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Sommario/riassunto	This compelling and convincing study, the capstone of decades of research, argues that political regimes are created and sustained by elites. Liberal democracies are no exception; they depend, above all, on the formation and persistence of consensually united elites. John Higley and Michael Burton explore the circumstances and ways in which such elites have formed in the modern world. They identify pressures that may cause a basic change in the structure and functioning of elites in established liberal democracies, and they ask if the elites cluster around George W. Bush are a harbinger of thi