

Abstract : This thesis explores one of the potential impediments to the development of Madagascar, which has been experiencing a recession and recurrent socio-political crises for sixty years: relations between the elites. Elites' integration is indeed considered as essential to the stability of democratic regimes. Using a database of unprecedented scope and comprehensiveness, and innovative techniques, we analyse the structure of the global elites' network and show that elites are globally integrated, but in a very unequal way. Some elite groups (especially those with the most modest social backgrounds) are on the margins of this network; while the most influential and socially advantaged elites hold a privileged place and prefer "keep to themselves". This type of integration has never been described before in the literature. By examining the distribution of elites' ego-networks, we also find that, despite perceptible signs of compensation for social disadvantages by the network, these disadvantages are reflected in the unequal access to the elite networks. Our results validate the hypothesis of amplification of inequalities by network and show that amplification is partly due to homophilous behaviours and elitist associations and clubs. Finally, we show that these inequalities of access to and integration into the elite network result in unequal access to the highest positions of power. The elite network is indeed one of the main determinants of the level of power of elites, in addition to social background. The relative exclusion of certain elite groups, potentially destabilizing, from the network of the most influential elites and from the highest positions of power is a possible way of explaining the trajectory of Madagascar.

Keywords : Social networks, elites, power, Madagascar, integration, inequalities, small-world, institutions, meritocracy.