

Pareto and the Ambivalence of Emotions

Emanuela Susca^a

Abstract

In the context of the growing interest in emotions in sociology, this article focuses on Pareto's investigation of the emotional foundations of society. Firstly, this paper highlights that the *Treatise on General Sociology* offers two interpretative options: the first reiterates ideas already expressed before the *Treatise* and the second is profoundly original and focuses on residues.

Accordingly, through an in-depth analysis of the theoretical framework of residues, this contribution highlights the originality and topicality of the Paretian approach. The conceptual framework of residues informs the understanding of the ambivalence of emotions in terms of their rich nuances, contradictions, and possible manifestations. Moreover, Pareto questions the accepted dichotomy between rationality and irrationality and shows how human action eludes rigid categorisation. Finally, employing a proudly elitist perspective that differs from today's democracy-focused perspective, Pareto is a visionary in his acknowledgment of the importance of emotions in leadership and public opinion.

The concluding remarks reflect on an aspect of the Paretian approach that seems less topical: the idea that humans want to hide their emotions from themselves and others.

Keywords: social action, irrationality, residues, emotions, sociology of emotions.

1. Introduction

The crisis of the entirely rational actor model is now evident and probably irreversible, and the concept of *homo oeconomicus* is being increasingly questioned as insufficient and one-sided by several economists, which has increased sociology's interest in emotions (Barbalet, 2008; Frank & McCarthy, 1989;

^a IULM University, Milan, Italy.

Corresponding author:
Emanuela Susca
E-mail: emanuela.susca@iulm.it

Received: 13 December 2023

Accepted: 24 April 2024

Published: 5 December 2024



Jacobsen, 2018; Kemper, 1990; Turner & Stets, 2005). Indeed, the sociology of emotions has become an extremely vital and stimulating field, with a series of highly refined and insightful studies fuelling this interest almost everywhere and particularly in Italy (Cerulo, 2010, 2018; Cerulo & Crespi, 2013; Iagulli, 2011; Longo, 2019; Santambrogio, 2021; Turnaturi, 1995). Therefore, it is not surprising that the perspective on emotions put forth by a great analyst of the non-logical and irrational such as Pareto has been accepted and valorised, especially among Italian sociologists (Mutti, 1992, 1994; Romania, 2021; Susca, 2023).

This paper contributes to this perspective by first emphasising the considerable difference between Pareto's categorisation of actions—based on the distinction between logical and non-logical action—and the thematization of residues he later proposes in the *Treatise on General Sociology*. This analysis demonstrates the extent to which residues provide a more realistic understanding of the complexity of social action while accounting for a crucial and particularly challenging aspect of emotions: their ambivalence. Pareto's residues are not linked to action in a mechanistic and necessary relationship; rather, they are treated as constituting the overall disposition of the acting subject. In addition, the residues mix and disaggregate with each other over time. This leads to Pareto describing an emotional component that is rich in nuance, inevitably contradictory, and ambivalent even from the perspective of concrete effects since this component can manifest itself in different and antithetical ways, even when it remains stable. After this, the political implications of Pareto's focus on residues are examined. While the political implications imply an unbridgeable distance between elites and non-elites, they also allow for surprising political developments when theorized by a realist, as Pareto is commonly considered to be. The latter approach goes as far as to treat widely spread emotions as a prevailing sensibility that could become public opinion and function as a force that interacts with and influences power. Hence, the theme of emotions is inseparable from the elite, which leads to the problematic art of governing human beings through governing their emotions, as asserted by Pareto. Finally, the concluding remarks reflect on the possible contemporary relevance of the Paretian approach and question the likelihood of a generalised current desire to rationalise one's behavior and conceal one's emotions.

2. The tension between what is logical and what is not

Analysing the Paretian approach to emotions provides a deeper and more complete understanding of this author's thought process, which is crucial in the

social and economic sciences. Moreover, this perspective allows individuals to better understand the reasons for Pareto's well-known and much-discussed move from economics to sociology. Without ever becoming an irrationalist, the 'engineer' Pareto reflected for many years on the fact that human being is "a very imperfect scale for weighing ophelimities", referring to economic utilities (2014, p. 232). He identified the reason for this as the emotional substratum from which subjects' actions take shape. This resulted in his search for an interpretative lens and model that accounts for immeasurably rich complex phenomena that cannot be explained by the logic of optimisation alone.

On closer inspection, the first interpretation offered by Pareto predates the *Treatise*. Indeed, the exposition on logical and non-logical actions contained in the second chapter of the *Treatise* proposes making several inessential modifications to *The Non-Logical Actions* (*Le azioni non logiche*), which is a long article published in 1910 that is a translation into Italian of an earlier course that was previously taught in French at the University of Lausanne. Pareto expresses the idea that beliefs associated with feelings can have a powerful influence on human action, for which he uses the compelling metaphor of the "varnish of logic", encapsulating the covering and shaping operations by which subjects aim to make the non-logical acceptable to others and themselves (1935, parr. 154, 183; 1980, pp. 347, 374). Pareto also focuses on the importance of sensation as a component of emotion (1935, par. 172; 1980, pp. 360–361) and delineates a reciprocal causal relationship between both sensations and beliefs as well as emotions and actions (1935, parr. 165–168; 1980, pp. 357–359).

Pareto also makes use of the notion of the "psychic state" (1935, par. 161; 1980, p. 355), which has reinforced some individuals' assertion that Pareto is too dependent on psychology. However, Pareto also emphasises that the sociological perspective is not reducible to a psychological one, writing that "logical actions are at least in large part the results of processes of reasoning. Non-logical actions originate chiefly in definite psychic states, sentiments, subconscious feelings, and the like". He adds, "It is the province of psychology to investigate such psychic states. Here we start with them as data of fact, without going beyond that" (1935, par. 161; 1980, p. 355).

However, for the analysis conducted herein, even more important than the distance between psychology and sociology is Pareto's assertion that the actions for which the means are appropriate for the end are logical "not only from the standpoint of the subject performing them, but from the standpoint of other persons who have a more extensive knowledge" (1935 par. 150; 1980, p. 346). This statement considerably narrows the field of logical actions (Mutti, 1994) and weakens Pareto's theoretical framework through the addition of an objectively problematic element (Busino, 1976). He also demonstrates how his sociological analysis method, while anticipating the developments of neo-

positivism to a certain extent, remains close to classically intended positivism, which is echoed in his well-known ambition to proceed by induction, in that he wished to catalogue as many actions as possible into two categories: the logical and the non-logical.

However, this founding father of sociology fortunately only partially fulfils his promises: he combines this inductive cataloguing with a valuable inclination towards heuristics of the ideal type, thereby ensuring that he is compared to his contemporary, Max Weber (Marchetti, 2020). Indeed, Pareto asserts that “concrete actions” are “synthetic” because they mix those “elements” that the analysis must decompose and isolate (1935, par. 148; 1980, pp. 344–345). This indicates that it may be infrequent or even impossible for concretely performed actions to be catalogued as completely logical or non-logical.

Conceptualisations made according to the device of the ideal type remain at least partially confused or obfuscated. This is because Pareto labels a range of very different actions as non-logical, ranging from those that are purely instinctual and lacking intentionality at all to those that are classified as such simply because they are performed by an actor who makes a material error or relies on knowledge that is not the most up-to-date even though it is clear that those who get a few details wrong, make a calculation error, or are not aware of the latest advances in knowledge are still using their reasoning.

Therefore, it needs to be clarified what ‘reasoning’ means to Pareto, as detailed in *The Non-Logical Actions* and the *Treatise*. While it seems as though Pareto has an idealised and unrealistic view of reasoning, he surprises the reader with his intuition. For example, looking at the animal world, specifically the seemingly insignificant life of some insects, he observes that “a certain number of actions in animals evince reasoning of a kind” if reasoning is understood as “adaptation of means to ends” (Pareto, 1935, par. 156; 1980, p. 350). Therefore, this not only brings even the most humble of animals closer to human beings but also affirms a truth about instrumental rationality: it is too humble and unspecific to be used to account for human complexity.

3. Residues and the ambivalence of emotions

The *Treatise’s* focus on emotions goes far beyond the conceptualisation we have just seen and that is contained in an article that proposes even earlier ideas. In this respect, the most original and successful section of the *Treatise* concerns residues, which form the basis of a new and different interpretation of the emotions from an interpretation centred around non-logical actions. By elaborating on and proposing the residues in his main work, Pareto details the lessons he learnt from his positivist masters, Comte and Spencer. If he distances

himself from the latter by becoming more aware of the limits of any scientific endeavour, thus turning to a contemporary relativism (Federici, 1999; Pizzorno, 1973), the attention he pays to the emotional foundations of society aligns with theirs. This is particularly evident in the case of Comte, whose contribution to the sociology of emotions has recently been emphasised (Iagulli, 2015) and whom Pareto criticises while also acknowledging that “it is necessary to act on the greatest number of men with feeling, because it is impossible to act on them with reasoning” (1902a, p. 302). Nevertheless, this is also true of positivism as a whole, which is praised for its intention to investigate the “feelings of people” with the “methods in use in all the experimental sciences” (Pareto, 1902b, p. 198), and it is particularly true for Herbert Spencer. Pareto draws a statement from Spencer and the French translation of *Social Statistics* that becomes almost a programmatic manifesto for him: “Ideas neither govern nor disturb the world: The world is governed or disturbed by sentiments, to which ideas only serve as a guide. The social mechanism is not ultimately based on opinions, but almost entirely on character” (Spencer cited in Pareto 1902a, pp. 21–22). This is ultimately the line of research he pursues in terms of residues and derivations, which he recalls in the *Treatise* as preceding his theory of the variegated universe of the non-logical (1935, par. 298).

However, Pareto does not uncritically accept or delve into the ideas put forth by positivists. Instead, aware of the fact that “feeling and reason each have their own part” in the existence of human beings (Pareto, 1980, p. 241), he searches for a device that accounts for the extent to which “emotion” rather than “reasoning” can in “certain circumstances and in a favourable environment” come to “drag and move great masses of people” (Pareto, 1965, p. 82). Furthermore, in his own words, he moves “groping along” to the gigantic theoretical effort of residues (1935, par. 183). This has led to a classification of residues that has been too little investigated and thus deserves to be revisited in its entirety and without limiting the focus to just the first two residues: instinct for combinations (class I) and the persistence of aggregates (class II). There are four more well-known classes:

- Class III, which is the “need of expressing sentiments by external acts”, ranging from religious-type exaltation to the simple and common need to act in the world and objectify oneself.

- Class IV, referring to the “residues connected with sociality”, which is also a very diverse class. It manifests itself through conformism, recognition anxiety, and neophobia as well as repugnance for the suffering of others and the impulse for concrete solidarity.

- Class V, denoting “integrity of the individual and his appurtenances”, which Pareto treats as the counterpart to class IV. These residues lead to individuals resisting the invasion of their private spheres, referring to the

intrusion into what is most dear that prompts individuals to act and restore the integrity of their offended selves.

- Class VI, referring to the ‘sex residue’, with its logical and chronological precedent being discussed in Pareto’s *Le mythe vertuiste et la littérature immorale*.

The elaboration and proposal of residues results in the abandonment of both the earlier view that emotions are a factor in distancing oneself from rational conduct as well as the idea that there are very few entirely logical actions on the one hand and an infinite number of non-logical actions on the other. Thus, Pareto arrives at a more realistic and stimulating conceptualisation of emotions that emphasises the ambivalence of the emotions themselves and has resulted in developments being made in contemporary research (Weigert, 1991).

To understand how this is possible, it should be noted that the residue is perceived as an element that contributes to the overall disposition of a subject that is expressed in action. Pareto, therefore, portrays it neither as the action itself nor as the subject’s entire disposition, which is why the residue makes possible the highlighting of the ambivalence of emotions from at least two perspectives possible. In the first, residues merge and separate to the point that one could use a chemical metaphor in line with Pareto’s reasoning to explain it: they occur in chains that are more or less long and relatively stable or branched. This means that the emotional substratum of subjects is always rich in nuance and ambiguity, and it is often intimately contradictory as it is always presented as being ambivalent. In the second perspective, the emotions that are presented in the *Treatise* are also ambivalent in terms of their effects since they can remain relatively stable in terms of the psychic energies they mobilise but, at the same time, they can be associated with very different contents or expressed in very different or even antithetical ways. This is exemplified below in the discussion of Pareto’s considerations on the proximity between pacifism and nationalism.

However, the shift from the theoretical pattern of the classification of actions to that of residues moves the focus to the actor who is conceived in the complexity, and there is a sociological perspective that blurs the very distinction between logical and non-logical, or between rational and irrational, in a surprisingly topical way.

4. Beyond the distinction between rational and irrational

In the *Treatise*, the residues correspond to those instincts that give rise to reasonings, and they are distinguished from all “simple appetites, tastes, inclinations” that are not logicalised ex-post and from interests (1935, par. 851). This means that even if the continuous covering operations described in the metaphor of the “varnish of logic” (1935, par. 975) are excluded, residues

essentially correspond to the “work of the mind” and “imagination” in which human beings incessantly engage (1935, par. 850). Moreover, along with derivations, interests, and social heterogeneity, residues are one of the four factors that interdependently shape the social system.

It is necessary to bear this in mind when considering the task assigned to sociology in the *Treatise* and, more specifically, the relationship established between sociology and economics. While Pareto asserts that the latter can still be conceived as a study of interests that deliberately ignores everything else, sociology is not simply an investigation of residues alone or residues linked to derivations but a study that encompasses all aspects of a multi-causal relationship from which social systems sharing points of equilibrium arise. This also implies that sociology incorporates the object and results of economics into itself, thereby creating a society in which the acting subjects are infinitely more complex than the model of the *homo oeconomicus* or the entirely rational actor.

Moreover, when reconstructing the Paretian approach to emotions, the notion needs to be considered that residues are not everything but that they relate to everything due to their being components of the system and that they occupy the position of “*primus inter pares*” (Femia, 2006, p. 55). In addition, the Paretian notion of the instinct for combinations is an essential but commonly overlooked motif of the thought that is treated as logical and rational, as claimed in the *Treatise*’s observation that theology and metaphysics are far from opposites as they are in fact closely linked to experimental science, which would have its motive not in pure and abstract logic but in a specific psychic state that induces people to engage incessantly in new trials to determine new connections between the elements around them (1935, par. 974). This does not mean devaluing science or reducing it to a form of knowledge like any other. Rather, Pareto contends that science could penetrate culture and become a mentality that can be applied to all things in life, stating that social phenomena are also shaped by “the state of people’s knowledge” and that this state can in turn be “modified by scientific research” (1902a, p. 78). He later emphasises this in the *Treatise*, where his rejection of the scientism that is rampant in his era does not prevent him from recognising that modernity was and is inseparable from a process of rationalisation that is seen as similar to Weber’s approach. He asserts that industrial life is, to a certain extent, “an experimental life” which inevitably weakens “the dominion of sentiment” as it spreads through various societies (1935, par. 984). Therefore, although Pareto is an implacable critic of progressive ideologies, he affirms that “‘reason’ is coming to play a more and more important role in human activity” (1935, par. 2392), thereby objectively challenging those who perceive radical and almost exalted irrationalism in his approach.

Pareto indeed perceives the residue as pervasive, if not omnipresent. This omnipresence is reflected in the innovation and experimentation that fuels scientific research as well as being highly proximal to the motive that drives economic calculation and choice. This is emphasised in the *Treatise* when Pareto fundamentally questions the distinction between residues and interests. According to Pareto, interests are a “sum of sentiments” that are similar to, if not the same as, those expressed by the fifth class of residues, referring to the “integrity of the individual and his appurtenances” (1935, par. 1207).

Pareto does not place all interests *en bloc* within the residual component, which is mainly because of a modelling requirement of his social system. This may appear strange for an author who owes a considerable part of his fame to the decisive contributions he made to the elaboration of the concept of *homo oeconomicus*. However, the non-conformist way he discusses interests is not surprising if we consider that he, especially in his *Treatise*, considers himself so superior to economism that he presents the idea that emotions also innervate production, exchange, and consumption. In this sense, Pareto’s move from economics to sociology can also be seen as the foundation for understanding the human condition and reasoning in a way that ensures that they are considered more realistic and useful for all social sciences (including economics). The result indicates an appreciation of the emotional basis of society that very wisely rejects the idea of a *homo duplex*, referring to the split between an economic subject (i.e. one that is optimising and selfish) and a non-economic subject (i.e. one that is altruistic and conformist). Pareto’s perception has profound motivations that combine notions of the drive for individualisation and social bonding (Susca, 2019).

It can be correctly claimed that Pareto lacks empathy as his assertions align with those of positivists who want to scientifically investigate residues and derivations as objects of study (1935, par. 1403), thus seeking to discover the “intrinsic characteristics” of “inclinations and sentiments” (1935, par. 445) and striving not to hypostatise the residues but, instead, to think of them as “manifestations” of “sentiments” and “instincts” in the same sense in which “the rising of the mercury in a thermometer is the manifestation of the rise in temperature” (1935, par. 875). Nevertheless, his perceiving researchers as capable of understanding the complexity of subjects not *because* of but *despite* their humanity should not prevent the understanding of the richness of his approach to emotions and his questioning and rejecting the rigid dichotomy between what is rational and what is not.

5. Residues between reproduction and change

Pareto treats residues as a way to posit inequality or, in his words, “social heterogeneity” as an immutable datum since it is rooted in the most profound human substratum and, thus, the one most impervious to change (Meyer, 1974). This is exemplified by the passages of the *Treatise* in which Pareto rules out a purely random distribution of the residues among the various social strata, which is related to the opposite of a variation linked to the hierarchy of power. Pareto claims, “residues are not evenly distributed nor are they of equal intensities in the various strata of a given society”, and particularly among “the lower classes”, the residues of “class V (individual integrity)” will be scarce, while “the residues of classes II and III” will be abundant and powerful, resulting in a natural inclination to “neophobia” and “superstition” (1935, par. 1723). However, as the instinct for combinations is described in numerous passages as being prevalent in the elite, it is easy to understand the picture offered by this classical sociologist: if the elite classes are physiologically predisposed toward more intense and refined intellectual activities (instinct for combinations) and a more vivid feeling of self (individual integrity), the masses would be equally physiologically condemned to submission without the possibility of redemption due to their conservative nature (persistence of aggregates) or, at most, to experiencing moments of sterile exaltation (need to express sentiments by external acts).

This could be refuted by the observation that the *Treatise* also refers to the action exerted on feelings by the social order and objective conditions (1935, par. 861, 1770, 1097, 2003). However, the naturalisation of inequality remains the prevailing aspect and is justified as a consequence of an immutable fact. This means that Pareto does not assert that the most disadvantaged people are more conservative in their mentality and morality, if not politically, due to the conditioning they undergo because of their social positions. Instead, he claims that the opposite is true, in that being at the bottom of the social pyramid is evidence of a particular psychic condition and specific emotional and sentimental dispositions.

Ultimately, Pareto’s treatment of the residue is too rich to be reduced to a naturalisation of inequality. On closer inspection, it offers an original and innovative explanation of the change, and it attempts to overcome the idea of imitation formulated by Tarde that inspired Pareto before the publication of the *Treatise* (Pareto, 2014). This is contained in the specific reflections in which the “propagation of residues”, such as those of derivations (1935, par. 2004), does not only occur directly through the imitation theorised by Tarde but more often occurs “indirectly by virtue of changes in certain circumstances”, including the

“economic, political and other”, that ‘modify residues in certain individuals and then gradually in others’ (1935, par. 2003).

Pareto also offers a materialistic explanation of how emotions are transmitted and spread. This theorisation forms the core of a model of change in which a transformation of objective structures provokes passions that, in turn, become political passions capable of exerting their effects transnationally. In fact, Paretian emotions and the derivations associated therewith spread independently of national borders while not sporadically clashing with the effects of the other two elements that shape the Paretian system: interests and social heterogeneity, both of which refer primarily to the national dimension in the *Treatise* (Susca, 2014).

Thus, it can be claimed that Pareto employs a theoretical framework that can still be used to interpret the complex processes of globalisation since it does not disavow the role of the world market (1935, par. 2280) and recognises that the mutual reinforcement of widespread sentiments and beliefs can drive rapprochement between societies and develop new transnational solidarities in place of previous national particularisms.

This certainly does not make Pareto an ardent advocate of brotherhood among nations. On the contrary, his references to Tocqueville’s *L’ancien régime* (Pareto, 1980, pp. 188–189) and his condemnation of the “epidemic of humanitarianism” (1935, par. 545, note 3) clearly show his concern for the possible destabilising or subversive consequences of waves of popular sentiment and socialist internationalism. But Pareto is also not so rigidly realist in politics that he sees mutual enmity among nations and the use of force as the only decisive factor in international politics, which he discusses in the *Treatise* when considering if sentimental and political developments of a new kind are possible. Indeed, he considers them perfectly possible, claiming that they partly exist as “public opinion” and that the “sentiments that are active in individual human beings” partly dictate the orientation of “international law”. Moreover, he considers it plausible that an “international power” will emerge in the future that is capable of imposing “a given system of law”, thus reducing war and contributing substantially to ending the anarchy in the relations between nations (1935, par. 1508).

These reflections may seem anachronistic since they were formulated just as the First World War was about to start. However, in analysing the present, Pareto’s foresight is astonishing: not only does he contemplate, albeit cautiously, the possibility of a future supranational or even global form of government, he also sees signs of a change that could lead to public opinion coalescing into a kind of world public opinion, denoting a force that is capable of opposing the selfishness of the various rulers and pushing for new ideas and convictions, thus inspiring new laws.

6. Towards a political sociology of emotions

Although his position is radically elitist and therefore far removed from the sensibility that is generally prevalent today, Pareto can be considered a forerunner of the political sociology of emotions (Demertzis, 2013, 2020). His perspective on the power of sentiments and the non-logical must be noted while acknowledging that he also thinks about the needs of those with power and their efforts to not lose it. While rulers certainly cannot create people's emotions from nothing, Pareto contends that governing also means channelling existing and widespread emotions in the most useful directions. He states that the elites of his time decidedly lacked the ability to properly direct the emotions across the popular classes. While he perceives these classes as being attracted to belligerent and incisive ideas and ideologies, the elite ranks are seen as being afflicted by humanitarianism, which is a lachrymose and unhealthy tendency towards excessive solidarity with the lowly that is the result of centuries of political and moral theories (1935, par. 436). Due to the "invasion of humanitarian sentiments and morbid sensitivity" that leads to them feeling close to the most unfortunate (1902a, p. 37), the bourgeoisie seems to be in danger of facing a catastrophe similar to the one experienced by the nobility during the French Revolution, in that it will be destroyed more by its psychic condition than by the force of the opponents (1935, par. 2191). This is because an aristocracy can only hope to retain power and life by not lowering itself to the level of the masses and maintaining a firm awareness of itself and its superiority.

However, the need for the powerful to govern popular emotions leads to Pareto suggesting the cultivation and maintenance of a certain sentimental consonance with the popular classes. This is evidenced by how much importance Pareto gives to Machiavelli (Femia, 2012). Machiavelli is the author of *The Prince*, which inspires the categorisation of the "foxy" and "lion-like" elites (1935, parr. 2178, 2480 note 4). These notions refer to the two styles of government and how they exercise power, but they also signal differences in the elite's attitude towards the sentiments prevailing among the people, in that the "foxes" are sceptical about popular beliefs, while the "lions" hold these beliefs. Machiavelli is also the author of the *Discorsi*, warmly quoted in the *Treatise* with reference to the theme of "religion". In this regard, Pareto discusses Machiavelli's foresight regarding the thematisation of residues and the instinct of combinations in particular. Moreover, he commends Machiavelli for praising rulers who do not offend and encourage popular religiosity, knowing that citizens who are the most reliant on values and tradition are also those who are most willing to sacrifice themselves for the homeland (1935, parr. 2532–2534).

In recovering and updating Machiavelli's lesson, Pareto emphasises how governing people encompasses the art of governing the human passions that

mobilise the governed by keeping them within the bounds of the power relationship they share with their rulers. However, Pareto is too aware of the complexity of emotions and their cognitive implications to believe that simple and banal propaganda or direct and deliberate manipulation is effective. Instead, in the *Treatise* Pareto asserts that derivations are generally “the only language that reaches the human being in his sentiments and is therefore calculated to modify his behaviour” (1935, par. 1403). However, ideologies are described by distinguishing between theories that express views which are too subjective to persuade others and theories which are more generalisable and serve “the interests of a social class” (1935, par. 860). While the former is destined to remain circumscribed to narrow circles, the latter can act on the residues by entering into consonance with deep feelings and unconscious automatisms, thus becoming a valuable device for rulers.

When examining the more political aspects of this argument, the overall Paretian scheme must be considered: in *Les Systèmes Socialistes*, Pareto overturns the simplistic relation in which emotions are viewed as an effect or consequence of the various reasonings that aim to persuade, stating instead that emotions themselves are to be considered a cause in the first place. In the *Treatise*, he then reiterates and clarifies that people do not experience a particular emotion because they believe in something but that they believe in something and act accordingly because they are experiencing certain emotions (1935, parr. 267–269, 1937). This indicates that Pareto views the ability of rulers to act on the emotions of the governed as limited. Indeed, the possibilities for the powerful do not extend further than exploiting the “persistence of aggregates” that is typical in the lower social strata, and stimulating subordinates’ attachment to tradition and their inclination toward neophobia as much as possible.

However, Pareto subdivides his residues in a detailed manner. These subdivisions are not motivated by pedantry or a positivist eagerness to classify what is instead nuanced and magmatic; instead, Pareto’s theoretical endeavour highlights the similarities in the very different directions that the same emotion can take in terms of stimulating an action. In other words, it has the virtue of showing how much the same emotion, ambivalent by nature and with unclear boundaries, can encapsulate different or even sometimes contradictory contents. Nationalism is an example of this in the *Treatise*, which is presented as the manifestation of a reaction that is sentimental in nature before being political, thereby countering the internationalist and solidaristic sentiments and ideals of socialism that have long been widespread among the masses (1935, parr. 1702-1705). For Pareto, the nationalist reaction not only typifies the “cumulations of sentiments” that are held together by the persistence of aggregates (1935, par. 1042), but it also responds to the complex fourth-class residues, which are the residues that are “connected with sociality”. The

paradoxical result is that pacifism, which tends to solidarise and feel compassion regardless (class IV- γ 2), and nationalism, which insists on sacrifice for the sake of a particular community (class IV- δ) are not opposites as it seems but are, instead, are contiguous and essentially mutually interchangeable (1935, parr. 1143, 1302, 1078 note 2).

Furthermore, Pareto expresses a wide range of judgements on nationalism, moving from his emphasis on its usefulness for the elites as an alternative to internationalist socialism to his criticism of the revanchist extremism that prolonged the hostility between European nations after the First World War (Susca, 2021). However, the essential point of the Paretian view of emotions lies in the decidedly unmechanical relationship between residues on the one hand and opinions and actions on the other. Simply put, it lies in the idea that the same sentimental or emotional state can be transformed into very different or even antithetical convictions and their consequent direct actions that are also very different.

In terms of the emotions as materials on which the art of government is exercised, these measures benefit the elites, which can only very mildly modify emotions themselves by direct intervention. However, they can channel emotions and make them take the form of the convictions or beliefs that are most useful or least harmful to those in power. However, the effects of the ambivalence of emotions, as understood by Pareto, may also have little bearing on rulers' choices. Moreover, nationalism is only one example, and other cases could be identified by retracing the meticulous breakdown of the residues made in the *Treatise*, with more attention being paid to the internal divisions within each class beyond the first two.

7. Conclusion and looking to the present

Pareto's approach to emotions must be assessed by considering its political implications and by going beyond these implications that arise from his profoundly elitist perspective. This is the only way in which this specific aspect of Pareto's thinking is manifested in all its depth and topicality. In other words, although the Paretian elitist perspective is quite different from that of our late modernity, the idea remains valid that emotions do not arise or express themselves in the absence of social stratification but, rather, must be related to the important question of how power is exercised.

However, significant changes have occurred between Pareto's time and ours, consequently affecting individuals' attitudes, mentalities, and ways of thinking and feeling to such an extent that even those who appreciate Pareto's insightfulness and unconventionality are forced to wonder how much his

assertions on the emotional underpinnings of society are helpful in deciphering our present. Assuming that human emotions are more or less the same as they were over a century ago, the question of whether our relationship with them is still the same needs to be asked. This is probably not the case, but certainly not because emotions are less important today. Instead, the *Treatise* details the basic idea that people spend much of their energy on arousing feelings and impressions in others, which is a valid idea now more than ever before. This is illustrated by the new capitalist economy of knowledge and the immaterial, which relies on subjects being seduced or lured in, and in which emotion is increasingly a target, holds an exchange value, and acts as a source of profit around which gigantic economic interests unimaginable in Pareto's time revolve (Illouz, 2007, 2019). However, today's emphasis on and redundancy of emotions result in Pareto's idea of the varnish of logic (rationalising or camouflaging emotions) not aligning with reality.

In the elite's culture, no concern for appearing coldly logical or letting logic triumph over reality as a whole seems to prevail. While these were perhaps the concerns of intellectuals at the time in which the *Treatise* was created (1935, par. 305), today several intellectuals celebrate what is subjective and even irrational without any particular problem. Generally, individuals' relentless need for "logical developments" that Pareto claims characterises the human condition as much as feeling and passion (1935, par. 1397) seems increasingly distant from us. For example, one need only consider those who satisfy their desire to feel by indulging in sensations typical of youth, "Like" logic, or even worse, the raw, vitriolic outbursts of many on-line users who have no "varnish". Finally, it can be claimed that the secondary but fundamental emotion of shame is generally fading.

Several indications lead us to doubt whether people today feel called upon or condemned to rationalise the reasons for their actions. In the words of a "master of suspicion" such as Freud (an author to whom Pareto can be compared in certain respects), the contemporary "ego" probably no longer feels so committed to the task of controlling and not letting the "es" transpire. This therefore means that our age, although one of reasoning, is not one of rationalisation.

References

- Barbalet, J. M. (2008). *Emotion, Social Theory & Structure: A Macrosociological Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Busino, G. (1976). Aux origines du structuralisme génétique: Vilfredo Pareto. *Revue européenne des sciences sociales*, 14(37), 175–194.

- Cerulo, M. (2010). *Il sentire controverso. Introduzione alla sociologia delle emozioni*. Roma: Carocci.
- Cerulo, M. (2018). *Sociologia delle emozioni. Autori, teorie, concetti*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Cerulo, M., & Crespi, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Emozioni e ragione nelle pratiche sociali*. Napoli-Salerno: Orthotes.
- Demertzis, N. (Ed.). (2013). *Emotions in Politics: The Affect Dimension in Political Tension*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Demertzis, N. (2020). *The Political Sociology of Emotions: Essays on Trauma and Ressentiment*. Abingdon-New York: Routledge.
- Federici, M. C. (1999). Pareto e i meccanismi sociali. L'approccio metodologico-scientifico nella sua sociologia. *Revue européenne des sciences sociales*, 37(116), 209–222.
- Femia, J. V. (2006). *Pareto and Political Theory*. New York: Routledge.
- Femia, J. V. (2012). Pareto, Machiavelli and the Critique of Ideal Political Theory. In J. V. Femia & A. J. Marshall (Eds.), *Vilfredo Pareto. Beyond Disciplinary Boundaries* (pp. 73–83). Farnham-Burlington: Ashgate.
- Frank, D. D., & McCarthy, E. D. (Eds.). (1989). *The Sociology of Emotions*. Greenwich (Connecticut): JAI Press.
- Iagulli, P. (2011). *La sociologia delle emozioni. Un'introduzione*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Iagulli, P. (2015). Le emozioni nel sistema di politica positiva di Auguste Comte. *Politica.eu*, 1(1), 42–56.
- Illouz, E. (2007). *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Illouz, E. (Ed.). (2019). *Emotions as Commodities: Capitalism, Consumption and Authenticity*. London: Routledge.
- Jacobsen, M. H. (Ed.). (2018). *Emotions, Everyday Life and Sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Kemper, T. D. (Ed.). (1990). *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Longo, M. (2019). *Emotions through Literature: Fictional Narratives, Society and the Emotional Self*. London: Routledge.
- Marchetti, M. C. (2020). Rileggere Weber e Pareto. Ragione e sentimento nella teoria dell'azione sociale. *The Lab's Quarterly*, 22(3), 43–60.
- Meyer, M. (1974). L'équilibre social chez Pareto et les forces sociales qui le déterminent dans l'Histoire. *Revue de l'Institut de Sociologie*, 47(2), 249–273.
- Mutti, A. (1992). Il contributo di Pareto alla sociologia delle emozioni. *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, 4, 465–487.

- Mutti, A. (1994). Il contributo di Pareto alla sociologia delle emozioni. In E. Rutigliano (Ed.), *La ragione e i sentimenti. Vilfredo Pareto e la sociologia* (pp. 149–170), Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Pareto, V. (1902a). *Les Systèmes Socialistes. Tome premier*. Paris: Giard & Brière. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5525301r>
- Pareto, V. (1902b). *Les Systèmes Socialistes. Tome second*. Paris: Giard & Brière. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k56516629>
- Pareto, V. (1935). *The Mind and Society [Trattato di sociologia generale]*. Vol. 1–4. A. Livingston (Ed.). New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Pareto, V. (1965). *Œuvres complètes: Libre-échangeisme, protectionnisme et socialisme*. Vol. 4. Genève: Droz.
- Pareto, V. (1980). *Scritti sociologici minori*. G. Busino (Ed.). Torino: Utet.
- Pareto, V. (2014). *Manual of Political Economy. A Critical and Variorum Edition*. A. Montesano, A. Zanni, L. Bruni, J. S. Chipman & M. McLure (Eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pizzorno, A. (1973). Vilfredo Pareto and the Crisis in Nineteenth-Century Science. *Social Science Quarterly*, 54, 480–482.
- Romania, V. (2021). Vilfredo Pareto. In M. Cerulo & A. Scribano (Eds.), *The Emotions in the Classics of Sociology: A Study in Social Theory* (pp. 96–112), London: Routledge.
- Santambrogio, A. (2021). Il mondo emotivo comune. Un approccio fenomenologico alla sociologia delle emozioni. *Società Mutamento Politica*, 12(24), 13–24. <https://doi.org/10.36253/smp-13219>
- Susca, E. (2014). Vilfredo Pareto's Contribution to a Sociology of Globalization. In M. Pendenza (Ed.), *Classical Sociology Beyond Methodological Nationalism* (pp. 65–89), Leiden-Boston: Brill.
- Susca, E. (2019). Il capitalismo e il suo soggetto. Nascita, grandezza e declino dell'homo oeconomicus. In M. Pendenza, V. Romania, G. Ricotta, R. Iannone & E. Susca (Eds.), *Capitalismo e teoria sociologica* (pp. 32–46), Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Susca, E. (2021). Between Internationalism and 'Will to Power': Paretian Theory Beyond Political Realism. *Quaderni di Sociologia*, 86(2), 97–113.
- Susca, E. (2023). A proposito di Pareto sociologo delle emozioni. *Rivista di Politica*, 2, 57–71.
- Turnaturi, G. (Ed.). (1995). *La sociologia delle emozioni*. Milano: Anabasi.
- Turner, J. H., & Stets, J. E. (2005). *The Sociology of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weigert, A. J. (1991). *Mixed Emotions: Certain Steps Toward Understanding Ambivalence*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.