

# Social Structure and Globalization of Political and Economic Elites in India

Suraj Beri and Christian Schneickert

**Abstract:** Contemporary Social Sciences show a strong interest in studying power and domination in postcolonial societies. Elite research has become crucial to understand the changes in the political and economic dimensions of power structures in the context of democratic experience and economic development in countries such as India. These changes can be located within social structures and the globalization of elites. This study is an attempt to make sense of the ongoing transformations happening in the field of power in India. The existing scholarship on elites in India has been more related to socio-political transformations post-independence, and less on the relation between globalization and changes in the composition of political and economic elites in India. Therefore, we study the context and impact of the process of globalization on the social background of these elites and the emerging larger dynamics regarding socio-economic changes in the Global South.

## Introduction

Post-colonial societies are undergoing huge transformations as part of worldwide liberal capitalist developments. The process of globalization initiated urbanization, the growing of consumerist markets, the rise of new regional power centers and the formation of new classes in India. Furthermore, we witness an increasing differentiation and globalization of the Indian power structure. Studying elites is crucial to understand such processes of social change and newly emerging dimensions of social inequalities. Therefore, this paper explores the basic structures of the field of power in India, theoretically by employing Bourdieu's field theory and empirically by analyzing biographic data of top politicians and CEOs (N=91).

One of the major issues within elite research is the question of sampling: who are the elites and how can power and influence be empirically operationalized? Social science research has shown that it is the social and material conditions within which certain kinds of elites emerge and flourish. Whereas the classical elite theorists (Pareto, 1935 [1916]); Mosca, 1939; Michels, 1968 [1911]; Manheim, 1956) were mainly interested in elites in a more political sense (focused on Europe), social scientists like Mills (1956), Dahl (1961), and Domhoff (1967, 1978) are a few who investigated the *origins, composition* and *influence* of elites from a social framework in the American context. These critical elite theories based on empirical data were then further developed and reinvented in a structuralist way (e.g., field of power) in French sociology by Bourdieu (1996). German sociologist Hartmann then continued that 'school' based on a multitude of empirical works, prominently institutionalizing critical elite research in German sociology (Hartmann, 2000, 2002, 2007a, 2007b, 2010). Thus, the concern is to go beyond the bold assertion classical elite theorists have made, i.e., the "inevitability of elites", and to ask what the channels for recruitment are and how they influence the social context within which they emerge. The popular debates on 'plurality of functional elites' within western democracies was questioned with the post-1990 shift

in economic policies worldwide. On the national level, elite research and theory were established in the context of the discussion between functional and conflict theory (Hartmann, 2007b; see especially Dahl, 1961, Keller, 1963; Domhoff, 1967, 1978; Mills, 1945, 1956, 1958, 1968; Parsons, 1968). The debates about globalization and particularly transnationalization processes revived elite research and brought up new issues necessitating empirical research (Schneickert et al., 2015: 230). The recent revival of elite studies can also be understood within the context of the debates on the emergence of 'corporate elites' (Scott, 1991, a 'world class' (Kanter, 1997), 'superclass' (Rothkopf, 2008), 'transnational capitalist class' (Sklair, 1997; Carroll, 2010) or a global ruling class (Robinson and Harris, 2000). Studies have argued for a renewal of the conceptual frameworks for elite studies and, finally, with the empirical demonstration of increasing income and wealth inequalities under liberal democracies (Savage and Williams, 2008; Piketty, 2014). On the other hand, there are studies that question the thesis of the emergence of 'global elites' and have problematized it by asking about the class and national origins of these 'elite' (Hartmann, 2000; Best and Higley, 2010; Carroll, 2010; Schneickert et al., 2015). From a field-theoretical perspective, elites can be defined as the holders of top positions in the most important social fields of a society, given the possibility to influence decisions which have major consequences regarding reproduction or change of the social structure, norms and culture. The privileged position of elites is legitimized by the collective belief in the meritocratic character of their domination.

Thus, an empirical study of elites today can also provide significant insights about the emerging structures of inequalities within the context of the proliferation of liberal democracy and global capitalism. The following paper presents data on political and economic elites in India, investigating biographic data information from top politicians (N=37) and top managers (N=54) in 2013. It focuses on political and economic field elites as the central sub-fields of the national field of power in India. Globalization and differentiation are the central developments affecting the increasing transformation of the power structure. Therefore, the changing structure of the field of power should be observable in the social structure of the elites.

Elite research, regarding power, conflict, inequality and differentiation, leads to the idea of a 'field of power', developed in the context of Bourdieu's theory of social fields. Bourdieu's differentiation of 'field' on the basis of different 'forms of capital' (Bourdieu 1986) and the processes of maximizing calls for a more nuanced understanding of diversified power structure (Bourdieu and De Saint Martin, 1987; Bourdieu, 1996, 2014 [1989-1992]). His field approach argues for an objective understanding of relations of domination. In *The State Nobility*, Bourdieu defines 'field of power' as 'a field of forces structurally determined by the state of the relations of power among different forms of capital' (1996:264). Thus, a field of power is a space where 'agents' and 'institutions' compete with their different capitals (economic, social and cultural) for a dominant position within the field. It is not just about the struggle for controlling the maximum amount of capital but importantly also to influence and 'determine relative value of the different forms of power that can be wielded in the different fields' (Bourdieu, 1996: 264-265). For Bourdieu, the struggle is obviously also about monopolizing the "dominant principle of domination" (Bourdieu, 1996: 264-265). In other words, within the field of power, various agents struggle to occupy dominant positions, both objectively and symbolically.

While classical elite theorists debated the nature and the social functions of elite, Bourdieu was concerned with what resources ('capital') these dominant classes employ to reproduce and legitimize their position in the field of power (Bourdieu, 1996, 2014). 'Capital' for Bourdieu means actual or possible resources that can be classified into three major forms (economic capital, cultural capital and social capital), and each can be converted into another form, depending on the respective field (Bourdieu, 1986). These different forms of capital, in turn, provide different forms of power. Similarly, by 'field', Bourdieu means "configurations of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97). These objective relations between positions

are determined by the structure of distribution of capital among various agents and institutions that decide their access to different powers and profits (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97). Differentiated societies like India developed various fields, e.g., political, economic, administrative, religious and cultural, etc., with each field's elites participating in the struggles of the national field of power. However, the top positions of the political and the economic fields can be considered to provide the lion's share of the relevant positions in the field of power. Therefore, we focus on these two field elites empirically in this paper.

## Political and economic field elites in the Indian field of power

The emergence of the modern state has been a key issue in studying the dynamic relations of power and domination. It is the state that has been the historical pre-condition for the development of the modern capitalist enterprise in India. During the post-independence period, social scientists were interested in understanding the Indian culture and tradition, and the 'village' was seen as a major entry point. Studies on the changing social structure in a rural context, in the wake of policies formed by the independent state, drew significant attention. With the formation of nation states and new political institutions, new centers of power emerged, with the community changing caste relations, and vice versa. With the end of the British period, new social and political processes began sprawling; the national leadership tried to give a new direction to the country. As the process of modernization was initiated, the Indian polity underwent several shifts. The bureaucratic state machinery was established. Thus, speaking from the perspective of classical elite theories, these were the times when the new 'power elite' came into existence.

Within the major debates among social sciences in India, the 'elite' remains an under-researched category within the context of persisting social inequalities. In the sociological literature, various models have been developed to capture the power structure of Indian society. Many studies have emphasized applying Marxist approaches to understand the inequalities and class differentiation in India (Desai, 1948; Bardhan, 1984). In contrast, other studies have analyzed the structures of domination and power through the framework of caste (Srinivas, 1959; B eteille, 1965, 1967; Jeffrey, 2001). There have been volumes of empirical works on the emergence of rural-landed elites after Indian independence, and the formation of political elites from an erstwhile nationalist leadership of anti-colonial struggle (Bottomore, 1966), but there are very few empirical works which deal with urban elites in the context of globalization. While these approaches to study the power structure have their own relevance, they don't deal with 'elite' structures in terms of their formation, history and transformation over the period of time.

The traditional way to conceptualize 'political elites' in India has been in terms of key actors in the 'political structure', i.e., mainly comprised of political leaders and high government officials. Thus, social scientists focused on understanding the emerging power structure and empirical works were done to understand the political elite in rural contexts. Andre B eteille's study of *Caste, Class and Power* (1969), using a Weberian framework, mentions shifting notions of power, with the village community power structure revolving around Brahmins and Non-Brahmins and politics providing avenues for social mobility. It tells how this interplay of these axes creates a form of stratification. Sharma (1976), illustrates that the rural elite drew their power from the interconnections between land ownership and local caste equations. Empirical works have shown how after independence, more than caste dominance, it was the complex interrelation of caste, class and political power that emerged as the major factor for deciding power (Swarankar, 1988). The organization called Congress can be seen in the first such system, which provided the initial political elites of India during the colonial rule and postcolonial period. It was dominated by upper-caste Hindus and encapsulated various ideological hues within it, from right to left, via

center. Its hegemony was sometimes challenged by communists as well as anti-untouchability and anti-caste movements. M. N. Srinivas (1959) has argued that this should be understood in terms of caste relations. Hence, the category of a 'dominant caste', which comprises mainly the middle castes that are numerically powerful and hold economic and political power (Srinivas, 1959), becomes important in explaining the power structure as well social stratification.

In other words, the political elites that came mainly from the upper and middle castes, who owned some land, were economically well-off. It is this elite group that, after independence, turned to party politics and started participating in Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. Arora (1973: 1527) showed that members of the political cabinet were highly educated persons, post-graduates who studied from foreign universities. And in terms of occupational distribution, law profession was the dominant one, apart from medical, teaching and engineering, etc. In a way, they furthered and strengthened (converting their social capital to the political field) their social position, via political authority. Hence, the emergence of political elites after independence can be seen in two ways (Bottomore, 1966: 182): first, as 'high officials', who were part of the modern administration system, and were then (recruited) selected through system of exams and scientific training (the civil service known as Indian Administrative Service, IAS). The second form of this elite group was the emergence of 'nationalist political leaders' (Bottomore, 1966). As mentioned earlier, it was the 'Congress Party' (Bottomore, 1966: 183) that included these new elites who had the power to influence the direction of the change in modern society. In other words, the 'political elite' of independent India was one such elite that had the capacity to shape the political processes as well as the direction of economic developments. The elite were created out of two different forms of social organizations, i.e., from 'political organization' and 'state apparatus'. Similarly, the initial policy provisions set up by political elites make it very clear how political elites held a broad consensus with the Indian capitalist class and, thus, the provision of legal rights in the constitution and ruling regarding corporate behavior (Kaviraj, 1988:2429).

The policies of the state had impacts on the structure of elites. For instance, the policy of land reforms and struggles around agricultural prices had transformed the feudal-landed elite into a new elite of rich and big farmers during the 'green revolution' period (Jodhka, 2006). This change had significant consequences for Indian politics, as during the 1970s and 1980s, this 'new rural elite' mobilized large numbers of farmers and thus the emergence of farmer's movements related to the 'price question' in India (Jodhka, 2006: 1530). In the northwest (Uttar Pradesh), these big farmers formed organizations, such Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), and were primarily led by dominant agrarian Jats. Hence, this was the rise of strong personalities from rural India, such as Chaudhary Charan Singh, Mahendra Singh Tikait, Lalu Prasad Yadav and many others in national politics. These changes in the rural context posed the important question of how democracy has strengthened the power of landed elites. Moreover, the decline of rural elites reflects the change in the relation between democracy and pro-business policies of the state, on the one hand, and the changing power structure of urban India on the other.

With the establishment of the modern Indian state, new avenues were opened up as the key centers of power. Hence, as mentioned earlier, the emergence of political elites after independence has been explained in two ways: first, as 'high officials' who were part of the modern administration system and were recruited through a system of exams and scientific training, the civil service known as Indian Administrative Service (IAS), and second as political leaders emerging out of a national movement against colonial rule (Bottomore, 1966; Frankel and Rao, 1989). Similarly, Rudolph and Rudolph (1987) have discussed in detail the formation of the Indian state. According to them, it also marks a shift to a 'demand politics' in the wake of rural elites' dominance post-green revolution. The review of existing scholarship on domination and power structure shows that the political structure of post-independence India had a more homogenous outlook and constitution, whilst post-1990s it has shown trends toward diversification. Thus, in the political

field, increasing differentiation within the political structure can be understood within the context of electoral practices, emergence of regional political parties, changes in rural power structure with important events (such as land reforms, green revolution and affirmative action policies) and with the initiation of the process of globalization.

Similarly, in the economic field as well, the 'business elite' has come from specific traditional business and merchant communities, such as Baniyas, Parsis, Bhatias, Chettiars, Marwaris (Aggarwals, Oswals from Shekhawati region of Rajasthan), Jains and Muslim groups (Bohras, Khojas, Memon), mostly from Northern and Western India. After independence, these groups, in their relation with the state, prospered and reproduced themselves as industrialist elites, although several changes have been observed. These modern elites emerged from the port cities. In the North Indian region, these elites controlled business at most levels. Indian business elites followed the British business model during colonial times and formed a pan-Indian organization called FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) in 1927 along with regional associations in Bombay, Calcutta, Kanpur and Ahmedabad (Markovits, 1985). Traditionally Baniyas had the transnational capital of linkages to European business houses. Some of the most important organizations of business class, such as FICCI, Assocham (Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry) and CII (Confederation of Indian Industry), had strong connections and lobbying with Congress party and the bureaucracy (Kochanek, 1974). One must notice the significance of the role of caste, kinship and community ties in order to understand the growth of business elites. This was also a major factor in the roadblock for the formation of a cohesive business class. All the business elites of colonial India were connected to the British state, although not dependent. The impact of economic policies on the nature of business classes, and the emergence of business elites from erstwhile peasant and agricultural communities, reflects these ongoing changes (Damodaran, 2008). These changes are crucial in understanding the formation and reconfiguration of elites in India within the context of democratic politics and neoliberal developments in urban India, and in the context of globalization.

## The Social structure of political and economic elites in India

Because of its ethnic and regional heterogeneity and its high levels of inequality, India's democracy is often described as a special case in international comparison (Kohli and Bardhan, 1988; Kohli, 1990, 2001, 2009; Varshney, 1998). A heterogeneous society can be expected to provide a diversity of elites as well, which was shown by existing studies on top positions in India (Leach and Mukherjee, 1970; Kochanek, 1974; Lele, 1981; Navlakha, 1989). In the following, we focus on the social structure of the top positions in the political and economic field in 2013. Table 1 shows the positional sampling. Biographic information on socio-economic background, education and career-paths of these position-holders was collected and analyzed. The sampling of the economic

*Table 1: Political and economic field elites (top position sampling, 2013)*

<b>Economic Elites</b>	<b>Political Elites</b>
Chairmen, Managing Directors (MD), Chief Executive Officers (CEO)	President / Prime Minister / Vice President / Ministers (32) / Lok Sabha (Speaker, Deputy Speaker, People Leader, Leader of Opposition)

elite consists of the 55 corporations that were included in the Forbes Global 2000 List in July, 2013. For the political field, 39 positions were identified according to common literature on the Indian political system (Khan, 2005; Jayal and Mehta, 2010; Jaffrelot, 2011; Kashyap, 2011). Due

to the cumulation of positions, 91 individuals were included in the final analysis (37 top politicians and 54 CEOs).

Figure 1 shows the relative share of gender in both field elites. Women are underrepresented in both fields but the difference between political and economic elites is surprisingly not significant.

Figure 1: *Gender (in percent)*



Source: Schneickert, 2015: 188.

With a mean age of almost 67 years, the political elite is significantly older than the economic elite (56.5 years). This difference may indicate the dynamics of a wider political field, such as the tradition of dynasty politics, messianism and systemic closure for the young, in the upper echelons of polity in India.

Table 2: *Religion (in percent)*

	Political Elite (N=37)	Economic Elite (N=54)
Hindu	73	90.4
Muslim	13.5	0
Atheist	5.4	0
Parsi	0	3.8
Jainism	0	3.8

Source: Own Calculations

Although there are no quotas along religious lines in Indian politics, the heterogeneity of the political elite can be explained as the strength of political mobilizations, which were translated into the representation of various social groups in the political field. In the recent elections of 2014, however, this has turned negative, with the number of Muslim Members of Parliament (MPs) having fallen to a historical low (22 MPs out of the total 543).

With almost 1.3 billion inhabitants in 2015, India is the second largest country in the world, with an incredibly high degree of regional diversification. This regional differentiation is central to an understanding of the Indian social structure (Guha, 2007), and so it is for an understanding of India's elite. However, there is a concentration in the geographic origin of the elites. Nevertheless, from our perspective, there is a strong need for local elite research in India. Regarding the sheer

size of the Indian nation state, it is questionable if the national field of power permeates the social structure like it does in smaller countries, like Switzerland or Norway (Hjellbrekke et al., 2007; Bühlmann, 2012, 2013). Table 3 shows the geographic origin of the elite members operationalized by their place of birth.

*Table 3: Geographic origin (in percent)*

<b>Indian Population</b>	<b>Political Elite (N=37)</b>	<b>Economic Elite (N=20)</b>
North (36.5)	45.9	35
North-East (3.7)	0	5
East (24.4)	13.5	0
West (14.4)	8.1	40
South (21 )	32.4	15

Source: Schneickert, 2015: 189. Population numbers based on Census 2011 (<http://censusindia.gov.in/>).

There is a geographic difference between the field’s elites, which is significant. Top politicians are more often from North, East or South India, with managers more often hailing from West India, especially Mumbai. In comparison to the Indian population, East India is underrepresented, while West India is overrepresented in the elite. Table 4 shows data on caste background grouped by the three categories ‘Scheduled Castes/Tribes’ (SC/ST), ‘Other Backward Castes’ (OBC) and Forward Castes. It is important to acknowledge that the categorization of caste belonging is itself an object of political struggle in the context of the quota system.

*Table 4: Caste (in percent)*

<b>% (N)</b>	<b>Political Elite (N=12)</b>	<b>Economic Elite (N=16)</b>
SC/ST	58.3	0
OBC	16.7	6.3
Forward Castes	25	93.8

Source: Schneickert, 2015: 188.

Despite the low number of cases, the results are significant: the economic elite is more often from higher castes, while OBC and SC/ST appear only in the political elite. Differentiated into caste groups, Brahmins (e.g., Iyengars) appear significantly more often in the economic elite and the same is true for Vaishyas (especially Baniya, Modh Baniya and Maheshwaris). On the other hand, Dalits only appear in the political elite. This difference can be well understood, as there is a constitutional provision for reservations for lower castes in the state’s legislative assemblies’ seats and in parliament. Studies completed by Jaffrelot and Kumar (2009) showed this trend of diversification and even more, they call this the process of the ‘plebianization of Indian polity’.

A similar picture can be drawn for class background. Although information on class is limited, even for elite members, class membership can be operationalized by father’s occupation. If that information was not available either, information on mother’s occupation or family status was also used. We first used a common four-class model with ‘Underclass’ (street hawkers, unskilled workers, etc.), ‘Lower Middle Class’ (factory worker, unskilled service worker, etc.), ‘Upper Middle Class’ (state officials, big farmers, land owner, doctors, etc.), and ‘Upper Class’ (higher politicians, managers and entrepreneurs, higher academics, etc.). However, since a significant number of elite members themselves come from elite member families, we introduced a fifth class, ‘Elite’, consisting of top politicians on a national level, CEOs of the largest corporations, royal families, etc. It is striking that in each field elite, we can identify more than half of the position-holders coming from such families (Table 5).

*Table 5: Class background (in percent)*

	<b>Political Elite (N=24)</b>	<b>Economic Elite (N=18)</b>
Underclass	8.3	0
Lower Middle Class	4.2	0
Upper Middle Class	8.3	27.8
Upper Class	25	16.7
Elite	54.2	55.6

Source: Schneickert, 2015: 189.

Moreover, caste and class do correlate, as demonstrated in many studies (e.g., Shah, 1990). In general, the higher the caste position, the higher the class position. However, we also observe an intersection of these structures, e.g., if a lower caste background is partly 'equalized' by a higher class background (but not vice versa).

*Table 6: Education and careers*

	<b>Political Elite</b>		<b>Economic Elite</b>	
	<b>% (N)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% (N)</b>	<b>N</b>
University Degree	97.3 (36)	37	100 (53)	53
PhD	10.8 (4)	37	1.9 (1)	54
Field Change	13.9 (5)	36	7.4 (4)	54
House Career	-	-	40.7 (22)	54
Branch Career	-	-	92.6 (50)	54

Source: Schneickert, 2015: 190.

Table 6 shows data on the education and careers of the elite. The degree of academization is remarkably high in elites of both field, confirming the hypothesis that cultural capital has become an obligatory requirement for entry into the field of power as well as supporting the legitimization of elites through meritocratic discourse. However, this cannot be said of a PhD, which is only relevant for ca. 10% of the political elite. Both field elites seem to be quite autonomous, regarding the fact that only between 7% and 14% of individuals change the field within their career. Although the field of power in India does not show a comparable concentration of 'schools of power', as Bourdieu acknowledged for the national field of power in France of the 1960s, we are indeed able to identify some significant institutions for the recruitment of political and economic elites. Almost half of the individuals (45.2%) have studied at least in one of the institutions listed in Table 7. Please note that the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) and National Institute of Technology (NITs) were included from a number of different locations. As a single institution out of this network, only the IIT in Delhi shows a significant concentration.

*Table 7: Schools of power (in percent)*

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>N=84</b>
University of Delhi	13.1
IITs and NITs	13.1
IIT, Delhi	4.8
Indian Institute of Banking and Finance, Mumbai	13.1
University of Mumbai	9.5

Source: Own calculations.



Since the prevalence of cultural capital for the reproduction and legitimization of elites seems to be a sub-process of the proliferation of capitalism and liberal democracy through processes of globalization, we witness a general trend of over-education of the elites. Therefore, the education of elites is usually complex and consists of a multitude of visited institutions as well as studied disciplines. In this case, 37 subjects were studied in a variety of combinations. However, a vast majority of 86.6% studied one of the three disciplines of law, economics and engineering (Table 8). The dominance of this 'triad' is well known in international comparative elite research.

*Table 8: Frequently studied subjects*

<b>Academic discipline</b>	<b>N=82</b>
Economics (including MBA)	54.9
MBA	20.7
Law	26.8
Engineering	22

In addition to the biographic data of the CEOs, regarding the economic elites, the dominant structures of the economic field might also provide valuable information. While the economic field in India as a whole is probably geographically quite diversified, the top Global 2000 corporations from India show a strong regional concentration, especially on Mumbai. Mumbai and Delhi alone account for over two-thirds (67.3%) of the corporations' head offices, together with the Bangalore, Chennai and Kolkata for more than 80% (Table 9).

*Table 9: Head offices of the Global 2000 corporations*

<b>Head office</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Mumbai	23	44.2
New Delhi	12	23.1
Bangalore	3	5.8
Chennai	3	5.8
Kolkata	3	5.8
Total (N=54)	44	84.7

The companies of the economic elite are not only geographically concentrated but also focused on only a few branches (Table 10): Five branches make up almost 90% of the Global 2000 corporations, while Banks/Financial Services and Energy/Infrastructure already cumulate 60%.

*Table 10: Most frequent branches*

<b>Branch</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Banks/Financial Services	23	42.6
Energy/Infrastructure	10	18.5
Construction	5	9.3
Computer/IT	5	9.3
Automobile	4	7.4
Total (N=54)	47	87.1

## The globalization of the Indian field of power

While the political structure of post-independence India had a more homogenous outlook and composition post 1990s, it has shown several instances of diversification and a growing complexity. Some attribute it to the strength of democratic practices and its institutionalization, electoral politics and affirmative action policies. From looking at these changes, it is also necessary to understand how the structure of power in India has changed. Similarly, in the realm of economy, the country has moved from the development policies of the nationalist state to the era of liberalization and globalization (Kohli, 2013). With this shift, there are subtle changes in the organization and institutions of economy. With the growth of cities and towns, rural social structures have also been transformed. Village India has changed drastically post 1980s (Gupta, 2005; Jodhka, 2006). These changes interconnected with the demographic shifts in the urban regions, e.g., the migration towards cities and small towns.

On the question of the nature of the state and capitalist class in India, Chatterjee (2008: 56) has discussed Bardhan's analysis of "three dominant classes", where the capitalists, the rich farmers and the bureaucrats compete with each other within a political space within the framework of a relatively autonomous state" (Chatterjee, 2008: 56). It was a usual approach twenty years back to theorize about state and power. Where as in Kaviraj's work (1988: 2431) on 'dominant class coalition model', along with the bourgeoisie and landlord elite, it was the bureaucratic-intellectual elite as a distinct and separate element, which has been part of the power alliance in India. Thus, during the Nehruvian period, the field of power in India was comprised of three main social groups: (i) a capitalist class, (ii) landed elites and finally, (iii) a bureaucratic managerial intellectual elite. But the context changed after the 1990s, when foreign capital was allowed to enter the Indian market. The erstwhile License Raj (rule) was done away with and a 'neoliberal' model was adopted. This led to more mobility within the capitalist class with a global flow of capital, services, labor and advanced technologies (Chatterjee, 2008).

The rise of the Indian information technology industry is one example. This also changed the power equation among elites, and the corporate capitalist class gained ascendancy in relation to landed elites. The urban middle class and the bureaucratic intellectual elite, which recognized the role of state in earlier development, now severely challenges it and sees the state as an inefficient, corrupt structure, and the recent Anna Hazare led agitation is a sign of changing relations between the urban middle classes and the state. Thus, the change in terms of the mechanisms for the negotiation of interests is significant to observe. Whilst the rural landed elites used to raise their voice through electoral mobilizations in politics, the present day capitalist elite of India prefers to mobilize urban middle classes to raise claim for their interests (Chatterjee, 2008). Harish Damodaran (2008) has explained how capitalism in India has expanded beyond few communities. However, this feature remains limited to South India. He studied Nattukottai Chettiar, Mudaliar, Kammas and Reddy, etc., and all were dominant in the sugar industry in South India (Damodaran, 2008: 311). An exposure to English education, the formation of a middle class and policies of affirmative action have contributed to this expansion of capitalism in these communities and hence the emergence of a capitalist-business elite. After the 1990s there was a shift in the role of state under the processes of globalization. Urbanization and migration have often led to the changing class profile of traditional economic elites. Therefore, in this period of globalization, when market reforms have been implemented, political and business fields' elites have experienced increasing diversification. With the changed dynamics and the growing complexity of relations between the public and private sector, more avenues have opened up for the new elites to interact and reproduce themselves nationally with the socio-cultural capital acquired globally. Table 11 shows empirical data on transnational capital of politicians and businessmen. The value and exchange rate of that capital into local power depends on the structure of the national field of power as

well as on its respective social fields (e.g., political, economic field, etc.). This process of capital accumulation and conversion now also provides critical insights challenging the arguments of an emergence of global elites.

*Table 11: Globalization*

	Political Elite		Economic Elite	
	% (N)	N	% (N)	N
Non-Indian Citizenship	0	37	1.9	54
Migration Background	0	37	5	20
Transnational Marriage	8.3	36	0	17
Study Abroad	18.9	37	31.4	54
Work Abroad	25.7	35	13	54

The experience of studying and working abroad is lower than expected. Less surprising are the destinations: UK (ca. 30%) and USA (ca. 70%). However, it is a common hypothesis that Indian elites are educated abroad, where especially the economic elites might get indoctrinated by neoliberalism, which they implement after their return locally (Dezalay, 2004: 35). We have no proof in this data for such a hypothesis, however. The high degree of globalization of the political elite is surprising and can be explained through the intense engagement of Indian politicians in international organizations like the UN, World Bank or Asian Development Bank. Such an international work experience seems to be an important 'capital' that can be used in the national political field.

## Conclusion: Future of elites research in India

The questions of domination, power and stratification have been topics of sustained scholarship of the Social Sciences in the Indian context. However, there are very few empirical works on studying elites from a field and conflict theoretical perspective, especially regarding emerging societies like India. The presented study of the social structure and globalization of elites in India provides insights about the change in the power structure in the context of processes of democratization and economic development in the context of globalization. However, empirical elite research often remains descriptive. Therefore, the analysis of biographic data needs to be embedded within a theoretical framework, including the regional and historic dynamics of change. In this paper we have suggested to employ a theory of fields of power according to Bourdieu for that purpose. Field theory relates local transformations to national and global structures and overcomes the dualism between structure and agency, both theoretically and empirically. Elite research in India needs to analyze regional and historic dynamics, while the link between the state and the market seems to be central. Therefore, this paper focused on the social structure and globalization of political and economic elites. With the economic shift of liberalization, erstwhile elites have been forging new alliances and changing relations with the state within the field of power in India. Furthermore, with democratic politics post-independence, elites have diversified their community and class backgrounds. In the context of electoral politics, political movements around farmer's problems, affirmative action policies and economic reforms, it becomes important to study regional processes of change in the elite structure. The analysis of elites in emerging societies like India does not just tell us something about the power structure of these countries as national fields of power. It also contributes to the understanding of the dynamics of power, domination and inequality within the global social structure of a capitalist world system in the 21st century.

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