Globalization, Elites and Social Mobility

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the effects of globalization on the market for elites. In this paper, I show that globalization will lead to tighter class stratification and to a reduction in social mobility at the top. Globalization will bring about the formation of an international technocratic elite with its own culture, norms, ethos, and identity, as well as its private clubs like the Davos World Economic Forum. Globalization will lead to a strong reduction of social mobility at the top and the emergence of a transnational oligarchy.

Keywords: globalization, education, elites, meritocracy, recruitment, social mobility, stratification.
JEL classification: I21, O15, O40.

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Introduction

Over the recent past, globalization has been blamed for many negative externalities especially in the field of inequality. The literature on inequality has shown that globalization might make the poor even poorer, can worsen working conditions, and might lead to polarization and to an increase in inequality within countries. This paper will focus on a related topic: It will focus on the effect of globalization on inequality, on social mobility at the top, and on the way elites are recruited.

The aim of this paper is to examine the evolution of recruitment of elites due to globalization. In the last century, the main change that occurred in the way the Western world trained its elites is that meritocracy became the basis for their recruitment. Although meritocratic selection should result in the best being chosen, it was shown that meritocratic recruitment may actually lead to class stratification and auto-recruitment.

In this paper, I show that due to globalization, the stratification effect will be even stronger. Globalization has two main effects on the recruitment and training of elites. In its first phase, globalization, and especially globalization of education, creates a new collection of elites and elicits changes in the social structure accordingly.

Yet, later on, the unity and uniformity of the elite increases, not only at the national level but also at the global level. National elites are replaced by a worldwide elite, along with uniformity in culture and education. This paper will emphasize the dynamics of the emergence of transnational elites, and their effect on the economy.

The paper is divided in five parts. In the following part of the paper, I analyze the training and recruitment of national and transnational elites during the 20th century and at present. I show the importance and impact of training in elite universities as regards the recruitment of the transnational elites, which has developed due to globalization.

In part III, I present succinctly the effects of meritocratic recruitment on social mobility, based on previous research which shows that recruitment to a university via a meritocratic method based on entrance exams does not lead to enrollment from all classes of society according to distribution or ability, nor does it necessarily bring about the admission of the most talented.

In Part IV of the paper, I analyze the effects of globalization on recruitment of elites. I show that the stratification effect will be even stronger. Part V concludes
II. Training and Recruitment of
National and transnational Elites during the 20th century

Globalization has led to the development of a transnational elite. This part will examine the main characteristic of this elite compared to the national one. It should be noted that the recruitment of national elites during the 20th century changed dramatically after World War II. In all countries, there was a desire on the part of politicians to “democratize” the elite, and consequently, significant reforms were introduced in the way the elites were recruited, as well as in their education. At that time, society faced three main changes. The first was that the elites became educated; the second is that the elite started to be recruited mainly through elite schools; and the third that these elite schools selected their students using meritocratic exams.

1. Education and training of national elites and transnational elites

The first undeniable fact is that education became a must for the elites. It is therefore not surprising to observe a convergence in the percent of business elite members who have university or equivalent degrees, to 100% over time (see figure 1). However, there were differences between countries, which can be explained by different traditions. In countries wherein firms were usually not family-owned, but rather state-owned, or financed by stocks and run by CEOs, recruits will have gone through more training than in countries where most firms are family-owned enterprises. This explains that the UK elite had relatively less education than others.

This phenomenon is even stronger with regard to the transnational elites.1 Business transnational elites are all educated, while the political elite is still comprised of some 3% without higher education, but among those 55 or younger, all are educated (see Table 1). It is interesting to note that only 36% of the business elites are younger than 55. This is not very different for the political elites, where only 39% of them are 55 or younger.

Education, therefore, has become essential for belonging to the elite, and is the entry ticket into the business and political elite. Is there a clear specific training path that can be demarcated so as to become a member of the elite? It seems that there is no clear pattern for the training of elites. In England, where business leaders come from economics, law, sciences, or the arts, it is not clear what “ticket” is best for advancement; while in France, engineering was clearly as the necessary training; and in Germany, it was either law or the sciences, although over time, we see some sort of convergence in the training of the elites (see Figure 2).

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1 Since the transnational elites meet in Davos, the data on transnational elites refer to the people who attended the Davos meeting of 2009. The data on national elites refers to CEOs of top companies (for instance, Fortune 500 for the US, and CAC 40 for France).
In the recruitment of the national political elites, there is no doubt that networking leads to concentration of specific training. In the US, the political elite is trained as lawyers (Obama, Clinton, Joe Biden, Leon Panetta). Moreover, over half of US senators practised law. This is also the case in many other countries of Europe. For instance, in Germany, a third of the Bundestag’s members are lawyers, and in France, 9 of 16 members of French cabinet of President Sarkozy were lawyers. It seems that in democracies, lawyers dominate. But, this is not the case in China: The Chinese political elite is mostly trained as engineers.

The training of the transnational elites present a different pattern (see Table 3). The political elites are mostly trained in Economics and Law. It is quite striking that 38% of them have a degree in Economics. The business elite is trained mostly in Business and Management (39%). An MBA seems to open the door to the top. However, it is not clear whether over time, there will be a clear pattern, and whether there is an optimal training path for the elites.

2. Education of National and transnational elites in Elites schools

The second point is that elites started to be educated in elite schools during the second half of the twentieth century. At the same time that a “democratization” of higher education took place, reflected by an enormous increase in the number of university students, there was a concurrent emergence of two channels of education: one for the elite and the other for the rest.

For entering the elites, in France, one needs to be an alumnus of a French grande école; in England to belong to an English public school or of Oxbridge; and in the US, in an ivy league university. This imbued a strong feeling of belonging to the elite and laid the foundations for vast networks of relationships.

Starting with the US, the evolution was described by Temin: “I was able to identify the colleges attended by 454 CEOs of the Fortune 500 companies. All current business leaders on whom I could find information attended college..and almost one-fifth graduated from the Ivy League” (Temin, 1999a, p.32).

In France, despite a different system of recruitment, the situation is somewhat similar. The grandes écoles (GE) and especially the ENA play a role similar to the Ivy Leagues universities in the US: they are elite schools, and very selective.

It is striking that this selection is even stronger for the transnational elites. Among the political elites in the world, 35% of them are recruited in elite universities, which we define

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2 Of the 800 chief executives running the largest US public companies in 2003, 87 had MBAs from the three top business schools - Harvard, Stanford and Wharton (see Forbes Global, October 13, 2003, p.28).

3 In the US, university applicants take the SATs, and those earning the highest scores are usually admitted to the elite universities. Of 2,000 colleges, 50 are considered elite colleges (including the “Ivy League”). In contrast, in France, of 450,000 students who obtain the Baccalauréat, only 36,000 enter the classes préparatoires, from which only 10,000 will reach the first rank of grandes écoles in the next couple of years. So in the US, the relative numbers of such “favorites of fortune” are higher than the graduates of the ENA and the grandes écoles.
as the 50 top universities in the world (the list is presented in Table 3). For the business elite, the recruitment is even tighter: 47% of them have graduated from an elite university. Focusing only on OECD countries, we can observe that 50% of the business elite come from elite universities (see Table 2).

This very thin recruitment base of elites is striking. It means that there is one obvious way to enter the elites, either political or business: that is by getting a degree from the top 50 universities in the world. However, \textit{a priori}, this thin recruitment base does not necessarily lead to stratification. We could believe that these universities are recruiting in a meritocratic way, and therefore all the strata of the society are integrated in these elite universities. In the next section, I present the way elite schools select their students.

3. Recruitment by Meritocracy

The changes in the way elite universities picked their students took place first in the US, mainly during the 1940s. Until then, there was a group of people who constituted the Establishment: they were male, white, and Protestant. They were the elite, their children attended the elite universities, and few others could attain any power.\footnote{See Miller (1949, 1950). Taussig and Joslyn (1932, p. 240) have shown that in 1930, 80% of the business leaders came from the top 7% of the population.} Indeed, education at an Ivy League university was the entry ticket to the elites of all kinds (except the political elite, which was more a melting pot), and before 1936, recruitment to universities was based on family and geography.

There was a need to replace the “aristocratic” and non-democratic elite with a “brainy” one that would lead the country.

This wish to find the “natural aristocracy” was not specific to the US, and had equivalents in Europe, especially in France. However, the American meritocratic way of selecting the most intelligent in order to recruit the best public servants, and let them run the country is different from the French one. While France opted for the system of the \textit{grande\'es \textsc{\text{\`e}}coles} already existing, and that were based upon achievement exams, the US adopted SAT exams.

The SAT, or Scholastic Aptitude Test (itself an adaptation of the army intelligence test called the Army Alpha) was developed at Princeton University, and placed the emphasis for university admissions on aptitude instead of achievement. The system was slowly adopted by all universities. Standardized tests provided the basis for selection to elite universities.

However, despite the wish to democratize selection, over time, it became clear that SAT scores were correlated with family education and wealth.\footnote{Research on the variables affecting SAT results is numerous. See in particular Bouchard and McGue (1981), Neal and Johnson (1996), and also Hernnstein and Murray (1994).} Temin has shown that the US economic elite is still overwhelmingly made up of white Protestant males, a significant number of whom were educated at Ivy League institutions. The picture has not changed
significantly from c. 1900: “The American business elite comes from elite families”, just like in France or Britain.⁶

In France, the system is different but the results are similar. In order to enter a grande école, there is a competitive exam (concours), and the number of candidates accepted every year is fixed.⁷

The grandes écoles have, over time, become increasingly important to the recruitment of the French business elite. From 1920 onwards, over 50% of a sample among the leaders of French industry had graduated from engineering schools, and the percentage had reached 70% in 1939. According to Lévy-Leboyer (1979, Table 6. pp. 160-1), amongst a cohort of business leaders over the period 1912-79, 29% of them had graduated from Polytechnique.

A very specific grande école, which has over time become the most elitist of the elite schools, is the ENA. This school is the main channel for recruiting the elite. Forty-seven percent of the heads of the 200 largest French companies in 1993 came from the civil service, and have been through ENA. In 1997, 55% of the leaders of French CAC 40 firms came from the civil service.⁸ It is also the entry to the political elite. Indeed, from 1980 onwards, 35 percent of ministers had attended ENA.⁹

As for the democratization of recruitment, after World War II the first few promotions were open to all classes and open to reform. At that time, the ENA was synonymous with innovation and new blood in the administration, and there was a feeling that only the best were chosen. Twenty years later, however, it was apparent that recruitment was sociologically and geographically narrow. The proportion of students in the ENA whose parents belonged to the elite (8% of population) was 44% in 1950, and rose to 63% in 1980.¹⁰

Thus, starting in the 1970s, an auto-recruitment of the ruling class has taken place, since 8% of the population supplies 63% of the ENA students, or the next generation of rulers.

In conclusion, from World War II onwards, the path to elite positions has required attendance at an exclusive school or university, in which recruitment is based on meritocracy.

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⁶ (Temin 1999a., p.33). Although the percent of workers entering the elite class in the 1960s was double in the US as compared to Britain, France and Germany (Blau and Ducan, 1967). As noted by Temin (1999a, p.32) and Kingston and Lewis (1990, p.111): “Approximately one quarter of 1986 college freshmen at highly selective universities come from families with incomes over $100,000, that is, from the extreme upper tail of the income distribution.” It should be noted that this lack of change in the economic elite occurred despite the fact that the makeup of the political elite has markedly changed over the century.

⁷ In all these schools, the number of entrants was, and is not large: the students admitted per year in the five biggest engineering schools were 320 in 1860, and 1176 over the period 1919-1932 (see Lévy-Leboyer, 1979, p.152).

⁸ See Baverez, 1998. It includes the shares of the 40 most important firms in France, the French Dow-Jones.

⁹ Presidents Giscard d’Estaing and Chirac, Prime Ministers Laurent Fabius, Michel Rocard, Alain Juppé and Lionel Jospin also went to ENA. But not President Nicolas Sarkozy!!

¹⁰ See Gaillard (1995, pp. 105-108). However, each graduating class includes a few persons from modest backgrounds, some of whom go on to brilliant careers.
In the next section, we present the model which stress why elites are auto-recruited. We show that recruitment to elite universities by meritocratic exams might be the cause of this stability of elites. This model will permit to develop in Section IV the effects of globalization on auto-recruitment.

III. The effects of meritocratic recruitment on social stratification

In this section, we present the model for the national elite. It is based on Brezis and Crouzet, 2006.

We first show that recruitment to a university via a meritocratic method based on entrance exams does not lead to enrollment from all classes of society according to distribution or ability, nor does it necessarily lead to the admission of the most talented. Recruitment by entrance exam still encompasses a bias in favor of elite candidates, because this type of exam requires a pattern of aptitude and thinking that favors candidates from an elite background.

The first result is that even a slight cultural bias can lead to more than half of students enrolled in elite universities coming from an elite background. This cultural bias, which can be included in the typology of environmental factors, has a magnification effect on class stratification. Therefore the resulting student body is a mostly homogeneous group that is not as open as it should be to the non-elite public, despite the meritocratic selection method of the elite universities. In other words, we show that an elite education leads to a “non-circulation of elites”.

Although meritocratic selection should result in the best being chosen to enter the top ranks of public service or business, the framework described herein allows us to show that elite schools and universities have a tendency to recruit in a non-diversified way, resulting in certain classes being over-represented.

A. The basic framework

Let us denote $P_c$, the population of students who have finished high school and would like to enter elite universities, and $E_c$, the population of students who belongs to the elite milieu, and wish to enter elite schools. We denote $E_s$ as the population of students belonging to the elite milieu who entered the elite schools, and $P_s$ the whole population of students who entered the elite schools. In consequence the ratio of potential students from elite milieu to the potential student population, $P_{ep}$ is:

$$P_{ep} = E_c/P_c$$  \hspace{1cm} (1)

11 In this paper, we do not include heredity (emphasized by Herrnstein and Murray, 1994) as one of the factors leading to class stratification, but only environmental factors as cultural bias.
and the ratio of students belonging to the elite milieu who entered the elite schools to the
total student population, denoted $P_{es}$ is:

$$P_{es} = \frac{E_s}{P_s}. \quad (2)$$

Denoting as $\beta$ the ratio of the percentage of the elite children in the elite school over the
percentage of elite in the total population, then:

$$\beta = \frac{P_{es}}{P_{ep}} \quad (3)$$

$\beta$ is in fact the parameter which measures the amount of auto-recruitment and
stratification in the economy. When $\beta$ is 1, then the percent of children from the elite milieu
in these elite schools is equal to the percentage of the elite in the population, which means
that there is no auto-recruitment and the system is totally democratic. When $\beta$ is greater than
1, that is $P_{es}$ is greater than $P_{ep}$, there is auto-recruitment; and the bigger $\beta$, the greater
the stratification effect in this economy. We will now show, how meritocratic exams affect $\beta$.

We define $I_E [0,1]$ as the minimum grade necessary to be accepted to the school. If the
grade $\alpha_i$ of student $i$ is greater than $I$ he is accepted to the elite school:

$$\alpha_i > I. \quad (4)$$

The performance of a student on the test is based on two elements. The first is his
ability; more able students get better grades at their exams. We assume that the ability $\alpha_i$ for
all students is uniformly distributed on $[0,1]$, i.e., whatever the social class, the ability is
distributed uniformly.\(^{12}\)

The second element takes into consideration that tests are not perfectly objective, but
reflect a culture related to the milieu of the elite with which the examiners for a school are
associated. Therefore, students with an equivalent ability, but who are born to the elite and
raised in this milieu, will perform better on tests.

The grade of student $i$ who is not part of the “elite milieu” corresponds to his inherent
ability, while the grade of a student from a family in the elite incorporates not only his
ability, but also the cultural background from his family -- the inside knowledge specific to
the elite milieu, which we define as $f$.

Without loss of generality, we assume that the relation is linear, the grade the student
receives is therefore:

\[^{12}\text{As mentioned above, the bias is only due to cultural background. We are aware that some empirical results show that ability is not uniformly distributed (Herrnstein and Murray, 1994), and some theoretical models explaining why effort, and therefore ability, would be different in the different social classes (see Durlauf, 1999, and Arrow et al., 2000). However, the assumption that ability is uniformly distributed is often adopted in models on mobility.}\]
\[ \alpha_i = a_i \quad \text{for student } i \text{ outside the elite system,} \]
\[ a_i + f \quad \text{for student } i \text{ being raised in the milieu.} \]

Since for the whole population, the success is only due to ability, then the percentage of accepted students from the entire population denoted \( \gamma_p \) is 1-I:

\[ \gamma_p = P_s / P_c = 1 - I = \lambda. \]

where \( \lambda \) is defined as \( \lambda = 1 - I \). \( \lambda \) is a factor that represents the tightness of enrolment. We will show that \( \lambda \) affects the size of the stratification effect.

For the students of elites milieu, \( f \) affects the percentage of accepted students, \( \gamma_E \), which is:

\[ \gamma_E = E_s / E_c = 1 - I + f = \lambda + f \]

Recall that \( \beta \) is the ratio of the percentage of the elite children in the elite school over the percentage of elite in the total population, then:

\[ \beta = P_{es} / P_{ep} = \gamma_E / \gamma_p \]

Therefore:

\[ \beta = (1 - I + f) / (1 - I) = 1 + \frac{f}{\lambda} \]

Equation (9) shows that \( \beta \) is a function of \( f \) and \( \lambda \). As explained earlier, \( \beta \) is the parameter which measures the amount of auto-recruitment and stratification in the economy; when \( \beta \) is greater than 1, we get a decrease in diversity of elites and an auto-recruitment. This framework permits us to show that a very small cultural bias (small \( f \)) will lead to a strong effect on class stratification, as underlined in the next proposition:

B. The Results

Proposition 1

A school for elites based on meritocracy leads to class stratification. A small cultural bias, \( f \), brings about that children born in the elite are represented by much higher percentages than their ratio to the population: There is a magnification effect.

This proposition states that stratification is a consequence of the advantage to the students raised in the elite milieu due to their cultural background, \( f \). To give a sense of magnitude to our parameters: for \( f \) of 0.07, we get that \( \beta = 8 \) (by assuming that \( I = 0.99 \), which is the case in most countries). An \( f \) of 0.07 means that the milieu gives an advantage
of 7% (which does not seem a large number). It seems very reasonable to assume that children raised in the elite get an advantage around 10%.

A stratification effect, $\beta$, of 8 means that the percentage of children from the elite milieu who are accepted is 8 times higher than the percentage of children from the total population. In other words, if the elite represents 8% of the population ($P_{ep}$), then the elite milieu will supply 64% of the students in the elite schools ($P_{es}$). This matches perfectly the facts found for France, since in part II we have shown that 8% of the population supplies 63% of the ENA students, which corresponds to a $\beta$ of 8. So a small advantage for the elite milieu of 7% leads to a major auto-recruitment effect as found for France.

No system can be perfect when there is imperfect information on the genuine talent of people. Recruitment by education and exams automatically advances those who are educated inside the system. Thus, under imperfect information, selection of students through tests leads to a bias, i.e., for the same objective ability, students who are not part of the elite milieu will not be accepted, while a student of the milieu will be.

Could it be that globalization will decrease this auto-recruitment effect, since different countries have different culture, and therefore the cultural bias would decrease after globalization. In the next section, we examine the effect of globalization on stratification and economic growth.

### IV. The effects of Globalization on Recruitment of Elites

In the previous section, I showed that recruitment of elites through education in an elite university leads to social stratification and to thwarted social mobility. These were at the country-specific level, wherein each elite has been educated in their country’s own elite universities.

Globalization generates and redeployrs this stratification at the global level. One of the main factors in this process is elite universities becoming international. While after World War II, each country had its own elite universities, today, at the turn of the 21st century, we are facing the creation of transnational elite universities.

In the past decade, we have seen the emergence of the ranking of all universities worldwide, which leads to a transition from elite national universities to top transnational universities. The two rankings that already exist are the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) and Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU). Table 3 shows the 50 top-ranked universities in the world.

Globalization leads not only to the creation of global elite universities, but to a clear path of uniformity of societies and cultures, e.g., we all read the same books and see the same movies. Comparing Paris to London or to Prague, the cultural life has become similar. Of course the baguette is still French, and pizza is still Italian; Notre Dame is still in Paris and Ponte Vecchio is still in Italy; yet these are constructions of the past. The Bilbao
Museum and the Pompidou Museum could be interchanged without a blink; culture today is transnational.

The past has left us a specific culture; the present proposes us a unified one. There are therefore universities that transmit knowledge that is transnational. Whatever the country and nationality, the elite can be educated in a top international university in the US, since there is no longer a specific and idiocratic behavior, except for few minor norms.

So, the elites send its kids to these top universities: The elites from Beijing to Calcutta; from Cairo to Tel Aviv, from Paris and Rome to Harvard, Stanford, or Princeton. There is now a unified, global elite.

In consequence of this interconnection of all elite, who are educated at the same institutions, on the one hand we get elites’ interconnections throughout the world, and on the other hand we get the elite receiving uniform education. This section examines how these two phenomena affect the economy, focusing on the effects of a transnational, uniform elite on class stratification and economic growth.

There is already an entire literature that examines the effect of a unified elite on inequality. Some sociologists claim that a consensual elite might use its power for its own interests. For instance, Etzioni-Halevi (1997) claimed that a unified elite does not use its power to reduce inequality and promote the development of a more egalitarian society, due to common recruitment and common interests. In consequence, elite homogeneity might actually increase the gap between the elite and the masses.

A strong interconnection among elites also results in all sectors of the economy being ruled by a group that thinks in a monolithic way. Two channels connect a monolithic group to economic growth. The first one underlines that a monolithic group leads to the stagnation of ideas and attitudes, which in turn may prevent the adoption of major technological breakthroughs (Bourdieu, 1977). It may also be that belonging to an elite group has consequences for the behavior of the chosen; it might perpetuate the role of their peers, place importance on hierarchy, and lead to conformist behavior, rigidity, and archaism.

The second line of thought argues that the lack of competition in a monolithic, powerful group generates corruption, with harmful consequences for growth. Indeed, wealthy elites with enough political power to block changes will not accept adopting institutions that would enhance growth, since the latter might compromise their power (see Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson, 2001).

This paper focuses on the effect of uniform education on the stagnation of ideas and the prevention of the adoption of major technological breakthroughs. I show that uniform education for the elites has two opposing effects, yet at different periods of time. While networking is optimal at times of innovation, it slows down and impedes the adoption of revolutionary techniques, i.e., inventions. Otherwise, a world with elite schools will more rapidly adopt new technologies and systems of production than would a world where the system of recruitment for key positions comes from differing types of education. On the
other hand, it may be that elites will be less open to revolutions in thinking and the economy, i.e., to inventions.

Regarding class stratification, there is no doubt that over time, top international universities will lead to tighter recruitment of transnational elites, as stressed in the next proposition.

**Proposition 2**

The existence of international elite universities leads to a stronger effect of class stratification, and to a very narrow recruitment into the transnational elites.

**Proof**

This proposition is a direct consequence of Equation 9. Homogeneity and stratification is measured by $\beta$; the greater $\beta$, the greater the stratification effect. When enrollment tightens - i.e., $I$ is greater -- social stratification increases.

Globalization and the emergence of a small number of elite international universities leads to the number of students recruited to these 50 top elite universities being very small. This means that $I$ in our model increases.

This proposition means that the decline in social mobility resulting from the examination and selection process in elite universities will accelerate. The number of "happy few" that will belong to the transnational elite will be small. They will have been recruited through the selection of the top elite transnational universities.

In consequence, a transnational oligarchy will be selected in a very thin way. They will be part of happy few of their own country, who will be admitted to these trans-national universities, and will get a similar education. A transnational elite -- uniform with regard to culture, education, and ethos, -- will thereby emerge.

In the next proposition, we examine the effect of uniformity in education on economic growth.

**Proposition 3**

While the common education of the elites encourages an increase in growth during periods of innovation, during periods of invention, it leads to a reduction in adoption of new technologies in periods of invention.

V. Conclusion
This last century, globalization has not only affected the economic arena through an increase in international trade, and capital flows, but it has had a major impact on society. Globalization and the growing integration of markets had led to a homogenization of cultures around the world. We tend to wear the same brands, eat the same food, listen to the same music and see the same movies.

The purpose of this paper was to analyze the effects of globalization and the homogenization of culture on social mobility and the recruitment of elites. I have shown that globalization is leading to a main change in the recruitment of elites. Over the centuries, many changes took place in the way elites were recruited, and more specifically, from the twentieth century on, the ticket to set foot into the national elite was to enter a national elite university. Today, due to globalization, the elites are recruited through international elite universities, leading to homogenization of the elites.

This paper has shown that more than 40% of the business and political elites of the developed countries have attended one of the top 50 universities in the world – the international elite universities. In consequence, we face today that the elite of the world becomes uniform. They obtain the same education, move in the same milieu, and imbibe the same culture.

In consequence, in the 21st century, we face the formation of a transnational oligarchy with its own norms, ethos, and identity. As shown in this paper, it is not only harmful for social mobility, but it is not without its negative effects on world economic growth.

References


Figure 1: University education of elites (per cent)

Source: Cassis (1997).
Figure 2: Business elites trained in engineering (per cent)

Source: Cassis (1997).
TABLE 1: Education of the Transnational Elites.  
(percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Political Elite</th>
<th>Political Elite in OECD countries</th>
<th>Political Elite below age 55 (39%)</th>
<th>Business Elite</th>
<th>Business Elite in OECD countries</th>
<th>Business Elite below age 55 (36%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Elite</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The data is for 2009; HE = higher education.  
Source: own calculation.

TABLE 2: Fields of Higher education of the Transnational Elites.  
(percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training of the elites (%)</th>
<th>Political Elite</th>
<th>Business Elite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Economics</td>
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Notes: Dual training includes polyvalent training in arts, eco.  
Source: own calculation
Table 3.

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Source: SJTU.