

# Vilfredo Pareto Philosophical Theory, Action & Residue with its Classification

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## Abstract

Vilfredo Pareto summarized his aim in writing his major sociological work, “The treatise on General Sociology.” His ambition was to construct a system of sociology analogous in its essential features of the generalized physicochemical system. The treatise attempts to study only non-rational aspects of action. Now we will discuss about his views.

**Keywords:** Action; Category; Residues; Elite.

## 1. Introduction

Vilfredo Federico Damson was an Italian engineer, sociologist, economist, political scientist, and philosopher. He made several important contributions to economics, particularly in the study of income distribution and in the analysis of individuals' choices. He was also responsible for popularizing the use of the term "elite" in social analysis.

He introduced the concept of Pareto efficiency and helped develop the field of microeconomics. He was also the first to discover that income follows a Pareto distribution, which is a power law probability distribution. The Pareto principle was named after him, and it was built on observations of his such as that 80% of the land in Italy was owned by about 20% of the population.

## 2. Actions

The fact or process of doing something, typically to achieve an aim is an action.

Two kinds. Logical action and non-logical action.

### 2.1. Logical Action

If the actions are based on logic and experiment and if the means and ends are connected with each other, those actions are known as logical action. For an action to be logical, the logical connection between the means and ends must exist both in the mind of the actor who performs the act and in objective reality.

#### 2.1.1. Characteristics of Logical Action

- a) All the actions personal or social that have a proper adjustment between means and the ends.
- b) The actions which are based on experiment and logic.
- c) Actions must be objective.
- d) Actions must be real.
- e) Actions must be accepted by the actor and must be defined objectively.
- f) These actions have no place in imagination or prejudices.
- g) Both the ends and the means must be scientific and justified.
- h) Social sanctions must be there behind such justification.
- i) There must be logical connection between means employed and ends attained.

j) Logical actions must be rational in nature.

k) Logical actions are motivated by reasoning.

## 2.2. *Non-Logical Action*

The action which is not based on logic that can be considered as non-logical action. According to him, Non-logical action doesn't mean illogical. He added that, non- logical action are those which are not logical, but non-logical action is action guided by sentiments and other non- logical factors.

There are two worlds of view of an action.

a) Subjective World

b) Objective World

## 3. According to Raymond Aron

Thus we can immediately draw up a table of non-logical actions which we shall call the second class of human actions.

Objectively :	NO	NO	YES	YES
Subjectively :	NO	YES	NO	YES

### 3.1. *Reflections of these above Categories*

No-No Category

No-Yes Category

Yes-No Category

Yes-Yes Category

#### 3.1.1. The No-No Category

Here action is not logical. The means are not connected to the ends neither in reality nor in the mind. The actor does not even have in mind either an end or a means-end relation. This "no-no category" is rare as man has reasoning capacity. There is no relation in the aim and goal both in subjective and objective world.

Example: A man sometimes does unexpected stuffs but then wants to give logic on that.

### 3.1.2. No-Yes Category

This no-yes category is widespread. There is no relation in the aim and goal of objective world but exists a relation in subjective relation. Example: Social regulation, superstition. When people desire rain they make sacrifices to the God. They are convinced that their sacrifices have an effect on the rainfall. In this case a means-end relation exists subjectively but not objectively.

### 3.1.3. Yes-No Category

In objective world, there exists a relation between aim and way. But there is no relation in subjective world.

Example: Closing of eyes when dust comes. That was not expected and not supported by mind.

### 3.1.4. Yes-Yes Category

Both relation are presented. But there is no similarities in subjective world and objective world.

Example: The behavior of revolutionaries. They wish to change existing society, to correct its vices.

## 4. Residues of Pareto

Pareto says, Residues no doubt, are the manifestation of sentiments and instincts but the manifestations is not constant. Residues are intermediary between sentiments and concomitant behavior. These are related to human instincts but not synonymous with them. Residues are those permanent elements in man's rationalization of behavior are intermediary between sentiments. In his work "Treatise on General Sociology", Pareto explained about residues by saying that residues as conceived as manifestation of sentiments or at least corresponding to them and not as equivalent of sentiments.

### 4.1. Characteristics of Residues

Residues have certain characteristics

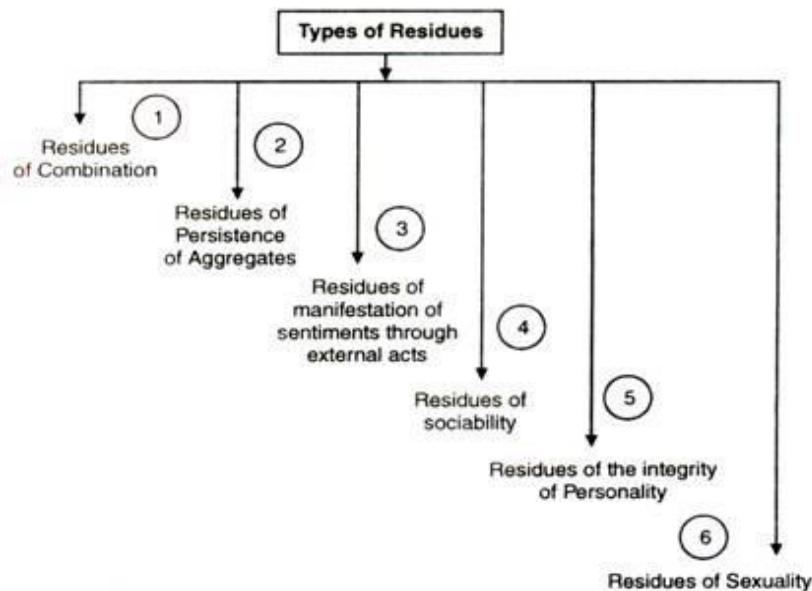
- a) Residues are not instincts and sentiments.
- b) They are the manifestation of sentiments and instincts.
- c) Residues are related to individual instincts but these residues do not cover all of them.
- d) Residues are intermediary between the sentiments we cannot know directly and the belief system and acts that can be known and analyzed.
- e) Residues are non-logical.
- f) Residues are not based on any reason.
- g) Residues are more or less permanent motivators of human behavior. They guide human behavior.
- h) Residues represent the general elements of human actions and behavior.
- i) Residues cannot be explained with the help of logic and experimentation.

j) Residues are responsible for maintaining social equilibrium.

## 5. Classification of Residues

Pareto classified residues into six groupings which corresponding more or less to certain instincts or emotional propensities of mankind.

These six types are



### 5.1. Residues of Combination

Pareto told about innate tendency. This residues runs the person in the way of change. It works as the evolution, the basic of civilization, the development of reason of the person. As outcome of these people made many theories, propositions, regulations etc.

Example-

Devotion to God leads to salvation. Likewise butterfly in dream indicates future happiness. There is no logic behind the working of such residues but they effectively control our social behavior. Class-I residues are found in inventors, speculators and politicians.

### 5.2. Residues of Persistence of Aggregates

This is the opposite of first type of residues. These residues are responsible for giving stability to the social relations and the relations between individual members of a particular social life. This is class-2 residues. It explains the inertia associated with group membership. It explains the persistence of kin groups, ethnic groups and socio-economic classes.

Example-

Traditions and customs are good examples of these residues.

There is a natural tension, or anti-thesis between class-2 and class-1 residues.

Class-2 residues are found in churchmen, family men and “good subordinates.”

### ***5.3. Residues of Manifestation of Sentiments through External Activities***

This residues is similar to innate tendency. Residues of this class are connected with external activities. These activities deal with the unexpressed desires of the individual. These feelings express themselves in form of religious feelings and worship etc. These class 3 residues are manifested in ceremonies, religious ecstasies and festivals. Political movements in order to achieve political freedom and such other social and economic movements those are intended at getting economic and social emancipation are parts of these residues.

### ***5.4. Residues of Sociability***

Because of this residue man becomes a social animal and tries to modify his behavior according to social norms and values. These residues make for communal living. These residues are also connected with life in society. These Class 4 residues explain the persistence of fashion, feelings of pity and cruelty and acts of self-sacrifice. Co-operation, sympathy, fears, kindness are the results of these residues. This kind of residues is very important for social organization.

### ***5.5. Residues of the Integrity of Personality***

These residues of class 5 involve “the defense of integrity and development of personality.” This class is manifested in “sentiments” to alterations in the social equilibrium. The sentiments to which class 5 residues correspond are “sentiments of interest.” They refer to individual acts based on self-interest. These residues are for maintaining the integrity and balance of personality. These are also helpful in making people moral in maintaining high moral standards.

### ***5.6. Residues Regarding Sex***

The sex residues, i.e. the class 6 residues are responsible for “mental states” having to do with sexual activities. All those residues that are responsible for establishing, maintaining and strengthening the sex relations come under this residue. These residues are also concerned with sexual urges. These residues influence our outlook, attitude and thinking. According to Pareto, debauchery that is carried out in the name of welfare of women is based on these very residues. Since there are many sex taboos, therefore sexual residues are very complex and complicated.

## **7. Derivations**

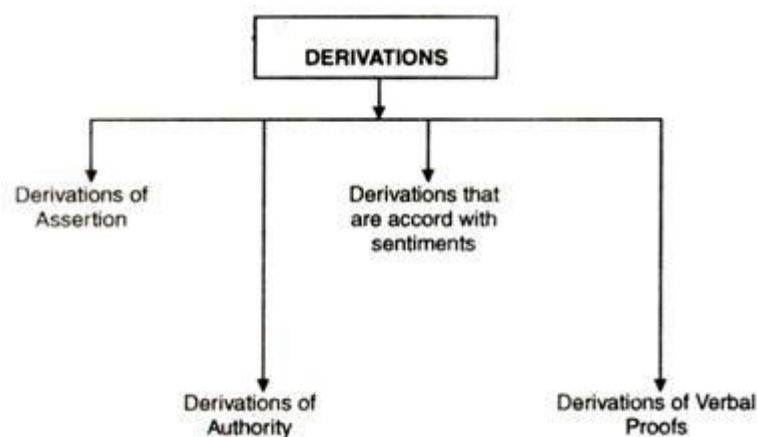
Generally it means the explanation making logical the residues. Derivations make action appear to be logical. They do not permit such individuals to understand the real purpose of their action. According to Pareto, those factors which help in presenting logical explanations to the activities on the basis of needs, nature, circumstances and norms are known as Derivations. Man tries to explain the logic behind the action. These actions may not always be correct. Basically, they do many illogical actions. Then they want to present some logics behind them. This is derivation.

### **7.1. Characteristics of Derivations**

- a) Derivations are linked with residues. These try to explain actions performed under the influence of residues.
- b) Derivations are non-logical actions and facts. These are accepted on the basis of emotions and feelings.
- c) Through derivations we try to provide justification to our ideologies and the actions on the basis of morality, logic and ideologies.
- d) As compared to residues, derivations are more flexible and changeable.
- e) These are an attempt to hide realities.

### **7.2. Types of Derivations**

Pareto, on the basis of his analysis has tried to classify derivations under the following four heads.



#### **7.2.1. Derivations of Assertion**

##### **7.2.1.1. Non-logical Assertions**

It is including affirmations of facts and sentiments. These sentiments are not subjected to experimentation. These are usually accepted as true and it is not possible to oppose them. This class of derivation is used

with class-I residues. For instance, a scientist might see himself as working long hours because he has “a thirst for knowledge.”

He might describe himself as a thoroughly logical person who is dedicated to “truth.” Pareto however would have claimed -that such a person is embodying the non-logical “instincts for combinations.” Affirmations which are partially based on facts and partially on sentiments are called “Mixed Affirmations.” If these affirmations are repeated they are generally accepted.

#### 7.2.1.2 Derivations of Authority

##### 7.1.2.1. Giving Wrong Logics for Instigating People

If the affirmations are based on reason and stated with definiteness they become an authority. Those derivations that are the sanction of some force or power behind it are called “Authority”. Authoritative relations in this class are in concord with sentiments. This class of Derivation is used with Class-2 residues.

For instance, the residents of ethnic Ghettos might claim that they prefer to stay in their neighborhood so that they can be with their own people and attend their own churches. They might point out that this is “logical” because, by living in the same neighborhood they do not have to cross town to get what they want.

Pareto however, would have insisted that their desire to place themselves under the authority of their own communal mores was a derivation from the residue of group persistence.

##### 7.1.3. Derivations accord with Sentiments

###### 7.1.3.1. Here Works the Interest of People’s Common Traditions and Ideas

This class of derivations is based upon agreements with emotions and the invocation of meta-physical entities. These include sentiments, collective interests, legal entities such as law and justice, meta-physical entities such as solidarity, progress, humanity etc. Such derivations are to be found when we link our sentiments with national interest, spiritual welfare etc.

##### 7.1.4. Derivations of Verbal Proofs

###### 7.1.4.1. These Are Found In Form of Metaphors and Analogies

Metaphors are figure of speech by which a thing is spoken of as being that which is only resembles. Analogies are agreement in certain respects between things otherwise different. Verbal proofs are not based on realities, but are used only to prove justification.

Most political speeches belong to the categories of verbal proof. Verbal proofs are non- logical in character. It is more concerned with the psychological procedure by which men influence one another. Raymond



Aron says, "Pareto's theory of derivations is a contribution to the psychology of interpersonal and inter-group relations, especially in the field of politics."

## **10. Circulation of Elites**

Pareto's treatment of the circulation of elites is often cited and is generally considered the most interesting part of his sociology. Pareto believed that individuals are born with quite different abilities and acquire quite different skills and aptitudes.

According to Pareto, since in every society there are classes. According to Pareto, people are unequal physically, as well as intellectually and morally. Some people are more gifted than others. Pareto says, those who are most capable in any particular grouping are the elite. Elite is generally considered as a social group. Pareto made discussion about elites basing on his 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class of residues. Elites are basically the most successful in their occupation.

### ***10.1. Pareto Further Divided the Elite Class into Two Categories***

- a) A governing elite: A governing elite comprising individual who directly or indirectly play some considerable part in government. Governing elites are directly and indirectly concerned with administration. They play highly important role and enjoy prestigious place in society.
- b) A non-governing elite: A non-governing elite is comprising the rest of the individuals. Pareto's main discussion focuses on the governing elite. Non-Governing elites are not connected with administration but occupy such a place in society that they somehow influence the administration.

### ***10.2. Basic Characteristics of Elites***

- a) The individuals not belonging to either of the governing elite or non-governing elite are called non-elite.
- b) The class of elite is universal and continuous process.
- c) The elite manipulate overtly or covertly the political power.
- d) The elite is having the capacity to establish superiority over others.
- e) The members of the elite class will always try that the non- elites should not influence social, economic and political processes in any manner.
- f) The non-elites respect only such elites who are liberal in outlook and approach, because they alone can help them to come nearer to each other.
- g) Circulation or upward and downward circulation amongst the members of the elite and non-elite is a typical characteristic of the elite.

According to Pareto the work and the role of the elites are influenced by two types of factors which are always operative in every society. One type which is constant is called residues, the other type is derivations.

According to Pareto social change comes because of residues of combination and residue of persistence of aggregates. Cycle of social change is a continuous process. Political, economic and ideological factors are responsible for continuing this process.

Following the Machiavellian formula, Pareto states that the elites are able to manipulate and control the masses by resorting to two methods: Force or Fraud, which corresponding to Machiavelli's famous anti-thesis between the 'Lions' and the "Foxes".

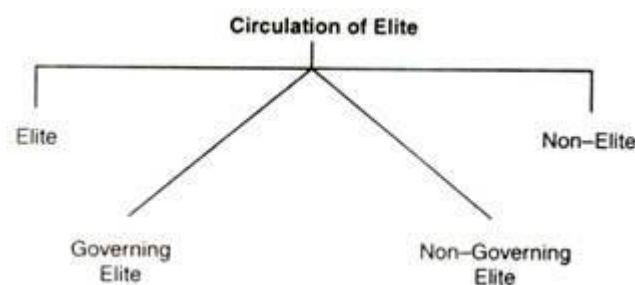
The "Foxes" are the elites abundantly endowed with residues of the first class (Residues of combinations) which includes the propensities in social groups to adopt flexibly to environmental or situational exigencies.

They are capable of innovation and experiment, prefer materialistic to idealistic goals, but lack fidelity to principles and use strategies that vary from emotional appeal to unadulterated fraud.

The "Lions" are conservative elites in whom the second class of residues (Persistence of aggregates) predominates. They have faith and ideology; they display group loyalty and class solidarity; they gain and retain power by the use of force.

The concept of elites has been given a great deal of attention by Vilfredo Pareto. Pareto's views and conclusions about the elites are interesting and incisive. According to him, every society has elite groups of different kinds. These elites, being the best or excellent members of their classes are always in a minority. But they are nonetheless vital and it is they who determine the development or progress of every society.

Pareto concerns himself with a simple distinction between those having power called the elite and those having none called the non-elite. He sees the history of every human society as the history of the relations between its elite who rules and its non-elites who are just ruled. Circulation of Elite is between elite and non-elite, and between governing elite and non-governing elite.



According to Pareto, there can be also a circulation of elites in the sense of being a process by which individuals circulate between the elite and the non-elite. This process of replacement takes place in two ways. It is either by a gradual process of infiltration or by a violent revolution.

Pareto explains all this in terms of changes in the psychological characteristics of the members of the elite on the one hand, and those of the lower strata, on the other. Thus when the elite no longer possesses the residues necessary for keeping it in power and at the same time at the lower strata of society, the necessary residues are sufficiently manifest then the declining elite recruits new elements from the lower strata of society and thereby restores its vitality. Or it may so happen that an elite decaying in the necessary residues is violently overthrown by the lower classes strong in the requisite residues necessary for keeping them in power.

According to Pareto the elites not only change within or amongst their own classes, they also do so across the classes. A few individuals may join the ranks of elites from the non-elite groups. And a few elites may become non-elite members of society.

The numbers of the various elite groups may decline both in arithmetical terms as well as in their quality or significance on account of the various factors. When this happens the elites cease to be elites and tend to come down to the non-elite group. On the other hand, when some members of the non-elite groups achieve excellence or acquire special power they tend to join the particular elite groups.

Pareto says that this kind of increase in the number or strength of elites as well as the decrease or decline in their ranks is common features of every society. Pareto takes a very large canvas of history particularly Roman history and the Italian history of his times to show how the circulations of elites take place.

He observes that in a perfectly free society there would be a constant and free circulation of elites. But such a perfect society is almost an ideal society. Most societies have imperfections of various types and therefore the circulation of elites is seldom ideally free or unimpeded.

Pareto adds that in case of great social changes as signified by wars or revolutions there takes place a large scale replacement of the old elites by the new ones. He argues that, whether particular elites stay in power or not, whether they are partially or fully replaced or not, the fact remains that they remain in vital positions and characterized the development and progress of a given society.

Pareto argues that men have a predominance of either Class-I residues where they are the “foxes” or of Class-II residues where they are the “lions”. The style of governing will depend on whether the ruling elite is composed of the foxes or the lions. The foxes are bold and adventurous, they do not care to be cautious and live by cunning and cleverness.

In the economic field, the foxes are the speculators; they do not dread risks for the sake of maximum profits. They indulge in promotion schemes. The lions on the other hand, are solid, conservative, tradition loving, loyal to family, church and nation.

They always prefer to rely on force rather than on cleverness. In their economic field they are renters. They are cautious, thrifty, content with small returns on safe investments and unwilling to gamble. The elite are composed of either of these types of individuals depending on the sort of residues that happen to prevail.

When Class I residues are dominant, the foxes will rule and the predominance of Class II residues will establish the rule by the lions. Indeed, history reveals a constant alteration between an elite having the dominant Class I residues and an elite having the preponderance of Class II residues.

The theory of elite is that in every society there are “people who possess in a marked degree the qualities of intelligence, character, skill, capacity, of whatever kind; that there are two kinds of elite: that the two groups are disjunctive at any given time, and that there is an up and down circulation of the elite. But aristocracies with the governing elite at the top, do not last. The Athenian aristocracy of the elite passed away without leaving descendants. “In Germany the aristocracy of the present day is very largely made up of descendants of vassals of the” Lords of Old.”

Pareto says, “History is the grave-yard of Aristocracy”.

The famous statement reveals the fact that history is accentuated with the elite class since generation, who emerge, dominate, fall into decadency and is replaced by non-decadent elites in society. Pareto has given a number of reasons for mortality of aristocracy which are un-graved in history for generation and generation.

- a) Aristocrats (mainly King and Emperor) were engaged in historical wars which lead to degeneration of aristocracy.
- b) The inheritors of aristocracy are not necessarily possessed with some inherent traits of that of their forefathers. But they rule or govern on the basis of heredity even though they may not have the necessary skill, knowledge about governance and sufficient ability to govern the kingdom, or empire; they fall into decadence after few hours of glory.

Thus aristocracies emerge, dominate, fall into decadence and fall into power, replaced by non-decadent elites.

On the whole the up and down movement of elite takes place in two ways. Firstly, some non-elite, by their merit, may rise to the level of elite. Secondly, by revolution the entire governing class may be reduced to the status of the governed. Pareto says, circulation of elite is necessary for healthy social change.

The general mechanism of society according to Pareto, can be understood by interest, residues, derivations and social heterogeneity. These four major variables are in a state of mutual dependence on which the movement of society depends. These are the four clear components in all the activities which had to assume some sort of equilibrium in any social system.

‘By the circulations of elites, “Pareto wrote, “the governing elite is in a state of continuous and slow transformation. It flows like a river, and what it is today is different from what it was yesterday. Every so often, there are sudden and violent disturbances. The river floods and breaks its banks. Then afterwards, the new governing elite resume again and slow process of self-transformation. The river returns to its bed and once more flows freely on.”

### **10.3. Criticisms**

- a) Pareto was busy with discussing about Elites. But he didn't discussed about the changes of general people.
- b) His theory seems like that, it is a political theory not social theory.
- c) Talcott Parsons criticized Pareto that he failed to define the conditions governing changes in the proportions of residues. He has not said anything about biological and genetic factors, “bearing upon these changes.”

### **11. Conclusion**

Pareto was the first to realize that cardinal utility could be dispensed with and economic equilibrium thought of in terms of ordinal utility– that is, it was not necessary to know how much a person valued this or that, only that he preferred X of this to Y of that. His contribution is thus significant.

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