

The Palgrave Handbook of Political Elites

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Brief description of handbook's scope and content

The study of political elites (small cohesive and stable groups which enjoy a disproportionate level of power in political systems) has a long theoretical tradition in the study of politics (from Mosca, Pareto to Max Weber, from Schumpeter to Dahl, Sartori, Mills, Bottomore, Parry and Scott) and it has produced a significant body of empirical research (summarized by Putnam in 1976 and extended greatly during the 40 years since by many scholars, not least those associated with the IPSA Research Committee on Political Elites). This rich theoretical and research effort lacks a systematic, contemporary appraisal. The proposed Handbook will powerfully map the studies of and knowledge about political elites that have accumulated and it would show how the study of political elites contributes to a better understanding of political phenomena.

The Handbook will begin, following a substantial Introduction by the editors, with a Section devoted to old and new theoretical approaches to political elites that highlight both continuity and innovation. A second section will document and discuss methodological techniques and instruments devised for the study of political elites. A third section will analyse specific features of different types of political elites found among democratic and non-democratic regimes. The fourth section will discuss the attributes of sector components of political elites (administrative, business, military, etc.) and how they relate to each other. The fifth section will explore the attributes and resources of elites vis-à-vis mass populations, while a final section will discuss a series of challenges political elites face in the twenty-first century.

Each of the six sections will be presaged with a brief introduction that provides an overview of themes elaborated in section chapters. Those chapters will document the most significant recent advances in theory and research and highlight unresolved questions about relevant aspects of political elites. With this structure and an extensive bibliography, the Handbook will enable readers to obtain a comprehensive view of what is

known and not known about political elites and their consequences for politics.

The Handbook will be edited by a half dozen of the most active scholars of political elites, all of whom have played leading roles in the Research Committee on Elites. But it would be wrong to view the proposed Handbook as centred on the Committee and what its members have done. A much wider net will be cast to ensure that important scholars of political elites not associated with the Committee will be fully represented in the Handbook.

The Handbook will be an authoritative reference work for academics, undergraduate and graduate students in political science, sociology, political economy, political psychology, communications, and for media.

Provisional Table of Contents

Introduction (The editors)

- The political elite concept
- The relevance of political elites today
- The Handbook's structure

Part I The Foundation and Development of Elite Theory

- Introduction (Jan Pakulski)
 1. Classical elite theory and its relevance
 2. Elites and democratic theory
 3. Continuities and discontinuities in elite theory

Part II Studying Political Elites: Research methods

- Introduction (Elena Semenova)
 1. Identifying political elites
 2. Surveying and observing elites
 3. Temporal analyses of elites
 4. Analyses of elite networks
 5. Discourse and content analyses of elites

Part III Basic Types of Political Elites and Elites in the Major World Regions

- Introduction (John Higley)
 1. Traditional rulers as political elites
 2. Authoritarian elites and regimes
 3. Theocratic elites and regimes
 4. Elite types and transformations in the modern West (incl. Eastern Europe)
 5. Elites in Sub-Saharan Africa
 6. Elites in Latin America
 7. Elites in the Middle East
 8. Elites in South Asia
 9. Elites in Southeast Asia
 10. Elites in East Asia
 11. Post-Soviet elites

Part IV. Elite Sectors: Differentiation and Integration

- Introduction (Heinrich Best)
 1. Parliamentary and legislative elites
 2. Executive elites (elected and appointed executive office holders)
 3. Non-elected political elites (administrative, judicial and military)
 4. Economic elites (incl. trade union elites)
 5. Media elites
 6. Elite integration: structural and normative

Part V Elite Attributes and Resources

- Introduction (Jean-Pascal Daloz and Ursula Hoffmann-Lange)
 1. Personality attributes of political elites
 2. Social and political backgrounds of political elites
 3. Political elites and symbolic superiority
 4. Norms and orientations of political elites
 5. Power networks (network ties as a resource in policy decisions)

Part VI Elite Dynamics and Dilemmas

- Introduction (Maurizio Cotta)
 1. Elite stability and reproduction (individual and collective elite circulation)
 2. Elites in democratic transitions
 3. Elites and political separatist movements
 4. Elites in supranational and transnational settings
 5. Accountability and autonomy of political elites (principal-agent relations)
 6. Political elites and political leaders

Conclusions: Elite Theory and Research – From Retrospect to Prospect (The editors)