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Q7(c)

What, according to Pareto, are the basic characteristics of elites? Discuss.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · Sociology GS 1 · 15 marks · Sociology

Sociology - The Discipline: Modernity and social changes in Europe and emergence of sociology; Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences; Sociology and common sense.

Core demand of the question

- What, according to Pareto, are the basic characteristics of elites? Discuss
- Keep the discussion within a 15-mark length

Revision summary

- **Pareto:** elites are the highest in any activity, governing and non-governing.

They circulate; aristocracies die.

Lions use force and persistence; foxes use combination and cunning.

Derivations are the stories they tell.

Mills and Indian caste-class closure qualify the psychology.

Introduction

Vilfredo Pareto treated elites as the highest stratum in any field of activity, circulating rather than disappearing. Their basic characteristics are superiority of talent in that field, use of force and persuasion, and a mix of residues that he labelled **lions and foxes**.

Body

Who the elite are

- A small governing elite plus a non-governing elite of talent in other spheres.
- Not a moral elect. Elite means the best at a given activity, including crime.

Basic characteristics

- **Circulation:** elites decay and are replaced; history is a graveyard of aristocracies.
- **Residues:** Class I combination (foxes, cunning, innovation) and Class II persistence of aggregates (lions, force, tradition).
- **Derivations:** the justifications elites tell, which are not the real motors.
- Use of force and fraud; foxes who cannot use force fall to lions.
- **Psychic and social heterogeneity:** the mass is not a uniform people in the **Rousseau** sense.

Discussion

- Pareto criticised both Marxist class monopoly and democratic self-rule as **derivations**.
- C. Wright **Mills** later named a power elite of institutions, more structural than residues.

- **Indian illustration:** a political fox-like combinational elite beside a force-backed local lion stratum; circulation through elections is partial.

Limit

- Residue psychology underplays property and caste as durable closure.

Flow diagram

Elite top stratum -> Circulation
Elite top stratum -> Lions force
Elite top stratum -> Foxes cunning
Derivations -> Public justifications

Conclusion

Pareto's elites are the top performers who rule by force and cunning, circulate, and justify themselves with **derivations**. **Lions and foxes** are the basic types. Use the scheme for circulation; add class and caste that Pareto thinned out.

Facts & figures

Circulation of elites

Pareto's law-like claim that ruling strata are replaced, not abolished.

Lions and foxes

Types by residues of persistence versus combination, after **Machiavelli**.

Derivations

Ideological justifications distinct from residues.

Mills

Power elite as institutional, a later contrast to Pareto's psychic types.