

Department of Anthropology and Sociology (ANSO)

Academic year 2021-2022

Elites and Inequality

ANSO139 - Autumn - 6 ECTS

[Schedule & Room](#)

Course Description

There has been growing attention to inequality in the social sciences literature. The move from poverty, which defined the poor as the social problem, to inequality, defined as a relational and global issue, has also brought growing attention to the top of stratification system, or the so-called "elites". In this course we will look into different approaches to analyzing the role of elites in shaping and reproducing inequalities across the globe. Moving from economics issue of measurement and temporal trends, to political and cultural approaches relying on habitus, fields and social capital, this course will discuss different conceptual definitions of the term "elites" (e.g. economic, political and cultural) as well as different research approaches to studying them (e.g. tax returns, surveys, network analysis, in-depth interviews and ethnographies).

> PROFESSORS

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Syllabus

Course assessment

Students in this course will be assessed on the following:

Presence is mandatory and with participation it accounts for 20% of the grade.

One reading response of max 2000 words of papers in one week of Unit 2 (25%)

Presentation of your preliminary research proposal at Final weeks of the class (15%)

Final research proposal of max 4000 words on one of the topics (of students' choice) covered in the course (40%).

Detailed instructions and deadlines for each of the assessment components will be provided in class and on Moodle.

Course outline

Week 1 - Introduction of the Program and Q&A on course dynamics

Unit 1 - Elites and Inequality - an introduction to the conceptual debate

Week 2 – Inequality – what are we talking about?

- Therborn, Göran. "The killing fields of inequality." *International Journal of Health Services* 42.4 (2012): 579-589.
- Verba, Sidney, and Gary R. Orren. *Equality in America: The view from the top*. Harvard University Press, 1985. Chapter 1 – Egalitarian dilemmas. (pg. 1-20)

Week 3 - Elites - Classical and Contemporary Debates

- Savage, Mike and Williams, Karel, eds. (2008) *Remembering elites. Introduction*.
- Rahman Khan, Shamus. "The sociology of elites." *Annual Review of Sociology* 38 (2012): 361-377.

Additional References:

- Veblen, Thorstein. "Conspicuous Consumption." 1899 Selected excerpts on moodle
- Pareto, Vilfredo. *The rise and fall of the elites: an application of theoretical sociology*. Transaction Publishers, 1991 [1901].
- Michels, Robert. *Political parties: A sociological study of the oligarchical tendencies of modern democracy*. Hearst's International Library Company, 1915.
- Mosca, Gaetano. "On the Ruling Class." (1939).
- Dahl, Robert Alan. *Polyarchy: Participation and opposition*. Yale University Press, 1956. Selected excerpts on moodle
- Mills, C. Wright. *The power elite*. Oxford University Press, 1956.

Week 4 – Elites, Democracy and the Redistribution dilemma (Guest lecture by Matias Lopez)

- Albertus, Michael, and Victor Gay. "Unlikely democrats: Economic elite uncertainty under dictatorship and support for democratization." *American Journal of Political Science* 61.3 (2017): 624-641.
- Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. "Why did the West extend the franchise? Democracy, inequality, and growth in historical perspective." *The quarterly journal of economics* 115.4 (2000): 1167-1199.
- López, Matias. "State Segmentation and Democratic Survival in Latin America." *American Behavioral Scientist* 64.9 (2020): 1242-1270.

Unit 2 – Elites and Inequalities –different research agendas

Week 5 – Who are the elites and how to study them?

- Hoffmann-Lange, Ursula. "Methods of elite research." (2007).
- Cousin, B., Khan, S. and Mears, A. (2018) 'Theoretical and Methodological Pathways for Research on Elites', *Socio-Economic Review*, 16, 225–249

Week 6 – Elites as the super rich

- Waldenström, Daniel. "Inequality and the Super Rich." *Journal of Income Distribution* 25.1 (2017): 1-14.
- Sherman, Rachel. "'A very expensive ordinary life': consumption, symbolic boundaries and moral legitimacy among New York elites." *Socio-Economic Review* 16.2 (2018): 411-433.
- Schimpfössl, Elisabeth. *Rich Russians: From oligarchs to bourgeoisie*. Oxford University Press, 2018. (Chapter TBA)

Week 7 – Elites and Distinction

- Friedman, Sam, and Aaron Reeves. "From aristocratic to ordinary: Shifting modes of elite distinction." *American Sociological Review* 85.2 (2020): 323-350.
- Gardner-McTaggart, Alexander. "International elite, or global citizens? Equity, distinction and power: The International Baccalaureate and the rise of the South." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 14.1 (2016): 1-29.
- Rivera, Lauren A. "Hiring as cultural matching: The case of elite professional service firms." *American Sociological Review* 77.6 (2012): 999-1022.

Additional Readings:

- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The state nobility: Elite schools in the field of power*. Stanford University Press, 1998. Part 2 – the Ordination (pg. 71-128)

Week 8 – Elites and Networks of Power

- Young, Kevin L., et al. "How white is the global elite? An analysis of race, gender and network structure." *Global Networks* 21.2 (2021): 365-392.
- Wedel, Janine R. "From power elites to influence elites: Resetting elite studies for the 21st century." *Theory, Culture & Society* 34.5-6 (2017): 153-178.
- Henriksen, Lasse Folke, and Leonard Seabrooke. "Elites in transnational policy networks." *Global Networks* 21.2 (2021): 217-237.

Week 9 - Elites, Political Culture and Public Policies

- Moore, Mick Moore and Naomi Hossain "Elites, Poverty and Public Policy: From Structure to Strategy" IN *Elite perceptions of poverty and inequality*. Zed Books, 2005:.
- Page, Benjamin I., Jason Seawright, and Matthew J. Lacombe. *Billionaires and Stealth Politics*. University of Chicago Press, 2018.
- Berens, S. and Von Schiller, A. (2017) 'Taxing Higher Incomes: What Makes the High-Income Earners Consent to More Progressive Taxation in Latin America?', *Political Behavior*, 39, 703–729.

Week 10 - Elite, Philanthropy and Social Responsibility (Guest Lecture by Livio Silva-Müller)

- Farrell, J. (2020). *Billionaire Wilderness: The Ultra-Wealthy and the Remaking of the American West*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctvp2n3s6. Introduction (p.17 -24), chapters 5 & 6.
- Hay, I., & Muller, S. (2014). Questioning generosity in the golden age of philanthropy: Towards critical geographies of super-philanthropy. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(5), 635–653. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132513500893>
- Wong, W., Levi, R., & Deutsch, J. (2017). The Ford Foundation: Building and Domesticating the Field of Human Rights. In L. Seabrooke & L. Henriksen (Eds.), *Professional Networks in Transnational Governance* (pp. 82-100). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781316855508.006

Week 11 - Elites and the Poor

- de Swaan, A., Manor, J., Øyen, E. and Reis, E. P. (2000) 'Elite Perceptions of the Poor: Reflections for a Comparative Research Project', *Current Sociology*, 48, 43–54.
- Paugam, Serge, et al. *Ce que les riches pensent des pauvres*. Le Seuil, 2017. Introduction.
- Hossain, N. (2005) 'Productivity and Virtue: Elite Categories of the Poor in Bangladesh', *World Development*, 33, 965–977

Unit 3 – Research in the Making

Week 12 - Presentation and Discussion of Graziella's FNS project

Week 13 - Presentation and comments of the first draft of research proposals

Week 14 - Presentation and comments of the first draft of research proposals