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## Comparing Elites Across Countries: Formation & Discourses

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# Comparing elites across countries: formation & discourses

Presentation to Masters in International Business, Dublin  
Institute of Technology, February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2015

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# Outline of Presentation

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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/](http://www.brendankorourke.com/)



**Dr. John Hogan** – Political scientist with expertise in lobbying regulation, measuring policy change and elite studies.

[www.johnhogan.net](http://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.

Duffy, M., & O'Rourke, B. K. (forthcoming 2015). A Systemic view of Meetings – Windows on Organization Collective Minding. In J. A. J.A. Allen, N. Lehmann-Willenbrock & S. G. Rogelberg (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Meeting Science* (April 11, 2014 ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

FitzGerald, J. K., & O'Rourke, B. K. (2014). *Exploring Economists & Society: Constructing expert identity*. Paper presented at the European Group for Organizational Studies, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

O'Rourke, B. K., Hogan, J., & Donnelly, P. F. (2015). Developing an Elite Formation Index for Comparative Elite Studies: The Case of the Schooling of Irish and UK Cabinet Ministers. *Politics*, 35(1), 3-18. doi: 10.1111/1467-9256.12071

O'Rourke, B. K., & Hogan, J. (2014). Guaranteeing failure: neoliberal discourse in the Irish economic crisis. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 19(1), 41-59. doi: 10.1080/13569317.2013.869456

O'Rourke, B. K. (2014). Learning from interacting: Language, economics and the entrepreneur. *On the Horizon: Special Issue on Language and Economics*, 22 (4), 245 - 255. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/OTH-01-2014-0002>



**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



**Diane Tagney** – (Postgrad. Research Student & Consultant) Different experts interacting creatively in a science gallery.



**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  $i^{\text{th}}$  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  $i^{\text{th}}$  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  $i^{\text{th}}$  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  $i^{\text{th}}$  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 :**

$$E = \sum_{i=1}^{i=n} \left( \frac{m_i}{M} \right)^2 \left( 1 - \left( \frac{p_i}{P} \right)^{0.5} \right)$$

# 4 Analysis & Results

# Eliteness Scores

<b>Ireland</b>	0.0109
<b>United Kingdom</b>	0.0253

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



# Influence Scores

	<b>I-Index*</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	0.0114
<b>United Kingdom</b>	0.0257

Reflects the impressionistic evidence

# Exclusivity

Ireland	<b>0.96</b>
United Kingdom	<b>0.98</b>

- 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

Data Supplement B - United Kingdom Calculations for O'Rourke, Hogan & Donnelly (under review for *Politics*) studies: The case of the schooling Irish

and UK cabinet ministers'. 'Developing an elite formation index for comparative elite

Total relevant population =		4249700	Note: Notation explained in paper.						
Total number of Cabinet minister =		336							
Formula			$I = \sum_{i=1}^k (i-1)^k$			$XE = \left[ \sum_{k=1}^n (k-1)^k \right] \cdot [1 - (0.985330768)]$		$E = \sum_{i=1}^k (i-1)^k$	
Totals		285	156185	0.025696216	162	0.036752006	2.37641553	159.6235845	0.0252659
School Name	$m_i$	$pk$	$(m_i/M)^2$	Elite school count	$Pk/P$	SqRt of (Pk/SumP)	$1 - [\text{SqRt of (Pk/SumP)}]$	E	
Eton College	47	1316	0.019566681	1	0.000309669	0.017597412	0.982402588	0.019222358	
Winchester College	13	672	0.001496953	1	0.000158129	0.012574928	0.987425072	0.001478129	
Harrow School	10	800	0.000885771	1	0.000188249	0.013720371	0.986279629	0.000873618	
Rugby School	6	831	0.000318878	1	0.000195543	0.013983677	0.986016323	0.000314418	
Westminster School	6	747	0.000318878	1	0.000175777	0.013258096	0.986741904	0.00031465	
Charterhouse	5	800	0.000221443	1	0.000188249	0.013720371	0.986279629	0.000218404	
George Watsons College	4	2300	0.000141723	1	0.000541215	0.023264021	0.976735979	0.000138426	
Nottingham High School	4	1013	0.000141723	1	0.00023837	0.015439228	0.984560772	0.000139535	
Wellington College	4	1000	0.000141723	1	0.000235311	0.015339841	0.984660159	0.000139549	
St. Paul's School	4	850	0.000141723	1	0.000200014	0.014142635	0.985857365	0.000139719	
Fettes College	4	670	0.000141723	1	0.000157658	0.012556201	0.987443799	0.000139944	
Dulwich College	3	1500	7.97194E-05	1	0.000352966	0.018787392	0.981212608	7.82217E-05	
Glasgow Academy	3	1300	7.97194E-05	1	0.000305904	0.01749011	0.98250989	7.83251E-05	
Haverstock School	3	1280	7.97194E-05	1	0.000301198	0.017355049	0.982644951	7.83359E-05	
Brentwood School	3	1121	7.97194E-05	1	0.000263783	0.016241408	0.983758592	7.84246E-05	
Marlborough College	3	872	7.97194E-05	1	0.000205191	0.014324488	0.985675512	7.85774E-05	
Clifton College	3	720	7.97194E-05	1	0.000169424	0.013016287	0.986983713	7.86817E-05	
Radley College	3	670	7.97194E-05	1	0.000157658	0.012556201	0.987443799	7.87184E-05	
Manchester Grammar School	2	1480	3.54308E-05	1	0.00034826	0.018661722	0.981338278	3.47696E-05	
Highgate School	2	1442	3.54308E-05	1	0.000339318	0.018420588	0.981579412	3.47782E-05	
Whitgift School	2	1283	3.54308E-05	1	0.000301904	0.017375375	0.982624625	3.48152E-05	
Dunoon Grammar School	2	1030	3.54308E-05	1	0.00024237	0.015568238	0.984431762	3.48792E-05	

# **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.



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