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The clustering in ‘global universities’ of graduates from ‘Elite Traditional International Schools’: A surprising phenomenon?

Abstract

Our paper reveals a significant under-reported emergent phenomenon; the graduates of the well-established ‘Elite Traditional International Schools’ worldwide are beginning to cluster in certain universities, in certain ‘global cities’. As one might expect, New York and London are central to this clustering, alongside Boston, Toronto, and Vancouver. Surprisingly, these destinations are not the world’s top, elite universities, showing that the forms of class reasoning which we might expect of the ‘Trans-National Capitalist Class’ do not seemingly apply to this model of elite education. We explore the emerging evidence, and discuss its character and implications.

Keywords

International Schools, graduates, universities, global cities, Trans-National Capitalist Class.

Introduction

Our paper is concerned with the growing yet still under-discussed and under-theorised area of ‘Global/International Education’ that might be best described as ‘International Schooling’. Our focus will be on the nature of the ‘Elite Traditional International School’ (‘ETISs’) and show its emergent links with (some) universities globally. Our findings suggest that, if we view these young people as potential members of the Transnational Capitalist Class (TNCC), then their choice of universities does not appear consistent with the logic of access to this class.

Here our interest is in a clustering of graduates of ETISs in a few universities. Some schools are sending many students to a few universities, and these universities in turn are increasingly beginning to focus and ultimately depend upon them i.e. there is evidence of a shift towards global inter-dependence, as the needs of high reputation, traditional ‘International Schools’ and ‘Global Universities’ align. For example, we know that 70 per cent of undergraduates at the University of British Columbia (UBC) emerge from ETISs (Keeling, 2015), effectively making that institution a ‘global university’ and Vancouver a ‘global city’. That revelation forms the stimulus to the writing of our paper.

Using matriculation data from reports and official school web sites, we will show the emergent destination of a growing body of graduates from ETISs worldwide. As one might expect from Sassen’s (1991) discussion, New York and London emerge as major destinations, but others appear, such as Toronto, Vancouver, and Boston. Further to presenting this clustering, we will consider the possible reasons for this phenomenon, some implications, and a future research agenda.

Having considered the evidence, we return to the question of the class logic behind the decision’s students make as to which university to attend. It has long been hypothesised that students from ETISs are socialised into attending globally elite universities (Wright and Lee,

2016), commonly described as the top-50 destinations as ranked annually by high-profile indices such as *Times Higher Education World University Rankings* (THEWUR). However, the data we present here suggests that either this is not the case, or that we need to rethink the logic of decision-making in the next generation of the TNCC (Robinson and Sprague, 2018; Sklair, 2000). In particular, it raises questions as to whether the entry to university will be followed by entry to the ‘top’ jobs in the global labour market, as one might further expect of the TNCC (Brown and Lauder, 2006). This issue clearly warrants research inquiry alongside a longitudinal study of career-entry.

A recent *Special Issue* of this journal (Volume 18, Number 1) discussed (in an Asian context) the implications of the hyper-mobility of students, and critically raised issues regarding social and cultural integration especially within a ‘global cities’ context (Mok and Chan, 2020). Our paper will add to this debate, giving a timely twist to the story, whereby young people move from a classed schooling environment (increasing in Asia) to studying and living in another exclusive setting, together (increasingly in England, and North America).

Ultimately, based upon the evidence we will present, we will consider the seeming contradiction. First, we will consider how students who attend ‘top’ International Schools do not always, indeed rarely, enter ‘top’ universities worldwide, as epitomised by Oxbridge (in England) and Ivy League (in East-coast United States) entry. Further, given the global pathways available to them alongside their unique schooling experience which is based upon developing them into risk-taking and open-minded ‘global citizens’, they also surprisingly often enter university as a cluster, within certain sites of Higher Education. Logically, we might expect them to be more diverse or adventurous in their choosing of location. We ultimately ask whether the phenomenon is really a contradiction, a form of ‘cosmopolitan sensitivity paradox’, or is it wholly predictable, a by-product of increasing class-consciousness and class-recognition?

The schooling context

The growing body of ‘International Schools’

While there is some debate as what constitutes an ‘International School’ (Bunnell, 2019), the market worldwide in 2015 as calculated by the UK-based market-intelligence firm *ISC Research* reached 8,000 schools, educating 4.26 million children (Keeling, 2015) and 10,000 in January 2019, showing a growth rate of two schools *per day*. The definition used here is a contestable one, simplified as ‘schools delivering a curriculum partly or wholly in the medium of English yet operating outside an English-speaking nation’. As a sign of growth, within the confines of this definition, consider that between 2012 and 2017 the number of International Schools in Myanmar doubled, from 25 to 51 (Machin, 2017 p.131). Further, between 2000 and 2017, the number of similar schools in Thailand grew from 12 to 180 (Machin, 2017 p.31).

The rapid growth of International Schools for the wealthy, and emerging middle-class in nations such as Myanmar and Vietnam, means that they can no longer be viewed as merely peripheral or area of education dominated by a fringe bloc of schools catering exclusively for mobile Anglophone expatriates. Indeed, in some nation-states such as the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, or Qatar, as well as cities such as Bangkok and Mumbai the general arena of International Schooling is now central to educational provision for both expats and locals alike (Kim and Mobernd, 2017). The forces behind this growth are complex and powerful, as neatly explained by Machin (2017 p.135) who has argued that:

‘In sum, globalisation has created the demand (and necessity) for International Education. In turn, neoliberal policy has created the regulatory framework (and the ideological acceptance) for that demand to be filled (at least in part) by International Schools.’

In this context, we can expect much further growth.

The notion of the ‘Elite Traditional International School’

The growing body of International Schools should not be viewed as homogenous. Like any mature educational market, there now exists a tier of offerings, and a stratified market can now be observed aimed at different sets of consumers. Our paper is concerned with a specific area of International Schools: those that are well-established, and still cater for a large body of expats as well as ‘locals’. These ‘Traditional’ schools continue to offer an international curriculum, mainly the university-oriented Diploma Programme of the Geneva-registered International Baccalaureate (i.e. the IBDP), which many helped to pioneer and test in the 1960s. Moreover, these schools continue to offer an international curriculum that facilitates the delivery of ‘international mindedness’ (IM) as their ‘institutional primary task’ (Bunnell, Fertig, and James, 2017), giving them a high-degree of legitimacy as ‘International’ institutions. International Mindedness is seen as central because it is assumed that students attending these schools will be educated into global roles, rather in the way that elite private schools have been seen as educating the country’s future leaders.

These schools, which we dub as ‘ETISs’, are considered part of the ‘premium-sector’ or ‘Tier-1’ area of the field. Lee and Wright (2016 p.121) see this type of school appearing in China, and being ‘notable for their global orientation in terms of student and staff, curricula offered (i.e. the IBDP), and the destinations of graduates for university studies.’ However, this definition masks a number of emergent facts. What has not been fully explored before is the extent to which this type of school sends graduates to study at certain universities in certain cities. Moreover, the eventual (matriculation) destinations are perhaps surprising given the trajectory we might logically expect of this economic and social class of student.

The emergent phenomenon

Preliminary evidence of ‘clustering’

The students in ETISs have substantial options, and numerous global pathways, yet a significant number choose the same universities, which are not among those considered globally elite universities.

A few examples will help reveal the extent and nature of this ‘place/space clustering’. Data regarding university entrance (i.e. matriculation) by students of the International School of Geneva, arguably the prototype ETIS and long-seen as representing the ‘ideal’ model (Leach, 1969), reveals a significant story. The school is undeniably a top-scoring ‘IB World School’. In May 2019, the average IBDP score was 35.1 points, much higher than the world average of 29.6 points. A quarter of students (82 candidates) scored 40 or more points (three times higher than the world average of 8%), and seven got the perfect/maximum 45 points (a rare feat).

The matriculation data reveals some surprising aspects, given the top-scoring nature of the students. In 2019, that school had 330 graduates, on three campuses. They sent over half (180 students) to UK-based universities, of which 30% (57 students) went to just five England-based campus-based universities, two of which are in London; these five being Durham (16 students), Exeter (14), Bath (10), UCL (10), and Imperial College London (7). Three went to Oxford, and another three entered Cambridge i.e. 3% of those attending British universities in this cohort entered Oxbridge. In total, 55% of the 180 entered Britain’s ‘Russell Group’ of institutions, made up of 24 leading universities, which seems relatively low given the average IBDP score of the group. Beyond the UK, a further 88 students entered colleges in North America, and the remaining 54 went elsewhere. A total of 15 went to McGill University, in Montreal; this was the major destination in North America.

The question of many ETIS students entering, in clusters, a small group of what might be deemed ‘lower-ranked’ universities can be seen by looking at other ETISs. For instance, New York’s 1947-established United Nations International School (UNIS) between 2012 and 2016 sent the biggest bloc of its students (38 students, representing 10% of the entire cohort) to New York University (NYU: ranked 29 in the *Times Higher Education World University Rankings* 2020), and a further 24 went to McGill (ranked 42), thus joining the grouping of 15 sent from Geneva. This may not seem surprising in that these universities are geographically close to the school in New York, but consider that just two students from UNIS went to Harvard (ranked 7), and Yale (ranked 8), also geographically close and none went farther afield to Oxbridge (ranked 1 and 3 in *THEWUR* 2020). It is worth noting that the school says (www.unis.org): ‘UNIS students are educated to become lifelong learners and active, responsible citizens fully prepared to continue their studies anywhere in the world.’ The clustering of graduates in universities close to the school clearly contradicts the notion that they continue their ‘studies anywhere in the world’, even though they are ‘fully prepared’ to do so.

Other ‘ETISs’ reveal evidence of large cohorts of graduates entering the universities mentioned above. Further, we can begin to see the significance of UBC, and NYU. Between 2017 and 2019, the International School of Kuala Lumpur (ISKL) sent 17 students to the University of Toronto, and a further 15 attended UBC. The Singapore American School (SAS) between 2016 and 2019 sent 39 students to NYU, and 30 went to UBC. A further 29 graduates from SAS went to Boston’s Northeastern University. Yokohama International School (YIS) between 2012 and 2016 sent 12 students to UBC, which was the biggest grouping of graduates (outside of Japan), followed by Northeastern University, the University of Bath, Toronto, UCL, and NYU. Only one student from YIS entered Oxbridge between 2012 and 2016, and only two entered an Ivy League institution, even though the average IBDP score in 2017 was 36 points, well above the world average. From this presentation, using figures from selected well-

established ETISs, we can see a trend and the emergence of a few, strategic destinations. Moreover, these destinations are not necessarily the ones we might expect given the high-scoring exam results of these elite private schools, and the globally-minded dimension of the schooling they deliver. Of course, we know little about their preferred destination and whether or not they failed to gain entry to other universities, but the appearance of relatively large clusters in certain ‘global cities’ cannot be coincidental and does seem worthy of further inquiry. The clustering issue will be examined in more detail below.

Methodology and Data

The IB does not have a comprehensive data base concerning matriculation and the subsequent destinations of students, which means that matriculation data needs to come from either individual school websites (which is difficult as schools tend not to release matriculation data revealing trends over time), or from data collected by agencies who have a membership base that facilitates data collection on a voluntary basis. At the same time, universities do not publish data on school exit destinations. This results in having to utilise an array of different data sets.

The biggest data set available is garnered from ISC Research’s *Pathways from K-12 English-medium International Schools to University 2018*, which provides data upon the destinations of graduates from 132 ‘International Schools’ including the top destination universities globally. UK-based ISC Research has been mentioned already, and is the major gatherer of market intelligence in the field of International Schools and has been since 1994. This report will be supported by matriculation data from the websites of a further seven ETISs (i.e. not the ones already mentioned) over a period of years since 2014 (using data mined from official school websites) that shows the *proportion* of students who enter certain key

universities globally. The prevalence of destinations such as New York, Vancouver (UBC), Toronto, and London (UCL, and KCL), will then become much more apparent.

The evidence of clustering

The ISC Research *Pathways Report*

This Report showed that in May 2018, 5,247 schools out of a total of 9,464 schools provided learning for students aged between 16 and 18 years old, representing a market share of 55%. Of these, 182 schools reported that in 2017-2018, 90 per cent of their graduates entered Higher Education. The top country-destinations were universities in United States, United Kingdom, and Canada, followed by The Netherlands. Data from 132 schools disclosed the actual university destination. The 'Top 5' destinations were: UBC, followed by University of Toronto, UCL, KCL, and NYU was fifth (McGill University was sixth). Unfortunately, figures were not released for how many students entered these five destinations, which is the main reason why we will also analyse data (below) from individual schools. What we can observe though is that these five universities featured in our aforementioned discussion regarding the prominent 'ETISs' based in Geneva and New York.

The top 50 university destinations showed that the four countries mentioned above dominated the scene: 18 universities are in the UK, 14 in the USA, and five in both Canada, and the Netherlands. The top university destination in the USA was NYU, followed by Boston, and Northeastern (both in Boston). NYU is based in Greenwich Village, and has the highest number of international students of any university in the United States (Hess, 2019). However, it is also one of the most expensive, and overseas students are not eligible for federal loans or aid. The top UK destination in the UK was UCL, followed KCL (both in London), and University of Warwick. The top destination in Canada was UBC, followed by Toronto. As said

already, the *Pathways Report 2018* data did not give any clues as to the proportion of students who entered these universities and that issue will be explored next.

The relevance of the ‘Top 5’

In order to test the destination strength of these ‘Top 5’, the websites of 50 ‘International Schools’ were analysed for evidence of data concerning university entrance, or matriculation. All 50 are well-established schools, with a diversity of nationalities on the staff and student body, all are accredited by the Council of International Schools (CoIS), and all offered IBDP. In other words, they represent the body of ‘ETISs’ as identified by Tarc and Mishra Tarc (2015).

In addition to data regarding the *proportion* of students entering the ‘Top 5’ universities mentioned above, further, data concerning matriculation over a series of years was sought to prove that there is a trend rather than the findings described above being a ‘one-off’ situation. Obtaining that data proved surprisingly difficult. Nearly all schools list the destinations, but do not quantify how *many* students enter each institution. Some schools list the ‘offers made’ but do not give indication of actual entry (i.e. matriculation). This may reveal the sensitivity of schools allowing other competitor schools to know the individual contacts and networks that they possess.

Only 13 schools gave both any matriculation data, and quantified the actual numbers of students in total. Of these 13, only seven gave data for more than one year. For the record, these data are usually found by searching for the ‘School Profile’ site of the official school website. The number of students entering the ‘Top 5’ university destinations according to the *Pathways Report 2018* was then calculated (to reiterate, the ‘Top 5’ being, in rank order: UBC, Toronto, UCL, KCL, and New York).

Table 1: The matriculation data from seven ‘ETISs’

School location	Dates of matriculation	No. of students that graduated	No. of universities entered	‘Top 5’ entry (no. of students)	‘Top 5’ entry (% of students)
A (China)	2013-17	406	208	58	14%
B (Thailand)	2017-19	138	106	13	10%
C (Hong Kong)	2016-18	307	111	45	15%
D (Austria)	2014-18	203	76	14	7%
E (France)	2017-19	261	170	13	5%
F (USA)	2014-17	264	111	27	10%
G (Hong Kong)	2017-19	525	185	69	13%

In total, the seven schools sent 2,104 students to a university, entering an average of 138 universities worldwide. Of these students, 239 (11.3%) entered the ‘Top 5’.

The figure of 239 students may, at first glance, seem quite small. To put this figure into some sort of perspective, consider that the 406 students from School A in mainland China, between 2013 and 2017, entered 208 universities worldwide (an average of two students per university), however 122 of these universities was the destination of a *single* student. At the same time, 20 students from that school entered UBC (this was by far the biggest batch to enter a single university, representing 5 per cent of the total cohort), 14 went to Toronto, 12 entered

NYU, and nine went to UCL. In other words, the ‘Top 5’ universities accounted for the four major destinations of School A’s students, and are therefore importance spaces and places of destination. Overall, 14% of the entire cohort went to one of the ‘Top 5’ destinations, whilst the other 348 students were spread across 203 universities worldwide.

Also, a single student from School A between 2013 and 2017 entered Yale, and a solitary other one entered Oxbridge (out of 406 total graduates between 2013 and 2017). Yet, this is a high-scoring ‘IB World School’. In May 2019, the average IBDP score was 34 points, and almost 20% scored 40 points or more. From this information, we can observe that students who attend an ‘ETIS’ such as School A are not necessarily destined to enter an elite University which seems surprising given that we might expect this to be case of elite education in general. This in itself suggests that the phenomenon has deeper, sociological roots that require investigation. Moreover, we can identify a clustering of students in ‘global cities’ such as London, New York, Toronto, and Vancouver. Even though the students at School A entered, as one might expect, a vast array of global institutions we can identify a few key destinations. The relative importance of the ‘Top 5’ universities is shown below.

Table 2: The prevalence of the ‘Top 5’ destinations

University location	Number of students	% of students (out of 2,104)
NYU	81	3.8%
Toronto	48	2.2%
UBC	46	2.1%
UCL	38	1.6%
KCL	26	1.2%

It can be seen that the ranking is different from the 2018 *Pathways Report* findings. Almost 1-in-25 went to New York University, which was by far the major destination (yet fifth in the *Pathways Report*). The two Canadian-based universities came next, followed by the two London-based ones. The difference can be explained by the fact that the data from the 2018 Report covered all International Schools, not just the elite ones who deliver the IBDP.

The Hong-Kong schools sent the highest proportion to the ‘Top 5’, followed by another school in (Mainland) China. The Northern European schools had the lowest proportion figures. The French school had the lowest proportion (5%) yet had sent students to 170 universities worldwide between 2017 and 2019.

Individual school stories reveal the significant importance of the ‘Top 5’ universities. The biggest grouping from School B, in Thailand, between 2017 and 2019, like School A, went to UBC (4 students). School C in Hong Kong sent their biggest bloc of students (14) to UCLA, followed by NYU (13), and Cornell (10), and Pennsylvania (7). This means that School C sent 25% of its students, over three years, to just 8 universities, and the other 75% were spread amongst 103 universities. School D in Austria sent 23 students to Austrian universities, and their biggest single cohort (8) went to University of Edinburgh.

School E in France showed a very different story, sending zero students to NYU, and instead their biggest cohort (11) went to Northeastern University, revealing that Boston is a favoured choice for some students. School F in the USA had an especially high level of clustering; NYU was their student’s number one choice in the USA, and UCL was number one choice in UK. A further 8 students from School F went to Canada’s McGill, and 10 went to Ivy League-member University of Pennsylvania, meaning that 17% of students at School F had matriculated at just 7 universities. School G in Hong Kong sent students to no less than 144

universities across the USA, yet the biggest bloc (31) went to New York University. A further 30 went to University of Southern California.

Explanations for the clustering

In order to explain the emergence of clustering, we need to consider the reported views of students as to location and their subject choices, since these may be considered candidate explanations. However, this will only take us so far. We need to then consider how these choices relate to the social class dynamics of the TNCC. Are these choices anomalous or can we provide putative class-based explanations?

The reported view of students

The ISC Research *Pathways 2018* report included data from 179 college counsellors regarding motivations for choosing the destination country. The top response was ‘location of the university’, revealing that the choice of a cosmopolitan, global city such as Vancouver or Toronto is perhaps often a very deliberate one. The ‘quality of education provision’ came second, followed by ‘cost’. In other words, issues such as cost-effectiveness of provision was less important than the geographical space that the university occupies. The ‘ranking of the university’ came fifth, which might help to explain why the most popular university destinations are predominantly within the 10-50 ranking range of the *THES World University Rankings 2020*, whilst the Ivy League/Oxbridge institutions and the UK’s ‘Russell Group’ do not tend to feature much at all in the most popular destinations.

This is consistent with a recent analysis which shows that league tables are not that significant when it comes to overseas students choosing universities in the UK (Souto-Otero and Enders, 2017). The ‘experience of friends and peers’ was eighth in the survey, showing

that discussion on social media might be important but is not a major factor, nor is ‘promotion by university to students’ (number seven in the rankings). More significantly perhaps, the issue of ‘employment/career prospects’ was ranked tenth in the survey, which leads us to consider that overall, graduates from ‘ETISs’ are confident enough about future job prospects. Of course, we need to treat such findings with a degree of caution as much is probably based on anecdotal evidence.

Student subject choices

If location was a key factor in choice of university, then what about the subject students choose? A further 168 schools in the *Pathways 2018 Report* provided data about university subject choices. By far the most popular choice, accounting for about 25% of all students who had graduated from the 168 schools was ‘Accounting and Finance, Business and Management Studies’ (506 students had chosen that path, in 2018). Next, came ‘Engineering Mechanical, Aeronautical and Manufacturing’ (279 students), followed by ‘Economics’ (250 students). By comparison, only three students had chosen ‘Philosophy’ and 10 had chosen ‘History’. These data imply that while many students are not only going to the same university, but may quite possibly be doing the same course.

These data show that many universities will have a course, in a Business-related subject, that has many graduates on it from a ‘ETIS’. Thus, the clustering phenomenon even applies to subject choice, within the chosen university. Studies among graduates from Chinese-based ETISs Lee and Wright (2019 p.486) had supported this data finding.

Is there a class logic to these destinations?

We have shown that the ‘Top 5’ destinations as revealed by ISC Research’s *Pathways* report in 2018 (UBC, Toronto, UCL, KCL, and NYU) are becoming major arenas for clustering.

Using further data from seven ‘ETISs’ showing the *proportion* of students who have entered these five universities, we have shown how ‘global cities’ such as Toronto, London, Vancouver, Boston, and New York, might have on their campus at any one point in time as many as 100 young people who had attended the same school overseas. Moreover, they attended a similar type of school, what might be deemed an ‘ETIS’. In other words, they will also share common attributes, concerns and beliefs about their purpose, role and responsibility. This forms the potential for a strong platform for potential class consciousness, and class solidarity.

Two hypotheses are worth considering. Firstly, that there are strong links between the schools we have identified and this cluster of universities. It may be a matter of tradition coupled with personal connections, as has been the case with private schools in the United Kingdom, where the links between the elite private schools and Oxbridge Colleges has been well established.

There are several possibilities to consider. It may be that the choices these students who have clustered have made, are consistent with the logic of a dominant global class. This would be the case if their reasoning led them to major cities for their particular subjects, like accountancy because it is the cities that networks can be created between them and the corporate world when they are, as we have discussed both insiders and outsiders. On the other hand, it may be that this form of grouping is instrumental to their class interests in the long term because they create their own internal networks for future job prospects. In this context we should also see the advice they receive from their international school teachers and career

advisors as part of a class relationship in that, as within countries like Britain, there are long standing relationships that have been built up over time between elite schools and universities.

We would also point out that the phenomenon of ‘global city clustering’ in ‘global universities’ might also be an outcome of an isolated, protected schooling experience, reflecting a particular educational pathway. The ‘ETIS’ has long been identified with a lack of contact with the local community (Bunnell, 2005), acting as a ‘cultural bubble.’ Lee and Wright (2016 p.121) had noted how ‘International Schools (in China) are exclusive in being cut off or isolated from local communities.’ Wright and Lee (2019 p.693) also mention ‘that a disconnection with the local might be an inherent characteristic or by product’ for these young people, and forms part of natural educational pathway from an isolated elite schooling towards entry into belonging to an ultimate inter-linked ‘global middle class’. Rizvi (2005) had observed how international students from India and China going to study in Australian universities, had already developed a ‘global cosmopolitan imaginary’ upon their arrival. There is now scope in our study to speculate that some of these children may have attended an ‘ETIS’.

Maybe some graduates from ‘ETISs’ prefer to replicate at university-level the schooling experience they have previously had? In this context, the phenomenon can be viewed as wholly predictable, not a contradiction. Toronto, for instance, is described as ‘one of the most ethnically diverse and dynamic cities in the world’ (Nash, 2011). In other words, Toronto might be viewed by some young people who attended a ‘ETIS’ as being similar to that schooling environment, containing others with a similar background and outlook on life. Here, the exact location of the university becomes vital, and a safe campus or attractive cosmopolitan urban area becomes more appealing. There is some evidence that this is the *attraction*; as revealed by Wright and Lee’s (2019 p.682) study, ‘the IBDP alumni from outside Hong Kong highlighted the appeal of a global city, international environment, and local culture.’ One immediately here can see the appeal of Greenwich Village or London’s Bloomsbury to graduates of an ‘ETIS’.

These hypotheses are not mutually exclusive and all point, albeit in a more complex way to possible class relationships underpinning the clustering we have observed.

Here it is worth comparing the choices made by ETIS students with those of two of the most prestigious groupings of English private schools, we can then see how anomalous the choice of ETIS students is in comparison.

The first and most prestigious of these groupings are the schools that belong to the 'Eton Group'. These include Dulwich College, and Westminster School. The 2019 Leavers' from Dulwich College entered 41 UK-based universities, plus 13 others overseas. Westminster School's Leavers' in 2019 went to 37 universities (51 students went to Oxford), of which 20 are overseas. The second is the Rugby grouping which includes Harrow School, and Rugby School. The most common destinations for these two schools were the older established 'Russell Group' of universities. For example, Harrow College's Leavers' in 2019 went to the following top destinations; Edinburgh (20 students), Exeter (19), Newcastle (13), Bristol (11), Durham (8) and Oxford (8). Rugby School's Leavers' in 2019 went to Newcastle (19 students), Bristol (13), Durham (12), Edinburgh (12), Nottingham (9), UCL (7), Cambridge (6), Bath (5), Reading (5), and Oxford (4).

Conclusion

Our findings, for the most part, resonate with Sassen's (1991) arguments about the appeal of 'global cities' to transnational elites, and we can easily identify which cities they are. Furthermore, our analysis supports the argument made by Sassen (2000) that the resources required for economic activity at a global level (i.e. a future labour-force for serving global Capital) are not hypermobile and spread out across the world, but are contained and deeply embedded within the space and place of 'global cities' such as Toronto, or New York.

Attending a ‘global university’ such as UBC in a ‘global city’ such as Vancouver, alongside fellow graduates from both your own school and the wider body of ‘ETISs’ facilitates much potential for networking and contact-making that can be useful in the (global) labour-market. Friendships and class solidarity can be made that proves useful for job and career prospects.

However, the research to investigate the issue of clustering and how it relates to the class logic of choice remains to be undertaken. The study of labour-market entry, and even career, for students from ETISs, which investigates the subsequent job destinations of these students is the next step.

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