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***The Role of Elites in Economic Development.***  
**Edited by Alice H. Amsden, Alisa DiCaprio and**  
**James A. Robinson.** Oxford: Oxford University  
Press, 2012. Pp. 361.

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The literature covering elites is vast, but a framework to understand elite behaviour in the context of development and poverty alleviation is missing. This book aims to contribute to such a framework, simultaneously bridging the disciplinary divide in the study of elites. It boasts a variety of methodological and disciplinary approaches — contributors from a range of social sciences such as economics, political science, anthropology, finance, business administration and sociology are represented. Although the definition of elites varies marginally between chapters, all hold to a core classification: elites are those who enjoy privileged status and exercise decisive control over society.

The book hosts eighteen contributors across fifteen chapters, divided into five parts. Part 1 looks at how elites affect economic development through their influence on institutions; Part 2 focuses on intra-elite relations, specifically the origins and mobility of elites; Part 3 investigates elites' perception of their relations to the rest of society in the context of poverty alleviation; Part 4 turns to the issue of how political elites interpret the need to strengthen state capacity; and Part 5 studies the interaction between elites and non-elites in development projects. Despite the vast strands of methodology and topics covered, the book impressively manages to draw some succinct conclusions: (i) elites create resources and should be cultivated rather than bypassed and vilified; (ii) there is no evidence to suggest that elites are anti-developmental; (iii) elite power remains embedded nationally; (iv) the way in which elites' identify themselves is crucial to conceiving their actions; and (v) the cultural context is often over-emphasized when studying elites' influence on economic outcomes. Further, the book recognizes its scope and limitations by highlighting areas that are only lightly touched upon but require

further inquiry, such as situations that challenge elites. Examples of these are changes in income inequality between and within countries, the complex dynamics of fragile and failed states and the role of technology in determining the limitations of elites.

Another laudable feature of the book is the debunking of some preconceived notions. In Chapter 7, Bjorn Gustafsson and Sai Ding investigate the determinants of belonging to the elite in rural China. They analyse data from 1995 and 2002 from 8,000 households spread throughout the country. While conventional wisdom postulates that elites are in an economically privileged position, they find that spatial differences matter much more, meaning that regional habitation is a considerably stronger indication of wealth rather than belonging to an elite grouping or not. In fact, inequality in rural China would only decrease marginally if elites were to have the same average income as non-elite households. This is due to the relatively even distribution of land in the country.

Chapters 8 and 9 reveal excellent survey research and insight into elites' perception of their own societal role in the context of poverty alleviation. Elisa Reis' surveys show that Brazilian elites see reducing poverty as one of the top priorities in the country but do not however see it as their responsibility to do something about it, pointing to the failure of social policies rather than to structural constraints as explanations of poverty. The elites' proposed solution is improvement in educational policies. In Malawi, Chipiliro Kalebe-Nyamongo confirms similar results — through education, elites maintain that the poor will be better able to take advantage of opportunities and resources. Education is often seen as the solution to poverty alleviation by elites because everyone can supposedly get richer without the need for redistribution. Kalebe-Nyamongo further calls for the development of social consciousness among elites in Malawi. She finds that elites claim that the poor hold behaviours and attitudes different from the rest of society, like resignation and laziness. She therefore concludes that elites are failing to create a consciousness that makes them react more responsibly in supporting pro-poor policy.

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However, other chapters of the book draw conclusions with less novelty. Solimano and Avanzini discuss the migratory patterns of elites in Chapter 4. Although their remarks on the spillovers developing countries may experience as a result of losing their knowledge elites to richer countries are noteworthy, the chapter over-elaborates on the well-known existence of brain drain. In the current phase of globalization, it would be more relevant to investigate how to reverse the negative consequences of international circulation of knowledge and entrepreneurial elites. Similarly in Chapter 6, Alison Wolf unsurprisingly concludes that female elites in developing countries have far better opportunities in education, business and politics than those their counterparts in industrialized countries had at comparable income levels. Given the significant social changes, apart from income increments, that have taken place on a global scale in the last century, does it really make sense to compare the two groups' opportunities at comparable GDP echelons? The reader is left with a positive image of female (elites') opportunities in the developing world, when in reality their male counterparts are considerably better off.

On a minor note, some restructuring of the table of contents would have been beneficial. Chapter 15, the concluding chapter of the book, should not belong to Part V — instead, would have been better placed as a stand-alone chapter, outside of any of the book's subsections. Chapter 10 of Part III, in which Xiaowei Zang superbly challenges the conventional view on democracy's effect on economic growth, would have been better placed under Part I together with Amsden's and Robinson's chapters investigating the relationship between institutions and economic development.

The book clearly achieves its aims — it represents an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary contribution to the understanding of the significance of elites in the context of development. Given its wide disciplinary range, students and academics considering reading this book will find the chapters that are most closely aligned to their own field of research of great use. For those who just want a taste of the topic, both the conclusion and

introduction are shrewd, well written and sum up the book in a concise manner.

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***Industrial Restructuring in Asia: Implications of the Global Economic Crises.* Edited by Willem Thorbecke and Wen-jen Hsieh.** New Delhi: Sage, 2013. Pp. 416.

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In the last four years, the world witnessed severe financial and economic meltdowns. While the reasons are more or less clear, the lessons learnt are far reaching and continue to challenge current day policy-makers, academicians and business practitioners. This book provides a timely and valuable compilation of scholarly papers and views from various experts specializing on issues concerning industrial development in Asia and the impact of such crises on their ongoing developmental efforts.

The introductory chapter sets the tone by providing critiques of Asian (including Southeast Asia, China and India) development till date. Foremost, foreign direct investment (FDI) and exports played an important role in driving industrial progress. These countries are highly dependent on exporting their goods and services to developed countries, and this creates concerns about the sustainability of the regions' developmental model if they are affected by global economic and financial crises. Thus, Hsieh, Kato, and Thorbecke argue for the need to rebalance growth away from an export-led strategy and emphasize vertically linked changes in productivity and technological progress within the broader context of production fragmentation (p. 5).

This leads to an emphasis on improving domestic demand to support higher value-added services and boost productive growth. Asian countries must absorb new technologies and climb the value chain instead of continuously engaging in low value-added activities. Such forward advancements are