

Title	The British Business Elite
Author	JOHN FIDLER
Source	Routledge & Kegan Paul
Pub Date	1981
Brief Introduction	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PREFACE</b></p> <p>This book was mainly written with sociologists in mind, especially those interested in the business corporation, elites, the power structure of capitalist societies, or the imagery of social class. However, since its whole perspective revolves around the thinking and actions of the very top executives of business firms, I hope that it will also be of interest to economists and other management researchers, and to management practitioners and more general readers.</p> <p>Precisely because the activities of businessmen are of interest and concern to workers in several different disciplines, and within several areas of sociological debate, I have had to discuss a wide range of theory and previous research findings. Some readers may feel therefore that the treatment of some issues is not detailed enough, and I can only say in answer to this that the book is primarily intended to present empirical research and to discuss such theory as it is relevant to, and is relevant to it.</p> <p>Others will find that the discussion of the literature and the research methodology in the first three chapters is more detailed or specialised than their own interests or concerns require. However I think that much of Chapter 4 onwards will be accessible to the more general reader and can be read without too much reference back to earlier chapters. I will say no more about the structure and aims of the book here as they are set out in the first few pages of the text itself.</p> <p>I have accumulated a number of debts in the course of the research and the subsequent writing of this book, and can do no more to repay them than acknowledge them. First and foremost the research would not have been possible without the co-operation of the businessmen who were interviewed and who gave most generously of their time. I promised them anonymity, and I sincerely hope that the book in no way breaks that promise. The research was funded partly by the Science Research Council, but in the main by the Social Science Research Council.</p> <p>I owe much to Professor Dorothy Wedderburn and Jack Winkler for help and guidance in setting up the project initially. Jack and I have had a number of discussions since then which I have greatly valued. I am especially grateful also to my supervisor at Aston University, Professor John Child, not only for his knowledge and experience, but for his encouragement, without which I would not have completed the research.</p> <p>I must also thank Theo Nichols, who read an early draft of this manuscript, and pointed out much that was lacking in it: and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">xvi <i>Preface</i></p> <p>Professor Ray Pahl and David Dunkerley who read later drafts and made many perceptive comments. I have also benefited from discussions with François-Charles Mougel and Mike Useem of Bordeaux and Boston Universities respectively, and colleagues and friends at Aston, Nuffield College, Oxford, and Imperial College, London. Several of those mentioned here have differed fundamentally from me in their theoretical orientation or conclusions, and of course none of them can be held responsible for the flaws in this work.</p> <p>I am also very grateful to Isla Smith, who, as well as typing the manuscript, helped to remove the worst constructions of my written English. Finally I must thank my wife, Clare, who could not have envisaged when she met me in 1974 that I would still be devoting so much of my time to businessmen six years later. Her tolerance and encouragement have been essential.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">John Fidler</p>