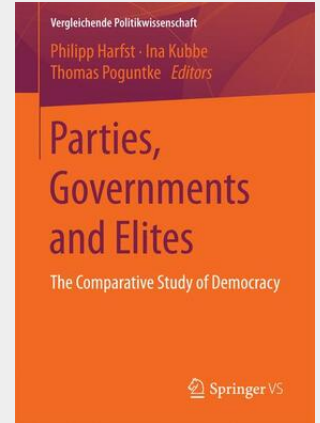


Parties, Governments and Elites

The Comparative Study of Democracy

Parties, governments and elites are at the core of the study of democracy. The traditional view is that parties as collective actors play a paramount role in the democratic process. However, this classical perspective has been challenged by political actors, observers of modern democracy as well as political scientists. Modern political parties assume different roles, contemporary leaders can more heavily influence politics, governments face new constraints and new collective bodies continue to form, propose new ways of participation and policy making, and attract citizens and activists. In the light of these observations, the comparative study of democracy faces a number of important and still largely unsolved questions that the present volume will address.

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90,94 €
84,99 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9783658174453
Medium: Buch
ISBN: 978-3-658-17445-3
Verlag: Springer
Erscheinungstermin: 05.05.2017
Sprache(n): Englisch
Auflage: 1. Auflage 2017
Serie: Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft
Produktform: Kartoniert
Gewicht: 4248 g
Seiten: 322
Format (B x H): 148 x 210 mm

