-	-		26	2	
PPD	3	1		25	9	
PDC	7	5		38	9	
PC	1	-		8	-	
PL	-	-		2	-	
PI	3	-		19	2	
PH	9	-		67	7	
MAS	1	-		1	-	
ECOV	1	-		5	-	
Indep. not in a list	6	1		17	3	
Indep. in a list	15	2		69	4	
Totals	67	17	643,64	470	74	248,06

Source: Author's calculations.

As shown in table 5, family concentration is low in both markets of candidates, despite striking examples of concentration of family political capital in the same district and the same election<sup>23</sup>. Although family concentration is almost three times higher in the senate than in the lower house, the ranges involved are very low.

The situation in these same markets is, however, diametrically different in the case of the election outcomes. As shown in table 6, in contrast to the low concentration seen in the market of candidates, we find that the HHI for elected senators with family political capital reaches 3,025 and, in the case of the lower house, 1,110. The ratio of almost 3:1 seen in the cases of candidates to the senate and the lower house is unchanged. However, the difference between the two points of time is striking in both markets. In the case of the senate, there is an almost fivefold increase in concentration between the offer of candidates and the election outcome and of a little over fourfold in the lower house. This increase occurs because there are less party brands in the market of elected senators and lower house representatives than in the market of candidates, implying that the most efficient way to invest family political capital is to do so with the backing of an established party. This, in turn, explains the relatively high concentrations of this family resource in these parties (although in differing proportions).

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<sup>23</sup> As, for example, in a senate constituency where the sitting senator (E.Tuma, PPD) promoted the candidacies in two lower house districts within his own constituency of two of his brothers (also from the same center-left party), one of whom was elected.

**Table 6. HHI for *elected* senators and lower house representatives with family political capital, by party**

	Elected senators	Elected senators with family political capital (N=11)	HHI (for total elected senators)	Elected lower house representatives	Elected lower house representatives with family political capital)	HHI (for total elected lower house representatives)
UDI	5	3		29	8	
RN	2	2		19	7	
PS	4	1		15	7	
PRSD	-	-		6	1	
PRO	-	-		-	-	
PRI	-	-		-	-	
PPD	3	1		15	7	
PDC	2	2		21	7	
PC	-	-		6	-	
PL	-	-		1	-	
PI	-	-		-	-	
PH	-	-		-	-	
MAS	1			-		
Indep. not in a list	1	1		3	1	
Indep. in a list	2	1		5	2	
Totals	20	11	3.025	120	40	1.110,89

If, therefore, the investment of family political capital increases an individual's chances of being elected, the effects on concentration in the markets of elected posts can be significant in terms of outcomes. The differences in outcomes between the senate and the lower house cannot be explained only by their relative size of the two houses, with a nominally smaller group of senators who have invested family political capital having a relatively larger impact on concentration. This demographic explanation, albeit real, does not suffice. Behind it and at a much deeper level, there is an aristocratic tradition of social origin and political moderation in the Chilean senate (Altamirano, 2015), which is reflected in family decisions about candidacies which involve the transfer not only of the resource but also of an ideal of distinction and an inherited feeling of a calling to represent voters and interests. Of course, in order for this to occur, it is not necessary for decisions about candidacies to have their root in deliberate plans and strategies. All that is required are family political ties which, through socialization processes, trigger an interest in politics and what the literature classically refers to as “ambition”, a feeling explained not only by political factors and whose mere existence does not explain its consequences.

This is only one possible case of analysis of a species of capital, examined at the static times when candidates are presented and the results become known in two markets of elected positions. The great efficiency of the investment of family capital is no trivial matter and should, in any case, be analyzed in the light of possible combinations with other species of capital at the level of candidates and elected agents. The challenge is to analyze the evolution of different species of capital over the long life of the political field, distinguishing between monopolistic capitalistic structures and others that are more diversified and always imply a genesis about which, in the end, we know little.

## **Conclusion**

This article was written to clarify the notion of political capital. For this purpose, it draws on a large part of Bourdieu's program of research on the political field and the capital which permits access to it, both agreeing and disagreeing on what is meant by investing and competing in the field and its market configuration at election times. We distinguish between different species of capital, which are not infinite in number (if they were, the notion of capital would lose meaning and its power to explain), at least according to the comparative literature on political elites in five countries. By including other countries, it would perhaps be possible to identify other species on condition that they are sufficiently recognizable and recognized by the agents who inhabit the field or aspire to do so.

It is important to remember that investments of capital in the political field involve not only economic acts and rationalities. These certainly exist but they may be accompanied by agents' investment of social value, implying not only different appropriations of the field, different trajectories and different career paths but also probable coalitions between agents who are political rivals but socially allied because of the capital they possess or the elective affinities that united them. In this sense, what this article describes is a research program that takes seriously the topography of the political field in terms of arenas and markets whose internal architecture is shaped by posts and positions to which access does not depend only on the wish to do so. Belying the saying that "to want is to be able", the real question is about the social conditions in which individual will can result in obtaining power.

Finally, depending on the frequency with which the different species of political capital are invested, the political field will have a certain monopolistic structure which we have termed capitalistic. A full explanation of the field's capitalistic structure should take into account its long history, ideally identifying a moment at which it was formed (for example, in the transition to democracy after the fall or defeat of a dictatorship) or, at least, a point of inflection that is powerful enough to permit understanding of the logic of the field's creation through the investment of political capital.

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