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Vilfredo Pareto's Contributions to Modern Social Theory

A Centennial Appraisal

Edited by
Christopher Adair-Toteff

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10 Carl Friedrich and the Cancellation of Pareto

Stephen Turner

Vilfredo Pareto was enormously influential at Harvard in the 1930s, under the influence of L.J. Henderson and his "Pareto Circle" (Heyl 1968; Isaac 2012), and this influence was extended by Henderson's protégés, notably Talcott Parsons ([1937] 1968), Crane Brinton (1936), and George Homans (Homans and Curtis 1934), as well as his associates in the School of Business (Acton 2022). Henderson applied his ideas about science and method to produce an understanding of what both scientific knowledge of complex equilibrating physical and biological systems could be, but more importantly to society itself (Henderson 1935).

Pareto's theory of elites was not a particular emphasis on these discussions, but his theory was sharply criticized both in the 1940s and again in the 1960s (after the publication of C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite* [1956]) by Carl J. Friedrich, the Harvard political thinker who was closely associated with Parsons in the "defense of democracy" movement in the pre-war period and afterward. This critique, along with James Burnham's more favorable *The Machiavellians* (1943), set the tone for Pareto's later reputation.

The superficial explanation of this neglect of elite theory, and as it turns out many other elements of Pareto's thought and the later hostility to this part of Pareto, is that Harvard embraced democratic ideals and anti-fascism, and that this part of the Pareto heritage was, therefore, impossible to assimilate into their political vision. Friedrich is the emblematic figure of this transformation: he was the leader of the pro-interventionist movement at Harvard, was known in political science as an expert on constitutionalism, and devoted much of a chapter in his wartime book, *The New Belief in the Common Man*, to an attack on Pareto (Friedrich 1942, chap. VIII, pp. 238–270).

Like many simple stories, this has elements of truth. But the underlying story is more complex and also more revealing about the political thinking of the time, about both Friedrich and Pareto, and about Harvard as well. In what follows, I will try to retell this story by filling in many details which give it a different significance, and also reveal something about the way in which the concept of elite rule gets transformed and sublimated into conventional social science thinking and thinking about modernity and modernization, and into the Harvard political *Weltanschauung* generally, and through this to the self-conception of the present governing elite.

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Why Focus on Friedrich?

What makes Friedrich of special interest is not only the texts but also the role he and his thought played in forming the self-conception of Harvard faculty and leadership as it emerged during the late Roosevelt administration and World War II as the academic arm of the federal government, where it played the role of an elite and as the academic wing of the national elite. Friedrich was a member, by any standard, of the elite, both German and American. Moreover, he was a major participant in the successful political *Griff nach der Weltmacht* (Grab for World Power) of Harvard during the period from the mid-1930s, when Harvard celebrated its tercentenary by inviting scholars from all over the world, to the 1960s, when the Kennedy Presidency was dominated by the "thought brigade" (Stuart 1963), overwhelmingly from Harvard. His comments on elites were therefore descriptions and implicit justifications of his own status—or denials of it. This lends his texts and thoughts a special historical interest, notably in relation to Pareto's own account of elites, and points to reasons to be cautious in interpreting them.

The temporal background of the rise of this new elite is important. Bronisław Malinowski confided in an unpublished text written shortly after the First World War that "the basic principle of democracy as we find it now is wrong [and] hence real advance lies in government by detached experts" (quoted in Coleman 2021, p. 99). This was a common perception at the time, promoted in the American public sphere by Walter Lippman. It came to be combined, in the 1930s, with the enthusiasm from intellectuals for the expansion of state power and liberation from a strict interpretation of the constitution under Roosevelt, his "brains trust," and the expansion of federal regulatory agencies with expert leaders. These were developments the Harvard community generally applauded, and in some key cases, such as the appointment of Felix Frankfurter to the Supreme Court, participated in. But they often did so by treating these developments not as anti-democratic but as the fulfillment of genuine democracy. Friedrich's writings of the period and indeed throughout his career reflected this climate of opinion, as well as his active membership in this group.

Nor was Friedrich's role merely intellectual. Not only was Friedrich a prominent figure in the movement to involve the US in the European war, which characterized itself as defending democracy, he played a prominent role in Harvard's participation in the war effort, especially in the training of officers for the expected occupation, along with Talcott Parsons who used this role as a way of expanding his own power (Buxton and Turner 1992). Friedrich was especially active. He provided a place for ex-chancellor Heinrich Brüning to write his memoirs (Brüning 1970–71) and followed James Bryant Conant, the President of Harvard, to Germany after the war when Conant became High Commissioner of Germany, representing the American occupation, where Friedrich served as legal advisor (Kornhauser 2015, pp. 149–151). In the postwar period, Friedrich was a mentor to both Kissinger and Brzezinski and held a famous conference on totalitarianism in which he generated what became, for a time, the conventional definition of the concept (Friedrich 1953).

Friedrich was himself a perfect representative of the concept of "elite": he came from a wealthy Prussian family, with a father who was a professor of medicine who had made a fortune by inventing the surgical rubber glove and a mother from the nobility. He moved effortlessly in international circles. He had been sent, with his brother Otto Friedrich, to the United States in the 1920s to learn about and from the new international leviathan. Carl stayed; his brother, Otto, returned to become an industrialist and a Nazi. Like many of his class, Carl was offended by the Nazis and thought they would soon be seen off by the bureaucracy; he wrote a defense of Hindenburg's seizure of power based on this belief. "The crisis through which Germany has been passing does not at all imply the establishment of a dictatorship" (Friedrich 1930, p. 130). Insisting that "Germany will remain a constitutional, democratic state, with strong socializing tendencies whose backbone will continue to be its professional civil service" (Friedrich 1937, p. xvi). His faith in the bureaucracy was shaken, but unchanged, by what followed. When it became clear that his endorsement of the Hindenburg takeover was an error—and it was one that damaged his reputation—he insisted, describing the German civil servants: "There are latent reservoirs of faith in a higher morality which were overgrown with the slime of nineteenth century decadence.... I will profess a faith in their potential strength" (1937, p. xiv).

In other works, Friedrich attempts to show that the "decadence" in question was intellectual and associated with the thought of Max Weber, Georg Jellinek, Gustav Radbruch, and Hans Kelsen. Weber's viewpoint, he says, "is closely akin to that of the skeptics and cynics who have dominated recent American philosophy of law and who are found among the so-called realists" (1958a, p. 176). He quotes Kelsen's famous comment that "He who lifts the veil [of metaphysical accounts of law] and does not close his eyes faces the Gorgon head of power" (1958a, p. 176). Friedrich comments that "This is exactly what we have experienced," with the implication that the rejection of metaphysical accounts of law in terms of legitimacy brought about Nazism. Friedrich insisted that

> Legitimacy is related to right and justice; without a clarification of what is to be understood by the rightness and justice of law, legitimacy cannot be comprehended either. Hitler's rule was legal, but it was not legitimate; it had a basis in law, but not in right and justice.
>
> (1958a, pp. 202–203)

Friedrich's own view was Kantian: that "the authority of a legal order develops as a result of increasing insight into its rational nature" (1958a, pp. 204–205). This was genuine authority, or legitimacy, which was based on the ability of authority in a community to realize the (presumably also rational) "ideals, beliefs, and values of its members" (1958a, p. 205). From Friedrich's point of view, Pareto was another cynical skeptic who undermined rational authority.

The intellectual problem posed for Friedrich by Pareto was parallel to the challenge posed by Weber, Radbruch, and Kelsen. Each of them was an anti-ideological thinker. "Rational authority" in this Kantian sense was, for them, a veil that hid

interests, emotions, and other non-rational determinants. It was merely another ideology. Moreover, it was likely to be an ideology associated with a class or social group which rationalized its quest for power.

Pareto had a sophisticated account of this kind of ideology. This is a clue to the underlying issue with Friedrich. Friedrich's account of authority and the centrality of bureaucracy to the modern state was a defense of a particular kind of power and a particular governing group—an ideology which he denied was an ideology. So it is not surprising that Friedrich, who was a controversialist, used Pareto as an opponent for the purpose of defending his particular account of politics. And it was convenient, for it allowed what appeared to be an overtly anti-democratic view of politics to be presented as pro-democratic and anti-fascist, and for him to embrace "democracy."

The Common Man and the Critique of Pareto

The representation of Pareto presented by Friedrich depended on a series of binary oppositions that reflected Friedrich's own commitments, which he presented as "democratic," as opposed to Pareto's, which he presented as anti-democratic. The critique Friedrich presents represents what became the conventional view of Pareto's politics. The series of binary oppositions Friedrich relied on helped significantly to define Pareto negatively. But each of these oppositions has both an exoteric and an esoteric side. The exoteric picture that emerges from the oppositions is this: Pareto was an elitist and therefore anti-democratic, whereas Friedrich defended democratic institutions; Friedrich embraced Kantianism and genuine authority, whereas Pareto ridiculed doctrines, especially Kantianism and Natural Law, that embraced the idea of genuine authority rooted in reason; Friedrich had a rich and humane Kantian view of reason, which included values, whereas Pareto had an odd and narrow view of logical action and scientific method that excluded the rationality of values and exposed their emotional basis and was therefore a form of irrationalism. Friedrich was open and honest, as shown by his various public confessions, while Pareto was disingenuous, elusive, and cynical, as shown by the contradictory and opaque character of his political statements; Friedrich embraced the idea of representation, whereas Pareto dismissed it as "poppycock"; Pareto believed in the inevitability of the rule of the few based on his account of history, whereas Friedrich affirmed the possibility of a future politics of a different more egalitarian kind; Pareto regarded the law as an instrument in the hands of the powerful, whereas Friedrich granted it an intrinsic purposiveness and rationality apart from the aims of its creators; Friedrich believed in universality, emancipation, and the power of reason to bring them about, whereas Pareto celebrated the dark, irrational, and particularistic side of humanity; for Pareto, bureaucracy was a stage of elite decadence, whereas for Friedrich, bureaucracy represented reason itself. The summary is this: Pareto was a Machiavellian who saw ancient and modern regimes as all governed by the rule of the few and their underlying power motivations and regarded this not only as unavoidable but good; Friedrich celebrated the modern state and the superior rationality of its bureaucratic and representative institutions governed by the rule of law and looked forward to more political equality.

From Pareto's side, the issues look quite different, and a brief introduction to the differences is necessary. Pareto was engaged in a form of the critique of ideology. His general account of society rested on a core insight: that the ideas justifying the same practices varied while the practices remained the same. That stable cultural differences had deep roots is an insight shared with many later thinkers. Pareto goes beyond them to emphasize the fact that the ideological justifications these groups employ are less stable but are nevertheless still articulations of the same underlying sentiments (Pareto [1935] 1963, vol. II, §863, p. 506).

In a sense, this is the obverse of the way Weber explains mentalities: for Weber, doctrines, such as Calvinism, or prohibitions, such as those against certain forms of magic among the Ancient Hebrews, become tacitized and habitual and need to be reconstructed genealogically to show their origins. For Pareto, it is the other way around: ideology follows and articulates deeper sentiments. This was a method of *Ideologikritik*: when one encounters an ideology, look for the underlying sentiments and at the group which shares them. As Pareto puts it, it is important not to stop at the form of the derivation but to delve into the substance that the form covers to see whether residues with an influence on the social equilibrium may not be lurking in it ([1935] 1963, vol. III, §1522, p. 971). In this respect, Pareto is closer to Freud or Jung: he categorizes a long list of residues, or sentiments, drawn from the historical and anthropological literature with an eye toward finding the common features among superficially different ones, with the aim of identifying and grouping them into a systematic classification scheme. He treated the ideologies that derived from these sentiments as more variable responses to transient situations and treated political structures as even more variable results of sentiments and ideologies. This conflicted with the holistic, relativistic view of culture that became fashionable in the interwar period: for Pareto, residues were fundamental and persisted, ideologies and explicit cultural beliefs—that is to say "reasons" other than those of science—were transient and derivative.

Elites and Democracy

When Friedrich professes to defend democracy and accuses Pareto of rejecting it, what is at stake, and how does it relate to Pareto's account of elites? This is a problem that goes to the heart of the case against Pareto. The issue seems clear: Friedrich abandoned elitism in favor of the common man. He accuses Pareto of disdain for the common man.

> Everywhere one finds a governing class of relatively few individuals that keeps itself in power partly by force, and partly by the consent of the subject class." This sentence is an almost verbatim repetition of Mosca's statement concerning the ruling class: "In all societies two classes of people appear, a class that rules and a class that is ruled." * The propagandist slant of both is antidemocratic.... Since these men believed in an elite, they did not believe in the common man; that much is obvious.
>
> (Friedrich [1942] 1950, p. 242)

This "obvious" conclusion is what Friedrich objected to. But it was a peculiar kind of objection. In the first place, Pareto disclaimed making value judgments (Pareto [1935] 1963, vol. I, §§73–91, pp. 38–48). Moreover, Friedrich accepted much of what Pareto said as true of the historical past. Friedrich concealed his thinking under a veneer of fervent devotion to "democracy," or at least democratic institutions. His most astute critic, Joseph Dorfman, saw through this veneer (1942) and concluded that Friedrich's version of democracy was a convoluted construction that concealed both his contempt for the common man and his continued elitism. As Dorfman puts it,

> through the dexterous use of such ambiguous terms as 'functional', 'pragmatic', 'realistic', 'progressive', the author invests the American ideal of democracy, equality and freedom, with a content which reduces the role of the common man to his status in medieval times.
>
> (1942, p. 864)

Why Dorfman would say this will become apparent in what follows.

Friedrich proclaimed his embrace of the common man. But what exactly about the common man had Friedrich come to embrace? Friedrich did not embrace their opinions, which is to say, the basis of consent, but rather what he called their instinct of workmanship. This obscured his continued elitism and hostility to the actual opinions of the common man. We have seen the inconsistency between his account of rational authority and the supposed ideals, beliefs, and values of the common man. Here, we come to an old problem: Kantianism is not compatible with democracy without a means of reconciling them. The Hegelians faced it as a problem of representation: was the parliamentary representative there to represent reason or the unreasonable opinions of those who voted for him? Kantian reason was prone to slipping into overt authoritarianism in the name of reason. Friedrich was of a generation that was well aware of the role of Kantian philosophers who, invoking the categorical imperative, promoted the German cause in the First World War. Yet he held to the idea of a rational basis for authority—genuine authority—to the end, despite the conflict between these ideas and democracy.

Finessing this issue was at the core of Friedrich's thought. He did it differently in different texts (see Friedrich, *Tradition and Authority,* 1972). In this one, he did it by switching from some sort of Kantian or Natural Law grounding for genuine authority to an embrace not of the common man's opinions but of the common man's instinct of workmanship. This was conveniently vague but convenient: grounding it in this instinct made it "democratic," but distinct from mere democratic consent. It also served to replace and democratize the notion of reason—it was now an instinct shared with the people. The notion of genuine authority could then be reinterpreted as the functional superiority of persons. This allowed Friedrich to present himself as a proponent of democracy while advocating for elite rule—the rule of superior persons. This complicated motive was the basis of his argument against Pareto. But it was less "democratic" than it was elitist. So he had a difficult task in hiding the elitist implications of his own views and differentiating

them from Pareto's explicit claims. How he managed this will be the focus of what follows, and it is revealing about Pareto's own argument.

Pareto's basic innovation in elite theory was his concept of the circulation of elites. His notion of elites was distinct from his notion of elites in the sense of the governing class. People differed with respect to capacities or talents; a good thief was better at it than a bad one. In this sense, there could be an elite thief. The term had no moral connotation. Political life was not exempt from distinctions of talent. Moreover, there was always, even in democratic societies, a governing class. These governing classes tended to be overthrown; in time, they came to be populated by people he likened to foxes, people who mastered the art of getting their way without force. They lacked, however, the talent and capacity to defend themselves or their rule with force. The people who overthrew and replaced them had those talents. He likened them to lions. History was a graveyard of elites. Through the process of succession, one elite replaced another.[1] An elite could prolong its rule by co-optation, bringing forceful types into the ruling class. But there was a tendency for this not to happen and for the lions to replace the old governing class. Both were examples of "circulation." The governing classes did indeed have special talents and capacities. But the capacities of foxes were different from those of lions (Pareto [1935] 1963, vol. IV, §2178, pp. 1515–1516). The theory implied that the governing class would become corrupt and be replaced if they were *not* open to outside talent of a different kind, which would have to, by definition, come from outside the governing class. Normally, the governing class became closed, fox-like, and vulnerable to challenge from below.

To buttress his claim of affection for the common man, Friedrich gave the example of Abraham Lincoln as the paradigmatic common man who rose to leadership ([1942] 1950, pp. 269–270). Presumably, this was meant to refute Pareto's account of elites. But in fact it exemplified it: Lincoln was an outsider to the foxes who dominated late antebellum American politics and had failed to solve the slavery question. He came with a following that transformed the federal system after his death—a transformation carried out not by the foxes but by the pride of lions who had risen to prominence through their military service in the Civil War and the radical Republicans, who took over and expanded the Federal government—only to be themselves followed by foxes. It was a paradigmatic case of the circulation of elites of the kind Pareto described. But it poses the problem Friedrich faces throughout: was Lincoln a superior person—an elite figure in the sense of capacity? And doesn't his rise in politics confirm the idea that the governing class has special capacities? As we will see, Friedrich believes that it does: that there are "superiorities" possessed by some people which the common man must recognize, and that this recognition, rather than consent, is what makes rule by these people "democratic."

Friedrich's project was to replace traditional democratic theory. And he did this in a root and branch way. He attacked "The absurdities of the traditional rationalist conception of democracy and of the common man," which he blamed "for much of this antidemocratic sentiment" ([1942] 1950, p. 239). What he rejected was the view of common man as rational. His replacement was this: "Enough common men,

when confronted with a problem, can be made to see the facts in a given situation to provide a working majority for a reasonable solution" (1944, p. 423). This was the justification for democracy, not the requirement of consent that assumed the individual rationality of the consenter, precisely what Friedrich rejected.

The need for someone to *make* the common man see the facts amounted to a rejection of the concept of the consent of the governed itself and bordered on coercion. The rationalist concept abhorred coercion. Friedrich thought otherwise:

> Only a realistically balanced concept of the common man can be the basis for a sound view. Such a sound view sees human group life as oscillating between two patterns: the pattern in which co-operation of the members is mostly elicited, and the pattern in which such co-operation is forced upon them by a self-appointed group or elite. It is, of course, the latter view which is propagated by the totalitarian philosophies.
>
> ([1942] 1950, pp. 239–240)

The term "pattern" is loaded: Friedrich changed his earlier view that democracy required "fundamental agreement, or the absences of dissent on matters of basic significance" (Friedrich 1939a, pp. 571–572; see Purcell 1973, p. 214), to say that all that was needed was "patterns of behavior," meaning "a common way of acting in spite of disagreement on fundamentals," in contrast to totalitarian societies, which demanded such agreement (Purcell 1973, p. 214).

This puts an entirely different light on Friedrich's rejection of elite theory. He insists that "The concepts of the 'elite' and the 'ruling class' are useful only in analyzing and describing the non-cooperative patterns of society" ([1942] 1950, p. 265). He nevertheless acknowledges that political order is *always* a combination of both cooperative and non-cooperative, i.e., coercive, patterns. This implies that the concepts of elite and ruling class are *never* completely irrelevant. We have now gone quite a distance from traditional democratic theory. So what is the "realistically balanced concept of the common man" and the "sound view of group life" he embraces, and how does it differ from Pareto's?

Bureaucrats and Officials

For Pareto, "A governing class is present everywhere... in absolute governments... [and] in so-called democratic governments." A sovereign or parliament "occupies the stage. But behind the scenes there are always people who play a very important role in actual government" (Pareto [1935] 1963, vol. IV, §2253, pp. 1573–1575). This is something Friedrich cannot deny. It is central to his own account of the modern state. But for Friedrich, the people behind the scenes are different from Pareto's: they are bureaucrats. And his whole account of the nature of modern political life revolves around his account of bureaucracy and bureaucratic power. He could have argued that this itself negated "democracy" in any meaningful sense. But to do this explicitly would have put him into the camp of the cynics who deny that democracy is meaningful and hold that even democratic states are ruled by

elites. So he needs to either abandon his account of the modern state or find a way to accommodate democracy to the central fact of bureaucracy.

The account of the modern state fulfills one of Friedrich's other intellectual agendas, which he was loathe to abandon. One of the underlying goals of Friedrich's writing was to refute the idea of the *Deutsche Sonderweg* (German special path), a thesis that ironically, given Friedrich's frequent appeal to him, came from Veblen himself (Veblen [1915] 1964). It was important for Friedrich to normalize the Prussian bureaucratic state, which had long been pathologized not only by democratic theorists but also by the propaganda against the German state of the First World War. He did so by inverting the usual story of modern political development, in which democratic revolutions and analogous pressure established human rights, produced universal suffrage, and modernized the state into an instrument of democracy. For Friedrich, the mark of modernity was the bureaucratic state itself. As he puts it in his magnum opus, *Man and His Government* (1963), reiterating the position he elaborated in his much reprinted and revised textbook, *Constitutional Government and Democracy* ([1937] 1950): "The vast bureaucratic structures of modern states with their tens of thousands of officials make them the 'core of modern government'" (1963, p. 464). He devoted a major historical work to the thesis that the modern state emerged "between 1610 and 1660" and was characterized by the development of "effective bureaucracies" (1952, p. 1) in the absolutist monarchies of central Europe.

How does Friedrich manage to reconcile this claim with his ostensible embrace of democracy and the common man? The problem is with the concept of a governing class. If bureaucracy is the core of the modern state and if it has a class character, it is difficult to deny that there is something like a governing class, even if its members are competitors and antagonists, and that the sentiments and motivations of the members of this class have something in common that distinguishes them from the governed. Friedrich does not deny that bureaucracies can have class cultures distinct from the governed. In his more realistic moments, he acknowledges that the cultures of the administration and the subjects can differ. He gives the example of Puerto Rico, whose progress he ascribes to "a bureaucratic elite who have been prepared to abandon the traditional cultural attitudes impeding effective administration and have enveloped the syndrome of behavioral as well as organizational characteristics of an advanced administrative system" (1963, p. 480), something he detects in other developing countries as well. It was also an obvious feature of the Prussian bureaucracy, and of the Swiss one, he based his notion of responsible bureaucracy on, which, for historical reasons, had a unique class basis (Friedrich and Cole 1932, pp. 34–35).

So Friedrich is faced with a dilemma: he must either acknowledge that the existence of an administrative elite is not "democratic" and reject it in the name of the common man, or find a way to reconcile the existence of a bureaucratic elite with democracy. Not surprisingly, this is done by redefining what is, for Friedrich, "genuinely democratic" ([1942] 1950, p. 259). The term turns out to mean something quite different from what anyone else means by genuinely democratic. He also means something different by elite and something different by representation. His account, however, is muddled.

Friedrich claims that "there is, under democracy, no such thing as a 'governing elite', but there are superiorities" ([1942] 1950, p. 258). But Friedrich knows that this is a problem for his argument. Why are Friedrich's possessors of superiorities not an elite? His response is two-fold. "First, that ... the use of such an expression as 'aristocracy' or 'elite' obscures rather than elucidates the situation under genuinely democratic conditions." These superiorities for Friedrich are divided into two quite different kinds:

> those possessing 'merit' must be divided into those who possess the capacity for workmanship in a given field of activity (whatever that field may be), and those called upon to formulate public policies because their general outlook coincides with that of the majority—they possess merit only in that they are 'representative'.
>
> ([1942] 1950, p. 259)

Here he redefines representation not as people who were elected to represent, but as people who are representative "because their general outlook coincides with that of the majority; and they possess merit only in that they are 'representative'" ([1942] 1950, p. 259). Those called upon to make policy are thus "representative" because their general outlook "coincides" with that of the majority.

The criterion of coinciding with the general outlook, however, seems to refer solely to leaders or politicians. Leaders, Friedrich says, come and go "because their solutions are likely to be judged inadequate after a trial," and new leaders, drawn from the common man, will replace them ([1942] 1950, p. 269). He adds, echoing Aristotle on the shoemaker, that "everyone knows when the shoe no longer pinches" ([1942] 1950, p. 265). The role of the common man is to participate, through their leaders, in decisions about what to do first. "We believe that he knows best which job must come next. That decision sets the stage for the expert and the specialist, the manager and administrator" ([1942] 1950, p. 269). The bureaucrats are merely the functionaries with a superior capacity for workmanship who enter the stage after the decision of what to do first has been made. The common man exits the stage. Here the muddle becomes apparent.

How is governance to be judged by the common man? Friedrich says: "we must reject Pareto's trick of putting over on us the assumption that there are such valid standards of what is an effective performance of the task of governing." Rather, "[t]he basic, commonly felt needs permit the common man through his own sense of workmanship to evaluate a workmanlike performance without especial intellectual equipment" ([1942] 1950, p. 265). This combination of commonly felt needs and sense of workmanship is a surrogate for the non-existent "valid standards." And this is the foundation of the legitimacy of rule in a democracy: "responsible leadership rests upon the common man's recognition of the superior workmanship of some members of the society in performing particular functional tasks" ([1942] 1950, p. 265).

The argument, however obscure, turns out to amount to this. Leadership, in a democracy, rests on representation in the sense of a shared outlook between

the leader and the represented. The represented, the common man, can judge success without special intellectual equipment or expertise. In contrast, "responsible bureaucracy" rests on deference, a recognition of "superiorities." In a democratic society this is not merely deference, but a recognition of superior workmanship based on the common man's instinct of workmanship. This is not recognition of an elite or an aristocracy because the term has the wrong implications under democratic conditions. It is obscure what these wrong implications or the "democratic conditions" are. What is clear is that the governing class gains a kind of generic approval and deference for their "superiorities" rather than for their meeting "valid standards," which do not exist. But only the leaders pay the price for failure, and they pay individually rather than as a class. The expert and the specialist, the manager and administrator, are deferred to for their functional superiority.

This leaves an odd lacuna. Why is the bureaucracy not an elite or part of the governing class, as in Pareto? The answer that the terms do not fit under "democratic conditions" seems oddly insufficient. The democratic conditions of election and ejection from power by voters apply only to leaders. Bureaucrats are insulated from these democratic conditions; they are subordinate only in theory; in fact, as Friedrich himself argues, they have a significant degree of autonomy. So in what sense are they different from traditional bureaucratic elites in non-democratic states? To the extent that Friedrich has an answer to this, it is to attack the idea that there is an elite at all in democratic societies. In his "common man" book (1942), this response takes the form of attacking Pareto's own characterization of the plutocratic control of democracies as the same as the propaganda of Goebbels. His other line of attack is to insist that the governing class lacks the coherence to be a real elite, something Pareto does not claim and does not fit Pareto's dynamic account of elite rule, in which members of the elite are engaged in outfoxing one another. Indeed, it is the failure of the foxes to stick together, their lack of the residue of solidarity, that ultimately dooms them. The more interesting problem is the lacuna itself: bureaucratic power. Its omission in Friedrich's account of the common man is itself ideological. Pareto did not omit it.

The Covert Defense of Bureaucratic Rule

Pareto and Friedrich give what can be read as parallel accounts of the nature of governance. Friedrich's big idea was "the rule of anticipated reactions" ([1937] 1950, p. 49), which provides a decisive clue as to the nature of influence or power that is exercised without overt constraint or consent through the adjustment of the influenced person's actions to the anticipated reactions of the other. Bureaucrats operated in this way. They were the ones who carried out the law by taking "measures," a concept Friedrich emphasized, in contrast to legislation, as the place where governance happens. They did so with discretionary power, which he also emphasized, but always with a sense of the limits imposed by the potential reactions of others. The picture we get is this: politicians propose, bureaucrats dispose, and in the way they want, unless they provoke a reaction (Friedrich 1958b).

Pareto makes a parallel point, but with respect to leaders. He describes two leaders as masters of utilizing the sentiments and interests of the country in order to keep power. In Friedrich's terms, they were good at anticipating reactions. But Pareto extends the same considerations to "officials" when he notes that they respond to force with "diplomacy, fraud, corruption" and comments that "governmental authority passes, in a word, from the lions to the foxes" ([1935] 1963, vol. IV, §2178, p. 1515). The bureaucrats, in Pareto, compare to the Byzantines, who were reviled in the period of the ascent of freedom and are now, tellingly, back in fashion.

> §2612. As we have said many times and again repeated just above (§2553), undulations in derivations follow undulations in social facts. That is why, about a century ago during an ascending period of freedom, it was fashionable to condemn the rigid and restrictive institutions of the Byzantine Empire. Now that we are in a descending period of freedom and an ascending period of "Planning," the same institutions are admired and praised, and it is proclaimed that the European countries owe a great debt to the Byzantine Empire for having saved them from the Moslem invasion, forgetting that brave warriors of Western Europe succeeded time and again in defeating and repelling the Arabs and the Turks and that they very easily occupied Constantinople before any Asiatic peoples conquered that city. Byzantium shows how far the curve along which our societies are now moving may lead. Anyone who admires that future is necessarily led to admire that past, and anyone who admires that past will in all consistency admire the future.
>
> ([1935] 1963, vol. IV, §2612, p. 1912)

Pareto fails to embrace the new Byzantines and ridicules those who do, but explains this as an ideological consequence of undulations in social facts; Friedrich reassesses and admires the past versions of bureaucratic rule. In Friedrich's case, it is the bureaucracies of the early modern authoritarian state. Friedrich describes the same trajectory, from freedom as a political good achieved and valued in the 19th century to the present, when he thinks it is no longer important (Friedrich 1967, pp. 12–13). He is the "anyone who admires that past will in all consistency admire the future."

With this we arrive at the real difference between them, and it has nothing to do with democracy.

For Pareto, what is of interest is the way in which the governing class and leaders manipulate the public and do so through "derivations" or ideological constructions that play on the sentiments. As Pareto explains, entrepreneurs were careful "not to run counter to democratic sentiments, but to exploit them for purposes of money-making" (Pareto [1935] 1963, vol. I, §1045, p. 623). Friedrich's embrace of the common man appears to be, for critics like Dorfman, equally manipulative. And it is manipulation by exploiting the democratic sentiments of the public. But instead of the entrepreneurs affirming their solidarity with the people through a shared democratic ideology, it is Friedrich telling the people that the governing class is just like them in the sense that they have the same instinct of workmanship.

The exploitation of democratic sentiments by the entrepreneurs was for the purpose of money-making: the sentiments supported political arrangements that favored it. The novel form of the exploitation of democratic sentiments invented by Friedrich served instead to justify the rule of the "superior" governing elements. The role of bureaucrats, or their role in combination with leaders, was to make the common man see the facts in a given situation so as to provide a working majority. This was all that democracy needed to amount to. The idea that bureaucrats were merely a group with recognized superiorities, superiorities which were somehow continuous with the instinct of workmanship of the common man, was his justification for calling them democratic and ignoring their character as an elite. But his account of power in the modern state is nevertheless elitist at its core: one of a "superior" class of bureaucrats governing through discretionary power by avoiding "reactions." Needless to say, this was a political vision that justified the emerging elite of which Friedrich was a part, and to justify calling their role democratic. They were not a new ruling class: they were simply the superior version of the common man, and entitled to deference and discretionary power because of their superiorities.

We are left with a number of ironies. L. J. Henderson, a Harvard grandee, discovered Pareto in 1925 and enthused about him to his colleagues. Eight years later, at the height of his enthusiasm for Pareto, Henderson was to call on his nephew by marriage, James Bryant Conant, to give him the Presidency of Harvard. Conant was related to the Boston elite, of which Henderson and the Board were a part, but he was, by their standards, a poor relation. Conant would refashion Harvard into a world-class university by a relentless but politic application of considerations of merit. As Kolegar explained Pareto's account of the circulation of elites,

> ...if in the selection of members of the elite there existed a condition of perfectly free competition so that every individual could rise just as high in the social scale as his talents and ambition permit, the elite would consist exactly of those persons who are best fitted for membership in it, and the would be automatically correcting its own defects and In reality, even in the liberal (open-class) society competition not entirely free, and, ...there are obstacles that interfere with the free circulation of individuals on the mobility ladder.
>
> (Kolegar 1967, pp. 360–361)

It is as though Conant had read this as a recipe for turning Harvard into the engine of elite circulation it had not been in the past. He "democratized" Harvard by recruiting talent, using such means as the Scholastic Aptitude Test he himself had promoted. And he worked effectively to bring Harvard into the world of Washington politics.

Friedrich returned to these topics in the 1960s, in relation to Mills and again on Pareto. Here the argument shifted to the claim that "elite" in politics has always and only meant a "cooperating group" and that "only a *cooperating* group of the 'best' could be said to be 'governing,' for government is a complex whole. Arguments

involving the importance of an elite, from Plato to contemporary writings, have always tacitly assumed it" (1965, p. 261; emphasis in original). This provides a standard for claiming there is a governing elite:

> We said that a ruling or governing elite, in short a political elite, is a group of persons who are distinguished by exceptional performance in politics, who effectively unite the rule in their hands, and who possess a sense of group cohesion and a corresponding esprit de corps.
>
> (1965, p. 266)

He reiterates the claim that "there is no readily available yardstick for the performance in the field of government" (1965, p. 263) as there is for technical competence in the professions. He claims that the "men behind the scenes" in politics only continue to wield power if they provide satisfaction (1965, p. 264). This is a suitably vague standard that is essentially circular: uniting rule in a few hands is the definition of governance itself. If the idea of uniting was taken more narrowly, it would have excluded the fractious elites that have ruled in the past, such as the Roman Senatorial class. But appealing to it allowed Friedrich to ignore the actual elites, including those of which he was a member.

Friedrich treats bureaucrats as a technical elite whose elitism is favorable to democracy: "Democracy has every reason to foster the development of such non-governmental elites, and even in the realm of government, it has developed, in the administrative bureaucracy, a kind of technical elite in terms of performance" (1965, p. 266). Like Carl Schmitt, his ally in the struggle against Kelsen, Friedrich was a partisan of bureaucratic discretion and of the concept of discretion (1958b). The possibility that bureaucrats form an elite in his sense, that they possess a sense of group cohesion and a corresponding esprit de corps, and wield a very large amount of discretionary power according to the rule of anticipated reactions, is ignored. The element of the state inherited from absolutism that defines it as "modern" for Friedrich seemingly vanishes from governing.

Friedrich, who delighted in ripping the mask off Anglo-American political thinking (1939b), was offended by Pareto ripping the mask off elitism and demolishing its ideological supports. But Friedrich was merely fashioning a mask of his own: of democracy worn over bureaucratic rule, the one thing that he believed in. Pareto was the victim of this dissembling and of the mistaken insistence, promoted by Friedrich, that he was an advocate of elite rule. Despite the efforts of Mills and Domhoff, elite theory remained a truth that could not be spoken—among academics eager to be part of the elite themselves.

Note

1 "The phenomenon of new elites which, through an incessant movement of circulation, rise up from the lower strata of society, mount up to the higher strata, flourish there, and then fall into decadence, are annihilated and disappear—this is one of the motive forces in history, and it is essential to give it due weight if we are to understand great social movements" (Pareto 1976, p. 134).

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11 Pareto on Violence

Christopher Adair-Toteff

Vilfredo Pareto has been accused of many things: he was confused and confusing, old fashioned and long-winded, contradictory, and just plain wrong. He was accused of being anti-democracy, anti-liberalism, and anti-humanism. And he was accused of being pro-fascism. Some of these charges are not particularly damning, and most of these accusations were made by relatively minor scholars. This is not the case in regards to the issue of Pareto and violence. The charge was made that Pareto not only tolerated political violence, but he actively endorsed it. Furthermore, this accusation was not made by just anybody but by one of the most respected experts on political violence—Hannah Arendt. In her book *On Violence,* she maintained that Pareto believed not only that political violence was occasionally justified but that he held that violence was a legitimate political weapon in the battle against the bourgeois. This was an incredibly damning accusation made by one of the 20th century's leading political thinkers, yet it has not been addressed.[1] The purpose of this chapter is to investigate Arendt's charge and to determine how accurate it is.[2]

This essay has three main parts: Part One is an explication of Arendt's accusation in *On Violence* and Part Two is an examination of Arendt's source for her criticism—S.E. Finer's Pareto article. Part Three is a comparison of what Arendt said about Pareto and what Finer said about him. This essay ends with some observations about Arendt and Pareto. The conclusion from this examination is that Hannah Arendt misinterpreted, if not misused, the single passage that she cited in Samuel Finer's article in which he had strongly defended Pareto from such misunderstandings.

Part One: Arendt's Accusation

Hannah Arendt is most remembered for her crucial writings on totalitarianism and for her major contributions to political philosophy. In their introduction to the *Anthem Companion to Hannah Arendt,* Peter Baehr and Philip Walsh list Arendt's most famous works as *The Origins of Totalitarianism, The Human Condition, On Revolution, Eichmann in Jerusalem,* and *The Life of the Mind* (Baehr and Walsh 2017: 2). *On Violence* is not regarded by them as one of Arendt's most important writings, and it is the focus of just one essay in their collection. In "Arendt on Power

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