

## Chapter 1 : Political Theory | Political Science

*Elite theory, in political science, theoretical perspective according to which (1) a community's affairs are best handled by a small subset of its members and (2) in modern societies such an arrangement is in fact inevitable.*

I also declare that my work is in accordance with all the said guidelines provided by the faculty. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude towards my course teacher, Mr. Avinash Samal for giving me constant guidance and encouragement throughout the course of the project. I would also like to thank the University for providing me the internet and library facilities which were indispensable for getting relevant content on the subject, as well as subscriptions to online databases and journals, which were instrumental in writing relevant text. Insofar as national events are decided, the power elite are those who decide them. Wright Mills According to Mills, understanding the middle classes it is not something much difficult, but understanding the very top of modern society requests discovery and description. These writers attacked classical democratic thought and also Aristotle and Karl Marx. Majority rule, they insisted, is impossible. Every society is divided into those who rule and those who are ruled; and the rulers constitute only a small minority of any society. It is the few, under any political system, who exercise effective control. History features a continuing struggle among elites. That struggle will never end, and a classless society cannot be created. Elite theory is a theory of the state which seeks to describe and explain the power relationships in contemporary society. Through positions in corporations or on corporate boards, and influence over the policy-planning networks through financial support of foundations or positions with think tanks or policy-discussion groups, members of the "elite" are able to exert significant power over the policy decisions of corporations and governments<sup>1</sup>. In Defence of Elitism. Research Methodology This research is descriptive and analytical in nature. Accumulation of the information on the topic include wide use of secondary sources like books, e-articles etc. The matter from these sources have been compiled and analysed to understand the concept from the grass root level. The structure of the project, as instructed by the Faculty of Political Science has been adhered to and the same has been helpful in giving the project a fine finish off. To these might be added C. The classical elitist thesis does not merely assert that in a society the minority makes decisions and the majority obeys. This is an obvious truth with no power to explain political relationships. The elitist argument is stronger; it states that the dominant minority cannot be controlled by the majority, whatever democratic mechanisms are used. An implication of this is that the supposed elite constitute a coherent, united and self-conscious group and these qualities appear in nearly all definitions. The theory of elites was presented systematically by Vilfredo Pareto in his work "The Mind and Society". Accordingly, elites are seen by Pareto not as the product of economic forces nor as building their dominance on their organizational ability but as the outcome of what Pareto believed to be human attributes constant throughout history. Interest groups such as unions, and employers who also play the democratic game by competing for a share in the national product, are all part of the one elite. The ruling class controls most of the wealth, power and prestige in society and exercises all power. Whatever form of government might be adopted. The rules are not competent to replace it. This view point is deducible from his famous passage regarded as the most concise statement of the general elitist position, the passage reads: In all societies two classes of people appear "a class that rules and a class that is ruled. Accordingly, no mechanism for ensuring the accountability of the leaders to the public, no ideology which enshrines the principle of majority will can prevent the elite from imposing its supremacy over the rest of society. Wright Mills, who adopted an institutional approach, shares with Burnham the belief that the status and compositions of elite cannot properly be explained in terms of the talents or psychology of its individual members but must be studied in the context of the economic and social structure of the particular society. Such contract may range from conscious conspiracy to a mere consensus amongst the leaders as to policies and values. James Burnham James Burnham presents an economic approach to elite domination. This is as opposed to Pareto, who adopted a psychological approach. His contention in the Managerial Revolution was that the capitalist system was in decline and would be replaced by a society controlled economically and politically by managerial elite. Social change occurs as a result of a shift in the

composition of the elite – old elite replaced by a new one. An egalitarian, classless society is inconceivable in the conditions of advanced industrialized societies with their need for technical training and expertise. This may be an act of inevitability rather than rational calculation. It became fashionable for regimes of all shades and colours to claim to derive their powers to govern from the people, hence their recourse to democracy. The result was the birth of a new theory elitist theory and practice democratic elitism of democracy these new elite theorists define democracy from the minimalist perspective, which prescribes the criteria of democracy as regular electoral competitions, usually in a multi-party system, and thus, governmental succession by constitutional electoral procedures, guaranteeing the rule of law. In political and theory, power elite consider a small group of people who control a disproportionate amount of wealth, privilege, and access to decision-making of global consequence. Mills describes the relationship between political, military, and economic elite. Wright Mills, among the best known power-elite theorists, the governing elite in the United States draws its members from three areas: Even though these individuals constitute a close-knit group, they are not part of a conspiracy that secretly manipulates events in their own selfish interest. For the most part, the elite respects civil liberties, follows established constitutional principles, and operates openly and 11 Elite Theory of Democracy peacefully. It is not a dictatorship; it does not rely on terror, a secret police, or midnight arrests to get its way. Nor is its membership closed, although many members have enjoyed a head start in life by virtue of their being born into prominent families. Nevertheless, those who work hard, enjoy good luck, and demonstrate a willingness to adopt elite values do find it possible to work into higher circles from below. If the elite do not derive its power from repression or inheritance, from where does its strength come? Basically it comes from control of the highest positions in the political and business hierarchy and from shared values and beliefs. Democratic Elitism The relationship between the democratic state and its elites is a matter of some controversy. The debate has undergone several vicissitudes since the "classical elitists" began it in the late nineteenth century. The role of elites within democratic governments presents democratic theorists with one of their thorniest problems. On the one hand, democracies are based upon some type of political equality among citizens- an equality which must be politically significant. On the other hand, wherever we look, we find political inequalities, sometimes great ones, within democracies. Democratic theorists have long held that there is a practical and theoretical problem concerning the place of elites within democratic politics. We cannot attain a balanced 12 Elite Theory of Democracy appreciation of the role elites play in political democracy until we appreciate the important distinction between democratic organizations and a democratic polity. Largely interred in the inter-war years, it was resurrected by Wright Mills and others in the s and given impetus by electoral studies and the "political behaviour" movement. There were some who saw elites and elitist tendencies as inimical to democracy and those who believed the two could quite easily be reconciled. Among the latter were the so-called "democratic elitists. Modern society is based upon a complex division of labour and upon large-scale economic and political organizations. The administration of these requires high skill, intelligence and experience. This fact leads to a division of the population into two groups. On the one hand are the highly skilled managers, administrators and bureaucrats; on the other are the unskilled masses4. In the resulting hierarchy, the former occupy positions of power and privilege, while the latter are restricted to non-policy-making functions. Because of this fact, and because those who hold positions of power will not surrender them voluntarily, the policy-makers tend to consolidate themselves into a class which defends its privileged positions against any attempts by the masses to displace it. This The subject of elite power seems even more relevant today. Since the s, social and economic policy-making has continued to disproportionately benefit those in power. Inequality in the US and similar capitalist democracies has risen steadily. The real incomes of the middle and lower classes have stagnated or declined in recent decades. There are fewer, more powerful chief executives, presiding over larger conglomerates. Their incomes are hundreds of times greater than average earnings. Individual international financiers control rather larger capital amounts than they ever did before. The invasion of Iraq demonstrates that tiny groups of politicians and advisors are still able to push the US and other nations into major conflicts with little accountability. Declining levels of voter turnout and trust as well as large social movement protests in mature democracies are testament to the growing dissatisfaction of publics with their elites. On the other hand, ruling elites appear more constrained by

circumstances. Politicians, financiers and CEOs all know rather less than they did about those sectors they manage. They are professional leaders, lacking experience or knowledge about what they decide on. It is a world of technical expertise, complexity and risk. Politicians are not equipped to challenge expert advice on economics, military capabilities, health systems and a wealth of other policy areas. So too, the erratic power of a powerful and varied news media has offered greater challenges to elites wishing to gain or maintain power. Politicians of all over the world, more than ever, are dependent on favourable news outlets and large financial war chests to fund advertising blitzes. In effect, decision-making and wealth, and hence power, are more concentrated and centralised, but the wielding of power by individuals may be more constrained. The mechanisms of control, from financial to new tax rules, are more inhuman and unforgiving, even for ruling elites. The range of intermediaries, who have an influence on elites, has extended. Journalists, editors, technical and expert networks, accountants and bureaucrats, at home and abroad, both aid and restrict elites. Risks and consequences are difficult to fathom. Paradigm shifts are harder to achieve. This is the fourth time the company has been fined in the last four years. The first three fines were imposed by the UPA government. But nobody can reliance industries are not paying any heed to governments fines<sup>6</sup>. It completely disregards any possible social or economic basis for class-stratification. This is a way of asserting that authority-subordination relationships are the basic relationships in society. A scientific demonstration of this assumption is still awaited. It is further based upon the questionable historical prognostication that ". This confusion is especially likely to occur in elitist theory in-so-far as it follows the method of lumping all socio-economic systems and all types of social organizations into one category, even such disparate ones as the modern states, trade unions and corporations, all under the label "large-scale social organizations.

**Chapter 2 : Interest Group and Elite Theory**

*In political science and sociology, elite theory is a theory of the state that seeks to describe and explain power relationships in contemporary society. The theory posits that a small minority, consisting of members of the economic elite and policy-planning networks, holds the most power—and this power is independent of democratic elections.*

If you refer to the article, please ensure you acknowledge both the publication and publisher appropriately. Thereafter, we will examine the concept of liberal democracy. The latter discourse will be undertaken with a view to showcasing the relationship between the elite theory of politics and the concept and principles of liberal democracy. In other words, the question is whether the existence of elites is compatible with the existence of democracy. Introduction Elite theories were originally developed in the field of sociology to explain the behaviour of men in a social setting. But, the elite theory of politics was developed to the status of a theory in political science by two Italian sociologists, Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca. The implication of the elite theory of politics in the field of politics posed a challenge to democratic theory, which was in turn revised by several thinkers. The core of the elitist doctrine is that there may exist in many societies a minority of the population which takes the major decisions in the society. Electronic copy available at: Therefore, in broad terms, the elite theory of politics holds that every society consists of two categories of men: a) the elite or the minority within a social collectivity such as a society, a state, a religious institution, a political party which exercises a preponderant influence within the collectivity, and b) the masses of the majority which is governed by the elite. For some, elites are the decision-makers of the society whose power is not subject to control by any other body in the society. For others, elites are the sole source of values in the society or constitute the integrating force in the community without which it may fall apart. Elites have been regarded as the chief threat to the survival of democracy. Their existence has been taken to be the very denial of democracy. Elites which have exceptional access to key positions in the society or which appear to wield control over critical and crucial policies disproportionate to their numbers can understandably seem to be living contradictions of the notion of government by the people. Despite this, other writers have seen elites as the bulwarks of democracy, protecting it from the dangers of totalitarianism. The latter might have become classic if only by virtue of the controversy they have aroused in the last decades, but they also display a conscious continuity with the earlier classic both in the issues with which they are concerned, and in some of their presuppositions. In particular, they are concerned, as, by and large, the earlier classics were, with examining the existence and nature of a single cohesive elite which dominates the affairs of a society. Much other recent writings on elites have, by contrast, been concerned with leadership in societies which are seen as composed of a number of elites which are potential competitors for influence in the society. As summarized by Ikpe: Thus, the elite may be powerful as a result of the revolutionary overthrow of the previously dominant group as in the case of Russia in the early twentieth century. Additionally, the elite may owe its position to conquest, like the Norman rulers of Saxon England after 1066, or the Fulani conquest of the Hausa land in Northern Nigeria in 1804. The minority may be powerful because of its monopoly of the crucial productive resources of a society such as the control of water in oriental societies, or its influence may be due to its embodying in fact or in appearance certain social or religious values widely shared in a tradition-bound society. Even in modern societies, the dominant minority at the very least includes some of those who have been elected to positions of leadership; the elitists claim that electoral victory is not gained entirely by open democratic means. Again, the classical elitist thesis does not merely assert that in a society the minority makes decisions and the majority obeys. This is an obvious truism with no power to explain political relationships. The elitist argument is a much stronger one. It is that the dominant minority cannot be controlled by the majority, whatever democratic mechanisms are used. In other words, no mechanism for ensuring the accountability of the leaders to the public, no ideology which enshrines the principle of majority will prevent the elite from imposing its supremacy over the rest of the society. An implication of this is that the supposed elite constitute a coherent, united and self-conscious group and these qualities appear in nearly all definitions. Principal Elitist Theories and Their Theories This segment of the paper examines individual versions of

classical elitist thesis as put forward by its principal protagonists. However, given the limited scope of this work, only a brief commentary on the theories propounded by these theorists will be undertaken. The theory of elites was presented systematically by Vilfredo Pareto in his monumental work "The Mind and Society". Accordingly, elites are seen by Pareto not as the product of economic forces nor as building their dominance on their organizational ability but as the outcome of what Pareto believed to be human attributes constant throughout history. Only those totally opposed to the regime and unwilling to compromise by participating in it can be counted as outside the elite. Interest groups such as unions, and employers who also play the democratic game by competing for a share in the national product, are all part of the one elite. Gaetano Mosca Mosca postulated that the people are necessarily divided into two groups: The ruling class controls most of the wealth, power and prestige in society and exercises all power. Whatever form of government might be adopted. The rules are not competent to replace it. This view point is deducible from his famous passage regarded as the most concise statement of the general elitist position, the passage reads: Among the constant facts and the tendencies that are to be founding all political organisms, one is so obvious that it is apparent to the most casual eye. In all societies two classes of people appear a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent, and supplies the first, in appearance at least, with material means of subsistence and with the instrumentalities that are essential to the vitality of the political organism. Accordingly, neither one man nor the mass of the people can rule. The single rule needs the backing of advisers and administrators, propagandists and police. On the other side the people can only act politically under the direction of a small group of leaders. Historical evolution mocks all the prophylactic measures that have been adopted for the prevention of oligarchy. If laws are passed to controlled the dominion of the leaders, it is the laws which gradually weaken and not the leaders. Accordingly, no mechanism for ensuring the accountability of the leaders to the public, no ideology which enshrines the principle of majority will can prevent the elite from imposing its supremacy over the rest of society. James Burnham James Burnham presents an economic approach to elite domination. This is as opposed to Pareto, who adopted a psychological approach. His contention in the *Managerial Revolution* was that the capitalist system was in decline and would be replaced by a society controlled economically and politically by a managerial elite. Social change occurs as a result of a shift in the composition of the elite an old elite replaced by a new one. An egalitarian, classless society is inconceivable in the conditions of advanced industrialized societies with their need for technical training and expertise. The failure of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia to establish such a society was proof to Burnham that a new a new class of rulers must inevitably arise. Wright Mills, who adopted an institutional approach, shares with Burnham the belief that the status and compositions of an elite cannot properly be explained in terms of the talents or psychology of its individual members but must be studied in the context of the economic and social structure of the particular society. Whereas Burnham held power in society to arise from control of the means of production, Mills sees it as attached to a wider set of institutions comprised, in the USA to which Mills confines his attention of the military, the big corporations and the political executive. The cohesiveness of the elite will be in large part determined by the closeness of the links between institutional hierarchies. If these hierarchies are scatted and disjointed, then their respective elites tend to be scattered and disjointed; if they have many interconnections and points of coinciding interest, then their elites tend to form a coherent kind of grouping. Such contract may range from conscious conspiracy to a mere consensus amongst the leaders as to policies and values. In short, democracy as a form of government implies that the ultimate authority of government is vested in the common people so that public policy is made to conform to the will of the people and to serve the interests of the people. Democracy has very often been associated with liberalism, a concept which as long been thought its closest relative. Accordingly, it is pertinent to consider the nature of liberalism. Liberalism might be defined as a means of achieving freedom. Liberalism is something which asserts that individuals have positive and continuing rights to a private life, and it goes far beyond a mere attack on unjust rulers. Liberalism often allied itself with the scientific and secular spirit, rejecting the power of both church

and princes. In the history of liberal thought, one man who must be mentioned is John Locke, who stressed that men have rights because they are rational beings. The following are some of the beliefs of liberalism; as summarized by Harris, The state should not interfere unduly with social life. When social changes including religious changes become necessary, these will be made by parliament or legislature. Everybody will be required to obey these laws. Laws may be made only by the legislature, and not, for example, by officials or civil servants. Judges exist only to interpret the law and are separated from the legislature and executive branches of government. The above assumptions of liberalism represented an ideal or even an idealized model, since they ignore the power of specialized interest groups and entrenched officials. Thus, while democracy is an old concept, liberalism is a recent one. Macpherson in his *Democratic Theory- Essays in Retrieval* has observed: Thus, classical liberalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries insisted on property qualification for the right to vote. This was contrary to the democratic principle which implies equal entitlement of each individual not only in the matter of choosing a government but also to the other advantages accruing from organized social life. But a combination of the two antithetical principles - liberalism and democracy - became inevitable in a latter phase because of historical reasons. Classical liberalism fostered capitalism and a free-market economy which were responsible for large-scale industrialization and urbanization. This gave rise to a large working class centered in large industrial cities and forced to live under sub-human conditions created by a cruel, competitive economy. In due course this class became conscious of its strength and insisted on a voice at the decision-making level. The outcome of this combination emerged in the form of liberal democracy. It represents a combination of free-market economy with universal adult franchise. It is an attempt to resolve the conflicting claims of the capitalists and the masses by making gradual concessions under the garb of a welfare state. Liberal democracy today, is distinguished from other forms of political system by certain principles and characteristics, that is, its procedure and institutional arrangements. Institutions are necessary for the realization of principles; without principles, the institutions might be reduced to a mere formality. The two must go together. All in all, liberal democracy works on certain principles and certain mechanisms. Broadly speaking, principles of liberal democracy include: They set out to show that the notion that the people or a majority of the people ruled was a chimera, and that, whatever the form of government, the effective rulers constituted a narrow elite. Majoritarian democracy in strict sense of the term was in their view, an impossibility confirmed by the experience of history. The opposition between the ideas of classical elites and the idea of liberal democracy may be expressed in two forms: But, this opposition need not by any means so rigorous and extreme as it appears at first sight. Schumpeter presented such a view of democracy, which has since been widely accepted, when he defined the democratic method as: For it is sufficient for democracy that the individual citizens, though prevented from taking a direct part in government all the time, have at least the possibility of making their aspirations felt at certain intervals. Moreover, it can equally be argued that even if democracy is regarded as comprising more than a political system, it is still compatible with classical elite theories; for the idea of equality which democracy as a form of society may be held to imply can easily be re-interpreted as equality of opportunity: Democracy will then be treated as a type of society in which the elites- economic and cultural, as well as political-are open in principle and are in fact recruited from different social strata on the basis of individual merit.

**Chapter 3 : Elite (elitist) theory: A Glossary of Political Economy Terms - Dr. Paul M. Johnson**

*It is obvious that the theory of elites (Rule of the few) is opposed to democracy because democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. However, Kari Mannheim (), who in his earlier writings had connected elite theories with fascism and anti-intellectualism.*

Wright Mills wrote of the "elite" in his book *The Power Elite* as "those political, economic, and military circles, which as an intricate set of overlapping small but dominant groups share decisions having at least national consequences. Insofar as national events are decided, the power elite are those who decide them". These memberships in turn pave the way to the prominent social clubs located in all major cities and serving as sites for important business contacts". Mills contended that since the end of World War II, corporate leaders had become more prominent in the political process, with a decline in central decision-making for professional politicians. Most prominent corporate leaders and politicians were strong proponents of military spending. According to Mills, in the s when the military emphasis was pronounced, it was corporate leaders working with prominent military officers who dominated the development of policies. These two groups tended to be mutually supportive. According to Mills, the power elite rose from "the managerial reorganization of the propertied classes into the more or less unified stratum of the corporate rich". Instead, class rule is manifested through the activities of a wide variety of organizations and institutions. Leaders within the upper class join with high-level employees in the organizations they control to make up what will be called the power elite". Wright Mills to describe a relatively small, loosely connected group of individuals who dominate American policy making. This group includes bureaucratic, corporate, intellectual, military, media, and government elites who control the principal institutions in the United States and whose opinions and actions influence the decisions of the policymakers. Bush in office identified 7, institutional positions of power encompassing 5, individuals. Age Corporate leaders aged about 60; heads of foundations, law, education, and civic organizations aged around 62; government employees aged about In the economic denomination, as of October [update], only 32 6. Social clubs Most holders of top positions in the power elite possess exclusive membership to one or more social clubs. About a third belong to a small number of especially prestigious clubs in major cities like London, New York City, Chicago, Boston, and Washington, D. Sociologist Christopher Doob gives a hypothetical alternative, stating that these elite individuals would consider themselves the overseers of the national economy. Also appreciating that it is not only a moral, but a practical necessity to focus beyond their group interests. Doing so would hopefully alleviate various destructive conditions affecting large numbers of less affluent citizens. They therefore, have a wide range of knowledge and interests in many influential organizations, and are, as Mills describes, "professional go-betweens of economic, political, and military affairs". Sociologist Manuel Castells writes in *The Rise of the Network Society* that contemporary globalization does not mean that "everything in the global economy is global".

*Elite (elitist) theory. The theoretical view held by many social scientists which holds that American politics is best understood through the generalization that nearly all political power is held by a relatively small and wealthy group of people sharing similar values and interests and mostly coming from relatively similar privileged backgrounds.*

Definition, Role and Criticism of Elitism are described below: Aristotle held that some persons are fit to rule while others are fit to be ruled over. Elite consists of those persons who come at the top because of their superior quality. Such chosen few generally exist in trade-Unions, bureaucracy, armed forces and almost everywhere. The Elite Theory consists of the idea that there are two groups: Elite theory assures that men may be equal in the eyes of God but they are not so in the eyes of man. According to the theorists, inequality is largely found in every state and society, thus making every one of them oligarchical in different degrees. Elites arise in every type of society and state because of the ancient traditions, wealth, physical might, economic status and ability. Rule of Elite differentiated from Aristocracy and Oligarchy: It is a minority, like an aristocracy but there is neither in the sense of self-preparation and selfishness which often is associated with the latter". In simpler words oligarchy and aristocracy are both distinct from the elite. Oligarchy is a government by the few privileged and the Aristocracy is a government by the few best but with the Elite there is no grandeur of aristocracy and no desire for self-perpetuation and selfishness as we found in Oligarchy. The Elite always works in the interest of those from whom it derives its power and authority but still it works against democracy because it believes in the rule of the few. Therefore Maurice Duverger holds the opinion that "government of the people and by the people must be replaced by another formula Government of people by an elite sprung from the people". Consequently, the theory of political elite stands on the principle of natural inequality and is opposed to the liberal democratic state. Role of the Elite: The role of the elite in the society is extremely important because it formulates the policies and takes the decisions. The elite give political education to the masses and they set certain model standards in the society. It is throughout the elites, writes Rajni Kothari, that-values of political development penetrate into society at various levels and by stages. The role of the writers, artists, social workers and scientists ever more important than the bureaucrats and politicians. They enlighten the people. Thus they preserve and promote the culture. No society without a governing elite can hope to transmit the culture it has inherited. Not only that the elite help the poor and remove their genuine grievances. In times of crisis the people look to the elite to show them the way. The elite theories which had been first advocated against Marxism have been put to searching questions and found lacking. Some of the points of criticism are: Elite cannot control the whole sphere of political activity: The advocates of elite theories wrongly believe that elite can control the whole sphere of political, social and economic activity. An elite may influence one field but it cannot influence all the fields. For example, Dahl holds that economically well-off section of society cannot find any place in the sphere of education. Wealth and political position cannot be proportionate: The supporters of the elite theory wrongly hold the belief that the wealthy persons may rise to political power and control the political structure. It is not necessary that the most powerful man of the state may be also wealthiest. Besides that it is also not certain that the wealthiest person may rise to political power. In communist countries the wealth has no role to play. Even in democratic countries like India, though the wealth has played a notable role in the elections, yet all the wealthy persons have not risen to power. Many big capitalists of India may exercise political influence upon the government directly or indirectly but they have not contested the election so far. Hence there is no proportionate relation between the two. Elites are more concerned about their personal interest than the interest of the whole community: Supporters of the elite theory wrongly lead us to believe that the elites look to the interests of the whole community. In fact they never look to the interests of the whole community. In fact they never look to the interest of entire society but confine themselves to their own interests. Decision-making does not lie solely in the hands of the elites: It is argued by prominent supporters of the elite theory that the decisions in the government are generally taken by the elites. When the government takes decisions, several factors influence it and not only the wishes of the elites. Ideas of elites never create values: The supporters of elite theory

believe that the ideas of the elites create value for the society but this is only one-sided picture. On the other hand the truth is that the elite give ideas in accordance with the values recognised by the masses because the elites can never force their values on society. Elites are not cohesive, conscious and conspiratorial: The main exponents of the elite theory hold that the elites are linked by ties of common interests and they are cohesive, conscious and conspiratorial but it is not so. Friedrich says that, "It is not the class that rules but the class from which the rulers and in whose interest they exercise power. Elites do not rule with their inherent ability: It has been held that the elites rule any country because of their inherent abilities but it is not so. Even if a small section of the people is alienated from the political system, then it may resort to protests and demonstrations which may paralyze the elite rule and the theory of the elites.

**Chapter 5 : Elite theory - Wikipedia**

*abstract This article reviews contemporary elite theory in political sociology and political science. Elite Elite theory is based on the assumption that elite behavior has a causal relationship with general patterns of.*

History[ edit ] Italian school of elitism[ edit ] Vilfredo Pareto “ , Gaetano Mosca “ , and Robert Michels “ , were cofounders of the Italian school of elitism, which influenced subsequent elite theory in the Western tradition. Power lies in position of authority in key economic and political institutions. The psychological difference that sets elites apart is that they have personal resources, for instance intelligence and skills, and a vested interest in the government; while the rest are incompetent and do not have the capabilities of governing themselves, the elite are resourceful and strive to make the government work. For in reality, the elite would have the most to lose in a failed state. Vilfredo Pareto[ edit ] Pareto emphasized the psychological and intellectual superiority of elites, believing that they were the highest accomplishers in any field. He discussed the existence of two types of elites: Governing elites Non-governing elites He also extended the idea that a whole elite can be replaced by a new one and how one can circulate from being elite to non-elite. Gaetano Mosca[ edit ] Mosca emphasized the sociological and personal characteristics of elites. He said elites are an organized minority and that the masses are an unorganized majority. The ruling class is composed of the ruling elite and the sub-elites. He divides the world into two groups: Ruling class Class that is ruled Robert Michels[ edit ] Sociologist Michels developed the iron law of oligarchy where, he asserts, social and political organizations are run by few individuals, and social organization and labor division are key. He believed that all organizations were elitist and that elites have three basic principles that help in the bureaucratic structure of political organization: Need for leaders, specialized staff and facilities Utilization of facilities by leaders within their organization The importance of the psychological attributes of the leaders Contemporary elite theorists[ edit ] Elmer Eric Schattschneider[ edit ] Elmer Eric Schattschneider offered a strong critique of the American political theory of pluralism: Rather than an essentially democratic system in which the many competing interests of citizens are amply represented, if not advanced, by equally many competing interest groups , Schattschneider argued the pressure system is biased in favor of "the most educated and highest-income members of society", and showed that "the difference between those who participate in interest group activity and those who stand at the sidelines is much greater than between voters and nonvoters". The "range of organized, identifiable, known groups is amazingly narrow; there is nothing remotely universal about it" and the "business or upper-class bias of the pressure system shows up everywhere". He says the "notion that the pressure system is automatically representative of the whole community is a myth" and, instead, the "system is skewed, loaded and unbalanced in favor of a fraction of a minority". Wright Mills[ edit ] Mills published his book *The Power Elite* in , claiming a new sociological perspective on systems of power in the United States. He identified a triumvirate of power groups“political, economic and military“which form a distinguishable, although not unified, power-wielding body in the United States. Mills proposed that this group had been generated through a process of rationalization at work in all advanced industrial societies whereby the mechanisms of power became concentrated, funneling overall control into the hands of a limited, somewhat corrupt group. *The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, “ , a study of how Nazism came to power in the German democratic state. It provided the tools to analyze the structure of a political system and served as a warning of what could happen in a modern capitalistic democracy. Floyd Hunter[ edit ] The elite theory analysis of power was also applied on the micro scale in community power studies such as that by Floyd Hunter Hunter examined in detail the power of relationships evident in his "Regional City" looking for the "real" holders of power rather than those in obvious official positions. He posited a structural-functional approach that mapped hierarchies and webs of interconnection within the city“mapping relationships of power between businessmen, politicians, clergy etc. The study was promoted to debunk current concepts of any "democracy" present within urban politics and reaffirm the arguments for a true representative democracy. Schwartz examining the power structures within the sphere of the corporate elite in the United States. William Domhoff researched local and national decision making

process networks seeking to illustrate the power structure in the United States. He asserts, much like Hunter, that an elite class that owns and manages large income-producing properties like banks and corporations dominate the American power structure politically and economically. Francis and Paul Gottfried in their theories of the managerial state. Burnham described his thoughts on elite theory more specifically in his book, *The Machiavellians*, which discusses, among others, Pareto, Mosca, and Michels. Burnham attempts a scientific analysis of both elites and politics generally. Putnam[ edit ] Putnam saw the development of technical and exclusive knowledge among administrators and other specialist groups as a mechanism that strips power from the democratic process and slips it to the advisors and specialists who influence the decision process. Gonzalez writes on the power of U. In *The Politics of Air Pollution: Urban Growth, Ecological Modernization and Symbolic Inclusion* and also in *Urban Sprawl, Global Warming, and the Empire of Capital* Gonzalez employs elite theory to explain the interrelationship between environmental policy and urban sprawl in America. His most recent work, *Energy and Empire: The Politics of Nuclear and Solar Power in the United States* demonstrates that economic elites tied their advocacy of the nuclear energy option to post American foreign policy goals, while at the same time these elites opposed government support for other forms of energy, such as solar, that cannot be dominated by one nation. Ralf Dahrendorf[ edit ] In his book *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, [16] Ralf Dahrendorf asserts that, due to advanced level of competence required for political activity, a political party tends to become, actually, a provider of "political services", that is, the administration of local and governmental public offices. During the electoral campaign, each party tries to convince voters it is the most suitable for managing the state business. The logical consequence would be to acknowledge this character and openly register the parties as service providing companies. In this way, the ruling class would include the members and associates of legally acknowledged companies and the "class that is ruled" would select by election the state administration company that best fits its interests. Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page[ edit ] In their statistical analysis of 1, policy issues professors Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page found that "economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on U. Set out most extensively in his book *Golden Rule: The Investment Theory of Party Competition and the Logic of Money-driven Political Systems*, the theory begins by noting that in modern political systems the cost of acquiring political awareness is so great that no citizen can afford it.

*Although the elite concept is often employed broadly and diffusely, it best refers to persons who are able, by virtue of their strategic decision-making positions in powerful organizations and movements, to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially.*

It is a very American theory that is popular with political scientists. It fits well with economic principles such as Adam Smith. Leading advocates are James Madison Federalist No. Its advantages are that it is comparatively neutral as to values and explains process. The theory is also called pluralism because there are many groups. It differs from a political party in that it does not try to win office. The power of an interest groups comes from its: Groups form when a disturbance occurs and people come together to resist change. Interest groups often lobby in Washington, where their techniques are direct, grass roots, information campaigns and coalition building. Groups sometimes compete with each other, and sometimes cooperate. Government is like a referee calling the balls and strikes. Public policy is only a temporary equilibrium. Adherents believe that government is held together by: Both the group leaders and political scientist believe that situation will remain fluid permanently; no one group will have a permanent victory. The recent campaign finance reform law is premised on interest group theory. It assumes that many groups are too powerful because they can raise money to donate to politicians, therefore the law restricts them. Critics often agree that the groups can spend a lot of money, but believe the law will merely make the donations harder to track. Like James Madison, they believe the solution is to play one group against another. The idea that "money talks" in this direct fashion is a form of group theory. Elite Theory believes that a wealthy elite runs the United States. The economic elite consists of the same people as the political elite wealth equals power. The elite exerts power downward on the masses. A large minority of political scientists believe the theory. Wright Mills The Power Elite. The theory maintains that very rich families are in power, people such as the Rockefellers, the Fords, and the Pews. They tend to live in the Northeast and attend exclusive prep schools and Ivy League universities. They tend to belong to mainline Protestant churches and they marry one another. Often members of the elite do not occupy governmental positions themselves, but depend on elected and appointed officials who do their work for them. It takes two or three generations of wealth to arrive in the elite. New members of elite are thoroughly socialized by the time they arrive at the top. Power flows downward making it democratic theory in reverse. The elite shares a consensus on the importance of private property, limited government, individual liberty and the fact that change should be incremental rather than revolutionary. As demonstrated in many charities, the elite may be public regarding, displaying a sense of noblesse oblige. The elite manipulates the masses by exploiting symbols such as charity or elections. Philanthropy reduces the threat that the masses will demand that money be seized from the wealthy. The power of money is latent and takes a long time to have its effect. It is not the direct "money talks" of group theory. Although few political scientists who believe the elite theory consider it good for democracy, they consider it to be an accurate view of reality. It does have the advantage of reducing conflict due to elite consensus. Two presidents make an interesting contrast. Bush Senior came from an old New England family that gained its wealth in banking. He attended Andover School and Yale University. Bill Clinton came from a working class family in Arkansas. Rising out of the masses, he attended a mid-range prestige university, Georgetown, and an Ivy League law school, Yale. He married Hillary Rodman, who had her undergraduate degree from one of the Seven Sisters and was the daughter of a Chicago businessman. Elite theorists consider Bush to be a member of the elite and Clinton as an official who was recruited to serve the elite. Bush Junior is not quite as pure an example of the elite as his father, although his own mother was also from an old wealthy New England family. He was raised in Texas even though he was born in Connecticut. Like his father, he attended Andover and Yale. Return to Nonprofit or Principles course.

**Chapter 7 : Elite - Wikipedia**

*Theory in all Political Science stating that elites are inevitable in any political system or society no matter the size, culture, demographic, or institution. Masses The many in an organization who do not hold power.*

But the term was widely used in the late 19th century in Europe or s in Britain and America, notably in the writings of social theorists like Michales, Mosca, Burham, Pareto, Gasset, C. Wright Mills and Lasswell etc. The Elite theory proceeds on the idea that every society consists of two broad categories; viz. As a consequence, the theory has modified the popular notion of democracy. The elites consist of those successful persons who rise to the top in every occupation and stratum of society. Society, to Pareto, consists of two classes: A lower stratum, the non-elite. A higher stratum, the elite i. He holds that there is continuous movement of individuals and elites from higher to lower levels and from lower to higher levels. It results primarily on account of psychological changes in the elites. He outlines a list of qualities called residues by which elites can remain in power. One ascends, another declines and there goes on the continuous replacement or circulation of the elites. To him all societies are characterised by two classes-a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The elites monopolize power and enjoy the privileges that accompany power. However Mosca emphasizes that one class counts on the cooperation of another. While the ruling class needs the support of the ruled class, the latter provides protection to the former. To ensure the success and survival of any organisation that the leadership attains power and advantages under such circumstances, they cannot be checked or held accountable by their followers. He combines the elements of traditional elitist theory with the Marxist theory of ruling class. According to Mills, the rule of power elite is a special characteristic of a developed society only such as the United States after the Second World War. Moreover the power elite are a composite but cohesive elite in which the political, economic and military elites are interpenetrated to such an extent that they now form a single entity. They are recruited from higher circles of American society. A group of intellectuals serve as their consultants, spokesman and opinion makers. He points out that within American Society major national power now resides in the economic military and political spheres. Within each of the three spheres, the typical institutional unit has become enlarged, more centralized in decision making, administratively more powerful and consumer of highly developed technology. If there is government intervention in the corporate economy so is there corporate intervention in the government process. As each of these domains has coincided with the others, as decisions tend to the three domains of power-the warlords, the corporation chieftains, and the political directorate and to come together, to form the power elite of America Mill locates a situation of political vacuum in American Society. There has been a decline in the role of professional politician and as such, the corporate and military elites have gained ascendancy. But, neither of them dominates the affair. The power today involves the often uneasy coincidence of economic, military and political power. Perhaps the contribution of elite theories is best summed up in the words of L. They are fertile and suggestive enough for the construction of new theories. They are of particular relevance for the understanding of the politics of developing countries where economic, political and other changes are bringing changes in social structures, that is, changes in the prestige and power of different social groups and consequently rise and fall of elites. We can examine the social forces which are creating new elites as well as the activities of the elite themselves in the modernization process of the developing countries.

**Chapter 8 : What does elite theory mean?**

*In political and sociological theory, the elite (French *l'élite*, from Latin *eligere*) are a small group of powerful people who hold a disproportionate amount of wealth, privilege, political power, or skill in a society.*

Introduction Numerous social scientists have examined how political power is distributed in the United States. However, class conceptions of political power i. From this perspective, there is no single ruling elite. The state is a neutral entity that solves conflict between groups; no particular group controls the state Lindblom According to pluralism, public opinion is the result of a combination of interests Polsby All individuals have the capacity to become politically organized and achieve their political interests Polsby Individuals and groups cannot be involved in every issue. This creates a low potential for unity among elites Dahl Since political effectiveness requires a high potential for both control and unity, elites do not have the power to dominate the political process Dahl Pluralism studies political power by examining the individuals involved in the decision making process. By tracing the concrete decision making process, pluralists examine the extent to which a power structure exists. Confronting mounting evidence of the political power of corporate elites, pluralism II attempts to account for the disproportionate influence of corporations. According to pluralism II, corporate political domination still fits within the pluralist model because the corporate enterprise is a social collective Manley Key class conceptions of political power include elite theory and class theory. Both class conceptions of political power claim the interests of the capitalist class control the political process. As modern bureaucracies have developed, power has become increasingly centralized and concentrated. As a result, the structural possibilities for collusion between the major spheres of society significantly increases. Members of the inner circle of the upper class share positions of power in major social institutions. Corporate elites share social networks and are able to use their social networks to shape public opinion and political outcomes Domhoff According to elite theory, the dominant class is able to control political outcomes due to shared class consciousness i. Class consciousness is achieved through the dominant ideology Abercrombie and Turner However, the dominant ideology is not the ideology of the working class. Class theory differs from elite theory in two respects: On the other hand, class theory examines how the ruling class is able to use political power to reproduce class relations Thernborn From this perspective, the state is a superstructure related to the economic structure of society Marx On the other hand, class theory focuses on the entire capitalist class. From this perspective, the state is related to the entire capitalist structure i. In short, elite theory examines the structure of an elite group of the capitalist class, and class theory examines the structure of entire capitalist class. According to pluralism, the capitalist class is not unified. However, as explained by class theory, class unity is not necessary for elite interests to be achieved. Furthermore, elite theorists, such as Mizruchi demonstrate class unity varies over time and is not necessary for elites to influence the political process. As such, elite theory overcomes pluralist critiques. Pluralist theorists claim elite theory is problematic because it is not falsifiable. According to Dahl As a result, pluralist theory is limited. By controlling information processes, conflict is able to be avoided while achieving group interests over the interests of others. Ideology influences the way individuals understand the world in which they live and ideology is related to capitalist reproduction Marx Class conceptions assume the state is representative of the interests of the capitalist class. According to elite theory, the inner circle of power elites in dominant political, economic and cultural institutions are able to control the policy formation process. In short, class conceptions of political power contradict pluralist assumptions of the impartial state by showing how the state is representative of economic interests. Conclusion Pluralism is a critical response to class conceptions of political power which assume a dominant class controls political outcomes in the United States. However, by ignoring the empirical reality that power is not evenly distributed in society, pluralist critiques fail to adequately explain the empirical world. On the other hand, key class conceptions of political power are better able to explain empirical events. Power, Politics and Social Change. The Myth of Liberal Ascendancy: Domhoff, William and Thomas Dye eds. Power Elites and Organizations. Jenkins, Craig and Teri Shumate. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. Mintz, Beth and Michael Schwartz. The Power Structure of

American Business. University of Chicago Press. The Fracturing of the American Corporate Elite. I hate it because they use their power for evil and not for the betterment of the welfare of the people. They abuse the power that was given to them by the people. They were elected because the people believed that they can help them to help society. Instead, they disappoint the people when they show their true colors and show people that they will be using their power for their own personal benefit.

**Chapter 9 : Essay on "Elite Theory" ( Words)**

*Home >> Political System >> Elite Theory Elite theory developed in part as a reaction to Marxism. It rejected the Marxian idea that a classless society having an egalitarian structure could be realized after class struggle in every society.*