

Political Elite and Elite Recruitment

Main points:

- The term "elite» originates from the Latin word "eligere" ("to select") and then was extended to some categories of people;
- The existing theories of the elite are supported mainly by two approaches - **meritocratic** (meritocracy - the power of elected people with **special qualities**) and a **structural-functional** approach;
- The quality of the elite depends on the "**transparency**" of **recruitment**

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The term "elite» originates from the Latin word "eligere" ("to select"), in the current literature it is widely circulated by the French "elite" - the best, chosen. Beginning from the XVII century it was used to identify products of the highest quality.

In the XVIII century, its use expanded, it begun to be used to name "chosen people", first of all, the highest **nobility**, as well as selected ("elite") military units.

В элиту входят



Главы
государств

Главы
правительств

Лидеры
партий

Региональные
руководители

Главы
парламента

Министры

До нескольких тысяч



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- At the end of the XIX century the theories of elite were effectively elaborated by A. Moska and W. Pareto.

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What is **Elite**?

- Let's start with the definition of A.Pareto:

- “elite- is the persons who received the highest index in their field of activity, reaching the **highest level of competence**”,

- "the people who occupy high positions according to the degree of their influence to political, financial, social and military power ... "

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- ... Most of those "so-called upper classes"- who seems to be "**the aristocracy**" ("aristos" means "the best" from Greek) in a remarkable degree possess certain qualities - good or bad - that provide them the power "
(W. Pareto)
- Other "elite" definitions:
 - "the most politically active people,
 - "govern-oriented people",
 - "organized minority that manages the majority of unorganized" (A. Mosca),

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"the supreme ruling class",

“persons enjoying the highest prestige”, status and wealth in a society”

“a person having the greatest authority”

(G.Lassuell)

“People with the highest sense of responsibility (X. Ortega y Gasset);

“persons with positions of power”

(A. Etzioni),

“minority that performs the most important functions in society, who has the greatest weight and influence”

(S. Keller);

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It is clear that any ruling elite will justify its power ideologically.

The existing theories of the elite are supported mainly by two approaches - **meritocratic** (meritocracy - the power of elected people with **special qualities**)

and a **structural-functional** approach, defining the elite as a ruling minority that occupies strategic positions in the state and economic institutions of society thus having a significant impact on **the adoption of important social and political decisions to ensure the stability of the political system**

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- Elites, by definition, occupy the highest positions in the hierarchy of status and power because they control a larger share of the material, symbolic, and political **resources** of society.
- It is not about unique features of those people with the exception of talented artists, writers, actors and other ones of cultural elite
- Elite is the **highest stratum** in any system of social stratification, that's why any "group" of elite, less or more connecting with the power and **political stratification of society**.



Функции политической элиты



- а) **стратегическая** (определение политической программы действий путем генерирования новых идей, отражающих интересы общества, классов, слоев и т.п.);
- б) **организаторская** (осуществление на практике выработанного курса, воплощение политических решений в жизнь);
- в) **интегративная** (укрепление стабильности и единства общества, устойчивости его политической и экономической систем, недопущение и разрешение конфликтных ситуаций).

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" It is usually assumed that generally the number of these people is about 1 % of the population.

The question arises: is it possible to apply the term "elite" to those people among whom too often there are the ones who may make any, most cynic, cruel, evil actions for the sake of their power?

A study of the ruling groups in any current (and last) political systems rejects such a statement, because too often they are corrupted individuals who do not hesitate to achieve their goal by any means.

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It is obvious that the quality of political elite depends largely on the principles of recruitment.

Political recruitment - is the involvement of people into active political life. The **process of recruiting** is very most important factor, through which the bodies of a state and government are formed.

The process of recruitment - undermines the means and ways how people become **involved in politics, how they are promoted to senior political positions (including the roles of political leaders), how they establish political contacts and make a political career** - it depends on many factors.

Теория элит Г.Моска и В.Парето



Правящий класс

МАЛО

Класс управляемых

МНОГО



Правящая элита

Оппозиционная элита-контрэлита

Стремится к власти

«Циркуляция элит» = смена элит

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- The quality of the elite depends on the "**transparency**" of recruitment:
- 1) in what extension the elites **are open or closed** to the most active, educated, innovative people from the all classes and stratas of a society.
- 2) if there are any **barriers** in upward social mobility for morally dishonest people,
- 3) Is it really of the worthy people in moral and intellectual respect to be recruited into the elite?
- **Closed type of elite** dominates in traditional society. The **open type** is prevalent in today's society, that requires for a high level of elite's education and political culture.

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A century ago, W. Pareto formulated the **theory of the elites circulation** - through that theory a social system tends to an equilibrium and when over time it deviates from it, there is the need to return to equilibrium.

This process forms a **social cycle**, which depends primarily on the circulation of elites.

They "appear in the lower strata of society and being in fight against the upper strata **are rising** to the highest levels, where they flourish and eventually degenerate and disappear ... This circulation of elites is an universal law of history " by Pareto.

В.Парето

ОБЩЕСТВО



ПРАВЯЩАЯ ЭЛИТА



УПАДОК



СМЕНА ЭЛИТ



ОППОЗИЦИОННАЯ ЭЛИТА



СОЦИАЛЬНОЕ ПОЛОЖЕНИЕ И СОЦИАЛЬНЫЙ СТАТУС

СУЩЕСТВУЮЩИЕ В ОБЩЕСТВЕ БАРЬЕРЫ

ПОСТОЯННАЯ ЦИРКУЛЯЦИЯ ЭЛИТ



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- To describe the types of elites, Pareto used famous opposition of the rulers given by Niccolo Machiavelli
 - The **first type of elite («lions»)** is characterized by an extreme conservatism, gross "power" methods of government.
 - The **second type of elites («foxes»)** the masters of manipulation and deception.
 - The constant change of one of the elite by another - the result of the fact that each type has certain advantages, which, however, over time is **failing to meet the needs of the sytem.**
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Типы элит по методам правления по В. Парето (итал. социол.)



Львы		Лисы
насилие	метод	гибкость
«рантье»: приспосабливаются к существующей системе	характер деятельности	«спекулянты»: готовы к риску
стабильность в обществе, застой в экономике	ИТОГ	быстрый экономический рост, движение вперед, нестабильность в обществе

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- Therefore, **maintaining the equilibrium of the social system** requires the replacement of the elites.
- This essentially provokes the formation of **counter-elite**, who uses the discontent of the masses by the existing social system for its overthrow, by surpassing the ruling elite.
- The effective way to recruit elites from the most competent, honest people is to have *contest political parties*.