Dynastic Capital and the Inheritance of Social Advantage

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Abstract

We use population-wide Norwegian administrative data to construct a multidimensional measure of dynastic social capital—elite education, occupational prestige, organizational and corporate leadership, and residence in social capital dense neighborhoods—to examine how it is transmitted across generations. Social capital is highly persistent across generations and strongly predicts children's long-run income and access to elite positions, even conditional on parental income, wealth, education, and cognitive ability. Horse-race regressions show that inherited social capital is quantitatively as important as parental income and cognitive ability in shaping children's outcomes. Moreover, the influence of social capital grows over the life cycle, and reaching the very top of the income distribution typically requires both high inherited income and high inherited social capital. Accounting for social capital also meaningfully alters conventional estimates of income-based mobility, indicating that part of what is typically attributed to inherited income reflects the transmission of social position. Quasi-experimental evidence from adoption placements and parental lottery wins shows that these patterns reflect environmental transmission rather than genetic inheritance or direct income effects.

Keywords: Social capital; Intergenerational mobility; Inequality; Elite positions
JEL Codes: J1, J2, J6

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1 Introduction

Economic advantage remains strikingly persistent across generations, even in societies that invest heavily in education and redistribution. This raises important questions about which family attributes shape children's long-run opportunities. A large literature documents strong and enduring parent–child correlations in earnings, wealth, and educational attainment (Solon, 1992; Charles and Hurst, 2003; Black and Devereux, 2011; Björklund and Jäntti, 2012; Karlson and Landersø, 2025; Ahrsjö et al., 2025).[1] Much of this evidence is interpreted as reflecting the transmission of parental resources and human capital through income, education, and investments in children(Becker and Tomes, 1979; Black et al., 2005; Lefgren et al., 2012; Sikhova, 2023; Daysal et al., 2023). Yet the magnitude and durability of intergenerational persistence indicate that these observable factors capture only part of the mechanisms through which advantage is transmitted.

These patterns point to the presence of broader, harder-to-observe family advantages, beyond standard economic inputs, that operate through other mechanisms. Two strands of evidence are consistent with this interpretation. First, observed parental characteristics, such as resources and educational attainment, explain only a limited share of intergenerational persistence, and evidence from adoption studies suggests that the home environment is at least as important as genetic inheritance (Fagereng et al., 2021; Björklund et al., 2006). Second, studies that extend measurement beyond parents to include siblings and other family members find substantially higher persistence in economic outcomes, indicating that shared family influences are broader than what is captured by observed parental characteristics (Lindahl et al., 2015; Adermon et al., 2021; Collado et al., 2023).[2] Together, this evidence indicates that a substantial share of intergenerational persistence may reflect inherited family advantages beyond standard economic measures.

A natural candidate for such advantages is social position. Research on social and cultural capital emphasizes that families transmit advantage through durable social positions—access to networks, institutions, and high-status environments that shape opportunities beyond financial resources (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988). Consistent with this view, empirical work on neighborhoods, peer groups, and social connectedness document substantial environmental influences on long-run outcomes (Chetty et al., 2016; Chetty and Hendren, 2018; Chetty et al., 2022a). Complementary evidence shows that labor market networks shape hiring, sorting, and wage-setting, highlighting the role of social connections in allocating opportunities (Hensvik and Nordström Skans, 2016; Barwick et al., 2023). Research on elite formation further shows that access to selective universities and high-status occupations has large effects on long-run

[1] See Mogstad and Torsvik (2023) for a recent review of the literature on the intergenerational transmission of income.

[2] Clark (2015) also shows that intergenerational persistence of advantage based on surnames is high and is similar across countries and time periods.

outcomes (Anelli, 2020), while a separate literature shows that access to these positions is strongly dynastic across institutional contexts (Torche, 2011; Zimmerman, 2019; Cattan et al., 2023; Benveniste, 2024). Yet these social and institutional dimensions of advantage are difficult to measure systematically, limiting our ability to assess how strongly they persist across generations and how important they are relative to income, education, and ability (Nybom et al., 2026).

This paper introduces the first population-wide measure of dynastic social capital and examines both how it is transmitted across generations and how it shapes children's long-run outcomes. The term social capital has been used in different ways in the literature; here, we define it as families' social position within society—their embeddedness in high-status institutions, organizations, firms, and neighborhoods that determine access to opportunities beyond financial resources or cognitive ability. We isolate and quantify well-defined components of this broader concept using administrative data, constructing a population-wide measure of social capital grounded in observable institutional positions. While not exhaustive, these components capture dimensions of social position that can be measured consistently at the population level. The index captures educational, occupational, corporate, organizational, and residential status for both parents and children, reflecting durable access to selective institutions, influential networks, and elite social environments. We then quantify how this form of social capital shapes children's long-run economic and social outcomes, over and above parental income, education, and cognitive ability. Finally, by combining administrative data with adoption placements and lottery-induced income shocks, we provide evidence that distinguishes the roles of environmental transmission, financial resources, and genetic inheritance in shaping these intergenerational patterns.

Understanding the social dimension of advantage is important for several reasons. First, many of the pathways through which opportunity is created, such as referrals, mentorship, institutional access, and visibility to influential gatekeepers, operate through social structures rather than financial resources. If these forms of social capital are a function of parental advantage (independent of income), they may help explain why intergenerational persistence remains strong even in contexts with relatively equal access to education and low income inequality. Second, differences in social position may shape access to elite educational and career trajectories that disproportionately generate top incomes, amplifying inequality at the upper tail. Third, because social capital cannot be directly taxed, transferred, or offset through standard redistribution levers, its transmission may be less responsive to traditional policy instruments than the transmission of income or wealth.

The first step in our analysis is to construct a measure of dynastic social capital that can be observed consistently for the entire population and linked across multiple generations. We develop this measure using six indicators for exposure to high-status educational, occupational, organizational, corporate, and neighborhood environments that are present in the adminis-

trative data. Each component marks entry into a domain where individuals are exposed to selective institutions, influential peer groups, and organizational environments that provides them with greater access to information, networks, and opportunities than is typical in the broader population.

The educational elite component identifies individuals who complete Norway's most selective college programs; the occupational elite component identifies those working in the highest-earning professions; the organizational elite component captures individuals in senior occupational roles at the top of the national job hierarchy; the corporate elite component identifies those holding C-suite or board positions within Norway's most profitable firms; the elite-positions-in-top-firms component records individuals who reach high-earning internal positions in these top firms; and the elite neighborhoods component reflects residence in areas with a high concentration of individuals holding these elite educational, occupational, and firm-based positions.[3] These six domains differ in structure and in the pathways through which individuals enter them, and they overlap only modestly. While these components do not span all dimensions of social capital, they capture observable and institutionally grounded aspects that can be measured consistently at the population level.

To construct these measures and examine both the intergenerational transmission of social capital and its consequences for children's long-run outcomes, we leverage Norwegian administrative data linking parents and children over several decades. These data allow us to follow children from birth into their early-40s and to observe their parents across the entirety of their working lives, providing rare life-cycle coverage of income, education, occupations, firm roles, residential histories, and cognitive test scores (from military entrance exams). These registers also include complete records on parental lottery winnings from the early 1990s and nationwide adoption data, which together supply the quasi-experimental variation used in our mechanism analysis.

The main takeaway of this paper is that dynastic social capital is an important dimension of inherited advantage that exhibits substantial independent variation from parental income, wealth, cognitive ability, and education. Social capital is transmitted across generations, predicts children's long-run income and placement into elite positions conditional on income and ability, and meaningfully alters standard estimates of income-based mobility when incorporated into intergenerational regressions. Its association with children's outcomes strengthens over the life cycle and is particularly pronounced in the upper tail of the income distribution. These patterns are reinforced by evidence from adoption placements and parental lottery wins, which provide quasi-experimental variation that helps distinguish environmental transmission from genetic inheritance and financial resources. We substantiate this core finding through six sets of results.

First, social capital is strongly persistent across generations. Children of high social capital

[3]See Section 3 for a full description of our social capital measures.

parents are far more likely to occupy similarly high status positions as adults. The intergenerational rank–rank correlation is 0.22 and remains large even after conditioning on parental income rank, parental cognitive rank (measured through mandatory military entrance exams), and demographics. These results show that dynastic social capital captures an inherited dimension of advantage distinct from conventional family background measures.

Second, parental social capital is a strong predictor of children's long-run economic success: a one-percentile increase in parental social capital is associated with a 0.14-percentile increase in children's income rank in their mid-30s. Conditioning on parental income rank, cognitive rank, and demographics reduces this coefficient to 0.08, but the relationship remains economically and statistically significant.

Third, horse-race regressions show that parental income, cognitive ability, and social capital are all quantitatively important and are of comparable magnitude but capture different dimensions of advantage. When included simultaneously, a one-percentile increase in parental income is associated with about a 0.10-percentile increase in children's income rank, compared with roughly 0.10 for parental cognitive ability and 0.08 for parental social capital. In addition, including social capital reduces the conventional income rank–rank coefficient by more than 20 percent, indicating that part of what is typically attributed to inherited income reflects correlated social position rather than financial resources alone.

Fourth, inherited advantages widen over the life cycle. Using complete income histories from ages 18 to 40, we show that while children from high–social capital families begin their careers in similar positions as their peers, their income trajectories diverge steadily from the mid-20s onward. Examining an extended career window therefore is essential for understanding how intergenerational differences emerge and accumulate over time.

Fifth, social and financial capital jointly shape children's outcomes. Each dimension matters independently, however neither is a strong predictor on its own of reaching the very top. Individuals who inherit only income or only social capital fare markedly better than those who inherit neither, but the group endowed with both advantages pulls away early and continues to widen the gap over time. Indeed, the roles of social capital and income appear to be additive and thus act as substitutes for one another in the production of long-run outcomes. One implication of this finding is that those from both high income and social capital households effectively have a double advantage.

Finally, we assess whether the intergenerational associations we document reflect environmental transmission rather than inherited traits or the causal effect of financial resources. A natural concern is that the social capital measures we employ may themselves be generated by parental resources or inherited genetic factors. We address this using two complementary sources of quasi-experimental variation.

We first exploit parental lottery wins, comparing children whose parents won large versus small prizes among lottery participants. Despite generating substantial, exogenous increases in

parental income—equivalent to more than 1.5 times the average annual income of individuals in our sample—large wins have no meaningful effect on children's long-run income or social capital ranks, nor do they alter the rank–rank correlations we estimate. This indicates that financial resources are not the primary mechanism behind the intergenerational associations we identify.

We then examine adoptees, who share no genetic material with their adoptive parents. In this setting, any association between adoptive-parent characteristics and children's adult outcomes reflects environmental transmission. The associations between adoptive-parent income, adoptive-parent social capital, and adoptees' long-run income is similar in magnitude to those in the biological sample, despite the smaller sample size. Together, these findings suggest that persistence operates primarily through the social environments families create rather than through genetic inheritance or direct financial inputs.

Our findings have important implications for how to structure policies to support higher intergenerational mobility. Policies aimed at equalizing opportunity operate at different stages—before individuals enter the labor market, within the labor market, and through taxes and transfers after they have entered the market. Across each of these margins, it is not clear how, or to what extent, the transmission of social capital can be directly influenced. Social capital, unlike income or wealth, is not directly redistributed through post-market policies and does not appear to be affected by large financial shocks. To the extent that it reflects access to early-life environments, institutions, and networks, it also is difficult to influence through standard pre- and within-market interventions. More broadly, inherited social position operates through durable aspects of family environments that are hard to move with conventional policy tools. The point is not necessarily that such interventions are desirable, but rather that inherited social position operates through channels that lie outside the reach of standard redistribution tools. This helps clarify why mobility remains limited even in settings with compressed income distributions and substantial public investment (Clark, 2015) and underscores the importance of understanding the institutional and social environments through which families transmit advantage.

We make several contributions to the literature. First, a large and longstanding body of work documents substantial persistence in socioeconomic status across generations (e.g., Behrman and Taubman, 1976; Solon, 1992; Charles and Hurst, 2003; Black et al., 2005; Black and Devereux, 2011; Björklund and Jäntti, 2012; Lindahl et al., 2015; Ahrsjö et al., 2025). This work traditionally has focused on income-based measures of mobility and on the roles of education and human capital in driving parent–child correlations (Becker and Tomes, 1979; Black et al., 2005; Lefgren et al., 2012). Early contributions highlight the joint transmission of income and wealth (Behrman and Taubman, 1976), while more recent work decomposes the roles of cognitive skills, education, and parental investments (Lefgren et al., 2012; Sikhova, 2023). Schools play only a limited role in mediating income persistence, with job networks and local labor and marriage markets explaining more of the intergenerational correlation than

the education system itself (Rothstein, 2019). Complementing this evidence, recent research emphasizes the importance of lifetime resources—rather than snapshot measures of income—in predicting mobility and family influence (Eshaghnia et al., 2022). Much less is known about the social and relational channels through which advantage is transmitted. By developing new population-wide measures of social capital and showing how they relate to canonical income and education-based measures, we extend this literature by incorporating forms of inherited advantage that are both empirically relevant and that existing data rarely capture. An important contribution of the paper is to show that well-defined components of these broader channels can be isolated and quantified using administrative data, allowing for systematic measurement at the population level.

Second, we contribute to research on networks, social context, and the foundations of opportunity (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Chetty and Hendren, 2018; Chetty et al., 2022a, 2016; Rothstein, 2019; Eshaghnia et al., 2022). Existing work shows that friendships, neighborhoods, and institutional environments matter for mobility. These papers typically examine single dimensions of social context in isolation, often within a single generation, and rarely across the lifecycle of children. None of this research measures social capital as a broad, inherited bundle of institutional affiliations, occupational status, elite positions, and neighborhood embedding. The closest paper to ours is Chetty et al. (2022b), which uses Facebook data to measure social capital at the county level. They show that areas with higher levels of cross-SES friendships generate higher mobility rates. Our paper differs from theirs in several ways. We employ a different definition of social capital that is focused on the social advantage of parents rather than the extent of connectedness within a local area. Despite using a similar term, our measures capture very different aspects of social structures. Chetty et al. (2022b) relate the extent of cross-SES friendships within an area to the amount of intergenerational income transmission in that area. In contrast, we construct a multidimensional measure of social capital at population scale and trace it across a large share of the working life for both parents and children. This allows us to study how social position is accumulated, when it begins to matter, and how it determines outcomes from adolescence into mid-adulthood.

Third, we contribute to the literature on elite formation, institutional access, and dynastic persistence (e.g., Torche, 2011; Zimmerman, 2019; Cattan et al., 2023; Benveniste, 2024; Barrios Fernández et al., 2024; Ellersgaard, 2024). This work shows that access to top schools, high-status occupations, and leadership positions is far from random. Elite universities play a particularly important role in the transmission of both human and social capital (Barrios Fernández et al., 2024), and sociological evidence highlights the mechanisms through which elites reproduce their advantage—family ties, legitimation through prestigious educational institutions, and the accumulation of organizational networks (Ellersgaard, 2024). By constructing population-level measures of social capital and linking them across generations, we show how different components of social capital (education, occupational networks, firm leadership, and neighborhood

embedding) contribute to dynastic persistence. Because we observe income, education, cognitive ability, and life-cycle trajectories, we can run direct horse-races between social, financial, and human capital and quantify which forms of inherited advantage matter most for accessing elite positions.

Finally, we contribute to causal research on how family environments shape children's outcomes, including work using adoption and quasi-experimental income shocks (e.g., Björklund et al., 2006; Björklund and Jäntti, 2012; Chetty et al., 2016; Fagereng et al., 2021; Eshaghnia et al., 2022). This literature has been central to distinguishing nature from nurture and for assessing the role of financial resources (Rothstein, 2019; Sikhova, 2023). Far less is known about whether, and how, social capital itself is transmitted. By combining adoption data with quasi-experimental income shocks, we provide new evidence on the environmental transmission of non-financial forms of advantage.

2 Institutional Background

Our analysis is set in Norway, a high-income welfare state with institutions that substantially compress economic inequality and equalize access to public services. In this section, we provide an overview of labor market institutions, education, and early-life environments in Norway, which provide an important backdrop to our analysis of intergenerational transmission of social capital.

Labor market institutions. Norway combines high unionization — over roughly 65% of workers are unionized or covered by collective bargaining — with a compressed wage structure and generous social protection. Unemployment and disability insurance replace a large share of prior income, and benefits are income-contingent, offering stable fallback outside employment. The tax and transfer system is strongly redistributive, further narrowing disposable income differences across families. As a result, income inequality is relatively low: the national Gini coefficient for disposable household income is around 0.25, compared to about 0.41 in the United States. Even in this setting, where financial resource differences are heavily compressed, prior research still finds a noticeable degree of intergenerational persistence. Estimates for Norway and other Nordic countries typically place the parent–child income rank–rank correlation at roughly 0.20 (e.g., Nilsen et al., 2012; Ahrsjö et al., 2025). However, this correlation is substantially lower than the 0.30–0.35 correlations typically reported for the United States (e.g., Solon, 1992; Chetty et al., 2016; Chetty and Hendren, 2018).

Education and early-life environment. Education in Norway is publicly funded from primary school through university, and admission to upper-secondary and higher education is determined almost entirely by academic performance (GPA). Private schooling is uncommon (less than 1 percent of students attend private school), and the market for private tutoring is very limited. Variation in school quality is modest by international standards: public schools

are funded through national grants rather than through local property taxes to ensure equal opportunities for children across all geographic regions, and students typically attend the school closest to them. Childcare is universally available from age one at heavily subsidized prices, with enrollment rates over 80 percent at age one and more than 95 percent by age two. Although overall tertiary attainment is similar to other high-income countries, the combination of public financing, limited private alternatives, and standardized admissions substantially equalizes access to educational opportunities. As a result, parental financial resources create relatively small differences in children's early-life environments compared to many other countries.

Implications for studying social capital. Because Norway substantially equalizes many determinants of opportunity through universal childcare, fully subsidized education, compressed wages, and generous income insurance, the scope for inherited social capital to generate inequality is more limited than in most other high-income countries. In settings with larger differences in school quality, neighborhood resources, private education spending, or uninsured economic shocks, social capital is likely to play an even greater role. Therefore, the patterns we document should be interpreted as conservative estimates of the importance of inherited social capital.

3 Data

3.1 Population Registers and Intergenerational Linkages

Our analysis uses Norway's population-wide administrative registers, which cover the entire resident population and can be linked across generations through permanent personal identifiers. These identifiers allow us to connect children to their biological parents, adoptive parents, grandparents, and siblings. The data provide complete coverage of individuals' demographic characteristics, educational histories, income, occupations, and residential locations over multiple decades.

The registers we use include the population register, which provides complete family linkages and demographic information; the national education registers, which record all completed degrees and fields of study; the income and tax registers, which contain annual earnings and tax-relevant income from 1967 onward (including wealth); the employer–employee register, which documents firm affiliations and detailed occupational codes; the firm accounting and enterprise registers, which provide firm-level financial information; and the board and corporate role registers, which record executive and board positions. We also use the national conscription registry, which provides cognitive test scores for men at age 19, and the national address register, which records residential histories at fine geographic resolution. In addition, we use complete records of major lottery prizes and nationwide adoption data. Together, these sources create a comprehensive multi-generational panel with rich information on family background, human capital, labor-market outcomes, wealth, firm roles, and social environments.

3.2 Sample Construction

Our main intergenerational estimates rely on parental and child outcomes measured at age 35, an age at which lifecycle bias in income is minimized (Haider and Solon, 2006; Böhlmark and Lindquist, 2006). We use paternal ranks for all parental characteristics in our baseline specifications. We focus on ranks because of the need to standardize the measurement of variables with fundamentally different scales (test scores, income, social capital) in order to compare effects of these different domains of parental advantage on child outcomes. We specifically use paternal ranks because the cognitive test scores from Norway's mandatory military conscription are observed only for men. Importantly, our results for income- and social capital-based intergenerational transmission are robust to instead using maternal ranks or the maximum rank across parents (see Online Appendix Tables A.1 and A.2).

In addition to these age-35 benchmarks, the richness of our data enables us to track children's income, occupations, and institutional positions annually from ages 18 to 40, allowing us to examine how intergenerational advantages evolve across most of the working career.[4]

Our analysis focuses on cohorts for which adult outcomes can be consistently observed across generations: children born before 1988 and fathers born between 1950 and 1970. This ensures that children are observed at age 35, when adult income and social-capital positions have materialized, and that fathers are no older than 53 at the beginning of the period with detailed occupational, firm, and residential data, allowing reliable measurement of their social capital. Table A.4 provides descriptive statistics on our core analysis sample. Appendix Table A.5 documents how each restriction affects sample size and composition.

In addition to the main parent–child sample, we construct two auxiliary samples used for the quasi-experimental analyses. The lottery sample links children to parents who experienced a lottery win during the child's upbringing. Using complete records of all Norwegian lottery payouts from 1993 onward, we identify lottery events for parents in our main sample. For each parent, we define "big" and "small" wins using the year-specific distribution of payouts (defined as top vs. bottom quartile). We tag children whose parents experienced a win in either category between the ages of 0 and 19.[5] All other sample restrictions follow the main sample. Table A.7 shows descriptive statistics for our lottery sample.

The adoption sample consists of adoptees linked to their adoptive parents through the Population Register. We apply the same cohort and age-35 measurement rules as in the main sample, ensuring comparable definitions of income, education, and social capital outcomes. Because adoption cohorts are smaller, the resulting analysis sample is correspondingly reduced. These auxiliary samples are used exclusively in the causal analyses presented in Section 7 and

[4] In the robustness section, we show that our findings are robust to altering the age at which these outcomes are measured (Online Appendix Table A.3).

[5] We explore alternative thresholds in Appendix Table A.6 (above and below the mean). The results remain unchanged.

are constructed to mirror the main sample wherever possible. Table A.8 contains descriptive statistics for the adoption sample.

3.3 Outcome Measures and Covariates

Our primary economic outcome is income rank at age 35. We measure total taxable income—wages and self-employment income—from the Income and Tax Registers and convert them into within-year and within-cohort percentile ranks; individuals with identical income receive the average rank. Total taxable income includes wages, self-employment income, and taxable transfers linked to the labor market status of the worker (parental leave benefits, unemployment insurance, sick leave support, and disability insurance). Because very low income may reflect limited labor-market activity within the year rather than underlying income levels, our baseline analyses restrict attention to individuals with income above one Grunnbeløp (1G).[6] While this is a common assumption in projects using Norwegian income data (e.g., Mogstad et al., 2025; Salvanes et al., 2024), we also show results for the full unconditional sample in the Appendix (Table A.9). Results and conclusions are robust to using this larger sample. In addition to these age-35 measures, we track annual income from ages 18 to 40 to document how intergenerational differences unfold across the life cycle. To study distributional differences, we define indicators for being in the top 10th or 5th percentile of the cohort income distribution.

We use information on schooling, cognitive ability, net wealth, neighborhood environments, and detailed labor-market placement (occupations, industries, and firm roles) in order to investigate the channels through which social capital generates income gains. These measures allow us to test whether social capital works by improving access to education, sorting individuals into better jobs and firms, or by impacting the residential and institutional environments people encounter.

3.4 Social Capital Measure

We measure social capital using six administrative proxies that capture observable aspects of individuals' educational, occupational, organizational, corporate, and residential histories. These proxies do not aim to represent the full set of attributes sometimes associated with the term "social capital." Instead, they summarize the dimensions of social position that can be consistently and reliably measured in nationwide administrative registers. Each proxy is defined uniformly over time and is observed annually for all individuals. We discuss each in turn below.

Educational elite is defined as completion of highly selective graduate degrees that constitute the main professional entry credentials in economics, business, law, medicine, and STEM fields in Norway. These programs tend to be concentrated in a small number of institutions

[6]The *Grunnbeløp* (G) is the base amount used to set benefit levels and thresholds in Norway's social insurance system; 1G is roughly NOK 90,000–110,000 in our sample period ($9,000 - 11,000).

and fields that historically funnel graduates into influential professional, corporate, and public-sector roles as well as provide exposure to high-achieving peer groups and professional networks. Following Bütikofer et al. (2018), these programs are identified using field-of-study codes in the national education register, and individuals are classified as educational elite upon completion of one of these degrees.[7]

Occupational elite captures employment in the segment of the occupational structure that consistently commands the highest income in the Norwegian labor market. These occupations typically require substantial formal training, specialized skills, and entry into professional environments—such as law, finance, engineering, medicine, and advanced technical fields—where access is restricted and where workers are more likely to interact with other high-status professionals. To construct the measure, we use annual seven-digit occupation codes and calculate the national median income for each occupation in each year. We then rank occupations within year, and individuals are classified as occupational elite in any year in which they work in an occupation whose national median income fall in the top decile of that distribution.

Organizational elite (executive roles) captures individuals classified in the occupational system as holding organization-wide managerial or administrative authority. These roles place individuals in settings where professional networks, information flows, and organizational connections are concentrated at the upper levels of firms and public institutions. For this reason, the proxy reflects a distinct dimension of social capital that is observable in administrative data. We construct this measure using two-digit occupation codes and classify individuals as executives in any year in which their occupation is recorded under ISCO group 11 ("Chief executives, senior officials and legislators").

Corporate elite (C-suite roles) captures individuals who hold formally recorded top-level corporate or governance positions in Norway's largest and most economically significant firms. These positions include chief executive officer, chief financial officer, board membership, and senior managerial appointments as defined in the enterprise registry. Individuals in these roles interact regularly with a small set of other top-level actors inside and outside the firm, creating stable connections within the uppermost segment of the corporate network. For this reason, the proxy represents a separate, observable dimension of social capital. We identify C-suite roles using enterprise-level role codes and classify individuals as holding such a role in

[7]Education is obtained from the National Education Register, which updates individuals' highest completed education twice yearly based on reports from schools and universities to Statistics Norway. Educational attainment is coded according to the Norwegian Standard Classification of Education (NUS2000), closely aligned with ISCED-97. We define elite graduate education as degrees requiring more than four years of study—primarily master's and doctoral programs—as well as graduate and postgraduate subjects within specific fields. Graduate business education includes advanced studies in economics (NUS2000 three-digit code 734) and business and administration (code 741). Graduate law education includes advanced legal studies (code 737). Graduate medical education includes advanced medical studies (code 763). Graduate STEM education includes advanced degrees in natural sciences and vocational and technical subjects (two-digit code 75). We exclude postgraduate coursework and shorter executive-level programs and assign graduation timing based on completion of the main graduate degree.

any year in which they appear as CEO, CFO, board member, or senior manager at a "top firm." Top firms are defined as the 100 highest profit-generating firms in the country.[8]

Elite positions in top firms identifies individuals who belong to the upper tier of roles within Norway's largest and most economically significant companies. Employees in these positions work in the parts of the firm where interaction with senior colleagues, exposure to key internal processes, and access to influential professional networks are more common. This measure therefore reflects a distinct organisational dimension of social capital: proximity to information, opportunity, and high-status professional circles inside major firms. To construct the measure, we use the same set of top 100 firms defined for the C-suite measure. Within each firm and year, we compute the distribution of employee income and classify individuals as holding an elite position when they fall in the top decile of their firm's income distribution. Individuals are coded as having held an elite position in any year in which this condition is met.

Elite neighborhoods captures the residential dimension of social capital. Living in areas where individuals with elite educational, occupational, or organizational backgrounds are concentrated reflects a form of social proximity: exposure to information flows, institutional norms, and networks that tend to circulate in high-status environments. While the administrative data do not contain interactions directly, residence in these neighborhoods provides a measurable location-based proxy for this aspect of social capital. To construct this measure, we assign each individual–year to a tract and, for every tract–year, compute leave-one-out shares of adult residents (ages 30–69) holding each elite proxy (elite education, elite occupation, executive status, C-suite, or elite position in top firms). For each individual–year, we sum the five leave-one-out shares into a single neighborhood elite score.[9] Within each year, we rank individuals by this score and classify those in the top decile as living in an elite neighborhood. To ensure that the measure reflects stable adult residential patterns rather than temporary moves, we record whether parents or children ever lived in such neighborhoods between ages 30 and 69.

Taken together, the six proxies discussed above capture different aspects of individuals' educational, occupational, organizational, and residential histories. They reflect multiple channels through which people become linked to institutions, professional environments, and social settings that may shape long-run opportunities. Table A.4 reports the prevalence of each component in our main analysis sample.

The proxies are only weakly correlated with one another (Table 1). The limited correlations across the six components highlight an important feature of the data: although each proxy captures an elite position within Norwegian educational, occupational, organizational, or residential structures, they overlap only modestly. This indicates that individuals tend to reach

[8] In the Online Appendix, we show that the results are robust to defining top firms based on wage bill rather than profits (Table A.10) and to expanding the definition to the top 500 firms by profit (Table A.11).

[9] An implication of this approach is that an individual who satisfies two distinct proxies contributes twice, and so on.

different kinds of elite positions rather than a single unified pathway and that each component contributes distinct information to the broader construct we aim to measure. Note that our goal is not to measure the full multidimensional structure of social capital directly—something that is not possible with any dataset, much less a population-wide administrative dataset —but rather to construct an empirical proxy based on the observable, institutionally mediated positions that are consistently recorded in the registers. While not exhaustive, our measures contain detailed information on important dimensions of social advantage and families' positions in the upper echelons of different parts of Norwegian society, which are likely strong indicators of underlying social capital. Table 1 provides pairwise correlations across components, illustrating both their differences and the complementary information they provide.

Table 1: Correlations between father social capital proxies

	Elite education	Elite occupation	Executive position	C-suite position	Elite position	Elite tract
Elite education	1.00					
Elite occupation	0.22	1.00				
Executive position	0.05	0.34	1.00			
C-suite position	0.04	0.08	0.07	1.00		
Elite position	0.10	0.21	0.02	0.11	1.00	
Elite tract	0.16	0.13	0.08	0.03	0.05	1.00

Notes: Pairwise correlations between paternal social capital proxies. Elite education indicates attendance at top-ranked higher education institution; Elite occupation indicates employment in an occupation with median income above the 90th percentile; Executive indicates a senior management role; C-suite indicates a top executive positions in a firm ranked among the top 100 by profit; Elite position indicates a leadership positions in a firm ranked among the top 100 by profit; Elite tract indicates residence in a census tract in the top decile of the social capital distribution. All measures reflect the maximum observed value over the observation window (2003-2021). The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Sample size: N = 210,023.

To summarize these six dimensions in a single measure, we construct an inverse-covariance–weighted index ("swindex"; Schwab et al., 2020). This approach assigns higher weight to components that contain more independent variation while downweighting components that overlap more with others, preventing double-counting of closely related domains and yielding a broad, multidimensional measure of social capital. We convert the resulting scores into percentile ranks within birth cohort to ensure comparability across generations, given that the prevalence of elite positions changes over time. Because the underlying positions represent cumulative achievements rather than short-lived states, we measure parental social capital as the maximum observed value of each component through 2023. This treats social capital as a stock that accumulates over the life cycle. The component weights used in constructing the index are reported in Online Appendix Table A.12.

Appendix Table A.13 reports correlations across paternal, maternal, and maximum parent rank measures, as well as correlations between parental income rank, social capital rank, and

cognitive ability rank. These measures are weakly correlated with one another, demonstrating that there is much independent variation between parents in their income and social capital as well as independent variation between parental measures of income and social capital.

4 Empirical Design

Our empirical strategy combines descriptive and quasi-experimental methods to study intergenerational persistence. We begin with a descriptive framework that estimates rank–rank associations between parents and children in income, measured cognitive ability, and social capital. These regressions characterize the degree of persistence in each dimension and provide a common metric for comparing their relative importance.

To help interpret these associations, we incorporate two quasi-experimental designs that provide externally generated variation in parental characteristics. Parental lottery winnings create large, unexpected income shocks that isolate the financial resources channel, while adoption placements allow us to separate environmental influences from genetic inheritance. By combining population-level descriptive evidence with targeted quasi-experimental variation, our approaches allow us to examine both the overall extent of intergenerational persistence and the mechanisms that contribute to it.

4.1 Descriptive Intergenerational Framework

Our descriptive analysis begins by estimating the intergenerational persistence of social capital. We use the standard rank–rank framework and estimate:

$$\text{SCrank}_i^c = \alpha + \beta\, \text{SCrank}_i^p + \varepsilon_i, \tag{1}$$

where SCrank_i^c is the child's percentile rank in her cohort-specific social capital distribution and SCrank_i^p is the father's rank in the same distribution. This baseline specification provides a descriptive measure of the intergenerational association in social capital and follows directly from the mobility literature.

We then examine the extent to which this relationship reflects other parental characteristics by sequentially adding father's income rank and ability rank (measured from mandatory military conscription tests, similar to the AFQT in the US). These horse-race specifications assess whether the persistence of social capital is simply a proxy for inherited financial resources or cognitive ability or whether it captures additional, independent factors. In the robustness section of the paper, we further add father's wealth as well as educational attainment to this specification.

After characterizing the parent–child relationship in social capital, we extend the framework to children's long-run economic outcomes. Specifically, we estimate analogous rank–rank

models where the dependent variable is the child's income rank at age 35 and the explanatory variables include father's social capital rank, income rank, and ability rank. These horse-race specifications both assess whether social capital reflects distinct inherited advantages beyond income and ability and allow us to compare the relative importance of each dimension in explaining children's long-run income.

Our baseline analyses use paternal income rank, social capital, and cognitive rank as measures of family background. This reflects two features of the data and institutional context. First, cognitive ability is observed through mandatory military testing and is therefore available only for men in the cohorts we study. Second, in these cohorts maternal labor-force participation and income were considerably lower than what they are today, making paternal income a closer proxy for overall family economic resources. In the Appendix, we show that the core results are robust to alternatively using maternal income and social capital ranks, as well as the maximum income and social capital ranks across parents.

In addition to income ranks, we examine a broader set of distributional outcomes, including indicators for being in the top decile or top vigintile of the income distribution. These outcomes allow us to assess whether inherited social capital and income matter differently at various points of the distribution and to capture nonlinearities that are not visible in mean-rank associations.

Finally, because the administrative data track individuals annually from adolescence through mid-adulthood, we complement these point-in-time regressions with life-cycle profiles. For groups defined by parental social-capital, income, and ability ranks, we plot average income by age. These nonparametric profiles describe how intergenerational differences emerge and accumulate over the career and help contextualize the age-35 outcomes within the broader life-cycle trajectory. Together, these descriptive analyses provide the foundation for the subsequent quasi-experimental evidence used to interpret the mechanisms behind intergenerational persistence.

4.2 Parental Lottery Shocks

To assess the role of financial resources in generating intergenerational persistence, we exploit exogenous variation in parental income created by large lottery winnings. Norway's national lottery system records the full universe of major prizes from 1993 onward, including the payout amount, the date of the draw, and the identity of the winner. Conditional on participation, the size of the payout is as-good-as-random, which provides a source of external variation in parental income unrelated to underlying parental or child characteristics.

We link lottery winners to their children and restrict attention to parents whose children were below age 19 at the time of the win, ensuring that the shock occurs during the period in which the child lived at home with the parent and can reasonably be assumed to also have been impacted by it. We classify prizes into "large" (top quartile) and "small" (bottom quartile)

based on the year-specific distribution of payouts and compare long-run outcomes of children whose parents won larger versus smaller prizes within the same set of lottery participants.[10]

We estimate regressions of the form

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Rank}_i^c = \alpha + \lambda\, \text{LargeWin}_i^p + \beta_1\, \text{Incomerank}_i^p \\ + \beta_2\, \text{SCrank}_i^p + \beta_3\, \text{Abilityrank}_i^p + X_i^p \delta + \varepsilon_i, \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

where rank_i^c denotes the child's income rank at age 35; LargeWin_i^p indicates whether either of their parents won a large prize; and Incomerank_i^p, SCrank_i^p, and Abilityrank_i^p refer to the father's income rank, social-capital rank, and cognitive-ability rank. The remaining controls, X_i^p, include the standard demographic covariates used throughout the analysis. The coefficient λ captures the effect of a substantial, unanticipated increase in parental income on children's long-run outcomes.

Because the comparison is restricted to lottery participants, the design is not affected by selection into playing. The identifying assumption is that, conditional on participation and lottery-year fixed effects, the size of the prize is independent of unobserved determinants of child outcomes. We view this as reasonable given the mechanical nature of the draw and the lack of information available to participants. While internal validity is not affected by lottery participation, it could affect external validity. We thus replicate our main descriptive rank–rank patterns within this sample to ensure that the results do not rely on a highly selective or materially different subset of observations.

This analysis isolates the financial-resources channel: if parental income operates primarily through monetary investments, a large prize should improve children's long-run outcomes. In practice, we find little evidence of such effects, indicating that financial resources are not the primary mechanism behind the persistence patterns documented in the descriptive analysis.

4.3 Adoption Placements

While the lottery design speaks to the financial-resources channel, it does not distinguish environmental mechanisms from genetic transmission. To address this concern, we draw on nationwide adoption records that link adoptees to both their adoptive parents. Adoptees share no genetic traits with their adoptive parents but are raised in the environments created by them. This allows us to assess the degree to which intergenerational persistence reflects environmental transmission.

We construct a sample of adoptees born before 1988 who were adopted in Norway by age 5. Outcomes for adoptees are measured at age 35, mirroring the definitions used in the main sample. The resulting dataset is smaller than the full population but provides a clean setting

[10] Appendix Table A.6 presents the same analysis using above versus below the median win amount as an alternative cutoff.

for probing environmental mechanisms.

We estimate regressions of the form

$$\text{Rank}_i^c = \alpha + \phi_1 \, \text{SCrank}_i^a + \phi_2 \, \text{Incomerank}_i^a + \phi_3 \, \text{Abilityrank}_i^a + X_i\delta + \varepsilon_i, \tag{3}$$

where rank_i^c is the adoptee's income rank at age 35, and SCrank_i^a, Incomerank_i^a, and Abilityrank_i^a denote the adoptive parent's social-capital rank, income rank, and cognitive-ability rank, respectively. The specification mirrors the structure used in the main sample but replaces biological-parent characteristics with those of the adoptive parents. The coefficients ϕ_1, ϕ_2, and ϕ_3 capture the degree to which adoptive-parent social capital, income, and ability are associated with children's long-run outcomes and therefore provide evidence on environmental transmission.

The intuition behind this approach is straightforward: If the intergenerational associations documented in the population reflect genetic transmission, then adoptive-parent characteristics should have no predictive power for adoptees, as adoptees share no genetic material with their adoptive parents. In contrast, any systematic association between adoptee outcomes and the social-capital rank, income rank, or ability rank of the adoptive parents must reflect environmental transmission. The coefficients ϕ_1, ϕ_2, and ϕ_3 therefore recover the extent to which the intergenerational patterns observed in the descriptive analysis arise through the environments that parents create. Although the adoption sample is substantially smaller, the estimated associations for adoptive parents are similar in magnitude to those obtained in the biological sample, indicating that environmental channels account for most of the persistence we document. This interpretation relies on the assumption that adoption placements are not systematically sorted on unobserved child characteristics correlated with adoptive-parent income, social capital, or ability—a condition made more plausible by Norway's centralized placement system.

The adoption evidence complements the lottery design: the former helps distinguish environmental transmission from genetic inheritance, while the latter isolates the causal role of financial resources. Taken together, these designs clarify the channels behind the intergenerational patterns identified in the descriptive analysis.

5 Results

We organize the results into six parts. We begin by documenting the intergenerational persistence of social capital and assessing the extent to which this persistence reflects other inherited advantages. We then turn to children's economic outcomes, examining whether parental social capital predicts long-run income and how its inclusion alters standard measures of income-based mobility. Next, we use full income histories to study how inherited advantages evolve over the life cycle. We then consider the joint role of social and financial capital, followed by a set of distributional and elite-outcome analyses that highlight nonlinearities and differences across

channels. We also examine the contribution of each component of the social capital index. The section concludes with quasi-experimental evidence from lottery winnings and adoption placements to assess the extent of environmental transmission.

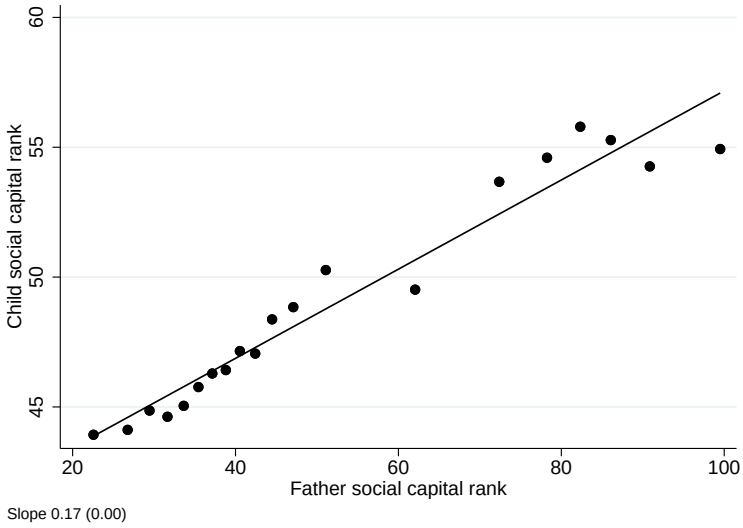
5.1 Intergenerational Persistence of Social Capital

Social capital is strongly inherited. We begin by examining whether social capital is transmitted across generations. Figure 1 plots children's social capital rank against their fathers' social capital rank, conditioning on paternal income rank, cognitive ability, and demographic controls. The relationship is strongly positive and approximately linear across the distribution. The rank–rank slope correlation is 0.17, indicating a substantial degree of persistence. For comparison, intergenerational income rank–rank correlations are typically in the range of 0.20–0.25 in Norway and other Nordic countries, placing social capital only slightly below income in terms of persistence. Unconditionally, without controlling for paternal income rank, demographics, and cognitive rank, the intergenerational social capital rank–rank correlation is 0.22 (Table 2, column 1). This is similar to the intergenerational income-based rank-rank correlation. These patterns imply that children whose parents fall in the top of the social capital distribution are substantially more likely to reach similarly high positions as adults than children from lower-ranked families. The degree of persistence we identify is consistent with the idea that social capital operates as an inherited advantage passed across generations.

Persistence is distinct from other transmission channels. Figure 1 shows that the intergenerational association in social capital remains strong even after conditioning on parental income, cognitive ability, and demographics. Table 2 formalizes and extends this comparison. Column (1) reports the unconditional rank–rank coefficient of 0.22. Columns (2) and (3) document that parental income rank and parental cognitive ability are each positively associated with children's social capital, with coefficients of 0.13 and 0.16, respectively.

Columns (4)–(6) then estimate horse-race specifications that include these dimensions jointly. The coefficient on parental social capital declines from 0.22 to 0.17 but remains large and statistically significant, indicating that a substantial portion of social capital persistence is not explained by income or ability. At the same time, including social capital meaningfully reduces the coefficients on income and cognitive ability (to 0.05 and 0.10, respectively), highlighting its distinct contribution. Controlling for demographic characteristics in column (6) has no impact on the estimates. These results suggest that the forms of positional advantage captured by our index are not well approximated by parental income or cognitive ability and that social capital contributes information about intergenerational status not captured by standard socioeconomic variables.

Figure 1: The intergenerational social capital rank relationship



Notes: Binned scatterplot of child social capital rank against father's social capital rank, controlling for father's income rank (measured at age 35), father's cognitive ability rank, father's partnership status at age 35, father's country of origin, and father's number of children at age 35. Social capital is measured by a weighted index of six proxies capturing access to elite networks: elite education, elite occupation, executive positions, corporate board membership, employment at high-wage firms, and residence in elite neighborhoods. Both child and father social capital ranks are computed within birth-year cohorts. The sample includes children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. The slope coefficient (standard error) from the corresponding regression is reported in the figure.

5.2 Social Capital and Children's Economic Success

Social capital predicts children's long-run income. After having documented that social capital is transmitted across generations and that this correlation is not accounted for by more conventional measures of intergenerational transmission such as parental income or cognitive ability, we next examine whether it is related to children's economic outcomes. Figure 2 plots children's income rank at age 35 against parental social capital rank, conditioning on paternal income rank, cognitive ability, and demographic controls. The relationship is strongly upward sloping and close to linear, with a slope of 0.08.

To quantify this pattern, we estimate rank–rank regressions of children's income rank on parental social capital. The results from this exercise are shown in Table A.28. Column (1) shows that the unconditional correlation coefficient is 0.14, indicating that parental social capital is an important predictor of long-run income. For comparison, Columns (2) and (3) of Table A.28 report the corresponding estimates for parental income rank and parental cognitive-ability rank, which yield coefficients of 0.16 and 0.14 respectively - similar in magnitude to the estimate for social capital. The R-squared values across these specifications also are comparable, suggesting that all three parental characteristics have similar predictive power for children's income. These comparisons place parental social capital on the same scale as income and

Table 2: Child social capital rank

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.22***			0.20***	0.17***	0.17***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.13***		0.08***	0.05***	0.05***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.16***		0.10***	0.10***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.047	0.017	0.031	0.052	0.064	0.070

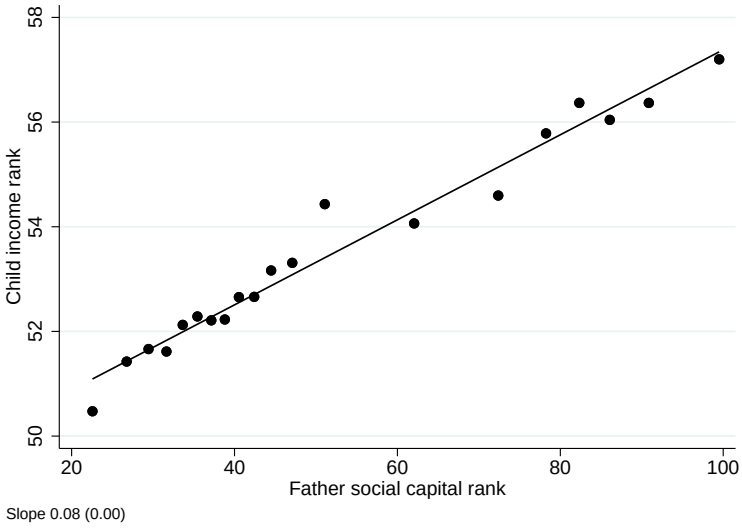
Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Similarly, the father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,022. Mean of the dependent variable: 49.04. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

cognitive ability in shaping children's long-run economic position.

The relationship remains after conditioning on other transmission channels. To examine whether the association between parental social capital and children's income reflects other inherited advantages, we sequentially add additional parental characteristics to the rank–rank specification. Column (4) of Table A.28 shows that controlling for parental income rank reduces the coefficient on social capital from 0.14 to 0.11. Adding parental cognitive-ability rank in Column (5) leads to a further decline to 0.08. Finally, Column (6) includes a detailed set of demographic controls; these have virtually no effect on the estimate (conditional on the other controls). The overall pattern indicates that while part of the raw association reflects correlations with parental income and ability, a substantial independent relationship remains. Parental social capital therefore appears to carry independent predictive content for children's long-run income that is not accounted for by standard intergenerational channels.

Accounting for social capital alters income-based mobility. The inclusion of social capital also changes the estimated degree of intergenerational income persistence. In the baseline specification without social capital, the parent–child income rank–rank coefficient is 0.16. When parental social capital is added to the regression, the income coefficient falls to 0.13—a reduction of around 20 percent. Because our measure is a proxy for an underlying latent structure of social position, this adjustment should be viewed as a lower bound: richer

Figure 2: The intergenerational social capital–income rank relationship



Notes: Binned scatterplot of child income rank (measured at age 35) against father's social capital rank, controlling for father's income rank (measured at age 35), father's cognitive ability rank, father's partnership status at age 35, father's country of origin, and father's number of children at age 35. Social capital is measured by a weighted index of six proxies capturing access to elite networks: elite education, elite occupation, executive positions, corporate board membership, employment at high-wage firms, and residence in elite neighborhoods. All rank measures are computed within birth-year cohorts. The sample includes children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. The slope coefficient (standard error) from the corresponding regression is reported in the figure.

or more detailed measures of social capital likely would account for an even larger share of the income-based association. The results therefore indicate that part of what is typically attributed to inherited financial resources reflects differences in social position, highlighting the importance of incorporating this additional dimension of family background into assessments of intergenerational mobility. Additionally, the sum of the coefficients in column (6) is 0.28, which indicates that the measures together show a level of intergenerational mobility that is much higher than what would be concluded from using any one variable alone.

Table 3: Child income rank

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.14***			0.11***	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.16***		0.13***	0.10***	0.10***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.10***	0.10***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.016	0.019	0.020	0.027	0.035	0.149

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Similarly, the father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.53. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

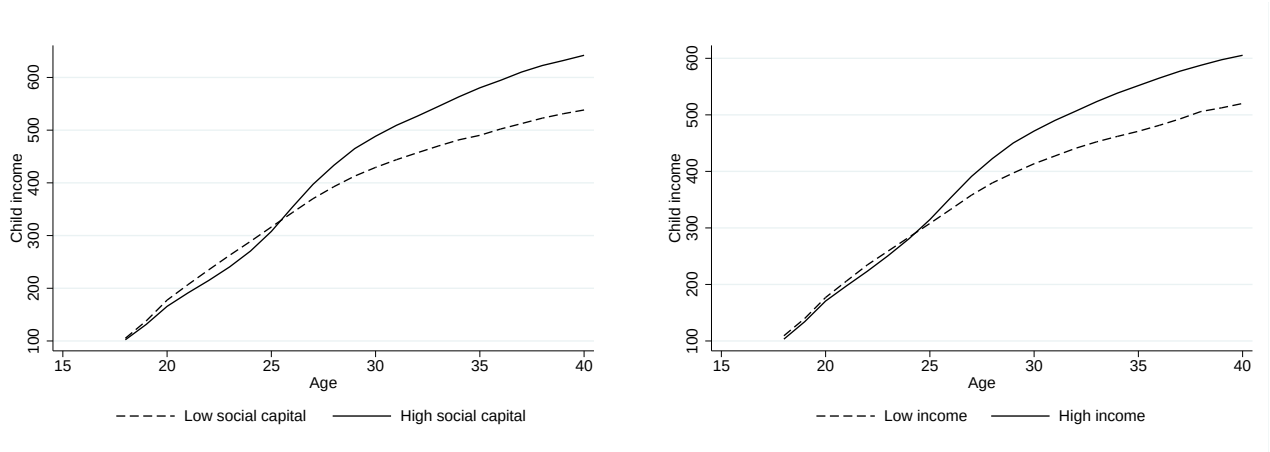
5.3 Life-Cycle Evolution of Inherited Advantages

A distinctive feature of our data is the ability to follow entire cohorts from their late teens into their early-forties and observe complete annual income histories. This allows us to examine how inherited advantages evolve over the course of a career, rather than relying solely on single-year snapshots or outcomes at a particular age.

Inherited advantages widen over the life cycle. Figure 3 shows income trajectories from age 18 to 40 for individuals whose father falls in the top versus bottom quartile of the social capital distribution (Panel A) and the income distribution (Panel B). We focus on a top–bottom quartile comparison because it provides a clear visualization of the magnitude and timing of inherited advantages while avoiding the noise that can arise when plotting many finer-grained groups. The resulting profiles capture the main contrasts in income growth associated with different parental backgrounds.

The two panels display strikingly similar patterns. Individuals from higher-status families earn slightly less in their early twenties—reflecting longer schooling and later labor-market entry—but their incomes rise more quickly after age 25. As cohorts move through their late twenties and thirties, the gaps between the top and bottom parental groups widen steadily.

Figure 3: Life cycle income outcomes



(a) Father Social Capital Rank

(b) Father Income Rank

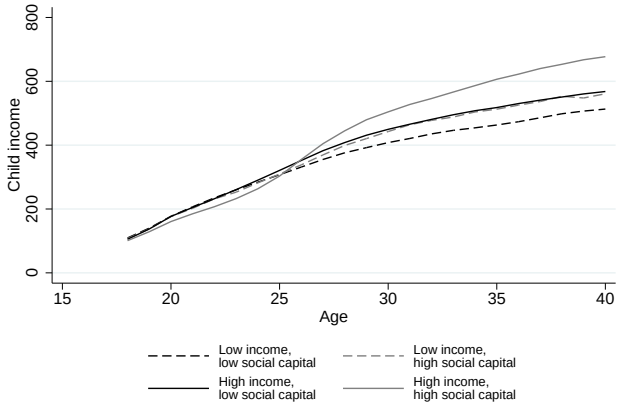
Notes: Average child income (in 1000 NOK) over the lifecycle, from ages 18 to 40. Panel A stratifies children by father's social capital: the blue line shows children whose fathers are in the bottom quartile of the social capital distribution, while the green line shows children whose fathers are in the top quartile. Panel B stratifies children by father's income at age 35: the blue line shows children whose fathers are in the bottom quartile of the income distribution, while the green line shows children whose fathers are in the top quartile. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position in a top-100 firm, leadership role in a top-100 firm, and elite neighborhood). Income are captured by taxable income above 1G. The sample includes children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970.

By forty, the difference is substantial: individuals from the top parental quartile earn roughly 15-20 percent more than those from the bottom quartile. These profiles show that inherited advantages accumulate gradually over the career, implying that the inequality associated with parental background becomes more pronounced over time. They also highlight the importance of timing: measuring children's outcomes early in their careers understates the full extent of intergenerational differences that emerge later in adulthood.

Joint role of social and financial capital. To examine how parental social capital and parental income operate jointly, Figure 4 divides individuals into four groups defined by whether their parents fall in the top or bottom quartile of each of the two parental background measures. This yields four combinations of inherited advantage: low social capital and low income, low social capital and high income, high social capital and low income, and high social capital and high income. Using this 2×2 structure keeps the comparisons straightforward, avoids imposing functional-form assumptions, and allows the separate and combined contributions of social and financial capital to be seen clearly in the life-cycle profiles.

The resulting income profiles reveal two clear patterns. First, having either high parental social capital or high parental income is associated with substantially higher income across the life cycle relative to having neither. Individuals in the mixed groups—high income but low social capital, or high social capital but low income—follow trajectories that lie well above the

Figure 4: Life cycle income outcomes by parent social capital and income



Notes: Average child income (in 1000 NOK) over the lifecycle, from ages 18 to 40. Children are stratified into four groups based on father's income (measured at 35) and social capital: blue shows children whose fathers are in the bottom quartile of both distributions; green shows children whose fathers are in the bottom quartile of income but the top quartile of social capital; red shows children whose fathers are in the top quartile of income but the bottom quartile of social capital; orange shows children whose fathers are in the top quartile of both distributions. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position in a top-100 firm, leadership role in a top-100 firm, and elite neighborhood). Income is captured by taxable income above 1G. The sample includes children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970.

low–low group and are broadly similar to one another in magnitude. Second, the combination of both advantages matters. The high–high group displays incomes that are consistently above those of the mixed groups, with the gaps widening gradually as individuals progress through their careers. By mid-career, the cumulative difference between the high–high group and all others is pronounced. These patterns suggest that the contributions of social capital and income are largely additive: each dimension independently shifts income upward, but the full effect is realized only when both advantages are inherited together. In particular, the mixed groups show that high parental income alone is not sufficient for reaching the very top of the income distribution; without inherited social capital, the trajectory falls well short of the high–high group. An alternative way to interpret Figure 4 is that parent income and social capital are substitutes in the production of long-run child income.

5.4 Distributional and Elite Outcomes

Taken together, the life-cycle profiles and the joint patterns for social capital and income show that inherited advantages accumulate gradually and that the combination of the two dimensions is particularly important for reaching the highest observed income levels. These findings motivate a closer examination of how parental background shapes distributional outcomes, including upward mobility relative to parents and the likelihood of being in the top or bottom of the income distribution. We therefore now turn to a set of distributional analyses that trace

how social capital and income relate to mobility, tail probabilities, and the broader shape of children's long-run income.

Effects are strongest at the top of the distribution. A natural starting point for understanding distributional patterns is to ask how parental background influences children's chances of entering the upper tail of the income distribution. Because the upper tail represents a sparse and highly variable part of the income distribution, and because outcomes in this segment account for a disproportionate share of overall inequality, it provides an informative setting for assessing how inherited advantages relate to extreme economic outcomes.

Table 4 reports horse-race specifications for children's probability of reaching the top decile (Panel A) and top vigintile (Panel B) of the income rank distribution as a function of parental social capital, parental income rank, and parental cognitive ability. In the raw specifications, each dimension of parental advantage strongly predicts children's likelihood of reaching the upper tail. Controlling for all dimensions simultaneously attenuates the magnitudes but preserves the overall structure: parental social capital and parental income remain large, precisely estimated, and of comparable size. Including parent demographic controls has no impact on the estimates.

Across both cutoffs, social capital contains substantial predictive power beyond conventional measures of intergenerational transmission. Together, parental social capital, income, and cognitive ability explain far more of upper-tail attainment than any individual component alone: having a parent who is one percentile higher in the social capital, income, and cognitive ability distribution increases the likelihood of being in the top 10% of the income distribution by 0.25% and in the top 5% of the income distribution by 0.15%. Inherited social advantage and financial resources thus operate as distinct and complementary determinants of who reaches the very top of the income distribution.

Top social capital rank and top income rank are similarly predictive of upper-tail outcomes. When parental advantage is defined using extreme upper-tail thresholds, both inherited social capital and inherited income remain strongly predictive along two distinct margins. Appendix Table A.19 shows that having a parent in the top decile or top vigintile of either the social capital or income distribution substantially raises children's income rank, with social capital and income exhibiting similar magnitudes in joint specifications. The estimates change little when we control for parental cognitive ability. Appendix Table A.20 further shows that these top parental positions sharply and specifically increase children's probability of reaching the upper tail of the income distribution themselves, again with comparable contributions from social capital and income and only modest shifts in relative importance across cutoffs. Together, these results indicate that having a parent at the top of the social capital or income distribution are equally and strongly consequential both for how high children rise in the income distribution and for whether they attain elite economic status themselves. Social advantage is particularly impactful at the top of the distribution, suggesting that rank-rank correlations overstate the

Table 4: Child top-tail status

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Child top 10% earner (×100)						
Father social capital rank	0.14***			0.11***	0.09***	0.09***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.13***		0.10***	0.09***	0.09***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.11***		0.06***	0.06***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.012	0.011	0.009	0.018	0.021	0.064
Panel B: Child top 5% earner (×100)						
Father social capital rank	0.08***			0.07***	0.06***	0.06***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.08***		0.06***	0.05***	0.05***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.06***		0.03***	0.03***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.008	0.007	0.005	0.011	0.013	0.037

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational mobility regressions. The dependent variable in Panel A is a binary indicator (multiplied by 100) equal to 100 if the child's income rank is in the top decile of their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. The dependent variable in Panel B is defined analogously for the top ventile. The father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 11.14 (Panel A), 5.52 (Panel B). Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

amount of economic mobility as it relates to upper tail outcomes.

Social capital increases upward mobility relative to parents; income does the opposite. While upper-tail attainment captures one margin of mobility, an equally important dimension is relative mobility—whether children surpass their parents. We therefore examine how social capital and income relate to that margin as well.

In Table 5, we estimate the probability that a child's income rank at age 35 exceeds that of their parents. The results show a clear asymmetry across dimensions of inherited advantage. Higher parental social capital rank is associated with a greater likelihood of upward mobility (conditional on income rank). In contrast, higher parental income rank is associated with a lower likelihood of relative upward mobility, anchoring children more tightly to their parents' position in the distribution. The negative effect for income could be driven by mean reversion in income, and it is notable that the same mean reversion is not evident for social capital. These estimates indicate that inheriting social capital tends to push children upward relative to their parents, whereas inheriting high income tends to reduce relative mobility, even as both dimensions raise children's absolute outcomes.

Table 5: Child outranks father (×100)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	-0.15***			0.10***	0.07***	0.07***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		-0.86***		-0.89***	-0.92***	-0.92***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			-0.11***		0.10***	0.10***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.006	0.196	0.004	0.198	0.201	0.202

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational mobility regressions. The dependent variable is a binary indicator (multiplied by 100) equal to 100 if the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35 exceeds their father's rank. The father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income (unrestricted). The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 34.21. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Life-Cycle Dynamics of Extreme Outcomes. The results above document large and systematic differences in distributional outcomes measured at age 35 as a function of parent

social capital and income. While these snapshots clarify who ultimately reaches the top of the income distribution and who surpasses their parents, they do not reveal when these gaps emerge or how they evolve over time. In particular, they leave open whether differences in tail outcomes reflect early sorting at labor-market entry or gradual divergence over the career.

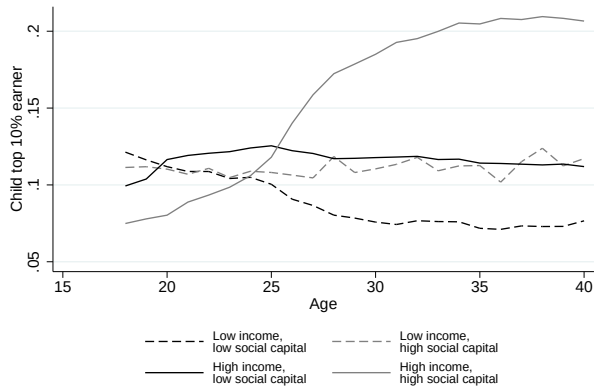
To address this question, we examine how the probability of reaching the top of the income distribution evolves over the life cycle. Figure 5 plots age-specific probabilities of extreme outcomes for the four parental background groups defined by social capital and income used earlier (top versus bottom quartile of the distributions, respectively). Panels A and B show the probability of reaching the top decile and top vigintile of the income distribution. The life-cycle profiles reveal sharp differences in timing across outcomes. For reaching the top decile or ventile of the income distribution, the high–high group is initially less likely to be in the top decile in the early 20s, consistent with prolonged schooling and later labor-market entry. This reverses quickly as they enter the labor market: by around age 30, the probability of being in the top decile is roughly 0.18 for the high–high group, compared to about 0.08 for the low–low group, and the gap persists thereafter. As with rank outcomes, parent income and social capital have an additive effect.

Panel C examines an even more extreme outcome by tracing the life-cycle probability of reaching the top 1 percent of the income distribution. While absolute probabilities are small for all groups, differences by parental background widen markedly at this margin. Children with parents in the top quartile of both social capital and income reach the top 1 percent with a probability of around 3 percent, compared to roughly 1 percent for each of the other parental background groups. Thus, the joint inheritance of high social capital and high income is associated with a roughly threefold increase in the likelihood of attaining the very top of the income distribution, a contrast that is substantially sharper than for top-decile or top-vigintile outcomes (a twofold increase).

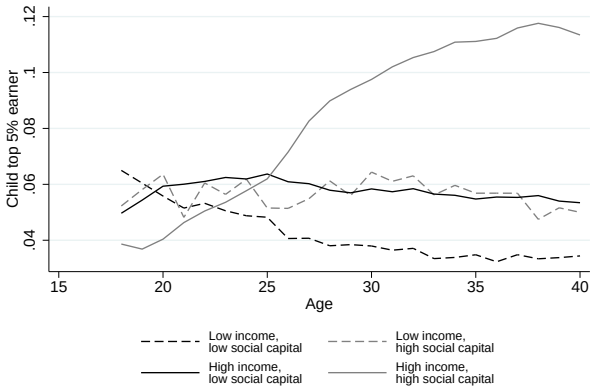
5.5 Components, Robustness, and Interpretation

Each component of the social capital index matters. To assess whether the association between parental social capital and children's income is concentrated in a single component of the index, we estimate the association between each component of parental social capital and children's income. The results of this exercise are shown in Appendix Table A.14 and demonstrate that each component—elite education, high-prestige occupations, executive roles, C-suite experience, within-firm leadership, and residence in elite neighborhoods—predicts higher income for children, even after controlling for parental income rank. The coefficients differ somewhat in size across the various components, with elite education and C-suite roles tending to be larger, but no component absorbs the full relationship. In a fully saturated model that includes all six components jointly, together with parental income and cognitive

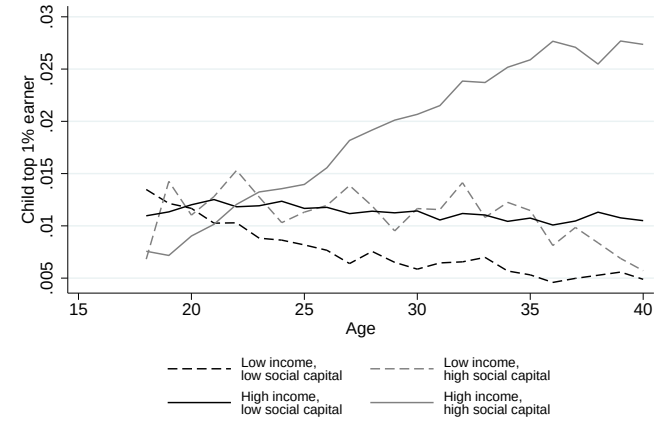
Figure 5: Life-cycle dynamics of extreme outcomes



(a) Top 10%



(b) Top 5%



(c) Top 1%

Notes: Probability of being a top earner over the lifecycle, from ages 18 to 40. Panels A–C show the probability of being in the top 10%, top 5%, and top 1% of the income distribution, respectively. Children are stratified into four groups based on father's income (measured at age 35) and social capital: blue shows children whose fathers are in the bottom quartile of both distributions; green shows children whose fathers are in the bottom quartile of income but the top quartile of social capital; red shows children whose fathers are in the top quartile of income but the bottom quartile of social capital; orange shows children whose fathers are in the top quartile of both distributions. Social capital is measured by a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, C-suite position in a top-100 firm, leadership role in a top-100 firm, and elite neighborhood). Income is captured by taxable income above 1G. The sample includes children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970.

ability ranks, each component retains independent explanatory power (Appendix Table A.15). The composite index therefore captures a set of distinct institutional and occupational channels rather than reflecting a single underlying feature of parental background.[11]

Social capital is not a proxy for wealth or education. An alternative interpretation of our findings is that the social capital index may simply reflect conventional forms of family advantage—such as parental wealth or educational attainment—rather than a distinct dimension of inherited social position. Both are natural candidates: they have been shown to be persistent across generations, correlated with residential and occupational status, and can directly shape children's early-life investments and opportunities.

To assess this possibility, we augment the fully saturated specification with paternal wealth rank and paternal education rank, allowing these dimensions to enter jointly with social capital (Appendix Table A.17). Wealth and education each is strongly associated with children's income when included on its own. However, including either has virtually no effect on the coefficient for paternal social capital. The magnitude and statistical significance of the social capital term remain stable across specifications.

These results indicate that the index is not capturing paternal wealth or educational attainment. Instead, it reflects an independent dimension of inherited advantage that operates alongside—rather than through—standard economic and human-capital measures.

Compositional differences do not explain our results. While the preceding analyses show that social capital is not a proxy for wealth or education, the observed gradient still could reflect systematic differences in family characteristics correlated with social capital. In particular, high–social capital families may differ from low–social capital families along observable dimensions—such as fertility, parental age, immigration background, or geography—that themselves influence children's outcomes.

To assess this concern, we implement an entropy-reweighting regression that forces the distribution of key demographic characteristics among high–social capital parents to match that of low–social capital parents. The reweighting is based on child year of birth, gender, number of siblings, parental age at birth, immigration background, and county of birth. As shown in Appendix Table A.18, the estimated correlations are not meaningfully affected by this procedure. Hence, the results are not driven by demographic composition as defined above. Social capital captures differences that persist even after aligning families on a broad set of observable characteristics.

Robustness to Parental Background Definitions. A potential concern is that our

[11] To further assess whether the social capital effect is driven by a particular elite channel, we re-estimate the main specification while sequentially dropping each component from the index. Appendix Table A.16 shows that the coefficient on parental social capital remains stable across all model specifications. No single dimension—education, occupational status, executive roles, corporate positions, within-firm leadership, or elite neighborhoods—accounts for the results on its own, confirming that the index captures a broad, multidimensional form of inherited advantage.

baseline results may depend on how parental characteristics are defined, given that we primarily use paternal income, cognitive ability, and social capital ranks. This choice reflects the availability of standardized cognitive test scores only for men and lower maternal labor-force participation in the cohorts we study. To ensure that the findings are not driven by this definition, we replicate the main specifications, with the exception of the cognitive ability rank (unavailable for the overwhelming majority of mothers) using maternal ranks and the maximum rank across parents.

The estimated effects of parental social capital and parental income remain highly similar across definitions (Appendix Tables A.1 and A.2). These results indicate that the intergenerational associations we document are not sensitive to whether parental background is measured using fathers, mothers, or the highest-ranked parent, implying that the role of social capital and income reflects family-level environments rather than the labor-market position of a particular parent.

Robustness to Alternative Measurement Choices. Our results rely on several empirical constructions—most importantly, how social capital is measured, but also how top firms are defined, how long-run income is summarized, and how treatment thresholds are set in the quasi-experimental analysis. Because the social capital index is central to our contribution, we first examine robustness to its construction. We then assess whether the results are sensitive to other key measurement choices.

Alternative measurement of social capital. Our baseline measure of social capital is an inverse-covariance–weighted index constructed from six binary indicators capturing entry into elite educational, occupational, organizational, corporate, and residential positions. While this approach emphasizes access to distinct high-status domains and avoids double counting (by weighting components according to the extent of independent variation they contain), it relies on (i) binary thresholds and (ii) a particular weighting scheme. We therefore examine whether our results are sensitive to how social capital is measured.

Appendix Table A.22 replaces the baseline index with a fully continuous social capital measure. In this specification, the father's social capital rank is defined as his percentile rank in the cohort-specific distribution of a standardized weighted index constructed from four continuous components: (i) education rank, defined using the average income rank at age 35 associated with the degree; (ii) occupation rank, defined by the occupation's national median wage; (iii) wage rank within firm, restricting to firms with at least 10 workers; and (iv) neighborhood rank, based on the leave-one-out neighborhood elite exposure score described in Section 3.4. These four continuous inputs are standardized and combined into a single index, which is then converted into cohort-specific percentile ranks.[12] The estimated coefficient on parental social

[12]The remaining two components in the baseline index—executive status (ISCO group 11) and C-suite or board membership in top firms—do not have meaningful continuous analogues in the data, as they reflect discrete institutional positions rather than ordered exposure margins. For this exercise, they therefore are excluded.

capital is virtually unchanged relative to the baseline specification, indicating that the results do not depend on discretizing elite exposure into top-decile indicators or on the inclusion of purely binary components.

Appendix Table A.23 measures parental social capital using positions attained by age 50 rather than over the full career. This addresses the concern that defining paternal social capital using lifetime maxima could incorporate elite positions attained after the child's adult outcomes are already realized. Restricting measurement to status achieved by age 50 ensures that parental social capital reflects positions plausibly relevant during the child's formative and early-career years. The estimates are not statistically or economically significantly different from the baseline estimates.

Appendix Tables A.24 and A.25 construct the index as the simple sum and mean of the six components, respectively, removing the inverse-covariance weighting structure. Appendix Table A.26 applies equal weights across components. Across all specifications, the magnitude and statistical significance of the social capital coefficient remain remarkably similar.

Finally, because the social capital index aggregates multiple components, a concern is that the results could be driven primarily by one particular dimension rather than the broader construct. While the above exercises give no suggestion of this being the case, we sequentially drop each component from the index and re-estimate the baseline specification. The resulting estimates are robust to dropping any one of the specific components, indicating that no individual component fully accounts for the findings (Appendix Table A.16).[13]

Taken together, these exercises demonstrate that the central findings are not sensitive to binary thresholding, the weighting scheme, the career window over which social capital is measured, or the specific aggregation rule. The intergenerational associations we document reflect a robust, multidimensional construct rather than an artifact of a particular index definition.

Alternative definitions of firms, income, and treatment thresholds. Beyond the construction of the social capital index, our analysis relies on several additional empirical choices that could, in principle, affect the results.

First, our construction of corporate elite exposure requires choosing how top firms are identified and how many firms are included, raising the possibility that the results could depend on these definitional choices. To assess this concern, we redefine top firms using wage bill rather than profits and expand the firm set from the top 100 to the top 500. The resulting estimates are nearly identical to the baseline (Appendix Tables A.10 and A.11).

Second, our analysis requires selecting a specific age at which to summarize long-run income and deciding whether to focus on individuals with meaningful labor-market attachment, raising the possibility that the results could depend on lifecycle timing or the treatment of very low in-

[13] Appendix Table A.27 reports intergenerational correlations for each binary component separately. All components exhibit positive and economically meaningful parent–child persistence, providing further support for the claim that the aggregate index is not driven by a single dimension.

come observations. To address this concern, we re-estimate the specifications using alternative age windows (ages 33–37 instead of age 35) and include the full unconditional income distribution rather than restricting to income above 1G. The estimated coefficients remain essentially unchanged (Appendix Tables A.3 and A.9).

Third, the quasi-experimental analysis requires choosing a cutoff to distinguish large from small lottery wins, raising the possibility that the results could depend on this threshold choice. To assess this concern, we redefine large wins using an above-median cutoff rather than the top-quartile threshold used in the baseline specification. The conclusions remain unchanged (Appendix Table A.6). Taken together, these robustness exercises demonstrate that the central findings are not sensitive to how firms or income are defined or how treatment thresholds are set.

6 Quasi-Experimental Evidence on Mechanisms

The descriptive evidence documents substantial intergenerational persistence in both income and social capital, but these correlations do not by themselves reveal the mechanisms through which advantages are transmitted. In particular, it remains unclear to what extent parental income influences children through financial resources and to what extent social capital reflects environmental rather than genetic transmission. To shed light on these channels, we draw on two sources of quasi-experimental variation: large lottery winnings, which isolate the financial-resource channel, and adoption placements, which distinguish environmental influences from biological inheritance. Together, these designs allow us to assess the extent to which the descriptive patterns identified above reflect causal effects of parental resources.

Lottery shocks isolate financial-resource effects. A central concern is that the associations we document may reflect the causal impact of parental income rather than a distinct role for social capital. If higher income directly generates the social positions and advantages captured by our index—through greater investments, access to opportunities, or institutional entry—then social capital would simply be another manifestation of financial resources. Under this interpretation, an exogenous increase in parental income during childhood should raise children's subsequent social capital and long-run income. We test this mechanism using large, unexpected lottery winnings, which generate substantial income shocks that are unrelated to underlying family characteristics.

We compare children whose parents won large prizes to those whose parents won small prizes, conditioning on lottery participation. This comparison removes selection into playing the lottery and isolates the effect of the prize amount itself. Table A.7 documents the distribution of winnings and shows that a "large" win corresponds to an average payout of 648,000 NOK ($65,000), equivalent to approximately 1.7 times average annual father income. These shocks generate immediate and substantial increases in parental income.

Despite the magnitude of these income shocks, we find no evidence that they improve children's long-run outcomes. Children whose parents experience large lottery wins do not attain higher income ranks in adulthood, nor do they reach higher positions in the social capital distribution, relative to children of small-prize winners.

Table 6 shows that the indicator for a large parental lottery win is small and is not statistically significant at even the 10% level in any specification. Moreover, including the lottery shock leaves the coefficients on parental income rank and parental social capital rank essentially unchanged, indicating that exogenous increases in financial resources do not account for the intergenerational associations documented earlier.

Because lottery participants may differ from the full population, we replicate the baseline rank–rank regressions within the lottery sample itself. Appendix Table A.21 shows that the intergenerational relationships in income and social capital closely mirror those in the main sample.

These results suggest that large, exogenous financial shocks experiences when young do not meaningfully alter children's trajectories. Hence, the intergenerational persistence of social capital documented above is unlikely to be driven by the causal effect of family financial resources.

Table 6: Lottery winners, controlling for lottery wins

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A: Child social capital rank							
Large lottery win (top prize)	0.66	0.44	0.58	0.60	0.42	0.41	0.35
	(0.66)	(0.65)	(0.66)	(0.66)	(0.65)	(0.64)	(0.64)
Father social capital rank		0.22***			0.20***	0.19***	0.19***
		(0.01)			(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father income rank			0.12***		0.07***	0.05***	0.05***
			(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father cognitive ability rank				0.14***		0.08***	0.08***
				(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)
Demographic controls							X
R^2	0.000	0.049	0.015	0.023	0.054	0.062	0.068
Panel B: Child income rank							
Large lottery win (top prize)	0.77	0.62	0.67	0.73	0.58	0.57	0.91
	(0.75)	(0.74)	(0.74)	(0.74)	(0.74)	(0.73)	(0.70)
Father social capital rank		0.16***			0.12***	0.11***	0.11***
		(0.01)			(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father income rank			0.17***		0.14***	0.12***	0.11***
			(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father cognitive ability rank				0.13***		0.08***	0.07***
				(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)
Demographic controls							X
R^2	0.000	0.019	0.022	0.016	0.033	0.038	0.137

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. Both panels control for parental lottery wins during childhood. Large lottery win (top prize) is a binary indicator equal to one if either parent had a lottery win above the 75th percentile of the year-specific distribution of wins during the individual's childhood (ages 0-18). Panel A: the dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Panel B: the dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970, and to children with at least one parental lottery win during childhood. Panel A: number of observations: 6,887; mean of the dependent variable: 54.33. Panel B: number of observations: 6,887; mean of the dependent variable: 48.28. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Adoption evidence demonstrates environmental transmission of social capital. Whereas the lottery analysis speaks to the question of whether parental income affects children primarily through financial resources, the adoption design addresses a different mechanism: whether the intergenerational associations we document reflect nature or nurture. Adoption placements provide a clean way to separate these channels, as adoptees share the environments created by their adoptive parents but not their genetic traits. With this structure, the adoption analysis allows us to assess the environmental component of the persistence patterns observed above.

To distinguish environmental mechanisms from genetic transmission, we estimate the same rank–rank specifications as in the main analysis using the sample of adoptees. The logic is straightforward: adoptees share no genetic material with their adoptive parents, but they grow up in the home environment created by them. If children's long-run outcomes systematically differ when they are placed into families with different levels of social capital and income rank, this provides evidence on environmental transmission. The adoption sample includes roughly 1,150 individuals, which makes the analysis demanding. The core assumption is that placement decisions are not strongly correlated with unobserved child characteristics that are themselves related to parental social capital or income rank. This assumption cannot be tested directly, but the highly centralized, state-controlled adoption process in Norway reduces the scope for differential placement along such unobservables. Fagereng et al. (2021) also employ this assumption in their analysis of intergenerational income transmission among adoptees in Norway.[14]

Despite the small sample, the estimates align closely with the patterns observed in the full biological sample. Table 7 shows that adoptive-parent income rank and adoptive-parent social capital rank both have strong and statistically significant associations with adoptees' adult income rank, with magnitudes similar to those in the main analysis. These results imply that the parental environment—rather than genetic transmission—is central to the intergenerational relationships we document. Because adoptees do not inherit biological traits from their adoptive parents, the predictive power of adoptive-parent characteristics points to environmental channels such as networks, expectations, access to information, and institutional connections. The adoption and lottery analyses together indicate that the intergenerational associations we document are not easily explained by financial variation or by genetic transmission, pointing instead toward the broader environments and experiences parents provide to their children.

[14] To ensure that differences between the biological and adoption samples are not driven by sample construction, Appendix Table **??** re-estimates the main specification using the adoption-sample restrictions but without limiting the sample to adoptees. The estimates are unchanged.

Table 7: Child income rank, adoptions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.12***			0.09***	0.10***	0.09**
	(0.03)			(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Father income rank		0.13***		0.08**	0.09**	0.09**
		(0.04)		(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.03		-0.03	-0.03
			(0.03)		(0.03)	(0.03)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.013	0.011	0.001	0.017	0.017	0.041

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions using the sample of adoptees. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. The father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for child gender. The sample restricts to adopted children born before 1988 with fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 1,145. Mean of the dependent variable: 48.99. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

7 Discussion

This paper introduces a population-wide measure of dynastic social capital and documents its central role in the intergenerational transmission of economic advantage. Using comprehensive Norwegian administrative data, we show that social capital—capturing families' embeddedness in elite educational institutions, occupations, corporate leadership, organizational hierarchies, and high-status neighborhoods—is strongly inherited across generations and is a powerful predictor of children's long-run income and access to elite positions.

Parental social capital predicts children's economic outcomes to a degree comparable to parental income and cognitive ability and remains quantitatively important when these conventional measures of family background are included simultaneously. Incorporating social capital into standard intergenerational regressions reduces income-based persistence by more than twenty percent, indicating that part of what is typically attributed to inherited financial resources reflects correlated social position instead. These patterns are particularly pronounced at the top of the distribution. While income and social capital each independently are associated with better long-run outcomes, neither is sufficient on its own for reaching the very highest income ranks. Entry into the top of the income distribution is concentrated among individuals

who inherit both high parental income and high parental social capital. This joint structure implies that elite economic positions are reproduced through the combination of financial and social advantage rather than through either channel alone.

Quasi-experimental evidence clarifies the mechanisms underlying these patterns. Large, exogenous income shocks from parental lottery winnings do not affect children's long-run income or social capital, indicating that financial resources alone do not account for the observed persistence. In contrast, adoptive parents' income and social capital strongly predict adoptees' adult outcomes, pointing to environmental transmission. Together, these results suggest that durable social environments and institutional access—rather than income shocks or genetic inheritance—are central to the persistence we document.

These findings contribute to the intergenerational mobility literature by identifying a distinct, non-financial channel of transmission operating alongside income, education, and ability (e.g., Becker and Tomes (1979); Solon (1992); Black and Devereux (2011)). They also connect to work on networks, neighborhoods, and elite formation by showing that access to high-status institutional contexts is itself dynastically reproduced and quantitatively important for lifetime outcomes (e.g., Bourdieu (1986); Coleman (1988); Chetty et al. (2022a)). Even in a setting with compressed income distributions and extensive redistribution, social capital remains a powerful and persistent determinant of opportunity.

An important implication of these findings is that inherited advantage operates through channels that lie largely outside the reach of standard policy instruments. Because social position cannot be directly taxed, transferred, or equalized through conventional redistributive tools, its transmission helps explain why intergenerational mobility remains limited even in settings with extensive public investment in education and income support (such as Norway). While financial resources can be compressed through fiscal policy, access to elite institutions, networks, and organizational environments appears far more durable and is very difficult to influence from a policy perspective.

Taken together, the results suggest that understanding inequality requires incorporating inherited social position into standard models of mobility. Financial resources matter. Human capital matters. But durable social embeddedness—who is connected to which institutions, firms, and environments—plays an independent and complementary role in shaping long-run economic trajectories and in sustaining the dynastic reproduction of advantage.

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Appendix

A Online Appendix: Data Source

B Online Appendix: Supplemental Results

Table A.1: Child income rank, maternal inputs

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Mother social capital rank	0.11***			0.09***	0.07***	0.06***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Mother income rank		0.11***		0.10***	0.08***	0.09***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.13***	0.12***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.006	0.007	0.020	0.011	0.027	0.139

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. The mother's income rank is her percentile rank in her cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The mother's social capital rank is her percentile rank in her cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores (male-only). Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the mother. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 151,727. Mean of the dependent variable: 54.52. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.2: Child income rank, parental inputs

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Parental social capital rank	0.13***			0.09***	0.07***	0.07***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Parental income rank		0.18***		0.15***	0.13***	0.12***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.10***	0.09***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.014	0.022	0.020	0.029	0.036	0.152

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions using the maximum of both parents' outcomes. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. The parental income rank is the maximum of the mother's and father's percentile ranks in their respective cohort-specific income distributions at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The parental social capital rank is the maximum of the mother's and father's percentile ranks in their respective cohort-specific social capital distributions. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores (male-only). Demographic controls include binary indicators for the father's and mother's marriage or cohabitation at 35, indicators for the father's and mother's Norwegian nationality, and the father's and mother's number of children. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 199,590. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.55. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.3: Child income rank, alternative measurement window (33-37)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.14***			0.10***	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.19***		0.16***	0.13***	0.12***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.09***	0.09***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.017	0.024	0.022	0.032	0.040	0.164

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution, averaged over ages 33 to 37. Similarly, the father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution, averaged over ages 33 to 37. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 56.01. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.4: Descriptive statistics

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Child Level					
Year of birth	1981.67	3.52	1965.00	1986.00	210,023
Female	0.49	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Income (1000s)	513	282	75	41,294	210,023
Social capital	0.10	1.06	−0.45	22.13	210,022
Elite education	0.07	–	0.00	1.00	210,022
Elite occupation	0.09	–	0.00	1.00	210,022
Executive position	0.05	–	0.00	1.00	210,022
C-suite position	0.00	–	0.00	1.00	210,022
Leadership role	0.02	–	0.00	1.00	210,022
Elite neighborhood	0.19	–	0.00	1.00	210,012
Cognitive ability	5.08	1.67	0.00	9.00	104,125
Education	4.82	1.61	0.00	9.00	210,023
Wealth (1000s)	−570	4,946	−28,002	1,434,542	210,023
Married or cohabiting	0.48	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Country of origin	0.02	0.17	0.00	2.00	210,023
Number of children	1.45	1.11	0.00	9.00	210,023
Father Level					
Year of birth	1955.91	3.23	1952.00	1970.00	210,023
Income (1000s)	384	185	55	15,981	210,023
Social capital	0.26	1.50	−0.45	23.92	210,023
Elite education	0.04	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Elite occupation	0.16	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Executive position	0.12	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
C-suite position	0.00	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Leadership role	0.03	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Elite neighborhood	0.16	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Cognitive ability	5.76	1.70	0.00	9.00	210,023
Education	3.75	1.56	0.00	9.00	210,023
Wealth (1000s)	26	5,688	−77,932	1,553,061	208,018
Married or cohabiting	0.93	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Country of origin	0.03	0.21	0.00	2.00	210,023
Number of children	2.36	0.92	0.00	12.00	210,023

Table A.5: Sample construction

	N	Dropped	% of full sample	% of prev. row	Mean child income rank	Mean father income rank	Share female
Full cross-section	6,520,901	—	100.0	—	50.00	63.93	0.49
+ Child born 1932–1988	4,112,839	2,408,062	63.1	63.1	50.00	64.15	0.48
+ Father born 1950–1970	533,701	3,579,138	8.2	13.0	52.53	64.12	0.49
+ Child income rank	391,492	142,209	6.0	73.4	52.53	64.29	0.49
+ Father social capital rank	377,342	14,150	5.8	96.4	52.73	64.43	0.49
+ Father income rank	350,244	27,098	5.4	92.8	53.27	64.43	0.49
+ Father cognitive ability rank	274,620	75,624	4.2	78.4	53.68	65.29	0.49
+ Demographic controls	210,023	64,597	3.2	76.5	53.53	65.05	0.49

Notes: Each row applies the listed restriction cumulatively. % of full sample reports the share of Row 1 retained; % of prev. row reports the share of the preceding row retained. Mean child and father income ranks are computed over non-missing observations at each step. Share female is computed over non-missing observations of the gender indicator.

Table A.6: Lottery winners, controlling for lottery wins

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A: Child social capital rank							
Large lottery win (top prize)	-0.47	-0.38	-0.56	-0.20	-0.44	-0.27	-0.28
	(0.60)	(0.58)	(0.59)	(0.59)	(0.58)	(0.58)	(0.58)
Father social capital rank		0.22***			0.20***	0.19***	0.19***
		(0.01)			(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father income rank			0.12***		0.07***	0.06***	0.06***
			(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father cognitive ability rank				0.14***		0.08***	0.08***
				(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)
Demographic controls							X
R^2	0.000	0.049	0.015	0.023	0.054	0.062	0.068
Panel B: Child income rank							
Large lottery win (top prize)	0.26	0.32	0.14	0.50	0.21	0.36	0.74
	(0.67)	(0.67)	(0.66)	(0.67)	(0.66)	(0.66)	(0.63)
Father social capital rank		0.16***			0.12***	0.11***	0.11***
		(0.01)			(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father income rank			0.17***		0.14***	0.12***	0.11***
			(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father cognitive ability rank				0.13***		0.08***	0.07***
				(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)
Demographic controls							X
R^2	0.000	0.019	0.022	0.016	0.033	0.038	0.137

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. Both panels control for parental lottery wins during childhood. Large lottery win (top prize) is a binary indicator equal to one if either parent had a lottery win above the median of the year-specific distribution of wins during the individual's childhood (ages 0-18). Panel A: the dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Panel B: the dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970, and to children with at least one parental lottery win during childhood. Panel A: number of observations: 6,887; mean of the dependent variable: 54.33. Panel B: number of observations: 6,887; mean of the dependent variable: 48.28. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.7: Descriptive statistics, lottery winners

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Child Level					
Year of birth	1981.67	3.52	1965.00	1986.00	210,023
Female	0.49	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Income (1000s)	513	282	75	41,294	210,023
Social capital	0.10	1.06	−0.45	22.13	210,022
Elite education	0.07	–	0.00	1.00	210,022
Elite occupation	0.09	–	0.00	1.00	210,022
Executive position	0.05	–	0.00	1.00	210,022
C-suite position	0.00	–	0.00	1.00	210,022
Leadership role	0.02	–	0.00	1.00	210,022
Elite neighborhood	0.19	–	0.00	1.00	210,012
Cognitive ability	5.08	1.67	0.00	9.00	104,125
Education	4.82	1.61	0.00	9.00	210,023
Wealth (1000s)	−570	4,946	−28,002	1,434,542	210,023
Married or cohabiting	0.48	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Country of origin	0.02	0.17	0.00	2.00	210,023
Number of children	1.45	1.11	0.00	9.00	210,023
Father Level					
Year of birth	1955.91	3.23	1952.00	1970.00	210,023
Income (1000s)	384	185	55	15,981	210,023
Social capital	0.26	1.50	−0.45	23.92	210,023
Elite education	0.04	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Elite occupation	0.16	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Executive position	0.12	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
C-suite position	0.00	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Leadership role	0.03	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Elite neighborhood	0.16	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Cognitive ability	5.76	1.70	0.00	9.00	210,023
Education	3.75	1.56	0.00	9.00	210,023
Wealth (1000s)	26	5,688	−77,932	1,553,061	208,018
Married or cohabiting	0.93	–	0.00	1.00	210,023
Country of origin	0.03	0.21	0.00	2.00	210,023
Number of children	2.36	0.92	0.00	12.00	210,023
Lottery					
Large lottery win (top prize)	0.28	–	0.00	1.00	6,887
Win amount (1000s) if large win	648	1,313	98	14,403	1,914
Win amount (1000s) if small win	47	30	0	430	4,973

Table A.8: Descriptive statistics, adoptions

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Child Level					
Year of birth	1982.64	3.10	1968.00	1986.00	1,145
Female	0.53	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
Income (1000s)	485	243	95	2,379	1,145
Social capital	0.21	1.10	−0.45	6.39	1,145
Elite education	0.07	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
Elite occupation	0.07	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
Executive position	0.05	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
C-suite position	0.00	–	0.00	0.00	1,145
Leadership role	0.02	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
Elite neighborhood	0.28	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
Cognitive ability	4.78	1.77	0.00	9.00	510
Education	4.92	1.73	0.00	8.00	1,145
Wealth (1000s)	−202	8,715	−9,672	283,877	1,145
Married or cohabiting	0.36	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
Country of origin	1.83	0.37	1.00	2.00	1,145
Number of children	1.12	1.13	0.00	6.00	1,145
Father Level					
Year of birth	1952.75	2.45	1950.00	1965.00	1,145
Income (1000s)	437	208	57	2,176	1,145
Social capital	0.69	1.92	−0.45	23.92	1,145
Elite education	0.13	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
Elite occupation	0.24	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
Executive position	0.16	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
C-suite position	0.00	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
Leadership role	0.04	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
Elite neighborhood	0.25	–	0.00	1.00	1,145
Cognitive ability	6.60	1.65	1.00	9.00	1,145
Education	4.67	1.78	2.00	8.00	1,145
Wealth (1000s)	396	4,405	−14,887	67,266	1,131
Married or cohabiting	0.98	–	0.00	1.00	730
Country of origin	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,145
Number of children	1.78	0.85	0.00	6.00	1,145

Table A.9: Child income rank, full income distribution

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.13***			0.09***	0.07***	0.07***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.17***		0.15***	0.12***	0.11***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.09***	0.09***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.014	0.023	0.020	0.029	0.037	0.130

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific unconditional income distribution at age 35. Similarly, the father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific unconditional income distribution at age 35. Unconditional income include zero earners. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 229,996. Mean of the dependent variable: 55.33. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.10: Child income rank, measuring top-100 firms by wagebill

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.14***			0.11***	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.16***		0.13***	0.10***	0.10***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.10***	0.09***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.017	0.019	0.020	0.028	0.036	0.149

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Similarly, the father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by wagebill, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.53. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.11: Child income rank, measuring top-500 firms by profit

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.14***			0.10***	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.16***		0.13***	0.10***	0.10***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.10***	0.10***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.016	0.019	0.020	0.027	0.035	0.148

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Similarly, the father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-500 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.53. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.12: Proportional Weights

	Weight
Elite education	0.178
Elite occupation	0.068
Executive position	0.183
C-suite position	0.181
Leadership role	0.174
Elite tract	0.216

Table A.13: Correlations between parental rank measures

	Father social capital rank	Mother social capital rank	Parental social capital rank	Father income rank	Mother income rank	Parental income rank
Father social capital rank	1.00					
Mother social capital rank	0.36	1.00				
Parental social capital rank	0.88	0.63	1.00			
Father income rank	0.28	0.10	0.24	1.00		
Mother income rank	0.09	0.20	0.15	0.06	1.00	
Parental income rank	0.29	0.13	0.27	0.96	0.21	1.00

Notes: Pairwise correlations between parental rank measures for social capital and income. Social capital rank is the percentile rank in the cohort-specific distribution of the social capital index. Income rank is the percentile rank in the cohort-specific distribution of income above 1G. Parental rank is the maximum of the mother's and father's percentile ranks. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Sample size: N = 199,590.

Table A.14: Child income rank and the components of social capital

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father elite education	6.48***					
	(0.29)					
Father income rank	0.11***	0.10***	0.11***	0.12***	0.11***	0.11***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank	0.10***	0.11***	0.11***	0.11***	0.11***	0.11***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father elite occupation		3.82***				
		(0.16)				
Father executive position			3.82***			
			(0.18)			
Father c-suite position				6.58***		
				(1.15)		
Father leadership role					2.68***	
					(0.33)	
Father elite neighborhood						2.93***
						(0.16)
Demographic controls	X	X	X	X	X	X
R^2	0.146	0.146	0.146	0.144	0.144	0.145

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational mobility regressions. Each column regresses the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35 on a single binary indicator of the father's elite status, controlling for the father's income rank, cognitive ability rank, and demographic characteristics. The father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35 (income measured as total taxable income above 1G). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Elite education indicates attendance at a top-ranked higher education institution; elite occupation indicates employment in an occupation with median income above the 90th percentile; executive indicates a senior management role; c-suite indicates a top executive position in a firm ranked among the top 100; top firm leadership indicates a leadership position in a firm ranked among the top 100; elite neighborhood indicates residence in a census tract in the top decile of the social capital distribution. All elite measures reflect the maximum observed value over the observation window (2003–2021). Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.53. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.15: Child income rank and the components of parental social capital

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Father elite education	9.95***	7.99***	6.60***	5.52***	5.31***
	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.30)
Father elite occupation	4.31***	2.70***	3.30***	2.12***	2.20***
	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.18)
Father executive position	4.10***	3.73***	3.21***	3.05***	2.95***
	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.19)
Father c-suite position	3.86***	3.22***	3.46***	2.99**	2.96**
	(1.24)	(1.24)	(1.24)	(1.23)	(1.16)
Father leadership role	2.93***	1.54***	2.35***	1.29***	1.33***
	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.34)
Father elite neighborhood	3.20***	2.62***	2.48***	2.12***	2.25***
	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.16)
Father income rank		0.12***		0.10***	0.10***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.11***	0.09***	0.09***
			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls					X
R^2	0.020	0.030	0.030	0.037	0.150

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational mobility regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. The father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The six social capital components are binary indicators for elite status in each domain, measured for the father. Elite education indicates attendance at top-ranked higher education institution; elite occupation indicates employment in an occupation with median income above the 90th percentile; executive indicates a senior management role; C-suite indicates a top executive position in a firm ranked among the top 100 by profit; top firm leadership indicates leadership positions in firms ranked among the top 100 by profit; elite tract indicates residence in a census tract in the top decile of the social capital distribution. All measures reflect the maximum observed value over the observation window (2003-2021). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.53. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.16: Robustness to index composition

	(1) Baseline	(2) Drop education	(3) Drop occupation	(4) Drop executives	(5) Drop c-suite	(6) Drop leadership	(7) Drop tract
Father social capital rank	0.08***	0.08***	0.09***	0.09***	0.09***	0.09***	0.09***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank	0.10***	0.10***	0.11***	0.10***	0.10***	0.10***	0.10***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank	0.10***	0.10***	0.10***	0.10***	0.10***	0.10***	0.10***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Index components	6	4	4	4	4	4	5
Observations	210,023	210,023	210,023	210,023	210,023	210,023	210,023
R^2	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Column (1) uses the baseline social capital index constructed from all six elite indicators. Columns (2)–(7) each reconstruct the index after dropping the indicated component. When one of the five elite proxies (education, occupation, executive, c-suite, firm leadership) is dropped, the elite neighbourhood indicator is also excluded, as it is constructed from leave-one-out shares of those same proxies. The index is a standardized weighted index (Anderson, 2008) and all ranks are percentile ranks within birth cohorts. Demographic controls include child gender and father's partner status, country of origin, and number of children (all at age 35). Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.17: Child income rank, introducing wealth and education

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Panel A: Introducing wealth			
Father wealth rank	0.05***		0.05***
	(0.00)		(0.00)
Father social capital rank		0.08***	0.08***
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.10***	0.10***
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank		0.10***	0.09***
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls		X	X
R^2	0.004	0.149	0.152
Panel B: Introducing education			
Father education rank	0.18***		0.10***
	(0.00)		(0.00)
Father social capital rank		0.08***	0.07***
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.10***	0.08***
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank		0.10***	0.05***
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls		X	X
R^2	0.028	0.149	0.154

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. Panel A introduces the father's wealth rank, measured as their percentile rank in their cohort-specific wealth distribution at age 50. Wealth is measured by net wealth (gross wealth minus debt). Panel B introduces the father's education rank, measured as their percentile rank in their cohort-specific education distribution. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Panel A: number of observations: 208,018; mean of the dependent variable: 53.57. Panel B: number of observations: 210,023; mean of the dependent variable: 53.53. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.18: Child income rank, entropy balanced

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Father social capital rank	0.17***			0.13***	0.10***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.19***		0.15***	0.12***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.17***		0.11***
			(0.00)		(0.00)
R^2	0.025	0.027	0.029	0.039	0.050

Notes: Entropy-balanced OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. Entropy balancing reweights observations to match the covariate distribution of high social capital fathers (above 75th percentile) to that of low social capital fathers (below 25th percentile). Balancing covariates include child's year of birth, gender, number of siblings, father's age at birth, mother's age at birth, immigration background, and county of birth. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. The father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 173,957. Mean of the dependent variable: 52.80. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.19: Child income rank and parental top-tail inputs

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Top Decile Inputs						
Father top 10% social capital	8.80***			6.44***	4.64***	4.60***
	(0.18)			(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.18)
Father top 10% earner		8.70***		6.98***	5.35***	5.19***
		(0.16)		(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.16)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.11***	0.11***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.011	0.013	0.020	0.019	0.030	0.143
Panel B: Top Ventile Inputs						
Father top 5% social capital	9.29***			6.85***	4.90***	4.84***
	(0.24)			(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.24)
Father top 5% earner		9.80***		8.10***	6.03***	5.83***
		(0.22)		(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.22)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.12***	0.12***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.007	0.009	0.020	0.013	0.027	0.141

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational mobility regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Father top earner is a binary indicator equal to 1 if the father's income is in the top decile (Panel A) or top ventile (Panel B) of their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. Father top social capital is a binary indicator equal to 1 if the father's social capital is in the top decile (Panel A) or top ventile (Panel B) of their cohort-specific distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.53. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.20: Child top-tail status and and parental top-tail inputs

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Child top 10% earner (×100)						
Father top 10% social capital	9.09***			6.46***	5.31***	5.30***
	(0.21)			(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.21)
Father top 10% earner		9.52***		7.80***	6.75***	6.68***
		(0.18)		(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.19)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.11***		0.07***	0.07***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.009	0.013	0.009	0.017	0.020	0.064
Panel B: Child top 5% earner (×100)						
Father top 5% social capital	6.19***			4.39***	3.69***	3.69***
	(0.20)			(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.20)
Father top 5% earner		7.08***		5.99***	5.26***	5.20***
		(0.18)		(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.06***		0.04***	0.04***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.005	0.007	0.005	0.010	0.012	0.036

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational mobility regressions. The dependent variable in Panel A is a binary indicator (multiplied by 100) equal to 100 if the child's income is in the top decile of their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. The dependent variable in Panel B is defined analogously for the top ventile. Father top earner is a binary indicator equal to 1 if the father's income is in the top decile (Panel A) or top ventile (Panel B) of their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. Father top social capital is a binary indicator equal to 1 if the father's social capital is in the top decile (Panel A) or top ventile (Panel B) of their cohort-specific distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 11.14 (Panel A), 5.52 (Panel B). Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.21: Lottery winners, without lottery control

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Panel A: Child social capital rank							
Father social capital rank		0.22***			0.21***	0.19***	0.19***
		(0.01)			(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father income rank			0.12***		0.07***	0.06***	0.06***
			(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father cognitive ability rank				0.14***		0.08***	0.08***
				(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)
Demographic controls							X
R^2		0.049	0.015	0.023	0.054	0.062	0.068
Panel B: Child income rank							
Father social capital rank		0.16***			0.12***	0.11***	0.11***
		(0.01)			(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father income rank			0.17***		0.14***	0.12***	0.11***
			(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Father cognitive ability rank				0.13***		0.08***	0.07***
				(0.01)		(0.01)	(0.01)
Demographic controls							X
R^2		0.019	0.022	0.015	0.033	0.038	0.136

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. Both panels exclude the lottery control; the sample is restricted to the same lottery winners as above. Panel A: the dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Panel B: the dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970, and to children with at least one parental lottery win during childhood. Panel A: number of observations: 6,887; mean of the dependent variable: 54.33. Panel B: number of observations: 6,887; mean of the dependent variable: 48.28. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.22: Child income rank, continuous measures of social capital

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.16***			0.12***	0.09***	0.10***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.16***		0.11***	0.09***	0.08***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.09***	0.09***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.024	0.019	0.020	0.031	0.037	0.151

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Similarly, the father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining four continuous measures: education rank (by average income rank at 35), occupation (by median wage), wage rank within firm (restricting to firms of at least 10 workers), and neighborhood rank (by our leave-one-out score, see Section 3.4). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.53. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.23: Child income rank, measuring social capital by age 50

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.17***			0.12***	0.09***	0.09***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.16***		0.13***	0.11***	0.10***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.10***	0.10***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.014	0.020	0.020	0.026	0.035	0.146

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Similarly, the father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). We consider the maximum value of each indicator by age 50. The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 179,191. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.40. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.24: Child income rank, sum of social capital proxies

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.14***			0.11***	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.16***		0.13***	0.10***	0.10***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.10***	0.10***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.016	0.019	0.020	0.027	0.035	0.149

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Similarly, the father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is the sum of six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.53. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.25: Child income rank, mean of social capital proxies

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.14***			0.11***	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.16***		0.13***	0.10***	0.10***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.10***	0.10***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.016	0.019	0.020	0.027	0.035	0.149

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Similarly, the father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is the mean of six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.53. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.26: Child income rank, equal-weighted standardized index of social capital

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.14***			0.10***	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.16***		0.13***	0.10***	0.10***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.14***		0.10***	0.10***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.016	0.019	0.020	0.027	0.035	0.148

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Similarly, the father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is an equal-weighted standardized index (Anderson 2008, GLS) combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for marriage or cohabitation at 35, country of origin, and number of children at age 35, all measured for the father, and child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 210,023. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.53. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A.27: Correlations between child (Y) and Father (X) social capital proxies

	Elite education	Elite occupation	Executive position	C-suite position	Elite position	Elite tract
Elite education	0.209	0.100	0.042	0.025	0.043	0.093
Elite occupation	0.050	0.077	0.041	0.021	0.031	0.043
Executive position	0.001	0.022	0.055	0.004	0.000	0.018
C-suite position	0.001	0.005	0.008	0.004	-0.001	0.007
Elite position	0.009	0.016	-0.002	0.007	0.030	0.008
Elite tract	0.129	0.093	0.058	0.027	0.042	0.269

Notes: Each cell reports the pairwise correlation between a child social capital proxy (row) and the corresponding father social capital proxy (column). Elite education indicates attendance at a top-ranked higher education institution; Elite occupation indicates employment in an occupation with median income above the 90th percentile of the occupation income distribution; Executive position indicates a senior management role; C-suite position indicates a top executive position in a firm ranked among the top 100 firms by profit; Elite position indicates a leadership position in a firm ranked among the top 100 firms by profit; Elite tract indicates residence in a census tract in the top decile of the neighborhood social capital distribution. All measures are constructed as the maximum observed value over the 2003–2020 observation window. The sample is restricted to children born 1932–1988 and fathers born 1950–1970, with non-missing values for child income rank, father social capital rank, father income rank, father cognitive ability rank, and demographic controls. Sample size: N = 210,012.

Table A.28: Child income rank, adoption sample restrictions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Father social capital rank	0.14***			0.11***	0.08***	0.08***
	(0.00)			(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father income rank		0.16***		0.13***	0.10***	0.10***
		(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Father cognitive ability rank			0.15***		0.10***	0.10***
			(0.00)		(0.00)	(0.00)
Demographic controls						X
R^2	0.016	0.019	0.022	0.028	0.036	0.153

Notes: OLS estimates of intergenerational rank-rank regressions. The dependent variable is the child's percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Similarly, the father's income rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific income distribution at age 35. Income is measured as total taxable income above 1G. The father's social capital rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific social capital distribution. Social capital is a standardized weighted index combining six elite indicators (elite education, elite occupation, executive position, c-suite position, leadership role in a top-100 firm by profit, and elite neighborhood). The father's cognitive ability rank is their percentile rank in their cohort-specific distribution of military conscription test scores. Demographic controls include a binary indicator for child gender. The sample restricts to children born before 1988 to fathers born between 1950 and 1970. Number of observations: 274,620. Mean of the dependent variable: 53.68. Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.