Comparing Elites Across Countries: Formation & Discourses

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Comparing elites across countries: formation & discourses

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Outline of Presentation

1. Introduction
2. Elites: theories and comparison.
3. Our approach to measuring and comparing Elite formation Systems
4. Analysis & Results
5. Discussion & Conclusions
1 Introduction
Dr. Brendan K. O’Rourke (Research Fellow) Business Scholar focussed on the construction of business and economic objects including enterprise, strategy, & creativity. Expertise in economic discourses, business discourse and elites.
www.brendankorourke.com/

Dr. John Hogan – Political scientist with expertise in lobbying regulation, measuring policy change and elite studies.
www.johnhogan.net
Examples of recent & current projects

Hogan, J., Feeney, S. & O'Rourke, B. K., (ongoing). Universities and Elite Formation of Irish and UK Cabinet Ministers.


Albert Veksler  (Postgrad. Research Student & Consultant) – Examining the reasons for introduction and nature of lobbying regulation.

Martin Duffy  (Postgrad. Research Student & Consultant)  
Tracing discourses across a system of a year of organisational meetings

Joseph K FitzGerald (Postgrad. Research Student & Lecturer) Constructions of economics experts in radio news interactions
2 Elites: theories and comparison
Elites are interesting

‘Small minorities who appear to play an exceptionally influential part in political and social affairs’ (Parry, 1967, p. 12).

Lot of interest across the social sciences (Hartmann, 2007; Mills, 2000; Mosca, 1939; Pareto, 1935)
Renewed interest as role of elites seen as important in the economic crisis of 2008 and responses to it (McBride & Whiteside, 2011; Rafter, 2014)

Thought to be particularly important in communication of policy frames & ideas, with danger of group think (Janis, 1983; O’Rourke & Hogan, 2013)
Elite formation

Are elite formed through a meritocratic struggle between people of diverse backgrounds competing with each other that ensures the cream rises to the top?

Or are certain formation institutes ‘concealing social selections under the guise of technical selection and legitimating the reproductions of the social hierarchies’ (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990)?
Elite formation in France:

“These universities accept only a few hundred students each year. Last year, for example, 116 students were accepted for the ENA, 380 for the HEC, and 400 for the École Polytechnique...

... Two of France's recent presidents (Giscard d'Estaing and Chirac) and six of 11 prime ministers have been ENA alumni. In addition, three other prime ministers had attended one of the other Grandes écoles.”

(Hartman, 2007,p.61-64)
Elite formation in the UK

• 29 UK ‘public’ schools ‘make up the "Eton and Rugby Groups" which are attended by only 0.5 per mill of a cohort… 
  ….Since 1945 the percentage of permanent secretaries who attended public schools has remained constant at over 60 percent – regardless of the party in power – reaching a maximum of 66 percent for the years 1979 to 1994. 
  (Hartmann, 2007 p.66-p.69)
3. Our approach to measuring and comparing Elite formation Systems
The eliteness of the system of institutions in formation of an elite societal group is a combination the degree of **influence** and **exclusivity** of institutions in that system. Influence could be great, but without exclusivity you don’t have eliteness.

e.g. Being raised a Roman Catholic in Ireland

Exclusivity could be great but without influence - no eliteness

e.g. Being born in Ireland at a minute past midnight on January 1st
• The **Influence** of an institution depends on how many of its affiliates are members of the elite societal group concerned, and the fewness of such institutions.

• **Exclusivity** of an institution is the degree to which being socialised there is an uncommon experience (e.g. proportion of all Irish schoolchildren attending Blackrock College).
To measure the **Influence** of a formation institution we count $m_i$ (the number of affiliates of the $i^{th}$ institute) that are members of the elite in question.

e.g. we counted how many of Blackrock College alumni become members of the Irish cabinet

and we related this to the total number of members of the Irish cabinet ($M$) in the period concerned
Exclusiveness Index

\[
X = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} 1 - \left(\frac{p_i}{P}\right)^{0.5}}{n}
\]

Where \( X \) is our Exclusiveness Index
\( P \) is the total number in the relevant general population
\( p_i \) is the number of the relevant general population in the \( i^{th} \) institution
\( n \) is the number of institutions

\( X \)-Index increases towards 1 if an elite school like Eton halves its intake
To measure the **exclusivity** of a formation institution we count \( p \) number in the relevant general population, \( p_i \) (the number of the relevant general population in the \( i^{th} \) institution), and \( n \) the number of such institutions.

e.g. we related how many pupils there were in the country, the number of pupils in each school and we related this to the number of such schools in the country
Institutional Influence Index

$I = \sum_{i=1}^{i=n} \left( \frac{m_i}{M} \right)^2$

Where  

- $I$ is our Institutional Influence Index  
- $n$ = number of formation institutions  
- $m_i$ = the number of affiliates of the $i^{th}$ institute that are members of the elite in question  
- $M$ is the total number of members of that elite

$I$ goes towards 1 if a greater proportion of ministers are graduates of any one school, or if there are fewer schools involved in producing elite.
To measure Eliteness (E) of a formation system we combine the influence and exclusivity:

\[
E = \sum_{i=1}^{i=m} \left( \frac{m_i}{M} \right)^2 \left( 1 - \left( \frac{p_i}{P} \right)^{0.5} \right)
\]
4 Analysis & Results
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Eliteness Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>0.0109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>0.0253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- UK post-primary school system - more than twice elite as Irish system
- Consistent with other investigations (e.g., Hartmann, 2009).
Influence Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I-Index*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>0.0114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>0.0257</td>
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</table>

Reflects the impressionistic evidence
Exclusivity

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• A more intuitive measure would be how unusual it is for members of a relevant general population to be part of an elite forming institution.
Sample of some of our UK calculations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>$m_i$</th>
<th>pk</th>
<th>$(m_i/M)^2$</th>
<th>Elite school count</th>
<th>$P_k/P$</th>
<th>$\sqrt{P_k/\sum P}$</th>
<th>$1 - \sqrt{P_k/\sum P}$</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>47</td>
<td>1316</td>
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<td>672</td>
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<td>0.013720371</td>
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<td>831</td>
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<td>747</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5 Discussion + Conclusions
We now have a way of comparing eliteness formation across systems. This allows us address questions such as

(1) Are some formation systems more elite than others?
(2) Is the eliteness of a system more dependent on influence or exclusiveness?
(3) Are policy decisions related to the eliteness of formation systems?
How does an elite talk about its elite formation?

How do the general public talk about the elite?

How does an elite’s policy discourse differ from the non-elite, if at all?
Thank you!

Please talk to us if you are interested in pursuing postgrad research.
References


Hogan, J., & O'Rourke, B. K. (Forthcoming 2015). A discursive institutionalist approach to understanding the changes to Irish industrial policy during the 1980s In M. Howlett & J. Hogan (Eds.), *Policy Paradigms in Theory and Practice: Discourses, Ideas and Anomalies in Public Policy Dynamics*. London Palgrave.


