

# Pluralism and elite theory



Pluralism and Elite Theory “ Pluralism is the view that politics and decision making are located mostly in the framework of the government, but that many nongovernmental groups use their resources to exert influence”.

Pluralists put forward the idea that power is not a physical quality that people have or do not have, but yet it flows from a variety of sources. It is the thought that people become powerful from ownership or controlling resources. “ Malcolm X, for example, was certainly not a rich person.

But by using resources such as his forceful personality, organizational skills, and especially the legitimacy of his cause, he had a greater impact on American politics than most wealthy people. ” Pluralists do not believe that anyone is “ all powerful” unless it is proven through a direct observation. “ Elite Theory is a theory of the state which seeks to describe and explain the power relationships in contemporary society. ” Elite theory is essentially an antonym to the theory of Pluralism because Pluralists suggest democracy as a utopian idea.

Elite theory is based on two major ideas, one being that “ power lies in position of authority in key economic and political institutions,” and “ 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 will strive to make the government work. For in reality, the elite have the most to lose in a failed government. ”

Pluralism and Elite Theories are known to be polar opposites of each other. The Elitists believe that a small out-numbered group of economic “ elites” and action planning networks would hold the most aptitude, no matter what the outcomes of elections. Whereas Pluralists suggest that true efficiency lies within a vast number of affiliations, even if they do not correlate within government associations or not. With both theories, the average person is unwilling to want to speak up in the government fabric without the aid of well-funded authority activists and well-connected policy thinkers.

The first elite theorists in America were Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca. Each theorist had their own influences on the creation of the Elite Theory. Pareto articulated the cerebral and inventive dominance that the Elites achieved, he considered that the elites were the greatest achievers in any profession and he explained how there were two types of Elites, one being the governing elites and the other being non-governing elites. He also extended on 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 asserted the sociological and personal attributes of elites. He said, “ Elites are an organized minority and that the masses are an unorganized majority. ” The commanding class is comprised of the administrating elites and the sub-elites. He separates the world in to two groups: ruling class, and class that are ruled. Mosca asserts that elites have intellectual, moral, and material superiority that is highly esteemed and influential. ” Works Cited [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pluralism\\_\(political\\_theory\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pluralism_(political_theory)). Pluralism, 2012. Web. 27 January 2012. <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080825225540AAa0EB8>. Difference Between Elite and Plural Theory, <https://assignbuster.com/pluralism-and-elite-theory/>

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