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Vilfredo Pareto’s Sociology
A Framework for Political Psychology

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ASHGATE
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An 11 page handwritten manuscript, *Un bel tacer fu mai scritton*, by Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), recently came under the hammer at Christies in London, as part of a Lot that included a number of separate items held together by the theme of mathematical social science. The manuscript – an extended book review, written in Italian at Céligny in 1909 – formed part of the now famous Albin Schram collection of autograph letters and manuscripts, which ran into over 500 lots and whose Sold Total was in excess of £3.8 million. There were a number of items available of interest to social science, including letters by Max Weber and by Adorno. These items sold, often fetching twice their estimates, but, nonetheless, the final prices were far behind those reached for other – mainly literary or historical or natural scientific – items. The Pareto mss had probably found its way into the Schram collection via a transaction in Italy in 2003.

I want to use this example of the ‘value’ of an historical sociological document to examine the ‘value’ accorded to classical sociology within sociology and to consider the extent to which the relation of sociology to the classical tradition is a dimension of the history of the discipline or a theoretical enterprise in its own right in which past and present are more or less closely interwoven. These concerns are clearly of relevance to our series Rethinking Classical Sociology.

Is the fact that this Pareto manuscript, along with other social science autograph letters, fetched far less than literary pieces – a letter of condolence by John Donne for example – or indeed other historical or scientific lots – an indication of the lack of public interest in sociology, or indeed a lack of a realisation of the historical impacts on thought and institutions and policies of social science in the modern world? Of course, even those items of a scientific nature that ‘did well’ – for example, Darwin always commands a high price as does Freud – did not actually carry within their pages the scientific theories for which these authors are responsible: rather the value came from the aura of association: these were papers that had been seen and touched, and written on by famous persons. And within the disciplines that Darwin and Freud ‘founded’ their legacies are not without severe criticism: that is, lack of contemporary esteem for every idea they formulated does not correlate with the high value of their artefacts.

All these items were of differential ‘value’ to private collectors – this was not an auction for academics, though some were no doubt in attendance; but common denominators in determining value were notions of age, authenticity, and when relevant, content (excellent examples of their genre for example). Rarity could play a role in arriving at final price, but the collector is driven to own that which exists, not to be familiar with the content and to intellectually ‘own’ that rather than the relic itself.

What principles of value operate in sociology in relation to the texts from the past which date from the foundational eras of the discipline? There were no social
science librarians, as far as I know, bidding on behalf of their institutions or the
discipline – the social science autograph letters and manuscripts in most cases went
into the hands of private collectors. What factor does age, authenticity, significance
of past impact, or potential for current illumination play in weighing the value of
classic texts and ideas in sociology? Is the study of classical sociology part of the
exercise of the history of the discipline, or part of social theory or methodology,
dependent on the topicality of substantive themes past and present, or perhaps a
mixture of all of these concerns? In the course of this preface I offer some responses
to these questions.

Sometimes sociologists are presented with an option in relation to the problematic
status of classical sociology, between either a concern with engaging with the real
world (by which is meant current and contemporary topical issues and concerns) or
engaging with the texts of the past. The context for this option is clearly a situation of
limited resources (or limited time tables), since scholars are being asked to choose or
prioritise, and the conclusion is foregone given the vocation and value commitments
of most sociologists to illuminate if not ameliorate current conditions. However,
making this choice in these terms actually misunderstands the nature and role of
classical sociology and the nature of contemporary sociological practice too. For
example, it is not possible to read and understand the classic texts without engaging
with the ‘real world’ since at a minimum the examples required to interpret and
understand the text can only come from the ‘real world’ and so an ignorance of
the real world restricts interpretation; the better informed one is about the real
world, the better the understanding of the classic author. Equally, when looking at
the ‘real world’ in apparent isolation from the classical tradition, the sociological
enquirer naively denies the presence, often unconscious, of the ideas of the classical
sociologist on their very activity.

This distinction between ‘real world’ and ‘classic texts’ is also not to be encouraged
because it drives a wedge between past and present which can become more or less
unbridgeable as time moves on. However, when it comes to the concerns of the
discipline the classics are our contemporaries: it is texts that perhaps derive from
before the onset of modernity which are separated from us by a major temporal and
cultural gulf. Nonetheless, there are ideas afoot within sociology that would insist
on the gulf between past and present and question the engagement with classical
sociology.

Talcott Parsons once famously and ironically asked: ‘Who now reads Herbert
Spencer?’ The question was ironic since he himself obviously was reading Spencer,
and he continued to do so throughout his career – to be influenced by him and also to
differentiate his conception of evolutionary sociology from Spencer’s. The sociology
of Pareto also bears a relation to Parsons’ 1937, The Theory of Social Action. Clearly,
Parsons had read Pareto very closely indeed, as the sections devoted to the latter in
the 1937 text demonstrate, and there are significant features of Parsons’ own system
that many commentators might trace to the influence of Pareto. Nonetheless, it is
important for us to pose the question: who now reads Pareto? We should be thankful
that Alasdair Marshall, the author of the volume to which this is the preface, has been
reading Pareto, and I invite the reader to engage with his work to ascertain in what
ways and to what ends, and with what successes, that rereading of Pareto in the light of contemporary questions has been carried out.

If we can adapt a Paretian principal, once used in welfare economics, we can say that if at least one person benefits from Marshall’s work and no one else is adversely affected that the author will have achieved a ‘Pareto-improvement’! Actually, Marshall’s book will have more of an impact than that, and more than one person or discipline will be affected, especially because it seeks to build bridges between contemporary political psychology and Pareto’s classical writings and does this through bringing aspects of Pareto’s psychology into analytical alignment with psychoanalytic literature and the results of much empirical work. The application of Pareto’s sociological ideas to the collected data, including a survey of Westminster MP’s, involves working with psychometric testing – not a procedure with which all sociologists are familiar, let alone completely comfortable, especially those more familiar with the interpretative traditions in classical sociology. All in all, therefore, Marshall’s book is a challenging dialogue with a classical sociological thinker which raises important methodological issues and is an example of how classical sociological texts are being approached by a new generation of scholars.

With this volume our series begins to fulfil its ambition of including work that brings attention and reassessment to classical authors who can be overlooked in the history of sociology or who have not received recent critical attention to the detriment of the discipline or the analysis of specific areas of substantive enquiry. Previous volumes in our series of Rethinking Classical Sociology have had for their subject matter the work of Marx, of Weber and of Durkheim – names commonly associated with the classical tradition whose status need not be questioned. I am pleased, therefore, that this volume considers the legacy of Pareto.

I would like to broaden the question of who now reads Pareto? I would like to ask: why should we read the sociological classics? The sociological classics can be read for a variety of purposes – both grudgingly and with enthusiasm no doubt – and hence the answer to the question is not singular. I only comment on a few approaches given limitations of space. We have yet to publish a volume that deals directly with questions of method in treating classical sociological texts, so I hope my remarks may stimulate others to take on a book-length investigation of these important methodological issues. The latter would also consider the ‘how?’ of re-reading classical sociology as well as the ‘why?’

Pareto’s work has been of importance to sociology at different times and in various respects since the publication of his *Trattato di sociologia generale* (1916) written some 8 years before his death. For example, the study of elites (and their circulation) owes a good deal to Pareto, and the Hawthorne studies of workers and all the work that followed in its wake is also a Paretian legacy. And, as already noted, Talcott Parsons gave Pareto considerable attention in the watershed publication, *The Theory of Social Action*. No doubt additions could be made to the list. The point is that one reason for reading Pareto as a sociological classic is because later developments in sociology cannot be understood without knowing Pareto, and his work needs to be understood if an informed appreciation of those uses – their successes and false starts – is to be made. The study of the sociological classics here is justified in a fashion that renders the field of classical sociology
close to the history of the discipline; but it is a history which has theoretical and practical ‘pay-off’.

Another reason for engaging with classical sociology is the continuity in the type of questions that occur ‘naturally’ to the sociological imagination. Whilst it is obvious that societies have altered since the period when the classical authors were writing (and often we are conscious of those alterations precisely because of the contrast between the worlds they were analysing and the worlds we are analysing), and that their horizons and ours can hardly meet willy-nilly, there is still a continuity of sociological questioning of human behaviour and the nature of societies that transcends these specific situations. Even in a post-holocaust, post-Cold war, nuclear world where our social problems and cultural challenges include global warming, Aids, the digital revolution, globalisation and so on, concerns central to the sociological imagination serve to connect us. (It should not be forgotten that the classical writers saw enough of natural disasters, plagues and epidemics, wars and widespread poverty, death, murder and cruelty themselves to be well aware of the nature of human societies: we do not have the monopoly on this sort of experience and in many ways may be more protected from them). Hence the classics are interrogated for the profound help they can offer in thinking through these very conceptual issues. To ask about the rationality or irrationality of human behaviour, about the causes of social change, order and stability, about the types of inequality that persist, about the nature of power and the control of resources – all these issues are shared between past and present, and there is no reason why classical thought about these conceptual matters should be any less profound. Hence the classics are engaged with because of this continuity of conceptual conundrum. With Pareto, his concerns with explaining the irrational basis of social behaviour and the predilection to give these irrational bases rational and ideological justifications, is one such example of an answer to a common and perennial question about the rationality of social action.

At other times, the situation can be somewhat reversed: for example, contemporary conditions may exhibit in more extreme forms than hitherto the very social situations that the classical theory originally considered, almost in anticipation. Such would be the case with Weber, for example, were charisma to be the dominant form of political legitimation in states where rational-legal values and norms had previously held sway; Marshall points to a similar situation in his work on Pareto, since the risks associated now with political planning in complex industrial societies, he argues, renders Pareto’s ideas particularly apposite: they have become of age. Of course, such a conclusion could not be reached without an interpretation of the current political system nor without knowledge of Pareto’s sociology – a dialogue between these two forms of knowledge creates a synthesis that has theoretical potential. In other senses too, the changing social conditions from classical times to our own does not impact on the relevance of classical sociological ideas for the interpretation of historical societies. What has altered – both for the study of past societies and the analysis of contemporary societies – is the range of specialised research and the uncovering or production of vast amounts of relevant data that are pertinent to the enquiry. Marshall’s study again provides a good illustration of this point since he brings Pareto’s work into alignment with the huge amount of psychoanalytic literature that has been produced since Pareto died: in many ways, Marshall
translates Pareto’s psychological theories into contemporary parlance to the mutual illumination of both. In other words, as I return to below, there needs to be kept fresh knowledge of classical sociology precisely because some of these resonances cannot be predicted in advance nor discovered without wide ranging knowledge of the classics themselves. Hence a further reason for reading the sociological classics is precisely to preserve our knowledge of them precisely because they are felt to be, or may become once again but in new ways, relevant to our worlds.

However, the degree to which we feel our worlds our similar or dissimilar to the worlds of the classical sociologists – and there are blatant examples of where they are not – will vary from time to time and topic to topic – but overall, where the nature of modernity and its origins and its futures are still a defining feature of sociological work then the classical sociologists, whatever their specific epoch, are still our contemporaries. Hence we read the sociological classics because they address similar social processes in relation to modernity that we have inherited.

One reason that can be given for not reading the sociological classics relates to a limitation at source, but this is often meant more in a moral than empirical sense: that is, classical sociologists were not concerned apparently with many of the social issues which concern us. Most strikingly is this felt to be the case with relation to race and ethnicity and most significantly in relation to gender. Even in the light of this legitimate criticism I believe there is still much scope for retaining engagement with the classics. I have two arguments. First, that learning how and why a sociological vision is limited should not give us cause to celebrate our superiority to the classics for seeing more than they ever did, since this is something of a hostage to fortune, when it becomes clear in days to come how limited and biased our own images of social reality and what was considered significant were. What is more interesting is to understand the social and cultural factors that impacted on vision and limited it: placing classical sociology in its context allows us to see how sociological discourse is produced within a context and does not exist outside of social realities, as if it were immune from the very social forces it uses to explain all other phenomena. Hence studying classical sociology in relation to the history of the discipline can only benefit the practice of sociology.

A second argument relates to actually finding, as I mentioned above, more continuity with the classical sociological imagination than is perhaps at first anticipated For sure, what constitutes inequality and the diverse forms in which social divisions arise and persist may involve a wider spectrum than the classical authors envisaged – there is nonetheless a continuity of concern with inequality and stratification as such in all the classical texts – the specific manifestations are what has altered. When we are alerted to these contemporary manifestations however, it is possible to see where they are in fact mentioned in classical work. For example, Herbert Spencer’s writing about children, education, child rearing or about the nature of disabilities connects classical concerns with contemporary issues. The continuity can also be found by the discovery of other classical voices that have not previously been heard because of earlier limitations in reception: the work of Dubois and in particular Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Jane Addams come very much to mind.

It is also important to read the sociological classics on account of the partial reception histories of the texts and ideas. In the nature of the case, and in a similar
fashion to the manner in which sociological visions, classical and otherwise, always have limitations, the reception of classical ideas in the past can often reflect the concerns of the context and tell us more about the interpreter than the work being interpreted. A good deal of the sociological reception of Pareto, for example, took place in the early 1930s at Harvard in particular circumstances and in the light of particular questions and agendas. This atmosphere impacted on the work of Parsons, of Homans and the Hawthorne studies. Each generation needs to reengage with the classics, not only to see how the classics speak to current situations but also to liberate the reader from the sometimes oppressive or misdirected readings carried out by the host of previous sociological readers. Often such re-readings can rediscover or even uncover new ideas precisely because they have been overlooked, ignored or quite inexplicitly misunderstood. We would not want our own interpretations of the classics to be similarly received by succeeding generations of sociologists and we can guard against that occurring by serious engagement with the classics.

Hence the choice is not strictly between – getting on with interpreting the contemporary social world or immersing oneself in the classics at the neglect of the contemporary social world. Working hard at either of these coal faces can result in never looking to the side of one’s focus, let alone visiting another mine. Hermeneutically working on one concentration in order to subsequently interrogate the other is not as straightforward as it seems – or rather, one should not imagine that the results are going to be the same, if the point of departure and the purpose of the interrogation of the classic, is itself dissimilar. The point I would like to make here is that if the classics are only ever visited from the perspective of raiding them for what they might say in relation to a problem being investigated by the researcher than this process is little different from the ‘research as rape’ castigated by feminist researchers in other contexts. There would result very little dialogue between present conditions and classical theorisations and it would probably be more accurate to say that the visit to the classics was not necessary – one danger in not consulting the classics at all is to undermine the cumulative practice of sociology and to re-invent the wheel – as so often happens in sociological work. Further, to raid the classic can create an atomisation of the source (taking concepts and themes out of context): a more effective way to create a Weberian sociology or a Paretian political psychology is to begin from the texts themselves, to reconstruct the project as designed by the classical theorist and continue to work in the letter and spirit of the source. In sociology, one fears that all too often the spirit rather than the letter has directed further research in the name of the founder; but this is to be preferred to the ‘raid’. Even so, the ‘raid is to be preferred – despite its damaging implications – to total lack of engagement with the classics on the grounds that they are irrelevant to current concerns.

For some in sociological circles therefore it undoubtedly appears to be the case that classical sociology is part of the history of sociology in the manner that museums display artefacts from the past because those artefacts require preservation and educational presentation if they are to be related to correctly: they are part of a heritage whose current meaning is actually provided by the museum itself (in this case the museum are the scholars concerned with classical sociology) and from which only historical meanings can be gathered. However, as curators of the Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC learnt early on, the presentation of individual
tribal histories would be inaccurate if it failed to acknowledge and include in the
design and communication the very people who still lived by these traditions and
for whom they were no museum piece but an element of current practice and belief.
That is to say, museums that are not interactive and do not reflect an integration of
past and present tend not to be successful.

A more accurate description of what one might hope for, and in many cases
is happening, would be to say, persisting with the notion of preservation, that the
study of classical sociology functions like an interactive museum where the artefacts
are not housed at all. That is, there is no working distinction between classical and
contemporary sociology – there is no museum for classical sociologists concerned
with modernity: rather, following an early immersion in the classics of sociology,
classical concepts, theories and perspectives will already be part of the scholar’s
sociological imagination, and, as almost second nature there will be little need
for deliberate methodological reflection as to how the classics are being used
when working sociologically. The classics are continually being rethought as new
conditions and theorisations are encountered.

In this scenario the practice of rethinking the classics is not restricted to motivations
to keep the classics ‘alive’ – as might be the case if the classics were to made into
items to be kept in the museum. Rather, the rethinking also involves reevaluating the
relationship to the classics as modernity phases into new forms, whether of versions
of late, high, radical, or post modernity. In this mode, even when the sociologist
considers the classical tradition to be unable to address new societal configurations
the ‘new’ form of theorising will often place itself in relation to that classical tradition
to underline just how ‘new’ the theorising is and just how ‘different’ contemporary
conditions are: if class is no longer an explanatory variable or if the concept of society
needs to be replaced by theorisations ‘beyond society’, and if experiences of risk, of
mobilities and of technological innovations are far beyond the horizons, even of the
imaginations of the classical writers, the analysis often convinces and explains these
dramatic developments in terms of the trajectories that use the classics as a point of
departure. That is, if one reason for studying the classics is to show where they are no
longer useful, this can only be achieved, and of course is worth achieving, by accurate
and historical and detailed reference to that tradition itself.

There is another way of conceiving the role of classical sociology in sociology and
for justifying the study of the classical sociologists that might be offered in situations
where the analysis of the contemporary does not currently draw on the classical tradition
in the manner described above. This way of conceiving the role of classical sociology
and those studying the classics would also apply to those situations where even the
practitioners mentioned above do not have knowledge of or time for a range of classical
sociology that has yet to come within their ken for a variety of reasons. The analogy I
am thinking of would be to consider those sociologists who concern themselves with
the writings and thoughts and legacies of classical sociologists as akin to protectors
of the writings – custodians of the transmission of texts whose oracle like status is
only re-enlivened when a lonely traveller traverses the difficult path to the monastery
where the traditions are kept alive and consulted by the learned scribes working away
in the scriptorium. The texts being kept alive by the keepers of the flame for those very
moments when events in the outside world give rise to pilgrims who are willing to make
the journey because they have heard that there may well be direction or relevance in the
texts of the past or least they hold out the hope for such. If the custodians had not done
t heir job, or if the custodians had had no job at all, then the traditions would die. The
implication is that the classic texts do not always speak to the moment – part of the skill
is being able to pose the appropriate questions – hence the role of the custodians. Of
course it behoves those (self-appointed) ‘custodians’ of the classical traditions to keep
a beady eye on all that is happening in the world and in the world of sociology, to keep
in readiness for when they will be consulted; moreover, it behoves those self-appointed
custodians to leave their enclave from time to time and remind those busily engaged on
other projects of what the classics have to offer and to work for their promotion.

The situation is of course not quite as polarised as I have portrayed it above and
the analogies should not be pressed to far; the choices are not either side of the duality
– the contemporary or the past. Rather, quality work in sociology that is conscious of
its classical heritage but involved in the analysis of the contemporary (or historical
societies) most probably requires a degree of balancing between the poles as I have
represented them and works dialectically with its knowledge of past theory, method
and substantive analysis, and current theory, method and substantive analysis and of
course with the awareness of contemporary events and processes that are themselves
comprehended because of sociology and its very reception of earlier formulations.
Often the hermeneutical concerns of interpreting texts from the past is discussed
by use of the metaphor of a bridge – the bridging of horizons for example. I have
used this metaphor myself. I think the metaphor is useful when it brings home how
careful we need to be when dealing with texts that come from a different time and
culture to our own and are written in languages other than our own. However, I would
caut ion against the metaphor of the bridge between the horizons of the classics and
the contemporary world where it suggests a too wide a gulf between past and present
sociological practice. It is important to keep in mind that the use of the metaphor of the
bridge to reflect the hermeneutical distance between classic texts and contemporary
conditions in itself can suggest that the classics are alien. An alternative metaphor
of a roundabout from which one can step off at particular points but upon which all
sociologists past and present are, so to speak, magically riding may in fact reflect
more accurately the community of purposes of all sociologists classic or otherwise.

Similarly, the scribes in the scriptorium of the sociological monastery guarding
the sacred relics of sociology is surely but a literary invention of my own making to
illustrate a possible function for classical sociology, but it too suggests too great a
distance between classical sociology and current practice: it is a function to be stressed
perhaps when the study of classical sociology is no longer supported. Fortunately, in
the current climate that is far from the case, at least in many enlightened corners of
sociology. Long may it continue.

There are many good reasons then for reading classical sociology. Engaging in
classical sociology therefore is not an easy option or an easier option from other
demanding types of sociological work: on the contrary, it is even more demanding
given the requirement to understand texts from the past in their own right and in terms
of our own contemporary concerns, and without forgetting the reception history that
purports to connect past and present but actually may in fact lead to different types
of ruptures. One such serious engagement with a classical text and thinker follows
in Marshall’s volume on Pareto and the implications of his sociology for political psychology and the analysis of contemporary politics.

Professor David Chalcraft
Cumbria, 2007
Author’s Preface

The epoch of classical sociology, which is usually considered to span the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is perhaps most famously associated with Weber, Marx, Durkheim and Simmel, whose texts endure as sources of inspiration for the sociological and wider social scientific imagination. This book presents Pareto as a further important source. It focuses upon his concern to bring together the ‘mind and society’, a concern which resonates with today’s feeling that psychological and sociological fields require closer dialogue.

This book does not evaluate Pareto’s status within the corpus of classical sociology, either by comparing him with the ‘big four’ currently at its centre, or by comparing him with other sociologists who might one day be repositioned there. Such comparisons risk repeating the efforts of many previous Pareto commentators who have heaped critical attention onto areas of his thought which appear weak relative to other classical sources. Pareto is easily disadvantaged by such comparisons, because as a generalist and polymath writing in relative seclusion, it was inevitable that he would often be out-thought by sociologists working alongside colleagues to develop specialisms.

One key weakness likely to be exposed through comparative evaluation is Pareto’s scientistic treatment of cultural-symbolic phenomena, which entailed looking across the entire sweep of western history, from the ancient Greek tyrannies right through to modern Italy, for those regular patterns which give science its subject matter. Also highly vulnerable is Pareto’s muddled theory of ‘residues’, which is fundamental to his sociology and has divided commentators over whether it is psychological or sociological. Most Pareto commentators, including Talcott Parsons, have allowed such matters to consume their attention. With very few exceptions, they have not explored how Pareto’s theory might be refined using subsequent theory and research, so that each new generation of scholars can evaluate it afresh for its relevance to contemporary social scientific concerns.

To strike out in a new direction, this book considers how Pareto provides us with something quite unique. The book’s technique is to highlight the intrinsic value and indeed growing relevance of Pareto’s broad sociological framework theory, by bridging it to the modern discipline of political psychology. We will see that many classical and more recent sociological works can help link the various sections of this bridge together. It is hoped that by highlighting these contributions, this book will encourage future writers and researchers to make greater use of Pareto’s bridge to political psychology, perhaps widening it into a busy thoroughfare between classical sociology and political psychology. In this way, Pareto might yet find a vital and highly practical role within the living tradition of classical sociology.

This book also engages with Pareto to serve a broad enlightenment agenda shared by many classical sociologists and political psychologists, which can be
expressed simply as a faith in the human capacity to solve problems through the application of reason. Classical sociology is energised by a faith that we can achieve a reasoned understanding of societal change, and then apply reason once more to deal with it. Political psychology draws upon this same faith, proceeding partly from the conviction that through applications of reason we may explore psychological aspects of politically significant changes identified by classical sociology. Political psychology can also help us take effective decisions as we respond to these changes. Crucially, knowledge generated within this discipline alerts us to our psychological biases. It can therefore help us sharpen our thoughts.

If we are to conceptualise the discipline of political psychology in terms of this enlightenment mission, then it becomes useful to consider this mission further with reference to the core enlightenment theme of rational self-determination. This theme privileges the perspective of the autonomous, rationally self-directed individual, who, in terms of Kant’s famously definition of the enlightenment, requires courage to escape the ‘self-imposed tutelage’ of all external influences upon thought which prevent the effective use of the rational faculty. This book cannot support rational self-direction by supplying the courage which Kant deemed necessary for free thinkers of the enlightenment. What it can provide, however, is valuable knowledge relating to influences over our thoughts which compromise our capacities for effective self-governance. Much of this book’s political psychology content is written with the standpoint of the individual decision-maker in mind, so that it might appeal to those who take political decisions at all levels. Such readers will be interested to discover that Pareto directs us towards features of personality which are likely to be decisive in influencing individual decision-making, particularly through the mediating influences of political subcultures and ideological scripts. In short, Pareto’s sociology is an excellent ‘way in’ to political psychology. Reading Pareto can stimulate anyone involved in politics to engage in enlightened self scrutiny.

As a historical pessimist who emphasised the irrational in social life, and who poured scorn on the notion that reason has hitherto driven human progress, Pareto may seem a very strange choice of enlightenment champion. Yet we must not count him amongst thinkers of the counter-enlightenment who have sought to undermine reason. He was certainly overzealous in his use of one of the enlightenment’s most powerful agents, scientific method. And although he wrote scathingly of the core enlightenment themes of democracy, humanitarianism and progress, it is their misuse that commanded his attention. This suggests we might best understand Pareto as someone who, like Horkheimer and Adorno after him, critiqued the enlightenment from within, supplying correctives, strengthening it. Most importantly, Pareto served reason well by setting us thinking about key psychological and cultural biases which continue to influence political decision-making today. His sociology leads us to view politics as a sphere of activity which still refuses to ‘let the enlightenment in’ to the extent which has occurred within so many other spheres of life, and which is now possible to a degree unimaginable in Pareto’s time, thanks to the wealth of political psychology research which has since become available. The fact that its findings remain curiously underappreciated, not least by those who make political decisions, provides us with a strong basis for promoting Pareto as a vital contributor within the canon of classical sociology.
Chapter 1

Introduction

The sociological thought of Vilfredo Federico Damaso Pareto has suffered neglect in recent years. Yet Pareto should rank beside Max Weber, Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim as one of the principal classical founders of the discipline of sociology. In order to understand this neglect, we should consider that Pareto’s writings, which spanned the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are especially indebted to Niccolò Machiavelli, who had been the principal guiding spirit for Italian social theory since the sixteenth century. Machiavelli’s concern, famously articulated in his ‘The Prince’, had been to show how leaders may succeed in statecraft, by employing certain skills and facets of character which conventional ethical opinion would deem inappropriate. This seemingly amoral standpoint earned Machiavelli a reputation as an advocate of political cruelty and deception. It was to be no different with Pareto, whose similarly concerned writings not only fell under Machiavelli’s shadow, but provided intellectual ammunition for the darker political forces which threatened Europe during the early decades of the twentieth century.

This book focuses upon the core feature of Pareto’s sociology which distinguishes it and contributes most of its value: its assertion that certain psychological factors recurrently play a pivotal role within social, political and economic life. We will see that Pareto’s intuitions concerning the psychological aspects of politics, in particular, contain profound insights which still seem fresh. Diverse psychological theories and research studies, many of them produced within the discipline of political psychology, will be pulled together to assess his claims. This exercise will lay bare important nuggets of truth within Pareto’s sociology, and it will point towards others yet to be found.

By explaining what it means to take a Paretian approach to political analysis, this book seeks to raise Pareto’s status within the canon of classical sociology. In particular, it is hoped that his reinstatement will inspire the sociological imagination towards a greater engagement with political psychology, a discipline which now resides less on individual psychological levels and more upon sociological ground where it can root itself back into the classical sociological tradition.

This book will also draw the reader’s attention to many psychological theories and research studies which are fascinating in their own right. Key issues in political psychology will be elucidated so that almost any ‘political’ matter can be analysed on psychological levels typically missed or underappreciated by political commentators. A substantial part of the case for Pareto’s rehabilitation will rest upon the way in which his theoretical framework can help us access and organise this stock of knowledge. We will also see that Pareto leads us to think about why political psychology is important. It is hoped this in itself might energise efforts to
apply Pareto today, and to look to classical sociology more generally as a source of inspiration for political psychology.

As we explore the theoretical framework set down by Pareto, we will discover that at its core rests a theory of personality which can be a little too convincing. We all rely upon what psychologists call ‘implicit personality theories’ to make unconscious judgements about how personality traits are bundled together in other people. These mental templates always remain vulnerable to change as we encounter new circumstances. Pareto’s ‘implicit personality theory’ is an ever-present feature of his sociology. As it appears again and again in subtly different guises, it can easily work subliminally upon us to transform our own assumptions about personality. The danger grows when we find ourselves productively applying Pareto’s theory to analyse all sorts of complex situations, becoming more impressed by its explanatory power on each occasion.

It is therefore worth stressing at the outset that Pareto’s sociology becomes dangerous where it succeeds most effectively. On the one hand, it gives us a very distinctive and elegant theory which we can operationalise in many ways; on the other hand, it provides exactly the kind of simplifying ideological system which is yearned for by those who would rather let their minds run in grooves, than tolerate the immense and growing complexity of the social phenomena which they would try to understand. Pareto was himself an aggressive critic of all ‘isms’, and it seems likely that he would have been the first to advocate that we regard his theoretical system as a valuable tool, which we may wish to put down once we are done with it.

Pareto remains well-known for his economic writings. Following his pioneering work in mathematical economics, we still hear of ‘Pareto curves’ and ‘Pareto optimality’. Pareto’s name has also travelled far beyond the boundaries of his own thought, thanks to his famous ‘80–20 rule’, which has been rearticulated within various professions towards very practical ends.¹ Pareto’s own application of this rule is easily the most fascinating. His ‘law of income distribution’ claimed that in every society 20% of the population are likely to own 80% of the wealth. Pareto thus seemed to be providing empirical evidence for a natural distribution of talents. This invited the condemnation that his real agenda had been to contribute to the armoury of ideas used by the conservative right to assert its belief in natural inequality.

Although Pareto’s reputation as an economist endures, it is less widely known that later in life, he broadened his intellectual focus to become concerned less with economics and more with a grandiose sociological project which undertook to explain how economic processes knit together with social and political processes. Nobody could have undertaken such a mammoth task without becoming vulnerable to criticism from many angles. Each of the academic disciplines which Pareto straddled would later develop towards far higher levels of complexity than he could

¹ This 80–20 rule was later articulated as ‘the rule of the vital few and the trivial many’ when carried by Joseph Juran into the field of Quality Management. It was now argued that 20% of product parts are likely to be responsible for 80% of product defects. Another common application was in the economics of building construction, where it was contended (largely without empirical verification) that just 20% of design time into a building project, 80% of the costs of the building are likely to have been committed.
possibly have foreseen. When judged by the standards that would arise within these professionalised disciplines, Pareto could only appear as a dilettante. Psychologists have certainly tended to find Pareto’s sociological theory wanting. William McDougall claimed as a professional psychologist to feel ‘offended’ by Pareto’s decision to neglect the psychological literature almost entirely, and content himself with terms which conveyed only highly generalised and often vague psychological references throughout his sociological writings. This may seem a damning indictment indeed, particularly given Berger and Luckman’s (1971, 220) controversial estimation that Pareto stands out amongst early sociologists as having begun to develop ‘the most elaborate approach to the psychological pole within sociology’.

Berger and Luckman’s view is contestable with reference to various classical sociological texts. For example, we might consider Robert Michels’ sharper focus upon the psychology of leader-follower interaction within his (1915) ‘Political Parties’, a text which continues to inform analyses of political bureaucracy. We might also note that Pareto’s writings on psychology display much less academic knowledge of the (then new) discipline of psychology than is found within the psychologically-educated Georg Simmel’s even earlier work on psychological aspects of urban living and the money economy. Simmel’s greater usage of psychological literature is evident for example within his (1903) ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’, a work which still remains a key sociological text on city life. Then there is Durkheim’s stronger focus upon the implications for social order of the cultural agon bound by a ‘conscience collective’ and threatened by feelings of anomie. This theory is associated primarily with Durkheim’s (1893) ‘The Division of Labour in Society’. Through Talcott Parsons it went on to exert a major influence upon the structural-functionalist paradigm within US sociology. On top of that, it might well be argued that Pareto’s orientation towards psychology lacked the very personal, curative significance which it held for Max Weber, whose convalescences from depressive illness in Italy at the close of the nineteenth century inspired him to think deeply about how subjectively-held, cultural meanings motivate individuals. This thinking is set out primarily within Weber’s ‘Objectivity’ essay. It is also famously applied within his classic work on the religious origins of work ethic, ‘The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism’, which was written alongside the ‘Objectivity’ essay in 1904–1905 (Whimster 2004, 7). Weber’s work on the protestant ethic still provokes debate concerning the extent to which capitalism has a psychological or religious dynamic.

We will see within this book that our concern to appreciate Pareto will lead us to consider all of these issues, to varying extents; yet they all relate back to the sociological classics in their own unique ways, and on each occasion to a thinker with more to say than Pareto. We will have cause to consider each of these issues because the scope for Pareto’s conception of social system was so wide as to allow him to either attend to them directly, or make relevant observations, at least to the

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2 McDougall listed 24 major authors in the emerging field of psychology, including Freud, Jung and himself, who Pareto failed to mention at all throughout the four long and meandering volumes of his ‘Treatise on General Sociology’ (Meisel 1965, 26–27).
extent that we can usefully measure Pareto’s contributions against other classical sources.

With this thought, Berger and Luckman’s estimation of Pareto as having taken a more elaborate approach to the psychological pole within sociology begins to make more sense. We can identify Pareto’s level of reliance upon psychological variables for the purpose of sociological explanation, right across the domains of political, economic and social life which together comprise his social system, as the chief distinguishing characteristic which sets him apart from other classical theorists. This heavy reliance means, of course, that Pareto’s theory stands or falls on the strength of its assumptions and claims about human psychology and its sociological role.

This book aims to convince the reader that Pareto’s theoretical template retains value and can still help us analyse many issues which are ‘political’ in the broadest sense. It will even be contended that this template is more readily applicable across industrialised societies now than it was in Pareto’s day. A key consideration here is that the current political climate is characterised by sophisticated and well-informed populations who have grown distrustful of politicians and political parties. That makes it an era to which Pareto’s sociology is pre-eminently well suited. Raymond Aron once commented that at the ‘living heart’ of Paretian thought we find the idea that ‘every political man is either selfish or naive’. He was echoing Pareto’s belief that the higher echelons of political elites are usually dominated by unscrupulous and devious types who are driven by the desire for wealth, whereas the lower echelons of political elites are generally filled with opinionated zealots who are easily animated by propaganda. Such aspersions are commonplace today as levels of trust in politicians plummet and election turnouts dwindle. To this modest extent, we can say that Paretian analysis is already a part of our political zeitgeist.

As our critical orientation towards politicians has deepened to become an inescapable feature of our political culture, it has impressed upon us a host of negative emotions and cognitions which may trigger whenever we contemplate the characters and motivations of politicians. Hence the argument arises that it must surely be in the interests of reason to use Pareto’s theory as a touchstone to help us discipline how we think about politicians. Pareto can help in two ways. Firstly, when we read him at his best, we can value his insight into the ways in which personality influences people to think and behave politically in certain ways. And secondly, when we read him at his worst, we can learn to be wary of some of his more malicious claims, particularly those involving character assassination, and avoid these ourselves.

Vilfredo Pareto’s magnum opus was his (1916) ‘Treatise on General Sociology’. This was written, for the most part, before the First World War, although it was not published in English until 1935, twelve years after his death. Writing in 1966, the political scientist Sammy Finer rated this as ‘the most pregnant work of political science in the last half century’, because he believed it provided a rich source of testable hypotheses for future researchers (Pareto 1966, 87). This was Pareto’s intention. He felt that it made good sense, for scientists and historians alike, to theorise with generalities before moving to specifics (Pareto 1935, §144, §540). Hence ‘general sociology’ had to precede the various ‘special sociologies’ such as political sociology. Pareto believed that once he had established a general framework theory for sociological investigation, social scientists following after him could
begin to contribute detail to his theory at microsociological levels more amenable to empirical enquiry. He valued his own general theory with some humility, hoping others would rework its constituent parts to accommodate future research findings.

Charles Powers (1987) reaffirms Finer’s estimation that it is Pareto’s broad sociological framework theory which retains most value. He argues that this has a timeless relevance because it ‘provides lessons about the social structural dynamics which have operated throughout human history’ (Powers 1987, 11). As will shortly be explained, Powers tries to distil his theory and restate its key claims as a detailed set of empirical propositions. In doing this, he felt he was completing Pareto’s sociological project (Powers 1987, 12). Powers’ restatement of Pareto argues that ‘social sentiment’, ‘economic organization’ and ‘political organization’ are each characterised by cyclical change. His ‘elementary theory’ for each of these cyclical processes consists of a set of interlocking mechanisms. Each of these mechanisms has a similar structure, whereby it is claimed that one kind of change is likely to induce another kind of change (if $\Delta A$ then $\Delta B$). Then Powers lists further mechanisms which explain how the endogenous dynamics of the social, political and economic cycles are likely to impact exogenously upon each other. In other words, we are given detailed explanations for how economic change is likely to influence the direction of social and political change, how social change is likely to influence the direction of political and economic change, and how political change is likely to influence the direction of social and economic change.

In accomplishing this, Powers lends some limited credibility to Pareto’s belief that the social, political and economic cycles tend to synchronise with one another to the extent that we can begin to think in terms of a grand ‘historical cycle’. One implication of Pareto’s cyclical approach to sociology is that it locates him within the long tradition of ‘historical pessimism’, which stands in sharp contrast to the eschatological visions of so many nineteenth century socialists and liberals and who had pinned great hopes upon ‘progress’, a word which Pareto frequently derided. What is more important for present purposes, however, is that Powers’ restatement of Pareto’s general sociology makes it immediately accessible. This, in turn, will make it much easier to understand both the decisive role for psychological factors which characterises Pareto’s general theory, and also the political sociology which Pareto nested within this broader framework.

At this point, the reader who is primarily interested in political psychology may well ask why effort should be dedicated to learning about Pareto’s general sociology. The answer is simple. The discipline of political psychology has increasingly recognised, over the last two decades or so, that it cannot hover at the level of individual psychology, and be concerned solely with attitudes, values, personality structures and the like; rather, it now emphasises the economic, political and social forces which influence, and are influenced by, the workings of the human mind. The English translation of Pareto’s treatise is entitled ‘The Mind and Society’ to reflect this same concern. We will see that what he wrote about this interaction is highly thought-provoking. It brings a degree of simplicity and elegance to a theoretical space which would otherwise be extremely difficult to fill.

The case for Pareto will unfold as follows. Chapter two will set the scene by explaining that Pareto’s sociological theory hinges upon general assumptions about
two very different types of personality. It will show that these were influenced both by Pareto’s experiences of Italian political and economic life, and by that dual typology of ‘lions’ and ‘foxes’ which Niccolò Machiavelli had famously incorporated within his political writings. This chapter will also explore key concepts in Paretian sociology, as a prelude to closer consideration of his political-sociological thought, which deals chiefly with how these two personality types are distributed throughout political elites.

Chapter three will then look more closely at Pareto’s assumption that it is legitimate to describe political elites in terms of how his two political types are distributed throughout them. This idea will require considerable reworking before it can be taken seriously. It will be argued that Pareto was really concerned with describing political subcultures in psychological terms. In order to revive his theory, it will be argued that there are good grounds for supposing that members of political collectivities will often possess very similar personality traits which come together within dominative configurations to give each collectivity what might variously be termed its distinct ‘social personality’, its ‘ethos’ or ‘silent understandings’, or even, in some cases where the collectivity in question has a long history, its ‘central tradition’.

Some of these arguments will refer to socialisation factors which explain why individuals tend to accommodate themselves to collective personalities, thus ensuring these persist over time despite personnel circulation. It will also be argued, however, that collective personalities are likely to exist in order to fulfil a necessary function, which is to allow political collectivities to respond in relatively consistent and predictable ways – and hence with collective assent from their memberships – to decision-making problems characterised by cognitive indeterminacy. Cognitive indeterminacy, it will be argued, is not only endemic to political life but is also deepening and spreading throughout an increasing number of political issue areas as industrial societies grow more complex. This will give rise to the following suggestion: if cognitive indeterminacy increasingly characterises the problems faced by political decision-makers, then the personality traits which define political cultures and subcultures may exert increasingly decisive influences upon political elite behaviour. This thought will allow chapter three to run to the conclusion that the Paretian approach to sociology, which deals with how major personality traits are distributed throughout political elites, stands ready to become an increasingly useful tool for social scientists.

In chapter four, the focus will shift from sociology to political psychology. Pareto’s two very different kinds of personality pattern – which, to reiterate, follow Machiavelli’s ‘lion’ and ‘fox’ typology – will be explored more thoroughly. The various individual differences which distinguish these two psychological types will be laid together along a multi-trait person continuum and each will be analysed in turn. A large volume of psychological theory (much of it psychoanalytic) and correlational research evidence will be assembled for this purpose. It will become clear that, without exception, all of these individual differences correspond to widely researched psychological constructs. This theory and evidence will also help indicate whether these individual differences align along a multi-trait person continuum as Pareto envisioned. Here, Pareto’s insight as a lay psychologist will become even more apparent.
Finally, in chapter five, Pareto’s political sociology will be put to the test. This will involve looking to see whether personality traits are distributed within the Westminster Parliament as Pareto would have envisioned. We will see that psychometric techniques make it easy to measure differences at the level of social personality both within and between the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat parliamentary parties. Here, we will see that Pareto’s psychological insight has real value by alerting us to axes of difference which exist therein at the level of social personality. Drawing once more upon chapter three’s argument that social personality might increasingly play an important role in contributing to policy processes, it will be concluded that further efforts should be made to measure and monitor these things. This chapter will conclude by considering whether findings suggest Vilfredo Pareto’s bridge from classical sociology to political psychology deserves further traffic, thereby raising Pareto’s status as a classical sociologist.
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2.1 Pareto and Marx

Pareto acknowledged a great debt both to Karl Marx and to one of his Italian popularisers, Achille Loria (Bellamy 1987, 19). He even referred to the idea of class struggle as ‘profoundly true’ (Burnham 1943, 191). Moreover, the language of Marx and Engels’ ‘Communist Party Manifesto’ finds clear echoes in Pareto’s claim that ‘the struggle to appropriate wealth produced by others is the great fact that dominates the whole of human history’ (Hirschmann 1992, 55).

Yet Pareto was no Marxist. He took strong exception to that assumption of causal asymmetry between economic and political power which is most pronounced in the earlier works of Marx and Engels. Instead of agreeing with them that governments exist to ‘manage the affairs of the bourgeoisie’, Pareto treated what he termed the ‘governing elites’ as psychologically and culturally homogenous entities which are shaped by complex social forces emanating not just from the economy. As we will shortly see when Charles Powers’ restatement of Pareto is explained, Pareto was interested in the workings of society on a grander scale. His concern to reveal the interactions between society, politics and the economy made the economic reductionism of Marxists seem narrowly focused by comparison. Indeed, his integration of economy within a wider social framework can be regarded as ‘his most interesting achievement, from an economic sociological perspective’ (Aspers 2001).

A further contrast can be made between the Marxist doctrine of ideology, which views class ideologies as rationalisations of class interests, and Pareto’s belief that governing elites are culturally and psychologically predisposed to employ distinctive strategies or styles of governing, which may, depending upon circumstances, either advance or compromise their interests. This unique stress upon the potential for disparity between elite strategy and elite interest underpinned Pareto’s claim that previous social theorists such as Marx had neglected the irrational, or, as he preferred to say, ‘non-logical’ components in the thoughts and behaviours of elites, which Pareto viewed as arising, proximately at least, from ‘psychic states, sentiments, and subconscious feelings and the like’ (Pareto 1935, §161). For this reason, Pareto is often identified with that wave of thought commonly associated with Durkheim, Freud and Weber who, towards the end of the nineteenth century, all found ways to argue that irrational forces play a major role in social life (Madge 1964, 73).

More fully, we may say that Pareto’s sociological theory is concerned to a large extent with the idea that elites possess distinctive psychological characteristics which influence how they interact with non-elites, for better or for worse. The following three sections will now explore this idea in more detail, first of all by explaining
more about Pareto’s elite theory, and then by showing that Pareto’s experience of Italian political and economic life had a profound influence on him, by colouring his ideas concerning the natures of elites and non-elites and the ways in which they interact.

2.2 Pareto’s Elite Theory

Pareto’s name is commonly linked with ‘classical elite theory’, a school of thought whose enduring contribution to sociology has been to assert, very simply, that minorities always wield control in large societies and associations (Wrong 1977, 177). James Meisel points out that this was actually the ‘idée maîtresse’ of another classical elitist, Gaetano Mosca. Pareto appropriated it without due acknowledgement (Meisel 1965, 14–15). Classical elite theory, Marvin Olsen (1970, 106–104) mentions, had established itself in bitter opposition to the Marxist belief that a democratisation and communalisation of political life would come about through the establishment of a popular proletarian regime. The three principal theorists of classical elitism, Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels, Olsen says, all reacted against this idea by finding ways to argue that ‘in all societies past the bare subsistence level there has been – and hence, presumably will be in the future – one or a few sets of dominant ruling elites’.

As we will see, Pareto viewed the capacity to exploit others as having been distributed disproportionately amongst elites throughout western history. He also believed that the slow movement towards democracy and meritocracy which had taken place during the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had done little to change this. Democratic political systems (or ‘plutodemocracies’ as he called them) were failing to reflect the will of the people because democratic elections merely provided mechanisms for the co-optation of new, more capable personnel into the political and economic elite strata. As elites are revitalised from below, Pareto believed, their potential to exploit (or to use his preferred term, to ‘spoliate’) the masses increases. Perversely, then, Pareto considered imbalances of wealth likely to increase along with the extension of the suffrage in the emerging European democracies (Hirschmann 1992, 55–58).

The following account of Italian political and economic life, as Pareto and many others experienced it, will explain why he reached this pessimistic conclusion. It will also permit a much clearer picture to emerge, both of the psychological characteristics which Pareto attributed to the ‘exploiters’ or ‘spoliators’ who fill the ranks of the elites, and of the psychological characteristics which he attributed to the ‘exploited’ or ‘spoliated’ who comprise the non-elites.

2.3 A Brief Biography

The following biographical details are based largely upon Powers’ (1987, 14–18) account. Pareto’s family rose to political and commercial prominence within the trading hub of Genoa during the eighteenth century. His great-great-great-grandfather, Giovanni Lorenzo Bartolomeo Pareto, had won the hereditary title of Marquis for
the family in 1729. During the Napoleonic period, Pareto’s grandfather and grand uncles were to hold important administrative positions, by virtue of their republican credentials. The family’s attachment to republicanism persisted into the nineteenth century, when, for his republican activism, the Marquis Raffaele Pareto was forced to flee Italy for France. It was there that he married a French Calvinist called Marie Mattenier, which led to Vilfredo being born on 15 July 1848, in Paris.

Whilst in exile, the Marquis Raffaele Pareto supported himself as a hydrological engineer, and he even managed to publish influential articles on hydraulics. This ensured that Vilfredo’s very early life and education benefited from some affluence. In the 1850s, however, the family was able to return to Italy. They settled in Turin, where Raffaele had secured a civil engineering position.

In 1869, Vilfredo gained a degree in engineering from the Polytechnic Institute of Turin. Apparently he graduated at the top of his class, ahead of fellow student Galileo Ferraris, who went on to become famous for his discovery of the rotary magnetic field. Following Italian unification in 1871, Vilfredo’s father was transferred to Rome. Vilfredo was to move there too, where he became a civil engineer within the government’s railway department. This was to be the first of several engineering jobs, which allowed Pareto to progress into management. In 1874, he became superintendent of an iron foundry in the valley of the Arno. This job allowed him to travel to England and Scotland on business, where he encountered the liberal legislation which had been systematically introduced there from 1846. This new legislation was underpinned by the *laissez faire* ideology and activism of Richard Cobden, John Bright, Walter Bagehot and others who fronted the free trade movement. The ideas of this movement, which Disraeli famously christened ‘the Manchester School’, were to have a profound influence on Pareto.

His interest in political economy kindled, Pareto joined the Adam Smith Society in Florence. In 1881, he even stood as a radical free trade candidate for Parliament in the district of Peruzzi. Between 1889 and 1892, he turned his attentions toward political commentary and public speaking, perhaps motivated by a wish to acquire a university teaching post. Between these years he published over 160 articles which consisted largely of appeals for the introduction of free trade. Powers mentions that during this period Pareto’s inflammatory, polemical style led to some of his speaking engagements being cancelled due to police concerns about public order.1

In 1891, Pareto began to publish papers which pioneered the use of scientific and mathematical techniques to assess economic theories. Just two years later, this work had impressed economists to the extent that he was appointed Professor of Political Economy at Lausanne University. Pareto soon became known as the ‘father of mathematical economics’ for the contributions to economics which he made during this period. However, it was only after he inherited a fortune from an uncle in 1898, and then moved to a country villa which he had built in the idyllic village of Céligny, close to Switzerland’s border with France, that Pareto could finally develop the economic ideas for which he is chiefly remembered. Pareto’s financial freedom had, it seems, brought with it intellectual freedom from established academic

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1 For further details see Coser (1977, 403), Bellamy (1987, 14) and Pareto (1935, §2255–2256).
opinion. Aside from spurring him on to his greatest achievements in economics, this freedom enabled Pareto to follow his intuition that economics could not be studied in isolation. As Pareto’s writing opened out from economics into general sociology, he began to lose the support of former colleagues, eventually becoming known as the ‘lone thinker of Céligny’. He continued writing into his retirement, which was increasingly marred by heart disease, and died on 19 August 1923.

Shortly before he died, however, events would deliver Pareto’s reputation a lasting blow. Mussolini, who claimed to have attended some of Pareto’s Lausanne lectures, offered him a senatorship in his fledgling fascist government, and invited him to represent Italy as a delegate at a Geneva disarmament conference. Although Pareto’s death occurred just ten months after Mussolini’s fascists seized power in the March on Rome, he witnessed enough of this regime to be impressed by its early leanings towards economic liberalism, before then being driven to protest its early clampdowns upon the press and academia. It seems likely that Pareto would have grown increasingly scornful of the regime as it steered towards economic corporatism and totalitarianism. However, commentators have disagreed over the extent to which Pareto’s sociology draws together proto-fascist themes (Meisel 1965, 34–36).

This book does not place Pareto in the dock over this matter. It will, however, help develop the reader’s psychological knowledge in ways which better enable Pareto’s theory to be evaluated on this level. To pave the way, it is useful to comment briefly on Pareto’s appeal to the conservative mind. It has already begun to emerge within this chapter that there is much evidence of elitism in Pareto’s sociological thought. It will soon become apparent that there is cynicism and misanthropy too. We will discern from theory and evidence presented in chapter four that low self-esteem may be a common personality denominator for these traits. Of course, self-esteem is, rather like stress, a vague construct which has suffered from overuse by popular psychology. Nonetheless, it helps us form an important personality cluster with particular significance for political attitude formation. We will see that the configuration of elitism, cynicism, misanthropy and low self-esteem appears commonly within what might be termed the ‘conservative’ or ‘authoritarian’ attitude syndrome; and so, by drawing these themes together within his writings, Pareto had effectively set out a stall to attract conservatives and repulse liberals.

It is also vital to realise that Pareto’s psychologistic mode of explanation is itself more appealing to the conservative mind. Skitka et al. (2002) cite evidence suggesting that when it comes to explaining phenomena as diverse as homelessness, crime, foreign aggression and obesity, conservatives tend to focus their explanations upon individual characteristics (i.e. upon the personal failings of those ‘responsible’ for the phenomenon) whereas liberals are more likely to draw attention to situational or structural causes. Hence Skitka et al. propose a ‘dispositional hypothesis’ according to which conservatives have ‘baseline propensities’ to view a person’s behaviour as rooted in ‘something about that person’, whereas liberals tend to look to that person’s situation. They observe that this hypothesis is consistent with the Freudian view of authoritarian personality as an ego defensive reaction to a strict and remote father, and with the literature which has distinguished between ‘authoritarian-paternalistic’ and ‘egalitarian-nurturing’ forms of upbringing as predictors of political orientation in later life. Once more, chapter four will explore these ideas in more detail. What
matters here is that Pareto’s near obsession with the human capacity for error and irrationality, and, more importantly, his incorporation of this within his psychologistic approach to social dynamics, effectively created a theoretical framework giving free reign to the ‘blame game’ favoured by conservatives. As such it constitutes a powerful enticement to the conservative mind.

It seems reasonable to conclude that an appreciation of the psychological roots of Pareto’s political appeal is likely to pay dividends in two ways. Firstly, we can use it to ethically evaluate efforts to articulate and operationalise Pareto’s sociological theory. Here, the critical consideration is the extent to which Pareto’s theory is being used as a vehicle for character assassination, scapegoating, and suchlike. Secondly, we can use this knowledge to ensure that Paretian analysis is conducted on a more sophisticated level, in keeping with Pareto’s more mature sociological approach which tried to move away from intensionalistic explanation towards a growing recognition of those situational and structural factors which weigh more heavily on the liberal mind. Of course, we will soon see that Pareto took a functionalist (which is to say deeply conservative) approach to even this.

2.4 Pareto’s Italy: Clientelismo and Trasformismo

It is to the Italy of Pareto’s early professional career that we must now turn if we are to understand the roots of his sociological thought. Pareto’s prolific free-trade activism, following his exposure to British liberalism, came at just the right time to win him both fame and notoriety because it allowed him to become a mouthpiece for liberal opposition to the practice of ‘trasformismo’ which had emerged as a defining characteristic of the Italian polity following Italy’s movement away from a system of relatively free trade in 1876. This was the year when Italy’s ‘historical right’, which had become increasingly unpopular for the priority it gave to paying off the heavy debt burden which Italy had accrued following the Risorgimento, was defeated at election and replaced by a series of administrations which were to steer towards protectionism and higher public spending (Bellamy 1987, 13–14).

Alan Zuckerman (1979) describes trasformismo as a ‘mode of cabinet turnover’. Italy, he says, saw 32 cabinet changes between 1876 and 1922. Cabinet turnover was, however, notably more rapid than Ministerial turnover. Parliamentary leaders (Zuckerman calls Depretis, who came to power in 1876, the ‘first master’ of this practice) would publicly propose to Ministers of outgoing cabinets that they may continue in their posts provided they abandon old loyalties, allegiances and principles, and substitute new ones (Zuckerman 1979, 45). Zuckerman credits Pareto with exposing the prevalence of the trasformismo ethic:

In the cabinet crises of 1891, [which saw] the formation of the Crispi government and its replacement after two months by di Rudini’s ministry, only 23 out of 508 deputies voted consistently for Crispi and against di Rudini, and all but one of Crispi’s cabinet voted for the new cabinet² (Zuckerman 1979, 45).

2 Zuckerman lifts this information from Pareto’s ‘The Ruling Class in Italy’ (1950, 31).
Underlying trasformismo, however, was a more deeply rooted system of ‘clientelismo’ which led politicians to behave in this manner. This consisted of complex, shifting networks of patron-client relations which threaded ‘vertically’ between the Prime Minister, candidate-Ministers and elected deputies, extending to the masses via the media of the many local political and economic power-mongers: the ‘grandi elettori’.

Citing Mosca, Zuckerman (1979, 47) mentions that in the south of Italy the grand electors were the large landowners and lease holders, while in the large cities they were lawyers, physicians, capitalists and ‘in general all those wealthy persons who because of their activities and professions acquire many relationships and a good number of clients and favour-seekers’. Pareto, however, also counted socialist and catholic labour organisations as a special category of collective grand elector. He felt that the partial co-optation of such organisations within the political establishment contributed, in the short term at least, to social stability. When, as would occur from Giolitti’s ministry onwards, leaders of socialist organisations were drawn within clientelistic alliances by patronage and by promises of piecemeal social reform, the consequence, as Pareto saw it, was to ‘decapitate’ working class organisations of their most talented leaders. Marx could thus be ‘put in the attic’ (Boggs, 1976, 50; Bellamy 1987, 21). This position is immediately notable for its consonance with Robert Michels’ argument for the inevitability of elite rule in his (1915) ‘Political Parties’, a work which has become famous for what Michels therein termed the ‘iron law of oligarchy’. Michels’ famous law owed much to the fact that, as a member of the syndicalist wing of Germany’s Social Democratic Party, he had been disillusioned by the SDP leadership’s reluctance to contemplate the mechanism of the general strike as a means to gain power (Beetham 1977). This led Michels to theorise the leadership of the SDP, affiliated trade unions, and indeed the leaderships of new mass political parties in general, as possessing agendas distinct from those of ordinary members and followers. He saw for a basic need for ‘organisation’ whereby concentrated leaderships become increasingly necessary if they are to maintain control over bureaucratic structures which are growing large and complex; yet this need inevitably concentrates knowledge and expertise within these leaderships, which they may then use to impose their own agendas across the structures under their control. These agendas include, of course, leaders’ desires to maintain themselves in high office. Hence for Michels, Germany’s workers’ organisations had effectively become dedicated to their own bureaucratic self preservation. Thus disillusioned with democratic politics, Michels went on to accommodate himself to the inevitability of elite rule, becoming a Politics Academic in Fascist Italy in 1928.

Italy’s Grand electors held a pivotal position within the social structure, influencing many whilst often remaining directly accountable to no-one. Their effective control of the votes of their economic dependants amongst the very few who were able to vote (around 2% in the 1870s) brought them considerable influence in deciding which local deputies were to be sent to Montecitorio. That provided good reason why parliamentary leaders and Ministers struggling to establish working majorities there could not afford to ignore their wishes. These wishes were, of course, that government would show its gratitude for their support by the favourable allocation of
government contracts, subsidies, tax and other forms of legislation, by international trade agreements, and by the provision of cheap labour.³

Some evidence suggests that patron-client ties were so pervasive throughout Italian society that influential individuals who voiced moral condemnation of clientelismo would risk personal ruin. Alan Zuckerman credits Pareto with the observation that this culture leaves ‘no room for anyone unwilling to play the game’. Such an individual, Pareto believed:

... is an outlaw, a man whom everyone can attack. If a lawyer, he has no clients; if an engineer, nobody employs him; if a merchant or tradesman, he is ruined; if a landowner, he is exposed to petty annoyances from prefects and syndics (Pareto 1950, 32, cited in Zuckerman 1979, 48–49).

This was a view based in part upon Pareto’s own business experience. As superintendent of the ‘Società Ferriere Italiana’, Pareto claimed to have been left deeply disillusioned by ‘the distasteful necessity of making deals with influential deputies and government agents’ (see Coser 1977, 403). With his focus always more upon the political system, Gaetano Mosca also viewed ‘playing the game’ as increasingly necessary:

In many branches of government agencies, it is no longer possible to operate through honest and legal means, it is necessary to act as camorrista (Mafioso) if one is not to fall to an act of camorra (Mafia) (Mosca 1968, 255, cited in Zuckerman 1979, 49)

Anti-corruption sentiment was also to heighten the appeal of Italian communism. In his political autobiography, Ignazio Silone repeats what became a popular maxim in early twentieth century Italy:

The state always stands for swindling, intrigue, and privilege, and cannot stand for anything else (Silone 1950, 98).

Such sentiment was, more fully, to provide an ethical veneer for anti-democratic movements of both left and right. By helping to polarise political conflict, it would soon contribute to the overthrow of Italian democracy.

With this thought, it is worth pausing to look in some more detail at the stark contrast which Pareto was to draw in his mature sociological works between the practitioners of trasformismo and clientelismo who make up the elites, and the non-elite masses who faced exploitation at their hands. Before the violent political upheavals which rocked Italy during the early twentieth century, Pareto had viewed democracy and popular participation in a positive light. Influenced strongly by J.S. Mill, he wrote enthusiastically on the subjects of proportional representation and the extension of the suffrage, believing along with Mill that an educated mass might one day be trusted to participate responsibly in the political process (see Bucolo 1980, 3

³ Pareto (1991, 69–70) refers, for example, to the practice begun under the Depretis ministry whereby government would send soldiers to work the fields of large landowners, thus depressing the wage levels of the free-mowers which would otherwise be fixed by free competition.
By the early years of the twentieth century, however, Pareto was prepared to look first of all at the violent protests of the left, and then at the reactive violence of the fascist *arditi* and paid strike-breakers, and conclude that he was witnessing not the darker side of human nature but rather the nature of every ‘non-elite’. Non-elites, it now seemed, are *always* prone to violent collective action where, just as Le Bon and Tarde had previously mentioned in connection with crowd psychology, they display little capacity to reason or accept responsibility (Coser 1988, 412).

The well orchestrated strikes of the *biennio rosso* of 1919 and 1920 would prove particularly symbolic for Pareto of the contrast between elite and non-elite. These set the scene whereby Mussolini could contrast an inflated image of his own strength and determination with the weaknesses of a corrupt, insular democratic government which had failed to subdue social unrest with sufficient force (Bellamy 1987, 32). Van Den Berghe (1978, 190) credits Pareto with the resulting theoretical insight that an important general precondition to political revolution, later to be developed by historian Crane Brinton, is the widespread impression that government, while on the one hand seeming oppressive, is simultaneously perceived as ‘weak and vacillating’.

Given the socio-political context in which he wrote, it is hardly surprising that Pareto tailored his ‘theory of revolution’ to pertain equally to the seizure of power by either fascist or communist extremists. Either scenario would, he believed, involve a penetration of non-elite personnel – and hence of non-elite psychological characteristics – into the elite strata. He qualified this view, however, by maintaining that such upsets of the social order tend to be short-lived. Working from his assumption that the more ‘capable’ will always tend to gravitate to fill the higher political and economic control positions, he argued that the characteristics of the practitioners of trasformismo and clientelismo are likely to prevail in the very senior levels of government in *all* kinds of political system. Even the leaders of the non-elite crusades against elite corruption, he believed, tend to be members of the elites who possess these traits.

Political events thus led Pareto directly to his stark contrast between the exploitative elite which appears weak, vacillating and corrupt, and the non-elite which is easily provoked into expressions of moral outrage and violent protest. It also becomes apparent here that Pareto’s contrast between the elite and the non-

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4 In his ‘Treatise’, Pareto provides a lengthy description of the revolutionary violence of the ‘red week’ of June 1914 which pitted the Salandra Ministry against trade union organisations which were then supported by newspapers such as the ‘Avanti’ of which Mussolini was then editor. The war of words between the two, according to Pareto, reflected exactly ‘the fight between the lion and the fox’. ‘There will come a day’, Pareto added, ‘when the lion will reach the fox with a well aimed cuff’ (Pareto 1935, §2480 (fn)). It was only later in his (1923)‘The Transformation of Democracy’, however, that Pareto came to look upon communist and fascist violence as competition between up and coming rival elites, both possessing the characteristics of his ‘lions’.

5 Pareto mentions in his ‘Treatise’ that ‘In general, in revolutions the members of the lower strata are captained by leaders from the higher strata, because the latter possess the intellectual qualities required for outlining a tactic, while lacking the [combativeness] supplied by individuals from the lower strata’ (Pareto 1935, §2058).
elite corresponds at the same time to some kind of distinction between, to use very loose terms for the present, ‘democratic’ and ‘anti-democratic’ character. Upon that understanding, a more complete account of the idiosyncracies which Pareto attributed to his ‘democratic character’ will now proceed through a closer examination of the patron-client ties which were essential to the functioning of Italy’s system of clientelismo.

This tie might be described, on the surface at least, as follows:

The distinguishing feature of archetypal patron-client relationships is a broad but imprecise spectrum of mutual obligations consistent with the belief that the patron should display an almost paternal concern for and responsiveness to the needs of his client, and that the latter should display an almost filial loyalty to his patron (Landé 1973, 105, cited in Zuckerman 1979, 16).

Ernest Gellner explains that this kind of bond was very different to that which existed in feudal societies. Certainly, there were similarities. In feudal societies, highly unequal, extended networks also ran vertically. There was also that same ‘stress upon loyalty to persons rather than to principles’ which we find in the patron-client tie. Gellner stresses, however, that feudal power relations were ‘codified’, ‘formalised’ and ‘proudly proclaimed’ as central to ‘the cult of honour and loyalty, violence and virility’. By contrast, he says:

...it seems to me of the essence of a patronage system that, though no stranger to pride, it always belongs to some pays réel which is ambivalently conscious of not being the pays légal. Patronage may not always and necessarily be illegal and corrupt, and it does have its own pride and morality; but though it may despise the official morality as hypocritical, fraudulent or effeminate, it nevertheless knows that it is not itself the official morality (Gellner (ed.) 1977, 3).

Rogow and Lasswell make a similar point in their discussion of economic circumstances where ‘corruption’ is likely to supplant ‘rectitude’ in human relations. They mention that in business and politics new strategies are constantly being devised that fall within the ‘gray zone’ of ‘confusion and disagreement about norms’ (Rogow and Lasswell 1963, 71). Corrupt strategies, they claim, are likely to be justified by their practitioners as follows:

The argument is: The incorruptibility of public and private persons is an ideal toward which we aspire; it cannot occur, however, in many practical situations without exposing businesses to great and unwarranted risk. Corruption can legitimately be used to mitigate excessive competition – cut throat competition – without going to the extremes of full monopoly, which in turn provokes government monopoly and sooner or later leads to autocracy. Corruption is a means of maintaining the many advantages of the modern organisation of markets into patterns composed of a few leading firms and many small units (Rogow and Lasswell 1963, 94).

Such thinking was common, they point out, in the US at the turn of the century when private business was expanding rapidly. Yet this might equally apply to Italy during the same period. As will now be explained, processes of economic modernisation
can easily place severe strains upon clientelistic groupings of political and economic actors, contributing in the fullness of time to their downfall.

Italy’s system of clientelismo compelled Ministers and delegates to pursue those particular interests for which they were elected. Due to the severely restricted suffrage, they often found themselves at the behest of specific local notables. Personal relationships therefore had to be carefully cultivated and loyalties had to be displayed. These personal loyalties could only endure, however, for as long as patrons and their clients remained linked by shared interests – and these are things which become ever more fleeting in a rapidly modernising and restructuring economy. As shared interests were undermined by the workings of the economy, feelings of suspicion, distrust and insecurity would therefore enter into the private thoughts of both patrons and clients. And such thoughts would always, for a time at least, have to remain split off from the behavioural requirements necessary for continuing relations.

In a strained and shifting economic environment, therefore, individuals working within clienteles are likely to devote ever more attention to cultivating and patching up trust-based personal relationships. Mutual favours become increasingly necessary because loyalties can no longer simply be pledged, they must repeatedly be demonstrated if distrust is to be kept at bay. Patrons and their clients increasingly sense that to be seen to pursue a vision of community interest is to risk being suspected of abandoning those particular obligations upon which clienteles are founded. Zuckerman therefore concludes that a key feature of political clienteles intent upon maintaining cohesion against a backdrop of rapid economic modernisation is their tendency to ‘rarely act so as to obtain collective goods of value to those who are not members of the group’ (Zuckerman 1979, 36). Mosca saw the wider consequences:

In order to advance and sustain themselves, all must favour their allies and friends to the detriment of good government, of conscience and justice (Mosca 1950, 254–255, cited in Zuckerman 1979, 48).

It follows that where clientelismo is sufficiently prevalent as to keep governments in power, as Zuckerman considers to have been the case with Christian Democrat rule in Italy for much of the twentieth century, certain kinds of policy error are likely to arise:

Clientelist politics is inflationary politics. It requires the outbidding of one’s opponents to stay in power. In particular, the longer they have been in power, the greater the number tied to their mode of governing, the more that is expected of them, and the greater the consequences of the failure to produce (Zuckerman 1979, 170).

Clientelistic politics thus survives only through an unsustainable carve-up of resources. Once more referring to Italy’s (then ruling) Christian Democrats, Zuckerman mentions that:

The mode of governing ascribed to the DC and its factions is best summed as the enactment of laws which are in the short run particularistic interests of their supporters, without regard for long-run interests. The question raised by observers in several recent articles, and implicit in my analysis so far, is whether the short-run game has finally reached its long-run consequences. Specifically, has the party’s policy of distributing resources to a
limited sector of the populace angered enough of the others for them to drive the DC from power? (Zuckerman 1979, 164).

This invites the further suggestion that clientelistic regimes may be able to function with some degree of success when an economy is growing, but they are chronically unable to manage periods of economic downturn when they have fewer resources at their disposal. Zuckerman (1979, 170) mentions that the link between crisis for clientelistic governance and economic downturn was well understood by Pareto the lecturer and writer on Economic theory who, in his ‘Treatise’, voiced bitter criticisms of the unsustainable tendency displayed by successive Italian governments to move towards bankruptcy while at the same time losing the creditworthiness by which they might continue to ‘mortgage the future’ (e.g. Pareto 1935, §2309).

In his analysis of this system, however, Pareto seemed to fall victim to biases which are very common indeed, and to which we all succumb to varying extents. Sometimes, when we discuss political events, we may sense that our desire to analyse and understand what happens becomes eclipsed by a stronger desire to heap blame, often vicariously, onto those who we identify as being responsible for what happens. The following two sources of bias will typically have a hand in this. Firstly, we have a cognitive bias which leads us to understand the unfamiliar in terms which are familiar to us. Our brains have enormous processing power dedicated to our social intelligence, allowing us to understand the meanings of others, and it is inevitable that we will overuse this asset when we encounter political and many other phenomena, which are unfamiliar to us, and for which our brains are therefore ill-prepared. Secondly, we must consider our affective (i.e. emotional) biases. It is commonly maintained by psychologists that we are always seeking socially sanctioned outlets for feelings of aggression or hostility. Even the expression of a political attitude is commonly understood as a means of aggressive discharge. This ensures that our political thoughts always risk being drafted for this purpose. It follows that when we try to analyse political events which are difficult to understand, these cognitive and affective biases are likely to feed off each other. Our desire to attribute blame will lead us to overuse the mental processing apparatus which we use to understand people, and the overuse of this mental apparatus (for want of apparatus which is more appropriate for political analysis) will in turn lead us to employ terms of reference which create further opportunities to attribute blame.

So it was with Pareto. I would caution against accusing Pareto of a vulgar intentionalism which understands events purely in terms of the characterologically-grounded decisions taken by the people involved. In fact, we will shortly see that he deserves credit for his theory of ‘social equilibrium’ precisely because this allowed him to take a more sophisticated view of things. However, it is one thing to insist upon a formal methodology, and quite another thing to apply that methodology rigorously when describing actual events. This was where the biases described above really seemed to influence Pareto. His analysis of clientelismo took as its primary focus the personality characteristics which were best adapted to that system, and which by any conventional moral reckoning, must appear wanting. Clientelismo’s short-termism became, for Pareto, the short-termist outlook of those who make up the political and economic elites. Pressures within the system for particularistic interests to be
advanced at the expense of wider community interests were to be interpreted, along with this, as evidence that such individuals must surely place self interest before any nobler vision of the common good. And of course, the tension between private belief and behavioural requirement so prevalent within the patron-client tie (especially within trasformismo) could easily be interpreted as evidence of an amorality of character which is adept at maintaining double standards and abandoning personal loyalties when their usefulness ceases. As the following section will clarify, these features, taken together, seemed to constitute key features of a characterologically rooted ‘Machiavellianism’.

Where this leads us then, is to the realisation that Pareto viewed the elites as a repository, not just of democratic character, but also of Machiavellianism. In fact, Pareto envisioned the two as combining within the same personality structure. They were easily blended. Machiavellianism could be regarded as a vital element of democratic personality by contributing its fortuitous lack of ideological zealotry, and also that quality of cunning which allows elites to subdue and exploit non-elites without resorting to undemocratic applications of force.

The choice between ‘democratic’ and ‘anti-democratic’ character is therefore not an easy one for Pareto. He presents us with an impossible choice between the unscrupulous, self-aggrandising master criminal and the dim-witted, intransigent, ideological zealot who thirsts for political violence. As mentioned earlier, Raymond Aron made this point well by saying that Pareto asks us to accept that ‘every political man is either selfish or naive’ (Aron 1968, 171). The realisation that he could well be right, Aron suggests, takes us straight to the ‘living heart’ of Paretian thought. He adds that this may leave us with a sense of malaise or disgust at the nature of politics.

Before moving on to explore the central role played by ‘Machiavellian’ personality in Pareto’s sociology, it is worth adding that his psychologistic interpretation of trasformismo and clientelismo runs contrary to established opinion. Italian histories are inclined to stress that trasformismo should be understood primarily as a practice required by circumstances, given both the heavy reliance of central government upon the local commune system, and the delicate relationships which were forced upon Deputies and Ministers in order to ensure governmental stability (e.g. Clark 1984, 57–67). Ernest Gellner indicates, furthermore, that clientelism is only likely to emerge under certain conditions: either when a situation of ‘incomplete centralisation’ occurs when a state lacks complete control over all its outlying territory – as may well be said of the Italian state which only gained access to Sicily in 1861 following the risorgimento – or when a state lacks technical resources to meet popular aspirations. In both cases, according to Gellner, local power holders may, like Italy’s ‘grand electors’, gain footholds in government and play important roles in determining how governments allocate resources.

Given the clear role for historical context in shaping Pareto’s thoughts concerning his political types, it becomes tempting to suppose that these thoughts might not apply more widely. The following two sections will clarify, however, that Pareto had grounds for believing that they should. As we will now see, they squared to a large extent with Machiavelli’s much earlier beliefs about enduring human characteristics.
2.5 Pareto and Machiavelli: Similar Theories of Human Nature

Pareto admitted to basing his sociology upon ‘maxims of Machiavelli which hold as true today as they were in his time’ (Pareto 1935, §2410). He would certainly have agreed with Machiavelli’s core assumption that:

The primary subject-matter for political science is the struggle for social power in its diverse open and concealed forms (contrary views hold that political thought deals with the general welfare, the common good, and other such entities that are from time to time invented by the theorists) (Burnham 1943, 165).

Chief among Machiavelli’s ‘brutal facts’ of power was that which says affairs of state require a morality distinct from those demanded by Christianity and by everyday life. The morality in question was, in Machiavelli’s day, popularly associated with the caricature of the ‘renaissance confidence trickster’.

This caricature had immense significance for Machiavelli. Although he is typically seen as an arch-realist who endeavoured to view the world as it is and not as idealistic delusion sometimes makes it appear, Machiavelli used both his politico-historical writings and, equally, his fictional works, not just to represent the world as he saw it, but also to explore certain theoretical problems, and indeed deep anxieties, which were widely sensed by the Renaissance mind. In fact, these were so widely sensed that they emerged as popular themes throughout the literature of the European Renaissance.

Wayne Rebhorn explains in his (1988) ‘Foxes and Lions: Machiavelli’s Confidence Men’ that Machiavelli’s fascination with the popular Renaissance image of the ‘confidence trickster’, and with the common literary vision of ‘life as a confidence game’ helped him structure his understanding of politics and history, organise his own personal experiences, and generally ‘reflect upon basic issues of the age’ (Rebhorn 1988, 4–5, 37). Many of these basic issues may be understood as having arisen from the social upheavals of the Renaissance:

The confidence man’s major traits – his deep moral ambiguity and his recognition of the contingency and transformability of the social order – reflect important aspects of Italy and Europe in the age of the Renaissance. The Renaissance fascination with confidence men might be correlated, for example, with the increased number of rogues and vagabonds, charlatans and mountebanks, of the poor in general, which humanists and social reformers linked to the land enclosures precipitated by a developing capitalism, to the population shifts related to the spread of the plague and other diseases, and to the furious wars that raged during the period (Rebhorn 1988, 26).

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6 Wayne Rebhorn (1988, 7) explains that the term ‘confidence man’ was originally used in an 1849 New York Herald editorial before becoming popular as a consequence of one of Herman Melville’s novels. The equivalent term used in the Italian Renaissance was ‘beffatore’.

7 Machiavelli’s tendency to ‘view the world through the lens of literature’ and to explore the key themes of Renaissance literature throughout his writings is explored by Rebhorn (1988). Ascoli and Kahn (ed.) (1993) introduce a number of articles which also give detailed support to this view.
To very briefly summarise Rebhorn’s argument, the co-expansion of educational opportunity and international trade with technological progress and very early capitalist development brought about dramatic increases in levels of social mobility during the Renaissance period. Furthermore, the collapse of the traditional medieval political order had led Western Europe’s centralising secular authorities to experience serious crises of legitimacy. A good indication of the depth of this crisis, Rebhorn mentions, is provided by the spate of political treatises which arose at the time dealing with questions of sovereignty (Rebhorn 1988, 30–31).

It is within this context of social flux, the breakdown of fixed social roles, and increasing ideological uncertainty, then, that Renaissance literature developed its deep concern with issues surrounding, to use Stephen Greenblatt’s term, ‘self-fashioning’:

Fundamentally free from any a priori definition of the self and utterly detached from the traditions, crafts and places by means of which medieval people normally acquired their identities, Renaissance individuals were conceived as creating themselves … Writers of the period thus spun out for themselves a myth of man as Proteus or as Faustus, freed from old allegiances, rising and changing solely through the efforts of his will, intelligence and art. Human beings made themselves through their education, or they made and remade themselves continually as they played role upon role on the great stage of the world (Rebhorn 1988, 27).

Rebhorn adds that serious doubts, fears and feelings of hostility arose in opposition to new ideologies of self-fashioning. One common source of anguish for those cut off from traditional sources of identity was the possibility that individuals who lack fixed social roles may discover that they have no authentic, underlying identities. Rebhorn mentions that these fears were spoken to directly by Shakespeare’s ‘Richard II’ and ‘King Lear’. Each provided a powerful illustration of how disorientation and madness can follow when individuals are stripped of their social roles (Rebhorn 1988, 29).

One common response to this crisis, again widely reflected in literature, was displacement: ‘arrivistes and slaves of fashion were increasingly mocked by satirists as people without inner selves whose identities go no deeper than the clothes they wear’ (Rebhorn 1988, 28). Fictional confidence tricksters were, of course, presented as ‘self-fashioners par excellence’. Much speculation was addressed to the nature of the inner selves which reside beneath the many ‘masks’ which they wear to conduct their deceptions. Such characters became, in other words, scapegoats to allow people to displace insecurities which they felt concerning their own identities.

If Renaissance literature’s fascination with the confidence trickster makes sense as a means by which, according to Rebhorn, ‘Renaissance writers could crystallise their culture’s profound ambivalence about the issue of self-fashioning’ (Rebhorn 1988, 29), then it becomes interesting to speculate that the enduring fascination with Machiavelli’s writings might be attributed, in part at least, to enduring feelings of ambivalence towards self-fashioning, feelings which we might even regard as continuing to ebb and flow with the times. We might draw, moreover, a broad parallel between the writers of the Renaissance who used literary fiction as a means to explore the psychological correlates of the breakdown of long established certainties, and the
early classical contributions to sociology made by Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Pareto and others who all tried to deal, in their various ways, with the psychological fallout produced by the upheavals of the industrial revolution. More specifically, we might consider the very similar psychologies of Machiavelli and Pareto as having focused upon the characteristics of the confidence trickster as a rather crude means to allow both thinkers to explore the difficult question of what kind of individual is produced by, or is best able to adapt to, conditions of rapid social transformation where fixed social roles, which may otherwise exert a powerful stabilising influence upon the individual’s search for identity, are increasingly unable to provide guidance. It will become increasingly apparent throughout this and subsequent chapters that although Pareto’s sociological theory fails to be explicitly concerned with this subject, it may well have drawn Machiavelli to its centre for this very reason.

As we will now see, Pareto’s debt to Machiavelli is heavy indeed, as he was to have recourse to the finer detail of Machiavelli’s beliefs about the ways in which personalities are packaged together. Although Machiavelli originally followed a lead provided by Boccaccio and others by linking the image of the confidence trickster to the lower socioeconomic groupings and in particular to the artisan class, he eventually realised that his con-men possessed qualities appropriate for that ‘ideal Prince’ who, he hoped, would finally unify Italy and repulse the French expansion into its territory. However, although Machiavelli felt that the role-playing skills of the confidence trickster would prove essential, he also viewed this caricature as deficient in several key respects:

Chief among the characteristics that distinguish the Prince from the confidence men of the literary tradition is their moral seriousness. Renaissance confidence men… are basically carnivalesque characters. Their activities celebrate the life of the body, its pleasures and creativity, and they are motivated by powerful drives for food and sex as well as wealth and power. They are gay characters, at times almost practical jokers or clowns…. Finally, as they turn the world topsy-turvy with their tricks and pranks, confidence men derive a real joy, not unrelated to aesthetic pleasure, from the trickery they engage in, trickery often conceived as game or play (Rebhorn 1988, 136).

Jettisoning those characteristics which he viewed as incommensurable with the gravitas and ascetic devotion to duty required of the ideal Prince, Machiavelli turned to consider other popular caricatures and found that the epic hero8 suited his purpose well:

The [epic] hero is a figure of energy and activity, a clever strategist and an eloquent leader of men, and above all, a warrior, whether one speaks of Odysseus wandering across the Mediterranean, Achilles slaying Hector at Troy, or Aeneas leading the Trojans into battle against the Latins. Machiavelli’s Prince is just such a character (Rebhorn 1988, 140).

This caricature appealed because it added virtues of courage, ferocity, leadership ability and strategic direction. Rebhorn also draws our attention to Machiavelli’s

8 Rebhorn points out that the epic hero was very much a Renaissance caricature. Having been revived by Dante, it became the preoccupation of many Renaissance poets such as Edmund Spenser and John Milton (Rebhorn 1988, 137).
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references – particularly those to be found in his ‘Arte della guerra’ – to the guiding influence of the more specific construct of the ‘farmer-warrior’. According to Rebhorn, Machiavelli referred to this image in order to convey the notion that the hero is also a ‘cultivator’ who upholds the values of ‘culture’ or ‘civilisation’ over the chaos of nature. The farmer-warrior’s martial qualities, that is, are devoted to the ‘domestication of nature’ by the upholding of the ‘cult of the state’ through the enforcement of social regulation (Rebhorn 1988, 164). Hence the essential moral ambiguity of Machiavelli’s ideal Prince. Forever present is the tension between, on the one hand, the commitment to be a rule-enforcer and culture-bearer and, on the other hand, that detachment from established social and moral norms which frees every confidence trickster to live life as theatre and play the con game.

It was, nonetheless, this unlikely amalgamation of epic hero, farmer-warrior and confidence trickster which Machiavelli was thinking of when he famously contended in chapter eighteen of ‘The Prince’ that a successful Prince should be both a lion adept in the use of force and a fox adept in the use of fraud. It is necessary to be a lion, he claimed, in order to ‘fright away the wolves’, and a fox in order to ‘avoid the snares’. Machiavelli remained acutely aware, however, that it was wholly unrealistic to expect the useful qualities of both ‘lions’ and ‘foxes’ to appear within any single individual. Even the most flexible and adaptable Prince must ‘inevitably fail at some moment or other, in order to suit his own ‘modo del procedere’ (Rebhorn 1988, 100).

Rebhorn further clarifies that even those historical figures who Machiavelli viewed as approximating most closely to the ideal Prince ‘failed uniformly and consistently to manifest the traits of both confidence man and epic hero’. However – and this explains why Machiavelli felt able to propose the amalgamation of such very different caricatures – he believed that where individuals fail in meeting his expectations, collectivities may succeed:

Cesare Borgia, for example, more often behaves as a tricky deceiver than as a warrior, and Ferdinand of Aragon is more warrior than deceiver. Even more striking, in the Discorsi, Scipio Africanus, the conqueror of Carthage, is a model lion, almost never a fox; Fabius Maximus, who saved Rome through guile, is just the reverse. These failures explain why Machiavelli ultimately prefers republican government to the rule of one individual: not because he believes in some lofty democratic ideal but because the many people involved in running a republic allow it to shift swiftly from role to role, from deceiving trickster to forceful warrior, as circumstances dictate, whereas single individuals could never match such flexibility (Rebhorn 1988, 138).

This interpretation is notably consistent with that of Antonio Gramsci who claimed in his ‘The Modern Prince’ that Machiavelli’s appeals to his ideal Prince are best understood as a barely veiled appeal to Italy’s collective will towards national unity (Hoare and Nowell-Smith (ed.) 1971, §126).

Pareto, to conclude then, predicated his sociological thought upon Machiavelli’s realisation that that the qualities required by the ideal Prince are rarely found within any given individual. He was to use the terms lion and fox to refer only to two mutually exclusive personality types (Finer in Pareto 1966, 57; Burnham 1943; 156), and as John Scott put it, to two corresponding ‘styles’ of political leadership (Scott
Here, finally, we can begin to fill out the personality model introduced in the last section. Being careful to acknowledge that Pareto did not actually use the terms ‘democratic character’ or ‘anti-democratic character’, we can conclude that Pareto nonetheless worked with a conception of democratic character, which he identified with the clientelismo and trasformismo systems in Italy, and which owed much to Machiavelli’s Renaissance confidence trickster. He also worked with a conception of anti-democratic character, which he found in Italy’s political extremists of the communist left and the fascist right, and which drew heavily upon Machiavelli’s epic hero and farmer-warrior.

Another important influence upon Pareto’s sociology was Machiavelli’s image of the government of a republic as a collective activity. Pareto’s whole sociological enterprise was to deal with how the alternating balance of ‘lions’ and ‘foxes’ within entire elites determines whether they fall in or out of step with the times. He was, in other words, thinking in terms of the concept of ‘social character’ (which Erich Fromm usefully defined as ‘the essential nucleus of the character structure of most members of a group’ (Fromm 1941, 277)). The question of whether it is indeed legitimate to employ individual characteristics to describe the behaviours of whole political groups and institutions will provide chapter three with its subject matter.

### 2.6 Pareto’s Historical Cycle and the Circulation of Elites

Machiavelli hinted at – without properly developing – a cyclical theory involving the rise and fall of civilisations in accordance with a natural law of ‘corso’ and ‘ricorso’. James Meisel cites the following ‘unforgettable words’ from Machiavelli’s ‘History of Florence’ which appear to owe much to Plato’s earlier plutocratic cycle:

‘virtue begets peace, peace begets idleness; idleness, mutiny; and mutiny, destruction.’
But then: ‘ruin begets laws; those laws, virtue; and virtue begets honor and good success’ (Meisel 1962, 267).

As Meisel then points out, one of Pareto’s unique contributions to classical elite theory, missed by Mosca, was to develop this cyclical theory using his now mutually exclusive lion and fox types. A ‘historical cycle’ was to be described in terms of patterned change to personality along what we might call Pareto’s ‘lion-fox axis’. Pareto went about this with real ingenuity. His historical cycle became more complex than Machiavelli’s because it now comprised economic, political and social subcycles which were hypothesised to run both in accordance with their separate internal dynamics, and in synchronicity with one another owing to forces at work within each cycle which regulate the pace of change within the other two. Crucially, each cycle incorporated psychological change along Pareto’s lion-fox axis, which, as we will now see, helped supply synchronising force between all three cycles.

Charles Powers (1987) makes our task much easier because he has distilled Pareto’s scattered writings on these cyclical dynamics. First of all, he explains each of the three cycles by setting out a sequence of causal mechanisms which lock together to form a cyclical dynamic. Then he proposes three further sequences of mechanisms, this time interfacing social, economic and political cycles, which explain how these
cycles synchronise. Hence there are six sequences of interlocking mechanisms, all tabulated within Powers’ book, which we need to consider here. The first of these is listed below just as Powers sets it out, not simply to highlight the psychological component in Pareto’s general sociology, but also to draw attention to the fact that when Pareto’s theory is ‘unpacked’ in this way, it yields a great many theoretical promptuaries which social scientists can apply widely. Based upon what Pareto says concerning how ‘social sentiment’ has oscillated throughout the history of western civilization, between periods of ‘faith’ and periods of ‘skepticism’, Powers distils the cyclical dynamics driving the ‘social sentiment cycle’ as follows:

(1) The more equivocal norms become (6), then (1) the less constrained people are in their behaviour and the more likely actions of potential but unproven detriment to others are to be tolerated.

(2) The less constraining norms are and the more tolerant people are of the actions of potential but unproven detriment (1), then (2) the more confusion there is likely to be over definitions of appropriate behaviour and the more likely people are to be injured or offended by the imprudent actions of others.

(3) The more confusion there is over definitions of appropriate behaviour and the more injury and offense people sustain due to the imprudent actions of others (2), then (3) the more likely people are to seek coherent traditions and unequivocal prescriptions.

(4) The less equivocal prescriptions become (3), then (4) the more constrained people are and the more likely people are to fear being blamed for the anticipated and unanticipated consequences of their actions.

(5) The more constraining norms are and the more inhibited people are out of fear of blame (4), then (5) the more likely people are to question the rationality of normative beliefs and the more likely people are to avoid helping others.

(6) The more people question the rationality of beliefs and the more hesitant people are to cooperate with others (5), then (6) the more likely they are to seek relaxed prescriptions and freedom of autonomous action.

(Powers 1987, 108)

It would doubtless be possible to map entire research literatures over each of these mechanisms. Indeed, this will grow more evident over the next two chapters, where the question of what Pareto’s oscillation between ‘faith’ and ‘skepticism’ means in precise psychological terms will receive considerable attention. For now, though, it is at least clear that at issue is the classic antagonism between conservative and liberal psychological orientations towards social and moral norms. Liberal ‘scepticism’ enjoys ascendancy during periods when habits and customs are increasingly sensed as being no longer relevant; this begins to evaporate, allowing conservative ‘faith’ to deepen, when it is later sensed that the guidance once provided by these things had real value by letting people interact according to known rules.

As interesting and controversial as this idea may be, we must leave it for now and move on to consider the remaining cycles and their interactions. Powers’ distillation of Pareto’s theory of the economic cycle (Powers 1987, 115) similarly consists of interlocking mechanisms which might each provide useful theoretical foundations for research. Its cyclical dynamic follows Pareto’s early understanding of the economic cycle which recognised that pools of unused capital build during economic
depression, creating the conditions for future economic expansion. These pools then deplete as expansion occurs, to the point where contraction begins again. However, Powers stresses that Pareto’s theory also contained the following insights:

1. General prosperity enables people to satisfy tastes for unnecessary consumer goods and services. 
2. Capitalists respond to growing demand for consumer goods and services by investing in the consumer sector rather than the capital-producing sector. 
3. Economic growth in general means that there is a larger infrastructure to maintain. Greater depreciation and replacement costs are therefore involved just in trying to maintain the growing volume of economic activity. 
4. Consumer goods and service industries can tend to have particularly high depreciation and replacement needs, at least in part because of the stress consumers place upon fads and newness. 

As a consequence of all these factors, the level of replacement costs required to maintain the status quo is especially great in a prosperous, consumer-oriented economy (Powers 1987, 114).

Pareto regarded psychological factors as integral to this cyclical dynamic, partly because fluctuations in the psychological compositions of elites in general will either promote or inhibit consumerism, but also because changes in the psychological composition of the economic elites in particular will influence whether capital flows on a long term, low risk, low reward basis to capital-producing industries, or on a short term, high risk, high reward basis to consumer industries. In fact, Pareto wrote very extensively about economic elites in psychological terms, using the terms rentier and speculator to designate two different types of capitalist. These terms approximate to the notions of ‘lion in the economic elite’ and ‘fox in the economic elite’. His speculators are ‘entrepreneurs’ whose ‘wide-awakeness in discovering sources of gain’ allows them to exploit the high risk investment opportunities which exist in expanding economies (Pareto 1935, §2233). The rentiers, by contrast, ‘do not depend to any great extent upon ingenious combinations that may be conceived by an active mind’. They prefer to dedicate their capital to low risk, low return enterprises; they are often ‘gentlemen’ content with fixed incomes (Pareto 1935, §2234). Hence, although the rentiers may lack the lions’ ferocity, they do share with them that low creativity and risk aversion which distinguishes them markedly from the foxes and speculators. Hence, speculators drive the expansion and eventual exhaustion of socially available capital within the consumer economy; once no further potential for capital expansion exists, rentier ‘thrift’ drives the ensuing process of capital contraction and consolidation to start the economic cycle afresh within the capital-producing economy.

Finally, Powers’ reading of Pareto’s political cycle (Powers 1987, 137) draws more overtly upon Pareto’s Machiavellianism. The focus here is upon alternation between the governing control strategies of ‘force’ (which leads to the consolidation and centralisation of sovereignty) and ‘fraud’ (which manages the dispersal of sovereignty throughout diverse networks). Powers’ argument is that both strategies, when carried to extremes, lead to inefficiencies of political coordination and control. Political decentralisation favours the strategy of co-optation, which produces wide social distributions of political sovereignty. This creates ‘patronage and usufruct’ which in turn produces organisational inefficiencies such as those increasingly expensive and unsustainable patterns of resource allocation which characterised
Italy’s *clientelismo*. Such organisational inefficiencies favour political reversals towards greater centralisation. The resulting drives to reconcentrate sovereignty produce greater reliance upon force as a control strategy and also create fertile ground for personality cultism. Governments which move in this direction do however become compelled to take on fewer tasks, eventually succumbing to ‘entropic asphyxiation’ whereby they fail to perform even key tasks well. Inefficiencies now arise in such areas as the delegation of authority and the rewarding of performance. This creates pressure for a further political reversal, this time in the direction of greater decentralisation.

Notably, Pareto’s political cycle employs Machiavelli’s lion and fox typology by treating these two positions as corresponding not just to alternative control strategies but also to changing elite psychologies which are considerable for their functional adaptation to these strategies, and indeed for their correspondence to changing principles of elite recruitment and leadership selection under changing conditions. Powers’ mention of the ‘cult of personality’ as a correlate of Machiavelli’s ‘force’ is particularly interesting; it represents a yearning for ‘strong leadership’ which chapter four will reveal to be an important feature of conservative-authoritarian personality.

Next we may consider Powers’ explanation of interaction between the social sentiment and economic cycles (Powers 1987, 122). Once more Powers presents us with interlocking mechanisms, this time to show why these two cycles are likely to synchronise. The argument here is that economic prosperity will tend to correlate positively with relaxed social prescriptions, whilst economic austerity will tend to combine with more restrictive social prescriptions. Beginning with the upswing of both cycles, Powers’ argument is that increasing productivity favours increasing social complexity and opportunity in life, which increasingly brings traditional beliefs into conflict with actual experiences. As social prescriptions relax, consumer hedonism becomes more permissible, which allows productivity to develop further to satisfy escalating consumer demands. This however results in consumer debt, within the context of a more general scarcity of capital which might fund further economic productivity increases. This produces economic contraction, which means levels of socioeconomic attainment increasingly fall below socioeconomic aspirations. Calls for tougher social prescription then grow louder, as a means to close this gulf, with the result that consumption once more becomes unacceptable and consumer industries contract sharply. The consumer economy then gives way once more to a capital-producing economy which allows both private savings and capital which might be used for larger scale business investment to accumulate to the point where the cycle can begin afresh.

Importantly, this cycle alludes to much more than it mentions directly. The question of how personality structure is likely to vary with level of social complexity is a difficult one which the next chapter will explore in far more detail, in order to place Pareto’s theory on a more solid footing. Among the many aspects of social complexity which are potentially relevant here are increased social mobility and broadening cultural horizons, increased educational opportunity, technological innovation, and indeed increased flux within economic production itself. All of these factors and many more besides, can undermine traditional work-related sources of identity, thereby producing that confusion over social and moral norms.
which the above theory requires for consumer hedonism to emerge as a stimulus for unsustainable economic growth. We have heard this argument before, of course. The dilemma of whether a new kind of person might result from increased social complexity has already been mentioned in this chapter as having led renaissance literature to ponder the caricature of the Machiavellian confidence trickster.

Next, Powers describes Pareto’s thoughts on interaction between social sentiment and political organisation (Powers 1987, 138). He begins with the observation that the inefficiencies and brutalities of centralised authority generate resistance and resentment. This promotes the political control strategy of co-optation, which stimulates hedonistic sentiment amongst the elites, who now pressurise government to extend even more ‘largesse and patronage’ towards them. Once this co-evolution of hedonism and patronage has generated crippling inefficiences and expenses, governments are compelled to backtrack towards greater centralisation of sovereignty and use of force.

Focusing more closely upon this co-evolution of patronage and hedonism, Powers observes that extensions of patronage stimulate hedonism in part through their undermining of work ethic. This is because patronage encourages people to think of ‘success’ less in terms of personal accomplishment and more in terms of ‘who one knows’. Furthermore, Powers comments that ‘the more people get, the more they think they deserve’; and, of course, ‘people would rather get things the easy way’. Thus, increasing numbers within the elites expect and demand special treatment. Hence taking stock of likely psychological correlates to the interaction between political and social sentiment cycles, two plausible themes emerge which will both be placed upon firmer ground later within this book. The first is the link between conservative personality and work ethic, which Powers relates to times of strict social prescription and political centralisation. We will see in the last chapter that scales to measure work ethic (founded upon Weber’s theory of protestant work ethic (Weber 2002)) and conservative personality correlate positively; furthermore, ‘anti-hedonism, asceticism and disdain for leisure’ have all been identified as important dimensions of work ethic (just as Weber had earlier flagged these as motivational puritan virtues shared by Benjamin Franklin and other early capitalist entrepreneurs). The second is the link between liberal personality and what might be termed ‘entitlement thinking’, which Powers relates to political decentralisation and that loosening of social prescription which stimulates hedonism. Chapter four will link entitlement thinking to the intertwined psychological themes of psychopathy and narcissism. More fully, we will see that these combine further with Machiavellianism to form what is now termed a ‘dark triad’ of tightly interconnected, socially aversive personality traits, which taken together yield a plausible psychological foundation for Pareto’s Machiavellian-liberal ‘fox’.

Finally, Powers’ account of interaction between Pareto’s economic and political cycles (Powers 1987, 140) begins at the bottom of both cycles. Political centralisation inhibits business, which stimulates drives towards political decentralisation and its attendant usages of co-optation for the purposes of political control. As more and more businesses are shielded from competition by patronage, however, they will be able to produce inferior products and sell these at higher prices. This eventually results in a widening gulf between quality and cost right across the consumer economy, which helps send processes of political decentralisation into reverse.
Powers is suggesting here that although a decentralised polity is better placed to address the regulatory concerns which arise within a rich and highly developed civil society, prospects for fair and effective regulation are reduced by the appearance of ever more extensive and elaborate networks of patron-client ties between political and economic interests. Although Powers does not draw direct attention to the role of psychology here, we can at least say that periods of political decentralisation and economic growth are characterised by ever more complex patterns of patron-client interaction between political and economic elites. This favours the emergence within both political and economic elites of Machiavellian types who possesses particular skills in negotiating these inter-elite ties, but who nonetheless utilise these skills to work towards self-aggrandisement and undermine the common good. It is perhaps fitting that a final comment on this matter should bring all three cycles together by adding that such activities will involve exploitation of Rogow and Lasswell’s ‘gray zone’ of confusion and disagreement over norms, which we can expect to see widen, both as the social sentiment cycle moves towards relaxed social prescription, and as the political system, the economy and civil society more generally grow complex.

Having sketched out some of the principal dynamics which drive and synchronise the political, economic and social cycles, the following theoretical overview becomes possible. Elite culture and psychology, Pareto thought, are sociologically significant not just as products of, but also as partial determinants of, political, economic and social forms. His approach appears similar in certain key respects to the theory of ‘social character’ found in Erich Fromm’s (1942) ‘Character and the Social Process’. Fromm’s ‘social character’ consists of facets of character common to a group of people; these things being far more sociologically significant than peculiarities of individual character. Fromm saw social character as determined by the basic life experiences commonly encountered within a society, including fundamentals of personality structure which tend to endure throughout the individual lifespan.

Fromm also regarded social character as a far more important influence than logic and reason, upon how we think, feel and behave. Although Pareto could not begin to equal the psychological richness of Fromm’s psychoanalytic and humanistic analysis of social character, he had at least stressed this essential point. In fact, he devoted what many might consider inordinate attention within his ‘Treatise’ to his idea that ‘non-logical’ actions greatly outnumber those which are justifiable in terms of a logical relation between means and ends. He did this for good reason. It is a necessary precondition for both Fromm and Pareto to regard social character as a ‘productive force’ which influences fundamental social forms so that these may in turn mould the social characters of future generations.

Taking this approach, Pareto believed that prosperous, entrepreneur driven economic orders will tend to align with decentralised, democratic political systems and liberal social attitudes because these phenomena are all advantaged during the ‘individualised’ phase of the historical cycle by synchronising forces (Fromm’s ‘social characters’ functioning as ‘productive forces’) which are embodied within the modes of thought and behaviour common to the foxes and speculators who are then most able to fill the ranks of the elites. Likewise, austere anti-entrepreneurial economic orders, strong, centralised political systems and religious-conservative social orders tend to align together as societies pass through their ‘crystallised’ phases...
because synchronising forces manifest themselves within the modes of thought and behaviour of the lions and rentiers who are now better adapted to upward mobility within the elites (see Pareto 1935, §2206–36 on the ‘Cycles of Interdependence’).

This overview of the historical cycle also provides clues concerning how Pareto theorised the changing psychological composition of elites. Following Machiavelli’s astute belief that individuals tend not to abandon acquired habits, he appears to have assumed that those psychologically in tune with the times will, over the course of years if not generations, gravitate to fill the highest elite control positions. These will be individuals who possess characteristics which are optimal for the successful handling of these control positions within any given phase of the historical cycle. This is easily rephrased in simple functionalist terms. Individuals rise through the elites according to their degree of ‘functional adaptation’ to current conditions, or, putting this differently, according to how well they meet the ‘needs of the system’.

This functionalist thinking was especially evident within Pareto’s theory of the ‘circulation of elites’ which first appeared in his (1896–97) ‘Cours d’économie politique’ (Meisel 1965, 10). This argues that for elites to endure as societies move through the historical cycle they must remain ‘open’ to influxes of individuals with appropriate ‘talents’ in order to avoid becoming vulnerable both to internal decay and to overthrow by rival elites. Van Den Berghe (1978, 166) refers to various historical studies which support his argument. Closed hereditary aristocracies, he says, have indeed proven vulnerable to sclerosis. Many long enduring traditional societies have, on the other hand, learned to survive by finding ways to maintain healthy levels of elite circulation. Imperial China’s entrance exams for accession to the mandarin class, Van Den Berghe says, provide a classic example. The Ancien Régime of eighteenth century France, he adds, suffered a fate which it could have avoided, were it not for its ‘relative closure’ against the growing bourgeoisie (see also Pareto 1935, §2057–2059).

Regarding all such adaptive psychological characteristics, Pareto did however restrict himself to generalities, attributing the loose and arbitrary manner in which he used terms conveying psychological references to his determination to avoid rooting his sociology in early, uncertain theories of depth psychology (see Meisel 1965, 27). It has also been suggested that Pareto realised psychology was a field of study outwith his competence, and he had no wish to appear as a dilettante (Madge 1964, 76, 90; Szacki 1979, 262). And yet, Pareto’s penchant for crude psychological generalisation also reflected his requirement to deal with psychological attributes defined so generally as to apply right across those incredibly diverse historical contexts, from the ancient Greek tyrannies right through to early twentieth century Europe, which are analysed in the ‘Treatise’.

2.7 Pareto and Parsons: Similar Theories of Social System?

Pareto gained notoriety for his obsession with human irrationality. One of his early critics, Emory Bogardus, aptly referred to his ‘error complex’ (Meisel 1965, 26). Talcott Parsons called him a ‘knocker’ rather than a ‘booster’ (Parsons 1949, 293). Raymond Aron described him as ‘a man who thinks against’, adding that ‘because
of the plurality of his enemies the intrinsic meaning of his work cannot but remain uncertain (Aron 1968, 169).

It has also been suggested that whereas Machiavelli advised his ‘Prince’ on those strategies which would best promote Italian unity, Pareto’s agenda had been to reveal the ‘cupidity and foolishness’ of political life, and, in particular, to scrutinise elites for examples of rifts between strategy and interest at every opportunity (Bellamy 1987, 25). Raymond Aron has proposed that this may nonetheless manifest an ethical concern to show how the character flaws of elites can, if carried to either of two sets of extremes, produce dangerous political instability (Aron 1968, 130). The following account of Pareto’s theory of social system will now explain this anti-radical position. It will be argued that Pareto was concerned with how relative social stability can be maintained in a world of rapid flux where, as his cyclical theory of history revealed to him, the maintenance of the status quo is never a lasting option.

Pareto condemned all forms of reductionist explanation, not just Marxist economism but also Buckle’s geographical determinism and Taine’s racial determinism. As Talcott Parsons points out, this view was rooted in his ‘modest and skeptical view of the scope of scientific explanation’ (Parsons 1949, 181). Pareto agreed with Hume that scientific hypotheses may only be judged ‘extrinsically’, as he put it, ‘by ascertaining whether and to what extent inferences drawn from them accord with the facts’ (Pareto 1935, §59). Hence, for example, his observation that ‘Newton was wise to halt at the dictum that celestial bodies move as if by mutual attraction according to a certain law’ (Pareto 1935, §67).

Pareto tried to move beyond reductionist theory by affirming a complex interplay of social forces where ‘action and reaction follow one another indefinitely as if in a circle’ (Pareto 1935, 2552, 2207). This aspect of his thought appears to derive in part from Herbert Spencer’s ‘organic analogy’ (Finer in Pareto 1966, 16). It also seems to owe something to the rejection of ‘monistic explanation’ which informed Machiavelli’s ‘pluralistic theory of history’ (Burnham 1943, 152). The decisive influence, however, came from Pareto’s own writings as an engineering student on the subject of equilibrium within elastic solids (Henderson 1935). This not only led Pareto to characterise the social system as existing within a state of equilibrium, it also allowed him to discuss the ‘molecules’ and ‘elements’ of the social system as one might discuss chemical equilibria.

Pareto’s definition of social equilibrium begins with the observation that the social system is ‘constantly changing in form’. We are then asked to ‘imagine some artificially induced modification’ to this form. ‘At once’, Pareto says, ‘a reaction will take place, tending to restore the changing form to its original state as modified by normal change’ (Pareto 1935, §2067). Pareto then clarifies that the concept of equilibrium should only be used ‘by analogy’ in its sociological applications (Pareto 1935, §2071–2074; Parsons 1949, 181). By analogy, then, ‘disequilibrating’ movements arising within the social system encounter opposing forces which seek to restore ‘equilibrial balance’. A social system is therefore like a river. Both flow constantly. Both resist, and threaten to sweep away, intrusive efforts to modify both their form and their ‘manner of flow’ (Pareto 1935, §2071).

Hence the main purpose of Pareto’s concept of social equilibrium was to convey the idea of synchronising force running between the social, political and economic
sub-cycles of the grand historical cycle. One example of a disequilibrating movement would therefore be where government attempts to centralise sovereignty at a time when social attitudes are liberalising and the economic cycle is moving towards prosperity. Pareto might say that under such circumstances, social forces such as growing consumer demands and feelings of individual entitlement will interact with economic forces such as those exerted by ever more powerful economic agencies which resent their political impotence, to thwart government. The one party state currently leading China into the twenty first century, whose experiments with political decentralisation ended abruptly in Tiananmen Square in 1989, seems a prime candidate for closer analysis within this Paretian framework. Likewise, Pareto would say that as societies pass through phases of economic austerity and social attitudes incline towards conservatism and religious faith, decentralising political strategies are likely to end in failure, both because they encounter popular moral resentment towards patronage and because low economic levels make patronage particularly expensive and unsustainable. Dashed hopes for swift democratic transitions in Afghanistan and Post-Saddam Iraq may well deserve to be placed within this Paretian framework, as might earlier ‘hearts and minds’ policies followed by the British in Malaya and the US in Vietnam. Powers’ (1987) account of the mechanisms which synchronise the social, political and economic cycles can be used as a resource, both to generate further hypotheses which help us sharpen our thoughts concerning examples such as these, and to alert us to many further types of disequilibration which may arise within politics, the economy or society. In the final analysis, of course, this Paretian framework need not apply perfectly to any concrete situation; what matters is that through Powers’ reinterpretation it yields a catalogue of mechanisms which we can use as Weberian ideal-typical formulations, to stimulate our thoughts.

Pareto derived further value from his equilibrium metaphor by modelling the social system upon chemical equilibrium in particular. This allowed individual social actors to be represented as the ‘molecules’ of the social system. Furthermore, just as individual molecules form molecular compounds in nature, so too Pareto grouped individuals upon the basis of shared ‘residues’ which then became the basic ‘elements’ for his social system (Pareto 1935, §2079–2080). The residues are discussed more fully in the following section. What must be said here is that this chemical equilibrium metaphor brings us straight to the crux of Pareto’s sociology which has baffled commentators and caused so much disagreement between them. Although his treatment of individuals as ‘molecules’ is relatively uncontentious because upon generous interpretation it may be regarded as expressing a simple methodological individualism, Pareto’s privileging of residues as organising principles for collective action is much more problematic because it very conspicuously delineates collective agency on the basis of psychological and cultural commonality. We are asked, that is, to somehow regard such commonalities as organising principles for collective action which eclipse even the roles played by common interests and common institutional frameworks in facilitating collective action. However, we have already covered some grounds for agreeing with Pareto on this point, because we can regard his residues as corresponding to psychological and cultural mileus which extend well beyond all institutional boundaries, and whose primary sociological significance is that they apply synchronising force to the social, political and economic cycles. This
interpretation provides us with an important sense in which Pareto’s sociology is fundamentally concerned with what chapter three will term ‘social personality’.

Pareto’s theory of social equilibrium also held direct implications for statecraft. Specifically, it provided a means to judge political leaderships according to how well they maintain equilibrial balance throughout constantly changing times, a chief determinant of which is whether they permit an open circulation of personnel throughout the elite strata. Crucially, the desirability of maintaining equilibrial balance, lest a ‘reaction’ be set in motion by the synchronising forces of the historical cycle, reveals a peculiarly conservative streak in Pareto’s thought. He could argue from this position that effort should not be squandered on political upheavals which run contrary to wider processes of societal change. Politicians should instead consider equilibrial balance as a criterion for judging the likely effectiveness of all significantly scaled interventions in politics, the economy or society.

This aspect of Pareto’s thought seems to explain why a ‘Pareto circle’ developed amongst conservative academics such as Robert Merton, Joseph Schumpeter, Crane Brinton and George Homans at Harvard University during the 1930s and 1940s. This circle first took shape under the central organising influence of Harvard physiologist Lawrence Henderson, a fierce debater who drew heavily upon both Pareto and Machiavelli in his vehement opposition to Marxism. Some members of Henderson’s circle later admitted they had warmed to the anti-radical implications of Pareto’s sociology, as expounded by Henderson, because they felt threatened by the intellectual interest in Marxism which had been kindled by the great depression. Harvard’s liberal and socialist academics, for their part, were quick to point out that in Pareto the bourgeoisie had found its Karl Marx (see Young 1971, 9–11).

A key figure within this circle was Talcott Parsons, whose early interest in Pareto stimulated his progress towards becoming the most influential US social systems thinker of the twentieth century. Parsons had only recently moved from Harvard University’s Economics Department to its new Sociology Department when he first joined Henderson’s circle. He soon became a regular contributor to its 1932–1934 seminar discussions of the (1917) French translation of the ‘Treatise’. Parsons’ first major sociological project was to bring European sociology to the US, leaving behind its Marxist contributions. To that end he famously went on to discuss Pareto at great length alongside Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Alfred Marshall in his (1937) ‘The Structure of Social Action’. Yet this work made few references to Pareto’s social system. This is possibly because Parsons had no desire to explain matters already covered in the separate writings of Henderson and Homans. More importantly, however, Parsons’ goal was to derive from these early European sociologists what he variously termed an ‘analytical theory of human action’ or an ‘action frame of reference’. Hence his focus was naturally directed towards Pareto’s theories of logical and non-logical conduct. What he found there allowed him to distinguish sociology as a discipline. Starting from his economist’s knowledge of Pareto as a thinker who treated homo economicus as a logical being, Parsons overplayed those elements of Pareto’s thought which distinguished the logical action assumptions of economic theory from the non-logical action assumptions of sociology. Following this distinction, Parsons could define sociology as a ‘residual science’ spanning non-logical actions only (Parsons 1949, 766). Dalziel and Higgins (2006) clarify that
Pareto did indeed view ‘pure economics’ as a field of study which assumes logical behaviour. Yet he did not view economic phenomena as wholly logical. Parsons therefore missed the vital point that Pareto’s social system spanned non-logical aspects of economic, social and political life.

Judging from what has gone before in this present chapter, and given Powers’ (1987) distillation of Pareto’s links between the economy and other areas of life in particular, it is hard to see how such an impression could have been formed. Yet Dalziel and Higgins list several commentaries on Pareto from the early 1990s which follow Parsons in representing Pareto as drawing a strict boundary between economics and sociology upon the basis of what one commentator called ‘a division of labour between the rational and nonrational aspects of social life’. Dalziel and Higgins stress that such interpretations neglect clear references made throughout the ‘Treatise’ to the idea that general sociology synthesises economics and many other disciplines to permit the study of ‘human society in general’. They side with more recent commentators like Aspers (2001) who argues that Parsons’ interpretation should be overturned so that Pareto is once more recognised as founding an economic sociology whose concern with non-logical economic conduct provides a valuable counterweight to economic theories which assume logical conduct.

Parsons had also brought to Henderson’s circle a desire to help elevate the new discipline of sociology to the same status as economics, such that economics, political science and sociology would become distinct and equal fields of study (Turner in Barber and Gerhardt (ed.) 1999). His interpretation of Pareto thus supplied a theoretical boundary between economics and sociology, around which the case for sociology could be constructed. Parsons’ concern to raise sociology’s status would eventually lead him to create, in 1946, a new Harvard Department of ‘Social Relations’ which drew together specialisms in ‘sociology, anthropology, social psychology and clinical psychology’, but notably not political science or economics. Parsons now saw his new discipline’s integrity as a matter of national importance. His Social Relations Department had been set up specifically as an institutional vehicle to further his chief intellectual ambition which had taken shape over the course of the Second World War: to highlight the systemic basis for liberal social order and so help protect democracy from threats such as fascism (Vidich 2000).

Parsons’ new social systems agenda appears to have led him to reappraise Pareto. Dalziel and Higgins (2006) quote from Parsons’ Marshall Lectures, delivered at Cambridge University in 1953, where he argued that Pareto’s distinction between social, political and economic ‘aspects’ of social action can only be upheld when it is recognised that they do not correspond to distinct sets of variables, but rather to ‘one set of fundamental variables of the social system which are just as fundamental in its economic aspect as in any other’. By this stage in Parsons’ academic career, however, Pareto had long been sidelined. It was to Freud and Durkheim, predominantly, that Parsons had amassed his greatest debts, in his effort to progress Pareto’s ambition to link ‘the mind and society’. To understand Parsons’ early failure to connect with Pareto as a guiding spirit for the refinement of social systems theory, we must consider that he did not fully appreciate the significance of Pareto’s residues as fundamental variables within the social system. This underappraisal seems to have been based upon deficiencies arising within Pareto’s abstract residue theory (e.g. Parsons in
Meisel (ed) 1965, 76–77). Had Parsons focused instead upon Pareto’s more valuable usages of the residues for the purposes of historical and sociological explanation, his estimation of their worth may well have been more positive. Powers’ development of Pareto from this perspective, and indeed this present book’s effort to find value in Pareto’s residues, based upon what appear to be their key psychological referents, together provide supportive evidence for this comment on Parsons.

Nonetheless, Parsons’ (1951) ‘The Social System’ could still commend Pareto for ‘standing almost alone’ in providing a ‘clear and explicit conception of social system’ (Parsons 1991, 546). This work reiterates at its outset Lawrence Henderson’s view that this achievement represented ‘the most important contribution of Pareto’s great work’ (Parsons 1991: xiii). Parsons then states his purpose as being to progress Pareto’s intention to delineate the social system, by employing a ‘structural-functional’ analysis more advanced than Pareto’s. Although further references to Pareto are peripheral, Parsons echoes Pareto’s concern with equilibriating forces which maintain lasting order across interconnected social, political and economic spheres. Although Pareto’s residues do not appear at all in this work, what Parsons says of equilibriating force can still be read for its congruence with Pareto’s earlier treatment of the residues. The remainder of this section will sketch Parsons’ theory in broad outline, simply to introduce these parallels, and to further suggest that perhaps Parsons’ structural-functionalist theory still holds out prospects for a revitalised Paretian framework for sociology which finds more worth in the residues than Parsons himself discovered.

Parsons’ ‘The Social System’ distinguishes between four levels of functional adaptation which we must consider if we are to understand the systematic organisation of social action to produce lasting social order. For Parsons all ‘action systems’ must adapt on all four levels, both to meet their own needs and to help meet the needs of the social system more generally. As Parsons’ action systems are for the most part institutionally bounded, regularised patterns of social action, we may count among these individual family units, all sizes of corporation, and all major political, legal, educational and religious institutions. An important consideration in relation to larger scale action systems in particular is that Parsons regarded modern, highly differentiated societies as having evolved action systems which specialise on particular levels of functional adaptation, to help the social system meet specific needs. It is therefore important to stress that the following discussion of Parsons’ four levels of functional adaptation, each of which describes an adaptation which must be made if a distinct need is to be met, is intended to apply to larger and smaller action systems alike, not just with reference to the needs of each action system, but also with reference to wider system needs.

We can usefully think of these four levels of functional adaptation as forming a needs hierarchy where lower order needs must be met before higher order needs can be addressed. Starting at the bottom level we have Parsons’ observation that every system must achieve economic ‘adaptation’ to its environment within the capitalist economy. This facilitates its own continued existence and simultaneously contributes to the economic life of society in general. Systems which succeed in sustaining themselves through these adaptations are then free to pursue distinct objectives. Hence his second level of functional adaptation is called ‘goal attainment’ whereby systems attempt to both define and pursue their goals. Here Parsons identifies the political
system as having a key role to play in orienting society as a whole towards its goals. Of course, the pursuit of diverse goals raises prospects for conflict between systems. Parsons’ third level of adaptation is therefore ‘integration’ whereby all institutionally orchestrated goal-directed systems are harmonised in relation to each other. This requires rules and procedures for resolving conflict, and here Parsons identifies systems of legislation and regulation, as well as legal and religious institutions as exerting powerful coordinating influences over a wide range of systems. The media, police and armed forces also play important roles here. These rules are in turn reinscribed within culture, from generation to generation, at the fourth and highest level of functional adaptation, called ‘pattern maintenance’. This is characterised by a broad society-wide consensus on cultural values which exert controlling influences over patterns of integration, goal attainment and economic adaptation. As Parsons (1991, 6) puts it, the social system is ‘defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols’. Digging deeper, we see that these symbols are motivational, they are founded on trust, and that family units, personal relationships, and religious and educational institutions can all play important roles in sustaining them within culture. In fact, Parsons stresses that ‘all institutionalisation involves common moral as well as other values’. These common values in turn create ‘collectivity obligations’ (Parsons 1991, 99). Here Parsons is placing his theory of social system very firmly within a Durkheimian framework by reiterating Durkheim’s fundamental belief that the problem of social order can be solved through conformity arising from a society-wide ‘conscience collective’ (Durkheim 1997). Yet we might add that Parsons’ emphasis upon value consensus and conformity also sets ‘The Social System’ within its time, belonging alongside works such as David Reisman’s ‘The Lonely Crowd’ which play uneasily to modern sensibilities by manifesting the conformist zeitgeist of the United States during the 1950s.

Ultimately then, pattern maintenance satisfies the social system’s need for order. It achieves this by maintaining social equilibrium through its conditioning influences upon not just general patterns of adaptation, goal attainment and integration, but also more specifically upon those specialised institutional mechanisms which seek to deliver these outcomes for the social system. Parsons is of course reasserting that primacy which both Durkheim and Weber had previously accorded cultural values over both political and economic matters, which taken together overturn the Marxist distinction between economic base and political superstructure. More than that, however, we can think of Parsons’ theory as leading us to ask if there could be a role for Pareto’s residues in helping us think afresh about what these overarching values might consist of, now that the idea of moral consensus has worn thin? This book will argue that Pareto’s residues do indeed correspond to aspects of culture which can help regulate and coordinate institutional behaviours. Chapter three will explain why.

2.8 Pareto’s Residues

Pareto articulated his Machiavellian assumptions about personality more through his many references to what he termed his ‘residues’ than by any other means. His ‘class I’ residues provided a quick and convenient means to allow him to allude to the
characteristics of his foxes and speculators. Similarly, his ‘class II’ residues referred primarily to the characteristics of his lions and rentiers. In fact, Pareto’s ‘Treatise’ is littered with rather unfortunate, slapdash references to elites within which either class I or class II residues ‘predominate’, or within which the balance between the class I and class II residues appears to be shifting. This section will now explain what he meant, by taking a fresh approach. It will concern itself only obliquely with Pareto’s abstract theory of residues, which has already been covered more than adequately by previous commentators, and will focus instead upon the role played by the residues (so that this question can be explored further throughout chapter three) and the content of the residues (so that this can be explored throughout chapter four). We will see that Pareto’s residues permitted him to describe, in psychological terms, the synchronising forces of his grand historical cycle, which manifest themselves within the thoughts and behaviours of the elites.

Pareto’s abandonment of reductionism in favour of an assumption of complex variable interaction may appear, on the surface at least, well in tune with later advances in scientific methodology. Along with other members of the Vienna Circle, Otto Neurath was later to argue that sociological causalism should be rejected for its unacceptable reliance upon a ‘ceteris paribus’ clause which so often fails to apply in real life situations. As a preferred alternative, Neurath suggested that theorists dealing with the social world should attempt to show how social phenomena ‘emerge from’ or ‘grow out of’ ‘highly complex social aggregations’ (Zolo 1989, 127–128). Yet Pareto’s scientistic mind insisted that sociology must be based, as natural science is based, upon the regular recurrence of similar phenomena throughout history. Whether Pareto’s scientistic stance represents, as Alvarez and Gonzalo (2006) have argued, a ‘moment’ in the evolution of conservative thought when science replaced religion as a basis for critiquing modernity, is open to debate. We can at least say that this stance created real difficulties for Pareto’s theory of social system, because having rejected reductionism Pareto still had to seek boundaries for the interaction of decisive variables within that system. This problem obligates the scientistic mind to make highly tenuous assumptions. Perhaps most problematically, the social system must be regarded as a single entity amenable to observation over long historical periods, such that regularities which provide science with its subject matter can be extracted. This requires a longitudinal approach best applied to distinct entities, such as individuals, and best used to observe change, not regularity. Pareto understood he could only proceed tentatively in his identification of decisive variables:

An exhaustive study of social forms would have to consider at least the chief elements that determine them, disregarding those elements only which seem to be of secondary or incidental influence. But such a study is not at present possible (Pareto 1935, §2063).

His decision to proceed by distinguishing between categories of variable which are either endogenous or exogenous to the social system must therefore be seen as having been made with considerable reservation. Endogenous elements listed in the ‘Treatise’ are ‘race, the sentiments manifested by residues, proclivities, interests, aptitudes for thought and observation, and the state of knowledge’. Exogenous ones listed are ‘soil, climate, fauna, flora, geological, mineralogical and other like
conditions’ which he took to be largely invariant (Pareto 1935, §2060). A further assumption followed. Of these endogenous elements, those which he termed the ‘sentiments manifested by residues’ were to command most of his attention as ‘the main elements’ in human affairs (Pareto 1935, §2194). Pareto thus became vulnerable to the accusation that he had effectively back-tracked to a reductionist position so narrowly focused upon psychological phenomena as to merit the title of ‘most outstanding representative of psychologism in sociology’ (Szacki 1979, 261).

It is necessary to look more closely at the nature and social role of Pareto’s ‘residues’ in order to consider this accusation. It must firstly be established that Pareto’s lions, foxes, rentiers and speculators were terms which, although they endured throughout his sociological writings, had been used to a greater extent before he set out his more developed thoughts in the ‘Treatise’. In that work, Pareto began to write about the alternating balance in the elites, not of the proportion of foxes and speculators to lions and rentiers, but instead about the proportion of ‘class I residues’ to ‘class II residues’. Hence Pareto’s residues effectively became his ‘independent variables’ (Meisel in Meisel (ed.) 1965, 29).

It is clear from Pareto’s discussions and usages of these residues that the psychological characteristics which he had dealt with earlier, although they were being elaborated to some extent, remained essentially the same. To indicate briefly that the psychological referents are similar, Pareto’s ‘class I’ residues are described as ‘instincts of combination’, a play on the Italian word ‘combinazione’ which refers simultaneously to the Machiavellian guile and creativity of the foxes and speculators. Pareto’s ‘class II residues’, on the other hand, are described as involving ‘the persistence of aggregates’, a label which was clearly intended to convey that intransigence, preference for the status quo, and incapacity for innovation which he had earlier attributed to both the lions and the rentiers.

No consensus upon the exact nature of the ‘residues’ has emerged from Pareto’s commentators. Indeed, William McDougall was probably right to conclude that they stood for ‘a muddle in Pareto’s mind’ and are symptomatic of his ‘mid-Victorian’ approach to psychology (Meisel 1965, 28). Some confusion arises from the fact that although residues ‘manifest’ sentiments, they are not themselves directly observable. Nonetheless they somehow correspond to ‘driving forces for actions’ (Aspers 2001). Most commentators do at least agree that Pareto devised his ‘residues’ in order to side-step psychological analysis. Aron (1968, 122) argues that Pareto tried to achieve this in two ways: firstly by insisting that residues exist only as ‘analytical concepts’ and not as ‘concrete entities’, and secondly by indicating that they refer to behaviour only, and not to unseen influences upon behaviour which reside, or are at least channelled through, psychic terrain which Pareto then viewed as beyond the reach of experimental science. A parallel might therefore be drawn between Pareto’s approach and early ‘biosocial’ treatments of personality which, by focusing only

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9 Efforts to define the residues within the secondary literature do little to clarify matters. Powers (1987, 59) states that the residues ‘simply refer to behaviour’. Szacki (1979, 266) claims Pareto was interested not in ‘what the residues are’, but rather ‘how they manifest themselves’. Coser (1977, 390) says the residues ‘correspond to’ without being ‘equivalent to’ manifestations of sentiments.
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up on observable human behaviour, also tried to evade questions concerning the ontology of underlying ‘biophysical’ components of personality which were at that time the preserve of early depth psychologists (e.g. Allport 1937, 39–43, 287–290).

Nonetheless, Pareto remained focused, as were the early biosocial theorists, upon trying to understand ‘personality traits’. His thinking might be summarised as follows. As Pareto tried to stress by his social system metaphor, individuals are acted upon by immensely complex constellations of forces, a logically complete account of which must involve recourse to the full range of sociological and psychological levels of explanation. These forces are constantly changing and are brought to bear in shifting combinations throughout the individual lifespan. However, Pareto felt this interplay could be reduced to manageable proportions for the purposes of very general, yet meaningful description, at least where aggregations of large social groups are concerned. His decision to classify behaviours as different kinds of residue may thus be understood as a concern with the outward manifestations of those enduring psychic structures by which groups of individuals who have undergone similar experiences have commonly learned to settle complex forces in order to bring some degree of consistency to their thoughts and behaviours.

Like Fromm, Pareto envisioned a two way interaction between these personality traits and the environmental circumstances which influence them. Operationally, however, Pareto overemphasised the agency of his residues in shaping the environment (to reiterate, these were to provide the ‘synchronising forces’ which regulate the historical cycle) to the extent that he deemed it necessary to warn that it would be a misrepresentation to treat residues as ‘causes’ and corresponding social phenomena as ‘effects’ (e.g. Pareto 1935, §2414). Once we recognise this two way interaction, residues become descriptive, not just of personality traits which reflect the inner predispositions of those who hold control positions within the political and economic elites, but also of elite environments themselves. They specify, that is, how individuals need to behave if they are to succeed within the elites.

It seems, therefore, that Pareto’s decision to downplay his use of the terms ‘fox’ and ‘lion’ in favour of the ‘class I’ and ‘class II’ residues might in part be regarded as an effort to move beyond his earlier, overly simplistic biophysical assumptions about personality (which his earlier use of animal labels to describe human types implies) towards one which acknowledges its plasticity. Pareto’s changing terminology may reflect, that is, his dawning realisation that individuals can adapt to new situations to which they are not initially suited, and, much more significantly, that institutions may adapt to new situations without relying upon a substantial personnel circulation.

Lastly, a final point may confirm that Pareto’s theory of ‘residues’ is best thought of as an early, unsuccessful effort to grasp the idea of a personality trait. Pareto believed that a small number of residues will typically manifest themselves within a greater number of ideological ‘derivations’ (e.g. Pareto 1935, §2081–2088). So, for example, he thought that ideologies of pacifism, humanitarianism, socialism and democracy all reflect the same underlying ‘class I residues’ (the characteristics which he attributed to his foxes are once more clear). Ideologies which involve a thirst for political violence, religious theology, or assertions of the importance of specific customs and traditions or folk wisdoms, were all deemed to manifest the
same underlying ‘class II residues’ (where the characteristics of the lions are once more apparent). The residues were, in fact, so called because they try to express the ‘common elements’ which are left when the changeable features of such varied ideologies are removed (e.g. Winch 1958, 104). More fully, they aim to be descriptive of different kinds of psychic terrain, where certain kinds of ideology will either flourish or find it hard to take root.

Pareto’s relationship between residue and derivation may thus be understood very simply as an early and unsatisfactory attempt to grasp a concept which is now common currency in psychological research. On replacing ‘residues’ with ‘dimensions of personality’ and ‘derivations’ with ‘items from a psychometric scale’, it becomes clear that the discipline of psychometrics, which emerged in the early twentieth century, in particular within the London school, came to rely heavily upon an inferential procedure which Pareto sensed but did not pursue towards practical ends.

2.9 Conclusion: Pareto’s Political Sociology

Throughout much of chapter twelve of his ‘Treatise’, Pareto moved his focus from ‘general sociology’ to a particular concern with the distribution of psychological characteristics throughout the ‘governing elites’ of western democracies. His thinking is neatly concentrated within the following passage which makes it clear that he viewed the distribution of psychological characteristics throughout political hierarchies as mirroring exactly the distribution of psychological characteristics between elites and non-elites:

In our political systems in the west political parties fall into two general classes, 1. Parties that alternate in governing a country, so that while one is in power the others stand in opposition. 2. Intransigent parties, parties of lost causes, that never get into power. The parties which never attain power are frequently more honest, but also more fanatical, more sectarian, than parties which do. In the parties that get into power, a first selection is made at election time. Barring exceptions – and they are few – a person cannot be elected Deputy unless he pays and is willing to grant, governmental favours. That makes a mesh which lets very few (honest politicians) get by. A second and more thorough-going sifting of the raw material takes place in the choice of Ministers. Ministerial candidates have to make promises to the Deputies and be able to assure them that they will look after them and their political followings. Rare gifts of acuteness and aptitude for combinations of every kind are absolutely necessary. Ministers have to look over the field of business with a discerning eye to discover subtle combinations of economic favouritism, neat ways of doing favours to banks and trusts, of engineering monopolies, manipulating tax assessments, and so on; and in other domains, influencing courts, distributing decorations, and the like, to the advantage of those on whom their continuance in power depends (Pareto 1935, §2268).

Two points are worth noting here. Firstly, this description, although aimed at ‘political systems in the west’, appears written with the Italian polity very firmly in mind. This must raise doubts over its more general applicability. Secondly, the personality theory which this chapter has begun to sketch out is very much in evidence. To
confirm this beyond any doubt, however, the very same section of Pareto’s ‘Treatise’ contains the following distinction:

As regards the various parties within the governing class, we may distinguish two sorts of person in each of them: A. Individuals who aim resolutely at ideal ends and unswervingly follow certain personal rules of conduct. B. Individuals whose purpose in life is to strive for their own welfare and the welfare of their associates and dependants … People who are kindly disposed towards a party will call the A’s in that party “honest men”. Adversaries of the party will call them “fanatics” and “sectarians” and hate them (Pareto 1935, §2268).

After elaborating upon this distinction slightly, Pareto concludes that the distribution of ‘A’ and ‘B’ types in political bodies ‘depends very largely on the relative proportions of class I and class II residues’.

What Pareto seemed to believe, then, is that democratic political elites consist of two basic types. The ‘B’ types or ‘foxes’ who possess the ‘class I residues’ will tend to gravitate to fill the higher elite strata whereas the ‘A’ types or ‘lions’ who possess the ‘class II residues’ will tend to be concentrated more strongly within the lower strata. This chapter has not explained exactly what traits are involved but it has at least indicated that Pareto’s contrast is between the Machiavellian democrat and the anti-democratic conviction politician, or as Raymond Aron put it, between the political man who is selfish, and the political man who is naive. We have also seen that this contrast refers to two alternative political styles, each of which, as Pareto tried to explain in his discussions of social equilibrium, can be carried to dangerous extremes unless a balance is struck which is appropriate for current social and economic conditions. Chapter four will explore the relevant personality traits, and their associated political styles, far more comprehensively. Before this, however, the next chapter will pave the way by evaluating Pareto’s belief that patterned distributions of individual psychological characteristics endure within political elites to influence their behaviour.
Chapter 3

Social Personality

3.1 Introduction

We have already seen that Pareto’s class I and class II residues refer to broad psychological themes. Confusingly, however, they are not psychological constructs themselves. This has important consequences for how we read Pareto. Glancing through his many commentaries on the distributions of class I and class II residues throughout political elites, we might easily suppose Pareto was indulging a psychologically reductionist view of elite behaviour. Only further reflection upon the nature of the residues leads us to reconsider. Pareto certainly assumed that elite behaviours reflect patterned distributions of individual psychological characteristics. His theory is one of ‘social personality’ in at least this limited sense. However, his residues refer to much more besides. As the previous chapter explained, the residues also represent patterned resolutions of synchronising societal dynamics which both condition and encompass elite behaviour. To ‘explain’ elite behaviour with reference to a residue is thus to set that behaviour beside many other societal interactants within connecting patterns.

It is useful to note that we are semantically ill-prepared to discuss these patterns. This is why Pareto’s commentators have been so at odds in their interpretations of the residues, and it seems fair to surmise that Pierre Bourdieu’s similarly concerned concept of ‘habitus’ (which is considered later in this chapter) has invited multiple interpretations for the very same reason. The Paretian solution to this problem is to articulate these patterns as interconnections between broad psychological themes which, being familiar to us, are readily manipulable and can power our imaginations. And so, as we discern that the class I residues refer to patterns such as the tendency for liberalism to combine with innovation and manipulativeness, or that the class II residues refer to patterns such as the tendency for conservatism to combine with risk aversion and political violence, we should perhaps treat these along with other patterns suggested by Pareto’s residues as existing not just at the level of individual psychology, but as positing something of the operation of wider societal dynamics. Taking this approach, Pareto’s residues become templates or sensitizing devices which can trigger more detailed analyses of political elites. They supply us with familiar, psychologically-based themes, and provide blueprints for arranging these themes together, yet they leave us free to theorise the dynamics operating both within and between each themed area. Hence although psychological factors will always deserve some attention, we need not take psychologically reductionist routes as we explain the dynamics they relate to. And so, taking ‘Machiavellianism’ as an example, if we are to explore this within a political elite we may well choose to follow most of Italy’s political historians by regarding this as referring less to political character
structure than to economic structures which require Machiavellian behaviour (like those which once underpinned Italy’s systems of trasformismo and clientelismo).

This realisation has important consequences for any reader of Pareto who works today within the fields of political psychology or sociology, who may find it strange to encounter a political sociology which, on the surface at least, describes elite behaviour using crude individual psychology referents, seemingly without recourse to any group-level constructs which would better engage with the internal dynamics of elites and more adequately reflect the heterogeneity and complexity of influences upon elite behaviour. Of course, the real world is far more chaotic than Pareto’s cosmos. And yet a theoretical framework need not apply all the time, or even most of the time, to qualify for a place within the social scientist’s toolkit. This present chapter therefore seeks to show that Pareto’s basic approach anticipated important truths about political elites. It moves beyond Pareto’s own thought, identifying some of these truths within the context of a sustained argument for the use of ‘social personality’ as a basic unit of sociological analysis. We will consider what it means, in the light of Pareto’s sociology, to refer to a political elite’s social personality. We will further explain that these things are not just likely to exist; they also deserve more attention in view of their often decisive and perhaps growing influence over policy processes.

These statements raise ontological questions which demand empirical solutions. Most obviously, the social personalities of specific political elites must be mapped out before speculation as to their influence upon elite decision-making can begin. In the final chapter of this book, some encouragement will be given to aspiring cartographers of social personality, because the psychometric study described there will successfully highlight differences between the social personality profiles of Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat subpopulations within the Westminster Parliament. There we will find clear echoes of Pareto’s distinction between the class I and class II residues. More fully, we will see not only that these elites possess social personalities, but that Pareto guides us towards their content.

This present chapter therefore establishes theoretical grounds for anticipating that attributes of individual personality are likely to harmonise on collective levels to create enduring social personalities within political elites, for two complementary reasons. Firstly, it provides theoretical validation for Pareto’s political sociology; secondly, by establishing a theoretical framework for the final chapter’s research findings, it paves the way for the more substantive empirical validation which follows in that chapter. Section 3.2 will begin by listing political socialisation agencies which influence elite members to internalise the social personalities of those elites within which they are immersed. This will explain why social personalities endure, surviving personnel circulation, but it will not directly engage with their purpose or function. A full Paretian solution to this problem would entail treating social personality as an agency which channels the dynamic forces of the social, political and economic cycles by resolving them within elite psychology. Although the argument provided in section 3.3 might well be developed along such lines, it focuses instead upon interaction between social personality and decision-making. The core argument will re-state and build upon a position which Pareto worked hard to formulate early within his Treatise, and which was intended to predicate his entire sociological project.
Following Pareto’s insistence that ‘non-logical’ conduct accounts for most human behaviour (Pareto 1935, §145–248) it will be argued that political elites frequently encounter circumstances which involve ‘cognitive indeterminacy’ in the sense that insufficient information exists to permit fully informed ‘rational’ decision-making. Under such circumstances, heuristic guidance is required. Social personality will be viewed in functional terms as both storing and supplying this guidance. Hence we might say that a social personality comes into being when elite decisions made under conditions of cognitive indeterminacy lead to the inscription of guiding heuristics within elite culture. This will occur on multiple cultural levels, including individual personality structure. Once embedded within social personality, these heuristics will then guide further decision-making under conditions of cognitive indeterminacy. On the basis of subsequent performance they will then be reinforced, modified or abandoned, perhaps attaining the status of elite tradition over time.

Section 3.4 will develop this functionalist approach to social personality by arguing that under such conditions, political elites will strain towards guidance which helps them behave in consistent and predictable ways. General personality traits will be regarded as good potential sources of such guidance by virtue of their stability over time and across diverse situations. More specifically, it will be argued that the psychological dimension of conservatism-liberalism (which will be theorised very broadly as comprising orientations towards the status quo, risk and innovation) typically contributes much of this stability, because the positions which we adopt along this continuum supply our object worlds with vital organising elements.

Section 3.5 will provide a counterweight by arguing that political decision-making is unlikely to involve settled strategies along these or indeed any other psychological continua because, to some extent at least, trial-and-error learning yields information concerning what sorts of strategies are objectively best at tackling problems. Section 3.6 will reply with arguments to suggest that under conditions of increasing complexity, such as advanced industrialised societies are now experiencing, the scope for trial-and-error learning by political decision-makers is narrowing. This will permit section 3.7 to conclude that the Paretian approach to political sociology deserves a favourable reappraisal because it focuses squarely upon aspects of social personality which can guide policy-makers as they negotiate the contemporary world’s widening sphere of uncertainty.

3.2 Social Personality

The last chapter indicated that Pareto’s political sociology is concerned primarily with the distributions of class I and class II residues throughout political elites. We might also recall that these residues refer in part to patterned clusters of personality traits which derive their basic structures from wider societal dynamics, but which may fail to maintain their adaptive fitness as societal conditions change, becoming impediments to, not instruments of, these dynamics. Indeed, this possibility establishes the necessary theoretical context for understanding that enthusiasm for exposing elite maladaptation which Emory Bogardus termed Pareto’s ‘error complex’. Hence we can say that Pareto’s political sociology envisions political
elites as bound by psychological commonalities which influence their decisions, for better or for worse. These commonalities will form the core of what are referred to below as ‘social personalities’.

Certain pitfalls await those who would employ social personality as a basic unit of analysis. For one thing, it is necessary to avoid the ‘individualistic fallacy’ which assumes that groups possess the properties of their individual members. Another trap is the ‘ecological fallacy’ which assumes that individual group members possess group properties. Jon Elster draws our attention to disanalogies between individual and group level explanation which show why we should not stray lazily between levels. Firstly, he says, ‘social preferences’ are harder to define than individual preferences because it is harder to ascribe singular motives and goals to collectivities. Secondly, ‘social beliefs’ may, unlike individual beliefs, rely upon socially dispersed knowledge. Lastly, ‘social action’ is, unlike individual action, vulnerable to the distorting, private interests of those agencies entrusted to carry it out. It is therefore only possible to speak of ‘rough similarities, at best’ between social and individual levels of explanation (Elster 1989a, 175).

At this juncture it is useful to conceptualise social personality from a methodological individualist standpoint as consisting of aggregated personality attributes; that is, of psychological commonalities between those who populate collective decision-making bodies. Typically, these attributes are unlikely to be shared universally, and may not even be shared modally. To the extent that they are shared, their salience is likely to vary considerably between individuals. Yet we may still measure and analyse social personality, because its existence and content are inferable from statistically significant patterns yielded by psychometric studies. Taking this approach, social personality is very much an empirical construct; moreover, it is one which by bridging individual and social levels, provides a basis for exploring the true extent of Elster’s ‘rough similarities’.

To begin to understand why political elites should possess social personalities, we can consider these from a cultural materialist standpoint as vehicles for wider social and economic interests. As Margaret Hermann (1986, 182) mentions, several theorists have written about ‘coalignment processes’ whereby political leaders use persuasion and bargaining to secure support from ‘multiple constituencies’. Similarly, Anthony Downs’ (1957) ‘Economic Theory of Democracy’ viewed the ‘rational’ political actor as motivated by the desire for political office and therefore beholden to the ‘median voter’. Taking a broader view of political conflict, Antonio Gramsci’s recentralisation of praxis within Marxism envisioned blocks of social forces shifting in and out of mutually beneficial coalitions as a ‘war of position’ rages between labour and capital. In short, all such arguments supply theoretical frameworks which set us thinking of political elites as managing cultural boundaries to maximise cultural harmonisation with wider economic interests which resource them with finances, recruits, votes, and grassroots helpers.

These harmonisations will occur on multiple cultural levels, including that of social personality. It is worth defining terms more closely here. The word ‘culture’ has been endlessly redefined to consist of norms, beliefs, values, manners, institutional arrangements, artefacts, language, symbols, meanings, human processes, relationships, patterns of interaction and the like. When we refer to a culture we
therefore establish a cavernous theoretical space wherein we may explore complex interplay between very diverse constituents. This interplay has been described as ‘cultural resonance’ (e.g. Kubal 1998) which we might say binds social personality to these varied constituents in patterns of mutual influence characterised by complexity and reflexivity. Some may disagree, insisting that social personality consists of human properties whereas culture consists of human products. Yet this splitting of the two concepts might easily lead to the reification of social personality, such that we underappreciate how social personality and other cultural levels reconstitute themselves through resonances spanning multiple levels. When we subsume social personality within culture, then, we begin to sense that when we refer to a personality trait, or to a broad family of traits such as conservatism or liberalism, we are actually dealing with entities which span multiple cultural levels. Such assumptions are often reasonably and productively made when we use psychometric instruments to tap social personality. Indeed, when we regard a psychometric tool as a blunt instrument capable of tapping multiple cultural levels simultaneously, what we lose in scientific precision we often make up for in terms of richer analysis and ad hoc theorising.

This chapter assumes broad and deep links between social personality and other cultural levels. When we refer to harmonisation between cultures, as we do when we talk of political elites managing their cultural boundaries, we refer in part to harmonisation between social personalities, because we regard social personality as malleable under harmonisation pressures absorbed through cultural resonance.

As soon as we accept that a political elite’s social personality will partly reflect the cultural milieu of its economic constituencies, we must however acknowledge that these supports are creaking and splintering. As the last chapter mentioned, mutual interests become fleeting as economies grow complex and differentiated, and as they transform under the influence of advancing technologies and changing markets. One consequence is that economic elites lose cultural homogeneity. The UK’s financial and corporate elites exemplify this trend well. Cadbury (1998) observes that for decades city financiers and corporate heads dealt with each other through personal contact and informal rule-based agreement. During the 1980s, however, financial services expanded rapidly, particularly after the so-called ‘big bang’ event of October 1986 when electronic trading began. The elites then filled with new recruits from a much broader range of class backgrounds, all eager to learn professions whose ground rules appeared incomprehensible, ambiguous or no longer inapplicable. The resulting cultural vacuum is commonly cited as a driver for the following decade’s corporate governance revolution, which sought to fill that vacuum with regulation.

Prospects for culturally-fixed economic constituencies are further diminished by the growing complexity, chaos and fluidity of ‘globalisation’ (Urry 2002). This is partly because diverse processes linked to globalisation, such as the development of economic interdependence, the liberation of markets and capital flows, and new technology’s capacity to shrink time and distance, have opened economic elites towards greater cultural heterogeneity. This has interacted with the slow blurring of dividing lines between classes to undermine the traditional role of economic class in structuring the constituencies of political elites. Ulrich Beck (1992) helps us better understand this blurring of boundaries, being pre-eminent among commentators who argue that growing diversity of individual experience no longer permits us to view
the world through the prism of economic class. Beck argues that whereas our class identifications once helped insulate us against harsh economic reality, we now absorb economic risks as individuals, for which we pay a heavy psychological toll. More recently, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) have set Beck’s concept of classless *individualization* more firmly beside that of globalisation, arguing that interaction between these processes should be our theoretical focus for understanding social and political change. As Bottero (2002) points out, class theorists have responded very differently to Beck’s theory of individualization. Some postmodernists carry it over into ‘death of class’ theory, whilst others use it to redefine class. Classes thus become ‘individualised hierarchies’ rather than distinct social groups. Interestingly, these emerging perspectives are inclined to factor culture into their re-definitions, by focusing on the embeddedness of culture within social and economic practices. Perhaps such cultural re-definitions will help us re-theorise the class sources of political elite culture. For the present, however, we can at least anticipate serious obstacles.

It would be remiss of any book on Pareto to move beyond this conclusion without reiterating that his sociology very conspicuously provides a theoretical framework which helps us grapple with this question. In fact, we might conveniently label this Pareto’s theory of ‘individualisation’ to invite comparisons between Beck and Pareto. The theory in question concerns the forces which Pareto envisioned (within his (1935) ‘Treatise on General Sociology’ and (1984) ‘The Transformation of Democracy’) as propelling the grand historical cycle through its ‘individualised phase’. As the last chapter explained, this shift comprises movements through three synchronising cycles: the political cycle as it moves towards decentralisation, the economic cycle as it moves towards prosperity, and the social sentiment cycle as it moves towards scepticism. Working from Pareto’s ‘Treatise’ and ‘Trasformazioni’, from what Powers says about these cycles’ internal and synchronising dynamics, or from our own inventiveness within Pareto’s framework, we can theorise how these dynamics synergise to promote the class I residues within the political elites. Our starting point might be that economic prosperity promotes consumer hedonism which in turn promotes individualistic rights-based thinking, or that economic decentralisation favours Machiavellian politicians who are skilled in negotiating social networks, or that both economic prosperity and decentralisation entail the development of a richer civil society whose wider distribution of power should undermine authoritarian elements within political culture. It is no exaggeration to say that many further hypotheses are easily forthcoming. Rather than develop these arguments further, it will simply be concluded that Pareto opens a rich seam. Consequently, we must be careful to preserve the possibility that the social personalities of political elites may typically derive at least some of their content from wider social, political and economic cultural milieus.

Even where a political elite’s economic constituency has lost definition under globalisation and individualisation pressures, we may still call upon a broad range of arguments to appreciate why its social personality should endure. Indeed, these arguments will also provide some theoretical support for Pareto’s view that residues may persist within political elites, even when they become maladapted to the times. Here we must consider the principal *psychological* agencies which cause individual
level mental attributes to permeate the minds of those who populate the political elites. The common conservative claim that institutions store up the ‘collective wisdom of the ages’ (e.g. Quinton 1978, 50) provides a good starting point for understanding these agencies. Whether by conscious intent or otherwise, such arguments run, institutions maintain stocks of heuristic guidance which exist on multiple cultural levels and may attain the status of ‘tradition’ over time. Yet we can never be sure how well an institution’s ‘collective wisdom’ will serve as a source of heuristic guidance. There may often be no means to distinguish ‘useful learned behaviours’ from maladapted ‘cultural survivals’. Guidance which works well one year, or when applied to a particular issue, may fail when applied under changed circumstances encountered the following year, or when applied to another issue area. It is therefore unlikely that heuristic guidance will attain the status of tradition simply because its mettle has been tested by experience. In order to understand its endurance, we must rather consider why elite members internalise it and place faith in it.

This point can usefully be restated and developed with reference to the literature on memetic theory which has arisen since the 1976 publication of Richard Dawkins’ ‘The Selfish Gene’. Dawkins then set out a fascinating and highly influential analogy between how genes and ‘memes’ replicate themselves. Memes are units of cultural information which are ‘copied over’ from one host mind to another. As recipient hosts often receive modified memes rather than true copies of originals, ‘variation’ arises. This in turn permits ‘selection’ between alternative memes. Successive selections then allow us to conceive of ‘memetic evolution’. Yet memetic selection, like genetic selection, cannot be explained in terms of its rationality for individual hosts. This applies both when we consider internal rationality for hosts (where hosts make selections oriented towards desired outcomes) and external rationality for hosts (where hosts make selections which objectively benefit them, as can be understood from enlightened external perspectives, but not necessarily by the hosts themselves). Memetic theory directs our search for the drivers of memetic selection away from these rationalities altogether. Instead, interactions between memes and their environments become decisive. Some memes are ‘active replicators’ whose successive replications are driven by inner potentials to replicate. Others are ‘passive replicators’ whose spread hinges upon the existence of favourable external conditions. In both circumstances, a material consideration is human agency (including subjective sense-making) within the transmission process, yet this is viewed as facilitatory, not causal.

Just like genes, memes may vary, mutate, compete, combine, lie dormant, drift, undergo purposeful modification or remain inert over successive replications. Some theorists have even conceived of memetic viruses which spread despite harming successive hosts (indeed, what makes this an alarming possibility is that memes can replicate much faster than genes). As a useful complement to memetic theory, we might also apply Max Weber’s classic notion that the locus for cultural transmission has varied widely throughout history between various religious, political and economic institutional carrier strata, depending in particular upon shifting distributions of social power. This potential for memetic copying-over between carrier strata can only add to the potential for memes to endure longer than rational calculations which sometimes create and support them.
Crucially, then, these genetic metaphors help us see that the utilities of memes for their hosts may explain just part of their survival stories. Distin (2005) stresses that memetic evolution should allow for human volition and creativity. Nonetheless, a full understanding of cultural transmission requires that we also look well beyond these things.

Turning to consider political elite culture in particular, we can decentre human judgment and focus more upon memetic replicatory power by considering agencies of political socialisation. Dennis Kavanagh (1972, 30) observes that numerous agencies typically shape the political socialisation experiences which sustain political cultures. Many of these agencies are psychological in nature, relating directly to the experience of political elite membership. It is to these that we now turn in order to more fully understand cultural continuity within political elites.

Given the conflictual nature of politics, students of political culture will always find some value in Schachter’s famous (1959) finding that we tend to ‘affiliate under anxiety’. An application of Schachter’s finding to the world of politics suggests that elected representatives will bind more closely within political subcultures when they experience shared adversities (e.g. the hazards of re-election) and face common foes (e.g. criticisms from other parties, the media or hostile constituents). Schachter stressed that heightened group solidarities are often maintained long after the threatening circumstances which create affiliation effects have passed. Hence it is likely that members of partisan groups like political parties and their internal factions will warm to certain ideological scripts (which can be conceived broadly as articulating attitudes, values, or even assumptions about human nature) because under threatening circumstances these take on symbolic significance as tokens of group identity and solidarity.

As Margaret Hermann indicates, individual psychological characteristics may also converge within political groups because of ‘doppelganger effects’ (Bennis 1973) whereby leaders tend to surround themselves with people who display similar stylistic preferences. Hence Hermann (1986, 175) observes that leadership styles tend to permeate institutions from the top down. However, given that new members of political elites often strive to attain professional identities which they perceive to work well for others, it becomes likely that both ‘top-down’ recruitment effects and ‘bottom-up’ ‘role modelling’ effects will synergise to increase psychological homogeneity. Hermann describes further bottom-up effects. When political leaders take office they are granted short ‘honeymoon periods’. They are also awarded a limited number of ‘idiosyncrasy credits’ by those followers upon whom their positions depend (Hermann 1986, 185). Sensing their dependency, successful leaders understand they must ‘work their audiences’ by gathering intelligence on followers and heeding their expectations.

It therefore becomes reasonable to anticipate, irrespective of whether we are thinking of leaders who accommodate themselves to the expectations of followers, or vice-versa, that a good measure of belief convergence will occur through dissonance. Leon Festinger’s (1957) seminal theory of cognitive dissonance provides an analytic framework for phases of cultural resonance spanning beliefs and behaviours. It argues that where inconsistency (dissonance) exists between cognitions and their attendant behaviours, psychic discomfort results. This discomfort stimulates efforts
to reduce dissonance through processes of belief modification which restore overall consistency, either by inventing or otherwise obtaining new cognitions, or by downplaying existing ones. One application of this theory to the study of political socialisation was that of Charles Osgood, who concluded in his (1978) ‘Conservative Words and Radical Sentences in the Semantics of International Politics’ that public figures ‘gradually and unconsciously change their values and beliefs towards consistency with what they feel they must say and do’.

Jon Elster (1998, 1–18) reinforces Osgood’s view by explaining why such dissonant feelings should frequently arise to challenge private belief within the context of deliberative interaction between politicians and those affected by their decisions. Elster argues that there is a ‘civilizing force of hypocrisy’ whereby political decision-makers seek approval by explaining their preferences in terms acceptable to their audiences, even though they would choose different terms for the purposes of their own understanding. We might find this civilizing force operating in many situations, but there are grounds for regarding it as integral to leader-follower interaction in particular. This is because leaders who call upon the ‘silent understandings’ or ‘central traditions’ of their institutions stand to gain respect or even veneration from followers. Hence the motive to gain or maintain power and prestige will often impel leaders to reaffirm their institution’s social personality, perhaps by reinterpreting it in the light of current events, or by stressing certain memetic components which are likely to strike a chord with followers for a particular reason. The final chapter will provide exemplification. We will see that ‘conservative individualism’ can be viewed both as an attribute of individual personality and as as a theme embedded within the Conservative Party’s central tradition. Conservative leaders have amplified it at different points in that party’s history, in efforts to justify policy and win popularity.

3.3 Cognitive Indeterminacy

The last section looked at why the social personalities of political elites should endure, despite ongoing erosion of their economic constituencies. We also considered the replicatory powers of memes, not in relation to the quality of heuristic guidance they provide, but rather in terms of how well they satisfy psychological utilities which may sometimes permit them to evolve in ways quite unrelated to the quality of their guidance. This section will now begin to explore the nature and quality of heuristic guidance provided by memes contained within social personality. We will look not so much at why social personalities replicate over time, but rather at why they are likely to exist at all. The argument will be that they have a vital function: to help political elites respond consistently and cohesively to decision-making scenarios characterised by cognitive indeterminacy.

It is useful, in the first instance, to consider cognitive indeterminacy with specific reference to what Weber (1968) famously called the ‘zweckrational’ form of social action. Taking this approach, cognitive indeterminacy can refer to confusion over both ‘means’ and ‘ends’ in decision-making. In the former case, indeterminacy arises where insufficient knowledge exists to allow decision-makers to calculate which of
a range of possible policies or procedures is most likely to succeed in securing a desired objective. Pareto had been particularly keen to reveal the prevalence of this kind of indeterminacy, labelling political behaviours under these conditions ‘non-logical’.1 Secondly, cognitive indeterminacy can be said to exist where decision-makers have no basis for determining which of various achievable outcomes is most desirable. For Elster this is the problem of establishing criteria to set up a ‘ranking of preferences’. Pareto, similarly, was fond of affirming that human reason is unable to tell policy-makers what ends they should seek.2 Of course, as Elster’s discussion of disanalogies between individual and group preference indicates, collective decisions may frequently reveal confused aims because they emerge from competition between diverse interests and views.

A question arising here is whether decisions made under either or both forms of indeterminacy should be considered ‘irrational’. Elster has pointed out that this question reflects the western world’s unique concern with the standard of instrumental rationality. It also fails to recognise that such theories have long been surpassed by ‘practical’ conceptions of rationality. A distinguishing feature of theories of ‘practical rationality’ is that they refer to the use of heuristic guides to decision-making under conditions of indeterminacy involving either means or ends. Norms are perhaps most often mentioned as guides within this context. Yet aspects of individual personality also feature to varying degrees. For example, Elster (1989c: chapter 3) lists social norms, moral norms, legal norms, convention equilibria, private norms, habits and compulsive neuroses, and traditions as all constituting potential sources of ‘non-rational motivation’ which cannot be reduced to self interest, and which may take hold in the absence of clear rational criteria for behaviour.

Many writers use psychological theory to explain these non-rational motivations which guide us through uncertainty. George Marcus (2003) has established an important new direction for political psychology research by counting our emotions amongst these. To fully appreciate his argument, we must however challenge the conditioning influence of centuries of western thought which have represented the human condition as a timeless struggle between reason and passion. One prominent early illustration of this is Plato’s image of the reasoning soul as a charioteer struggling to command two winged horses, one (representing passion) brutish and resistant to the charioteer’s desire to steer towards human perfection, the other (representing spirit) noble and obedient. We similarly find reason opposed to passion within Freud’s tripartite theory of personality structure, where this time it is the reasoning ego which struggles, and Plato’s horses give way to the conflicting demands of id and superego. This conflict is easy to locate within Pareto too. Although we should bear in mind Pareto’s derision of both ‘the cult of reason’ and ‘the goddess science’, there is nonetheless a cold, detached, ‘view from Mars’ within his sociology. More specifically, his scientistic mapping out of sociologically significant aspects of our inner, emotional lives, simultaneously labelling these ‘non-logical’, seems to

1 Pareto defined a ‘non-logical act’ as one where ‘means are logically conjoined to ends’, both subjectively and objectively (Pareto 1935, §150).

2 Pareto returns repeatedly in his ‘Treatise’ to the inevitable ‘vagueness of the notion of utility’ (e.g. Pareto 1935, §2143).
constitute a particularly negative orientation towards emotion and passion which may well underlie his ‘error complex’. This coldness might even deserve explanation with reference to that ego defence against emotional expressiveness which Wilhelm Reich would later term ‘affect-block’.3 Pareto believed that:

In the practice of the social sciences one must be especially on one’s guard against intrusions of personal sentiments; for a writer is inclined to look not for what is and nothing else, but for what ought to be in order to fit in with his religious, moral, patriotic, humanitarian, or other sentiments (Pareto 1935, §1737).

We may agree with Pareto on this and many similar points made within the ‘Treatise’, yet still find many ways in which we gain from interactions between sentiment and thought. In his (2003) ‘The Sentimental Citizen: Emotion in Democratic Politics’, George Marcus concerns himself with mind-brain interaction. He argues that our brains contain ‘emotional appraisal systems’ which structure how our conscious minds engage with the world by providing preconscious emotional appraisals of environmental stimuli. As Marcus et al. (2000) had previously observed, these appraisals occur several hundred milliseconds before our conscious mental perceptions; hence, when our minds perceive stimuli, these arrive with emotional appraisals already attached by our brains. Most notable amongst these appraisal systems are our ‘disposition systems’ and ‘surveillance systems’. The purpose of the disposition system is to support our habits (or heuristics) by enthusing us to engage these in familiar circumstances, and by making us feel anger or despair when we disengage these things. This helps us routinise complex tasks, it reduces the quantity of information we require to act, and it releases mental processing capacity so we may accept heavier mental workloads or focus our minds. Our surveillance systems, on the other hand, provide emotional cues which help us cope with change and the unfamiliar, in particular by making us feel anxious. These feelings, Marcus argues, have value by making us review our threat-preparedness and question whether our habits are appropriate under changing conditions. Marcus draws attention to the particular role of anxiety in determining how these systems interact. When anxiety is low, the disposition system regulates our use of existing heuristics; when anxiety is high, the surveillance system engages, leading us to make new judgments based upon fresh information. Hence these systems represent our frontline responses to environmental uncertainty. They prime us with immediate impressions of what is uncertain and what is not, what carries risk and what is safe.

Marcus’ theory cannot put to rest the many intrapsychic conflicts and structural deficiencies of personality which lead many to fear their emotions, but it can at least sensitise us to the fact that we should value our emotions and use them well (which might even have some therapeutic potential for those who fear their emotions). However, what he says concerning our political lives asks us to raise our evaluations of emotion even further. He suggests we should recognise the

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3 Although we cannot be certain about this, we can be more confident that Pareto’s orientation towards emotion will appeal especially to the conservative-authoritarian mind, which, as the next chapter shows, seems related to higher levels of emotional repression, numbness and blockage.
functional value of emotion displayed on collective, political levels, together with the rhetoric which stokes this passion, because, within such contexts too, emotions are essential to processes of political judgment. They should count amongst the elements of our reasonableness, and we must understand them if we are to increase our reasonableness. To that end, a literature is developing which explores how our emotional appraisal systems influence political cognition (Marcus et al. 2005). The closely related question of how these systems relate to personality structure is also still in its infancy. Wolak and Marcus (2006) show that individual differences influence both the intensity of our ‘policy anger’ responses to ‘policy threat’, and of our emotional responses which prompt us to learn about and engage with political issues. This research raises the possibility that our personalities may shape our orientations towards uncertainty, in part through structuring influences upon our emotional appraisal systems. It also follows from this research that we should perhaps raise the status of the emotional appraisal system to become a centrepiece of social personality, and credit it with particular significance as an element of social personality capable of providing heuristic guidance under uncertain conditions.

Peter Marris’ (1996) also uses psychological theory to explain our non-rational motivations. He views these as consisting to a large extent of our strategies for managing social relations. Marris draws upon John Bowlby’s theory of early childhood attachment (which owes much to psychoanalysis) to argue that how we experience uncertainty as adults depends upon the extent to which we achieved secure attachments in early childhood. This is because it is in childhood that ‘[the] mental organisation of attachment experiences sets the context in which all future experiences of and opportunities for attachment will be interpreted’ (Marris 1996, 43). And so the meanings which we construct to make sense of our attachment relations in adulthood, for example with political institutions or employers, are said to derive in large measure from those models of specific attachment relationships developed throughout infancy. Part of Marris’ purpose in centralising the influence of meanings upon behaviour, is to more adequately represent human adaptability (through interaction between meanings and the circumstances where they are applied) than would be achieved if behaviour were regarded as an output from the internal structure of individual personality (Marris 1996, 4, chapter 3). Marris is effectively delivering a warning that when we limit our attention to features of individual personality which might seem to provide guidance on how we negotiate uncertainty, we may neglect that plasticity which allows us to interact reflexively with diverse and fast flowing circumstances. Of course, this has implications for what it means to say that ‘social personality’ can help organisations negotiate uncertainty. To take Marris’ argument on board we must theorise social personality as encompassing resonances between personality structures and meanings shared widely throughout groups. Taking social personality as an empirical construct, it is important to recognise that when psychometric tools are used to tap social personality, they must tap these resonances to some extent. They cannot tap personality traits without also demonstrating that respondents have attached similar meanings to scale items.

Marris does however assume some resonance between individual personality structure and the meanings we attach to our social relations when he argues that these meanings are influenced by early childhood experience. Some good supportive
evidence will be provided in the following chapter. We will see that our orientations towards institutional authority tend to be stable across a range of different types of institutional authority such as the armed forces and the police. Hence we can at least say that our orientations towards institutional authority tend to be ordered by mental templates, and it is perfectly reasonable to further suppose that childhood experience will strongly influence their basic characteristics. Indeed, psychologists or counsellors who have experienced ‘transference relationships’ with their patients or clients are well aware of the potential for early relationships with authority figures to form templates which can be displaced onto much later relationships with therapists, and indeed for these relationships to be deliberately cultivated within the context of therapeutic treatment, through extensions of empathic understanding to patients.

For a complementary perspective on the psychological influences upon our negotiation of uncertainty we may consider Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of an unconsciously learned ‘habitus’. This concept refers to aspects of culture existing below the level of ideology which condition the daily habits, rituals, skills, preferences and bodily experiences of individuals. There are interesting parallels between Bourdieu and Pareto. Both undertook to bridge ‘the mind and society’ in sociological rather than psychological terms, using these terms with partly psychological referents to produce confusion and disagreement amongst secondary commentators. Much like Pareto’s residues, Bourdieu’s habitus consists of largely unsensed guidelines, or ‘durably installed generative principles’ as they have been termed. These originate from within culture to organise human agency and thereby regularise thought and behaviour. Just as Pareto insisted we should not confuse the residues which drive behaviour with those ideological ‘derivations’ which articulate the residues, Bourdieu distinguished the habitus from what are termed ‘doxa’. These doxa are pre-reflexive elements of subjective experience or ‘practical sense’ which extend by degrees from pre-verbal origins into ideological formulations which find wide acceptance as folk wisdoms. Doxic experience includes feelings which we attach to behaviours at odds with what the habitus would prescribe. Most obviously, we may perceive our behaviours to be unnatural or strange where they are required by novel situations. Under such circumstances, our mental focus upon divergence between how we actually behave and how we would normally behave is likely to serve the very useful purpose of aiding our learning and adaptation (as indeed Marcus’ theory of affective intelligence argues). Equipped with this subjective awareness, then, although we may not sense the habitus directly, we may nonetheless sketch its boundaries. Being pre-reflexive, doxa also tend to reflect existing social arrangements. For example, it is through these that we experience power relationships inscribed within the habitus. The more these feature within our lived experience, the more likely we are to acquiesce towards them. Doxa also count as conservative forces because they represent channels through which great ideological paradigms influence us. For example, Bourdieu regarded ‘neo-liberalism’ both as an ideology resulting from doxic experience, and as consisting of cultural agencies which shape habitus producing structures (Chopra 2003).

In insisting that it is the habitus, more than belief and intentionality, that drives behaviour, Bourdieu does not downplay the influence of ideologies such as neo-liberalism so much as alert us to the possibility that what we might in the first instance
identify as a ‘belief’ might also refer to wider cultural agencies which mould us. His view that unconsciously held generative principles instil constant and predictable behaviour over time and across situations, and that these principles although hard to grasp may be partially captured in political ideological terms, certainly helps us theorise the anchoring of our behaviour under uncertain conditions.

Many writers have also explored guidelines for the negotiation of uncertainty which exist on conscious ideational levels more open to intellectual scrutiny than Bourdieu’s habitus. One highly productive approach has been to establish psychological generalisations which alert us to our own biases under such conditions, so that by knowing our biases we can then compensate for them. Kahneman and Tversky (1973) mention, for example, the famous ‘anchoring’ heuristic which says that we tend to base our decisions upon familiar positions such as rough statistical estimates or common assumptions, because we find it easier to structure our thoughts in relative terms, based upon such anchors, than to think in absolute terms. Likewise, many stock market investors are painfully well aware of the heuristic which Arkes and Blumer (1985) term the ‘sunk cost effect’. This says we tend to be more reluctant to remove ourselves from loss-making positions than we should be, because having incurred losses we tend to overestimate probabilities of recovery, which means we underestimate probabilities for losses to widen. Many writers have tried to compile lists of heristics such as these, in order to help us correct our many decision biases. Indeed, Pareto’s own listing of the residues (Pareto 1935, §888) deserves to be read in precisely these terms. Pareto advises us that we sometimes make mental linkages between unusual things and exceptional occurrences (§§922–28), and that we sometimes place a logical veneer over our non-logical acts (§§972–75). Pareto linked these biases to the class I residues. Similarly, we are told that biases can arise from our social class perspectives (§§1043–51), and that our thoughts can often fall under the influence of a ‘personification’ bias where we attribute to a theory, or even to a place, properties such as ‘male and female principles’ which should properly refer to persons (§§1070–85). For Pareto, these biases reflect the class II residues.4 A similar picture emerges when we consider Pareto’s listing of the various ideological ‘derivations’ which manifest and rationalise the residues (Pareto 1935, § 1419). For example, we are told that words or phrases may be ‘mere devices for evoking sentiments’ and that these can become motivational where they are have been ‘repeated over and over again’ (§ 1426). He also argues that when people obtain authoritative social positions due to certain competencies, we tend to then overestimate their competencies in areas where they have not proven themselves. We may think accordingly in terms of a ‘veneration’ bias extending from ‘simple admiration’ to ‘outright deification’ (§ 1436–37). Taking stock of these and many similar biases listed under the many subcategories of residue and derivation appearing within the ‘Treatise’, we should perhaps acknowledge that Pareto’s ‘error complex’ deserves

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4 Pareto’s linking of personification to the class II residues becomes more interesting in view of the following chapter’s argument that these residues can be understood with reference to the superego-dominated person who has strongly internalised the imago of the same sex parent.
some positive evaluation, because it consists, in part at least, of effort made by a lay psychologist to expose our many biases so that we may sharpen our thoughts from positions of enlightened self-understanding.

Following Herbert Simon’s concept of ‘bounded rationality’, other writers concerned with conscious selection between different forms of heuristic guidance have promoted the concept of an ‘adaptive toolbox’. According to Gerd Gigerenzer (Gigerenzer and Selten (ed.) 2001), the adaptive toolbox comprises ‘heuristics made out of cognitive and emotional building blocks’. These heuristics supply us with ‘searching rules’ whereby we acquire choices and the means to evaluate these choices, ‘stopping rules’ whereby we acquire a sense of how much time and effort should be dedicated to these activities, and ‘decision rules’ whereby we finally make use of this information and choose between alternatives. Gigerenzer argues that the usefulness of our emotions in supplying us with these rules should not be underestimated. Simple heuristics, based upon emotion, may prove more robust than complex alternatives, and may be especially useful where ‘fast and frugal’ decisions are required. Hence our ability to adapt by delving within our toolboxes for more effective heuristics will depend to some extent upon our self-awareness, particularly in relation to our emotional awareness systems, and it will depend more generally upon our abilities to scrutinise the adaptive fit between our circumstances and the sorts of people we are.

Of course, when we scrutinise our heuristic guidance we do this not so much as isolated individuals who rummage in toolboxes, but rather as broader collectivities intent on solving common problems. We share heuristic guidance because it is inscribed within culture, and when we debate our culture we debate the effectiveness of this guidance. Cultural anthropologist Mary Douglas is clear on this point: heuristic guidance can be embedded within culture, such that culture becomes a ‘mnemonic system’. She argues that we must adopt this perspective as far as heuristic guidance on risk is concerned, because many of the risks which we focus upon are culturally defined for us, possessing symbolic significance over and above the objective threats they represent (Lupton 1999). More will be said in the following chapter concerning how these cultural definitions harness our disgust systems and place them in the service of existing power structures. The crucial point here is that we may plausibly regard many of our heuristic orientations towards risk and other matters as perhaps arising on cultural rather than individual levels to serve functional ends which we as individuals do not understand or gain from. Hence we cannot neglect their cultural embeddedness if we are to assess their worth.

Ernest Gellner credits Descartes with originating this understanding of culture ‘as a kind of systematic, communally induced error’ to be corrected through our capacity for reason (Gellner 1992, 3). He points to a long enduring tension between reason and culture which may be described in terms of the Weberian antithesis between instrumentally rational (zweckrational) action and ‘traditional’ or ‘habitual’ forms of action, or with reference to similar distinctions found in the works of Oakeshott (see Franco 1990), Schutz (see Emmet and MacIntyre 1970) and Neurath (see Cartwright, Cat, Fleck and Uebel 1996, 131–133). The idea of tension between the two has persisted within the history of ideas. Having once given enlightenment thinkers and classical sociologists much of their subject matter, it now pervades
debate on secularisation, as well as counter-enlightenment trends such as the global rise of religious fundamentalisms.

The idea that culture and reason clash in their efforts to gain control over our thought process raises too many issues than can be explored here, but suffice to say it deserves critical scrutiny as manifesting once more the clash of reason and passion. It is however interesting to consider one particular discipline placed upon culture by the modern world which highlights its capacity to adapt to hostile circumstances. Jon Elster (1989c) argues that the scope for unconscious norm-guidance is limited by the ‘incessant change’ which surrounds us. New practices, he says, often emerge and then disappear long before appropriate norms have had a chance to develop by trial-and-error experimentation. He therefore argues that as social change intensifies, norm-guidance becomes increasingly dislocated from specific contexts and is instead reconstituted in non-specific (i.e. general or vague) terms. Referring directly to norms governing risk, for example, Elster points out that under stable social conditions norms may emerge which allow individuals to negotiate specific kinds of risk. However, ‘when change is the rule, norms emerge that regulate people’s attitudes towards change itself’ (Elster 1989c, 286).

Elster’s argument helps build the case for treating social personality as a worthwhile level of analysis because our general orientations towards risk, and indeed many other objects of our concern, need not be regarded solely in Elster’s terms as set within norms; rather, many of our general orientations are widely reckoned to exist as personality traits. Traits are universally defined as influencing behaviour across diverse situations, in contrast to ‘states’ which are situation-specific. They also tend to be grouped according to the breadth of their situational span. A prime example is Gordon Allport’s hierarchy of secondary traits, central traits and cardinal traits. Allport’s secondary traits influence behaviour within narrow situational confines whereas his cardinal traits govern a person’s whole life. Hence we may think of traits, especially those with wider situational reach, as effective suppliers of heuristic guidance because they provide us with stable orientations in the face of rapidly changing circumstances.

This stability has numerous advantages. It makes us predictable. It allows us to possess cultural identity, which makes social interaction possible, and it allows us to possess psychological identity, which is the basis of self image, self-esteem, and all forms of self-driven cultivation or development such as humanistic self-actualisation, Jungian individuation, or that awareness and tolerance of neurosis which is the goal of psychoanalysis. Of course, these theoretical perspectives only begin to sketch out the reasons why we should value a stable self. And the volumes of sociological and psychological theory which can be called upon to suggest that we should value this stability, simultaneously provide us with a myriad of ways to theorise how our personalities may supply us with heuristic guidance under conditions of cognitive indeterminacy. It is far too simplistic to suggest that a personality trait will provide a default strategy under such conditions. Instead we must find generalisations which help us map a vast theoretical territory, if we are to explore this function of personality. It has already been argued that interaction between our emotional appraisal systems and our personalities may be particularly important here, yet there are many further possibilities. Drawing upon psychoanalysis, for example, we may say that when
we have no rational basis to choose between a range of decision options, we are likely to strain towards those options which help us fulfil other psychological needs, for example by allowing us to act out conflicts or vicariously discharge repressed aggression. Furthermore, as we will see in the next chapter, psychoanalysts argue that where uncertainty presents itself as threatening, we often regress to childhood coping strategies (Leites and Kris in Marvick (ed) 1977, 57).

An important question here is whether Pareto’s model of personality supplies heuristics which can orient us in consistent and predictable ways towards uncertain situations where context-specific heuristics are unavailable. What we find is that Pareto’s class I and Class II residues seem almost tailor made for this purpose, because they refer to contrasting liberal and conservative orientations along three axes which begin from conservative acceptance of the status quo and reach out together towards liberal preferences for change, risk and innovation. The next section will explain why variation along these axes permits conservative and liberal individuals, and whole elites, to adopt stable yet very different positions under changing and uncertain conditions. All that remains to be concluded here is that the primary significance for political sociology of all the psychological theory which helps us understand our orientations towards uncertainty, may well be to explain and flesh out these conservative and liberal positions.

3.4 Conservative and Liberal Heuristics under Conditions of Cognitive Indeterminacy

This section will examine contrasting conservative and liberal personality orientations under conditions of cognitive indeterminacy, not in any psychological depth, but rather to illustrate what sorts of heuristic guidance each can provide. The simple nature of this guidance will soon become apparent. We do not define it in absolute terms but instead explore variation between conservative and liberal positions vis-à-vis three overlapping objects which all political decision makers encounter. One of these objects is the status quo, although Pareto’s term ‘the persistence of aggregates’ may better convey what this means. The other two objects are risk and innovation. It will be assumed that when we orient ourselves to any one of these three objects in a particular way, then it is highly likely this will condition our orientations towards the other two, with preferences for risk and innovation tending to undermine our attachments to the status quo. Of course, this will not always apply. We may innovate or take risks in order to maintain the status quo, or innovate to reduce risk, or preserve the status quo because we value the risks associated with it. However, the general tendency for preferences for risk and innovation to relate inversely to preferences for the status quo will soon find substantial support from the weight of psychometric evidence presented throughout chapters four and five. Hence the heuristic guidance to be discussed below will comprise not fixed rules in relation to specific objects, but rather basic orientations towards these three interrelated objects which, taken together, will be considered to form the backbone of the conservative-liberal continuum.
We may begin to understand this continuum by returning once more to the Cartesian split between reason and culture, which suggests a view of politics as an activity concerned with tension between (unconsciously held) culture and (consciously driven) rational criticism. This further invites a corresponding distinction between ‘conservative’ and ‘liberal’ or ‘radical’ orientations towards politics, which holds reassuringly true to the surface meanings of these words. We may thus ask: is conservative personality more likely to give unconscious support to established elements of culture such as beliefs, practices, political policies and the like? Similarly, is liberal personality more likely to apply that conscious rational criticism which ensures these cultural elements remain in tune with the times? As we will see, this question gains significance as social change intensifies, because each changed circumstance may prime reason with a fresh agenda for its assault on culture. These are also particularly fascinating questions because when we situate these contrasting orientations within the social personalities of contending conservative and liberal political parties, we can then view electoral choice as an opportunity to select between heuristics. The following discussion now looks more closely at the different packages of heuristic guidance which we can associate with conservative and liberal positions.

We might set up a hypothetical decision-making scenario where both ‘conservatives’ and ‘liberals’ desire the same outcome. They disagree, however, over whether existing policy arrangements designed to produce this outcome are sufficiently sub-optimal as to merit either continued, stoic acceptance of the status quo, piecemeal change, or radical overhaul. In his (1977) ‘The Essential Tension’, T.S. Kuhn provides a means to understand why such situations permit responses to vary widely along conservative-liberal axes. Science, Kuhn famously pointed out, lacks external criteria to allow scientists to know when to abandon particular scientific traditions or practices – which he understands as being epistemologically bound within distinct paradigms – in favour of alternatives which might prove more productive, leading to a greater purchase upon scientific truth. His observation applies equally to political decision-making scenarios where options exist for switching to new and untried strategies. Irrespective of whether we are talking about scientists or politicians, alternative paradigms must be tried out before rational selections can be made.

The scope for enduring division between conservatives and liberals widens in view of the argument that the aptitude for balancing the risks of acting too soon and too late – an aptitude which Machiavelli had previously termed ‘prudentia’ – must involve something other than a rational calculation. Rational deliberation, in whatever form that is to be understood, both Niklas Luhmann and Jon Elster stress, needs time to acquire and consider appropriate information. This may often require an unacceptable postponement of decision (Luhmann 1993, 173, Elster 1989a, 15). Taken together these arguments suggest there will always be scope for controversy over when, to what extent, and at what pace any given policy or paradigm should be altered or replaced. This conservative-liberal difference gains significance when we set it within the context of rapid social change because it now presents itself along a broader front. In a fast-moving and globalised world, it is reasonable to anticipate that paradigms will have less chance to normalise and consolidate. This is
not just because circumstances will change frequently, thereby calling into question the continued effectiveness of existing paradigms. It is also because alternatives will emerge more frequently and on a global basis. Although Marshall McLuhan famously speculated that the ‘global village’ set to emerge from the global spread of mass media may develop its own uniform and potentially sinister ‘tribal base’, the intervening decades have instead witnessed the rise of a general scepticism towards ideology and metanarrative which has allowed globalisation to add confusingly to the paradigms available to political decision-makers. Arguably, our exposure to multiple paradigms, and especially to successful movements through epistemological breaks, should help us appreciate that there are often credible liberal options available in relation to existing paradigms. Indeed, this knowledge might help us challenge those ‘doxa’, to once more use Bourdieu’s term, which reinforce our default commitments to conservative positions. In conclusion, then, we should perhaps value our increased exposure to alternative paradigms which emerge from across the globe as these may raise our political awareness, not simply by encouraging us to accept liberal positions, but more fully by extending our conscious options to include *choice* between conservative and liberal positions.

A good partial explanation for variance between these conservative and liberal positions is provided by variance in the ‘willingness to take risks’. According to Luhmann (1993, 112), empirical research has revealed that this depends upon ‘how firmly we believe ourselves capable of keeping precarious situations under control, of checking a tendency towards causing loss, of maintaining our coverage by means of help, insurances, and the like in the event of losses occurring’. The willingness to take risks can therefore be understood in three ways: *sociologically* (by considering those resources which decision-makers know they may call upon in the event of loss of control), *psychologically* (by considering the decision maker’s psychological constitution) and at both levels simultaneously (by considering how institutional arrangements either promote or inhibit risk-taking).

To focus upon the psychological aspect, it is worth considering how theories relating to the general processes of human judgement help us understand conservative and liberal psychological orientations towards risk. This exercise will also help clarify that these orientations are closely bound up with orientations towards ‘the persistence of aggregates’ (i.e. the status quo versus change) and innovation. Following Henri Bergson and Alfred Schutz, who once understood the experience of decision making as rather like ‘running through one alternative then the other until the decision falls from the mind like a ripe fruit falls from a tree’ (Schutz in Emmet and MacIntyre 1970, 103), Arie Kruglanski’s more recent theory of ‘lay epistemology’ holds that ‘all knowledge formation and modification involves a two-phase sequence in which hypotheses are generated and then validated’ (Kruglanski in Bar-Tal and Kruglanski 1988, 113). Kruglanski points out that the number of hypotheses which may be produced by risk-taking is likely to produce ‘risky shift’ effects, where groups make decisions riskier than those which individual members would have proposed on their own. Some commentators (e.g. Janis and Lester 1972, Elms 1976, 148–160) have also developed this idea in their discussions of ‘groupthink’.
generated for any given judgement is potentially unlimited. The validation stage, which compares with Bergson’s ‘running through of alternatives’:

...has no unique point of termination. In principle, one might always come up with further alternative hypotheses compatible with the same body of evidence (Kruglanski in Bar-Tal and Kruglanski 1988, 114).

At some point, to follow Bergson’s metaphor, the fruit ripens and falls. In Kruglanski’s terms, it always becomes necessary to close the ‘epistemic sequence’ and make a ‘definite’ judgement by a process of unconscious selection between the most likely alternative hypotheses which have been generated. This point of halting, Kruglanski argues, is imposed either sooner or later, in accordance with the workings of three kinds of conflicting psychic motivation or ‘epistemic need’. It is worth considering these in more detail, because this will help us understand the psychology involved in the decision-maker’s experience of Kuhn’s ‘essential tension’, and it will allow us to redefine Machiavelli’s ‘prudentia’ in psychological terms as the achievement of a fortuitous balance between conflicting needs.

Firstly, Kruglanski mentions a ‘need for nonspecific structure’. We sometimes need any answer to a problem, Kruglanski points out, simply to overcome feelings of anxiety provoked by confusion and ambiguity. Secondly, he adds a ‘need for specific structure’ which refers to our bias towards specific conclusions which, for various (e.g. ego-defensive) reasons, we would prefer to believe were true. As with the need for non-specific structure, these needs will tend to draw epistemic sequences towards early closure. They might well sometimes have the opposite effect, for example where they lead us to seek reinforcement for unsustainable ego-defensive positions. Yet we are arguably more likely to end searches than to delay them further, when we already have specific theories in mind whose status we wish to elevate to that of truth. Our standards of proof are likely to fall, not rise, on such occasions. Lastly, one epistemic need which will very clearly tend to prolong the epistemic sequence is the ‘need for ambiguity’. This refers to the feeling that indecision should be prolonged because further deliberation and information gathering may pay dividends (Kruglanski 1988, 114–6). Notably, then, the first and second motivations can be understood as tending to compete in a zero sum game with the third. All three have implications for our orientations towards the status quo, risk and innovation; specifically, the first and second will lead us to seek certainties which will more often than not mean that we cling to existing social arrangements, whilst the third is likely to promote both risk-taking and innovation, which will both undermine these arrangements and receive impetus from their erosion.

Kruglanski’s theory thus permits the psychologies of conservatism and liberalism to be partially understood with reference to the idea that conservatives and liberals balance these epistemic needs in differing proportions, each failing in their own characteristic ways to attain that ideal balance which we can equate with Machiavelli’s prudentia. The following chapter will soon explore this idea in more detail by considering a wide variety of psychological theory and evidence which explains why conservatives have heightened needs for structure and liberals have heightened needs for ambiguity. Much of this evidence will be martialed to explain why liberals
tend to be more tolerant and innovative. However, we can for the present conclude
that our struggle to balance Kruglanski’s three psychic motives helps explain why
we should differ, along a conservative-liberal axis, in our responses to uncertainty.
We may further conclude, in view of the argument that our orientations towards
the status quo will align closely with our orientations towards risk and innovation,
that conservative and liberal heuristics will each build a good deal of consistency
and predictability into our orientations towards our object worlds, simply by fixing
orientations towards these three vital objects.

3.5 The Evolution of Knowledge through Trial and Error Experimentation

The previous section has argued that our political decision-making is likely to be
stabilised by underlying psychological orientations which supply heuristic guidance
along a conservative-liberal axis under conditions of cognitive indeterminacy. This
section will now provide a counter-weight by exploring the possibility that political
strategies are unlikely to be fixed in accordance with the psychological orientations
of either individual or collective decision-makers because they are instead subject
to processes of evolution which draw them towards ever closer correspondence with
strategies which are objectively necessary in view of the problems they address. From
this perspective, practical rationality refers to the process whereby decision-makers
progressively gain purchase upon problems because trial-and-error experimentation
yields a growing stock of ever more useful knowledge which feeds back to inform
future decisions.

In his later works, Karl Popper proposes just such a theory as a challenge to the
epistemological relativism which we associate with the sociology of knowledge.
Human knowledge evolves, Popper says, through an interaction between the
individual and a realm of human cultural products which he labels ‘world 3’. Popper
himself acknowledges that the very existence of a ‘world 3’ is open to controversy,
and he offers no exact definitions. This realm is to be distinguished both from ‘world
1’ (the physical world) and ‘world 2’ (the mental world) such that:

..in its role as mediator between world 3 and world 1, our mind (world 2) may depend on
world 3 objects, such as melodies or arguments, which it “follows” or “grasps”; and the
brain processes initiated by these world 2 processes may lead to action in world 1 such
as speech or writing whose coherence is explicable in world 3 terms (it is “anchored”
entirely in world 3) (Popper in Schilpp (ed.) 1974, 1056).

One of Popper’s examples is a performance of Joseph Haydn’s ‘The Creation’ which
made its composer announce, in tears, ‘It was not I who wrote this. I could not have
done it’. Popper explains that every great work of art does indeed transcend the artist.
The artist ‘constantly receives suggestions from his work, suggestions that point
beyond what he originally intended’. Yet artists are not inspired, he continues, by
the contents of their own unconscious minds. Rather, they tap into world 3 (Popper
1996, 32). There they access not only the products of many other human minds,
but also the ‘unintended interrelationships and interactions between these products’
(Popper in Schilpp (ed.) 1974, 1050).
We might therefore look to world 3 in order to understand where cultural memes, and ‘active replicators’ in particular, derive their replicatory power. Yet Popper’s argument progresses on the basis that World 3 has an ‘informational content’. It consists of certain ‘problems, theories and errors’ (Popper in Schilpp 1974, 1060) which may be subjected to ‘rational criticism’. Although Popper adds that the very existence of a human drive or instinct for exploration presupposes a world which is to some extent knowable and explorible (Popper in Schilpp (ed.) 1974, 1060), he appears to remain sensitive to the criticism that he does not specify the sphere of applicability for his proposed evolution. Some indication of how widely this sphere extends is however provided by Popper’s reference to a ‘world 3 method’:

... we are always the prisoners of our prejudices, or of our framework of assumptions. But we can, with the help of the world 3 method of putting our assumptions and our theories outside us – of formulating them clearly, so that they can be criticised – always break out of this prison through rational criticism (Popper 1996, 139).

Popper’s understanding of rational criticism is not as rigidly defined as we might expect. As he suggested in his (1945) ‘The Open Society and its Enemies’, rationality should be given the loose psychological definition of a ‘critical attitude’ or an ‘attitude of reasonableness’:

We could then say that rationalism is an attitude of readiness to listen to critical arguments and to learn from experience. It is fundamentally an attitude of admitting that “I may be wrong and you may be right, and by an effort, we may get nearer the truth”. It is an attitude that does not lightly give up hope that by such means as argument and careful observation, people may reach some agreement on many problems of importance; and that, even where their demands and their interests clash, it is often possible to argue about the various demands and proposals, and to reach – perhaps by arbitration – a compromise which, because of its equity, is acceptable to most, if not to all (Popper 1945, 224).

This is not to imply that Popper’s critical attitude is consistent with that of his critics such as Paul Feyerabend (1975) who argue that scientific advance should rely upon a variety of methods. Rather, Popper’s reliance upon the specific method of ‘falsificationism’ (e.g. Popper 1959) is best now explained, as this provides us with the method which he viewed as allowing world 2 to access world 3.

Popper’s critical attitude seems to impose no limitations as to the forms of knowledge involved here. That is, Popper did not limit his belief in the evolution knowledge through the competition and elimination of theories by applying strict lines of demarcation between ‘scientific’ and ‘nonscientific’ theories. Rather, both kinds of theory were to be included within that world 2 knowledge which always remains fallible and conjectural as it moves ever closer to a one to one correspondence with the contents of world 3 (Popper in Schilpp 1974, 1060). This interpretation makes sense in view of Popper’s claim that both kinds of knowledge are, in principle, subject to elimination through falsification. Scientific theories are directly falsifiable by single instances of nonconfirmation. Nonscientific theories (including metaphysical but not pseudoscientific theories) are indirectly falsifiable because they may be used to generate directly falsifiable hypotheses. Nonscientific theories then, where they are
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open to indirect scrutiny in view of the weight of empirical evidence they generate, may be valued if they appear to retain or gain explanatory power over time.

A subsequent debate suggesting that single instances of nonconfirmation are typically insufficient to force the elimination of a theory led Lakatos and Musgrave (1970) to argue for the practical necessity of a ‘sophisticated falsificationism’ which values bodies of ideas according to whether they appear progressive or degenerating over time. Crucially, this requires a blurring of scientific and nonscientific categories. The scientist’s decision of whether to accept or reject a theory now depends upon how they experience Kuhn’s ‘essential tension’ between paradigms which, as the previous section has revealed, must hinge to some extent upon personality variables.

It remains to be specified that the theories which Popper is thinking of are problem-oriented. They are geared towards limited efforts at economic and social planning which he terms ‘piecemeal social engineering’. Although Popper treats the evolution of knowledge through such ventures as ‘blind forays into the unknown’, he adds that they are never truly ‘random’ because they are always drawn forward by the contents of world 3. This happens, he argues, because deliberation assumes both that a particular problem is recognised and requires attention, and that knowledge always exists to suggest why past strategies, or indeed inactions, have failed to yield desirable results (Popper in Schilpp 1974, 1061).

The appeal of Popper’s argument might even increase if the following theory of political decision-making is accepted. Niklas Luhmann has pointed out that problem-oriented political deliberation by decision-making elites can be understood to involve the playing out of cathartic dramas of risk containment:

Politics works in episodes, in short stories each ending with a collectively binding decision, a symbolic gesture of conclusion. The political system is thus free to turn to new topics or to await feedback from old ones (Luhmann 1993, 165).

Although controversy exists over whether ‘policy cycle’ constructs provide an effective basis for modelling policy processes, they remain widely used (Howard 2005). According to Luhmann’s usage of the policy cycle metaphor, then, political risks are transferred to the legal system by acts of legislation and regulation. When the legal system fails to quell them, they filter back to policy-makers and the curtain rises for a new act. Crucially, however, this risk transfer cycle must be viewed as operating within narrow confines. Where long enduring and clearly defined problems (involving for example health, education, and certain kinds of crime) demand recurring phases (or ‘dramas’) of political deliberation and legal enforcement, it may well be possible to speak of Popper’s ‘evolution of knowledge’. In such cases, successive phases of trial-and-error learning may well allow better practices to evolve.

However, Popper’s theory places a heavy reliance upon the ceteris paribus clause. His trial-and-error learning processes can best be envisioned as occurring within relatively closed systems where decisive variables remain constant and new ones do not emerge to threaten system homeostasis. We might develop this line of criticism with reference to Otto Neurath and other philosophers of the scientistic ‘left wing’ of the Vienna circle, who argued that outcomes must remain indeterminate wherever insufficient knowledge exists concerning decisive variable interactions. For Neurath,
prospects for achieving this knowledge are greatly reduced by epistemological complexity arising from the reflexive component in decision-making. Danilo Zolo summarises his argument as follows:

... any possibility of certainty, or, following Popper, of ‘approximation’ to the truth, is excluded because agents themselves are included in the environment which they attempt to make the object of their own cognition. The agents may take critical – i.e. reflexive – account of the situation of circularity in which they find themselves, but they cannot remove themselves from their own historical and social perspective, or free themselves from the biases of the scientific community, culture or civilisation to which they belong and which influence their own perception of themselves. They cannot know themselves objectively, but they cannot even know objectively their environments either, since they themselves alter the environment by projecting upon it their own biases when they interact with it in making it the object of their own cognition (Zolo 1992, 7).

Policy-makers are thus condemned to learn from trial-and-error experiment only through the distorted lens of a series of after-the-act rationalisations by which they try to interpret why decisions were made. Interestingly, this was very much Pareto’s view. Seeking to explain the ‘certainty of irrational experience’, Arnold Gehlen stressed that:

Vilfredo Pareto has compiled evidence from six languages and sources spanning centuries to present the convincing argument that human beings primarily behave in [non-logical actions], that there is a “logic of feeling”, which means that we often believe something because we have acted accordingly, and then formulate certainties to cover any discrepancies … (Gehlen 1988, 297).

This view can readily be extended to cover collective as well as individual decision-makers. In fact, it seems to apply particularly well to circumstances where governments and major political parties come under pressure to account for poor decisions which they have made in the past. Given the unrelenting hostile criticism which such institutions face, the acceptance of past failure is usually neither easy nor politically desirable, and so politicians may very easily settle upon contrived reasons for past decisions. Moreover, we might envision Elster’s ‘civilizing force of hypocrisy’ as often creating cognitive distortion by leading politicians to internalise distorted understandings of past motives, as well as distorted images of the world, in their efforts to deal with intense scrutiny and accountability pressures. Finding a large measure of uncertainty and doubt in the reflexive self-assessments of decision-making institutions, Niklas Luhmann even goes so far as to suggest that:

Organizations … are constantly involved in interpreting (observing) their own operations and seek goals, even new goals, that make what happens or has happened understandable and determinable. Planning is for the most part a writing of the system’s memoirs (Luhmann 1998, 105).

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6 Zolo (1992, 7) points out that T.S. Kuhn, Ludwik Fleck and others have argued that the problem of epistemological complexity similarly confronts individuals, social groups, and scientific communities.
Luhmann is suggesting that decision makers will often reproduce past strategies simply to seek reassurance that these have been and will continue to be successful. Equipped with evidence that their techniques actually work, and that their theoretical constructions provide a good grasp of reality, they may then feel more confident of their abilities and more deserving of continued trust. More fully, however, his argument seems to echo Carl Schmitt’s (1991) critique of political romanticism, which argued that political decision-makers are often more captivated by their subjective inner worlds than by the objective consequences of their decisions. For Schmitt, this was because our political thought processes are bound up with our ‘romantic productivity’; decision-makers cannot not fully engage with reality because their decisions provide ‘occasions for poetry’. This sets us thinking of the ego defences and fantasies of politicians – perhaps those with narcissistic qualities in particular. It reminds us, just as political lampooners and satirists so often do, that politicians may subliminally model their political careers on simple and very personal dramatic themes such as recognition, growth, revenge, rivalry, ordeal, justice, and the like, which can easily slant how they interpret and learn from past decisions.

From these arguments we may conclude that policy processes might easily become retrospective and bound up with the psychic needs and biases of decision-makers, which in turn will impede those processes of piecemeal social engineering by trial-and-error learning advocated by Popper. The following section will build upon this argument by showing that cultural pessimist treatments of increasing social complexity provide grounds for believing that the sphere of applicability for trial-and-error learning may be narrowing. More fully, increasing social complexity will be regarded as a mixed blessing. On the one hand, it will be argued that it has probably aided the emergence of democratic character during the course of the twentieth century. On the other hand, it will be viewed as having reduced prospects for political prediction and intervention for reasons relating both to the complex and shifting natures of social environments themselves and, just as importantly, to the changing psychological constitutions of decision makers. This chapter will then conclude that as political decision-making becomes a more uncertain business under conditions of increasing social complexity, the potential role for the social personalities of political parties in contributing general strategies for the management of uncertainty can only grow.

3.6 Social Complexity

Stewart and Cohen (1997) have used Popper’s distinction between worlds 2 and 3 to argue for a complicit co-evolution of mind and culture over the course of generations:

We see the accumulating knowledge of generations of intelligent beings as a thing or process with its own characteristic structure and behaviour: extelligence. As a result, extelligence has become greater, more permanent, and far more capable than any individual intelligence (Stewart and Cohen 1997: x).

The parallel between extelligence and world 3 continues as follows:
All the extelligence in the world is useless if you lack the intelligence to use it; on the other hand, without extelligence we humans would still be back in the caves, rather literally reinventing the wheel in each generation. We are what we are because of a remarkable complicity between intelligence and extelligence. Intelligence invents but cannot reliably and accessibly remember what it has invented; extelligence can remember but (on the whole) not invent. Extelligence deals in information; intelligence in understanding (Stewart and Cohen 1997, 244).

Popper’s argument for an evolution of knowledge might strengthen in view of Stewart and Cohen’s claim that extelligence is likely to evolve at ever faster rates as its expansion becomes driven by an increasingly effective human capacity for rational scrutiny. This argument hinges upon the operation of a fortuitous cycle or ‘feedback loop’ whereby levels of environmental complexity determine levels of mental stimulation which each successive generation benefits from during early childhood socialisation. Intelligence thus evolves in ways which boost the human capacity to create further environmental complexity.7

Stewart and Cohen further argue that extelligence co-evolves with intelligence along a historical continuum moving from ‘simplicity’ to ‘complexity’ and then on to ‘multiplexity’ which has greatly picked up pace throughout the industrialised world. Hence they envisage three corresponding minds which they contrast as follows:

The test for a simplex mind is to ask what is the most important thing in the universe. If it answers, then it is simplex. It is focused on a single, overriding goal. A complex mind can perceive the many intertwining strands of cause and effect that combine, within some consistent world view, to constrain and control the unfolding of a particular selection of events. Complexity is a state that is inaccessible to the vast proportion of the human race, but as the global village shrinks, more of us take a complex view. Rarer still is the multiplex mind, which can work simultaneously with several conflicting paradigms. It sees not just one interpretation of reality, but many, yet it sees them as a seamless whole. Such a mind is untroubled by mere inconsistency. It is comfortable with a mutable, adaptive, loosely coherent flux [which is better able to see] the world on its own terms (Stewart and Cohen 1997, 289).

This ‘multiplex mind’ is only able to function as such because it has been stimulated by early exposure to an increasingly complex multi-paradigmatic extelligence towards acceptance of inconsistent images of the world (Stewart and Cohen 1997, 289–292). The multiplex mind is therefore a tolerant and democratic mind, able to delay Kruglanski’s epistemic sequence and explore competing theories for their respective kernels of truth. Stewart and Cohen’s argument implies, then, that by stimulating the evolution of the human mind towards a growing acceptance of difference and diversity, increasing epistemological complexity is to be thanked, in

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7 This theory of mental evolution seems quite consistent with results of a variety of studies which have shown substantial increases (of around one standard deviation) in IQ in developed nations over the past 50 years. Some of these studies are listed by Lynn (1990) who argues that although the precise reasons for these changes remain unclear, increases in nutritional intake may play a part.
part at least, for the emergence of democratic character throughout the industrialised world during the course of the twentieth century.

Danilo Zolo takes a rather more pessimistic view of the human implications of exposure to increasing complexity, not just epistemological complexity but social complexity more generally. He argues that current levels have risen so far as to threaten to outstrip the human capacity to maintain productive conceptual models of the world. His theory of increasing complexity, which he says is heavily indebted to Niklas Luhmann’s neo-functionalist account of an increasing proliferation of and differentiation between social spheres, may be summarised as follows.

Firstly, Zolo describes the splintering of society into an increasing number of spheres which develop their own, to some extent hermeneutically sealed, systems of meaning:

In post-industrial societies, typified by a high level of division of labour and functional differentiation, social complexity manifests itself as the variety and semantic discontinuity of the languages, understandings, techniques and values which are practised within each sub-system and its further differentiations ... The meaning of an event experienced within one social environment – a religious experience for example – cannot be conveyed in the terms relevant to the experience of a different environment – a sports club, for instance, or an office, or a nuclear research laboratory. The different experiences are not at root commensurable. The variables of social behaviour increase in correlation, and there is a consequent growth in the difficulty of its understanding and prediction (Zolo 1992, 5).

Secondly, it is explained that as these spheres proliferate and separate out, it becomes exponentially harder to map their interrelationships. Social complexity is therefore likely to multiply beyond the human capacity to model the world and, hence, to trace the likely consequences of political intervention:

Alongside the tendency to autonomy of the functional codes, there exist phenomena of growing interdependence between the various sub-systems. These phenomena are a condition of their co-ordination within the wider social orbit ... Political campaigns, for example, are nowadays conditioned by the requirements of the medium of television, but this medium is subordinate to legislation governing political use of the media, and both of these agents, the politicians and the television companies, have to submit to the exigencies of the advertising market. This process is in turn conditioned not only by general economic legislation, but also the increasingly fierce competition between television and more traditional forms of publicity .... an increase in phenomena of interdependence is accompanied by an increased difficulty of prediction and social intervention (Zolo 1992, 5).

Thirdly, Zolo explains that social complexity brings about a progressive reduction in what Arnold Gehlen had earlier termed ‘the invariant reservoir of cultural real estate’. As individuals find it harder to agree upon what political goals are desirable, the scope for effective political intervention is further compromised:

Differentiation of experience favours social mobility. In place of a society weighted by the ballast of universal and unchanging principles, there is a pluralism of social spaces regulated by contingent and flexible criteria. Removal of the constraints of tradition, stratification, and localisation leads to a marked acceleration of social change. Moral ‘polytheism’
and widespread agnosticism over the ‘final questions’ take the place of institutionalised collective beliefs brought into being by political coercion (Zolo 1992, 6).

And finally, the subjective experience of social complexity is explained in terms of epistemological overload and increasing anxiety:

... increased levels of differentiation lead to a greater ‘depersonalisation’ and ‘abstractness’ of social relations. Variety of experience increases, but the experiences are more directly moulded by functional needs or expectations ... The multiplicity of possible actions and the increase in the range of services produce a kind of ‘selective overload’ in a context of increasing insecurity and instability. The wider the spectrum of possible choices extends, the more hazardous becomes the need for each agent to choose between options and ‘reduce the complexity’ (Zolo 1992, 6).

Zolo says even more, and implies more still, about what might be involved in the human experience of increasing social complexity. Whereas Stewart and Cohen welcome the development of a ‘tolerance of inconsistencies’ within the framework of an increasingly democratic, ‘multiplex’ culture, Zolo once more articulates the concerns of contemporary cultural pessimists:

It is easy to observe, with Gehlen, that in societies of high technological development it is now extremely difficult to identify any sphere even of direct experience in which individuals operate with a secure sense of reality, confident that they are using autonomous criteria of judgement and staying at the height of their intellectual efficiency. The overload of communication and symbolised stimulation appears to have reserved its most powerful effect for the domain of private life, including sexual emotions. The explosive increase in North America of recourse to psychoanalysis and other, very disparate, forms of private counselling may be taken as an index of the general decline of the ‘sense of reality’ and of the growing insecurity in information based societies which have reached a high level of complexity. The phenomenon of teenage suicide, now constantly increasing in the United States and in many European countries, may well also deserve to be seen in the same light (Zolo 1992, 169).

In their (1971) ‘Treatise on Social Phenomenology’, Berger and Luckman help us understand this ‘declining sense of reality’. They appear well in agreement with Zolo when they suggest that increased social complexity has brought about a fracturing of human knowledge into ‘an increasing number and complexity of sub-universes’ which have become ‘esoteric enclaves, increasingly inaccessible to outsiders’ (Berger and Luckman 1971, 104). They describe our subjective experience of movement between these sub-universes as follows:

My consciousness… is capable of moving through different spheres of reality. Put differently, I am conscious of the world as consisting of multiple realities. As I move from one reality to another I experience the transition as a kind of shock. This shock is to be understood as caused by the shift in attentiveness that the transition entails (Berger and Luckman 1971, 35).

As we move between cultural spheres, then, a kind of ‘shock’ arises from the experience of incongruity. This stimulates our thoughts, awakening us to ways in
which each of these spheres make separate, perhaps contradictory, demands upon our thoughts and behaviours. The more we find our attention drawn to incongruent features of cultural spheres, the more we engage in conscious comparisons which challenge those normative assumptions which guide us within each of these spheres. Placing these ‘shocks’ alongside the feelings of anxiety, insecurity and doubt which Gehlen and Zolo see emerging with social complexity, we might plausibly explain all of these states with reference to George Marcus’ more recent theory of affective intelligence, which views the harnessing of anxiety by the ‘surveillance system’ as serving the useful purpose of disengaging habits and forcing new thinking in the light of strange and potentially threatening circumstances.

This understanding of what might be involved in Gehlen and Zolo’s ‘declining sense of reality’ lends itself to further development from various theoretical perspectives. For example, it might be interpreted from within Bourdieu’s sociology as a clash between multiple doxa. Or we might link it to those feelings of normlessness or ‘anomie’ which Durkheim, and by extension, Parsons, regarded as arising in the absence of those flexible and liberating norms and values which produce what Durkheim termed ‘organic solidarity’ and Parsons termed ‘pattern maintenance’ in modern, highly differentiated societies. One more specific line of development might then be Parsons’ sociology of democratic society which linked fascism in particular to the anomie breakdown of liberal social order.

Taking our lead once more from classical sociology, it seems particularly important to also mention Georg Simmel’s (1903) ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’, which presents these shocks as arising more within urban settings. Simmel had argued that the condition of ‘metropolitan individuality’ entails both the intensification and unsettling of emotional life, owing to the swifter succession and greater diversity of stimuli encountered within cities. This quicker rhythm of events overstimulates the mind. Habitual and emotional responses, which are more prominent within the thought patterns of rural dwellers, go increasingly challenged and have less chance to form. Simmel also argued that city living brings about a shift in the locus of mental activity from emotion to reason (which is conceived as existing at the ‘upper levels’ of the mind). This produces a more intellectualised thought process, which is distinguishable from emotional thinking not just by its properties of lucidity and conscious awareness, but also by its greater malleability under the weight of constantly changing stimuli. Crucially, this malleability renders the intellect more adaptive to city life. The mental shift from emotion towards reason also produces what Simmel calls a ‘matter of fact attitude in the treatment of persons and things’ which synergises with the very impersonal functioning of the money economy. Simmel also speaks more specifically of an ‘indifference to the distinctions between things’ which he famously terms ‘the blasé attitude’. This refers, crucially, not to a failure to perceive things, but rather to an inability to distinguish between their respective values. For Simmel, this devaluing of the world ‘ends inevitably in dragging the personality downward into a feeling of its own valuelessness’.

There are many further ways to theorise the psychological consequences of exposure to Berger and Luckman’s ‘multiple realities’. One intriguing possibility is that this might stimulate individuals to develop multiple personae. This can be interpreted positively. For example, we might theorise the emergence of Stewart
and Cohen’s multiplex mind with reference to symmetries between extelligence paradigms, multiple realities and multiple personae, such that the multiplex mind is said to result from a process whereby extelligence paradigms channel separately through multiple realities to be absorbed, once more separately, by multiple personae. Our democratic tolerance of difference could then be theorised as stemming in part from our capacity to tolerate our multiple personae and their related contradictions. More pessimistically, however, the development of multiple personae might entail an amplification of pre-existing inclinations towards either mild dissociative experience or, more seriously, dissociative pathology. This possibility becomes particularly interesting in view of highly controversial estimates of dramatic increases over recent decades in levels of what has variously been termed dissociative identity disorder and multiple personality disorder.8

In order to further interpret Gehlen and Zolo’s concept of a ‘declining sense of reality’ at the level of identity, we might consider Erik Erikson’s belief that ever since the middle decades of the twentieth century, we have faced growing difficulties in gaining and maintaining integrated identities. Erikson argues that since that time, successive generational cohorts have found the adolescent phase of self-definition troublesome:

The young person, in order to experience wholeness, must feel a progressive continuity between that which he has come to be during the long years of childhood and that which he promises to become in the anticipated future; between that which he conceives himself to be and that which he perceives others to see in him and to expect of him...
The adolescent search for a new and yet reliable identity can perhaps be seen in the persistent endeavour to define, to overdefine, and to define oneself and each other in often ruthless comparison; while the search for reliable alignments can be seen in the restless testing of the newest in possibilities and the oldest in values. Where the resulting self-definition, for personal or collective reasons, becomes too difficult, a sense of role confusion results: the youth counterpoints rather than synthesizes his sexual, ethnic, occupational, and typological alternatives and is often driven to decide definitely for one side or the other (Erikson 1964, 91–92)

To make an important qualification here, Erikson argues that adolescence has always involved the working out of identity conflicts which stem, as psychoanalytic theory holds, from early childhood. What has changed, he mentions in his (1968) ‘Identity: Youth and Crisis’, is that adolescents increasingly ‘wear these conflicts on their sleeves’. They ‘play at making them happen’ (they are acted out) whereas previously they were preserved as ‘inner secrets’ (they were repressed) (Erikson 1968, 26–28). Whereas in the past it was easier to achieve unconscious resolutions of identity conflicts within stable patterns of thought and behaviour across a wide range of situations, now our conscious manifestations of our conflicts bring confusing choices to light, and our efforts to bring consistency become unsettled and vulnerable. Even where consistency and settlement appear on the surface, inner doubts remain which

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8 Arguments for and against this are provided by Boor (1982) and Lilienfeld et al. (1999).
fuel fear, anger, even rage, when our identities are challenged by others whose identity work has taken them a different course.

Erikson’s notion of a heightened conscious experience of identity crisis is easily developed with reference to the idea that increasing exposure to multiple reality and its associated ‘shocks’, as brought on by rising levels of social complexity during the course of the twentieth century, are now inhibiting the gaining and maintaining of identity. This can be understood as follows. Firstly, our exposure to multiple reality may hinder the inscription within personality structure of consistent strategies for resolving childhood conflicts. Secondly, the shocks which we then experience as we pass between multiple realities during adulthood might reinforce or reawaken these conflicts. Thirdly, these shocks might also alert us to vulnerabilities within those identities which we precariously impose across multiple realities. These possibilities should perhaps be considered by future research which explores how our emotional appraisal systems, and surveillance systems in particular, interact with personality.

Ulrich Beck (1992) provides a good complementary interpretation of Zolo’s ‘declining sense of reality’ which also deals with increased difficulties in gaining and maintaining identity. His argument focuses upon psychological fall-out from the breakdown of fixed role-structures. Beck points out that as economies become increasingly differentiated and as we are increasingly forced to switch jobs and retrain to perform very different tasks, we find it harder to develop and maintain life-long professional identities. This fuels what Beck terms the ‘individualisation of social risks’ whereby we come to bear the brunt of environmental risk directly because we feel progressively less able to link our individual interests in permanent ways to the interests of larger collectivities. Now more than ever, Beck says, it is possible to:

… cheerfully embrace seemingly contradictory causes, for example, to join forces with local residents in protests against noise pollution by air traffic, to belong to the Metalworkers Union, and yet – in the face of impending economic crisis – to vote conservative (Beck 1992, 101).

An unfortunate consequence of this inability to make enduring and clear-cut identifications with collectivities, he says, is that we increasingly interpret our widening life experiences in individual terms. Beck shares the concerns of many sociologists when he says that:

… social problems are increasingly perceived in terms of psychological dispositions: as personal inadequacies, guilt feelings, anxieties, conflicts and neuroses. There emerges, paradoxically, a new immediacy of individual and society, a direct relationship between crisis and sickness. Social crises appear as individual crises, which are no longer (or are only very indirectly) perceived in terms of their rootedness in the social realm. This is one of the explanations for the current revival of interest in psychology (psychowelle). Individual achievement orientation similarly gains in importance. It can now be predicted that the full range of problems associated with the achievement society and its tendency towards (pseudo-) legitimations of social inequalities will emerge in the future (Beck 1992, 100).
Beck appears to be suggesting here that although recent generations have increasingly broken free from the constraints of those fixed life expectations which accompany permanent social roles, our life expectations have soared to unrealistic – and damaging – heights. ‘Individual achievement orientation’ is growing in importance because our inflated ideals increasingly drive us to see just how far we may ascend before we find our ceilings within social hierarchies. As we encounter obstacles, we feel personally accountable for shortfalls between our real life predicaments and our demands and expectations because we lack those close identifications with wider collectivities which allowed previous generations to comprehend their failures in sociological terms. Beck’s ‘individualisation of social risks’ may be understood as referring, then, to a creeping tendency for us to shift our perspectives so that our images of the world become less political in the sense that they grow less concerned with abstractly conceived, collective struggles. Instead, attention is diverted towards mapping out the immediate, interpersonal environment, as this helps us contend with personal hazards which arise within the contexts of increasingly unique life experiences.

Taken together, then, these various pessimistic accounts of the human consequences of increasing complexity challenge Stewart and Cohen’s optimistic view of humanity keeping apace with, and improving itself through, rising levels of complexity. They suggest instead that we are becoming more likely to talk across one another from within a proliferating number of cultural spheres, each of which is becoming less able to provide identity and normative guidance. And they provide us with frameworks for understanding why we are becoming less likely to identify with political elites, and with the values, images of the world, and political visions for the future which political elites orchestrate.

In order to further appreciate why these factors limit prospects for a political process which learns by trial and error, we might proceed in a number of directions, for example by considering their implications for political ‘leaders’ as well as for all gradations of elected and non-elected political ‘followers’. However, there seems to be a strong case for applying this thinking to political followers in particular, because unlike elected politicians who will typically have been socialised into taking on relatively secure professional identities, ordinary voters will tend, on the whole, to be more remote from sources of professional identity, both because they are more exposed to the insecurities of the labour market, and because their occupations will tend not to offer identities as clearly defined and as widely recognised (and hence as subject to constant social reinforcement) as those which immersion in the world of politics can provide. Furthermore, whereas politicians must nurse their local communities by cultivating links with many different organisations which

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9 Beck’s theory that feelings of low self worth are the inevitable consequence of unmet ‘Faustian’ aspirations appears to be a very strong position in view of available evidence. Oliver James (1998) supplies a mass of evidence to suggest that a ‘winner-loser’ culture has indeed put down roots in the last few decades. Various psychological conditions, including aggressive and compulsive behaviours and depressive illnesses, James maintains, have all become far more prevalent because they flourish under conditions of reduced self-esteem brought about by inflated ego ideals.
bring people together, voters will be more likely to experience social atomisation within these same communities. In short, we might therefore say that politicians will often experience political life as a sanctuary which satisfies their needs for clearly-defined professional identity, which will in part involve the internalisation of social personality, whereas voters, and in particular those who find their prospects for secure identity limited, will become less likely to trust and identify with politicians.

Much theory and evidence weights this latter point. Zolo closely shadows Beck’s thinking when he alerts us to an ‘increasing differentiation of individual experience which engenders a growing demand in advanced industrial societies for autonomy from the organic aspect of politics and its protective criteria for the reduction of complexity’ (Zolo 1992, 62). Zolo’s theory of increasing individual autonomy of political judgment appears well in tune with evidence and mainstream opinion which views the UK electorate as becoming ever more reluctant to place trust in politicians. For example, Curtice and Jowell (1995) have highlighted the increasing volatility of the UK electorate and noted that the proportion of electors who class themselves as floating voters appears to be rising steadily. They conclude that ‘British people have clearly become less trusting of their politicians and political institutions in the last two decades’. They qualify this, however, with the caveat that their findings do not imply a decreasing willingness to participate in political affairs. Many commentators have since echoed the view that our estrangement from politicians and political parties does not and need not entail estrangement from politics itself.

Curtice and Jowell’s findings are also consistent with longstanding evidence which has described the UK’s ‘deferential and allegiant’ political culture (Almond and Verba 1965) as at least ‘waning’ (Kavanagh 1980), if not ‘collapsing’ (Beer 1982). This phenomenon has manifested itself more recently in the development of a ‘new politics’ which mobilises support on single issue bases only, often expressing its disenchantment with the political establishment through collective preferences not to appoint elected leaders or organisers. Academic debate on trust in government has also shifted in recent years, towards a greater concern with the concept of ‘social capital’, which Robert Putnam has defined as consisting to a large extent of a ‘generalised trust’ which facilitates cooperative endeavour throughout all areas of life. Putnam (2002) concludes from social capital studies undertaken in various countries that discontent with political institutions is still intensifying.

Although heightened disenchantment and scepticism among political followers might be attributed, in part, to that process of cultural fragmentation which has been sketched out above, Niklas Luhmann suggests that we increasingly make autonomous decisions because we are becoming ever more aware of those risks which governments take on our behalf. This growing awareness can be understood quite simply as a consequence of our increased education and access to information:

Practical experience tends to teach us that the more we know, the better we know what we do not know, and the more elaborate our risk-awareness becomes. The more rationally we calculate and the more complex the calculations become, the more aspects come into view involving uncertainty about the future and thus risk ... Modern risk-oriented society is a product not only of the perception of the consequences of technological achievement.
Its seed is contained in the expansion of research possibilities and of knowledge itself (Luhmann 1993, 28).

In fact, it appears that Zolo, Beck and Luhmann would all concur that levels of social complexity seem to vary directly with the degree to which risk is experienced by the individual; as the experience of risk intensifies, so too individuals are able to call upon superior informational resources which fuel doubts in the state’s ability to manage risk. Hence, as politicians increasingly appear to voters as overstretched generalists, they and indeed the roles that make up established political life might therefore all too easily be dragged into disrepute. For Curtice and Jowell (1995), this can be understood in positive terms. They welcome the rise of an increasingly sceptical and watchful electorate. Luhmann, similarly, welcomes the healthy distribution of sovereignty which the ever wider social distribution of knowledge entails. Beck, on the other hand, is suspicious of moves towards democratization which actually amount to a ‘disempowerment of politics’ (Beck 1992, 191–199). He argues that a new political culture is emerging which increasingly gives centre stage to non-governmental organisations whose specialist knowledge is required to inform the policy process. This does not just entail the rise to increasing prominence of single issue pressure groups which help keep governments on their toes. Large corporate organisations, he points out, are particularly well organised and financed to take advantage of their repositories of specialist knowledge. As the sphere of ‘non-politics’ gains ground, Beck warns, ‘politics is becoming a publicly financed advertising agency for the sunny sides of a development it does not know, and one that is removed from its active influence’ (Beck 1992, 224).

The above arguments present a view of politics which challenges possibilities for a slow evolution of policy through piecemeal social engineering in the Popperian sense. What this view suggests, in summary, is that increasing levels of social and epistemological complexity are likely to deepen rifts between political elites (which are likely to retain much of their cultural homogeneity) and their electoral constituencies (which will move towards cultural and psychological heterogeneity at a much faster pace). Therefore, as elites negotiate problems of cognitive indeterminacy which result from growing complexity, they may come to rely increasingly upon elite social personality for heuristic guidance. They will strain increasingly in this direction as they discover that social personality yields relatively stable and enduring formulae which permit them to act consistently, predictably,

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10 This rise is described, for example, by Anthony Giddens (1999). Giddens argues that individuals are increasingly sensing that their own knowledge of those ‘esoteric enclaves’ within which they function is superior to that of the state which remains responsible for regulating activities within these enclaves. States find it increasingly difficult both to keep track of their proliferation and to appear to reflect the values and beliefs which emerge therein. Importantly, states may also fail to keep track of specialist knowledge held by such groups. Hence, Giddens says, the growing memberships of (and influences exerted by) single issue interest groups. Such groups ‘are often at the forefront in raising problems and questions that may go ignored in orthodox political circles until too late’. Prior to the recent BSE crisis in the UK, he mentions, various groups and movements had been warning about the dangers of contamination in the food chain.
and with the conviction demanded of political elites. By contrast, they will find heuristic guidance ever less discernible within an increasingly heterogeneous, volatile, unpredictable electorate. Moreover, leaders of political elites may at such times find that it suits their interests to have recourse to elite social personality for the purposes of policy formulation, because this will create the impression that their decisions reflect the aggregated inputs of ordinary members and supporters, which will help them shore up weakening social capital in these areas. Followers within political elites may respond with a keener focus upon elite social personality also. The degree of fit between leadership decision and elite social personality may serve for them as a barometer for the extent to which elite power is distributed downwards, and for the extent to which leadership decisions either remain true to the ‘soul’ of the organisation or serve other interests.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that increased social and epistemological complexity threatens political decision-makers by obscuring from them the likely consequences of their decisions. It is worth stressing just how seriously some theorists take this depiction of the modern political condition. Niklas Luhmann says that ‘contingency’, or the unpredictability of future events, is ‘modern society’s defining attribute’ (Luhmann 1998, 44). Very similarly, Jon Elster argues that political decision-making is, generally speaking, characterised by a ‘radical cognitive indeterminacy’ where, as he puts it, ‘theory is impotent’ and ‘we cannot learn from experience and experiments’ (Elster 1989a, 181). From this point, it is a very short step to reiterate that political elites will have growing cause to turn to social personality to help them deal with decision-making problems consistently and predictably, and to then turn once more to the question of whether Pareto successfully based his sociology upon psychological qualities capable of generating heuristic guidance useful for this purpose. This chapter has already provided a fair indication that he did, because it has shown that Pareto’s psychological model included general orientations towards change, risk and innovation, which we can think of as providing a backbone for the conservative-liberal continuum. However, the following chapter will explore each of these constructs in the theoretical depth they deserve, in part so that we may better gauge the richness of their implications for political decision-making, and also so that we can then assess Pareto’s political sociology in the final chapter. This will finally allow us to ascertain whether it is to Pareto’s psychological insight that we should turn, if we are to rate him as a key figure within classical sociology.
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4.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine what Pareto said concerning each of the individual differences which align to form his psychological model. It will consider how well these differences match up with constructs which have subsequently developed within psychological and sociological literatures, and it will call upon wide-ranging evidence to assess the extent to which they align as Pareto envisioned. For this task to remain manageable, it has been necessary to focus upon what seem to be the model’s core individual differences.

The following six sections argue that the imposition of a six dimensional structure gives good coverage. Hence, to test Pareto’s model upon a given population would mean asking, firstly, whether the following six individual differences actually exist as real dimensions of personality, and, secondly, whether they lock together along a general multi-trait person continuum as Pareto believed. The first of these six sections, section 4.2, will begin by exploring the polarity between cultural conservatism and liberal scepticism which Pareto set within his model. Section 4.3 will then look at how an individualism/collectivism continuum aligns beside this, such that collectivism clusters with cultural conservatism, and individualism clusters with liberal scepticism. Section 4.4 will then consider those heightened creative abilities which Pareto also linked to liberal individualism. Section 4.5 will look at Pareto’s assumption that creative, liberal individualism also tends to cluster with what we now term the general personality trait of ‘risk-taking’ or ‘sensation-seeking’. Section 4.6 will thereafter consider how Pareto’s ‘force-fraud’ continuum also slots into the model, such that liberals incline towards manipulativeness and compromise in their dealings with political opponents, while conservatives incline towards blunt, uncompromising and aggressive strategies. Finally, section 4.7 will consider how comfortably an ideological conviction-relativism continuum fits within this overall pattern, such that conservatives now become zealous ideologues and liberals become detached relativists.

Before examining each of these individual differences, this introductory section will prepare the reader with some very general comments on the model. Firstly, it is worth reiterating that Pareto treated the ‘conservative’ traits listed above as common within the lower echelons of mainstream political elites. Yet he also regarded them as underpinning the violent and extremist politics of both the far right and the far left. Aspiring politicians who possess these traits, Pareto believed, will gravitate towards small, highly principled parties which may so esoteric as to be almost inaccessible, and which split easily into factions due to squabbles over ideological purity. Such parties will tend to recoil from opportunities to make deals with dominant political
and economic elites. Yet shouting from the sidelines they may strike populist chords by resorting to their favourite battlecry: that those who rule are weak, corrupt, self-seeking, short-termist and lacking in commitment to any grand political vision.

By contrast, Pareto used the ‘liberal’ traits listed above to characterise moderate politicians who hold the centre ground. Unhindered by rigid ideology and motivated largely by material gain, they will gravitate towards mainstream political parties which may be of any sociopolitical complexion provided they can serve as stepping stones to the centres of power. Pareto’s liberal-moderate types will thrive close to these centres because their superior manipulative and people-oriented skills allow them to succeed within diverse and constantly shifting networks of highly competitive individuals and interest groups.

Building upon Machiavelli’s notion that the ‘religious’ personality tends to be distributed more amongst the populace than amongst its rulers, Pareto also regarded the above listed conservative traits as having been distributed more amongst masses than amongst elites throughout western history. This is an enormous claim, but it does find some empirical confirmation in studies of the phenomenon of ‘working class authoritarianism’ which now stretch back over fifty years. These personality types make their deepest inroads within the political elites, Pareto believed, as societies go through their ‘crystallised’ phases which are characterised by economic austerity, cultural insularity, low levels of artistic and intellectual achievement, strict social and moral codes, and highly centralised political authority. They thrive under these conditions because of their superior functional adaptation to the heavily centralised religious or military governments which these conditions promote.

As we will soon see, some psychological studies place Pareto’s theory relating conservative personality to the ‘crystallised’ societal condition on a firmer footing, by showing that conservative personality can be regarded as a ‘crisis orientation’. These studies encourage us to view psychological conservatism as manifesting a biologically rooted imperative for the human species to close ranks under threatening circumstances, simultaneously becoming more altruistic towards in-groups, more hostile and distrustful towards out-groups, and more inclined to think rigidly and categorically. Pareto viewed his liberal moderate types, on the other hand, as filling the elites (and squeezing the conservatives out) as societies go through their ‘individualised’ phases which are characterised by growing material prosperity, loosening attachments to social and moral norms, artistic and intellectual rebirth, and political decentralisation. We will see that Pareto’s theory relating psychological liberalism to improving societal conditions squares rather well with controversial evidence suggesting that a culture shift in the direction of ‘postmaterialist value orientation’ has been taking place throughout the industrialised world for at least several decades now. Pareto’s theory is also strikingly consistent with evidence, also discussed below, which suggests that levels of ‘Machiavellianism’ and even ‘psychopathy’ have risen throughout the industrialised world over the same period.

Pareto also took from Machiavelli the idea of conservative personality as a rural phenomenon (e.g. Pareto 1935, §1723, §2465, §2533). Machiavelli’s ‘lion’ was, to reiterate, a ‘farmer-warrior’ and a ‘cultivator’, and it was to the rural peasantry that Machiavelli looked for infusions of ‘religious’ (i.e. pagan) sentiment which he hoped would re-glue and reinvigorate Italian society. However, Pareto believed that
Machiavelli’s references to ‘religious’ individuals and peoples were unfortunate because by using this word he ‘mistook the part for the whole’. Pareto felt that his own conservative ‘class II residues’ better encompassed the broad range of meanings which Machiavelli was trying to convey (Pareto 1935, §2465). Despite this reaffirmation of Machiavelli’s link between conservative personality and rural living, Pareto however displayed no desire to remain close to Machiavelli by then linking his liberal type to such value-laden constructs as urban ‘sophistication’, ‘decadence’, ‘artificiality’ or ‘rootlessness’. In fact, he accused Machiavelli of ‘lapsing’ into the moralistic view of city life as ‘corrupt’ (Pareto 1935, §2533). In another section of his ‘Treatise’, it is highly likely that Pareto had Machiavelli in mind when he observed that several authors have written histories of Rome simply in order to vent ‘ethical prejudices against wealth and luxury’ (Pareto 1935, §2589). This disagreement with Machiavelli might seem strange given that Pareto’s experience of trasformismo and clientelismo created within him a near obsession with what he viewed as the corruption of Italy’s political and economic elites. It is therefore likely that he would have felt at least some temptation to expand beyond Machiavelli by more fully applying his model of personality to make it descriptive of psychological aspects of urban/rural division. However, Pareto was well known for his aristocratic and epicurean opposition to petty moralising (Aron 1967, 161). It could easily be this, combined with his strong desire to be read as a scientist and not as a moralist, which made Pareto step back from attaching his sociological theory to that long tradition of religious and social thought which has heaped moral condemnation onto city living.

Before moving on, it is important to say a little about the major theoretical perspectives which will be called upon to evaluate Pareto’s psychological model. Psychoanalysis will serve as a framework theory which contributes not just to the explanations of all six individuals within the model, but also to our understanding of the model’s overall psychological coherence. Psychoanalysis has of course become marginalised within psychological theory over the course of several decades now. This book does not address arguments which have arisen concerning whether it is best understood as a hermeneutic enterprise which sometimes provides useful metaphors, or whether it has ‘scientific’ status by either consisting of theories which are directly testable, or of theories which are subject to sophisticated falsification by virtue of their capacity to generate testable hypotheses. A good summary of this debate is provided by Drew Westen (in Pervin (ed.) 1990, 34–38). It is appropriate, however, to heed Eysenck’s (1985) warning that many studies have been too hasty in their claims of finding empirical support for Freudian theories. Much of the problem stems from the fact that psychoanalytic theory often provides just one of several ways to interpret correlational data (as this chapter will demonstrate). Given the ambiguous status of psychoanalytic theory, then, it is important to stress that this chapter does not set Pareto’s model within a psychoanalytic framework in order to prove that it accurately describes different kinds of personality structure. Instead, it merely argues that psychoanalytic theory works well as an integrative framework, and that Pareto’s psychological intuitions contain surprising insight given that he formed his ideas before Freud.
More specifically, we will see that the core features of Pareto’s conservative and extremist ‘lion’ match up well with what psychoanalysis terms the ‘compulsive’, ‘obsessional’ or ‘anal’ personality pattern. Pareto’s liberal and moderate ‘fox’, on the other hand, will be seen to have much in common with the ‘negativistic’ or ‘leisurely’ personality. Furthermore, theories of ‘Machiavellian’ and ‘psychopathic’ personality, which integrate readily within this psychoanalytic framework, will prove useful in explaining some ‘fox’ traits.

Hence this chapter will commit itself to the idea that psychoanalytic theories of negativism and theories of Machiavellianism-Psychopathy can be blended to provide a better understanding of Pareto’s ‘fox’. It is admittedly dangerous to assume significant overlaps between negativistic and Machiavellian-Psychopathic personality patterns within general populations, and it would go beyond the scope of this book to address this problem through a detailed study of links between these constructs. However, key similarities between the negativist and the Machiavellian-Psychopath will become apparent. Both seem to share low superego strength. Both are believed to experience very similar intrapsychic conflicts producing orientations towards authority which are simultaneously cynical, doubting, demanding, and fearful of neglect. Both are also reckoned to act out their conflicts, whereas compulsives repress theirs. Furthermore, both often have impulsivity, narcissism and anomic disenchantment attributed to them.

In the final analysis, however, we need not conclude that the various features of the negativist and the Machiavellian-Psychopath tend to combine within individuals. Rather than follow Pareto exactly by treating his ‘fox’ as an individual entity, it will be regarded instead as a statistical entity representing tendencies for whole personality patterns to cluster together. In other words, it will be used as a descriptive term for social personality. Of course, such clusters require organising principles, and it will become clearer that low superego strength is the most likely candidate for supplying this principle. Pareto’s foxes will hopefully become more real, then, when viewed as standing for certain general personality correlates of low superego strength. The six sections which now follow will produce theory and evidence in support of this notion that a distinction between high superego strength (considered along with other attributes of the compulsive personality) and low superego strength (considered along with other attributes of negativistic and Machiavellian-psychopathic personality) holds the key to Pareto’s general model of personality. In making this argument there is no intention to engage in a name-calling exercise by labeling conservatives ‘compulsive’ or ‘anal retentive’, or by labelling liberals ‘Machiavellian’, ‘negativistic’, or, even worse, ‘psychopathic’. Rather, the point will be to suggest that general populations can be situated along a multi-trait person continuum running between compulsivity and Negativism-Machiavellianism-

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1 The word ‘leisurely’ is often used to refer to mild, non-pathological negativism.
2 To qualify this slightly, although both negativism and Machiavellianism can be explained in terms of intrapsychic conflicts which persist throughout adulthood, this is only likely to hold true for the secondary psychopath, and not the primary psychopath for whom intrapsychic conflict is conspicuously absent. This distinction will be explained in section 4.6.2.
Psychopathy. It is hoped that the very idea of such a continuum, which Pareto’s crude and never fully articulated model of personality points us squarely towards, could contribute to the political psychology literature by providing a distinctive and thought-provoking means to understand conservative and liberal personality patterns.

4.2 Cultural Conservatism and Liberal Scepticism

The first individual difference to be described and then explained will concern contrasting conservative and liberal orientations towards social and moral norms. This can also be understood as involving psychological propensities to take sides in that conflict between culture and reason which the previous chapter touched upon. Pareto refers often within his ‘Treatise’ to conservative ‘faith’ and liberal ‘scepticism’. He historicises conflict between these positions throughout many passages which depict European societies as having ‘oscillated’ between ‘periods of faith’ and ‘periods of scepticism’ since the days of ancient Greece (e.g. Pareto 1935, §605–06, 2353–66, 2367–84).

Pareto certainly viewed this conflict as corresponding to psychological difference. His periods of faith and scepticism follow the historical cycle’s movement through its ‘crystallised’ and ‘individualised’ phases. Periods of scepticism are times when the elites are replete with ‘foxes’, ‘speculators’, and ‘class I residues’; periods of faith are times when ‘lions’, ‘rentiers’, and ‘class II residues’ predominate. This distinction between conservative ‘faith’ and liberal ‘scepticism’ clearly owes much to Machiavelli’s much earlier contrast between the lion (which includes the idea of the farmer warrior as cultivator and culture bearer) and the fox (which refers to the light spirited, carnivalesque, confidence trickster who bears no such responsibility).

Given this Machiavellian ancestry, it is immediately tempting to view this individual difference psychoanalytically as a person continuum running between ‘superego dominated’ and ‘id dominated’ personalities. However, before taking this route it is useful to consider Pareto’s comments concerning how his two psychological types think differently about social and moral norms. It has previously been mentioned that Pareto’s error complex manifested itself within his view that different sorts of people make different sorts of misjudgment. The following passage contains his thoughts concerning misjudgments relating to norms:

At times, for individuals in whom class II residues have declined in vigour while the class I residues have intensified [and while experimental science has gained in prestige], conclusions deriving from class II residues seem more strikingly at odds with realities, and that circumstance gives rise to a feeling that such residues are “outworn prejudices” that had better be replaced with combination residues (i.e. class I residues). So, non-logical actions are mercilessly condemned from the standpoint of experimental truth and individual or social utility, and the idea is to replace them with logical actions, which are professedly dictated by experimental science, but in reality are based on pseudo-science and are made up of [ideological constructions] of little or no validity. The situation is usually stated in terms of … “Faith and prejudice must give way to reason” … At other times, when an inverse trend is in progress and [class II] residues are gaining new strength
while the [class I] residues are losing ground, contrary phenomena are observable. The [class II] residues that have weakened may be beneficial, indifferent, or detrimental to society. In the first case, the [ideological constructions] of the [class I residues], on the basis of which the class II residues are rejected, show themselves entirely at odds with practice, as tending to give the society forms unsuitable to it and which might even encompass its destruction. That is felt instinctively rather than by thought. [This gives rise to the feeling that] we have within us ideas, notions, concepts, that are superior to experience, that “intuition” must take the place of “reason”, that “conscience must assert its rights in the face of positivistic empiricism” (Pareto 1935, § 2340).

Evidently, Pareto viewed those possessing the ‘class II residues’ (i.e. the ‘lions’ and the ‘rentiers’) as unquestioning anti-intellectuals who adhere stubbornly and for no good reason to established customs, traditions, practices, dogmas etc. This view of psychological conservatism is validated by recent psychometric research using several well-established measures of ‘conservative’ and ‘authoritarian’ personality which will prove invaluable throughout this chapter. Crucially, this evidence supports Pareto’s ‘conservative faith’ construct by encouraging us to view the conservative thought process as often reflecting religious, superstitious, mystical and other ‘anti-rational’ influences. Joe (1974), for example, notes from strong positive correlations between Adorno’s F-scale and the Jackson personality inventory that authoritarians are more religious, superstitious and anti-scientific than non-authoritarians. This dovetails well with Herbert McClosky’s (McClosky in DiRenzo (ed.) 1974, 276) finding that conservatives greatly outscored liberals on his ‘Mysticism’ scale designed to tap mystical and obscurantist sentiment. Furthermore, strong links between conservatism and religious belief are clear from the fact that a religious belief subscale is included within the (1968) Wilson-Patterson Conservatism scale, which suggests we might even view religious belief as a dimension or definitional component of conservatism.

Following Pareto’s view that conservatives tend to think intuitively, their stock of arguments for privileging ‘faith’ above ‘reason’ will doubtless include the following one which Herbert McClosky counts as a strong indicator of conservative personality:

Man’s traditional inheritance is rich, grand, endlessly proliferated and mysterious, deserving of veneration, and not to be cast away lightly in favour of the narrow uniformity preached by [those who Burke called] “sophisters and calculators”. Theory is to be distrusted since reason, which gives rise to theory, is a deceptive, shallow and limited instrument (McClosky in DiRenzo (ed.) 1974, 260).

We can also see from the preceding ‘Treatise’ passage that Pareto viewed those who possess the ‘class I residues’ (i.e. the ‘foxes’ and the ‘speculators’) as inclining towards their own hallmark biases. Just like Edmund Burke’s ‘sophists and calculators’, they will tend to subject social and moral norms to harsh judgments by employing pseudo-scientific (Neurath would say ‘pseudorational’, Elster would say ‘hyper-rational’) criteria which refuse to acknowledge that norm-following may sometimes benefit us in ways which we do not understand.
Before exploring these liberal orientations further, it is worth considering how psychoanalytic theory provides an explanatory framework for both conservative and liberal positions. In the first instance, we will consider the inclination to accept norm-guidance as resulting from a particular set of consecutive, developmental experiences. The inclination to reject norm guidance will then receive similar attention. Perhaps the best place to begin is by considering Freud’s anal phase which the child is said to undergo between the ages of around three and four years. This is where, according to classical psychoanalytic theory, the anal (i.e. ‘compulsive’ or ‘obsessional’) character forms in reaction to the forced repression of anal erotism during toilet training. Too severe repression of this form of gratification, Freud and many subsequent theorists have claimed, can produce certain enduring traits – named by (Freud 1925, 83) as neatness, obstinacy and parsimoniousness – which carry forward into adulthood to create individuals who we commonly think of as ‘conservative’. This process of forced repression is most significant for present purposes because it lays the groundwork for events which follow during the phallic phase (which begins from around the age of five) where the ‘conservative’ personality will become more recognisable by taking on its distinctive moralistic aspect. We can say that forced repression during the anal phase paves the way for how the phallic phase is likely to be experienced in two key respects. Firstly, it establishes a pattern of forced compliance to, as well as fear and unquestioning acceptance of, parental authority (part of which involves a process of ‘anaclitic identification’ with the mother which forms the basis of the ‘ego-ideal’ or ideal self); secondly, the infant accepts strong external restrictions upon the id which help prepare the way for further – this time internal – controls.

Later, during the phallic period, these factors combine to promote the introjection of the strong superego. For male children, this is famously said to involve a succession of oedipal and castration complexes which are resolved through, to use Anna Freud’s term, an ‘identification with the aggressor’ where the child quells fears of being punished by the father by imbuing himself with the father’s characteristics. For female children, we have to think even more controversially in terms of a weaker ‘identification through loss of love’ with the mother which resolves the electra complex. In each case, the ‘imago’ of the same sex parent is said to be internalised through identification. This means that the five year old child internalises what he or she perceives to be the moral sense possessed by the parent; this then forms the basis for that child’s own moral sense, called the superego. The superego is usually held to consist of both social proscriptions and prescriptions which are internalised as the conscience and the ego-ideal respectively. An early sense of sex role is also said to be gained through identification with the same sex parent at this time.

To carry this argument in a neo-Freudian direction by focusing less upon the oedipal triangle and more upon wider environmental influences upon personality, it can be argued that the newly introjected superego still has a long way to go before it can produce that moralistic nature which we associate with conservative individuals. Erikson (1968) has argued that for the superego to emerge as a dominant influence upon personality it must first carry forward throughout adolescence as a guide to the acquisition of adult identity. Even with this accomplished, it still faces the longer term challenge of guiding the personality towards integrated wholeness. Drawing upon
both arguments, we may say that the formation and maintenance of conservative personality hinges upon not just the introjection of the strong superego but also the presence of adolescent and adult environments which later reward and reinforce the superego by allowing it to perform its guiding roles successfully.

To run with this theory, it is interesting to hypothesise that modal socialisation environments vary over the course of generations so as to either favour or inhibit the creation and lifelong continuity of the superego. Section 3.6 has already provided some of the necessary groundwork by suggesting that high levels of social and epistemological complexity may combine with rapid flux within socialisation environments to inhibit superego development and reduce prospects for identities which are tightly integrated under the governance of the superego. If we credit this broad framework theory with at least some plausibility, then we begin to see that Pareto’s vision of slow historical alternation between periods of ‘faith’ (under conditions of relative poverty, austerity, cultural insularity, and relative permanence within socialisation environments) and periods of ‘scepticism’ (when societies grow rich, complex and culturally heterogeneous, giving rise to variability within socialisation environments) really could have some basis in reality.

So far, therefore, it appears that we might plausibly regard the ‘faith’ of those who possess Pareto’s class II residues as involving high levels of superego strength. This soon becomes an even more attractive proposition when it is realised that a simple explanation has arisen within psychoanalytic theory to account for that inclination towards religious, superstitious and irrational thinking which Pareto linked to these residues (and which above mentioned research correlating religious and superstitious thinking with conservatism and authoritarianism clearly affirms). According to Wilhelm Reich, individuals who possess strong superegos are particularly likely to experience anxiety when repressed emotions and desires threaten to enter consciousness. In order to avoid this anxiety, they may become reliant upon the coping strategy of ‘ruminative thinking’ which diverts the mind towards concerns which are ‘safe’. In practice, this will often involve the diversion of attention from what is ‘rationally important’ about an issue to its more ‘superficial aspects’ (Reich 1969, 194). In her more recent discussions of this coping strategy, Elizabeth Young-Bruehl has suggested that it will commonly involve recourse to specific, compulsive thought habits or ‘idée fixes’. More significantly, though, it may also involve inclinations to organise thoughts within ‘superstitious, mystical or pseudomystical ideational systems’. Hence, she continues, high superego strength individuals may place stakes in all sorts of traditional practices and ideological systems because these serve as ‘protections and talismans’ against repressed contents of their own psyches (Young-Bruehl 1998, 211).

Further arguments from psychoanalytic theory will now be used to make better sense of the ‘scepticism’ of Pareto’s foxes. This will be regarded as consisting of more than simply the absence of the lion’s ‘faith’ (i.e. the absence of a strong superego). Rather, we must now consider the theory which views Pareto’s moderate liberal politicians as inclining towards ‘negativistic’ personality. The basic features of negativism may be explained in terms of their childhood origins as follows.

As Millon et al. (1996) point out, psychoanalytic theorists regard negativists as displaying conflicts which originate during the oral phase which runs from birth
until the anal phase. Particularly significant are feelings of ‘distrust’ and ‘narcissistic rage’ which arise if the child’s needs go unmet — relatively speaking that is — by parents or caretakers. During the later months of the oral phase when infants reach ‘object constancy’, and when parents or caretakers can finally be regarded as separate individuals with their own agendas, children who have experienced these feelings now have an object for them which is other than self. Feelings of doubt, suspicion and fear of neglect may now carry forward in confusing and unsettled counterpoint to more positive feelings towards parental authority. It is this conflict between feelings which the term ‘negativistic ambivalence’ refers to. Given the strong component of doubt and suspicion involved, it begins to become clear why negativists should, as Millon et al. (1996, 551–552) point out, display more than any other personality type a cognitive style which is sceptical.

It is a short step to then add that if strong negativistic ambivalence emerges during the oral phase, then this will later hinder both the acceptance of parental authority during the anal phase, and the uptake of the parental imago during the phallic phase. Moreover, prospects for the acceptance of parental authority and the introjection of the superego might often be reduced further because parents or caretakers responsible for instilling oral conflicts may typically provide weaker superego training throughout subsequent developmental stages. In fact, Millon et al. (1996, 641) point out that negativists are inclined to internalise the various ‘inconsistencies and vacillations’ which they find in parental authority. Crucially then, negativists avoid those decisive experiences which are responsible for the early emergence of that trait cluster which will crystallise during adolescence as the ‘conservative’ — i.e. compulsive — personality. They emerge from the anal and phallic phases able to give relatively free expression to their inner conflicts — i.e. able to act them out — to an extent that conservatives, who have been forced to submerge their conflicts, cannot.

What remains to be provided now is a fuller indication of how negativistic ambivalence can manifest itself throughout adulthood. It seems that if during infancy a mental template linking parental or care-taking authority to negativistic ambivalence should arise, then this might conceivably continue to operate throughout adult life, only now finding new objects in political, civil, religious and other institutional forms of authority. We can gauge this from the common observation that negativists typically display a:

... tendency to see any form of power as inconsiderate and neglectful, together with a belief that authorities or caregivers are incompetent, unfair and cruel (Benjamin 1993, 276, cited in Millon et al. 1996, 546).

Millon et al. (1996, 542) agree that ‘a tendency to resist authority’ should count as one of the most prominent negativistic traits. Psychometric evidence confirming that mental templates really do tend to govern our attitudes towards institutional authority throughout adulthood is readily available. Rigby’s (1982) ‘general attitudes towards institutional authority’ (GAIA) scale demonstrates that attitudes towards social enforcement institutions such as police, army, law, and educational facilities consistently show strong, positive correlations. It is interesting to note Heaven
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and Bester’s (1986) observation that individuals who gain GAIA scores indicating consistently negative attitudes towards institutional authority are inclined to feel anxious and alienated, and perceive the world as hostile. They credit McClosky and Schaar (1965) with noticing that such individuals tend to suffer from an impaired cognitive functioning which leads them to distort social reality by projecting anxieties, fears and uncertainties outwith themselves. In each case, negativistic personality might easily be involved. Negativists are well known to possess high levels of anxiety and to blame others for their misfortunes.

Hence it seems fair to conclude that just as the infant who experiences negativistic ambivalence is critical and suspicious of the intentions of parents or caretakers and therefore tends to ‘disidentify’ with them, the adult who continues to experience these same feelings will often remain on guard against all manner of cultural and ideological phenomena whose legitimacy they perceive to derive from the stamp of institutional authority. Section 4.7 will shortly develop this idea one small but important stage further when Nathan Leites’ theory of ‘projective distrust’ is explained. Fundamental to Leites’ theory is the notion that negativistic ambivalence is especially likely to influence adult orientations towards political authority under circumstances where political decision-making problems are too complex to be handled competently. Rather than acknowledge their own incapacities and distrust themselves, negativists become inclined to ‘project’ feelings of distrust onto politicians and governments. ‘I do not trust myself to make competent decisions’ becomes ‘they are not to be trusted to make competent decisions’.

Leites’ argument will be called upon to help explain why Pareto’s ‘foxes’ should incline towards ideological relativism. Section 4.4 will, even before that, argue that these same feelings of rebellious dissatisfaction will often contribute to those heightened creative abilities which Pareto also attributed to his foxes. The argument will be that negativistic ambivalence may very frequently supply what Anthony Storr (1991: ch. 13) has called that ‘divine discontent’ which has driven so many creative challenges to orthodox ways of thinking. In short then, it will become very tempting to suppose that sceptical orientations towards norms, ideological relativism and heightened creativity do indeed cluster just as Pareto’s model proposes, because these traits frequently co-originate from negativistic ambivalence.

Now that this section has introduced the idea, to be developed throughout subsequent sections, that Pareto’s ‘lion’ appears rather like the compulsive who possesses high superego strength, and that his ‘fox’ appears rather like the negativist who possesses low superego strength, it only remains to be added that this core distinction between the lion and the fox in terms of superego strength corresponds to one of the most important individual differences which personality psychologists have so far been able to settle upon. The treatment of superego strength as a major individual difference has long been attested to by the inclusion, as one of Raymond Cattell’s 16 primary personality factors, of a ‘factor G’ which distinguishes between those with high superego strength who are ‘conscientious, persevering, staid and moralistic’, and those with low superego strength who ‘think expeditiously, disregard rules and feel few obligations’ (Saville and Blinkhorn 1976, 22). More recently, the individual difference tapped by Cattell’s factor G has become established as ‘conscientiousness’ which is now widely recognised as the third largest of the ‘big
five’ dimensions of personality. Oliver John mentions that various researchers have tapped into Big Five Conscientiousness independently, each giving it different names. His examples include Cattell’s ‘superego strength’, Block’s ‘high ego control’, Buss and Plomin’s ‘impulsivity’ (a negative relationship, of course), Noller et al.’s ‘orderliness and social conformity’ and Gough’s ‘norm-favouring vs. norm-doubting’ (see John in Pervin (ed.) 1990, 89).

4.3 Individualism and Collectivism

It is clear from Pareto’s references in his ‘Treatise’ to the class IV and class V residues that some kind of individual difference involving individualism and collectivism also integrates within his psychological model. The (conservative) class II residues, he said, tend to combine with the class IV residues of ‘sociality’; the (liberal) class I residues, on the other hand, tend to combine with the class V residues of ‘the integrity of the individual and his appurtenances’ (e.g. Aron 1968, 134). This section will now look more closely at what traits stand in opposition here. A broad range of psychological constructs and theoretical perspectives will be brought forward for this purpose, but the basic traits at issue will prove sufficiently clear to allow items to be designed to tap this individual difference in the following chapter.

Pareto’s listing of the various sub-categories of the ‘residues of sociality’ immediately asks us to accept that altruistic behaviour (and it is important not to jump to any hasty definitions of this term here) relates more closely to conservative than to liberal personality. This is suggested by the fact that the sub-categories of the residues of sociality include what Pareto terms ‘the extension of self pity to others’, ‘instinctive repugnance to suffering’ and ‘reasoned repugnance to useless suffering’ (Pareto 1935, §§ 1138–1144). He adds to this list ‘risking one’s life for others’ (§1148) and ‘sharing one’s property with others’ (§§ 1149–1152). It might seem odd that Pareto should then add ‘neophobia’ to this list. This seems to refer to feelings of hostility towards the unfamiliar, or as he puts it, ‘of resistance to innovations which are likely to disturb uniformities’ (Pareto 1935, §1130).

This assertion of a link between altruism and neophobia does however suggest that it might be possible to place Pareto’s class IV residues of sociality on a firmer footing by explaining them from the perspective of evolutionary social psychology with reference to W.D. Hamilton’s (1964) concept of ‘inclusive fitness’. Homo sapiens, Hamilton’s seminal argument ran, have evolved design features which advantage the survival and reproductive fitness of human collectivities at the expense of each individual member of these collectivities. These evolved features include, for example, propensities for individuals to make sacrifices to the common good within narrow circumstances, most obviously where the collectivity is directly threatened in some way. The key consequence is that even though individuals may perish, those who survive will tend, as was presumably much more likely to be the case during our evolutionary history, to be of similar genetic stock. Hamilton’s point, then, was that genotypes have been able to replicate more successfully by preprogramming sacrificial and other qualities into each human carrier. However, to expand upon this theory by drawing upon what is now termed ‘genetic similarity theory’, it has
also been argued that before this sacrificial behaviour (i.e. altruism) could evolve by promoting genotypical replication, it had to be accompanied by something altogether less benign. According to this theory, we have also evolved an innate ‘neophobia’ (to stick with Pareto’s term) to complement our altruism. This works on both a conscious and an unconscious level to encourage us to make selections, using the criterion of evidence of genetic closeness, concerning to whom and to what extent we should ration our helping behaviours. One of the major proponents of this theory is J. P. Rushton, who has observed that ‘xenophobia may represent a dark side of human altruism’ (Rushton 1997, 1). So far, therefore, the selfish interests of gene replication appear to provide us with what could be a rather unpleasant psychological reality underlying Pareto’s ‘residues of sociality’.

Various research findings can be drawn together to support and develop this idea. The following evidence will try to suggest that Pareto was not only right to link ‘neophobia’ and ‘altruism’; he also displayed considerable astuteness by linking these things in turn to his (conservative) class II residues. One important thread connecting altruism, neophobia, and indeed conservatism, it will now be argued, is that they can all be understood as phenomena which intensify together under conditions of environmental threat.

Firstly, it is important to establish that biases in altruistic behaviours towards genetically similar individuals are now known to strengthen and weaken together in general populations with variation in the extent to which the environment is perceived to contain threat. Evidence showing that individuals are inclined to help kin more than non-kin, and that this favouritism becomes stronger in ‘emergency as opposed to nonemergency situations’ is provided by Form and Nosow (1958) and by Burnstein, Crandall and Kitamaya (1994).3

There is compelling evidence indicating, moreover, that levels of ‘conservatism’ and ‘authoritarianism’ are also likely to vary directly with levels of environmental threat. Katz (1992) has shown that levels of conservatism – as measured by Glenn Wilson’s widely used index of general conservatism, the (1968) Conservatism scale – increased significantly in both Arab and Jewish populations during the first Gulf war. And as Simonton (in Pervin (ed.) 1990, 672–673) has pointed out, several studies indicate that individual tendencies towards ‘authoritarianism’ are likely to intensify ‘when a person confronts severe threat’. One such study undertaken by Sales (1972) indicates that threats to economic well-being must be included here. He found that economic ups and downs appear to affect the extent to which individuals are inclined to convert to authoritarian as opposed to non-authoritarian churches (authoritarian churches being those which ‘enforce absolute obedience to doctrine and prescription’). A follow up study (Sales 1973) later suggested that the U.S. depression of the 1930s influenced popular tastes in ways which highlighted this relationship between economic austerity and authoritarian attitude syndrome very clearly. He found, for example, that ‘comic strip characters exhibited more power and toughness; magazine articles became more cynical; books on superstitious topics (e.g. astrology) saw improved sales; interest in psychology and psychoanalysis

3 These citations are mentioned by Buss and Kenrick (in Gilbert, Fiske and Linzey (ed.) 1998, 983).
declined (anti-intraception); and punishment for sex crimes became more harsh’ (Simonton in Pervin (ed.) 1990, 673).

Simonton mentions further studies which reaffirm Sales’ conclusion. Of particular interest are several listed as demonstrating that ‘political crises and violence may motivate momentary drops in levels of integrative complexity in the thoughts of both leaders and followers’ (Simonton in Pervin (ed.) 1990, 675). As we will see in the following section, low levels of integratively complex thinking are very much a part of the conservative-authoritarian psychological profile, so it is not at all surprising that these drops should occur under threat as global conservatism-authoritarianism intensifies. Indeed, much the same can be said of Marcus et al.’s (1995, 101–113) finding that higher levels of threat prompt individuals to become less tolerant of civil liberties. More recently, Duckitt and Fisher (2003) have cited several studies including their own which uphold the notion that increased social threat (which they say we must distinguish from personal threat) causes heightened authoritarianism. They stress these findings’ consistency with Duckitt’s model of authoritarianism which they describe as consisting of ideological attitudes which ‘express the motivational goal of social control and security, activated by a view of the world as dangerous and threatening’. At the very least, therefore, these findings combine to suggest that the experience of social threat (that is, threat which we must ideologise because it does not present itself wholly within the immediate physical environment) prompts us to think about others stereotypically. This leads us to see members of groups where once we saw individuals, and to divide these groups between ‘friend’ and ‘foe’ categories. Whether these psychological re-orientations occur as part of an unconscious process which has evolved by advantaging genotypical replication is a question which must remain open.

To conclude this list of evidence, it is worth also considering Schachter’s (1959) classic study of ‘affiliation under anxiety’ which has confirmed the intuitively rather obvious point that individuals facing common threats develop strong positive identifications with one another which endure long after these threats have passed. Most significantly for present purposes, Schachter’s research supports the claim that conservative individuals are especially likely to affiliate under anxiety. He had set out to test Adler’s birth order theory which holds that first-born children will tend to be more conservative and socially oriented than later-born children. His tests involved informing some experimental subjects in a waiting room that they would soon be exposed to electric shock as part of a test procedure, and then comparing their behaviour patterns with those of control groups who received no such information. Subjects who had been forewarned of electric shock, Schachter found, were significantly more likely than controls to await what they perceived to be their forthcoming ordeals in the company of others rather than by themselves. Hence, Schachter had evidence of an affiliation effect. Schachter also found that 81% of first-born children who had been forewarned chose to wait with others, while only 31% of the later-born children who had been forewarned opted to do the same. This latter finding does therefore give some indication that this affiliation effect may be stronger amongst conservatives – provided we accept that Adler and more recent birth order theorists are correct that first-borns tend to be more conservative than latter-borns.
Finally, therefore, some degree of psychological coherence is becoming apparent in Pareto’s insistence that the (conservative) class II residues tend to correlate with the class IV residues of sociality. It seems that he anticipated the idea that both individuals and whole societies risk succumbing to a kind of ‘crisis orientation’ with distinctively conservative-authoritarian characteristics. We might think of this crisis orientation as having perhaps evolved by helping our evolutionary ancestors adjust psychologically to survive all manner of threatening circumstances through a combination of neophobic suspicion of the unfamiliar, strong in-group affiliation, and preparedness to share resources and make sacrifices. The point of contrast to this crisis orientation would then be times of peace, economic prosperity and material abundance when altruistic concerns can be freely and widely distributed without compromising genotypical survival, and where neophobic suspicions go unfed and reduce because the ‘unfamiliar’ becomes much less threatening. It is worth stressing that this concept of a conservative or authoritarian crisis orientation dovetails very neatly indeed with Pareto’s repeated insistence that the class II residues come to the fore under conditions of material austerity, often in societies geared towards military readiness, while the class I residues intensify as societies grow more prosperous and interdependent with neighbouring societies.

To return once more to what Pareto said of his class IV residues, it appears that the idea of a conservative or authoritarian crisis orientation also provides a plausible framework theory for understanding that ‘willingness to conform’, and, and the same time, those ‘demands for conformity from others’, which Pareto also lists among them (§§ 1117–1129). Clearly, these aspects of our sociality might, just like ‘altruism’ and ‘neophobia’ have advantaged group survival during our evolutionary history. However, it is interesting to consider that psychoanalytic theory also provides an explanatory framework for these conformist sentiments. What’s more, this framework seems to lend further weight to Pareto’s belief that these are more pronounced within conservative personality. Perhaps most obviously, it is useful to reiterate that psychoanalytic theories of compulsive personality explain that the child’s forced compliance to parental authority during the anal phase and/or later identification with the same sex parent during the phallic phase can provide a template for the adult’s willing compliance to other – e.g. political and religious – forms of authority. Hence the child’s identification with the aggressor might often reoccur throughout adulthood in the form of yearnings for strong leadership. Indeed, this might well explain Wolak and Marcus’ (2006) finding that authoritarians in particular are likely to display ‘enthusiastic’ emotional responses to favoured political candidates. Or, where such individuals find themselves in extremely threatening situations, we might speculate that they will be more likely to identify with those who threaten them. We see this phenomenon in its most extreme manifestations within the condition which Nils Bejerot termed ‘Stockholm Syndrome’, where hostages in kidnap or siege situations cope with their trauma by identifying with their potential killers. This is often exemplified with reference to the 1974 kidnapping of the heiress Patty Hearst by the Symbionese Liberation Army, which was followed just two months later by her filmed participation in a bank robbery where she brandished a machine gun alongside her former captors.
Psychoanalytic theory also explains that compulsives cling to all manner of established social regulations, partly due to exaggerated, neurotic fears that if they should be freed from the restrictions which authority and regulation impose, then they may lose control over or be forced to acknowledge repressed emotions and desires. Indeed, this might explain why many individuals who struggle with the demands of their superegos seek membership of conservative institutions which simultaneously reinforce the superego and provide sanctioned outlets where these repressed contents can be discharged without guilt. One further argument from psychoanalytic theory becomes important here. Freud argued in his ‘Civilisation and its Discontents’ that culture ‘levies energy from sexuality’ in the sense that aim-inhibited libido is channeled towards strengthening those bonds of friendship which ultimately hold together civilised communities. The close relationship suggested by Pareto between the conservative, class II residues and the class IV residues of sociality might therefore be explained in part by arguing that because compulsives repress libidinal energy heavily, they become more likely to create sublimated outlets, both through enthusiastic praise directed towards particular politicians, and through in-group bonds formed within political institutions.

Having said that, Baumeister and Leary (1995, 497–529) have pulled together empirical research which suggests that the desire to form interpersonal attachments, or as they term it, the ‘need to belong’, is a ‘powerful, fundamental and extremely pervasive motivation’ which has hitherto been underappreciated by psychologists and sociologists alike. After setting out detailed evidence to suggest that this need to belong governs cognition, emotion and even physical well-being to a surprising degree, they conclude that it seems too fundamental to count, as Freud believed, as a mere by-product of other psychological processes. Of course, this view does not exclude the possibility that differing levels of libidinal sublimation might explain some individual variance in the strength of Baumeister and Leary’s ‘need to belong’.

Finally, it is worth adding that Pareto also regarded human sociality as manifesting itself within ‘sentiments of hierarchy’ which fix one’s sense of place or ‘rank’ within the social structure. He seemed to suggest that there are ‘sentiments of superiors’ and ‘sentiments of inferiors’ which, along with the need for group approval in general, spring from the same imperative for us to integrate within social hierarchies. We are asked to accept that ‘sentiments of superiors’ vary between ‘protection and benevolence’ and ‘dominance and pride’ (Pareto 1935, §1155), whilst ‘sentiments of inferiors’ include ‘subordination, affection, respect and fear’ (Pareto 1935, §§1156–1159). This may on the surface seem a rather awkward ordering of a very heterogeneous list of other-regarding sentiments. However, we might try to bring them together within an explanatory framework by saying that all correspond to a heightened consciousness of one’s position within social hierarchies.

One way to theorise this consciousness is with reference to Alfred Adler’s famous belief that inferiority and superiority complexes often combine within individuals striving to compensate for childhood feelings of helplessness which have persisted into adulthood. Adler believed that the more intensely we have experienced helplessness as children, the more likely we are as adults to experience fluctuate between timidity and aggression in our relations with others as we try to develop ourselves towards
feelings of superiority which help us feel whole. Enduring feelings of inferiority are likely to stimulate exaggerated, overcompensatory efforts towards superiority, which might for example involve the projection of inferiority feelings onto others, or identification with others perceived to hold higher social rank.

Fortunately, Adler’s theory gels with more modern perspectives based upon empirical evidence. As the section below dealing with Pareto’s distinction between force and fraud will mention in more detail, the mental states of humans and other primates depend upon brain concentrations of the neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin. Those who perceive themselves to have high status within social hierarchies tend to have high levels of dopamine, which produces feelings of relaxation, whilst those perceiving themselves to have lower status will tend to have low levels of serotonin, which makes them feel frustrated and aggressive (indeed, just as Adler had earlier linked inferiority to aggression). Oliver James (1998) cites this research in order to suggest that its claims concerning status consciousness have implications for how we understand those feelings of depression and perceived personal failure so common in today’s ‘low serotonin society’. He draws particular attention to the painful social comparisons which individuals make with others whose status they perceive to be slightly above or beneath their own, in their efforts to reduce inferiority feelings. James’ argument thus breathes some fresh insight into Adler’s insistence that inferiority and superiority complexes often combine, and by extension, Pareto’s altogether hazier notion that there are distinguishable ‘sentiments of hierarchy’ involving orientations towards both inferiors and superiors.

Further insight into these ‘sentiments of hierarchy’, which clarifies their closer affinities to psychological conservatism than to psychological liberalism (just as Pareto envisioned) is provided by recent work on hierarchy attenuation and hierarchy enhancement, undertaken by Jim Sidanius and others. Before approaching this literature, it is important to understand the general direction of authoritarian personality research over the last three decades. Robert Altemeyer’s (1981) development of the right wing authoritarianism (RWA) scale represents a milestone in this literature. Altemeyer’s RWA scale was born out of the failure of Adorno et al.’s (1950) F-Scale. Adorno et al. had identified nine interlinked components of authoritarianism, all of which they theorised as relating to the psychodynamic conflicts of the child who has been reared harshly, and who journeys throughout adulthood with repressed hatreds of parental authority which discharge on political levels against out-groups. These were: conventionalism, aggression, submission, destruction and cynicism, power and toughness, superstition and stereotypy, anti-intraception, projectivity, and intense concerns relating to sexual matters. Altemeyer’s contribution was to notice that of Adorno et al.’s nine components, only the first three intercorrelated sufficiently as to justify the treatment of authoritarianism as a unitary dimension. This tight cluster of conventionalism, authoritarian aggression, and authoritarian submission, from which he constructed his RWA scale, provides us with a vivid sense in which Pareto was right to link the class II and class IV residues, and in particular to envision a personality type which harbours pro-social sentiments in conjunction with preferences for the use of force in politics.

Thus established as a psychometric entity no longer reliant upon psychoanalysis for its existence, the RWA scale became widely used. Stenner’s (2005) review of the
literature on authoritarianism is clear that RWA studies have generated contradictory evidence concerning exactly what authoritarianism is, where it comes from, and how it is best measured. She stresses, however, that previous research attests to the robustness of the link between authoritarianism and social threat established earlier in this chapter, even to the point of arguing that our general understanding of intolerance should be founded upon an appreciation of this link.

Altemeyer’s revival of a narrower, more psychometrically viable authoritarianism cleared space for other researchers to develop a similar yet distinguishable construct called ‘social dominance orientation’ (SDO). This shares with RWA its affinities with psychological and political conservatisms. Both fundamentally involve antipathy towards out-groups (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Yet SDO differs from RWA in important respects. Following their initial development of social dominance theory during the early 1990s, Pratto et al. (1994) constructed the ‘SDO Scale’ and reported on its key predictive and discriminant validities. They define SDO as an individual difference variable which refers to:

… the extent to which one desires that one’s in-group dominate and be superior to out-groups. We consider SDO to be a general attitudinal orientation towards intergroup relations, reflecting whether one generally prefers such relations to be equal, versus hierarchical, that is, ordered along a superior-inferior dimension. The theory postulates that people who are more social-dominance oriented will tend to favour hierarchy-enhancing ideologies and policies, whereas those lower on SDO will tend to favour hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and policies. SDO is thus the central individual difference variable that predicts a person’s acceptance or rejection of numerous ideologies and policies relevant to group relations (Pratto et al. 1994, 742).

They found that men tend to outscore women on SDO. Furthermore, ‘hierarchy enhancers’ (i.e. student respondents who anticipated careers which protect, serve or benefit members of the elites) were found to outscore ‘hierarchy attenuators’ (i.e. student respondents who anticipated careers which would benefit the oppressed more than the elites). They also found SDO strongly related to ideological constructions entailing prejudice against ‘other nations, ethnic groups, and women’. Importantly, however, although SDO is prosocial in the limited sense that it entails positive identifications made by individuals towards favoured in-groups, Sidanius and Pratto found it to be negatively related to ‘empathy, tolerance, communality and altruism’.

According to Duckitt and Fisher (2003), RWA and SDO each express motivational goals activated by some combination of worldview and personality structure. High RWA expresses the motivational goal of ‘social control and security’, which is said to be activated by a view of the world as ‘dangerous and threatening’. The corresponding personality component is ‘dispositional social conformity’ which is said to raise perceptions of threat to the social order, as well as the premium placed on the goals of social control, security and stability. High SDO, on the other hand, is linked to the motivational goals of ‘power, dominance and superiority over others’. It is said to be activated by a view of the world as a ‘ruthlessly competitive jungle in which the strong win and the weak lose’. The corresponding personality component is ‘tough-mindedness’ (which is said to involve being hard, tough, ruthless and unfeeling towards others, rather than compassionate and altruistic), which is viewed
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as activating the ‘world as jungle’ mentality of high SDO individuals, together with their motivating goals of power and dominance.

Duckitt and Fisher indicate that this distinction between RWA and SDO squares with research findings: social conformity correlates with RWA but not SDO; tough-mindedness correlates with SDO but not RWA. Hence the SDO construct provides us with an important sense in which there exists a threat-sensitive consciousness of hierarchy which is not directly related to an underlying predisposition towards social conformity. Instead, the high SDO individual will favour hierarchy-enhancing ideologies because these reinforce the social order in the specific sense that they support power relationships which subdue groups perceived to possess malign intent.

To illustrate the usefulness of the distinction between RWA and SDO we might consider one particularly fascinating study by Henry et al. (2005). Taking stock of Sidanius and Pratto’s (1999) observation that when terrorism has been understood from the perspective of social dominance theory, it has mostly been regarded as a tool for maintaining intergroup hierarchies, they undertook an exploration of the perhaps more significant question of its role in resisting such hierarchies. Hence they administered the RWA and SDO scales to samples in the USA and Lebanon. They found, unsurprisingly, that US respondents high in RWA were more likely to favour intergroup violence towards the Middle East, and that Lebanese respondents high in RWA were likewise more supportive of intergroup violence towards the US. However, whereas US respondents high in SDO were also more likely to favour intergroup violence towards the Middle East, Lebanese respondents with low SDO scores were more likely to favour intergroup violence towards the US than were Lebanese respondents with high SDO. Henry et al. therefore concluded that Middle Eastern violence towards the west deserved further consideration in psychological terms as a project of counter-dominance.

We must therefore be wary of assuming that SDO and RWA co-vary as distinct yet interacting sources of preferences for political violence under conditions of raised social threat. Whilst this seems true for RWA, for SDO we should instead consider the status of each participant group experiencing conflict. RWA certainly provides us with a powerful sense in which Pareto was right to link preferences for political violence to a conservative, conformist personality structure which intensifies under conditions of economic austerity. Yet SDO research warns us that preferences for political violence can have very different psychological sources. Where threat exists in the form of perceived intergroup oppression, it may not be the tough-minded high SDO individual, but rather the more tender-minded, communal, empathic and altruistic low SDO individual, who demands intergroup aggression.

More fully, we might agree with Sidanius et al. (2004) that we should apply such constructs along with disparate theories covering psychological, sociostructural, ideological and institutional influences upon intergroup oppression, if we are to better represent such phenomena in all their complexity. It is, of course, a tall order to blend theoretical traditions towards this goal. Perhaps Pareto provides part of the solution by mapping out some of the more important landmarks which any such analysis should cover. For example, we might remind ourselves that Pareto provides an overarching framework theory involving interaction between social,
political and economic processes which influence aspects of personality related to oppression, or that it simultaneously addresses the mechanics of elite *spoliation*, partly in terms of psychological difference between elite and non-elite. Indeed, these latter provisions concerning interaction between elites and non-elites might usefully be considered for their specific potential to enhance social dominance theory’s efforts to understand social conflict and discrimination involving intergroup hierarchy. Any such usages of Pareto’s sociology should perhaps focus on the ‘social personalities’ involved in intergroup hierarchy and conflict, taking account of the limitations and areas of sociological significance which the last chapter attributed to social personality.

We may now turn our attention to the class V residues. For Pareto these refer to ‘the integrity of the individual and his appurtenances’. Their tendency to rise and fall alongside the class I residues confirms their place within Pareto’s model of personality. If the class IV residues for the most part involve individual predispositions to integrate *co-operatively*, and sometimes *sacrificially*, within social hierarchies so that collectivities can function more efficiently, then the class V residues clearly involve conflicting predispositions for individuals to pursue self-interested, *competitive* agendas within these collectivities. As S.E. Finer sums it up, these Class V residues ‘comprise the propensities relating to the individual’s determination to preserve his position and his interests against the rest of society’ (Pareto 1966, 40).

Partly at issue here is an ‘instinct to desire pleasurable things’ which seems, as Raymond Aron points out, to reflect a concern for individual integrity and status whose meaning is best expressed by the German term *geltungsbedürfnis* (Aron 1968, 132–133, 173). The idea of social envy, or as Pareto calls it, ‘sentiments of equality in inferiors’ (Pareto 1935, §§1220–1228), also appears amongst the class V residues. Jon Elster’s (1989c, 253) argument that social envy is related primarily to self respect and only secondarily to redistributary ethics provides some grounds for accepting this categorisation. The notion that the class V residues are concerned with ‘self respect’ similarly explains why sentiments of ‘vengeance’ or ‘getting even’ (Pareto 1935, §1312) should also be listed here rather than amongst the pro-social class IV residues.

Knowing this about the class V residues, it begins to appear as though Pareto’s contrast between these and the class IV residues anticipated a distinction which has only very recently been developed by Anthony Stevens and John Price in their (1996) theory concerning two ‘archetypal’ human needs which should ideally be met within every social order. Their first archetypal need is a ‘need for emotional attachments’ which involves ‘care giving and receiving, affiliation (the desire for emotional and physical contact), and altruism’. Their second archetypal need is a ‘need for status’ which involves ‘positioning on rank hierarchies, law and order, territories and possessions’. Pareto, it seems, was astute enough to anticipate these constructs around eighty years earlier, believing that individuals vary by tending to possess either of these fundamental ‘needs’ more than the other.

However, we need not focus entirely on the class V residues in order to get a feel for the individualism which Pareto incorporated within his psychological model. We are told in the ‘Treatise’ that:
The predominant influence of instincts of combination (class I residues) and the weakening of sentiments of aggregate persistence (class II residues) have the effect of making the governing class more satisfied with the present and less inclined to take thought for the future. The individual comes markedly to prevail over the family, the community, the nation. Material interests and the interests of the present or the very near future come to prevail over the ideal interests of the community and nation and over the interests of the distant future. The impulse is to enjoy the present without too much thought for the morrow (Pareto 1935, §2178).

This and many similar references to the class I residues highlight an individualism which combines material acquisitiveness with a hedonistic present-orientation, and which fits comfortably within Pareto’s conflation of liberal and Machiavellian personality. Section 4.6.2 will shortly affirm that this combination of traits is conspicuous within the ‘Machiavellian’ or ‘psychopathic’ personality pattern. In fact, much of the above passage from the ‘Treatise’ reads as though it could have been lifted from virtually any page of Alan Harrington’s (1974) controversial polemic concerning the rise of the psychopath within the counterculture and the elite of the US during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Hence it may well be that the individualism which Pareto incorporated within his psychological model is best understood with reference to what is now known about Machiavellians and psychopaths. Section 4.6.2 will show that right at the core of the Machiavellian syndrome – and this appears true for psychopaths as well – is a failure to empathise emotionally with others in face to face situations. This condition has been called ‘encounter blindness’; it has been contrasted with the ‘encounter proneness’ of the non-Machiavellian. It is therefore interesting to hypothesise that this encounter blindness-proneness continuum might account for at least some individual variance along the individualism-collectivism continuum which this section has explored. This and other Machiavellian traits which can be linked to individualism, such as materialism and narcissism, are discussed more fully in section 4.6.

To recap, then, we now have at least seven ways to understand the contrast between the class IV and class V residues. It seems that human sociality as Pareto described it can usefully be considered biogenically, both as a matter of evolutionary design and of archetypal need to belong, and psychogenically, as a phenomenon explicable psychoanalytically in terms of the dynamics of the compulsive personality, with reference to RWA-SDO research, with reference to Adler and that consciousness of hierarchy which we might equate with feelings of inferiority in the ‘low serotonin society’, and also with reference to certain Machiavellian-psychopathic traits which can be considered individualistic qualities.

Original research evidence presented in the final chapter will confirm a point which makes good sense in view of the existence of these very diverse perspectives: that the idea of a general individual difference between individualism and collectivism is highly problematic. However, we will see that the search for items designed to tap it can prove useful, by yielding items which can carry forward to help test Pareto’s psychological model. The final chapter will describe the administration of these items to UK MPs, in conjunction with items from C. Harry Hui’s widely used Individualism-Collectivism scale (Hui 1988, 17–37). Findings will permit further theorising on links between conservatism and collectivism, which will set us
thinking of the possibility that there is a distinct ‘conservative individualism’ which is psychologically distinguishable from ‘liberal individualism’. Hence we will see that although Pareto may have been wrong to link conservatism to collectivism by suggesting a general co-variance between class II and class IV residues, the testing of his psychological model can nonetheless produce useful conclusions.

4.4 Creativity

That Pareto considered his foxes and speculators more creative than his lions and rentiers is clear from the fact that he repeatedly described the former as possessing the class I ‘instinct for combinations’ residues (Pareto 1935, §§ 889–990), whilst the latter were said to possess the class II ‘persistence of aggregates’ residues (Pareto 1935, §§ 991–1088). The ‘instinct for making combinations’ is clearly something which Pareto equated with an inclination to think new thoughts, whilst the persistence of aggregate residues involve, as the term suggests, the very opposite inclination to cling to old thoughts. This section will now examine this individual difference, blending psychoanalytic and other theories of creativity with research evidence to demonstrate that it seems to integrate well within Pareto’s psychological model.

Pareto’s description of the class I residues as arising from an ‘instinct for combinations’ (Pareto 1935, §§ 889–990) seems to refer both to some kind of creative impulse or drive, and some kind of creative process. Unfortunately, however, Pareto said very little about these things. His description of the creative instinct mentions only that it comprises a ‘propensity for combinations’, a ‘search for the combinations that are deemed best’ and a ‘propensity to believe that they actually do what is expected of them’ (Pareto 1935, §889). Similarly, there is little detail to be found in his references to the process of ‘making combinations’. His listing of the various subcategories of class I residue merely provides us with a wide variety of different sorts of mental association (see Pareto 1935, §§ 892–936).

This leaves us with the impression that Pareto was thinking quite simplistically in terms of a process of mental association combined with a healthy curiosity which encourages us to explore and interact with the world (a trait which Marcus et al. (1995) have recently termed the ‘need for cognition’). However, Pareto does provide a couple of further leads concerning the nature of creativity which can usefully be followed up here. The most important of these derives not from what he actually said about creativity, but rather from how he saw it clustering with other traits. Section 4.2 has already flagged up the idea that negativistic ambivalence might well provide a common element which helps us to understand several of the core traits – most obviously scepticism, ideological relativism and creativity – which Pareto attributed to the personality profile of his liberal, moderate ‘fox’ who possesses the class I residues. This section will therefore devote some more detailed attention to the possibility that Pareto’s distinction between his creative foxes and his uncreative lions could have some basis in reality when we think of his foxes as individuals whose creative thinking is spurred on by a kind of ‘divine discontent’ which arises from the intrapsychic conflicts of the negativist. This argument will simultaneously reveal that the lack of creativity found in Pareto’s lions makes good sense in view of
the common psychoanalytic notion that compulsives suffer disproportionately from neuroses which deny them access to their inner worlds.

A good place to begin is with one influential view of creativity proposed by Anthony Storr in his (1991) ‘The Dynamics of Creation’. Storr observes that:

Man is a creative creature because he is spurred by doubt, by confusion, and by dissatisfaction with what is, both within and without. This compels him to use his imagination and to look for new ways of understanding himself and the world in which he lives (Storr 1997, 176).

Storr does not specifically equate these doubts and dissatisfactions with the unrepressed conflicts acted out by the negativist, but we will see that he repeatedly comes close, because some of his further general comments concerning creative individuals are notably consistent with this equation. For example, Storr attributes higher levels of creativity to those who develop strong egos, as will typically occur where pressures brought to bear by the superego have proven sufficiently tolerable as to reduce requirements for damaging ego defences which cause neurotic suffering. According to Storr, the strong ego individual’s ability to manage tensions and anxieties arising from the superego explains why creative individuals should typically feel confident about and in satisfactory control over their inner and outer worlds. This helps them free-associate, and has two further important implications. Firstly, as such individuals have greater conscious access to their conflicts, they will be better able to utilise these as sources of creative inspiration. Secondly, a strong ego entails self confidence and expressivity. Such qualities are likely to energise processes whereby creative ideas are communicated and turned into creative productivity.

Of course, this argument hinges upon the idea that creative individuals tend to enjoy a relative freedom from neuroses which disproportionately afflict compulsives:

Neurotics … do most emphatically not have dominion over their inner worlds. It is this which makes them suffer and have symptoms [clearly evident within the compulsive, conservative personality] which, by definition, are felt as alien to the conscious ego. To repeat Fenichel’s definition: all neurotic phenomena are based upon insufficiencies of the normal control apparatus. What is unusual about the creative person is that he has easy access to his inner world, and does not repress it as much as most people. When he is able to create, he certainly is not overwhelmed by it, but has dominion over it … (Storr 1991, 259).

Storr also specifies that the strong ego allows creative individuals to remain aware of and tolerate an ‘exceptional degree of division between opposites’. This, he claims, is one of their vital distinguishing features (Storr 1991, 244). These people may ‘suffer and be unhappy’ as a consequence of their internal divisions, but they are not driven to ‘displacement, denial, repression and other mechanisms of defence’ (Storr 1991, 283). This notion that creativity relates to the high degree of access which the strong ego individual has to his or her inner world will be developed later in this section. For the moment we can summarise by saying that Storr’s argument provides three grounds for relating creativity to negativistic conflict: firstly, creativity will often
be driven by dissatisfaction; secondly, it will be more prevalent amongst those who have not introjected strong superegos and who therefore enjoy a relative freedom from neurosis; thirdly, it will frequently stem from constructive tensions created by ‘opposites’ (it is tempting to substitute the term ‘ambivalences’) to which the individual has conscious access. Clearly, all three conditions for creative thinking are easily met by individuals who experience negativistic ambivalence; on the other hand, it is equally notable that all three conditions go unmet by compulsives. This thinking cannot, of course, wholly explain the distinction between creative and uncreative individuals. Storr’s study of creativity is clear that a broad range of very different psychological constellations may spur creative thought and productivity. He even lists the compulsive preoccupation with ritual and symbol as an important case which disconfirms what is generally true for creative individuals (as might cruelly be said of Wagnerian opera, for example). It remains a real possibility, however, that the argument set out above relating negativism to high creativity, and compulsivity to low creativity, still holds true to an extent which might be reflected in psychometric studies of creativity in general populations. Its only real weakness seems to be that negativists will often lack the self confidence which is often necessary for creative thinking to carry forward into creative productivity. Yet it might still explain a significant amount of individual variance.

One further point which must be mentioned concerning Pareto’s view of creativity is that it very conspicuously had what might be termed a Machiavellian edge. Pareto used the Italian term ‘combinazione’ quite deliberately, within the context of his class I ‘instinct for combinations’ residues, in order to convey suggestions of Machiavellian guile (Finer in Pareto 1966, 224, footnote). When he referred to his ‘foxes’ and his ‘speculators’ as possessing this instinct in abundance, therefore, it seems that he was referring not just to heightened general creativity but also to various never fully defined social skills which allow the Machiavellian to manipulate. A wide range of contemporary psychological constructs such as ‘people-oriented skill’, ‘social cognition’, ‘cultural sophistication’ or even ‘Machiavellian intelligence’, all come to mind here as possible contributors to that adaptive fitness which allows Pareto’s ‘foxes’ and ‘speculators’ to thrive as he envisioned within the complex and fast moving social environments which exist near the centres of political and economic power. This fits well with contemporary theories of ‘Machiavellian intelligence’ which explain this capacity with reference to neocortical development in both humans and in non-human primate species. Machiavellian intelligence is usually explained as having arisen so that humans and other primates can strike delicate balances between competition and cooperation within complex social hierarchies (e.g. Byrne 1995).

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4 As Erikson (e.g. 1968, 96–107) points out, the experience of distrust during the first year of life (which forms the basis of negativistic ambivalence) must be understood to involve a lack of self confidence. This is because the child’s universe then consists only of self objects. Where instinctual needs are not comfortably met, distrust can therefore only be directed towards the self. These earliest feelings of low self confidence, Erikson claims, can thereafter inhibit the infant’s active exploration of the world, sometimes even persisting throughout adulthood.
Pareto seems to have little more to say concerning the nature of creativity. Hence the remainder of this section will simply assume that he included individual variance in something like ‘general creativity’ within his psychological model, and it will dig deeper for theory and research which helps us evaluate whether he was right to incorporate it within his psychological model as he did. A pattern will emerge. High levels of general creativity will be linked to some combination of psychoticism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy and negativism; low levels of creativity will be linked to compulsive personality. Hence Pareto’s assumptions concerning how general creativity tends to correlate with other traits will be shown to be quite sound.

A good way to begin is to run with Pareto’s view of creativity as a process of mental association and look at some of its implications. Arthur Koestler’s theory of the creative process of ‘bissociation’ is helpful here because it provides a useful tool for exploring the basic process which Pareto seems to have had in mind. It will soon emerge that this simple, traditional approach to understanding creativity lends itself to a particular understanding of individual variance in levels of creative ability.

Koestler describes the process of mental association (or ‘bissociation’ as he terms it) as follows. Each instance of bissociation involves a ‘sudden collision of two unrelated association trains at a given point’ (Koestler 1949, 36). These association trains are previously unrelated in the sense that they carry information which has originated from ‘habitually incompatible’, ‘self consistent’ and ‘structurally homogeneous’ contexts which he terms ‘operative fields’. What he means is that they have originated from clusters of mental associations enmeshed within different parts of the brain which have each developed to permit individuals to interact with separate aspects of their environments. Koestler adds that once ‘junctional concepts’ come into being as these association trains collide, there occurs a kind of ‘short circuiting’ effect whereby operative fields begin to coalesce into ‘continuous flows’ (a reference to William James’ ‘stream of consciousness’ metaphor). In short, then, Koestler’s image of the creative process can be understood to have taken a small but important step beyond Pareto. Whilst Pareto only implied as much when discussing the making of ‘new combinations’, Koestler explicitly viewed separate thought habits as constituting stocks of metaphors which may be called upon to allow the world to be modelled more effectively. This theory of creativity as a process hinging upon a clever use of metaphor has retained plausibility over the years. It is notably consistent with contemporary ‘modularity’ theories in evolutionary psychology which explain individual differences in creativity in terms of complexity of interconnection between relatively autonomous neural ‘modules’ or ‘subsystems’ which have each evolved to address separate adaptive problems. Indeed, this helps explain why the maintenance of a good range of hobbies and pastimes should very commonly be counted as an indicator of creative ability.

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5 Gardner’s (1985) theory of ‘multiple intelligence’, for example, identifies modules which separately control linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and interpersonal domains of information processing which may be so understood. Some research (e.g. Abelson 1997, 29–32) has strongly related poor communication between neural subsystems such as these to prejudice, thereby helping to add further detailed understanding to the common research finding that human intelligence and creativity are negatively related to prejudice, as indeed Pareto’s psychological model suggests.
Affective thinking and emotional inhibition, to return to Koestler’s theory, are important in determining what stores of ‘operative fields’ are and are not available to consciousness at any given time (Koestler 1949, 47–48). Where inhibitions are weak, or during (day)dreams when they disengage, Koestler argues, consciousness flows more widely and freely between operative fields to allow fresh bisociative concepts to form (Koestler 1949, 49). This might be taken, in part at least, as a reference to Francis Galton’s earlier idea that when inhibiting influences are removed, individuals may retrieve ‘irrational’ ideas from the unconscious mind and use them to aid conscious thought. One common example of this is the chemist Kelkulé’s discovery of the ring structure of organic molecules following his dream of a snake swallowing its tail (e.g. Storr 1988, 67).

One wonders, therefore, whether individual differences in levels of access to the contents of the unconscious might explain a fair amount of individual variance in creative ability. Some reputable opinion suggests that this is indeed a fair generalisation. Anthony Storr agrees with Donald MacKinnon that ‘the more creative a person is, the more he reveals an openness to his own feelings and emotions, a sensitive intellect and understanding self-awareness’ (Storr 1991, 241), and of course, it has already been stated that for Storr lack of creative ability will often relate to neuroses which prevent compulsives from accessing their inner worlds. Wilhelm Reich (e.g. 1969) would certainly agree. His description of compulsives stresses the peculiarly heavy reliance which they place upon the repression strategies of ‘affect-block’ and ‘cathetic diversion’ by which they stave off the anxiety arousing contents of their unconscious minds. He claims that this limitation makes compulsives ‘ill-suited to creative work or work which depends on new ideas’. Moreover, he explains that this is why ‘one will rarely find compulsive characters among great statesmen’ (Reich 1969, 194), a view which reflects Pareto’s belief that the class II residues are always uncommon amongst the higher echelons of governing elites.

It would doubtless be a productive exercise to examine all of the various defences which compulsives may employ in order to block out the contents of their unconscious minds, in order to show how each of these might simultaneously inhibit creative thinking. Generally speaking, this list would have to take account of a broad range of factors: the emotional numbness which may often prohibit a conscious integration of thoughts and feelings, the preference for fixed thought habits and delusional ideational systems, difficulties in accessing dreams, and also the compulsive fear of the unfamiliar which is to be explained more fully in section 4.5. Section 4.5 will also explain that compulsives tend to suffer from low self-esteem, which may inhibit creative productivity.

Although this section cannot undertake this task of exploring the relationship between compulsivity and low creativity with any thoroughness, what it can usefully achieve is an examination of various general contrasts which have been drawn by psychologists concerning individuals who are either good or bad at ‘free-associating’, ‘fantasising’ and ‘recalling their dreams’, which correspond surprisingly well with what Pareto’s model of personality assumes about the general correlates of creative ability. A brief exploration of these contrasts will lead us to a much more detailed understanding of what the heightened general creativity of Pareto’s ‘fox’ and ‘speculator’ types means in precise psychological terms.
Liam Hudson has famously referred to intelligent people who are good at free-associating and recalling their dreams as ‘divergers’. Such individuals will tend to be attracted to the arts, while comparably intelligent people who are less proficient at these things (‘convergers’) will tend to be attracted to science and technology (Gregory (ed.) 1987, 172). Anthony Storr mentions that the former type will tend (exactly like Pareto’s foxes) to adopt unconventional attitudes towards authority (Storr 1988, 89). He adds that the diverger-converger distinction will tend to overlap with Howard Gardner’s (1985) distinction between children who may be categorised either as ‘dramatists’ or as ‘patterners’. Dramatists, as Storr puts it, will typically have been children who have devoted more attention to the social as opposed to the physical world. As a consequence they grow up (as we might well regard Pareto’s foxes) more proficient in the ‘people oriented’ as opposed to the ‘task oriented’ skills.

Much more significantly though, a distinction between ‘divergent’ and ‘convergent’ thinking has also provided Hans Eysenck with his understanding of creativity as a measurable trait (Eysenck in Sternberg and Ruzgis 1994, 17). Eysenck’s comments on divergent creativity are particularly useful as they provide further vital clues concerning why Pareto might have been right to shape his psychological model as he did. Eysenck points to what he considers conclusive evidence of a significant, non-gender specific, positive correlation between creativity and his ‘psychoticism’ trait (Eysenck in Sternberg and Ruzgis (ed.) 1994, 17–19) This link has been replicated many times since (e.g. Satvridou and Furnham 1996; Merten and Fischer 1999). However, Burch et al. (2006) point out that findings have been mixed, depending upon what measures of psychoticism and creativity are used. Their study linked heightened creativity in visual artists to elevated scores on Mason et al.’s (1995) multidimensional measure of ‘schizotypal’ personality (schizotypy is Gordon Claridge’s alternative term for Eysenck’s psychoticism). In particular, Burch et al. found elevations on subscales for positive schizotypy (unusual experiences), disorganised schizotypy (cognitive disorganisation) and asocial schizotypy (impulsive non-conformity). Although we must proceed with caution when relating schizotypy to any pathological condition, we can at least say that these findings suggest some link between creativity and schizophrenia. Indeed, the key to understanding the relationship between creativity and psychoticism emerges quite starkly, Eysenck believed, from the thinking styles of creative, high ‘P’ scorers who have fallen prey, as they are prone, to schizophrenia:

It has often been suggested that schizophrenic thinking is characterised by a cognitive style that has been variously called overinclusive, allusive, loose, or characterised by the term “mental slippage”. Such overinclusiveness would seem to be similar in nature to the gentler slope of the associative gradient, or the broader associative horizon often suggested to be crucial in accounting for creativity (Eysenck in Sternberg and Ruzgis 1994, 20).

Anthony Storr mentions that one contemporary interpretation of schizophrenia:

… suggests that sufferers lack some aspect of selective discrimination. Overwhelmed by stimuli which they can neither order nor disregard, they are compelled to withdraw as far as possible from the impact of the world (Storr 1989, 170).
Taking these two observations together, it becomes reasonable to speculate that Eysenck’s high P individuals think creatively and are vulnerable to unpleasant mental overstimulation (leading in more extreme cases to schizophrenic withdrawal) because complex, decentralised and loosely interconnected neural organisation exists as a common underlying precipitant. Of course, this puts it rather crudely. Claridge’s (e.g. 1985) theory which explains psychoticism in terms of the dissociation of central nervous system activity (particularly involving a dysfunctional uncoupling of emotional arousal of the CNS from control over sensory inputs into the CNS) provides just one more technical explanation for this phenomenon.

These links between creativity and psychoticism bring us to the more general observation that core traits possessed by Pareto’s ‘foxes’ (especially creativity, cultural criticism and individualistic concern for self) overlap considerably with well known personality correlates of Eysenck’s ‘P’. Eysenck and Eysenck (1976, 202–203) list these as including originality (particularly involving odd or unusual mental associations), a low boredom threshold, ‘non-acceptance of culture’, and feelings of hostility which are often unconstrained by empathy and expressed through impulsive discharges. They also stress that convention and authority will often serve as targets for the ill-feelings of high P individuals. The suggestion arises, therefore, that Pareto’s ‘fox’ type might best be understood as an impulsive, iconoclastic rule-breaker in precisely this psychotic mould. Correlational studies cited by Eysenck and Eysenck (1976, 192–201) which show that P correlates negatively with measures of conservatism, authoritarianism and superego strength, affirm this view.

More intriguingly, it is worth remembering that Pareto viewed the various traits of his foxes and speculators as tending to emerge when societies become richer, exhibiting higher levels of complexity and flux. One means to place this historical theory upon firmer ground may be to look for evidence indicating whether conditions of increasing social and epistemological complexity (and flux) have implications for the functioning of the central nervous systems of children and adolescents, such that they begin to develop more complex, decentralised and loosely interconnected forms of neural organisation, which in turn boosts levels of divergent creativity and other traits linked to psychoticism. It is particularly interesting to consider that traits favouring what might be termed liberal or democratic tolerance are likely to flourish within this changing psychological terrain. For this argument to be plausible, it is merely necessary to accept that loose, decentralised neural organisation can help guard against fixed and rigid ways of thinking about people and events. More pessimistically, however, this theory also entails the emergence of less desirable psychotic traits such as impulsive, anti-authority sentiment and even lack of empathy, under such circumstances. This can be theorised using the idea that complex social stimuli may prove hard for children and adolescents to process in consistent ways, and so they may fail to develop those fixed associations of thought and emotion upon which healthy social adjustment depends. They may therefore experience and display emotions in circumstances where they are inappropriate, or they may fail to experience and display emotions in situations where they are called for. This research suggestion will be left standing as an example of how Pareto’s theory can generate hypotheses. This thesis will not pursue it any further, largely because competent attention to it requires specialist knowledge of the CNS. However, it is important to
note that sufficient evidence exists to allow it to be taken very seriously. It will soon be seen that psychoticism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy are closely overlapping constructs. Although there appears to be no evidence regarding whether levels of psychoticism are rising, there is some research evidence, and indeed a substantial weight of longstanding clinical and non-clinical opinion, which suggests that we are becoming more ‘Machiavellian’ and ‘psychopathic’. And it is especially interesting to note evidence suggesting that levels of Machiavellianism and psychopathy vary directly with levels of urbanisation and cultural sophistication.

In order to further consider the merits of Pareto’s assumed link between liberal personality and creativity, this section will now devote some attention to that considerable volume of research evidence which has correlated conservatism with reduced cognitive complexity. It has long been recognised that, as Pareto sensed, there exists some kind of link between the two. Herbert McClosky, for example, has observed in his psychometric study of conservatism that:

… conservatism is not the preferred doctrine of the intellectual elite or of the more intelligent segments of the population, but the reverse. By every measure available to us, conservative beliefs are found most frequently among the uninformed, the poorly educated, and so far as we can determine, the less intelligent (McClosky in DiRenzo (ed.) 1974, 267).

McClosky’s measures included educational data, an ‘Awareness’ scale to tap ‘clarity of one’s grasp of the social process, past and present’ and an ‘Intellectuality’ scale ‘which assesses the degree to which intellectual habits have been formed and are perceived as attractive’. Small wonder, McClosky mentions, that the conservative personality ‘derogates reason and intellectuality, eschews theory, regards intellectual activities as dangerous to established arrangements, and perceives intellectuals as deviants, bohemians and nonconformists’ (McClosky in DiRenzo (ed.) 1974, 275).

Hinze, Doster and Joe (1997) review various studies which report this same phenomenon in various guises. They mention, for example, Wilson, Ausman and Mathews’ (1973) finding that conservatives prefer ‘simple representational paintings over complex abstract paintings’, and Gillies and Campbell’s (1985) finding that conservatives prefer simplicity to complexity in poetry. Arie Kruglanski’s theory of ‘lay epistemics’ may also be called upon to further explore links between conservatism and reduced cognitive complexity. As section 3.4 has already explained, Kruglanski’s theory holds that individuals vary, both in their personal needs for specific and nonspecific forms of structure (PNS), and in their ‘needs for ambiguity’. We either foreclose or delay epistemic sequences depending upon how we balance these demands, which is to say according to whether we place a higher premium upon reducing anxieties provoked by lack of structure, or upon reducing anxieties which are provoked by a lack of knowledge and understanding. It is the combination of a high PNS with a low need for ambiguity which explains, according to Kruglanski’s theory, why some are more inclined than others to prefer ‘simple and habitual conceptions’ as well as ‘fast resolutions of uncertainties such as those posed by problems and figures with incomplete closure’ (Kreitler and Kreitler 1990, 260).
Research using the ‘tolerance of ambiguity’ construct confirms that conservative personality deserves to be understood in terms of its orientation towards ambiguity. Low tolerance of ambiguity has been positively correlated with ethnocentrism and prejudice (e.g. Block and Block 1951), a finding which seems to have a lot to do with the fact that it entails viewing others in a highly categorical and stereotypical manner. Dean Simonton (in Pervin (ed.) 1990, 673) mentions that longstanding research linking authoritarian personality both to low tolerance of ambiguity and to rigid, categorical thinking links directly with more recent research on information processing sophistication which uses the construct of ‘integrative complexity’. Integratively complex thinking requires, as Simonton puts it, being able to produce ‘finely differentiated and yet fully integrated’ representations of phenomena. This is an ability which is widely reckoned to be tapped by Schroder, Driver and Streufert’s (1967) paragraph completion test which grades individuals along an integratively simple/complex mental processing continuum according to how well they put their thoughts to paper. Tetlock (1984) used this test to analyse transcripts from interviews originally conducted with a group of 89 members of the UK House of Commons by Robert Putnam in 1967. He found that:

… both extreme socialists and extreme conservatives exhibited a predilection for simple, undifferentiated and unidimensional mental habits, and both poles were decidedly distinguishable from the more respectable integrative complexity manifested by the moderate conservatives and the moderate socialists. So ideologues of all persuasions tend to display a more rigid and narrower kind of information processing (Simonton in Pervin (ed.) 1990, 674–675).

Tetlock (1979) had previously found that low scores on integrative complexity will often be achieved by individuals who are predisposed to comply with the weight of opinion which forms within collective decision-making contexts (social psychologists are inclined to use the term ‘groupthink’ to refer to situations where this tendency to comply becomes so widespread that the quality of group decision-making begins to suffer). It does therefore seem that Tetlock’s two studies place certain aspects of Pareto’s thinking upon much firmer ground. His conclusion that the integratively simplex thinker inclines towards conformism and compliance and tends to remain close to the political extremities certainly lends weight to Pareto’s image of the conformist and dim-witted ‘lion’ who will tend to populate the minor, ‘intransigent’ political parties which find it hard to access the political mainstream.

In summary, therefore, it seems that Pareto’s class I (instincts of combinations) residues make most sense as being so generally sketched out as to easily encapsulate ‘intellect’, ‘creativity’ and various rather more specific constructs which can be related to the essential skills of the Machiavellian. However, given that distinctions between intellect and creativity continue to pose real problems for personality psychologists, it is unlikely that he would have got very far had he tried to be more specific. Individual differences involving both what has been called ‘intellect’ (e.g. Digman and Takemoto-Chock 1981, Peabody and Goldberg 1989) and ‘openness to

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6 One of the main attractions of this test is that it can be used to rate both historical figures and senior political figures who are normally inaccessible to researchers.
experience’ (e.g. McCrae and Costa 1987) are now widely reckoned to correspond to the fifth of the ‘big five’ personality factors. And as Oliver P. John (in Pervin (ed.) 1990, 76) clarifies, there is as yet no settled agreement concerning how this fifth factor domain may be said to involve a constructive interaction between a distinct intelligence, artistic creativity, sensitivity, or indeed the very ‘Machiavellian’ construct of cultural sophistication.

4.5 Risk

An individual difference involving varying orientations towards risk is quite clearly integral to Pareto’s model of personality. We are told that:

Class I residues predominate among the speculators, class II among the rentiers. The two groups fulfil functions of differing utility in society. The speculator category is primarily responsible for changes and progress in economic and social affairs. The rentiers, on the other hand, are a powerful element making for stability, and in many cases they safeguard society against the risky ventures of the speculator class (Pareto 1935, §2235).

More fully, the speculator capitalist is evidently a daring entrepreneur who is quick to take advantage of those high risk, high gain opportunities which economic prosperity brings. When this willingness to take risks becomes prevalent throughout the economic elite, the economic cycle is driven at a greater pace through its phase of capital expansion. The rentier capitalist, on the other hand, prefers low risk, low gain strategies which are conducive to the process of capital contraction and consolidation which inevitably follows once the speculator elite has exhausted levels of socially available capital. To stress this point, Pareto clearly believed that the speculators and rentiers were distinguishable psychologically. We are told that the speculators are ‘usually expansive personalities, eager to take up with anything new’ (Pareto 1935, §2313). And Pareto even went so far as to describe the rentiers as ‘mere savers who are often quiet, timorous souls sitting at all times with their ears cocked in apprehension, like rabbits, hoping little and fearing much from any change (Pareto 1935, §2232).

Pareto made a further important distinction concerning strategy and tactics. The rentiers, he said, are strategic, long term planners who possess the virtue of ‘thrift’ (e.g. Pareto 1935, §2228). The speculators, on the other hand, tend to neglect the distant future and focus instead upon tactical considerations pertaining to their successful functioning in the present. Hence, to sum up, we can say that the individual difference to be examined in this section involves a broad contrast between the risk-averse long-termist and the risk-tolerant short-termist. Various theoretical perspectives will now be used to explore this distinction, and it will become evident that it sits comfortably within Pareto’s model of personality. This exercise will begin with an investigation of the possibility that this individual difference might have some basis in reality when understood to involve self-esteem. First we will consider

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7 For a review of various constructs used by these and other investigators to describe this fifth factor domain see Oliver P. John in Pervin (ed.) (1990, 72).
research evidence linking low self-esteem to conservative personality. Then we will interpret these findings with reference to how psychoanalytic theory relates low self-esteem to compulsivity.

Some of this evidence is provided by Glenn Wilson (1973), who based his theory of conservative personality on research involving the (1968) Wilson-Patterson Conservatism scale (the C-scale). This measures what Wilson termed the ‘conservative attitude syndrome’. This syndrome comprises the following elements which certainly remind us of Pareto’s ‘lion’:

(1) religious fundamentalism; (2) pro-establishment politics; (3) insistence on strict rules and punishments; (4) pro-militarism; (5) preference for conventional art, clothing and institutions; (6) anti-hedonistic outlook; (7) intolerance of minority groups; and (8) superstitious resistance to science (Joe, Jones and Miller 1981, 225).

The common thread running through these various preferences, Wilson argued, was a ‘generalised fear of uncertainty’. This arises, we are told, from feelings of ‘insecurity and inferiority’ (i.e. low self-esteem) which are likely to result from a wide combination of underlying factors. Wilson listed these as follows:

… certain genetic factors such as anxiety proneness, stimulus aversion (sensitivity to strong stimuli), low intelligence, lack of physical attractiveness, old age, and female sex, and certain environmental factors such as parental coldness, punitiveness, rigidity, and inconsistency, and membership of the lower classes (Wilson 1973, 259).

Wilson’s notion that low self-esteem holds the key to understanding the generalised risk-aversion and hence the ‘attitude syndrome’ of the conservative personality thus provides us with one highly plausible explanation for that cautiousness which Pareto attributed to his lions and his rentiers. However, his suggested link between conservatism and low self-esteem is also comprehensible with reference to those psychoanalytic theories of compulsivity which have throughout this chapter helped explain Pareto’s lions and rentiers. Freud appeared to deal with the subject of self-esteem rather obliquely by treating it as ‘the feeling of triumph when ego corresponds to ego ideal’. He contrasted this with ‘the sense of guilt, as well as the sense of inferiority, which expresses tension between the ego and the ego ideal’ (Sniderman 1975, 39). Hence Paul Sniderman is led to argue that level of self-esteem makes most sense in Freudian terms as a reflection of how well the ego manages to meet the expectations placed upon it by the two substructures of the superego: the ego ideal and the conscience. High self-esteem individuals will tend to have strong ‘records of success’ in satisfying the demands made by these two substructures. Low self-esteem individuals will tend to have records of failure (Sniderman 1975, 66).

The argument for adding that low self-esteem disproportionately afflicts compulsive individuals is as follows. Firstly, because their formative experiences involve the introjection of strong superegos, compulsives will find it harder to meet the various proscriptions and prescriptions which their superegos demand of them. Secondly, because compulsives rely heavily upon repression as a defence mechanism, their ids will consist of powerful impulses and conflicts, much of whose force will derive from repression. This will often make the demands of the superego harder
to bear. Hence compulsives will tend to experience certain forms of heightened anxiety. More fully, we can link compulsivity and low self-esteem to two of the three major forms of anxiety which Freud identified. Leaving aside the affective state of ‘reality anxiety’, which Freud described as a signal to the ego that it may be overwhelmed by an external environment which is beyond its control, we can say that compulsives will experience higher levels of ‘neurotic anxiety’ (which are provoked when the demands of the ego-ideal are not easily met) and ‘moral anxiety’ (which are provoked when the demands of conscience are not easily met).

The affective state of neurotic anxiety appears in Freudian theory as something experienced as ‘free-floating’ and hard to associate with particular objects. Its function is to signal to the ego that repressed id impulses, which will often be experienced as alien to consciousness, threaten to over-rule the various reaction-formations which compose the ego-ideal and which lend the ego its structure and identity. Freud’s concept of ‘moral anxiety’, on the other hand, refers to guilt feelings which warn us that circumstances have arisen where the superego threatens to utilise the reservoirs of aggression which it has at its disposal for the purposes of self-punishment. These punishments may be experienced as intensified guilt feelings, as feelings of depression, or as ascetic or masochistic urges. It seems reasonable to suppose, then, that when compulsives experience low self-esteem and therefore come to place an especially high premium on preventing further lowerings of self-esteem, they will experience neurotic and moral anxieties both more acutely and across a wider range of situations.

There are grounds for believing that these anxieties will, especially where self-esteem is low, frequently trigger defensive strategies involving prejudice towards others. The argument that prejudice can help defend the ego ideal when it is threatened has been made by Vamik Volkan, who claims in his (1994) ‘The Need for Enemies and Allies’ that throughout their adult lives individuals require ‘suitable targets for externalisation’ (STEs). These allow the sense of self to be reaffirmed through contrasts made with unfavourable representations of others. What makes his theory particularly controversial is that he regards the ‘need for enemies’ as essential:

My work with severely regressed patients gradually brought home to me that the patient who has not as a child established suitable targets for externalisation lacks as an adult an important component in the arsenal he needs to protect and regulate his sense of self (Volkan 1994, 61, 63).

It can also be argued that prejudice helps protect against guilt feelings and other punishments by conscience (such as depression and sleeplessness) because, as we will see in section 4.6.1 when the relationship between compulsivity and prejudice is investigated, compulsives often project onto others aspects of themselves which would otherwise invoke the wrath of conscience – aggressing outwardly where otherwise they would aggress inwardly.

Interestingly, Sniderman’s investigation of the syndrome of low self-esteem provides some original research evidence involving the use of a psychometric instrument called the ‘inflexibility index’ (consisting of separate measures of intolerance of ambiguity, obsessiveness and rigidity) which he used as a ‘rough
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gauge’ of compulsive personality. He concluded that there does indeed appear to be a significant correlation between compulsivity and low self-esteem. He adds that although, generally speaking, low self-esteem will tend to prohibit political involvement, his own research evidence suggests that the low self-esteem driven compulsive will often enter the world of politics as a form of ‘compensatory striving’ to overcome low estimates of the self (Sniderman 1975: ch. 7). One wonders, therefore, just how often this might account for the involvement of Pareto’s ‘lion’ type in politics, and indeed just how often such types might display that curious combination of timidity and aggression associated with juxtaposed inferiority and superiority complexes.

So far, then, psychoanalysis has helped us interpret risk aversion as part of a broader syndrome involving low self-esteem, neurotic/moral anxiety and prejudice. However, we have yet to consider how the ‘thrift’ which Pareto attributed to his rentiers lends itself to psychoanalytic explanation. Looking at Wilhelm Reich’s (1969, 193–200) account of the compulsive personality, we see that a key indicator of compulsivity is ‘thriftiness, if not avarice’ (Reich 1969, 194). Erich Fromm has very similarly described the compulsive as possessing a ‘hoarding orientation’. Millon et al. (1996, 523) point out that this trait remains central to contemporary theories of compulsivity. They draw attention to the fact that one major variant of the compulsive personality is the ‘parsimonious compulsive’ whose ‘niggardly, tight-fisted and penny-pinching’ disposition ‘reflects a wariness and a self-protective stance against exposures that would permit the possibility of loss’. Following Freud (1925), classical psychoanalytic theory understands the origins of parsimoniousness or thrift with reference to the experiences of the child during the anal phase: the desire to collect and accumulate money is considered, along with the trait of obstinacy, as ‘a sublimation of the desire to retain faeces’ (Kline 1984, 26). It is certainly interesting to speculate that this phenomenon may contribute to that emotive opposition to ‘profligate spending’ which perennially distinguishes conservative political campaigning.

Of course, individual differences in levels of willingness to take risks can also be viewed sociologically. From this perspective, Pareto’s foxes and speculators are positively disposed towards risk because they possess material resources which allow them to absorb losses incurred through risky ventures. Similarly, we can view the hoarding orientation of the rentiers as resulting from the experience of scarcity. One of Bertrand Russell’s aphorisms articulates this view of the rentier capitalist especially well:

I once befriended two little girls from Esthonia, who had narrowly escaped death from starvation in a famine. They lived in my family, and of course had plenty to eat. But they spent all their leisure visiting neighbouring farms and stealing potatoes, which they hoarded. Rockefeller, who had in his infancy experienced great poverty, spent his adult life in a similar manner (Russell 1985, 21).

This possibility can be developed using contemporary ‘postmaterialist’ theory which argues that improvements to living standards throughout the industrialised world render us substantially less threatened by concerns relating to material scarcity.
Some postmaterialist theorists follow the early ideas of Ronald Inglehart (who is probably the most influential theorist of this school) by understanding this change in humanistic psychological terms as involving the conquest of those fundamental material needs which form the base of Abraham Maslow’s ‘needs hierarchy’. For Maslow our ‘lower order needs’, or ‘deficiency needs’ consist firstly of physiological needs, then safety needs, then belongingness needs, and after that, esteem needs. Once deficiencies arising within each of these areas have been overcome, we become free to address our ‘higher order needs’ or ‘growth needs’. These begin with needs for knowledge and understanding, and for aesthetics, but then extend higher to include ‘self-actualisation’ and ‘self-transcendence’. Self actualisation refers to self-cultivation towards the fulfilment of individual potential, whilst self transcendence, the pinnacle of human achievement, involves concern for others and other-centred behaviour. Hence self-transcendence bears close comparison with that condition of ‘free conscious production’ found in the works of the young Karl Marx, which understands creative productivity as prosocially motivated, yet only possible when labour overcomes alienation and material scarcity.

Other postmaterialists, who are less keen to assume that human development has a particular teleological structure, have chosen to follow Inglehart’s later work. They rely upon a safer, less psychologically specific ‘scarcity hypothesis’ which holds that ‘one places greatest objective value on those things that are in relatively short supply’ (Scarbrough in Van Deth and Scarbrough (ed.) 1995, 124–125). Hence, although postmaterialists disagree over humanistic psychological theory, they all contend that individuals who grow up experiencing ‘formative security’ during their early years will later tend to concern themselves much more with abstract issues relating to the overall quality of life than with more immediate and concrete issues relating to personal security and well-being within the daily environment. Ultimately then, the Postmaterialist contention is that as societies grow wealthier, and as formative security propagates throughout the modal socialisation environment, heightened concerns regarding abstract quality of life issues will draw people together in co-operative political endeavours (Scarbrough in Van Deth and Scarbrough 1995, 125). This iterates a strand of humanist thought which is commonly thought to have its origins in Aristotle, for whom the condition of happiness or flourishing (eudaimonia) results from a sharpening of reason and virtue through participation in the public affairs of the city state. Interestingly, this link between political partipation and humanistic flourishing finds support in Fowler’s (2006) finding that altruism is positively related to voter turnout. We might further contend that as these ‘postmaterialist’ individuals have not experienced crisis or scarcity, they may well exercise less caution when confronted with risk on both personal and political levels.

Postmaterialist theory thus provides a basis for understanding why there should be, as Pareto’s sociology proposes, a general link between a society’s level of wealth and the preparedness of its citizens to engage in risk-taking. Moreover, this allows us to hypothesise a broader contrast between the risk-tolerant ‘postmaterialist value orientation’, which can be understood as a product of relative freedom from material scarcity, and its exact opposite, the risk-averse conservative-authoritarian crisis orientation. This possibility does find some support in Abramson and Inglehart’s (1995) finding that postmaterialist values wither during periods of economic instability.
The following chapter will include a short measure of postmaterialism⁸ within the test battery used to assess Pareto’s model. Results will show that postmaterialist value orientation correlates solidly with several indicators of liberal personality. This will confirm that postmaterialist theory could well hold the key to Pareto’s link between liberal personality and tolerance of risk.

So far, then, this section has investigated various theories which explain why people should vary in their levels of willingness to take risks. It has, however, so far neglected the question of whether psychometric evidence is able to confirm that risk-taking can legitimately be treated as a general individual difference. Dahlbäck (1990) provides a short review of evidence which reveals no consensus. Only weak or non existent relationships, he says, have been found between psychometric measures of risk-taking (Slovic 1992; Kogan and Wallach 1964; Weinstein and Martin 1969; Steiner 1972; Jackson, Hourany and Vidmar 1972; Knowles, Cutter, Walsh and Casey 1973; MacCrimmon and Wehrung 1985). Such findings support the contention of Mary Douglas, Aron Wildavsky and other cultural theorists who believe that the psychometric approach to risk neglects to consider that we encounter risk indirectly through cultures which emphasise certain risks and downplay others. Douglas’ classic argument is that our individual orientations towards risk come ‘culturally primed’. Our cultures define risk not just to make us aware of the objective risks we face but also to uphold social structures, often by affirming the values which support these structures. Risks are ‘politicised’ in the sense that our cultures direct our attention towards certain risks in ways which help social structures resist threatening influences. Such politicisations, Douglas maintains, draw heavily upon our individual psychological orientations towards risk come ‘impure’, ‘polluting’ threats to our bodies. When individuals, groups, or indeed specific hazards are identified on political levels as polluting, this can activate our individual orientations towards dirt, pollution, impurity, and the like, such that we then serve as guardians of social structure by fearing and aggressing against whatever threats are symbolically imbued with these characteristics (Lupton 1999). Hence we become like sniffer dogs, forever patrolling boundaries, quite unaware of dangers growing within the premises we guard. It follows from this cultural theory perspective that individual orientations towards risk are likely to be conditioned by a range of not just cultural but also psychological variables including submissiveness, pliability, conformity, and indeed our preparedness to draw upon those reserves of anger and fear from which we construct our disgust responses to polluting influences.

Yet we may still usefully explore orientations towards risk on a purely psychological level. Dahlbäck mentions that some personality psychologists (e.g. Eysenck and Eysenck 1977 1978) have concluded that a general individual difference spanning risk-aversion and risk-proneness is real. He also explains his own

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⁸ Inglehart’s widely used forced choice questionnaire contains only four items and asks respondents to select their first and second priorities. Item A is ‘Maintain order in the nation’, item B is ‘Give people more say in the decisions of the government’, item C is ‘Fight rising prices’ and item D is ‘Protect freedom of speech’. Responses combining (A) and (C) are held to indicate a materialist orientation; those comprising (B) and (D) are held to indicate a ‘post-materialist’ orientation (Van Deth and Scarbrough 1995, 129).
research finding that the general inclination to take risk is related to criminality. This
correlation is considerably stronger, we are told, for minor criminal acts involving
low possibilities of detection. Horvath and Zuckerman (1993) have subsequently
found a very strong correlation ($r=.53$) between petty criminal acts among college
students and scores on an influential scale to measure the general predisposition to
take risks called the ‘sensation-seeking scale’ which is shortly to be described.

Findings such as these connecting sensation-seeking to petty criminality are
notably consistent with Pareto’s notion that the ‘fox’ type is simultaneously a risk-
taker and a rule-breaker. They also lead us to reaffirm the idea introduced in the
previous section that the ‘fox’ is, more fully, someone who possesses antisocial
inclinations which stem from high levels of psychoticism (and perhaps psychopathy
and Machiavellianism). This connection can very easily be made because strong
evidence confirms that sensation-seeking is very closely related to psychoticism.
Glicksohn and Abulafia (1998), for example, have recently presented convincing
evidence in support of Zuckerman’s (1994) contention that sensation-seeking
is intrinsically related to Eysenck’s ‘P’ scale. Armed with this evidence relating
sensation-seeking to both petty criminality and psychoticism, we might begin to feel
slightly more justified in suspecting that Pareto could have been right to settle upon
the highly provocative idea that those politicians who are disposed to take or assent
to big risks (his ‘foxes’) will also be the ones who are most likely to strike behind-
the-scenes deals which are criminal or anti-social.

Low superego strength seems very much at issue within this pattern of
intercorrelations. Some studies confirming the relationship between psychoticism and
low superego strength will be set out in the following section. Cattell and Kline also
confirm that low superego development is, as the ‘Freudian dynamic interpretation
of crime’ predicts, found disproportionately among criminals in general (Cattell and
Kline 1977, 260). It is also clear that superego strength is strongly and negatively
related to sensation-seeking. Zuckerman (1994, 84) explains that his own research
into the relationship between his sensation-seeking scale (the SSS) and Cattell’s 16
PF has revealed that:

The general SSS correlated positively and significantly with dominance, surgency,
adventurous, bohemian, and radicalism scales, and negatively with the superego strength
scale (Zuckerman 1994, 84).

Further evidence showing that the SSS correlates strongly and negatively with
conservative attitudes to confirm Pareto’s link between conservatism and risk
aversion is provided by various studies (see Kish in Wilson (ed.) 1973: ch. 13;

A strong pattern is therefore emerging here. It appears from these studies that risk-
taking, rule-breaking (involving petty criminality) and low superego strength share
a loose tendency to intercorrelate, as Pareto’s model has long implied. Correlations
between the SSS and measures like ‘openness to experience’ and ‘diversive curiosity’
(see Zuckerman 1994, 58–60) further suggest that general creativity is also integral
to this pattern, once more as Pareto’s model has clearly implied. This loose pattern
of intercorrelations thus makes Pareto’s ‘fox’ seem very real indeed.
For a more complete assessment, we must however consider whether ‘Machiavellian’ traits integrate within this pattern. This question is not easy to answer because, as the next section will demonstrate, Machiavellianism is a complex phenomenon. Its constituent parts are likely to arise separately within various psychological contexts, and so it is difficult to discuss its general intercorrelations with other personality traits. That said, some studies do suggest that Machiavellianism deserves to be situated within this trait cluster. For example, the following section will present some factor analytic evidence of a positive relationship between Machiavellianism and low superego strength. Another highly relevant study is as follows. After administering Richard Christie’s ‘Mach IV’ (Machiavellianism) scale (Christie and Geis 1970, 17–18) in parallel with six of Kogan and Wallach’s (1964) risk-taking problems to individuals who had been differently rated for their contributions to group decision-making scenarios, Rim (1966) discovered a positive correlation between a willingness to take risky decisions – both involving risky individual pronouncements and risky efforts at influencing group decisions – and a capacity to manipulate others in interpersonal interaction situations (the hallmark, as will shortly be seen, of Richard Christie’s Machiavellian). Of particular interest, however, is Rim’s finding that a sample of his risk-taking ‘high Machs’ gained significantly elevated scores on an Eysenck test for tender-mindedness (Rim 1966, 30). Pareto’s presumed link between risk-taking, Machiavellianism and tolerant, democratic personality thus becomes more intriguing.

Interestingly, some evidence suggests that Rim’s link between Machiavellianism and risk proneness makes sense biogenically. Following the use of the SSS in hundreds of experiments over the last three decades, it is now reckoned that up to 60% of variance in sensation-seeking is genetically inherited (e.g. Zuckerman 1994, 18). A growing body of research indicates that ‘high sensation-seekers’ have much lower than average brain concentrations of an enzyme called monoamine oxidase (MAO), while ‘low sensation seekers’ have higher than average concentrations (Zuckerman 1994, 295–301). Eysenck (in Pervin (ed.) 1990, 259–260) provides a short review of research linking MAO to various other personality traits. Impulsivity, he mentions, correlates particularly strongly with low concentrations of this enzyme. Aggressiveness has been found to correlate more weakly. Students of psychoticism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy will find this trait cluster very familiar because it recurs prominently within discussions of all three constructs.

All that remains in this section is to say a little more about Marvin Zuckerman’s widely used ‘sensation-seeking scale’ (or SSS) which seems to correlate quite solidly with other traits to help confirm important aspects of Pareto’s psychological model. The general inclination towards sensation-seeking which it taps covers how individuals tend to orient themselves towards a wide range of activities like driving, playing the stock market, gambling, drug-taking and sexual behaviour (Zuckerman 1994). As Zuckerman explains, the sensation-seeker possesses an unusually low degree of anxiety when confronted with novel, challenging situations. This should not imply that low sensation-seekers are unusually anxious or neurotic. Rather, they are ‘just cautious and conservative with a preference for a world that is safe and predictable’ (Zuckerman 1994, 155).
Four intercorrelating subscales make up the SSS. The first, ‘thrill and adventure seeking’ (TAS) concerns ‘a desire to engage in outdoor sports or other activities involving elements of speed or danger’. The ‘experience seeking’ (ES) subscale is thought to tap the desire to have a variety of sensation inducing experiences. ‘Disinhibition’ (Dis) involves seeking release from social constraint by, for example, ‘drinking, partying, gambling and sex’. Lastly, ‘boredom susceptibility’ (BS) refers to ‘an aversion for repetitive experience of any kind’ (Kreitler and Kreitler 1990, 248–251). In the following chapter, this scale will serve as a criterion measure for a risk-taking scale designed to test Pareto’s model.

4.6 Force and Fraud

This section will now consider whether Pareto’s distinction between the lion’s forcefulness and the fox’s manipulativeness corresponds to a real individual difference which integrates well within his psychological model. Different degrees of ‘force’ and ‘fraud’, it will be explained, each invite various interpretations using well established individual differences and theoretical perspectives. An ongoing concern will be to assess Pareto’s highly problematic assumption that ‘force’ will tend to combine with the absence of ‘fraud’, and vice versa. This will allow the integrative framework which has been developed throughout this chapter to be applied once more. It will be argued that the forcefulness of Pareto’s lions makes sense to a large extent with reference to psychoanalytic theories of compulsivity which focus upon ego-defensive responses to the strong superego. The ‘manipulativeness’ of Pareto’s foxes will then be interpreted with reference to the closely interwoven constructs of psychoticism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy, which all relate to the weak superego. This section is divided into four subsections. Subsection 4.6.1 will consider ‘force’. Subsection 4.6.2 will consider ‘fraud’. Then subsection 4.6.3 will argue for a relationship between psychoticism, psychopathy, Machiavellianism and low superego strength which provides us with grounds for suspecting that ‘force’ and ‘fraud’ really are inversely related. Finally, subsection 4.6.4 will investigate Pareto’s force-fraud continuum as a cultural trajectory.

4.6.1 Force

Pareto wrote extensively of governing elites strong in the conservative class II residues which relied upon force as a strategy of political control. We find this reliance, for example, in the system of vassalage which existed under Europe’s ‘military feudalism’ (Pareto 1935, §2260), in the early Greek tyrannies, in Sparta, in Rome under Augustus and Tiberius, and in the late Venetian Republic (Pareto 1935, §2274). In a short discussion of the ‘use of force in society’ in the ‘Treatise’, we see that a ‘willingness to use violence’ provides the connecting thread (Pareto 1935, §2178). Given the widespread extremist violence which threatened Italian democracy during the early twentieth century, it is easy to see why Pareto became concerned with the psychological propensity to favour political applications of force, and indeed with the idea that sociology should investigate this propensity’s social distribution as a means to understand political conflict.
Of course, military violence remains widespread across the globe. Democratic regimes which would balk at its domestic use nonetheless practice it frequently on the international stage. Such usages are typically sanitised for domestic consumption by claims concerning the precision of smart weaponry, and through usages of terms such as ‘collateral damage’ and ‘friendly fire’ to refer to unintended deaths caused by these weapons. Focusing on domestic UK politics, however, we can say that decisive political conflict now takes place almost exclusively within institutional contexts governed by norms which ensure that no actual violence occurs. There are of course periodic exceptions, involving for example rioting and terrorism; yet there are good grounds for toning down Pareto’s ‘force’ construct so that it pertains to a significant number of elected politicians, the vast majority of whom would not publicly sanction any form of rioting or terrorism within the UK.

The way forward will be to replace preferences for violence with preferences for ‘strong leadership’. Graham Little (1988, 2–11) points out that a ‘rage for strong leadership’ underpinned much of the popularity enjoyed by the Thatcher and Reagan administrations of the 1980s. He suspects, based upon close examination of these administrations’ psychological constituencies, that the ‘authoritarian personality’ which once had Adorno, Horkheimer and many other theorists fearing for their lives, still persists in dilute form within the democratic polities. It will now be argued that the core characteristics of strong leadership, which apply both to strong leaders and their followers, are comprehensible in terms of four interacting attributes of the conservative mind. This will clarify that strong leadership is very much a conservative phenomenon which integrates well within Pareto’s psychological model. We will also see that psychoanalytic theories of compulsivity explain it well.

The first of these four attributes will be risk aversion. This will be linked to heightened threat sensitivity amongst compulsives. The second attribute will be the tendency for compulsives to make ‘paranoid’ overestimations of threat. Here, it will be argued that mild, subclinical paranoia might often be explained with reference to the compulsive’s strategy of managing aggression by ‘projecting’ it onto others. This will be explained as occurring in conjunction with the compulsive’s irrational fear of punishment which stems from high levels of neurotic anxiety. The third attribute will be the trait of ‘anti-intraception’ which Adorno et al. listed amongst their nine components of authoritarian personality. This will be explained as a preoccupation with ‘acting’ or ‘doing’ which allows individuals to avoid introspective self scrutiny, and as one of several ego-defensive strategies used especially by compulsives to keep anxiety-arousing thoughts submerged below consciousness. This will pave the way for discussion of a fourth key attribute which focuses upon the tendency for compulsives to display a highly aggressive and socially destructive form of prejudice which Elizabeth Young-Bruehl calls ‘obsessional prejudice’. In summary, then, preferences for strong leadership will be viewed as stemming from a clustering of risk aversion, paranoia, anti-intraception and obsessional prejudice within compulsives.

Graham Little sets out the basic ingredients of strong leadership as follows:

Strong leadership announces itself with warnings. A threat looms, ultimately to the survival of nation, organisation or person, and the dangers will grow unless some “hard-
headed” thinking is begun, some “tough decisions” are made. The strong leader diagnoses a parlous state of affairs, and blames it on drift, a confusion of aims, irresoluteness in the incumbent leaders – or in self indulgence – leaders who “mortgage the future” or “buy popularity”. Strong leadership’s diagnosis may be correct or it may be a fabrication, a device, and the crisis a manufactured one. Strong leader’s warnings contain an implicit promise: unlike environmentalist or nuclear doomsters, strong leadership has a simple political answer – its own accession to power. It disturbs people, but it quickly settles them down in the simplest possible way. It promises that decisive leadership will transform the situation and avert the crisis; it offers a program of clear goals and a leader with gumption. Moreover, the enemy is named and therefore easier to resist. In thus focusing our fears, strong leadership calms them (Little 1988, 13).

Fundamentally, then, strong leadership diagnoses some kind of threat. It pleads to be allowed to stamp this out as quickly as possible and by whatever means necessary. All of the reasons advanced earlier for supposing the conservative-authoritarian person to be ‘risk-averse’ and to possess a ‘crisis orientation’ can be called upon to help explain this preoccupation with threat, including that heightened experience of neurotic and moral anxiety which the last section linked to compulsive personality. Hence strong leadership already begins to stand out as a distinctively conservative phenomenon. Yet it is important to add that, as the above description indicates, strong leadership is motivated not just by a fear response to actual threatening circumstances but also by an overestimation of threat, perhaps sometimes involving the imagining of threat where none really exists. This might often be explained as irrational fear of punishment stemming from neurotic anxiety. However, to strike out in a new direction, we might note that the overestimation of threat is also famously linked to the condition of paranoia. Might strong leadership therefore include paranoid leadership? A brief definition of paranoia is useful here:

The critical and essential feature of the paranoid condition is the suspicion that other people are involved in some kind of plot, however simple or however intricate, against oneself – with the intention to do harm in some way. It is not sufficient, for example, that a person feels simply that they are hated or disliked. Also, being merely afraid, on its own, is not enough for anyone to be said to be paranoid. It is the inference of planning and intent in others that is the common thread to the thinking and feeling of all paranoid people (Chadwick 1995, 1).

Any interpretation of strong leadership as paranoid leadership must therefore show that strong leaders and their followers often possess mistaken or highly exaggerated convictions that some groups or individuals – ‘enemies within’ for example – are conspiring with malign intent and must be stopped. Peter Chadwick argues in his (1995) discussion of paranoia that paranoid thoughts and feelings occur within a wide range of psychological conditions: paranoid schizophrenia, paranoid personality disorder, and manic paranoia, to name but a few. This makes it hard to generalise about ‘the paranoid person’. However, looking from the standpoint of the ‘compulsive person’, we can easily find generalisations concerning compulsive paranoia which help us understand why basically ‘normal’ individuals with compulsive inclinations might often delude themselves by attributing malign intent to others.
Elizabeth Young-Bruehl echoes a lot of clinical opinion when she states that each of the three ‘normal’ character types mentioned within Freudian characterology (the id dominated erotic, the ego dominated narcissist and the superego dominated obsessional) is likely to fall prey to a separate kind of psychopathology, where normal patterns of thought and behaviour are exaggerated. The erotic is vulnerable to dissociative disorder (or what might very controversially be termed multiple personality disorder in the US); the narcissist is vulnerable to schizophrenic withdrawal; finally, the obsessional (or compulsive) is vulnerable to paranoia (Young-Bruehl 1998, 207). Young-Bruehl goes on to provide a lengthy discussion of ‘the paranoid style in politics’ which focuses exclusively on the dynamics of the compulsive personality. At the core of her argument is a simple, general explanation for why compulsives are likely to display the symptoms of paranoia to a mild, non-pathological degree. We are told that:

… more or less normal people who are given to the paranoid style are of a particular characterological sort – they are obsessional. Paranoid expressions are the means by which obsessionals displace onto the outer world that battle they feel in themselves between their bad desires and their moral strictures, their wishes and their warning lights, their fantasies and their “thou shalt nots”, their ids and their superegos (Young-Bruehl 1998, 359).

This view of compulsive paranoia, as entailing displacement of that internal conflict between id and superego which the compulsive experiences most acutely, provides us with a good general theory which can be fleshed out in various ways. Perhaps most obviously, we might turn to the classic Freudian account of paranoia as a process involving a sequence of reaction formation followed by projection. According to this theory, unconscious homosexual impulses are experienced as feelings of hatred. In order to cope with these feelings – i.e. to prevent them from raising anxiety – they are projected onto others (e.g. Chadwick 1995, 21–22). Hence ‘I love you’ transforms through reaction-formation to become ‘I hate you’; then ‘I hate you’ transforms through projection to become ‘you hate me’. Young-Bruehl’s own thoughts appear less specific. She would agree that obsessional paranoia is fundamentally bound up with the needs which obsessionals have to find targets for the projection of their own aggressive impulses (e.g. Young-Bruehl 1998, 215). Once projected, she believes, these impulses become the ‘malign intentions’ which drive real and imaginary enemies to conspire. However, we might ask why these projections culminate in attributions of malign intent. After all, the attribution of hatred through projection does not by itself explain why projecting individuals should subsequently regard themselves as targets for their projected hatreds. One possible explanation is that the attribution of malign intent reflects strong mental associations between aggression and threat which are built up by obsessionals. More fully, obsessionals may regard their own aggressive impulses as threatening in the sense that they are a permanent source of moral anxiety. Projected aggression might therefore trigger the same mental template linking anxiety to a sense of threat, as is elicited by aggression prior to its projection. This theory also allows us to view the compulsive’s real and imaginary enemies as always threatening to ‘infiltrate’ just as aggression is always threatening to demand recognition by consciousness and seize control of behaviour. To supplement this argument, we might
also consider that when faced with an aggressive enemy, compulsives may deal with feelings of weakness in the face of threat by resorting to that defence of ‘identification with the aggressor’ which they have learned from childhood. This might lead to the projection of the superego itself onto the real or imagined aggressor, with the result that the fears which obsessionals typically have of punishment by their superegos are now experienced as fears of punishment by those with whom they identify.

A fuller explanation of the preference for firm and decisive political intervention possessed by strong leaders and their followers may now be gained by turning to consider another core ingredient of strong leadership listed by Graham Little: that stress on ‘action’ or ‘getting things done’ which is so often accompanied by feelings of hostility towards what is perceived as impractical intellectual vacillation. The argument here will be that strong leaders and their followers crave opportunities for decisive action in political affairs because they are driven by certain inner fears which, once more, are distributed disproportionately amongst compulsives. These fears are explained quite clearly within Adorno et al.’s (1950) description of the authoritarian personality. They base their explanation upon Henry Murray’s (1938) earlier distinction between ‘intraceptive’ and ‘extraceptive individuals’:

Intraception [stands] for the “the dominance of feelings, fantasies, speculations, aspirations- an imaginative, subjective human outlook”. The opposite of intraception is extraception, “a term that describes the tendency to be determined by concrete, clearly observable physical conditions (tangible, objective facts).”… It seems… that anti-intraception, an attitude of impatience with and opposition to the subjective and tender-minded might well be a mark of the weak ego. The extremely anti-intraceptive individual is afraid of thinking about human phenomena because he might, as it were, think the wrong thoughts; he is afraid of genuine feeling because his emotions might get out of control. Out of touch with large areas of his own inner life, he is afraid of what might be revealed if he, or others, should look closely at himself (Adorno et al. 1950, 235).

Adorno et al. are clear that anti-intraception counts as one of the key defences employed by their authoritarian personality which, as Dixon (1976) has clarified, was based squarely upon Freud’s anal character type. Certainly, Adorno et al.’s attribution of anti-intraception to the authoritarian who suffers from neuroses provoked by the ‘weak ego’ makes good sense in view of what this chapter has repeatedly said concerning the compulsive’s fear of loss of control which stems from conflict between id and overbearing superego. It could well be, therefore, that strong leaders and their willing followers are often driven to focus their attentions on practical concerns involving ‘acting’ and ‘doing’ by an underlying fear of ‘thinking’ which we might expect to find distributed disproportionately, just like the paranoid overestimation of threat, among neurotic compulsives.

Intuitively, it is interesting to speculate that this theory relating anti-intraception to compulsive personality might contribute substantially, not just to our understanding of preferences for strong leadership which are prevalent today, but also to how we interpret those stresses upon action which were so aggressively promoted by extremist political movements throughout early twentieth-century Europe. Perhaps the widespread anti-intraception of these more conservative societies can be regarded as providing fertile psychological soil where very different and bitterly
opposed political ideologies could take root and flourish within the general social and economic climate created by the experience of war and the collapse of faith in the values of nineteenth century liberalism. These decades did, after all, witness the growth of Marxist movements which stressed the revolutionary significance of ‘praxis’. And yet the stress upon action rather than words became, if anything, even more pronounced throughout national movements of the far right. In Germany, for example, Heidegger’s theory of ‘decisionism’ (which continues to influence theories of radical conservatism) arose as a solution to existentialist crisis. In France, we might think of Charles Maurras’ founding of ‘Action Français’, or, in the UK, of the fact that Oswald Mosley chose ‘Action’ as the name for the official newspaper of his British Union of Fascists. However, it is perhaps in the Italy of this period that we find the stress upon action embedded within extremist ideology to its greatest degree. Here, Mussolini edited ‘Avanti’, the official daily newspaper of the Italian Socialist Party, to which Antonio Gramsci also contributed. This newspaper had been named after its German equivalent, ‘Vorwärts’, another socialist daily (the mouthpiece of Germany’s Social Democratic Party, in fact) which shared with Avanti inclinations towards nationalism and militarism following the First World War.

It can also be argued that after the 1922 March on Rome, anti-intraception found its fullest expression within Italian Politics as a leadership style. Giovanni Gentile’s (1934) ‘Origins and Doctrines of Fascism’ now denigrated intellectualism as ‘thought divorced from action’, and expressed admiration for Mussolini’s ‘real decisions’ because these were ‘implemented and not formulated’ (see Lyttleton (ed.) 1973, 301–306). Similarly, the exaggerated preoccupation with youth, vitality, aggression, conflict and speed which before the war made Filippo Marinetti’s (1909) ‘Futurist Manifesto’ for Italian cultural revival so distinctive (see Lyttleton (ed.) 1973, 209–215), was now reinvented for a fascist audience, based this time around the related themes of sweeping industrial change, military rearmament and the cult of the aviator. We may therefore conclude that anti-intraception is likely to have had at least some role in feeding those preferences for ‘force’ which Pareto attributed to Italy’s socialist and fascist ‘Lions’.

The fourth and final way in which psychoanalytic theories of compulsivity can help explain the phenomenon of strong leadership (and hence the forcefulness of Pareto’s lions) is by linking compulsivity, as Elizabeth Young-Bruehl (1998) does, to a particular kind of prejudice. She argues that ‘obsessional prejudice’ is more socially destructive than any other kind of prejudice. Her reasoning is as follows. Firstly, as indicated earlier, obsessinals are predisposed towards paranoid thoughts which attribute malign intent to out-groups. These attributions can, of course, easily enflame prejudice. More fully, Young-Bruehl argues that obsessinals often deal with their ‘polluting thoughts’ (i.e. those unconscious, primary process activities of the id which always threaten to raise anxiety in compulsives) by misinterpreting these as target group attributes. Hence they misdirect aggressive discharges towards target groups to avoid ‘inward’ discharges of aggression, which might typically involve harsh self-condemnation, feelings of self-loathing, disgust, or even depression. However, just any target group will not suffice. Rather, such attitudinal discharges must be directed against groups whose suitability as objects of prejudice has been sanctioned by politics or the media, such that hostility towards these groups becomes
possible for the neurotically anxious, conformist individual who cannot aggress alone. Social amplification is therefore likely to be an important factor in obsessional prejudice.

Obsessional prejudice becomes a more serious matter still in view of the following consideration. When obsessional call forth aggression which has been ‘made over’ from the harsh superego, they may direct this against what they perceive as infractions of the social order with a ferocity far more individually and socially destructive than the infraction itself, to the point where their externalisations become tantamount to dousing fireflies with a flamethrower. In extreme instances of obsessional prejudice – and here Young-Bruehl lists the anti-semitism of ‘Prussian society’ – target groups are treated as having no legitimate place in society, to be swept away as befits all things polluting or contaminating. Very notably, Young-Bruehl’s account of obsessional prejudice synergises with Mary Douglas’s cultural theory of risk. As indicated earlier, this views culture as defining risk by highlighting polluting, contaminating threats to the social order. Our risk objects therefore consist disproportionately of social threats which gather along society’s boundaries. By acting to mitigate these risks we therefore police and reinscribe social boundaries, furthering whatever interests dominate risk discourse. Cultural theory treats our disgust instincts in particular as deep reservoirs of private emotion which are amenable to displacement and amplification on collective political levels. Hence we should perhaps regard displacements of disgust towards culturally-defined risk objects as frequently combining with the externalisation strategies of obsessional prejudice.

In conclusion, then, the tendency for risk-aversion, mild paranoia, anti-intracception and obsessional prejudice to cluster within strong leaders and their followers provides us with a good indication of what it means to be the kind of politician who, like Pareto’s lion, will tend to favour the use of ‘force’ in political affairs. As this conclusion appears to be based more upon theory than upon evidence, it is worth stressing that the above arguments stress a fundamental link between compulsive personality and aggressive discharge which is quite consistent with what psychometric studies lead us to believe. McCourt et al. (1999, 986) list aggression (especially towards ‘deviant’ target groups) and projectivity as two of the nine major attributes of authoritarian personality tapped by Adorno et al.’s F-scale. The fact that Robert Altemeyer (e.g. 1981 1988) has subsequently ranked ‘authoritarian aggression’ beside ‘authoritarian submissiveness’ and ‘conventionalism’ such that these become the ‘big three’ attitude clusters which together comprise authoritarianism, greatly reinforces the idea that conservative-authoritarian personality possesses a strong aggressive component. It is worth reaffirming that Altemeyer’s RWA scale has proven more internally consistent and unidimensional than any previous measure of the same entity (Tarr and Lorr 1991, 307). Even recent suggestions that RWA becomes a ‘finer grained instrument’ when we regard its three constituent attitude clusters as corresponding to separate dimensions (Funke 2005) sustain this link by confirming strong intercorrelations between these dimensions.

If we are to look for the forcefulness of Pareto’s ‘lions’ today, it thus becomes interesting to turn to Altemeyer’s (1996) ‘The Authoritarian Specter’ which confirms that the authoritarian personality is no mere historical anachronism, but rather
embedded within US and Canadian politics to the extent that many political office holders possess RWA. In fact, Altemeyer found that links between RWA and political conservatism were stronger for political office holders than for ordinary voters, and stronger for higher-level office holders than for lower-level office holders. Taking stock of his findings, we can say that conservative-authoritarian preferences for force have multiple manifestations: in punitiveness towards criminals, in pleasures derived from the contemplation of such punishments, in racial and homophobic prejudice, in heightened predispositions to ‘blame’ those who err or suffer, and in related tendencies to seek interpersonal dominance and employ bullying behaviours to gain and maintain such dominance. Then of course we must consider that greater preparedness to aggress within the context of intergroup conflict which we also find in social dominance orientation. Yet none of this tells the whole story. Preferences for the use of force also deserve to be understood as obstinacy and intractability in the face of reasoned opposition and pleas for compromise from others. Hence links between authoritarian personality and ideological zealotry become important considerations. Some of these links have already been mentioned in section 4.4’s discussion of the dim-wittedness of Pareto’s lions. They are further addressed in section 4.7’s discussion of ideological fanaticism.

4.6.2 Fraud

This section will show that the capacity or preparedness to engage in ‘fraud’ which Pareto attributed to his foxes also seems to correspond to an important individual difference. The argument here will be that the manipulativeness of Pareto’s foxes can be understood to have some basis in reality if we think of the ‘fox’ as a statistical entity which brings together various closely-related psychological conditions, all involving manipulative behaviour, and all arising disproportionately amongst those possessing low superego strength.

The existence of some kind of individual difference along a continuum of ‘Machiavellian’ manipulativeness is now firmly established, following efforts by Richard Christie and associates (see Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970) to develop a series of psychometric measures for it. These ‘Mach scales’ each consist of three subscales which measure the ‘tactics’, ‘views’ and ‘morals’ of Machiavellians. The Machiavellianism construct has simple conceptual origins. Christie sought a psychometric measure to tap qualities which individuals require in order to control others. He guessed – correctly as it turned out – that these should include ‘a relative lack of affect in interpersonal relationships’, ‘a lack of concern with conventional morality’, ‘a lack of gross psychopathology’ and ‘low ideological commitment’ (Christie and Geis 1970, 3–4). Christie found that individuals possessing these qualities were inclined to agree with a range of items lifted directly from Machiavelli’s own writings, which were thereby revealed to possess an unexpected degree of psychological truth (Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 14). One important qualification discovered experimentally by Christie, however, was that the Machiavellian’s notorious manipulativeness appeared only in interpersonal and not impersonal situations. It seemed that Machiavellian manipulativeness might therefore be explained as arising from the Machiavellian’s emotional detachment from those with
whom they interact. It is worth exploring this detachment in some detail, because it seems fundamental to the condition of Machiavellianism. And we will soon locate it again within the closely related conditions of psychoticism and psychopathy.

Christie described his high Machs as ‘unresponsive to the personal and ethical concerns of others, tending to depersonalise social interaction and approach situations instead from a cognitive-probabilistic orientation’. His low Machs, by contrast, tended to ‘personalise situations and respond primarily from an emotional-ethical orientation’ (Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 159). Christie saw this as the ‘primary difference’ between high and low Machs (Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 312). However, it is James Durkin, one of several contributors to Christie’s volume on Machiavellianism, who offers the most valuable insight into this individual difference. Durkin applies what he terms ‘encounter theory’:

Encountering is a process by which we change through direct contact with one another. Encountering happens as we open up to one another, that is, when we lay aside the layers of cognitive insulation that usually insulate us within separate (although roughly equivalent) frames of reference. As encountering happens, we move together with reference to each other rather than with reference to ourselves and get carried away spontaneously in the process of interaction, often in directions irrelevant to any previous intentions (Durkin in Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 260).

Durkin’s research found that high Machs tend to be ‘encounter blind’ whereas low Machs tend to be ‘encounter prone’. Low Machs, Durkin explains, are particularly susceptible to distraction by group maintenance processes which may ultimately help groups carry out collective tasks and solve collective problems, but which consume resources of time and effort en route to these objectives. Hence immersion in the experience of encountering may lead low Machs to divert mental focus from group problems onto whatever matters are pushed their way by group dynamics. This point might usefully be qualified by adding that such individuals will probably be more susceptible, both to ‘groupthink’ and to Jon Elster’s ‘civilising force of hypocrisy’. High Machs, who do remain task-oriented, then become more likely to direct groups (especially low Mach groups) towards solutions which progress their own interests.

Affinities between Durkin’s ‘encounter blindness’ and Georg Simmel’s (1903) ‘blasé attitude’ certainly deserve some recognition here. To reiterate, the blasé attitude which Simmel attributed to metropolitan individualism, is characterised by a shift in mental activity from emotion to reason as an adaptive coping mechanism to enable successful functioning within urban environments. Of course, Simmel lacked hard evidence for this. Section 4.6.4 will however present some relevant evidence because it will show that Machiavellianism seems to vary directly with level of urbanisation and population density. This suggests that psychological literature on Machiavellianism might very usefully be drawn together with classical sociological literature on Simmel, as a means, perhaps, to help refine both.

Having identified this core Machiavellian trait, we can now turn to consider some more peripheral characteristics through an examination of various personality correlates of Christie’s psychometric Machiavellianism. Some correlational studies have produced findings which support the image contained within Pareto’s model of personality of the Machiavellian as a tolerant, risk-taking democrat as opposed to an
intolerant, risk-averse ideological zealot. Christie (in Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 51) mentions Steiner and Spalding’s (1966) report of a negative correlation (.25) between the Mach IV scale and Budner’s (1962) measure of intolerance of ambiguity. He also mentions an extensive 1964 election survey which found amongst a number of large N samples a series of ‘astonishingly consistent’ negative correlations (in each case involving a significant Pearson r of around -.20) between his ‘Mach IV’ scale and levels of authoritarianism as measured by Adorno et al.’s California F-Scale (Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 38). Furthermore, Rim’s (1966, 30) finding that high Machs are particularly likely to be tender-minded and risk-tolerant has already been mentioned.

This impression of Machiavellianism is also reaffirmed in a study by Kline and Cooper (1984), who administered Christie’s forced choice ‘MACH V’ scale alongside several measures of conservatism-authoritarianism in order to explore the factorial structure of the authoritarian personality. They also included MACH V because they thought it would tap traits ‘not that different’ from those possessed by authoritarians. Although they do not specify, they were most probably thinking of cynicism and anomie: traits which had previously been linked both by Christie to Machiavellianism and by Adorno to authoritarianism. They might also have been directed to this conclusion by Adorno’s discussion of the ‘exploitive-manipulative type’ which depicted the Machiavellian as a near neighbour of the authoritarian personality (see Adorno et al. 1950, 767–771). However, Kline and Cooper’s hunch that Machiavellianism and authoritarianism would prove closely related was disconfirmed. They found that MACH V did not load at all onto their first factor domain, which instead attracted several widely used measures of conservative, authoritarian, and anal personality. Moreover, their third factor domain, which they called their ‘Machiavelli factor’ because it was the only factor domain to display strong loadings for all – or indeed any – of the three Machiavellianism subscales, displayed clear negative relationships with several indicators of conservatism-authoritarianism. More specifically, Machiavellianism appeared strongly and negatively related to the ‘anti-hedonism’ and ‘religion’ subscales of the (1968) Wilson-Patterson conservatism scale. Variables from the Cattell 16 PF test loading heavily onto this Machiavelli domain (also negatively) included the cynical, independent, tough minded factor (I) and the conservatism-radicalism factor (Q1). Another strong negative loading which further disconfirmed Kline and Cooper’s supposition of a close relationship between Machiavellianism and authoritarianism was that gained by Ray’s (1974) balanced dogmatism scale. It is clear, therefore, that the image of Machiavellianism to arise from Kline and Cooper’s study is of an individual who is simultaneously hedonistic, irreligious, tolerant, and positively disposed towards risk—exactly as Pareto’s psychological model anticipates. What must also be mentioned, however, is Altemeyer’s finding of a relationship between Machiavellianism and social dominance orientation. Both Machiavellian and high SDO individuals seem to share with authoritarians a desire for social dominance within interpersonal situations (e.g. Altemeyer 1996). Of course, unlike authoritarians, who incline towards social conformity, they will often seek this dominance using interpersonal strategies based upon competition and group subversion.
It would certainly be a missed opportunity if we did not strike a rather stark contrast between this image of the tolerant, risk-prone Machiavellian and that image of the intolerant, risk-averse compulsive which the last section discussed. Compulsives were described there as risk-averse owing to low-self esteem which is experienced as neurotic and moral anxiety. It was also explained that low-self esteem can fuel compulsive intolerance and aggression. It is worth pointing out here that some evidence allows us to understand the Machiavellian’s tolerance and risk-proneness with reference to the idea that Machiavellians will typically possess high self-esteem, which means they will experience less intense fears than those which trigger prejudice amongst compulsives. Oliver James (1998, 37–38) describes a study undertaken by David Madsen which suggests that there appears to be a correlation, found in humans and non-human primates alike, between dominant behaviour within social hierarchies and levels of the ‘happiness drug’, serotonin. Whilst researching this phenomenon, Madsen found a significant positive correlation within a student sample between serotonin level and Machiavellianism. As Oliver James puts it, Madsen found that high serotonin did not appear to correlate with Machiavellian ‘manipulativeness’, but it did correlate with other aspects of Machiavellianism. He mentions that ‘the higher the serotonin level, the more likely the student was to be hard-charging, competitive, impatient, aggressive, distrustful and confident’. Although this link between Machiavellianism and aggression warns us to be careful when assessing the significance of aggression within this pattern, such evidence does suggest that a distinction between the low-self esteem driven compulsive and the high self esteem driven Machiavellian can help us distinguish between Pareto’s ‘lions’ and ‘foxes’.

A reasonable conclusion, then, is that Machiavellianism integrates well within Pareto’s model. However, we must acknowledge its factorial complexity. Some evidence indicates that different components of Machiavellianism often appear unaccompanied by the syndrome as a whole. Christie’s factor analytic studies showed Mach loading onto factor domains involving (firstly) a ‘negativistic’ or ‘anomic’ disenchantment with society, (secondly) preferences for interpersonal manipulation (the ‘core’ Machaivellian attribute identified by Christie and reaffirmed by Durkin, which seems absent from that non-manipulative Machiavellianism which relates instead to high levels of serotonin), and (thirdly) a lack of faith in human nature (Christie and Lehmann in Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 387).

Research involving Leo Srole’s (1956) ‘anomia’ scale therefore helps us explore Machiavellianism. This scale rates as anomic those who indicate that politicians are insensitive to their needs, that society lacks order and is unpredictable, that life goals are receding, that life holds little meaning, and that one cannot count on associates for social and psychological support (Srole 1956, Merton in Clinard (ed.) 1964). This scale is known to correlate strongly and positively with Machiavellianism (Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 363). However, it is also clear that it taps authoritarian personality. We know this because although Srole developed his scale to tap Durkheim’s concept of normlessness, he also found a positive correlation with ‘the formation of negative, rejective attitudes towards minority groups’, with interpersonal dysfunction, and with authoritarianism as measured by Adorno et al.’s F-scale (Srole 1956, 714–716). Struening and Richardson (1965) later confirmed
this link. Hence, Srole’s anomia scale seems to correlate with Machiavellianism and authoritarianism for very different reasons. We might therefore speculate that the affinity between Machiavellianism and anomia might very often reflect the condition of relative normlessness which one finds in individuals who are low in superego strength and have correspondingly failed to develop firm identities (and who therefore possess that ‘hollowness’ which is often attributed to Machiavellians). The affinity between anomia and authoritarianism, on the other hand, may often reflect the many frustrations and resentments of authoritarian individuals who feel socially marginalised. This possibility takes account of a considerable volume of research showing that those who are socially isolated, both from society and from other people, tend to be more authoritarian, dogmatic and intolerant (Altemeyer 1988, McClosky and Brill 1983, cited in Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse and Wood 1995, 166).

A good way to say more about what might be involved in the ‘manipulativeness’ of Pareto’s foxes is by now bridging Machiavellianism with similar constructs. McHoskey, Worzel and Szyanto (1998) noticed that the vast majority of researchers who have used Richard Christie’s Mach scales have overlooked the striking overlap between Machiavellianism and psychopathy. The literature on psychopathy has very different origins. Whereas Machiavellianism was investigated using subjects drawn almost exclusively from normal populations, psychopathy studies addressed the need to control, diagnose and treat individuals possessing pathological conditions which dispose them towards criminality. Psychopathy research has been inspired by the realisation that such individuals are uniquely dangerous because, although they conspicuously lack a moral sense, they remain rationally intact and are often gifted with high intelligence, creativity and burning ambition.

It is clear that Machiavellianism and psychopathy refer to similar trait clusters. In fact, McHoskey, Worzel and Szyanto are led by their own research to conclude that Christie’s Mach scales can serve as measures of ‘global Machiavellianism Psychopathy’. It has also been suggested that Machiavellianism and sub-clinical psychopathy combine with sub-clinical narcissism to form a ‘dark triad’ of socially aversive personalities. Paulhus and Williams (2002) indicate that this dark triad has long been recognised within clinical research. Only the relatively recent development of non-clinical measures for narcissism and psychopathy has permitted its discovery within normal populations.

In order to explore this triad, we begin with similarities and overlaps between Machiavellianism and psychopathy. Psychopathy literature has generally upheld

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9 They report that all five items from Srole’s anomia scale load heavily upon a factor domain which they term ‘alienation via rejection’. This domain, we are told, consists of a ‘tightly organised syndrome of traits’ involving feelings of uncertainty, distrust bordering on suspicion, extreme pessimism about the future, cynicism about the motives of others, and a general perception of society as rapidly changing, with most people lonely, distrustful and unrelated to each other (Struening and Richardson 1965, 769–770). They observe from factor score correlations that this factor is strongly related to their factor focused around emotional/interpersonal distance (r=.49) (which we might take as a marker for the anti-intraceptiveness or the ‘tenderness taboo’ of the authoritarian) and to their factor dealing primarily with authoritarianism itself (r=.41).
Karpman’s (1947) distinction between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ (or ‘neurotic’) psychopaths. Primary and secondary psychopaths share certain core traits with Machiavellians, yet important differences also exist. All three constructs are contrasted below, to better indicate what sorts of people Pareto’s ‘foxes’ are likely to be in real life. Turning first to primary psychopathy, a good way to get a feel for this condition is through the listing of major psychopathic attributes which appears in Hervey Cleckley’s ‘The Mask of Sanity’:

1. Unreliability.
2. Untruthfulness and insincerity.
3. Lack of remorse or shame.
4. Inadequately motivated antisocial behaviour.
5. Poor judgement and failure to learn by experience.
6. Pathologic egocentricity and incapacity for love.
7. General poverty in major affective reactions.
8. Specific loss of insight.
9. Unresponsiveness in general interpersonal relations.
10. Fantastic and uninviting behaviour with drink and sometimes without.
11. Suicide rarely carried out.
12. Sex life impersonal, trivial, and poorly integrated.
13. Failure to follow any life plan.

(Smith 1978, 26).

Of course, this list describes the pathological condition. Milder, non-pathological instances involve not the complete absence of the social emotions, but rather levels of emotional coldness sufficient to bring about that ‘encounter blindness’ which Christie considered decisive within Machiavellianism. Cleckley’s list is also worth considering for its overlap with Eysenck and Eysenck’s (1976, 202) listing of traits associated with high P – i.e., psychotic – individuals. They describe high P scorers as ‘solitary, troublesome, cruel, lacking in feeling, lacking in empathy, hostile to others, sensation-seeking, and liking odd and unusual things’.

Eysenck and Eysenck (in Hare and Schelling (ed.) 1978, 213) confirm that primary psychopathy is indeed very closely related to the psychoticism construct tapped by Hans Eysenck’s P-scale. They posit a genetic link between psychoticism and psychopathy which is likely to appear disproportionately amongst convicted criminals, and add that proneness to schizophrenia is also likely to set such individuals apart. In order to build up a fuller picture of primary psychopaths, then, it is interesting to refer back to section 4.4 of this chapter where Eysenck’s treatment of creativity as divergent intelligence was explained with reference to that trait’s close affinity with loose, decentralised neural organisation, psychoticism, and proneness to schizophrenia. It might be inferred from this cluster that the kind of divergent creativity which is common amongst psychotic and schizophrenic individuals will frequently contribute to that phenomenon of the ‘creative psychopath’ which, as Smith (1978, 24) points out, has a long history within the European literature on psychopathy in particular. In short, it therefore appears that various traits which fall within the orbit of primary psychopathy and psychoticism – namely manipulativeness,
creativity, tolerance, lack of empathy and proneness to criminality – may indeed cluster just as Pareto’s model of personality proposes.

To more fully appreciate primary psychopathy, it is interesting to note Marvin Zuckerman’s (in Hare and Schelling (ed.) 1978: ch.10) reference to a close relationship between disinhibition and primary psychopathy which, he says, might involve hyperarousability of the central nervous system. Zuckerman therefore suggests that more attention should be paid to the possibility that manic individuals can be regarded as ‘exaggerated and episodic psychopaths’ (Zuckerman in Hare and Schelling 1978, 182). To pursue his suggestion, it is indeed worth considering that Zuckerman’s manic, hyperarousable psychopath appears very like someone who might be described as hypomanic. This idea is certainly well in tune with research which drawn attention to the fact that adult psychopaths have often been hyperactive as children (Satterfield in Hare and Schalling (ed.) 1978: ch. 19). The findings of Spielberger, Kling and O’Hagan (in Hare and Schalling (ed.) 1978: ch.2) also support this parallel by showing that psychopathy is indicated by elevations on both the psychopathic deviate (pd) and the hypomania (ma) subscales of Hathaway and McKinley’s widely used Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). Some further evidence suggests that elevations on the ma and pd subscales correlate, in turn, with Eysenck’s psychoticism10 to confirm that this link between psychopathy and hypomania relates to primary psychopathy in particular.

The core features of hypomania may conveniently be described with reference to traits tapped by four hypomania subscales devised by Harris and Lingoes (1968) using items lifted from the MMPI. High scorers on the Harris and Lingoes’ ‘amorality’ subscale display selfishness, poor conscience and manipulativeness. They will tend to justify selfish and manipulative behaviours by believing others to be selfish and opportunistic also. High scorers on the ‘psychomotor acceleration’ subscale have restless, hyperactive thoughts and behaviours. They will often seek excitement to reduce boredom. High scorers on the ‘imperturbability’ subscale are unaffected by the concerns and opinions of others and will deny feeling socially anxious. Lastly, high scorers on the ‘ego inflation’ subscale harbour unrealistic perceptions of their abilities and resent having burdens placed upon them by others (Groth-Marnat 1997, 294–295).

According to Gary Groth-Marnat, hypomanics with elevations on these four scales will experience their condition as running in cycles, with ‘periods of euphoria, irritability and unproductive activity often functioning as distractions to stave off impending depression’. This seems highly relevant to a discussion of political types. It is very tempting to read the common presence of hypomania into Anthony Storr’s description of the workaholic MP who will seek out a hectic parliamentary schedule for the very reason that it keeps depression at bay.11 Furthermore, Groth-

10 Eysenck and Eysenck (1976, 200) mention one Israeli study which found a correlation of .30 between Eysenck’s P and the pd subscale of the MMPI, and a correlation of .33 between P and the ma subscale.

11 Storr puts his case as follows. “When Parliament is sitting, [MPs] need never come home at night. When it is not, there is the constituency, the books and papers to be read, the committees to attend, the associations and societies demanding speeches. Political life is an
Marnat confirms syndomal continuity between pathological and nonpathological populations, which further supports such speculation. Something like 10–15% of normals (nonpatient groups), he estimates, will have elevations on this scale. Males with ‘moderate to mild elevations and no history of psychiatric disturbance’, he says, ‘might be described as warm, enthusiastic, outgoing and uninhibited’, with a surprising capacity to expend large amounts of energy over long periods of time. Females with elevations are more likely to be ‘frank, courageous, talkative, enthusiastic, idealistic and versatile. In short, it is clear that males and females who are mildly hypomanic are exactly the sorts of people who can be expected to do well in politics. It is also interesting to note that individuals with low scores on the hypomania subscales appear to have several features in common with conservatives. They are described as typically conventional and lacking in self confidence, and as belonging to older age groups (Groth-Marnat 1997, 258–260).

Turning now to consider the literature on secondary psychopathy, we see a rather different pattern of intercorrelations, and indeed a closer correspondence with Christie’s Machiavellianism. By Karpman’s (1947) reckoning, a considerable majority of psychopaths (around 85%) fall into this latter category (Spielberger, Kling and O’Hagan in Hare and Schalling (ed.) 1978, 27). McHoskey, Worzel and Szyanto (1998) point out that links between psychopathy and Machiavellianism have sometimes gone unrecognised because Christie’s Machiavellians, most unlike both primary psychopaths and ‘imperturbable’ hypomanics, tend to report surprisingly high levels of social anxiety. However, secondary psychopaths do share with Machiavellians this tendency to report high levels of anxiety. As Eysenck and Eysenck mention (in Hare and Schalling (ed.) 1978, 213), just as primary psychopathy relates closely to psychoticism (Eysenck’s P), secondary psychopathy is close to extraversion and neuroticism (Eysenck’s E and N). Secondary psychopathy thus appears to involve some degree of neurotic delinquency which has its origins, as Karpman (1947) has suggested, in severe emotional frustration and inner conflict (Spielberger, Kling and O’Hagan in Hare and Schalling (ed.) 1978, 27). Hence it could be the lack of a moral sense, which appears both in secondary psychopaths and in Christie’s high Machs, will often arise from efforts to repress moral conflict, and not from the absence of such conflict which one finds in the primary psychopath. More fully, it is well worth speculating that this moral conflict will often involve *negativistic ambivalence*. It has already been mentioned above with reference to Christie’s factor analytic research that Machiavellianism has ‘negativistic’ and ‘anomic’ components. Another

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12 This is not to suggest that Machiavellianism is unrelated to psychoticism. Indeed, McHoskey, Worzel and Szyanto’s (1998) contention that the Mach scales work as good measures of global Machiavellianism/psychopathy relies upon the Mach scales’ abilities to tap both primary and secondary psychopathy. Kline and Cooper help confirm that it is likely to be the case. They report that Eysenck’s P did load moderately onto the ‘Machiavelli factor’ which they found in their (1984) study of the factorial structure of authoritarianism.
component mentioned there was a ‘lack of faith in human nature’—something which we might explain in terms of those early feelings of ‘distrust’ which arise during the oral phase to provide the basis for negativistic ambivalence. Importantly, if this connection between secondary psychopathy, Machiavellianism and negativistic ambivalence is accepted, then it would certainly lend weight to the broad theoretical framework adopted within this chapter which has tried to understand Pareto’s ‘foxes’ using theories of negativism and Machiavellianism-psychopathy.

According to Spielberger, Kling and O’Hagan, secondary psychopaths also seem to differ from primary psychopaths by their heightened abilities to learn from experience. The absence of anxiety, they contend, explains why a hallmark of the primary psychopath, which has consistently been reasserted within Hervey Cleckley’s many revised editions of ‘The Mask of Sanity’, is an inability to learn from experience by responding positively to social reinforcement cues from others (a dysfunction which often leads to social isolation). Hence secondary psychopaths will often read and adjust to social situations where primary psychopaths will not. They will therefore often appear more flexible, accommodating, considerate and sensitive. Hence it might be concluded that secondary as opposed to primary psychopathy is likely to be more prevalent amongst political actors, and probably within elite institutions more generally, not just because secondary psychopaths are considerably more numerous amongst general populations, but also because their capacities to adapt to the expectations of others may often prove decisive in helping them succeed.

Grounds for regarding such individuals as possessing heightened attunements to the expectations of others emerge when we explore the trait of narcissism which ‘dark triad’ research has linked to both psychopathy and Machiavellianism, and which has for a long time been thought to incorporate a heightened desire to seek perfection in the eyes as others. Narcissistic leaders are well known for their composure during crises. In fact, they may thrive in situations where attention is lavished upon them by followers who look to them for deliverance from threat. Paulhus and Williams (2002) describe subclinical narcissism as combining ‘grandiosity, entitlement, dominance and superiority’. Their preferred measure of subclinical narcissism, Raskin and Hall’s (1979) Narcissism Personality Inventory (NPI), was found to correlate at 0.5 with subclinical psychopathy, as measured by Robert Hare’s (1985) Self-Report Psychopathy Scale (SRP III). They also report correlations of 0.25 between the NPI and Christie’s Mach-IV scale, and 0.31 between SRP III and Mach-IV. All three scales, they found, relate to the ‘Big Five’ personality model through negative correlations with Big Five agreeableness. This comprises altruism, modesty, and the possession of a trusting nature. It is known to correlate strongly with female gender.

In similar research, Lee and Ashton (2005) report primary psychopathy and Machiavellianism as both displaying ‘moderate negative correlations with Big Five Agreeableness’, whereas Narcissism, which does not follow this pattern, strikes out on its own by correlating with Big Five Extraversion. Lee and Ashton also correlated dark triad traits against Lee and Ashton’s (2004) HEXACO personality model which has recently arisen to challenge the Big Five model. They clarify that HEXACO represents an advance beyond the Big Five most saliently through its recognition
of a distinct sixth dimension called ‘honesty-humility’ whose trait definition places fairness, sincerity and modesty in opposition to slyness, pretentiousness and greed. Lee and Ashton (2005) discovered that primary psychopathy, Machiavellianism and narcissism all correlated strongly and negatively with HEXACO honesty-humility, suggesting that this new dimension merits further investigation as a personality denominator for the dark triad.

More will be said in the following section concerning narcissism’s role within this triad. For the moment, though, we can pave the way by adding that this trait is commonly thought to co-occur with the trait of ‘perfectionism’. An understanding of perfectionism’s place within the dark triad will alert us to the fact that this cluster suggests personality patterns fundamentally concerned with reputational management – as we might expect of many successful politicians. Yet it is also worth noting that theories of narcissistic perfectionism have been considered for their striking appropriateness as frameworks to help us understand the ‘hubris-nemesis complex’. This complex is typically attributed to godlike, messianic political leaders whose concerns with power and prestige render them volatile, unpredictable and highly dangerous in the specific sense that their power-driven ambitions may lead them to upset and destabilise the political fabric, such that they later incur the wrath of others in destructive power contests (Ronfeldt 1994). It might even be ventured that patterns of hubris-nemesis, with narcissistic perfectionism at their core, can help explain those innovative, risky, self-aggrandising disturbances of the status quo which Pareto attributed to his foxes.

Freud had originally argued within his (1914) essay on narcissism that ‘primary narcissism’ is a dynamic process whereby we dedicate libidinal energy to our self-preservation. He distinguished between ‘ego-libido’, which consists of self-love, and ‘object-libido’, which consists of love for others, viewing all object-libido as converted ego-libido, i.e. as self-love which has been channelled outwards. These transfers, Freud believed, ultimately benefit the self because they elicit affection from others. This usually compensates the ego for its lost libido. However, this libido economy can break down. When compensatory affection is not returned, libido retreats back within the self. For Freud, this produced ‘secondary narcissism’, a pathological condition characterised by extreme self-love, which reveals in stark outline the various symptoms of those more moderate narcissisms which Freud famously regarded as universal to us all.

Writing within his (1971) ‘The Analysis of the Self’, Heinz Kohut developed Freud’s theory by relating it more closely to the theme of perfectionism. He argued that ego-libido instils within children grandiose senses of self; magical feelings of omnipotence and omniscience which feed off positive experiences of parental care. As Karen Horney had stressed, these feelings have a defensive function: to quell anxieties during painful processes of separation and individuation whereby children come to regard themselves as separate entities who must address their own distinct needs. Within this context, Kohut regarded ego-libido as flowing outwards to form idealised parental imagos which mirror the perfect self; these imagos in turn form the basis for the two substructures of the superego: conscience and the ego ideal. Hence the child’s early sense of a perfect self transforms over time, and through the introjection of similarly idealised parental imagos, into more mature feelings of self
worth. Just as Freud regarded narcissism as universal, Kohut believed we all preserve a sense of our own perfection, which can be a positive motivator throughout adult life. However, whereas Freud regarded secondary narcissism as an accumulation of self-love, for Kohut pathological narcissism became a ‘self disorder’ involving a failure of the self-esteem system to develop, which in turn allows perfectionist feelings to long outlive their usefulness. Inflated self-love becomes, throughout adulthood, a desperate and ultimately doomed mechanism for building self-esteem, and more specifically, for sustaining that magical sense of perfection which has endured in infantile form, and which leads narcissists to experience the normal challenges of adulthood, which so often confront us with our limitations, as intensely threatening.

Kohut’s view of the pursuit of perfection as a hallmark strategy of self-esteem regulation for narcissistic individuals has since persisted (e.g. Rothstein 1984; Watson et al. 2000). Hence it becomes interesting to consider whether perfectionism integrates more fully within the dark triad. Sherry et al. (2006) have helped answer this question by correlating Machiavellianism against both trait perfectionism and perfectionistic self-presentation. They clarify that trait perfectionism comprises three stable dimensions. These are: ‘self-oriented perfectionism’ (demands for perfection which are placed upon oneself), ‘other-oriented perfectionism’ (demands for perfection which are placed upon others) and ‘socially prescribed perfectionism’ (perceptions of others as demanding perfection). Perfectionistic self-presentation, on the other hand, involves expressing our ‘perfect’ qualities to others and concealing our less-than-perfect ones. Like trait perfectionism, perfectionistic self-presentation also has three dimensions: ‘perfectionistic self-promotion’, ‘nondisclosure of imperfection’ and ‘nondisplay of imperfection’.

Sherry et al. found self-oriented perfection to be unrelated to Machiavellianism. Other-oriented perfectionism did correlate, but only for women. Socially prescribed perfectionism, on the other hand, correlated positively with Machiavellianism for both genders. This finding revealed Machiavellian perfectionism as being ‘externally oriented’ in the sense that it focuses upon others’ perceptions; specifically, it showed that Machiavellians regard others as making high, often unrealistic demands upon them. Hence it was unsurprising that Machiavellianism was also found to correlate with all three dimensions of perfectionistic self-presentation, all of which are perhaps best understood as referring to strategies designed to meet harsh demands from others. Evidently, Machiavellians emerge from this research, not as striving for perfection themselves, but as striving to appear perfect for others. This can be understood as a defensive response, stimulated by that ‘world as jungle’ outlook and bleak view of human nature which Machiavellians and high SDO individuals share. It is also notably consistent with current theoretical speculation that the ‘relational context of individual development’, together with the ‘interpersonal interpretative capacities that emerge as part of the attachment system’ should be regarded as key considerations in both the treatment and etiology of pathological narcissism (Bennet 2006). Furthermore, this facing outwards, and not to inner ideals, for one’s behavioural compass, is also readily explicable in terms of the weak superego, as the following section shows.
Now that Pareto’s ‘force’ and ‘fraud’ have been explored for the extent to which they each correspond to real individual differences, it is important to say a little more in support of the idea that Machiavellian, psychotic, psychopathic, and indeed narcissistic-perfectionistic individuals represent an altogether different breed from those compulsive individuals who prefer ‘force’ over ‘fraud’ in political affairs. Low superego strength will provide the connecting thread. To seek to demonstrate this point by sifting between the speculative etiological theories currently put forward to explain these traits would however yield very uncertain conclusions. A simpler and more convincing case will therefore be constructed from correlations between measures which tap these traits and measures of superego strength. More fully, the thrust of the following argument will be that longstanding intuition and opinion, weighted heavily by research evidence, does indeed suggest low superego strength as a common denominator. Evidence presented will resonate especially well with Lee and Ashton’s (2005) observation that HEXACO honesty-humility seems to underpin the dark triad. It will therefore be concluded that Machiavellians, psychotics, psychopaths and narcissists are, on the whole, less susceptible to those conflicts involving paranoia, anti-intraception and obsessional prejudice which cluster amongst overcontrolled compulsives to produce their strong leadership preferences.

To begin with Christie’s Machiavellianism, there is surprisingly little evidence to confirm or deny whether Mach scales correlate with low superego strength. This may seem surprising in view of Florence Geis’ observation that Machiavellians typically aim to ‘do what works – whatever works – regardless of ethical considerations’ (Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 30, 133), yet it becomes less surprising when we consider that psychometricians tend to avoid psychoanalytic constructs. However, some indication of a link does emerge from Kline and Cooper’s (1984) investigation of the factorial structure of authoritarian personality. Their ‘Machiavelli’ factor domain included several loadings suggestive of low superego strength. Aside from finding a relationship between Machiavellianism, hedonism and low levels of religious belief, they found a weak negative relationship with Cattell’s superego strength scale (factor G from the 16 PF loaded at .20 onto the Machiavelli factor, the third strongest loading of a 16PF variable after those for radicalism and tender-mindedness). Another indication that Machiavellianism is likely to combine with low superego strength is provided by Christie’s contention that Machiavellianism seems to have an anomic component, as we can see, for example, from correlations found between Mach and Leo Srole’s anomia scale (Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 363). More recently, dark triad research conducted by Jakobwitz and Egan (2006) has correlated Machiavellianism against Big Five Conscientiousness (r=-.27). They report a very similar correlation between Narcissism and Conscientiousness (r=-.24). Whilst both correlations are significant at the 0.01 level, negative correlations between Conscientiousness and Primary Psychopathy (r=-.21) and between Conscientiousness and Secondary Psychopathy (r=-.19) conform to this general pattern at insignificant levels. Related factor analysis saw all dark triad variables clustering in their first domain beside Big Five Agreeableness (which alone had a negative loading), whilst Big Five Conscientiousness appeared in their second domain with a strong negative
loading beside moderate positive loadings for Secondary Psychopathy and Big Five Neuroticism. This latter finding reaffirmed what was reported in the previous section concerning neuroticism’s link to secondary rather than primary psychopathy. Given the relative prevalence of secondary as opposed to primary psychopaths, Jakobwitz and Egan could conclude that ‘much of the antisocial behaviour in normal persons appears underpinned by high N and low C’. Jakobwitz and Egan’s factor analysis did therefore suggest that C was not the strong negative correlate to the dark triad which they anticipated it might be. Yet their consistent pattern of weak negative correlations connecting Big Five Conscientiousness to dark triad traits suggests at least some link.

Turning now to consider psychoticism, there is much less doubt about its correlation with low superego strength. Eysenck and Eysenck (1978, 192–201) report negative correlations between the P-scale and measures of both conservatism and ‘acceptance of culture’. They also cite an Israeli study by Montag which revealed that, amongst two groups of 100 males, P correlated strongly and negatively (r = -.45, -.37) with Cattell’s superego strength scale (factor G from the 16PF). Once more, this is intuitively what one would expect of high P individuals. Eysenck and Eysenck (1978, 43–44) point out that the high superego strength individual’s ‘concern for the feelings of others, adherence to the moral codes of the individual’s milieu, responsibility to others, feelings of a sense of duty, and self-disciplined demeanor’ is ‘clearly the obverse’ of what is true for high P scorers.

A connection between psychopathy and low superego strength also looks very likely in view of some further research findings. Schalling (in Hare and Schalling (ed.) 1978, 98–99) mentions that the widely used California Psychological Inventory includes a ‘socialisation’ scale which was originally developed by Gough and Peterson (1952) to measure psychopathy. She adds that factor analysis of this scale undertaken by Rosen and Schalling (1974) and later by Rosen (1977) revealed that it should be regarded as a unitary dimension consisting of six interlocking components, each of which is measurable by a separate subscale. One of the best performing subscales has been found to be the fifth, which seems to tap low superego strength. Correspondingly, Cattell and Kline (1977, 259) point out that scores on Cattell’s superego strength scale (factor G) are ‘excessively low’ amongst psychopaths. The suggestion arising here that poor superego introjection is integral to psychopathy helps us understand a lot about psychopaths. For example, Buss (1966) and several other major writers have stressed the idea that psychopaths are ‘hollow’ individuals who often go through life as ‘impersonators’, not just in order to manipulate, but because they lack authentic, inner identities. Thomas Mann’s ‘Felix Krull’ and Bret Easton Ellis’ ‘American Psycho’ are famous instances of this. Buss relates this hollowness to the failure to develop the ego-ideal component of the superego, which Freudian theory understands in terms of the absence of anaclitic identification with the mother during the anal phase, as is likely to be disproportionately common amongst children who have grown up in institutions (Smith 1978, 10). This would certainly help explain that ‘failure to follow any life plan’ which Cleckley lists as the 13th major attribute of the Psychopath. It also helps explain why psychopaths should be described as ‘short-ranged hedonists’ (e.g. Widom in Hare and Schelling (ed.) 1978, 73). To better understand this lack of identity which is frequently attributed
to psychopaths, it is also worth noting that some researchers (e.g. Cattell and Kline 1977; Widom in Hare and Schalling 1978) have highlighted a significant link between psychopathy and homosexuality or bisexuality which seems to be especially prominent in prison populations. This is consistent with the theory that psychopathy results – proximately at least – from failures to introject both superego and sex role through identification with the same sex parent during the phallic phase.

In conclusion, then, this book’s exploration of Pareto’s binary opposition between force and fraud draws no firm conclusions as to its reality as a psychological continuum. We have however seen that force and fraud do appear to correspond to more reliable constructs which relate separately to high and low superego strength individuals. This shows that something like a ‘force-fraud continuum’ does deserve to be taken seriously as a component of Pareto’s psychological model.

4.6.4 The Rise of the Dark Triad?

Finally, there are further grounds for supposing that Pareto’s continuum, which sets conservatism-authoritarianism in opposition to what is now termed ‘the dark triad’, is to a large extent real. This evidence does not just deal with this continuum as an individual difference, but more fully as Pareto envisioned it, which is to say as a cultural trajectory characterised by changing personality structure. Literatures will be set out which shadow Pareto’s thinking about this continuum in the crucial respect that they deal with Machiavellianism, psychopathy and narcissism not just as individual differences but also as cultural trajectories. What we will see, more specifically, is that these literatures effectively support Pareto’s view that the Machiavellian class I residues tend to displace the conservative class II residues as societies grow prosperous and complex.

Robert Smith (1978, 93–95) provides a useful review of research evidence which suggests that levels of Machiavellianism are rising. This evidence includes findings by Christie and Geis which revealed that Mach scores decline with increasing age, and were higher amongst college samples tested in 1964 than amongst college samples tested in 1955. Although this evidence is hardly convincing in itself, Smith goes on to point out that increasing urbanisation might hold the key to understanding these increasing Mach levels. He cites US studies by Guterman (1970) and Milburn (1970) which found positive correlations between Mach and population densities. Also mentioned is deMiguel’s study which found a large correlation (.89) between Mach and a measure of industrialisation in nine Spanish provinces, and a similar Hong Kong study by Oksenberg which found that Mach levels were significantly higher amongst Chinese children attending western schools than amongst those attending traditional schools. This relationship between Mach and transitional cultural situation is also reported as holding true for studies involving Tongan islanders, and Hungarian refugees living in the US.

Although Smith’s evidence now appears dated it dovetails neatly with Jakobwitz and Egan’s (2006) dark triad research which finds that:

… our mean scores on the MACH-IV were higher than for studies 20–25 years ago …
Recent scores were consistently high and uninfluenced by sample size. We speculate that
modern western society is much more competitive and materialistic than even 20 years ago, and some degree of apparent psychopathy may be necessary to succeed in this type of society (Jakobwitz and Egan 2006, 338).

Smith (1978, 117–132) also links Machiavellianism to psychopathy, blending his evidence for the rise of Machiavellianism with similar evidence for psychopathy. Once more, this research suggests that levels of industrialisation, urbanisation, and hence cultural complexity are decisive factors. One particularly interesting study mentioned by Smith is by Eaton and Weil (1955). They investigated the personality profiles of members of the isolated Hutterite religious sect of the US midwest, who practice a simple communal lifestyle informed by the values of a kind of ‘religious socialism’ akin to that of the more widely known Amish community of New York State. Eaton and Weil found that of the 8,542 individuals who belonged to the Hutterite community in 1950, not one single person could be diagnosed psychopathic. It seemed to them that the Hutterites had successfully found a way to repress, rather than act out, their antisocial and aggressive impulses.

Smith then provides further evidence of a link between psychopathy and cultural complexity or sophistication. This evidence includes Bronfenbrenner’s (1970) finding that US children were more willing to engage in antisocial behaviour than Russian children. Smith points out that this finding also seemed to hold true more generally when eastern European children were compared with some of their western European counterparts. He also mentions a study by deFundia, Draguns and Philips (1971) which indicated that Argentinian hospital patients were much less prepared to engage in psychopathic acting out behaviours than were US hospital patients. Smith concludes by pointing out, rather disappointingly, that official statistics on the incidences of psychopathic disorder cannot be relied upon to support the idea that psychopathy is rising. He warns that diagnoses of psychopathy are perhaps more likely to be made within social contexts – rural areas for example – where the condition stands out in its starkest contrast from the norm. This carries an interesting implication: if levels of Machiavellianism-psychopathy are indeed rising, then we may not sense this intuitively. As we constantly update our sense of what is normal to absorb slow incremental change, we may fail to notice macro-level drift between modal personality patterns.

Such evidence is of course rather flimsy and dated, but it does dovetail with more recent research into aspects of psychological and cultural change. McHoskey, Worzel and Szyanto (1998, 197) confirm that ‘materialism is a goal orientation associated with maladjustment generally and psychopathy specifically’. It therefore seems legitimate to treat materialism as a marker for psychopathy, even if only a primitive one, given that various economic and cultural forces might also influence psychological materialism. Oliver James (1998) lists several longitudinal studies which indicate that material acquisitiveness has been rising for at least several decades now throughout Europe and the USA. He cites, for example, Angeli’s (1991) survey of 85 leading European analysts of social trends who all rated rising acquisitiveness as a key trend within their respective countries. Also mentioned is Halpern’s (1995) Europe wide study which found that, compared with 1980, samples of individuals interviewed in 1990 appeared ‘substantially more concerned with pay and promotion and less
bothered with whether a job was useful to society’. Specific suggestions that the decline of the superego is partly at issue here arise from Veroff’s (1981) comparison between over two thousand Americans interviewed in 1957 and a similar number interviewed in 1976. Veroff notes that the 1976 interviewees were far less likely to use moral concepts to define themselves. This notion that superego strength may be declining also seems relevant to ongoing sociological debate concerning processes of secularisation (e.g. Bilton et al. 1985, 530–541). For example, superego introjection and maintenance is conventionally understood to be favoured by parental consistency. Bader and Desmond (2006) find that religious transmission between generations is greatest where individual parents are consistent in the sense that they both attend church and stress the importance of religion. They indicate that prior studies also identify consistency between parents as a factor in religious transmission. Such studies are undertaken, of course, within the context of declining church attendance (successive world values surveys attest to this, whilst surrounding literatures warn us not to conflate church attendance with private religious belief).

Nathan Leites and Ernst Kris (in Marvick (ed.) 1977, 47–58) argue that the decline of the superego is discernible within the changing nature of allied war propaganda over the course of the twentieth century, which they claim has consisted of progressively fewer appeals to the superego. Leites (in Marvick (ed.) 1977, 59–85) finds this same decline within the slow ‘atrophy of moral feeling’ which he claims is detectable within the changing nature of popular philosophical belief, and in the rise and development of existentialist ideas in particular, all of which can be understood as possessing discernible ‘moods’ of response to the death of God, whether these involve anxiety (as might be said of Heidegger) or depression and disgust (as might be said of Sartre, or that ennui which was amplified by postwar café existentialism).

What could well be involved in these changes then, is the slow displacement of compulsive repression (the strategy which seems to be decisive in almost eliminating crime amongst Hutterite and Amish communities) by psychopathic acting out. Recent, widely publicised media reports of rising levels of such phenomena as ‘air rage’, ‘road rage’, ‘office rage’ and attacks on doctors, politicians and public officials are notably consistent with this theory. Oliver James (1998) cites varied research evidence which seems to confirm that these and other aggressive outbursts are becoming more commonplace throughout much of the developed world (exceptions mentioned are Japan and Switzerland), and that these constitute ‘real and sustained changes’ in patterns of behaviour over the past few decades. Although these changes are typically linked directly to the stresses and frustrations of modern living, it remains the case that the decline of compulsive repression could well be instrumental in allowing these stresses to increasingly provoke impulsive, antisocial behaviours.

Given what we know about the anti-authority inclinations of the psychopath, it could even be added that Jowell and Curtice’s (1995) study which found rising levels of ‘healthy scepticism’ amongst the UK electorate provides us with one further snippet of evidence which is consistent with the rise of psychopathy thesis. This may also be true of studies which reveal declining levels of social capital and generalised trust across the industrialised world (Putnam 2002). Studies such as that undertaken by Beer (1982) which have charted the decline of deference within the political culture of the UK may
well deserve to be seen in the same light. The tendency towards leaderlessness in the ‘new politics’, and indeed Beck’s trend towards ‘individualization’, as discussed in the last chapter, might also count as manifestations. The theory of rising psychopathy, it therefore seems, could conceivably have important implications for how we theorise the changing relationship between government and the governed.

The following clinical diagnostic trends might also be taken as indicators of rising psychopathy. As has already been mentioned, psychopathy in adults is often preceded by hyperactive disorder in children. Dramatic and highly controversial increases in the rates at which attention-deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) is being diagnosed for children in the United States and in the UK might therefore be taken as one indicator. Increasing diagnoses of dissociative identity disorder (DID) in the US (e.g. Boor 1982) might be viewed as symptomatic of those rising levels of identity confusion which we might expect to accompany rising levels of psychopathy. Of course, this section has already warned that we should be cautious about drawing inferences from clinical diagnostic indicators. There is in particular a great deal of controversy surrounding whether DID is actually growing more prevalent (e.g. Lilienfeld et al. 1999). It may simply be the case, as Erikson has suggested, that individuals are increasingly inclined to act out rather than repress their identity conflicts; yet this too can be regarded as evidence for the rise of psychopathy.

Difficulties which psychopaths have in forming lasting relationships, and perhaps related aspects of psychopathy such as the failure to give thought to long term financial planning, may well deserve to be investigated as factors which are contributing to the rising divorce rates which we see throughout northern Europe. Low impulse control in males is one feature of psychopathy which has certainly been correlated with marital disharmony and divorce (see James 1998, 174). The plausibility of this link between psychopathy and rising divorce rates is affirmed by the fact that northern Europe, where these rates are escalating most sharply according to eurobarometer statistics, is distinguishable by its high levels of urbanisation and industrialisation. Hence it is reasonable to hypothesise that levels of psychopathy and Machiavellianism will be especially high, perhaps with some causal significance.

The following anecdotal evidence might also have some intuitive appeal. Widespread media usages of the phrase ‘rip-off Britain’, and controversy surrounding the business ethics of financial institutions (particularly in relation to terms of mortgage and credit card lending) are consistent with the notion that levels of psychopathy are rising within the business elite. The UK’s corporate governance revolution of the 1990s, together with contemporary developments such as the reform of UK company law and the setting up of the Financial Standards Authority, and indeed the re-writing of international accounting standards and the growth of what has been termed the ‘audit society’ (Power 1997), might all deserve to be understood in the same light, which is to say as part of an overall drive to regulate and legislate for corporate propriety, based upon diminishing faith in corporate self regulation.

It is hard to say whether fraud by corporate insiders is actually growing. Major corporate scandals such as Enron, Worldcom, Parmalat, and the collapse of Barings Bank have certainly fuelled speculation. However, appropriate indicators are at least emerging to permit informed debate. KPMG Forensic’s ‘Fraud Barometer’ has recorded major financial fraud since 1990. Its annual reports often reveal dramatic
increases, which must be interpreted within the context of growing opportunities for corporate criminals to commit new types of fraud. Of course, such barometers do not take account of unscrupulous yet legal activities, involving for example the exploitation of newly deregulated markets, or the exploitation of lag-time between the development of new activities or products, and later requirements to comply with any legislative or regulatory responses. Controversial techniques have however emerged, not to identify fraud itself but rather to identify those with psychological propensities towards fraud. Robert Hare has reworked his famous psychopathy checklist (the ‘gold standard’ of psychopathy measurement) to produce both the ‘P-Scan’ intended to spot psychopathy amongst new police recruits, and the ‘B-Scan’ which is tailored for business elites. In 2003, Hare argued in a documentary called ‘The Corporation’ that large corporations are themselves ‘sociopathic’ in the sense that they single-mindedly dedicate themselves towards self interest, i.e the pursuit of shareholder value. Indeed, both UK Company Law and US Delaware Law oblige company directors to place shareholder interests before the interests of all non-equity owning stakeholders, such as employees, customers and local communities. Paul Babiak, who has become famously linked to the post-Enron crusade against corporate psychopaths, has argued along with Robert Hare in their (2006) ‘Snakes in Suits: When Psychopaths go to Work’ that growing corporate exposure to change, speed and risk, permits psychopaths to thrive at senior levels like never before. Michael Maccoby’s (2003) ‘The Productive Narcissist: The promise and perils of visionary leadership’ similarly finds narcissists commonplace throughout US business elites. His ‘productive narcissists’ possess more genuine company loyalty and inspirational long term vision than can be attributed to psychopaths – although they certainly share their lack of empathy. As visionaries who can inspire others, Maccoby argues, such individuals can excel as top level managers throughout periods of disruptive change in particular.

Although none of these contemporary trends lend much support to the rise of psychopathy thesis in isolation, when placed together they form a theory which deserves further attention, not necessarily as an alternative to, but rather as a psychological complement or even adjunct to, sociological explanations which emphasise the changing nature of economic life as a cause of these trends. To now say a little more about the literature which supports the rise of psychopathy thesis, Smith’s belief in this was not, of course, his own invention. He based his ideas on a small but influential literature which seems to begin with Norman Mailer’s (1957) essay ‘The White Negro’. This essay argued that the deprivation and exploitation experienced by black people in 1950s America had led many to reclaim self-esteem by taking on the identities of sexual outlaws. Hence the birth of the ‘hipster’, which soon outgrew its socioeconomic origins because it provided a style and ideal for those increasingly large swathes of the general population who could be described as psychopathic. Mailer believed that ‘the psychopath may indeed be the dangerous and perverted front runner of a new kind of personality which could become the central expression of human nature before the twentieth century is over’. He claimed that cultural direction in the United States already appeared to be falling under the influence of ‘psychopaths and part-psychopaths’ as they ascend to prominence in politics, the media and other spheres. Such individuals, Mailer thought, are especially well able to cultivate
nervous systems’ for themselves which make it easier to cope with the quickening
tempo of modern life. Because they stand outside culture, they may adapt themselves
with appropriate swiftness to new and changing situations.

Following Mailer, writer Alan Harrington’s (1974) ‘Psychopaths’ also found this
personality type on the rise, now modelling itself not upon the 1950s hipster but
upon the ‘hippie’ counterculture of the 1960s. Harrington even diagnosed his close
associate, the Harvard ‘psychedelic philosopher’ Timothy Leary, as a psychopath.
He points out that Leary, in his ‘The Politics of Ecstasy’, derided emotions as ‘the
lowest form of consciousness’ and ‘a harmful form of stupor’. Certainly, when we
are also presented with Leary’s view that ‘the emotional person cannot think; he
cannot plan any effective game action’ (Harrington 1974, 256–257), psychopathy
and Machiavellianism immediately suggest themselves.

Harrington did not only draw upon literature and direct observation, he
assembled beliefs in rising levels of psychopathy held by influential psychologists
such as Kretschmer who have made major contributions to the clinical literature.
This exercise appears to have inspired Cleckley to modify one of the later editions
of ‘The Mask of Sanity’ to take account of his belief that psychopathy was
incubating within the left counterculture. Harrington believed that the psychopathy
of the counterculture would, as its radical student proponents aged and entered the
professions, eventually permeate through to the very highest levels of the US elite. He
therefore anticipated that US society would increasingly ‘revolt against conservative
humanism and its contracts’, and that within it there would develop a radically self-
centred individualism which gives little thought to the future (Harrington 1974, 37).
Harrington’s prediction might therefore be read as an anticipation of the zeitgeist
of the 1980s, which Bret Easton Ellis famously tried to capture within his novel
‘American Psycho’ about a serial killer who has grown rich as a Wall Street banker.

One further feature of Harrington’s analysis with particular relevance for politics was
the idea that the sense of duty is slowly being undermined by what might be termed
‘entitlement thinking’. Harrington mentions that Ralph Waldo Emerson’s Victorian
definition of a gentleman as someone who ‘does not insist on his right’ must appear to
the American of the 1970s as ‘insane’ (Harrington 1974, 27). Whether Harrington’s
predictions are even more relevant today is a question not easily answered.

Harrington’s concerns were echoed in a similarly controversial and non-clinical
work on the growth of narcissism in US society. Christopher Lasch’s (1979) ‘The
Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations’ was
a bestseller, famously quoted by President Jimmy Carter, which warned of the
changing nature of psychological problems reported in the US. He believed that
classic neuroses and phobias were giving way to more diffuse dissatisfactions with
life which iterated the full range of narcissistic symptoms. Increasingly, he argued,
patients reported feelings of ‘inner emptiness’ and revealed ‘fantasies of omnipotence
and a strong belief in their right to exploit others and be gratified’. Yet many of
these feelings remained cut off from public sentiment. The new breed of narcissistic
patient may often publicly disavow competitive ideology, even within the context
of competitive sport, because they link this unconsciously to ‘an unbridled urge
to destroy’. Hence public preferences for teamwork and cooperation combine with
more private antisocial drives. Similarly, such individuals may publicly praise those
who respect ‘rules and regulations’ whilst privately assuming that these do not apply personally. Lasch also mentions ‘violent oscillations of self-esteem’, reminding us of how narcissists manipulate both themselves and others along continua running between high and low expectation, often becoming explosive when they or others underperform against elevated standards. This narcissistic rage, he felt, was evidenced both by the modern inability to mourn, and by inability to form close relationships. In all such cases, he believed, narcissists must guard against impulses to vent intense rage towards love objects; in fact, ‘their personalities consist largely of defenses against this rage’.

For Lasch, the causes were, in part, intimately related to forces driving the growth of consumerism in US society. He explained growing material acquisitiveness with reference to the invisibility of power relationships in modern US society. The interpersonal striving for materialistic and hedonistic symbols of power, he believed, both expresses our status within vertical hierarchies, and protects us when we fall. Yet these symbols grow increasingly transient and unreliable as social change accelerates, and so we preserve our investments in these symbols by adding to them. Perhaps more productively, however, Lasch also considered parental-educational influences upon narcissistic culture. In particular, he condemned the rise of educational environments which instead of helping children internalise core values, are content to hope in vain for the child’s self-development, with the result that teachers come to be regarded throughout the educational experience as hostile, alien powers who demand conformity to values which appear equally alien. Although Lasch did not explore this relationship between narcissism and failures of moral education in detail, his theory nonetheless represented a milestone for academic interest in narcissism. Ryan et al. (1999) point out that many researchers have subsequently explored the rise of narcissism within US culture, focusing in particular upon the role played by education. For example, William Damon argues that:

Our heightened concern with children’s internal mental states has combined with the increased child-centredness of modern times to create crippling imbalances in children’s views of themselves and the world. When we tell children that their first goal is self-love, we are suggesting to them that they are at the centre of the universe. By contributing to the already child-centred orientation of modern culture, this can push a child towards a narcissistic insensitivity to the needs of others (Damon 1995, 77).

In conclusion, therefore, we can say that a substantial weight of opinion, theory and evidence suggests that levels of Machiavellianism, psychopathy and narcissism are rising generally and perhaps spreading throughout the political and economic elites. All of this seems to slot comfortably within Pareto’s broad sociological framework, creating a much clearer understanding of what sorts of people his ‘foxes’ and ‘speculators’ are likely to be in real life.

4.7 Ideological Conviction-Relativism

Finally, it is clear that Pareto also integrated a continuum running between ideological conviction and ideological relativism within his psychological model.
We are told that the lions ‘aim resolutely at ideal ends’. Members of a political party will typically regard the lions within their own parties as ‘honest men’, whilst members of opposing parties will typically brand these same individuals as ‘fanatics’ and ‘sectarians’ (Pareto 1935, §2268). The foxes, on the other hand, are described as lacking conviction altogether. Hence they are able to manipulate the lions, or at least ‘draw the teeth of their opposition’ (Pareto 1935, §2268). The speculators, very similarly, are presented as opportunists who use their absence of conviction for personal gain. Pareto described their political views as ‘always the opinions most useful to them at the moment’. They are ‘Conservatives today, Liberals tomorrow, and they may be Anarchists the day after as well, if the Anarchists show any sign of getting closer to power’ (Pareto 1935, § 2313). Of course, it is of little surprise that Pareto should have drawn this distinction. The idea of an ideological conviction-relativism continuum might be deemed to emerge to a large extent from that moral conviction-relativism continuum which section 4.2 has already explored.

However, we cannot simply take it for granted that individuals fit along an ideological conviction-relativism continuum. It is important to be aware that if such a continuum exists – and the findings of the following chapter will suggest that it probably does – then it is likely that it exists polythetically, explicable only with reference to multiple theoretical perspectives which may not rest well together. This section cannot hope to explore the full range of psychological and sociological factors which might influence whether individuals incline towards either ideological conviction or relativism. It will, however, show that the theoretical template which has so far appeared productive in helping to explain the various individual differences which make up Pareto’s model may once more provide the key to understanding such a continuum. Hence, the argument for suspecting Pareto’s distinction between the ideologically relativistic ‘fox’ and the more ideologically zealous ‘lion’ to have a strong basis in reality will be that it reflects, once more, the distinction between the compulsive (on the one hand) and the negativist and the Machiavellian-psychopath (on the other hand). This argument will suggest that level of superego strength is likely to count as an important determinant – and yet as only one of several major determinants – of the ideological-conviction relativism continuum.

It is a fairly straightforward matter to now summarise the various arguments presented throughout this chapter which combine to suggest that compulsives will incline towards ideological conviction. The strongest arguments for making this link were set out in section 4.2 where the developmental origins of compulsivity were explained with reference to the experience of forced compliance to parental authority during the anal phase and the later introjection of the superego during the phallic phase. These early experiences suggest a number of things about adult compulsives. Firstly, we can say that during the anal phase a pattern of authoritarian submission and compliance is established. In later life, this will tend to predispose compulsives towards a submissive acceptance of whatever trusted political authorities wish them to believe or do. The compulsive experience of the phallic phase has two implications. Firstly, it instills an enduring willingness to ‘identify with aggressors’. This will manifest itself through identifications with political, religious and other forms of institutional authority, which in turn will produce internalisations of whatever ideological constructions these institutions seek to propagate. Secondly, the
introjection of the strong superego during the phallic phase will propel compulsives through life with firmly implanted moral or religious ideas which may easily become embedded within political ideologies. Such embeddedness might often be further explained in terms of compulsive repression, not just because repression inhibits expressiveness and so adds to the intensity of belief, but also because moral affect which strains towards expression on personal levels, for example in confessional forms, may find its path blocked, such that it diverts towards vicarious release through displacement onto political objects.

Further grounds for linking ideological thinking to the strong superego arise from Kenneth Minogue’s (1993) argument that political ideologies are held together by ‘identity monisms’. These can be understood as simplistic, culturally popular yet largely unconscious assumptions concerning what human beings are, how they should live, and what they should aspire to. One good example of an identity monism is provided by Shirley Letwin’s (1992) argument that Thatcherite ideology only becomes coherent when understood as moulded around the ideal of the hard-working entrepreneur who possesses what Letwin calls ‘the vigorous virtues’. It follows from Minogue’s theory that a good way to criticise an ideology is to locate the identity monism at its core, and then consider how this fails to capture both complexity within individuals and variegation within and between human societies. As compulsives possess relatively powerful and fixed consciences and ego-ideals, there may well be a case for arguing that they are disproportionately likely to employ these as identity monisms to help guide and bring consistency to their political thinking. Thus viewed, identity monisms become heuristics whose usefulness increases in proportion to the level of uncertainty which must be negotiated.

Section 4.2 also made the very significant point that compulsives engage in ‘ruminative thinking’. This means they often organise their thoughts within ‘idée fixes’, and in rather more ambitious ‘delusional ideational systems’ which serve to stave off anxieties which would be provoked should their thoughts wander onto ‘unsafe’ territory. This goes a long way towards explaining why compulsives will often be, as Adorno (in Adorno et al. 1950, 765–767) has pointed out, masters of ‘semi-enunciation and pseudo-intellectualism’, who communicate their political beliefs in a fixed language form, making them sound as if they have been learned by rote without really having been digested. Young-Bruehl (1998, 211) makes this point too. She observes that compulsives will often ‘brood’ on their beliefs, ‘repeating phrases, repeating stories, talking quickly and emptily’.

In section 4.3, compulsives were presented as group conformists. This was explained in various ways. Firstly, the above arguments concerning the childhood origins of the compulsive’s willing compliance to authority were deemed important. It was also argued that compulsives warm to group regulations because these help the superego maintain control over the various hidden impulses and conflicts of the id. Thirdly, it was argued that compulsives may be especially likely to affiliate together in large groups because impulses to affiliate or conform may arise or be strengthened through libidinal sublimation, and indeed by that imperative to close ranks under conditions of social threat which has been strongly linked to authoritarian personality. All of these arguments combine to suggest that compulsives will warm towards ideological constructions which bind political collectivities as tokens of group belonging.
Section 4.4 has also explained that compulsives harbour preferences for simplicity and structure which stem from desires to avoid anxiety provoked by ambiguity. As section 4.5 explained, all three Freudian anxieties (reality, neurotic and moral anxiety) are likely to feed these fears. Hence compulsives will often resist cognitive change. They will stick to old and tried assumptions both because they tend not to think about alternatives and because they actively work to maintain highly structured views of their inner and outer worlds, even if the price to be paid is that these become grossly oversimplified or delusional.

To complete this list, section 4.6 has suggested that compulsives often accept simple ideological formulae for the following reasons which relate to the psychology of strong leadership. Firstly, ideologies allow compulsives to make sense of and give vent to their paranoid fears of being threatened by malicious enemies. They also provide compulsives with reassurances regarding what strong measures must be taken, if the various real and imaginary threats which they face are to be conquered. Section 4.6 also argued that simple ideological formulae may provide compulsives with justifications for action (or at least with justifications for dwelling upon those aspects of politics which are concerned with action), as a safeguard against introspective self scrutiny. Lastly, it can also be argued that political ideology can provide compulsives with justifications for obsessional prejudice. Why they should actively seek these justifications is clear. Each opportunity for obsessional prejudice may deliver temporary relief from neurotic and moral anxiety, stave off depression, raise self-esteem through downward social comparison, and help regulate the sense of self which is embodied within the ego-ideal.

We find a stark contrast when we compare compulsives with negativists, Machiavellians and psychopaths who have all either avoided or not been similarly influenced by the early experiences which produce compulsivity. One major point of difference worth considering is that these individuals are all likely to possess pronounced anti-authority feelings. Whereas compulsives submit, comply and ‘identify with aggressors’, negativists, Machiavellians and psychopaths will all tend to regard authority as incompetent, unfair and cruel. It is therefore inevitable that, relatively speaking, they will tend to be left unimpressed by the stamps of legitimacy which established political and other institutions, including the media, confer upon many culturally popular or ‘common sense’ ideological constructions.

This chapter has also explained that negativists, Machiavellians and psychopaths differ markedly from compulsives by their relatively weak superegos. This has several implications. For one thing, the relative absence of conscience renders these individuals unlikely to base strong political ideologies upon moral or religious certainty. More speculatively, their relatively weak ego-ideals may render them less likely to organise their political thoughts around identity monisms. Another possibility is that individuals who possess weak ego-ideals will tend to focus attention upon the present far more than upon the past or the future (most unlike the compulsive who will tend to focus attention on the past and future as a form of escapism in order to avoid anxious contemplation of the present). This ‘present orientation’ does indeed seem to be especially pronounced in the Machiavellian-psychopath, but it is clear even from the label, leisurely personality, that it can be related to negativism as well.
Crucially, this focus on the present means that Machiavellians, psychopaths and negativists will probably engage far less than compulsives in ideological thinking which is concerned with any combination of moral rectitude, planned social vision, and faith that a mythical golden age can provide a basis for individual identity or nationhood. Moral norms are, after all, buoyed up by reverence for the past; their authority derives in part from not-necessarily-accurate perceptions of their historical rootedness, as we see for example with ‘old-fashioned’ or ‘Victorian’ values. Similarly, grand ideological visions may invoke mythical golden ages which help individuals achieve identity through such fictional re-inventions of national history as the rural, pastoral ideal of Nazi Germany. And even secular ideologies lift eschatological, teleological and theodical templates from history, using these to theorise history’s direction, purpose and meaning. Here we may think, for example, of similarities between the Marxist theory of history and the Christian salvation story, both of which can plausibly be interpreted as involving intensifying struggles against evil which culminate in paradise. In short, the Machiavellian-Psychopath’s present orientation seems likely to entail weaker commitments to all such thinking.

We can also relate ideological relativism to the Machiavellian predilection to do ‘whatever works’ (to once more quote Florence Geis). Arguably, this notion of doing ‘whatever works’ captures the mood of contemporary UK politics. It has been argued that Tony Blair’s New Labour government represented a sea change of political approach by:

… consistently stress[ing] the redundancy of socialist versus capitalist, state versus market debates of the post-war periods, arguing instead that economic and social policies need to be concerned primarily with what works (Ellison and Pierson 2003, 7).

Nathan Leites (in Marvick (ed.) 1977) sets the movement towards this new normalcy within a much longer timeframe, illustrating its direction with reference to the shifting nature of war propaganda over the course of the twentieth century. Differences between allied propaganda used in the first and second world wars, he argues, reveal a discernible shift away from a moralistic outlook, and towards rational-instrumental (or what Max Weber called ‘zweckrational’) ways of thinking. This emerges, for example, when we compare incitements to exact revenge for such atrocities as the sinking of the Lusitania, with the Churchill government’s much later concern with process and efficiency, which even downplayed nazi atrocity. For Leites, the war against Hitler was a time of political disillusionment when moral imperatives simply would not function effectively as propaganda. Winston Churchill’s slow stentorian speaking style conveyed courage and resolution in relation to the task at hand, more than it conveyed moral gravitas. We will see below that Leites further explained this interwar cultural shift in psychoanalytic terms as evidence of a loosening superego.

Primary psychopaths, in particular, seem unlikely to harbour strong political convictions for the further reason that they are typically egocentrist too immersed in personal concerns to spare attention to wider collective concerns which do not relate to immediate self interest. They will also remain relatively immune to the many group dynamics which sweep others along within collective political movements. And because they experience little or no intrapsychic conflict, primary psychopaths
will have less cause to invest emotions in political affairs by displacing internal conflict and experiencing it as political conflict. This is not to suggest that those who incline towards mild degrees of primary psychopathy will tend to avoid political engagement. In fact, it is likely that they will often be drawn by opportunities for power and prestige, as well as by those opportunities which adversarial political systems create for socially acceptable forms of impulsive discharge. Of course, those who do become involved may put on theatrical displays which make them appear more emotionally engaged than they really are. Hence that opacity of ideological commitment, which all politicians require to some extent if they are to manoeuvre for position throughout changing political climates, becomes a particular problem where our challenge is to identify and understand the psychopathic politician.

As the last section explained, secondary psychopaths and Machiavellians do experience intrapsychic conflicts. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that these conflicts might often be displaced onto political ideas. This makes it harder to explain why such individuals should incline towards ideological relativism. However, this can be achieved by focusing upon their intrapsychic conflicts. More specifically, we need to identify these with that condition of ‘negativistic ambivalence’ which endures throughout adulthood amongst those who have experienced strong feelings of distrust and narcissistic rage during the oral phase, and whose resulting conflicts have remained unpressed during later anal and phallic phases.

Nathan Leites (in Marvick (ed.) 1977) provides a clearer basis for understanding why those who experience negativistic conflicts (e.g. Machiavellians and secondary psychopaths) are less likely to embrace political ideology. He argues that the ego dominated personality, which has slowly replaced the superego dominated personality over the course of the twentieth century, finds it increasingly difficult to accept political-ideological constructions. He suggests that these difficulties make sense in view of diminishing prospects for political prediction as the world grows complex and, as a consequence, our opinions become reliant upon overstretched capacities to assimilate specialist, technical knowledge. Leites argues that we should acknowledge personal limitations under such circumstances, applying some healthy self distrust to whatever beliefs and behaviours we settle upon as we negotiate uncertainty. However, the strong ego type which is becoming prevalent cannot consciously tolerate this self distrust. Instead they project it onto political authorities.

This theory of ‘projective distrust’ (Leites in Marvick (ed.) 1977, 54) can be explained more fully as follows. Leites suggests that whenever we encounter uncertainty, we seek adjustment by employing our sense of ‘critical distrust’ which aims at reasoned understanding. When this fails, we may turn to regressive coping strategies rather than simply suspend judgment in the Humean sense:

… individuals who feel impotent in the face of a world they do not understand, and are distrustful of those who should act as their guides, tend to revert to patterns of behaviour known from childhood, in which an increase of hostility against the adults and many neurotic or delinquent mechanisms may develop (Leites and Kris in Marvick (ed) 1977, 57).

Hence, rising levels of ‘projective distrust’ are used by Leites to explain why some individuals are increasingly disinclined to accept culturally popular ideological
constructions which derive their legitimacy from political authority. It follows from his theory that when faced with the above feelings of impotence, individuals will pursue very different kinds of regressive strategy. Compulsives will invest blind trust in political authority and cling to simple ideological formulations which provide reassurances; negativists, secondary psychopaths and Machiavellians will instead heap accusations of neglect and incompetence onto those same authorities. This does not mean such individuals will become unwilling to embrace ideology *per se*, but it does suggest their relative immunity to institutional efforts to instil ideology through political socialisation.

In conclusion, then, this section has made some rather controversial suggestions concerning why some individuals are likely to embrace ideology and others are not. It has sketched out a person continuum which stands the compulsive in opposition to the negativist, the Machiavellian and the psychopath. Clearly, this aspect of Pareto’s personality theory places earnest belief on the side of conservatism and authoritarianism, thus underlining the possibility of earnest and intense commitment to liberal and democratic ideology. This certainly helps explain why Pareto’s political credentials have come under close scrutiny. Furthermore, a conspicuous failing of this section has been that it has been impossible to relate the theme of narcissism comfortably to its two dark triad partners: psychopathy and Machiavellianism. It has already been mentioned that narcissists may excel as ideological visionaries. In fact, Maccoby (2003) views narcissists as tending to ‘reject how things are for how things should be’. When we combine this with heightened creativity, and what’s more, with a yearning for individual freedom, unconstrained by convention, we begin to get a clearer picture of what sorts of political ideologies narcissists will strain towards. The theme of power seems especially important here. Narcissists seek power over others as a means to build self-esteem. To this end, they may seek to inspire others with fantasies which originate from their own, relatively undiminished childhood feelings of perfection and omnipotence. At the same time, however, narcissists project their power needs onto others, such that they become fearful of power wielded by others. It follows that they become especially concerned to assert their individual entitlements, rights and privileges, against what they often perceive as attempts by others to undermine these things. Arguing in this vein, Rothman and Lichter (1985) view narcissists as developing ‘exaggerated concerns with personal autonomy’. They undertook a large scale US study of business and media elites in order to test Daniel Bell’s contention that the worldviews of cultural elites (such as journalists) display greater narcissism and power orientation than do business and other traditional elites. What they found was that journalists were indeed more narcissistic and power-oriented than their business elite sample. Moreover, factor analysis showed ideological differences clustering around three themes. Their media sample favoured a ‘new morality’ based upon non-acceptance of traditional values, they were more inclined to express ‘anti-system’ or ‘alienated’ views of US society (for example by drawing attention to injustices within the legal system) and they were more inclined to favour liberal economic reform. These findings lend credence to the notion that narcissists possess negativistic conflicts which interact with power anxieties to favour liberal, individual, rights-based thinking. The fascinating insight which they provide into the psychological underpinning for liberal individualism
challenges Pareto’s view of liberals as ideological relativists, and yet it simultaneously provides us with a means to validate Pareto’s effort to link the themes of creativity, freedom from convention, and liberal individualism under the rubric of the class I residues.
Chapter 5

Testing Pareto’s Theory

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter reviews a study, undertaken by the author, of how personality traits comprising Pareto’s psychological model are distributed at the level of social personality throughout the UK Parliament. This study was undertaken in two stages. Firstly, a questionnaire was designed to test Pareto’s psychological model using psychometric data provided by 92 undergraduate students from the University of Glasgow in Scotland. The second and more substantial part of the study involved the analysis of 153 questionnaire returns which were later received from UK MPs. This return rate represented around 25% of the Westminster Parliament. It allowed subpopulations of around 80 Labour MPs, 40 Conservative MPs and 20 Liberal Democrat MPs to be compared on a range of measures.

The principal objective of the MP study was to clarify the extent to which Pareto’s ‘lions’ and ‘foxes’ actually exist, at the level of either individual or social personality, within the Westminster Parliament. A further intention was to test Pareto’s belief that those who possess the traits of his ‘foxes’ will tend to be distributed more towards the higher echelons of the big parliamentary parties. This, it was hoped, would reveal the extent to which we should value Pareto as a key figure within the classical sociological tradition who offers us a bridge from classical sociology to political psychology.

This chapter progresses as follows. Section 5.2 reviews the student study, describing the development of new psychological scales to test Pareto’s model and reporting on the extent to which findings support that model. Section 5.3 then turns attention to the MP study. First it lists the shortened versions of these new scales which were chosen for the MP questionnaire. Then it lists and explains a number of short criterion measures which were also incorporated. Section 5.4 explains that all scales appeared valid not just for the whole population of 153 MPs, but also for Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat subpopulations considered separately. Following a brief description of sample demography in section 5.5, section 5.6 begins to explore intervals between the three party political subpopulations on all measures. This will reveal a surprisingly rich pattern involving seven personality variables, the age variable, and a variable measuring the number of years for which MPs have served in Parliament. Efforts are then made to determine which of these two demographic variables best explains the pattern linking the seven personality variables. This exercise will highlight ways in which Labour and Conservative MPs may change as they accumulate parliamentary experience. More specifically, it will suggest possible ‘convergence effects’ whereby MPs of both parties tend to modify their ways of thinking towards a broad consensus between the parties; and it will
suggest possible ‘divergence effects’, whereby MPs of both parties tend to modify
their ways of thinking away from each other, perhaps thereby becoming accommodated
to the very different social personalities of their respective parties.

Section 5.7 tests Pareto’s link between level of eliteness and Machiavellian
personality by examining the personality correlates of a variable measuring the most
senior parliamentary position obtained by each MP A particular affinity between
this seniority variable and one of the new ‘Machiavellian’ measures developed
within the student study called the ‘political aloofness’ scale (which seems to tap
the Machiavellian’s distrust and external locus of control) will be highlighted. This
affinity between political aloofness and parliamentary seniority will be seen to apply
not just when all cases are considered, but also when Labour and Conservative
subpopulations are tested separately. Some further evidence for the disproportionate
distribution of Machiavellian characteristics towards the higher echelons of the
Parliamentary Conservative Party will be reported.

Section 5.8 factor analyses all ten personality variables to gauge the extent to
which they cluster as Pareto’s model would predict. Further factor analysis of these
personality variables alongside demographic variables will then permit an overview
of the extent to which patterned differences between party subpopulations might be
explained demographically. This exercise will highlight patterns involving gender
and class. Section 5.9 then reviews findings and considers their implications. A
particular concern here will be to consider the extent to which the chapter’s findings
have demonstrated that we should value Pareto’s bridge from classical sociology to
political psychology.

5.2 The Student Study

The student questionnaire contained sixty newly constructed items arranged very
tentatively within six pools to accord with the six dimensions of personality identified
in chapter four as comprising Pareto’s model of personality. Each new ten item scale
was balanced between positively and negatively keyed items to mitigate response
bias. Also included in the questionnaire were eight well-established measures which
provided criterion and discriminant validities for the new scales (some important
criterion measures were however reserved for the MP study).

The questionnaire was administered in the autumn of 1997 to 92 Glasgow
University students who were enrolled throughout various faculties. Following item
selection where the 24 poorest performing items were jettisoned, factor analysis was
used to assess whether the new scales possessed acceptable psychometric properties.
Four of the scales performed well. However, the two intended to measure force-fraud
and individualism-collectivism did not. This problem was only solved when the 36
items were rearranged within just five scales, one of which was newly constructed
from items lifted from the two failed scales. This scale was named the political
aloofness scale because it seemed to tap a misanthropic unwillingness to place trust
in politicians and political parties. Factor analysis of the 36 items alongside criterion
measures showed all items clustering together within their respective scales along
five factor domains. Distributions of criterion measures within these domains were
then able to affirm scale validities and also facilitate a general overview of the extent to which findings supported Pareto’s model. These criterion measures were as follows:

1) A five item (all positively keyed) version of Leo Srole’s (1956) ‘Anomia’ scale was included as a potential correlate of various traits associated with Pareto’s ‘liberal’ type. It was felt that any such correlations would be consistent with the link between psychological liberalism and the condition of relative normlessness (perhaps involving low superego strength) which the previous chapter has judged as probably containing a lot of truth. This scale was found to correlate with the new conservatism-liberalism scale at $r=0.29 \ (p=.005)$.\(^1\)

2) A twelve item ‘Openness’ scale (Marcus et al. 1995) was selected from the NEO Five Factor Personality Inventory (Costa and McCrae 1992). As Marcus et al. (1995, 168) mention, Costa and McCrae describe high scorers as curious, creative, original, nontraditional, and likely to have broad interests. It was felt this would be a good criterion measure to validate the new convention-innovation scale. It served this purpose well. The correlation achieved was $r=0.51 \ (p=.000)$. Furthermore, Openness also correlated with the new conservatism-liberalism scale ($r=0.44, \ p=.000$) and the new caution-risk scale ($r=0.34, \ p=.001$).

3) A six item ‘Standing Decision Political Tolerance’ scale (Marcus et al. 1995, 246–247) was also chosen. This ascertains how tolerant respondents claim to be towards their most disliked political groups or organisations. This was included as a means to validate Pareto’s link between conservative personality and preferences for the use of ‘force’ in political affairs. It failed. What it did achieve, however, was a weak correlation ($r=0.25, \ p=.018$) with the conviction-relativism scale, to suggest a weak inverse relationship between political tolerance and conviction.

4) An eight item version of the Mason et al. (1995) ‘Impulsive non-conformity’ scale was selected. This comprises items originally lifted from the Chapman (1982) Hypomania scale, the Claridge (1991) Borderline Personality scale and the Eysenck (1976) Psychoticism scale. It was hoped this inclusion might provide further insight into Pareto’s liberal type. A strong positive correlation ($r=0.38, \ p=.000$) was found with the new caution-risk scale, thereby supporting the idea that those with relatively strong appetites for risk will often be impulsive non-conformists.

5) Inglehart’s four option ‘Postmaterialism’ scale (Scarborough in Van Deth and Scarborough 1995, 129) was also included. It was felt that any correlations with psychological liberalism and related traits might provide some indirect insight into whether Pareto’s model captures aspects of psychological conservatism and liberalism which are subject to historical variation. This seemed reasonable

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\(^1\) Given Ray’s (1987) finding that ‘alienation’ relates to left-leaning radicalism in students, but not necessarily to political polarisation in general populations, it seemed unwise to assume that correlations involving anomia found in the student study would also hold true for general populations.
in view of evidence establishing conservatism-authoritarianism as a ‘crisis orientation’ which varies with level of social threat. Postmaterialism did correlate with two new scales: caution-risk ($r=.22$, $p=.039$) and convention-innovation ($r=.24$, $p=.021$).

6) A 43 item version of the fifty item Wilson-Patterson (1968) Conservatism scale (C-scale) was also included. Several original C-scale items were either removed or replaced in view of the likelihood that their meaningfulness has ebbed since the scale was designed. This scale was included as a measure of general conservatism which, it was hoped, would at least validate the new conservatism-liberalism scale. It served this purpose admirably with a particularly strong correlation ($r=-.75$, $p=.000$). Further strong correlations were found with the new caution-risk scale ($r=-.41$, $p=.000$) and the new convention-innovation scale ($r=-.46$, $p=.000$). This link between conservatism, risk aversion and low innovation would prove robust throughout both the student and MP studies.

7) Richard Christie’s (1970) MACH V (Machiavellianism) scale consists of three subscales. Two subscales, each containing nine items, tap ‘Machiavellian Tactics’ and ‘Machiavellian Views’. A third subscale, with just two items, taps ‘Machiavellian Morality’. MACH V was included to serve as a global measure of Machiavellianism-psychopathy. It was felt this might validate the proposed force-fraud scale and more generally permit comment upon Pareto’s controversial link between Machiavellianism and psychological liberalism. All that appeared, however, was a moderate correlation ($r=.32$, $p=.018$) with the new conviction-relativism scale. Interestingly, though, the ‘Machiavellian Views’ subscale did correlate with the new political aloofness scale ($r=.25$, $p=.017$) to reinforce the idea that this new scale taps political distrust. Richard Christie is clear that Machiavellianism correlates very strongly with lack of trust in others (e.g. Christie in Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 42), a finding which may also reflect the narcissist’s fear of power wielded by others.

8) Finally, Marvin Zuckerman’s (1994) form V ‘Sensation-Seeking’ scale (SSS) was also included. This has four subscales: ‘Thrill and Adventure Seeking’, ‘Experience Seeking’, ‘Disinhibition’ and ‘Boredom Susceptibility’. Its inclusion was intended primarily to help validate the new caution-risk measure. However, given the SSS’ relatedness to psychoticism it was also suspected that it might have some affinity with Machiavellianism, impulsive non-conformity and even creativity. A strong correlation between the SSS and the new caution-risk scale did appear ($r=.42$, $p=.000$). A further strong correlation appeared with the new conservatism-liberalism scale ($r=.40$, $p=.000$), and there were more moderate correlations with convention-innovation ($r=.27$, $p=.012$) and conviction-relativism ($r=.31$, $p=.003$). Hence Zuckerman’s sensation-seeking construct seemed to have some mileage as a personality denominator for Pareto’s distinction between the conventional conservative who harbours firm convictions, and the innovative liberal relativist.

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2 This correlation has a negative value because the new conservatism-liberalism scale was keyed towards liberalism, whereas the C-Scale was keyed towards conservatism.
Factor analysis allowed affinities between the five new measures and the eight criterion measures to be explored. One factor domain whose contents were clearly linked by the theme of innovativeness attracted the convention-innovation scale (factor weighting: 0.65) alongside the openness and political tolerance measures (factor weightings: 0.74 and 0.70). Similarly, a conservatism themed domain drew the conservatism-liberalism scale (factor weighting: 0.79) alongside the C-scale (factor weighting: -0.88), and the postmaterialism scale (factor weighting: 0.66). Given that conservatism-liberalism, the C-Scale and the postmaterialism scale correlated at levels of .41, -.45, and .21 with the openness measure, at levels of .40, -.49 and .31 with convention-innovation, and at .06, -.24 and .27 with the political tolerance measure, it became evident that the traits tapped by the conservatism, innovativeness, political tolerance and postmaterialism scales were closely intertwined. These findings all supported Pareto’s model.

Another important feature of this openness/innovativeness/political tolerance cluster was its affinity with a further factor domain which drew together two SSS subscales (‘boredom susceptibility’ with a weighting of 0.72 and ‘disinhibition’ with a weighting of 0.50) alongside the impulsive non-conformity measure (weighting: 0.77) and the new caution-risk scale (weighting: 0.42). This was clearly a ‘risk’ domain. Its interconnectedness to the innovativeness domain emerged from the fact that both the new caution-risk scale and its impulsive non-conformity criterion measure correlated moderately (both at r=.28) with the openness measure. This link between innovation and risk once more supported Pareto’s model.

Links were also found between conservatism and risk-themed domains. Most noticeably, the C-Scale and the SSS correlated very strongly at r=-.46. This correlation came as no surprise as it was very similar in magnitude to the correlation of r=-.49 found between these same measures in a student sample by Glasgow, Cartier and Wilson (1985). More detailed links between the conservatism and risk-themed domains emerged from the following evidence. The strongest variable within the conservatism factor domain, the C-Scale, correlated with the ‘experience seeking’, ‘dishinhibition’ and ‘boredom susceptibility’ SSS subscales at -.47, -.27 and -.36. The second heaviest loading variable within the conservatism domain, the new conservatism-liberalism scale, correlated with these SSS subscales at similar magnitudes (.32, .39 and .33). The third strongest variable within the conservatism domain, the postmaterialism scale, managed to correlate with the ‘experience seeking’ and ‘boredom susceptibility’ subscales of the SSS at lower levels (.28 and .17).

The general conclusion arising from factor analysis, then, was that Pareto’s model appeared validated by the general contrast found between the risk-averse, uncreative conservative and the risk tolerant, innovative liberal. Of course, this finding might easily have been anticipated. Many studies have repeatedly drawn attention to these links. Postmaterialist value orientation’s various affinities with the conservatism, innovation and risk themed clusters constituted a more original and thought-provoking finding. This suggested a richer general contrast between the ‘liberal postmaterialist’ who is simultaneously tolerant of risk and creative, and the ‘conservative materialist’ who is simultaneously risk averse and uncreative. Once more, this was just as Pareto’s model would predict.
A great deal of caution is however required in assessing these findings. A relatively safe inference is that liberals will tend to show less interest in material well-being, and will concern themselves more with individual expressiveness, with self-development, and with political ideas relating to the development of a more humane society. Another intuitively appealing interpretation is that findings might also reflect a tendency for liberals and conservatives differ along an ‘altruism-non-altruism’ continuum. Just such a continuum has been proposed by Lee Ellis (e.g. 1998). He proposes that liberals will tend to distribute helping behaviours widely and willingly, whereas conservatives will impose stricter rationing.3 The idea that the postmaterialism scale taps an altruism-non-altruism continuum is certainly consistent with the strong correlation linking postmaterialist value orientation to female gender ($r=.32, p=.018$) which the student study found.

The linking of liberalism with altruism and conservatism with non-altruism can be further developed with reference to the ‘scarcity hypothesis’ which informed Inglehart’s more mature view of postmaterialism. This might draw heavily upon the view of psychological conservatism as a ‘crisis orientation’ whose markers are a tendency to hoard possessions, to ration helping behaviours according to genetic similarity, to display suspicion and hostility towards out-groups, and to think rigidly and categorically at low levels of integrative complexity. Furthermore, this understanding of conservatism may well help explain that clustering of conservatism with risk-aversion and low levels of creativity found within the student study.

Other findings from the student study do however disconfirm Pareto’s model. We saw earlier how Pareto’s view of democratic character has a very distinctive Machiavellian twist. However, the student study found Machiavellian variables absent from clusters linking postmaterialism, liberalism, risk and innovation. Moreover, it must be added that Pareto’s belief in a major individual difference opposing force (involving political intolerance and the absence of Machiavellianism) and ‘fraud’ (involving political tolerance and the presence of Machiavellianism) appeared unfounded. Hence we might conclude that the distinction between force and fraud is best left within its original sociological context to describe styles of government. Some evidence of its correspondence to a psychological difference was however salvageable from the student study. Here we must look more closely at the new conviction-relativism and political aloofness scales, which did succeed in pulling MACH V variables within their orbits.

Close examination of the new conviction-relativism scale suggested that it tapped different levels of political affect. Positively keyed items’ face validities and correlations suggested a disinclination to engage emotionally with political issues, whilst negatively keyed items’ face validities and correlations hinted at a moral earnestness in combination with intense concerns about political issues. Interestingly, the new scale also correlated positively with the political tolerance

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3 This, Ellis suggests, helps explain why conservatives with good academic qualifications are drawn to the competitive world of private enterprise, often succeeding as ‘hard-nosed’ or ‘tough-minded’ business types, whereas liberals who attain similarly high academic standards are drawn more towards caring professions in the public sector, or to academic fields where values of co-operation are stressed over those of competition.
measure \((r=.23, p=.025)\). A fuller picture emerged from factor analysis. The new scale was found to load at .85 onto a factor domain also containing the disinhibition subscale of the SSS (factor weighting: .49) and the ‘Machiavellian views’ subscale of MACH V (factor weighting: .39). Closer examination of correlations revealed that the new scale correlated at .21 and .19 with the ‘experience seeking’ and ‘disinhibition’ subscales of the SSS. It also correlated moderately with MACH V \((r=.29, p=.007)\), achieving fainter correlations (.19, .20 and .13) with MACH V subscales. These findings were notably consistent with research described in the previous chapter which showed that Machiavellianism, tender-mindedness and tolerance of risk tend to cluster. Although the new conviction-relativism scale’s correlations with Machiavellianism and related constructs are relatively weak, they do at least support the idea that the scale taps different levels of political affect, because they might plausibly be explained in terms of that hallmark ‘encounter blindness’ which allows Machiavellians to manipulate.

The new political aloofness scale, by contrast, contained items which seemed to deal with the broad themes of distrust and disillusionment. Factor analysis showed this new scale clustering alongside both the anoma measure and the ‘Machiavellian views’ subscale of MACH V. The new scale also correlated with these measures at levels of .27 and .25. This pattern suggested that high scorers on the new political aloofness scale tend to possess pessimistic views of human nature which may manifest themselves as lack of trust or faith in the good intentions of politicians. According to Christie, ‘anomic disenchantment’ underlay Machiavellian distrust. After factor analysing a combination of anoma and Mach items, he pointed to a dimension common to both anoma and Machiavellianism. He called this an ‘anomic disenchantment’ dimension, claiming that it seems to involve ‘a dismal view of the world and of the nature of man’. Christie reports that this dimension, despite counting as a major part of the Machiavellian syndrome, is only weakly related to Machiavellian manipulativeness (Christie in Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 363).

It also seemed that ‘external locus of control’ might be a common personality denominator for the new scale, anoma and Machiavellian views. External locus of control involves a fatalistic belief in one’s own powerlessness and inability to change various aspects of one’s life for the better. Crucially, it extends to include negative views of whether desirable social change can realistically be brought about through political channels. This trait sprang to mind because measures of it have been found to correlate both with Machiavellianism (e.g. Phares 1976, 100–101; Mudrack 1990, 125–127) and anoma (Christie in Christie and Geis (ed.) 1970, 46). Moreover, just like Machiavellianism and anoma, external locus of control is reckoned to be strongly related to lack of trust in others (e.g. Phares 1976, 138). It was decided that the MP study should test whether the new political aloofness scale taps external locus of control. Some confirmation was indeed found. It is therefore worth speculating, as a final observation on this measure, that negativistic ambivalence may often underlie the pattern of distrust, pessimism, external locus of control and political disillusionment which is suggested by its correlates. Narcissistic fears relating to power may also feature.
Taking the new conviction-relativism and political aloofness scales together, then, we can conclude that each taps a distinct aspect of the Machiavellian syndrome, and, at the same time, a distinct form of political alienation. Importantly, political distrust and lack of political affect need not co-vary. In fact, it is essential to grasp this point if contemporary political alienation is to be understood. As Anthony Giddens (1999) points out, the rise of single issue interest groups has been symptomatic of the modern trend for concerns about political issues to remain intense (and hence, it is assumed, for levels of political affect to remain high) despite increasing disillusionment with the people and institutions of established political life.

5.3 The MP Study: Variable Selection

All Westminster MPs were sent questionnaires during the spring of 1998. In an effort to boost the numbers of high ranking politicians, a further 14 questionnaires were sent to Conservative Peers with postal addresses at the House of Lords who had all been MPs until the dissolution of Parliament for the 1997 general election (just one year earlier). A total of 153 questionnaires were completed and returned. This represented approximately one quarter of Parliament and was sufficient to permit subpopulations of around 80 Labour MPs, 40 Conservative MPs and 20 Liberal Democrat MPs to be compared on all measures.

As a prime concern was to produce a dataset diverse enough to permit comparisons between subpopulations, the questionnaire had to be brief. Criterion measures from the student questionnaire were dropped, having already served their main purposes in establishing criterion validities for the five new scales. Furthermore, it was decided to use only shortened versions of these new scales. To guard against low reliability, these were shortened whilst retaining Cronbach alphas above .45. Item contents are listed below. A short discussion of each of the five chosen criterion measures follows immediately after. A (+) or (-) sign after each item denotes whether it is positively or negatively keyed.

The Conservatism-Liberalism Scale (α=.77)

- Traditional moral values should be rejected in favour of ones more suited to today’s world (+)
- Parliament should legislate to preserve the moral fabric of society (-)
- Politicians should be motivated by a desire to uphold traditional moral values (-)
- Traditional moral values should be discarded if there is no clear reasoning behind them (+)

The Caution-Risk Scale (α=.45)

- Good governments must be prepared to take big risks occasionally (+)
- You tend to frown upon political policy options which appear risky (-)
- Politicians who don’t take risks have little to contribute (+)
- Extreme caution should always be shown in the management of the economy (-)
The Conviction-Relativism Scale (α=.53)

Politics is ultimately about good against evil, right against wrong (-)  
Politicians whose private beliefs contradict their public comments are rotten to the core (-)  
You will always retain the core political beliefs that you have now (-)  
Common-sense political ‘truth’ changes all the time and will probably keep on changing (+)

The Convention-Innovation Scale (α=.45)

Politicians can only do so much- we must accept that many social ills cannot really be cured (-)  
You often come up with political ideas which no-one has thought of before (+)  
Children should be taught to respect and obey authority (-)  
Good politicians should always abide by the rules (-)  
You are good at making up jokes (+)

The Political Aloofness Scale (α=.53)

It is best to approach politics with a sense of scepticism and detachment (+)  
You just can’t understand why some football supporters feel so strongly about their favourite teams (+)  
People who become totally committed to political causes tend to be outright bigots (+)  
Politicians who don’t take risks have little to contribute (+)  
Breakdown in political negotiation always involves some failure of communication (+)

The Individualism-Collectivism Scale

Four items were lifted from C. Harry Hui’s widely used ‘Individualism-Collectivism’ scale (Hui 1988, 17–37). This compensated for the failure of the new individualism-collectivism scale in the student study. Hui’s individualism-collectivism construct deals with individual and cross cultural differences which are regularly used to distinguish ‘eastern’ or ‘traditional’ society from ‘western’ or ‘industrial’ society. His definition of collectivism appears laden with the more positive evaluation. Initially it is defined as ‘ … a set of feelings, beliefs, behavioural intentions, and behaviours related to solidarity and a concern for others’. We are also told it involves ‘ … favouring attitudes towards sharing responsibilities, troubles and burdens’ (Hui 1988, 17). Hui expands his definition of collectivism by describing it as ‘a syndrome of feelings, emotions, beliefs, ideology, and actions related to interpersonal concern’ which include ‘consideration of implications (costs and benefits) of one’s own decisions and/or actions for other people’, ‘sharing of material resources’, ‘sharing of nonmaterial resources (such as time and effort)’, ‘susceptibility to social influence’, ‘self presentation and face-work’, ‘sharing of outcomes’ and ‘feelings of involvement in others’ lives’ (Hui 1988, 19).

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4 This item is shared with the caution-risk scale.
Although Hui does not expound his individualism construct in comparable
detail, it certainly involves more than the absence of such solidarity and concern.
Hui’s individualists are people who ‘ ... believe they can stand or fall on their own,
and survive on their own’ (Hui 1988, 18). An open question which we are left with is
whether such beliefs are best viewed positively as manifesting individual autonomy,
or negatively as manifesting alienation or withdrawal. Arguing against what they
call a backdrop of ‘growing cultural and professional scepticism about the merits
of individualism’, Watson, Sherbak and Morris (1998) suggest neither explanation
should be discounted. Extremes of both individualism and collectivism can have
negative implications for mental health. They report that individualist values appear
linked to greater self-esteem, but also to stronger feelings of normlessness. Their
chosen indexes of collectivism, although found to correlate with indicators of social
responsibility and reduced normlessness, also displayed affinities with indicators of
low self-esteem, powerlessness and social isolation. Hui’s individualism-collectivism
scale is divided between six subscales which together create an additive index of
individualism-collectivism. Four items were selected for this present study, all from
separate subscales. These were items which Hui reported as having particularly high
part-whole correlations within their respective subscales (Hui 1988, 33–35). It was
hoped that together they would provide a short, general index of individualism-
collectivism. Items selected were:

- It is reasonable for offspring to want to follow the successful careers of their parents (+)
- Your neighbours always tell you interesting stories that have happened around them (+)
- You would agree with the proverb “too many cooks spoil the broth” (-)
- Individuals have their own unique problems. It does not help to tell relatives about one’s problems (-)

**The Social Anxiety Scale**

There were several grounds for including four items from the (1969) Watson and
Friend ‘Social Avoidance and Distress’ (SAD) scale. One specific possibility was
that it might cluster with traits linked to conservatism, which would be consistent
with the idea that compulsives possess high levels of ‘reality’, ‘neurotic’ and
‘moral’ anxiety. Another possibility was that it might align with indicators of
Machiavellianism-psychopathy, anxiety being one of the distinguishing features of
both Machiavellianism and secondary (although not primary) psychopathy. Lastly, it
was felt this scale may be a good criterion measure for the dissociative experiences
scale (which is described below). Leary (1983, 192) mentions that Watson and
Friend’s scale, following factor analysis by Patterson and Strauss (1972), has been
shown to measure two distinct phenomena: social avoidance behaviour and social
anxiousness. Only items thought to tap social anxiousness were selected in view of
the likelihood that MPs, given the nature of their profession, are unlikely to report
high levels of social avoidance behaviour. Items selected were:

- You usually feel calm and comfortable in social situations (-)
- You are usually nervous with people unless you know them well (+)
You often feel tense or nervous in the company of attractive people at casual get-togethers (+)
You usually feel relaxed when you meet someone for the first time (-)

**The Aggression Scale**

It was hoped the inclusion of four items from the Walters and Zaks (1959) ‘Aggression’ scale might indicate whether Pareto’s suggested opposition between force and fraud might yet be revealed as containing some kernel of truth. Pareto, to reiterate, had contrasted the ‘forceful’ conservative with the liberal fraudster. By ‘forceful’, it seems that he meant potentially violent (section 4.6.1). Perhaps, it was hypothesised, a contrast between the aggressive conservative and the non-aggressive liberal would prove nearer the mark. Some theoretical grounds for anticipating this derive from Young-Bruehl’s earlier references to the unique destructive potential of obsessional prejudice. Some empirical evidence also points tentatively in this direction. Gary Groth-Marnat (1997, 330) observes that individuals who score highly on the Aggressive/Sadistic scale (scale 6b) of Theodore Millon’s widely used (1977) Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI) are ‘typically competitive, energetic, hard-headed, authoritarian, and socially intolerant’. Of course, caution is required here. A tendency for conservative people to be aggressive does not necessarily follow from Groth-Marnat’s finding that aggressive people tend to be conservative.

Edmunds and Kendrick (1980, 48) speculate that the Walters and Zaks scale may also tap criminality. They also cite one validation study where youths were asked to evaluate peers according to whether they seemed ‘ruthless and inconsiderate of others in pursuing their aims’ or if they tended to ‘assert themselves in a domineering manner’ or ‘impose their ideas on other people’. These youths were also asked if their peers were ‘loud mouthed and argumentative’ and if they tended to ‘defy the standards of their social groups’ (Walters and Zaks 1959, 214). Edmunds and Kendrick report that these peer evaluations correlated positively with scores on the aggressiveness scale. Hence it seems that this scale could tap social dominance orientation to some extent. It becomes reasonable to make the further inference that the aggressiveness which it taps will often involve psychopathic acting out, or at the very least it will involve that socially aversive, impulsive, rule-breaking streak which appears within psychotic and psychopathic individuals. In short, it was felt that this scale might serve, just like the measure of trait anxiety, as an indicator of Machiavellianism-psychopathy.

The four items selected for the MP study focus more upon self reports of subjectively experienced feelings of aggressiveness than upon admissions of aggressive behaviour. This heeds Berkowitz’s (1978) frustration-anger hypothesis which stresses that frustration will often lead to anger (the readiness to aggress), yet this anger will often be controlled to prevent its discharge as aggressive behaviour. It was felt that this exercise of control would pertain especially to MPs, given their concerns with image management. It seemed fair to assume that MPs who indulge in even the mildest forms of psychopathic acting out will repress or suppress their aggressive feelings, at least when they are in the public eye. They will do this because
they know all too well that rare examples to the contrary are quickly seized upon by the media and can then carry a high risk of reputational damage. It was therefore decided that items referring more to feelings of anger than to aggressive behaviour would discriminate optimally. Items selected were:

You almost never dare express anger to people for fear you may lose their love or approval (+)
It makes you mad when you can’t do things for yourself the way you like to (+)
There are two kinds of people in this world: the weak and the strong (+)
You easily lose patience with people (+)

The Locus of Control Scale

Four items from Rotter’s (1966) ‘internal versus external control of reinforcement’ scale were selected to test the possibility that the new political aloofness scale taps external locus of control. This likelihood entailed that, along with the aggression scale and the social anxiety scale, the locus of control scale might prove useful in this study as a marker for Machiavellianism-psychopathy. Phares (1976) says that individuals possessing ‘external locus of control’ (externals) feel that their ‘personal achievements, failures, victories, and shortcomings all stem from the capricious or unfathomable hand of fate or luck’. Those possessing ‘internal locus of control (internals) are more inclined to regard these things as ‘products of their own efforts or personal attributes’ (Phares 1976, 1). Some evidence suggests that internal locus of control will also tend to resonate with traits which we can associate with psychological liberalism. For example, internal locus of control has been found to correlate with higher rather than lower social class (Kohn 1969; Hendrix 1980; Chebat 1986). Both of these variables have, furthermore, been found by Chebat (1986) to correlate with Berkowitz and Lutterman’s (1968) ‘Social Responsibility’ (SR) scale in a large Canadian population. This scale is described as measuring ‘an orientation toward helping others even when there is nothing to be gained from them’ (Berkowitz and Lutterman 1986, 170). These resonances between internal locus of control, higher social class and altruism suggested that internal locus of control might well correlate with psychological liberalism and related traits, thus allowing the MP study to achieve a richer depiction of liberal personality.

Further research which supports this likelihood includes the finding that ‘externals’ disproportionately comply with the wishes of powerful others (Crowne and Liverant 1963). They also tend to be more vulnerable to persuasive messages and group polarisation effects (Hjelle and Clouser 1970). Knowing this, it follows that externals will probably display that quality of submissiveness which Altemeyer identified as a dimension of right-wing authoritarianism, and that external locus of control may well relate to conservatism-authoritarianism more generally.\(^5\) Items selected were:

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\(^5\) Overlaps between authoritarianism, submissiveness and externality are supported by Erich Fromm’s (1941, 173) intuition that ‘the feature common to all authoritarian thinking is the conviction that life is determined by forces outside of man’s own self’. Roger Boshier (in Wilson (ed.) 1973, 158) similarly notes that research evidence linking conservative
As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand nor control (+).

Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for you as making a decision to take a definite course of action (-)

It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office (+)

By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events (-)

The Dissociative Experiences Scale

Four items were lifted from Bernstein and Putnam’s (1986) ‘Dissociative Experiences’ (DES) Scale. This scale distinguishes ‘low dissociators’ from ‘high dissociators’. Low dissociators possess a ‘unified consciousness’ which retains its unity in its interactions with the world across diverse situations. High dissociators’ internal representations of how they interact with the world are more disunited and context specific. This leads them to report multiple subpersonalities and to experience confusion concerning the nature and characteristics of their core selves.

Holtgraves and Stockdale (1997) admit that previous research has reached mixed conclusions regarding the homogeneity of the DES. They conclude from factor analysis that it measures a ‘single dimension of dissociation’ (Holtgraves and Stockdale 1997, 703), and support their interpretation by citing similar findings by Fischer and Elnitsky (1990) and Waller (1995). However, Holtgraves and Stockdale also mention some evidence for a multifactorial structure (e.g. Carlson et al. 1991; Ray et al. 1992). According to Ray et al. (1992), the DES (reconstructed as the RDES in Lickert format) contains seven meaningful factors. The four items (numbered 10, 21, 22 and 23 in the DES scale) which loaded onto Ray et al.’s fifth factor domain were selected for inclusion in the present study. This subscale deals with ‘different selves’. It taps the feeling that ‘different parts of one’s self act differently in different situations’ (Ray et al. 1992, 421).

Although scores on the DES are thought to increase, generally speaking, with level of psychopathology (Van Ijzendoorn and Schuengel 1996), this instrument is usually regarded as suitable for administration to non-pathological populations (Holtgraves and Stockdale 1997, 699). Some evidence supporting the suitability of the rather more specific ‘different selves’ construct to non-pathological populations comes from Lester’s (1992) finding that 84% of a group of undergraduates were able to describe several of their own ‘subselves’, with females reporting larger numbers than males. Lester also mentions controversy over the desirability of having ‘different selves’. He places, on one side of this controversy, Ogilvy (1977), Mair (1977) and
Sampson (1983), all of whom are critical of the possibility of a ‘unified self’ and advocate something like ‘the development of multiple selves with decentralised organisation’. On the other side he places Erikson (1968) and Loevinger (1977) who have stressed the desirability of a unified self.

The main reason for including this measure was to test the extent to which it clusters beside indicators of Machiavellianism-psychopathy. Grounds for suspecting this have already been provided in the last chapter, which highlighted the absence of a secure identity as an important feature of both Machiavellianism and psychopathy, perhaps for reasons bound up with the child’s failure to develop a strong ego-ideal. This possible link between dissociative experience and the weak superego becomes a more serious proposition when we consider the following evidence. Ruiz, Pincus and Ray (1999) have found significant correlations between the DES and the ‘big five’ personality factors as measured by Costa and McCrae’s five factor inventory (the NEO-FFI) in a sample of 719 university students. They correlated the DES positively with openness to experience and negatively with conscientiousness. Hence we can say that Dissociative experience, which may be an important element of Machiavellian personality, clearly correlates positively with a trait (openness) which the last chapter has shown to be central to liberal personality, and negatively with another trait (conscientiousness) which the previous chapter has reckoned to be a key feature of conservative personality. It was felt that if the DES ‘different selves’ subscale performed similarly within the MP study, then this might help us pinpoint the lack of a secure identity as a feature of both Machiavellian and liberal personality. To add further plausibility to links between dissociative experience and liberal personality, it is worth noting that levels of dissociative experience decline throughout the life cycle (Ross, Joshi and Currie 1990). Hence it is generally true to say that levels decline as individuals also become less liberal, less tolerant, and less sensation-seeking.

The DES was also included to test another, perhaps even more intriguing, hypothesis. Pareto’s experience of trasformismo and clientelismo led him to believe that a successful, upwardly mobile career within a democratic political elite must hinge upon one’s skill in – and just as importantly, one’s moral acquiescence towards – the cynical making and breaking of promises and alliances. He viewed politics, in other words, very much as a vocation for the Machiavellian con-artist. Of course, this idea has long lost its novelty and has even become clichéd. In the current political climate, where politicians are held in low esteem by a volatile and sceptical electorate, this view of politics and politicians often gains easy and uncritical acceptance. Yet despite this idea’s popular appeal and its numerous treatments in books, films and television dramas, little attention is paid to the specific possibility that the multiple role-playing required of politicians might actually produce these undesirable traits.

There is evidence indicating that this idea deserves serious attention. Glenn Wilson (1994, 170) mentions an experiment by Henry and Sims (1970) which concluded that performing artists are especially likely to suffer from ‘identity diffusion’. Wilson points out that Henry and Sims’ finding can be explained by arguing that the extensive role-playing of performing artists was actually responsible for producing their high levels of identity diffusion. Wilson also cites Girodo’s (1984) finding that police
officers who re-emerge from prolonged undercover work are likely to experience a dangerous ‘re-entry strain’ which may in extreme cases provoke schizophrenia or ‘possession’. Irrespective of whether we are talking of politicians, performing artists or undercover police officers, then, it becomes reasonable to suppose that the prolonged experience of pretending to be one or more other persons may influence the self towards disunity and disintegration.

It was therefore hoped that the inclusion of four DES items within the MP study might highlight links between dissociative experience and either duration or seniority of parliamentary experience. It was felt that a fair inference from any such correlations would be that high levels of dissociative experience are often produced or at least exacerbated by political role-playing. Any such finding would of course represent an avenue for the further development of Pareto’s political-sociological theory linking Machiavellian personality to upward political mobility.

Lastly, it is worth adding that research by Holtgraves and Stockdale (1997) indicates that the DES correlates positively with ‘angry hostility’ (r=.15, P<.05) and ‘vulnerability’ (r=.15, P<.05) as measured by the NEO PI-R (Costa and McCrae 1992). Dissociation, they conclude, is somehow positively related to anxiety (Holtgraves and Stockdale 1997, 704). It is also associated with a wide range of neurotic symptoms and negative life experiences (Muris and Merckelbach 1997). When we also bear in mind that dissociative experience is related to level of psychopathology in general, it becomes tempting to speculate that high scorers may be experiencing some social maladjustment. Hence it was felt MPs with higher DES scores may often feel uncertain or insecure in their roles, perhaps anxiously attuned to discrepancies between private thoughts and public expectations of them. Items selected were:

- You are sometimes conscious of acting differently with different people (+)
- Outwith your political life, you are sometimes accused of lying (+)
- You are sometimes conscious of fitting into certain situations with amazing ease (+)
- You sometimes talk out loud alone (+)

**Other Variables**

MPs were not asked for personal information so detailed as to threaten the anonymity promised to them, as it was felt this could lower the return rate. They were however asked to indicate age within the categories of ‘0-35’, ‘35-55’ or ‘55+’. They were also asked their genders, how many years they had served in Parliament, and which most senior post they had obtained while serving. A coding system was devised to quantify these responses. MPs were also asked whether they had been raised in ‘lower class’, ‘middle class’ or ‘upper class’ households.

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6 Senior ministers (ministers of the crown) and shadow senior ministers were given weightings of 10. Junior ministers (ministers of state), shadow junior ministers, chief whips and (shadow) spokespersons were given weightings of 7. Parliamentary private secretaries and whips were given weightings of 4. One select committee chairman was given a weighting.
5.4 Scale Analysis

Before comparing the three subpopulations (Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat MPs) on each of the ten personality measures, checks were made to ensure adequate internal consistency validity and reliability. Part-whole correlations were examined for each of the three subpopulations in turn. Crucially, for an item to pass muster it had to contribute to its associated scale with a reasonably high part-whole correlation for all three subpopulations. This provided a rigorous three way split reliability standard for each scale; furthermore, it ensured all three subpopulations could be compared on all ten personality measures.

Scales measuring conservatism-liberalism, conviction-relativism, caution-risk, dissociative experiences and social anxiety all fared well when subjected to this test. Items contributing to the locus of control scale also held up well across the three subpopulations. Most part-whole correlations were in the $r=±.5-.7$ range, with the poorest performing item, ‘trusting to fate has never turned out as well for you as making a decision to take a definite course of action’ still managing a moderate part-whole correlation ($r=-.35, p=.023$) for the Conservative subpopulation. Items contributing to the political aloofness scale did almost as well, with most part-whole correlations retaining high values across subpopulations. The single exception to this rule was ‘politicians who don’t take risks have little to contribute’. This item correlated with its set score at just $r=.32 (p=.145)$ for the Liberal Democrat subpopulation. This failure may reflect skewness arising from a tendency for Liberal Democrats to score particularly highly (18 cases out of 24 either ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’). Hence it was decided to retain the item. The convention-innovation scale gave more cause for concern, because the ‘children should be taught to respect and obey authority’ item failed badly for both Conservative and Liberal Democrat subpopulations. This item was therefore jettisoned. The resulting balanced four item scale was found to perform acceptably for all three subpopulations. The individualism-collectivism scale’s performance was acceptable overall, although one item was problematic. The item ‘You would probably agree with the proverb “too many cooks spoil the broth”’ performed poorly for the Conservative subpopulation owing to an unusual degree of skewness (35 out of 42 Conservatives either agreed or strongly agreed). This item’s part-whole correlation for the Liberal Democrats was also low, although this time the failure appeared less attributable to skewness. Hence it was judged necessary to be wary of the resulting individualism-collectivism variable when analysing Liberal Democrat responses. The poorest performing scale was that tapping aggression. Part-whole correlations were low for all three subpopulations. This seemed due to skewness towards low scores. 125 out of 150 MPs either ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with ‘you almost never dare express anger to people for fear you may lose their love or approval’. 107 out of 153 cases either ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with ‘you almost never dare express anger to people for fear you may lose their love or approval’. 107 out of 153 cases either ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’.
disagreed’ with ‘there are two kind of people in this world: the weak and the strong’. Hence caution was necessary with this variable.

5.5 Population Diversity

The population contained good diversity. The 153 respondents included 81 Labour MPs, 42 Conservative MPs and 24 Liberal Democrat MPs. No other political parties were represented in numbers sufficient for statistical analysis, although two Ulster Unionists, one Welsh Nationalist and one Scottish Nationalist did contribute. 13 MPs indicated they were younger than 35. 97 were between the ages of 35 and 55. 43 MPs were aged over 55. 48 were raised in lower income bracket households, whilst 74 were from middle income brackets and 23 were from upper income brackets.

Only 28 MPs (18%) were female. Of these, 21 identified themselves as Labour (26% of the Labour subpopulation), 4 identified themselves as Conservative (9% of the Conservative subpopulation) and only 1 identified herself as Liberal Democrat (4% of the Liberal Democrat subpopulation). This meant gender differences could only be studied within a Labour Party context; specifically that cohort of female Labour MPs popularly known as ‘Blair’s Babes’.

71 MPs (46% of the whole population) had entered Parliament for the first time within the 1997 intake. The remainder, bar one missing case, had been there for between 3 and 39 years. Of these, 35 MPs (around 23 %) had been in Parliament for 15 years or more. Of the Conservative and Labour MPs who replied giving some indication of the levels of political seniority which they had managed to attain, 62 (just under 50% of the whole population) had not risen beyond the back benches. 23 MPs (19%) had achieved a rank of P.P.S. or equivalent. 21 MPs (17%) had achieved the rank of Junior Minister or equivalent. A further 16 MPs had risen to full cabinet (or shadow cabinet) level.

5.6 Comparing the Three Parliamentary Parties

Mean scores were calculated on both demographic and personality measures for each of the three political parties. Rather than express differences between party subpopulations using these scores, it was decided that a better indication of effect size would be conveyed by expressing differences as proportions of mean standard deviations which were calculated for the whole population. Intervals between the parties on all variables are set out in table 5.6(a) below. Subpopulations are ordered on each variable according to ascending mean scores. Intervals between low and middle positions, and between middle and high positions, are also given for each variable. Statistically significant intervals are asterisked. Ns are all in the region of 80 (for Labour), 40 (for the Conservatives) and 20 (for the Liberal Democrats).

The patterns highlighted by table 5.6(a) reveal the extent to which differences between the political parties correspond to the multi-trait continuum which comprises Pareto’s model. The richest of these patterns, which will provide our starting point, certainly echoes much of Pareto’s distinction between the lion and the fox. This pattern consists of a similar ordering of the parties on seven of the ten personality variables.
Scores on measures of conservatism-liberalism, conviction-relativism, caution-risk, innovation, individualism-collectivism, dissociative experience and aggression all rise together, firstly in intervals between Conservative and Labour subpopulations, and then once more in intervals between Labour and Liberal Democrat subpopulations. Moreover, relatively large intervals between Conservative and Labour MPs are all

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Lowest position (mean Score on measure)</th>
<th>Interval between low/middle positions (SD units)</th>
<th>Middle position (mean score on measure)</th>
<th>Interval between middle/high positions (SD units)</th>
<th>Highest position (mean score on measure)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Lib (1.87)</td>
<td>.58***</td>
<td>Lab (2.20)</td>
<td>.32***</td>
<td>Con (2.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as MP</td>
<td>Lib (3.54)</td>
<td>.33***</td>
<td>Lab (6.47)</td>
<td>.68***</td>
<td>Con (12.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con-Lib</td>
<td>Con (-2.57)</td>
<td>1.1***</td>
<td>Lab (1.32)</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>Lib (2.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conv-Rel</td>
<td>Con (-8.47)</td>
<td>.59***</td>
<td>Lab (-7.05)</td>
<td>&lt;.00</td>
<td>Lib (-7.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution-risk</td>
<td>Con (2.07)</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>Lib (3.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
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<td>.19*</td>
<td>Lab (-.39)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>Lib (-.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiv-Collect</td>
<td>Con (-.10)</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>Lab (.16)</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>Lib (.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociation</td>
<td>Con (12.12)</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>Lab (12.34)</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>Lib (12.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
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<td>0.06</td>
<td>Lab (9.99)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>Lib (1.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fem Gender</td>
<td>Lib (1.04)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>Con (1.10)</td>
<td>0.41***</td>
<td>Lab (1.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loc Control</td>
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<td>.26***</td>
<td>Con (-1.76)</td>
<td>.37***</td>
<td>Lib (-.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aloofness</td>
<td>Lab (13.44)</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>Con (13.69)</td>
<td>.35***</td>
<td>Lib (14.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Lab (1.76)</td>
<td>.34***</td>
<td>Lib (2.00)</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>Con (2.10)</td>
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<td>Seniority</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>.70***</td>
<td>Con (5.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc Anxiety</td>
<td>Con (-3.71)</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>Lib (-3.46)</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>Lab (-2.76)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Probability ratings calculated by two tailed T-test

Intervals between Labour and Conservative mean scores become significant at the p<.05 level if greater than .19 SDs. They become significant at the p<.02 level if greater then .23 SDs, and they become significant at the p<.01 level if greater than .26 SDs.

Intervals between Labour and Liberal Democrat mean scores become significant at the p<.05 level if greater than .22 SDs. They become significant at the p<.02 level if greater than .25 SDs, and they become significant at the p<.01 level if greater than .28 SDs.

Intervals between Conservative and Liberal Democrat mean scores become significant at the p<.05 level if greater than .25 SDs. They become significant at the p<.02 level if greater than .28 SDs, and they become significant at the p<.01 level if greater than .30 SDs.

*** Three asterisks indicate an interval which is significant at the p<.01 level.
** Two asterisks indicate an interval which is significant at the p<.02 level
* One asterisk indicates an interval which is significant at the p<.05 level.
followed by much smaller intervals between Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs. Although not all of these intervals are statistically significant, Labour elevations over Conservative mean scores on conservatism-liberalism, conviction-relativism and caution-risk are all significant at the p<.01 level. The Labour elevation above the Conservatives on the innovativeness scale is significant at the p<.05 level.

It immediately became intriguing to suppose that these findings represented axes of difference between the social personalities of the three main Parliamentary parties. This may itself mean a number of things. One reasonable inference would be that the personality measures succeeded in tapping deep and enduring personality structures, in which case the above pattern can be regarded as highlighting ways in which the parliamentary parties are composed of different sorts of people. However, it is equally conceivable that findings will to some extent reflect the different ideological scripts which MPs have internalised, as part of their identity work, to cement affiliations with in-groups, to establish boundaries against out-groups, and the like. Dissonance effects are likely to be important here. In particular, it is worth recalling Charles Osgood’s (1978) observation that politicians internalise their public pronouncements over time. Of course, there is no need to choose between these interpretations. The term ‘social personality’ is used here inclusively to assume resonances spanning multiple levels of personality structure and internalised ideology.

An important related issue is how enduring these differences of social personality are likely to be. When we consider the plasticity of ideological scripts against the more enduring nature of personality structure, it becomes clear that the more we stress deep personality structure in the interpretation of findings, the more we can then regard any patterned ordering of the parties as likely to endure. Of course, the more enduring these differences are likely to be, the more significant they become for social science. Working from the assumption that findings do reveal enduring party differences, we might then speculate, for example, that the relative proximity of Labour to Liberal Democrat subpopulations means that, ceteris paribus, prospects for political coalition-building between these two parties will be greater than for any other combination of the three parties.

Alternatively, we might regard differences between the parties on the personality measures as having perhaps changed since the study was conducted. Such arguments might be based upon cultural differences between generations, or they may cite other changing demographics such as the rising number of women MPs (a phenomenon which is discussed shortly). In addition, such arguments might plausibly draw upon the classic Downsian model of party competition which says that because politicians seek political office more than anything else, they will continually change their policies to accord with those favoured by the fickle and ever more volatile ‘median voter’. Hence the ideological scripts which mark out the boundaries between the parties must remain forever in flux.

However, grounds for interpreting findings as standing for enduring differences between the parties have been set out in chapter three. And these grounds apply irrespective of whether we regard social personalities as consisting more of shared personality structures, or more of shared ideological scripts. The collective personality of a political party was depicted there as a set of unwritten heuristic principles which persist through time by guiding parties to respond in relatively consistent
and predictable ways to problems characterised by cognitive indeterminacy, and it was argued that orientations towards conservatism-liberalism and caution-risk in particular represent heuristics upon which collective entities like political parties must increasingly rely, as levels of cognitive indeterminacy rise.

To return to the analysis of findings, it is particularly interesting to note that the Machiavellian measure of ideological conviction-relativism aligns with measures of liberalism, creativity and tolerance of risk, as Pareto’s model predicts. One possible explanation is that high scorers on this scale will often be emotionally expressive individuals who will tend not to require sublimated outlets for their emotions. Low scorers may then be emotionally inhibited individuals whose searches for sublimated outlets have drawn them to the world of politics. It is certainly noteworthy that Conservative MPs were the lowest scorers. Following the Freudian listing of ‘intellectualisation’ as one of the ego defence mechanisms, and Harold Lasswell’s classic formulation of political man in this Freudian vein as someone who displaces private thoughts onto public objects, we may think here of the superego dominated person who experiences emotion vicariously as fierce ideological conviction.

One particularly intriguing pattern remains to be considered. Liberal Democrat scores on external locus of control are elevated significantly above Conservative scores by a large interval (p<.01), whilst Labour scores are lower than Conservative scores by an even larger interval (p<.01). This suggests that Labour MPs are more likely than Conservative MPs, and much more likely than Liberal Democrat MPs, to possess internal locus of control. As this survey took place just one year after the 1997 general election, this finding may in part reflect the high morale of Labour MPs during the honeymoon period following their election. And in particular, it may convey their heightened optimism concerning the new government’s capacity to bring about positive change. To venture the alternative explanation and argue that Labour MPs really are more inclined to possess internal locus of control as an enduring personality trait is to run with what has become a political football. In the wake of the 1997 election, as commentators began to form impressions of the character of the new administration, there emerged a pronounced tendency amongst the hostile media to label it as an arrogant, ‘control freak’ government. The term has since stuck. In a February 2006 interview for ‘The Independent’ newspaper, Labour Chancellor Gordon Brown responded to the suggestion that he was reputed to be a ‘control freak’ by referring to his commitment to devolution, and by stating that ‘the twenty-first century must be about governments giving power to the people’. There is perhaps some irony here. It is worth reminding ourselves, by glancing back at the earlier list of locus of control items, that the Chancellor’s belief that ‘the people’ can exercise effective control is itself a marker for internal locus of control.

The real value of the above finding is perhaps to draw attention to the fact that further correlational research using locus of control and related constructs may well prove fruitful in the further exploration of social personality (and perhaps individual psychobiography) within the Parliamentary Labour Party, the party grassroots, and perhaps democratic socialist movements more generally. Such research could

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conceivably help redress the weight of literature which positions ‘authoritarian personality’ firmly on the political right, by teasing out a more limited sense in which a rather different kind of authoritarianism, based upon an overestimation of the capacity for control, resides with the democratic socialist approach to politics. The idea that Labour governments are ambitious and overconfident beyond their means, as is suggested by the internal locus of control construct, cannot be levelled at every Labour government. Some may be tempted to refer to this trait in order to understand the political will which led to the post-war nationalisation of industries such as mining, or the construction of social welfare institutions such as the National Health Service. Others may regard it as a psychological motivator for measures designed to control individuals, such as anti-terror legislation, national identity cards, anti-social behaviour orders, and the like, which came to characterise Tony Blair’s three terms in office as Prime Minister. Such wild speculation suggests that internal locus of control, if it really can exist as a government attribute, is likely to constitute a mixed blessing, because it may simultaneously be a force for incompetent meddling, for building great institutions and for making great changes.

To continue in this vein, we might regard the wide gulf (.63 SDs) between Labour and the Liberal Democrats on the locus of control measure as providing an important sense in which the Liberal Democrat MPs stand out more than the MPs of any other party as being ‘individualists’. Of course, both conservatives and liberals have, over the years, criticised ‘big government’, they have shared Churchill’s suspicions of ‘construction’, and they have warmed to Friedrich Hayek’s advocacy of ‘spontaneous order’ over state intervention, and indeed Hayek’s preferences for the rule of law over ‘socialist legality’. More fully, we might say that Conservative individualism echoes the Liberal Democrat theme of control to the extent both perspectives are ideologically rooted in the seventeenth Century Whig concern to instil a rule of law which protects the individual from arbitrary decisions by government; a concern which was to endure into the late eighteenth century with Burke and on into the twentieth century with Hayek (Raeder 1997). Irrespective of whether the bogey has been the Stuart monarchy, French revolutionary zeal, or state socialism, the shared feeling that the rule of law must protect the individual from arbitrary force has endured. And now that the great ideological battles of the twentieth century have been played out, both Conservative and Liberal Democrat MPs continue to apply this shared thinking within their criticisms of micro-management from Whitehall.

Yet the significant interval (0.37 SDs) between Liberal Democrats and Conservatives on the locus of control measure provides us with a basis for teasing apart subtly different senses in which these two groups are ‘individualists’. If conservative resistance to ‘big government’ is to be regarded as stemming from something other than a fatalistic belief that events are inherently uncontrollable, then we might usefully take as our starting point the idea that conservative individualism focuses not upon the properties of events themselves but rather upon the properties of those who act to bring events under control. Here we might usefully consider that lack of faith in human nature which has become integral to contemporary theories of ‘conservative realism’ (e.g. Minogue (ed.) 1996). This conservative realist orientation towards human nature stresses both the limitations of the intellect and the power motive as a fundamental driver of human behaviour. It also assumes what might problematically be termed human ‘selfishness’
or ‘non-altruism’. A fuller discussion of conservative individualism in the light of further evidence follows shortly.

The differences between the parties on the personality measures deserved further investigation to see if they remained after controlling for demographics. Notably, table 5.6(a) showed duration of parliamentary experience, rather than age, conforming to the patterned ordering of the parties. This was surprising. Grounds for anticipating a closer relationship with age than with the parliamentary experience are that liberal views, tolerance of risk, innovativeness, aggression and dissociative experience are all known to decline throughout the individual life cycle. Hence it seemed possible that the seven variable personality configuration might be explained to some extent with reference to the accumulation of parliamentary experience.

Table 5.6(b) will now show how younger Labour and Conservative MPs compare on the personality variables. Table 5.6(c) will then compare older Labour and Conservative MPs. Table 5.6(d) will thereafter show how scores alter, moving from younger to older MPs. This exercise will then be repeated using the duration of parliamentary experience variable. These tables, it was felt, might invite some fascinating inferences. It was anticipated that comparisons between younger and older MPs might be read in either of two ways. Firstly, statistically significant intervals might be read as highlighting ‘life-cycle effects’ whereby MPs of one or more party tend to change in certain ways as they age. Secondly, significant intervals might also highlight ‘generational effects’ whereby younger MPs bring new ways of thinking to Parliament, which may impact in time upon the ‘social personalities’ of the parties. Given the inevitable correlation between age and duration of parliamentary experience, it was anticipated that the tables showing different levels of parliamentary experiences may also reflect such trends. However, it was felt that comparisons between MPs with different levels of parliamentary experience would be more likely to represent processes of political socialisation or acculturation which take place within Parliament, influencing MPs of different parties to diverge or converge on personality measures.

**Investigating Age Differences**

Each subpopulation was first of all split into three groups: MPs under the ages of 35, between the ages of 35 and 55, and over the age of 55. Resulting Ns were around 5, 52 and 19 for the Labour subpopulation, so it was decided that only the latter two groups could be compared with some hope of finding statistically significant trends. Conservative Ns were around 1, 23 and 17. Again, it was decided that only the latter two groups could be compared. Liberal Democrat Ns were around 6, 14 and 2 (and were insufficient to permit any kind of comparison). Hence, only Labour and Conservative subpopulations could be investigated. In each of the following three tables, differences between mean scores are expressed once more as fractions of mean standard deviations. Significant differences are asterisked.

Tables 5.6(b) and 5.6(c) reaffirm only three differences between the parties which appeared in table 5.6(a). It appears from comparing both older and younger groups of MPs that Labour MPs are inclined to be more liberal, tolerant of risk and
innovative than Conservative MPs. However, differences in levels of ideological relativism, which are particularly salient among younger MPs (a Labour elevation of .86 SDs which is significant at the p<.01 level appears), fall away into insignificance when older MPs of both parties are compared. As the three tables also show, older Conservative MPs appear significantly more relativistic than younger Conservative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Lower mean score on measure</th>
<th>Interval (SD units) between mean scores</th>
<th>Higher mean score on measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con-Lib ***</td>
<td>Con (-2.67)</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>Lab (1.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conv-Rel ***</td>
<td>Con (-8.90)</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>Lab (-6.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution-risk ***</td>
<td>Con (2.25)</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>Lab (3.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation *</td>
<td>Con (-.87)</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>Lab (-.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiv-Collect *</td>
<td>Con (-.17)</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>Lab (.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociation</td>
<td>Lab (12.44)</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>Con (12.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>Con (1.12)</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>Lab (1.19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Probability ratings calculated by two tailed T-test

*** Intervals greater than .30 SDs are significant at the p<.01 level.
** Intervals greater than .28 SDs are significant at the p<.02 level.
* Intervals greater than .24 SDs are significant at the p<.05 level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Lower mean score on measure</th>
<th>Interval (SD units) between mean scores</th>
<th>Higher mean score on measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con-Lib ***</td>
<td>Con (-2.41)</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>Lab (.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conv-Rel</td>
<td>Con (-7.94)</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>Lab (-7.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution-risk ***</td>
<td>Con (1.71)</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>Lab (2.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Con (-1.00)</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>Lab (-.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiv-Collect</td>
<td>Lab (-.21)</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>Con (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociation</td>
<td>Con (11.18)</td>
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<td>Lab (11.71)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>Lab (9.06)</td>
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<td>Con (9.56)</td>
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</table>

*Probability ratings calculated by two tailed T-test

*** Intervals greater than .44 SDs are significant at the p<.01 level.
** Intervals greater than .40 SDs are significant at the p<.02 level.
* Intervals greater than .33 SDs are significant at the p<.05 level.

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Table 5.6(b) Differences between Labour and Conservative MPs aged 35–55

Table 5.6(c) Differences between Labour and Conservative MPs aged 55+
Vilfredo Pareto’s Sociology

MPs (p<.02), and older Labour MPs appear significantly less relativistic than younger Labour MPs (p<.01). This statistically significant finding raised the possibility that the passing of time might somehow draw MPs of the two main parties towards convergent positions on the ideological conviction-relativism continuum. It was hypothesised that if this trend also appeared – or better still, was amplified – when similar controls were placed on the variable for duration of parliamentary experience, then perhaps the culture of Parliament has slowly produced this convergence. Table 5.6(d) also shows that both Labour and Conservative MPs over the age of 55 appear less aggressive, less likely to report dissociative experiences and less ready to accept political risk than their respective colleagues between the ages of 35 and 55. As these are all changes which are known to accompany increasing age, this finding attests to the validity of these three measures.

Investigating Duration of Parliamentary Experience

Labour and Conservative subpopulations were now subdivided between those who had accumulated up to 9 years parliamentary experience and those who have served in Parliament for longer durations. This split point of 9 years allowed Ns to remain at viable levels. Labour Ns were around 56 and 21; Conservative Ns were around 16 and 25. Table 5.6(e) highlights differences between Labour and Conservative MPs who have been in Parliament for nine or less years. Table 5.6(f) will then compare Labour and Conservative MPs who have served for longer than nine years. Finally, table 5.6(g) distinguishes between lesser and more experienced MPs.

### Table 5.6(d) Differences between younger and older MPs of both Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>∆ Labour mean scores (from younger to older MPs). Probability ratings are asterisked</th>
<th>∆ Conservative mean scores (from younger to older MPs). Probability ratings are asterisked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con-Lib</td>
<td>down by .26 SDs*</td>
<td>up by .07 SDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conv-Rel</td>
<td>down by .31 SDs***</td>
<td>up by .40 SDs**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution-risk</td>
<td>down by .16 SDs</td>
<td>down by .24 SDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>down by .02 SDs</td>
<td>down by .05 SDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiv-Collect</td>
<td>down by .27 SDs*</td>
<td>up by .08 SDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociation</td>
<td>down by .29 SDs**</td>
<td>down by .63 SDs***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>down by .47 SDs***</td>
<td>down by .23 SDs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Probability ratings calculated by two tailed T-test**

**Labour MPs:**
- *** Intervals greater than .30 SDs are significant at the p<.01 level.
- ** Intervals greater than .28 SDs are significant at the p<.02 level.
- * Intervals greater than .24 SDs are significant at the p<.05 level.

**Conservative MPs:**
- *** Intervals greater than .42 SDs are significant at the p<.01 level.
- ** Intervals greater than .38 SDs are significant at the p<.02 level.
- * Intervals greater than .31 SDs are significant at the p<.05 level.
Table 5.6(e) Differences between Labour and Conservative MPs who have spent nine or less years in Parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name. Probability ratings are also asterisked.</th>
<th>Lower mean score on measure</th>
<th>Interval (SD units) between mean scores</th>
<th>Higher mean score on measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con-Lib ***</td>
<td>Con (-3.00)</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Lab (1.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conv-Rel ***</td>
<td>Con (-9.00)</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>Lab (-6.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution-risk</td>
<td>Con (2.38)</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>Lab (2.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation **</td>
<td>Lab (.58)</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>Con (.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiv-Collect</td>
<td>Con (.19)</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>Lab (.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociation</td>
<td>Lab (12.34)</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>Con (12.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression ***</td>
<td>Con (9.13)</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>Lab (9.50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Probability ratings calculated by two tailed T-test

*** Intervals greater than .31 SDs are significant at the p<.01 level.
** Intervals greater than .28 SDs are significant at the p<.02 level.
* Intervals greater than .24 SDs are significant at the p<.05 level.

Table 5.6(f) Differences between Labour and Conservative MPs who have spent more than nine years in Parliament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name. Probability ratings are also asterisked.</th>
<th>Lower mean score on measure</th>
<th>Interval (SD units) between mean scores</th>
<th>Higher mean score on measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con-Lib ***</td>
<td>Con (-2.31)</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>Lab (.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conv-Rel **</td>
<td>Con (-8.13)</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>Lab (-7.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution-risk ***</td>
<td>Con (1.88)</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>Lab (3.36)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation ***</td>
<td>Con (-1.48)</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>Lab (.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiv-Collect</td>
<td>Con (-.28)</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>Lab (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociation</td>
<td>Con (11.77)</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>Lab (12.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression *</td>
<td>Lab (9.50)</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>Con (1.32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Probability ratings calculated by two tailed T-test

*** Intervals greater than .39 SDs are significant at the p<.01 level.
** Intervals greater than .36 SDs are significant at the p<.02 level.
* Intervals greater than .29 SDs are significant at the p<.05 level.

Table 5.6(g) shows that more experienced Labour MPs are more ‘conservative’ than their less experienced colleagues. The interval, which is significant at the p<.01 level, is considerably larger than that which divides older from younger Labour MPs. Perhaps, therefore, the accumulation of parliamentary experience is a more
significant factor than increasing age in influencing Labour MPs to become more conservative. This certainly provides food for thought. However, Conservative MPs do not exhibit this pattern. Table 5.6(d) has shown that age does not seem to influence their level of conservatism. And it may now be inferred very tentatively from table 5.6(g) that the accumulation of parliamentary experience could even have some marginal significance in influencing them to become more liberal, or at least to resist the general tendency for conservatism to intensify over the life cycle.

This finding begins to hint at a process of political socialisation or acculturation whereby Labour and Conservative MPs converge on the conservatism-liberalism continuum as they accumulate parliamentary experience. However, conservatism-liberalism is certainly not the only personality variable which invites such speculation. Table 5.6(g) suggests that Labour MPs may become less liberal (p<.01) and less relativistic (to a statistically insignificant extent) and less aggressive (p<.05) as they accumulate parliamentary experience. Conservative MPs display exactly the opposite tendencies, maybe becoming more liberal (to a statistically insignificant extent) and more relativistic (p<.05) and more aggressive (p<.01) as they accumulate parliamentary experience. However, to qualify this slightly, Labour and Conservative scores do not actually ‘converge’ on the aggression scale as they do on the conservatism-liberalism and conviction-relativism scales. Rather, conservative mean scores rise as Labour mean scores fall to create a Conservative elevation which is significant at p<.05.

The contents of the above tables also support the possibility that MPs of the two parties diverge on certain traits as they accumulate experience. Labour MPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Δ Labour mean scores (as experience increases).</th>
<th>Probability ratings are asterisked</th>
<th>Δ Conservative mean scores (as experience increases).</th>
<th>Probability ratings are asterisked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con-Lib</td>
<td>down by .38 SDs***</td>
<td>Probability ratings are asterisked</td>
<td>up by .19 SDs</td>
<td>Probability ratings are asterisked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conv-Rel</td>
<td>down by .11 SDs</td>
<td></td>
<td>up by .36 SDs*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution-risk</td>
<td>up by .24 SDs*</td>
<td></td>
<td>down by .23 SDs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>up by .29 SDs**</td>
<td></td>
<td>down by .68 SDs***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiv-Collect</td>
<td>down by .10 SDs</td>
<td></td>
<td>down by .22 SDs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociation</td>
<td>down by .01 SDs</td>
<td></td>
<td>down by .37 SDs*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>down by .26 SDs*</td>
<td></td>
<td>up by .49 SDs***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Probability ratings calculated by two tailed T-test

Labour MPs:

- *** Intervals greater than .30 SDs are significant at the p<.01 level.
- ** Intervals greater than .28 SDs are significant at the p<.02 level.
- * Intervals greater than .23 SDs are significant at the p<.05 level.

Conservative MPs:

- *** Intervals greater than .42 SDs are significant at the p<.01 level.
- ** Intervals greater than .38 SDs are significant at the p<.02 level.
- * Intervals greater than .31 SDs are significant at the p<.05 level.
Testing Pareto's Theory

appear to become more innovative (p<.02) and more positively disposed towards risk (p<.05). Conservative MPs display exactly the opposite tendencies. They seem to become less innovative (p<.01) and less positively disposed towards risk (to a statistically insignificant degree). These widening gaps might plausibly be interpreted as corresponding to axes along which MPs slowly accommodate themselves to the very different orientations towards risk and innovation which mark out the social personalities of their respective Parliamentary parties.

In conclusion, we can say that convergence between Labour and Conservative MPs on conservatism-liberalism, together with divergence on caution-risk and convention-innovation, may plausibly stand for real processes of political socialisation or acculturation to parliamentary life for the following reasons. Convergence between the parties on conservatism-liberalism is likely to count as such because it is more closely related to duration of parliamentary experience than to age. Divergence between the parties on caution-risk with increasing duration of parliamentary experience is also very plausibly a reflection of political socialisation as this would explain why Labour MPs should buck the trend for both Labour and Conservative mean scores to decline with age. This is also true for divergence between the parties on convention-innovation because we can see that this trend is very strongly related to duration of parliamentary experience whilst being completely unrelated to age. Of course, strictly speaking, the above evidence merely shows that more experienced Labour MPs are more ‘conservative’ and more positively oriented towards risk and innovation than their less experienced colleagues, and that more experienced Conservative MPs are more ‘liberal’ and more negatively oriented towards risk and innovation than their less experienced colleagues. To interpret these differences as convergence and divergence effects, rather than simply as indicators of differences between generational cohorts is to make ambitious inferences which this thesis will leave as useful hypotheses which deserve fuller investigation.

Finally, one trend common to both parties deserves special attention here, because it supports the hypothesis that prolonged role-playing by politicians might conceivably produce higher levels of identity confusion amongst MPs. Firstly, levels of dissociative experience clearly drop with increasing age by significant amounts for both subpopulations (a fall of .63 SDs (p<.01) appears for the Conservatives and a fall of .29SDs (p<.02) appears for Labour). Yet levels of dissociative experience drop to reduced extents with the accumulation of parliamentary experience (a fall of only .37 SDs (p<.05) appears for the Conservatives and a fall of only .01 SDs appears for Labour). This pattern may be intriguing, especially as it is common to both parties, yet on its own it constitutes flimsy evidence in support of the hypothesis that aspects of parliamentary experience somehow influence both Labour and Conservative MPs to resist the general tendency for older MPs to report fewer dissociative experiences.

Fortunately, more substantial evidence is at hand. It is not just the dissociative experience variable that exhibits this pattern for both Labour and Conservative subpopulations. The aggression variable shows it too. Scores on the aggression scale dip by .23 SDs with age (a statistically insignificant amount) for the Conservatives, and yet they increase by .49SDs (p<.01) with accumulating political experience. Scores on the aggression scale dip by .47 SDs (p<.01) with age for Labour, yet
they fall by only .26 SDs (p<.05) with accumulating political experience. Hence findings show that the cohorts of veteran Labour and Conservative MPs who have served in Parliament for more than nine years retain relatively buoyant scores on both dissociative experience and aggressiveness, compared with the scores of their less experienced colleagues, even though the groups of older Labour and Conservative MPs both have much lower scores on these variables than their younger counterparts.

This link between dissociative experience and aggressiveness might well have been anticipated in view of the preceding discussion of the dissociative experience construct, where correlations with ‘angry hostility’ and ‘vulnerability’ were mentioned. What was more interesting was the fact that scores on aggressiveness were not substantially lower for more experienced MPs, as they were for older MPs. Hence it will be concluded that this pattern might conceivably represent a tendency for political role-playing, or perhaps other aspects of political experience, to inhibit the slow development of the adult personality towards that state of integration which Jung labelled ‘individuation’ and Erikson labelled ‘ego integrity’. A more certain conclusion is that this finding at least lends some narrow support to Pareto’s theory relating Machiavellian personality to the membership of political elites.

5.7 Seniority within Parliament

The next question was whether any of the above patterns related to the accumulation of political experience might appear more saliently when the variable tapping high level political experience was controlled. Subpopulations were now split between those who had risen no higher than PPS or Whip, and those who had managed to become junior or senior (shadow) ministers. Mean scores were run for both subpopulations. Ns were around 60 and 17 for the Labour subpopulation and around 21 and 19 for the Conservative subpopulation. Resulting differences between mean scores moving from MPs with only low level political experience to those with high level political experience are as follows:

These findings amplify only one trend which appeared to be linked more closely to parliamentary experience than to increasing age. However, the trend in question is also perhaps the most intriguing of those to have been highlighted in the last section. It is the one whereby levels of dissociative experience and aggression remain buoyant among veteran MPs even though they decline more steeply with age. These trends are not now accentuated by any great amounts, yet mean scores hold up better on both variables and for both Labour and Conservative subpopulations. Hence it seems that the tendency for levels of dissociative experience and aggression not to decline with increasing age amongst veteran MPs of both parties might best be explained not just with reference to political experience in general but rather with reference to high level political experience in particular. Remembering once more that dissociative experience and aggression can both be counted as elements of Machiavellianism-psychopathy, it may be concluded that this surprising finding of a relationship between these two variables and level of eliteness within both the Labour and Conservative Parliamentary Parties constitutes a partial upholding of Pareto’s notion.
that Machiavellian personality is likely to be distributed more towards the centres of power than towards the peripheries of the mainstream political parties. These findings suggested it would be interesting to check more thoroughly for personality correlates of the seniority variable, to test Pareto’s belief that foxes thrive within higher elite strata. A series of three factor analyses inputted the seniority variable alongside the ten personality variables. The first of these was run for all cases. The second was run for Labour MPs, and the third was run for Conservative MPs.

The matrix run for all MPs consisted of four factor domains with eigenvalues above one. The seniority variable failed to make any impact upon the first three domains, yet it dominated the fourth domain with a very strong loading (.84). The only other variable to appear with a significant loading was one of the Machiavellian variables, the political aloofness scale (.49). However, this fourth factor domain had a low eigenvalue (1.2) and was only able to explain around 11% of the total variance. Interestingly, the matrix run for the Labour subpopulation also revealed a link between seniority and the political aloofness scale. The second largest of five significant factor domains was the only one to include the political aloofness variable with a significant loading. This domain had an eigenvalue of 1.5 and accounted for 13.8% of the variance, indicating that its contents were worth investigating. Here, political aloofness (.81) combined with caution-risk (.65), conviction-relativism (-.49) and political seniority (.31) to suggest that Labour MPs who experience that kind of alienation tapped by the political aloofness scale are more likely to harbour
positive orientations towards risk, to hold firm convictions, and to have obtained more senior positions within the Parliamentary Labour Party. If only ideological relativism, and not firm ideological conviction, had combined with these other variables, it would have been very tempting to read this as a ‘Machiavellianism’ factor. However, findings for Labour MPs did at least flag up a slender, partial truth in Pareto’s link between Machiavellianism and level of political seniority obtained, by suggesting that Labour MPs who hold (or have held) senior positions will, just like Machiavellians, be more likely to experience mild feelings of distrust and disenchantment, and will tend to be more positively oriented towards risk.

It may be tempting to speculate that this finding simply reflected the mood of the Labour subpopulation at the time of the study. However, evidence suggesting it may correspond to an enduring structural link between personality and parliamentary seniority was provided by the fact that Conservative MPs displayed very similar tendencies. The factor matrix run for the Conservative subpopulation produced four domains with eigenvalues above one. The second of these had an eigenvalue of 2.2 and explained 20% of the total variance. Echoing very closely the content of the second factor domain which appeared for the Labour subpopulation, a three variable cluster involving an alignment of political aloofness (0.72), caution-risk (0.51) and the seniority variable (0.26) appeared within this domain. Certainly, the seniority variable appeared with a weak loading. Yet its clustering with political aloofness and caution-risk was itself significant. It could now be concluded, tentatively of course, that relatively aloof, distrustful individuals who harbour preferences for political risk, have tended to obtain more senior positions within both the Labour and Conservative parliamentary parties.

However, this does not tell the whole story. Within this second factor domain which appeared for the Conservatives, a broader range of variables appeared with heavy weightings. These were conviction-relativism (.82) and conservatism-liberalism (.73). External locus of control appeared with a more modest weighting (.38). The fact that both ideological relativism and external locus of control loaded onto this domain meant that this could well amount to a ‘Machiavellianism’ factor, perhaps highlighting a particular type of politician who, although certainly not the most prevalent type within the party hierarchy, is still well represented. More fully, it could be argued that all personality measures loading onto this domain suggested aspects of non-pathological Machiavellianism-psychopathy. It is worth taking stock of how this conclusion emerged from each of these loadings:

(1) the loading for political aloofness hints at the Machiavellian-psychopath’s anomic disenchantment and distrust in human nature, and perhaps also narcissistic anxiety in relation to power wielded by others;
(2) The conviction-relativism loading signals the Machiavellian-psychopath’s hallmark encounter blindness and lack of affect;
(3) The conservatism-liberalism loading may be construed as reflecting this type’s low superego strength and corresponding detachment from traditional social and moral norms. Furthermore, this delivers us that psychological liberalism which make’s Pareto’s Machiavellian type so distinctive);
(4) The caution-risk loading reveals positive orientations towards risk which are known to distinguish Machiavellians and which could, more speculatively,
reflect that impulsive mode of instinctual discharge which we associate with psychopathy and psychoticism;

(5) To cap it all, the presence of external locus of control may well reflect the Machiavellian-psychopath’s belief in a chaotic, unpredictable and uncontrollable environment; a view of the ‘world as a jungle’ where manipulation is necessary if one is to survive and prosper, as we might relate once more to the narcissistic fear of power.

Further evidence linked this phenomenon to a richer pattern within the Parliamentary Conservative Party. The r-matrix run for the Conservative subpopulation revealed a strong positive correlation \( r = .52, p = .001 \) between social class origin and conviction-relativism. Correlations between class and conservatism-liberalism, and between class and caution-risk were weaker \( (r = .22, p = .161; r = .27, p = .087) \) but nonetheless perceptible within this small subpopulation. A considerably weaker correlation \( (r = .17, p = .282) \) also related class to political aloofness. These links between higher class origin and increased liberalism, tolerance of risk, aloofness and (most saliently) ideological relativism, were not reflected in the r-matrix run for Labour MPs. They afford a fascinating insight into the relationship between social class origin and personality within the Parliamentary Conservative Party, by suggesting a distinct political type who possesses several Machiavellian traits and who also tends to be of higher class origin, and, by the same token, a type of MP from lower or middle class backgrounds who possesses a range of conservative (and perhaps compulsive) traits. It is important to mind, however, that this distinction only related faintly to differing levels of parliamentary seniority. What findings did not indicate, to be clear, is a direct relationship between class origin and level of seniority within the Parliamentary Conservative Party. Political seniority and class origin did not correlate at all \( (r = -.02) \) for this subpopulation.

No firm conclusions can be drawn from these Machiavellian patterns displayed by the Conservative subpopulation, but they can at least inspire further theorising. An interesting question is to ask why individuals with Machiavellian-psychopathic leanings from upper class backgrounds, and compulsives from lower or middle class backgrounds, should separately seek political careers in the Conservative Party. It is well known that Machiavellians are power hungry, and that they will therefore be drawn to powerful institutions. We also know, particularly in the light of dark triad research which connects Machiavellianism, psychopathy and narcissism, that they often project charisma, gathering admiring followers around them so they may satisfy narcissistic needs. It therefore makes good sense to suppose that such individuals will often be drawn, not just to political institutions which grant access to positions of power, but also to institutions replete with followers who are likely to defer to strong and charismatic leaders. The particular appeal of the Conservative Party for such individuals may well be that it meets both criteria splendidly, as it has held office for most of the twentieth century, and it is set apart by its cult of loyalty and deference. Although these factors might pertain to individuals with Machiavellian leanings from all class backgrounds, it is likely that they will pertain to individuals from upper class backgrounds in particular, given that such backgrounds are likely to create advantages for winning power and prestige in the Conservative Party.
Grounds for regarding individuals from lower or middle class backgrounds to gravitate towards Conservative Party politics when they possess the very different personality structure of the compulsive are as follows. Compulsives possess traits spanning conformity, submissiveness, dependence and pliability, which can all plausibly be explained in terms of some combination of low self esteem and harsh parental discipline during early childhood. Psychoanalytically speaking, we might think here of the compulsive’s experience of forced compliance to parental authority during the anal phase, and of their conditioned reliance upon the defensive strategy of ‘identifying with aggressors’ which originates during the phallic phase. Compulsives may also submit to external authority because, as a source of moral proscription, it assists the superego to keep the contents of the id at bay, which helps them manage those conflicts which dominate their inner lives (hence the familiar conservative argument that individuals need institutions to ‘save them from themselves’). Finally, the last chapter has explained why compulsives should be drawn to strong, charismatic leaders. It was argued there that fear, paranoia and anti-intracception combine within compulsives to create attractions to political leaders who display a gritty determination to ‘get things done’. Of course, these arguments can be used to explain why compulsives from all class backgrounds should feel the lure of Conservative Party Politics. However, it can be argued that they are most readily applicable to compulsives from lower or petit bourgeois class backgrounds because from these class perspectives followers are often separated from their leaders by expanses of social distance which permit leadership to be contemplated as something magical and exotic. Social distance permits this because it ensures leadership is not experienced as a part of mundane reality; hence feelings of envy and jealousy, which are well know to pass most intensely between those of similar social status, are kept at bay. This helps qualify political leaders as suitable objects onto which the superego can be projected.

What the above arguments suggest, then, is that whilst upper class Machiavellian individuals might often be drawn to Conservative Party politics as a practical means to allow them to satisfy what might be termed their psychic needs of leadership, the lower class compulsive route to Conservative Party politics might often be bound up with what we might term the very different psychic needs of followership. The failure of previous commentators to take account of this distinction would certainly explain why they should typically have found the business of describing the social personality (or rather the ‘central tradition’) of the Conservative Party so problematic. The problem is summed up by Anthony Seldon:

The Tories have often been seen as a party of consistent ideology and as defenders of core principles and interests. I am never convinced by this argument. What is remarkable about the Conservatives is not their ideological or interest tenacity but their willingness to jettison positions which no longer appeal: laissez faire, the House of Lords, the Union with all Ireland, the empire, have all been abandoned when it suited the party, as to some extent have been the monarchy, the Church of England and the agricultural interest (Seldon 1996, 18).

What the above analysis of findings provides, then, is a tentative means to unconfound the two views of conservatism which commentators have struggled with. We
should perhaps distinguish more between the ‘two conservatisms’ of conservative leadership and conservative followership, giving particular thought to how these interact through changing times. With this thought it is interesting to recall Pareto’s belief, lifted from Machiavelli, that political institutions which manage to find a stable balance between their ‘lions’ and their ‘foxes’ will prove far more flexible in negotiating new situations than institutions which err towards either extreme.

5.8 Do Findings Support Pareto’s Model of Personality?

The following factor matrix was run for all MPs using only the ten personality measures as input variables.

Table 5.8(a) Factor analysis of personality variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism-liberalism</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution-Risk</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conviction-Relativism</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Aloofness</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>-.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissociative Experience</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invididualism-Collectivism</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-E Locus of Control</td>
<td>-.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Component Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.8.1 Introduction

The following discussion will explore these factor domains, taking account of whether variables which load together also correlate within the r-matrix. This method of cross-referencing between factor and cor relational matrices was selected
as a means to arrive at an overview of how variables align within broad personality configurations. This exercise, it was hoped, would highlight the extent to which psychological diversity within Parliament was patterned as Pareto’s model would predict, irrespective of party political affiliation.

First of all, section 5.8.2 looks at factors 2(a) and 3(a) which both involve variance in psychological conservatism-liberalism. Section 5.8.3 then looks at factor 1(a), which seems for the most part to involve variance in individualism-collectivism but which might also be interpreted as a kind of ‘postmaterialism’ factor. Following that, section 5.8.4 explores factor 4(a) which brings together three indicators of Machiavellianism: dissociative experience, aggression and political aloofness. Section 5.8.5 explores the inter-relatedness of these clusters. Section 5.8.6 then considers the extent to which patterns reflect demographic variation.

5.8.2 Conservatism-Liberalism

Factor domains 2(a) and 3(a) clarify that conservatism-liberalism is involved in two distinct factor clusters. The more significant of these links it to caution-risk and political aloofness. The other links it to social anxiety and conviction-relativism. When we consider each cluster separately, we find that their constituent variables intercorrelate by Pearson $r$. Political aloofness correlates significantly with both conservatism-liberalism ($r=.17$, $p=.041$) and caution-risk ($r=.17$, $p=.044$), whilst caution-risk correlates highly with conservatism-liberalism ($r=.36$, $p=.000$). Evidently, therefore, these traits combine frequently in MPs. We may therefore consider Pareto’s model upheld in the limited sense that MPs who are relatively liberal and tolerant of risk will also be more likely to possess that component of the Machiavellian syndrome which is tapped by the political aloofness scale. Conviction-relativism correlates weakly with social anxiety ($r=.13$, $p=.121$) and strongly with conservatism-liberalism ($r=.36$, $p=.000$) whilst social anxiety also correlates weakly with conservatism-liberalism ($r=.15$, $p=.077$). Hence this second trait cluster would appear to occur less frequently amongst MPs. Nonetheless we may conclude that MPs who are relatively liberal and prone to social anxiety will also tend to possess that component of the Machiavellian syndrome which is tapped by the conviction-relativism scale. Further examination of the $r$ matrix revealed that the constituent variables of these two clusters were completely unrelated to one another, other than the fact that both involved variance in conservatism-liberalism. In other words, conservatism-liberalism clustered either with political aloofness and caution-risk or with conviction-relativism and social anxiety. In summary, then, psychological liberalism appears from this evidence to be linked to two distinct trait clusters wherein at least some elements of Machiavellianism-Psychopathy are represented.

5.8.3 Individualism-Collectivism

Factor domain 1(a) highlighted an even stronger variable cluster, with innovativeness loading alongside collectivism and internal locus of control. This domain immediately seemed to invite a range of complementary interpretations. From a psychoanalytic interpretation, it could stand for the ‘strong’, ‘open’ or ‘tolerant’ ego.
From a humanist standpoint, it might count as a self-actualisation domain, and from a postmaterialist perspective, conceived with or without humanist assumptions, it might even make sense as a domain which distinguishes between people upon the basis of whether they have enjoyed formative security during their early years. The variables intercorrelated as follows. Innovativeness correlated convincingly ($r=\cdot30$, $p=\cdot000$) with individualism-collectivism, although barely ($r=-\cdot10$, $p=\cdot227$) with locus of control. There was, however, a substantial correlation ($r=-\cdot29$, $p=\cdot001$) between individualism-collectivism and locus of control. It could therefore be concluded that collectivists appear moderately inclined 

**either** towards internal locus of control **or** towards innovativeness, with both inclinations combining occasionally in collectivistic individuals.

### 5.8.4 Dissociation, Aggression and Aloofness

Factor domain 4(a) suggested that MPs who report higher levels of dissociative experience will also harbour stronger feelings of aggression. Of course, we have visited this binary cluster before, as it appears amplified within veteran Labour and Conservative MPs. However, it is particularly interesting that it should appear once more in factor analysis, this time accompanied by the political aloofness variable which taps distrust and detachment. A bold explanation would be that this factor domain stands for a Machiavellian-psychopathic type; perhaps a ‘hard-charging’ narcissistic or hypomanic MP who excels at role-playing, distrusts party colleagues and feels aloof from the cut and thrust of party politics. Given its low eigenvalue, it seemed reasonable to regard this personality configuration as relatively uncommon amongst MPs. Interestingly though, the correlation between dissociative experience and aggression in the $r$ matrix was significant ($r=\cdot27$, $p=\cdot001$), as was that between aggression and political aloofness ($r=\cdot19$, $p=\cdot020$). Only dissociative experience and political aloofness failed to correlate, indicating that aggressiveness will tend to combine 

**either** with dissociative experience **or** with political aloofness.

### 5.8.5 Do these Clusters form Broader Personality Configurations?

A check was made for how variables forming the aggression-dissociation-aloofness cluster in factor domain 4(a) correlated with other variables. The results were very straightforward. The three variables each correlated in different ways with the remaining personality variables, thus suggesting no links to broader configurations.

As factor domain 2(a) clearly involved conservatism-liberalism and factor domain 1(a) involved innovativeness and perhaps self-actualisation or freedom from the harsh superego, it was unsurprising that the $r$-matrix should now reveal links between variables loading onto these domains. Firstly, conservatism-liberalism correlated weakly with individualism-collectivism ($r=\cdot16$, $p=\cdot055$), locus of control ($r=-\cdot18$, $p=\cdot034$) and innovativeness ($r=\cdot17$, $p=\cdot038$). This highlighted a general contrast between (on the one hand) psychologically conservative individuals who incline towards external locus of control, individualism and low levels of innovativeness, and (on the other hand) psychologically liberal individuals who incline more towards internal locus of control, collectivism and higher levels of innovativeness.
findings appeared upon investigation of whether the correlates of individualism-collectivism achieved correlations with the correlates of conservatism-liberalism. Firstly, individualism-collectivism was found to be unrelated to caution-risk and political aloofness. Innovativeness correlated weakly ($r=.14$, $p=.082$) with caution-risk but not at all with political aloofness. Locus of control failed to correlate with caution-risk and only correlated very faintly ($r=.13$, $p=.117$) with political aloofness.

In conclusion, therefore, the resonances between these two clusters were weaker than might have been anticipated, especially given the link between liberalism, innovation and postmaterialism revealed by the student study. In particular, it was surprising that the correlation between conservatism-liberalism and caution-risk was not stronger, given that the longer versions of these scales correlated at $r=.37$ in the student study. The correlation between political aloofness and external locus of control was also fainter than anticipated, given the earlier hypothesis that these variables are likely to be closely related. In the final analysis, however, findings still justified a general contrast between conservative and liberal individuals which pulls together variance in conservatism-liberalism, locus of control, individualism-collectivism and innovativeness, to form a single multi-trait continuum.

Next we can consider resonances between the individualism-collectivism cluster and the cluster which brings conservatism-liberalism together with conviction-relativism and social anxiety. It has already been established above that individualism-collectivism correlated weakly with conservatism-liberalism ($r=.16$, $p=.055$). It may now be added that individualism-collectivism correlated similarly ($r=.15$, $p=.086$) with conviction-relativism, but not at all with social anxiety. To complete the picture, locus of control correlated with conservatism-liberalism ($r=-.18$, $p=.034$), but not with conviction-relativism or social anxiety. The innovativeness variable also correlated weakly with conservatism-liberalism but not with conviction relativism or social anxiety.

Hence the strongest finding was that collectivism and innovativeness cluster loosely with liberalism and relativism, thereby striking a contrast between the conservative who inclines towards individualism, firm ideological conviction and low levels of innovativeness, and the liberal who inclines towards collectivism, ideological relativism and high levels of innovativeness. This link between psychological conservatism and individualism should not be overstated, particularly in view of the fact that when we look back at the intervals between the parties on the individualism-collectivism measure, we see only statistically insignificant links between political conservatism and individualism. Nonetheless, the fact that such links should have appeared at all may seem both intriguing and counterintuitive. What’s more, this ‘conservative individualism’, which the earlier contrast between conservative and liberal forms of individualism has already addressed to some extent, has importance for the purposes of this book because it alerts us to senses in which Pareto was wrong to lump together conservatism (his class II ‘persistence of aggregates’ residues) with collectivism (his class IV residues of sociality). Pareto’s decision may seem surprising in view of Charles Powers’ observation that Pareto himself displayed that curious combination of being traditionally conservative and yet fiercely defensive of individual liberty (Powers 1987, 19). Hence we will now explore this combination further.
One way to theorise conservative individualism is as a gestalt within conservative personality. That a person who is likely to conform and submit to authority, to look both to religion and to the past for collective social and moral codes, and then apply an unusually harsh conscience to the policing of these codes, should be, in any sense, an ‘individualist’, does at the very least suggest tensions will appear between that person’s collectivist and individualist trains of thought. Hence we must understand the phenomenon taking account of all its attendant psychic tensions and attitudinal contradictions. Here it becomes important to remember the psychoanalytic argument that compulsives do not eradicate their conflicts, they merely repress them. The struggle between the collectivist and the individualist within the mind of the conservative may thus be regarded, to some extent at least, as one where the early anti-authority conflicts, which persist throughout adulthood in repressed form, will strain towards sublimated release and may often find expression within individualist ideology. To return to the findings of the MP study, we might therefore speculate that the phenomenon of conservative individualism will be difficult to capture within psychometric studies, because a good deal of ambivalence and dissonance will underlie its very malleable and diverse articulations. Moreover, at the time of the MP study, the Conservative Party was barely one year on from serious election defeat and had been thrown into confusion over the continuing role of Thatcherite individualism within the party. The Conservative MPs who responded to the survey would therefore have had considerable latitude to reduce dissonance by harmonising their minds along either collectivist or individualist lines.

If we are to regard the conservative individualism suggested by the MP study as partly reflecting conservatism’s transformation following the breakdown of the post-war economic consensus, then it helps to consider Shirley Letwin’s (1992) view of Thatcherism as a project of national renewal based upon an unleashing of the ‘vigorous virtues’ of independent-mindedness and energetic pursuit of self sufficiency. Letwin argued that although the aims of the Thatcher project were hard to discern as they were never clearly articulated, they did at least include the promotion of these qualities in a direct challenge to what Conservatives saw as the dependency culture. This new commitment to individualism represented an essential psychological corollary to the monetarist experiment of the early 1980s, because the Thatcher government hoped desperately whilst monetarism was teetering on the brink of fiscal failure that these virtues would re-awaken under low tax conditions to energise economic recovery.

We may understand conservative individualism thus, and yet still argue that it represents much more than a passing ideological contortion of conservative thought. Industriousness, at least in so far as this is reflected in the level of importance which individuals attribute to their work, is now a well established psychometric construct, following the development of scales to measure the beliefs and values of the ‘protestant work ethic’ (PWE) (e.g. Mirels and Garrett 1971). Mudrack (1997, 217) describes this construct as fundamentally involving the extent ‘to which people place work at or near the centre of their lives’. It derives originally from Max Weber’s writings (Weber 2002) on the role of the protestant ethic as a driver for early capitalist entrepreneurship. Jones (1997) points out that Weber’s writings on PWE suggest a psychological process which begins with a confluence of religious faith and personal asceticism, leading
onwards to a particular set of values (or ‘virtues’) which those with protestant work ethic feel they must commit to, if they are to achieve material success. Importantly, this material success was not regarded by Weber as an end in itself, but rather as an indicator of God’s blessing. More specifically, Weber regarded a record of successful commitment to the specific values of hard work, use of time, thrift, innovation and honesty, as helping early capitalist entrepreneurs quell anxieties that they may not be counted among God’s elect. Weber also believed, however, that the protestant ethic may persist as a powerful motivator in secularised form.

Jones argues that recent psychometric developments of Weber’s construct attest to its psychological insight. For example, Furnham (1990) investigated seven measures of PWE in order to explore its dimensional structure. He found five. These included a veneration for, and willingness to undertake, hard work; religion and morality; and independence from others. The two remaining dimensions were conspicuously anti-hedonistic: asceticism and the disdain for leisure.

A close relationship between PWE and conservatism has long been noted in both theory and empirical research. For example, Atieh et al. (1986) correlated the Mirels-Garrett PWE Scale with Glenn Wilson’s C-Scale at .22 in a US student sample. More recently, Christopher and Mull (2006) reported a very high correlation of .56 between PWE and Robert Altemeyer’s right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) scale in two towns in the Midwestern United States. It should be acknowledged, however, that Jones’ (1997) consideration of the empirical literature on PWE for its correspondence with Weber’s original construct presents us with mixed implications for whether we should stress links between PWE and conservatism-RWA. For one thing, Jones observes that links between PWE and creative innovation, which Weber emphasised, have not found support within the more recent empirical literature. Given the above links between PWE and conservatism-RWA, this should perhaps not surprise us. What is perhaps surprising, however, is that Jones cites a variety of studies linking PWE to internal locus of control, and indeed further studies linking PWE to beliefs in a just world. Such findings suggest a highly problematic relationship between PWE and the authoritarian worldview in particular. Nonetheless, we may conclude that findings reveal PWE as a construct which deserves to be linked to those ‘vigorous virtues’ which Letwin placed at the heart of Thatcherism. It also serves us well as a theoretical framework for understanding the conservative individualism glimpsed within the MP study.

Yet even this does not exhaust the list of potential explanations. Little’s (1998) discussion of Mrs Thatcher’s ‘strong leadership’ style provides further insight into the psychological underpinning for the Thatcher brand of individualism. He quotes from a particular speech which Mrs Thatcher made in Chicago in 1975, which used the Atlantic convoys of the Second World to illustrate the importance of individual autonomy and responsibility as a basis for successful human interdependency:

During that period the convoy was a feature of our daily lives in Europe, and it seems to me to provide an excellent illustration of inter-dependence in practice. Each individual ship has a purpose – to get to its destination – which it can best achieve only in concerted action. Yet each ship can only play its part if it is in good working order and keeping a certain distance from its neighbour. This is the strength of the convoy (quoted from Little 1988, 65).
This perspective very notably evokes that heightened apprehension of threat which we find in paranoia and neurotic anxiety, and which we recognise as an important feature of the conservative mindset when we return once more to the view of conservatism as a crisis or threat orientation.

We might therefore regard conservative individualism as emerging from deep within the conservative psyche, and yet as something which may manifest itself at times within any political party, depending upon levels of social threat within society. However, perhaps the potential for conservative individualism to vary with level of social threat, combined with its status as a gestalt characterised by conflicts likely to provoke attitudinal dissonance, explains why commentators have drawn attention to it as a phenomenon which Conservative political leaders have either emphasised, or played down, in their strategic decisions. Writing in 1974, the archetypal Tory journalist Peter Utley echoed Lord Hailsham’s point that ‘the Conservative Party is at times a party of authority and at times a party of freedom’. Utley therefore proposed a set of maxims which party leaders might use to choose which course to steer. These stressed that the ‘public good’ should be viewed as an aggregate of individual and family interests, that individual industriousness in pursuit of these things is required, and that the most important function of the state is to protect the family by securing private property and inheritance rights (Utley in Moore and Heffer (ed.) 1989, 54–58). By representing individual industriousness and responsibility as prerequisites for liberty, and by representing conservative individualism less as individual selfishness and more as a concentration of altruism within the family unit, Utley’s maxims capture key elements of conservative individualism well, and it is certainly interesting to consider these as providing a framework for the outward harmonisation of what is essentially an ongoing conflict within the conservative mind.

5.8.6 Demographic Analysis

The following factor matrix shows personality variables loading alongside demographic variables. This helped shed light upon the extent to which demographic variation contributed to the personality patterns revealed by the MP study.

Factor domain 6(b) shows higher class origin combining with greater aloofness and reduced social anxiety. This was explained previously as very much a Conservative phenomenon. Notably, the class variable failed to make significant correlations in the r-matrix run for all cases.

Factor domain 5(b) alerts us to something new. It links female gender to low innovativeness and high levels of social anxiety. Moreover, domain 2(b) links female gender to collectivism and internal locus of control. Cross referencing between these domains, it seemed that female respondents, the overwhelming majority of whom were Labour MPs, were more collectivistic, less innovative and more inclined towards internal locus of control than their male colleagues.

A growing literature has speculated upon whether increased female representation within Westminster and other assemblies can create ‘critical masses’ of female presence with the potential to change political culture (e.g. Norris and Lovenduski 2001). Some regarded the 1997 general election as a milestone event because it saw
numbers of women MPs double from the previous general election to reach 120, thus raising hopes of a ‘feminised transformation’ of Parliament (Childs 2001). Findings might be interpreted very tentatively as highlighting axes of cultural change within the Parliamentary Labour Party following this new influx. If table 5.6(a) had been based upon differences between male MPs only, it would have shown Labour scores marginally lower and closer to Conservative scores on individualism-collectivism. It would also show Labour MPs as having higher scores on innovativeness (thus widening the gap with Conservative scores). To be clear, these gender differences within the Parliamentary Labour Party are statistically significant at the p<.01 level. Male Labour MPs outscore female Labour MPs on innovativeness by .31 SDs.

Table 5.8(b) Factor analysis of all variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1(b)</th>
<th>2(b)</th>
<th>3(b)</th>
<th>4(b)</th>
<th>5(b)</th>
<th>6(b)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Con-Lib</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caution-risk</td>
<td></td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>- .36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conv-Rel</td>
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<td>.49</td>
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<td>.41</td>
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<td>Aloofness</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.30</td>
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<td>.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
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<td>.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td></td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>- .45</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Dissociation</td>
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<td>.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiv-Collect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loc Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
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<td>Years as MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seniority</td>
<td>.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Female Gender</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.61</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Origin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>.74</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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Female Labour MPs outscore male Labour MPs on collectivism by .39 SDs. Hence these intervals may well correspond to real gender differences. If these findings are to be regarded as influencing the social personality of the Parliamentary Labour Party, then it is worth noting that the possibility of an intensified collectivism seems congruent with the theory that feminised cultural transformation can result from increased female representation. The possibility of an intensified collectivism in combination with lower innovativeness should perhaps however be considered for its consistency with the literature (e.g. Cowley and Childs 2001) which has described ‘Blair’s babes’ as less rebellious than their male colleagues.

Moving on, factor domain 3(b) shows conservatism-liberalism and several related variables loading together in the absence of any demographic variables which might have helped explain their clustering. The r matrix does however show that conservatism-liberalism is affected by demographics to at least some extent. Its moderate negative correlation (r=−.32, p=.000) between conservatism-liberalism and duration of parliamentary experience reflects the heavy weighting of experienced MPs within the Conservative subpopulation. However, no other personality correlate of conservatism-liberalism came close to making a significant correlation with this demographic variable. Furthermore, it is worth remembering that when Labour and Conservative subpopulations were split so that only cases from each subpopulation whose years of parliamentary experience fell within narrower ranges were compared, Labour elevations remained on conservatism-liberalism, conviction-relativism and caution-risk in both cases. Hence parliamentary diversity on these variables seemed to correspond to real psychological differences.

5.9 Final Conclusion

The student study confirmed truths which have become embedded within the psychological literature over decades, appearing earlier not just within Pareto’s sociology but also within the intuitions of political commentators dating back centuries. Relatively speaking, conservatives tend to be risk-averse and poorly endowed with creative ability; liberals tend to have stronger appetites for risk and are more creative. Many people are unaware of these trends. Hence there is value in stressing them once more in this book. The student study also found solid links between liberal personality and postmaterialist value orientation. Such links are to some extent intuitively obvious, yet they have been largely neglected by sociologists and psychologists. The insight which they provide into how postmaterialist values connect with personality configurations is interesting for various reasons, not least because these connections might usefully be explored further within a Paretian sociological framework. The very idea that the postmaterialist literature can be read for its consistency with Pareto’s view of slow cultural change, between the two poles of conservative austerity and liberal humanitarianism, is a fascinating one with the potential to inspire much further hypothesis building.

The student study did however fail to find broad or deep links between liberal personality and traits which we might consider for their relatedness to the so-called ‘dark triad’ of Machiavellianism-Psychopathy-Narcissism. It appeared at that point
that Pareto’s personality theory might best be confined within its original context, as something which helped him make sense of his personal experiences of business and politics as Italy modernised during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

It seemed, more fully, that Pareto was probably misguided, both to assume that Machiavelli’s lion-fox typology held timeless significance as encapsulating patterns of variation within enduring human nature, and to grant this typology its pivotal role within his ambitious general sociology.

The MP study did however reveal Pareto’s psychological model as having some validity within a real political elite. Not only did findings reaffirm core differences between liberals and conservatives set out in both the student study and the last chapter, they also highlighted ways in which aspects of Machiavellian personality integrate within these differences. Just as Pareto’s political sociology would have us believe, Machiavellian traits emerged most saliently when we looked at different levels of elitism within Westminster.

Furthermore, the MP study highlighted statistically significant intervals between the parliamentary parties on a good range of measures. These findings become particularly interesting in view of chapter three’s argument that political collectivities are likely to possess distinct social personalities because these supply heuristic guidance for the consistent and predictable negotiation of the world’s widening sphere of uncertainty. The richness of these patterned differences is worthy of contemplation in itself. In particular, they suggest Pareto has served us well as a guide to the psychological bases of social personality. And so we may now speak with more confidence and precision about differences between the social personalities of the three main parliamentary parties, and between the social personalities of the two main parties in particular. We even have a clearer understanding of how these differences might be influenced by processes of political socialisation.

The insight into social personality provided by the MP study thus provides a useful springboard for further research using either quantitative or qualitative techniques to explore, or perhaps even monitor, the social personalities of these or indeed any other political institutions. More longitudinal studies seem particularly useful as a means to chart the cultural trajectories of competing political institutions, highlighting how they converge in some respects and diverge in others over time.

Mention must also be made here of the various contrasts between conservative and liberal personality which the MP study brought to light. These findings might assist the writers of political psychobiographies, or help ordinary voters form better intuitive impressions of political candidates or leaders. They might even help political leaders understand how their personalities influence their decisions. It is noteworthy, although not entirely unexpected, that findings fell short of reflecting those strong general links between psychological liberalism and Machiavellianism which make Pareto’s psychological model so distinctive. Some correlations between psychological liberalism and indicators of Machiavellianism-psychopathy did however appear. The political aloofness variable, which was described in the last chapter as probably tapping the Machiavellian’s anomic disenchantment and distrust, was found to correlate significantly with psychological liberalism (r=.17, p=.041). The measure of dissociative experience, which was included as a marker for the Machiavellian’s lack of a firm identity, also correlated positively with psychological
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liberalism ($r=.18, p=.033$). And of course, the conviction-relativism scale (which seems to tap the Machiavellian’s ideological relativism and lack of affect) correlated strongly ($r=.36, p=.000$) with psychological liberalism. Taken together, these findings do highlight links between liberalism and Machiavellianism, whose distributions concentrate in such places as the higher echelons of the Labour and Conservative Parliamentary Parties, and which deserve further consideration as features of elite social personality.

In response to those asking why Pareto should be read today, perhaps the best way to address this question is by returning once more to the enlightenment theme of rational self-direction, and thinking it through from the perspective of those who contributed to this study. Our main consideration then becomes, how might decision-makers such as these benefit from a greater awareness of the psychological and cultural biases which work through the social personalities of their respective parties to influence how they think about politics? More fully, if the MPs who contributed to this study found time to read through this book, and if they tried to situate themselves within the individual differences explored within it, and if they were to reflect upon the possible conditioning influences of social personality, and upon the psychological correlates of different levels of eliteness within their parties, and indeed upon what appear to be psychological differences between the parties, would this hold value for them? It seems likely that it would. A familiarity with Pareto’s sociology, bolstered by a knowledge of the political psychology which places Pareto on surer ground, might help all political decision-makers, be they voters, activists, elected representatives, those who govern, those who take political decisions within executive capacities, or even those who take ‘political’ decisions in contexts removed from politics itself, such as business leaders, improve the quality of their decision-making. There may be much value for future commentaries on Pareto, in adopting and deepening this practitioner orientation.

Finally, it is important to add that Pareto is not the only classical sociologist who we might return to in order to make sense of this chapter’s research findings. For example, Weber’s work on protestant ethic deserves further consideration alongside Inglehart’s work on materialism, for their combined capacity to help us understand the phenomenon of conservative individualism which has appeared. We might also look back at how a range of sociologists mentioned in chapter three can help us theorise the social personalities of the three parliamentary parties, or, as might be said of Simmel in relation to his work on metropolitan individualism and the ‘blasé attitude’, at how they might help us understand several of the psychological correlates of liberalism and eliteness which have appeared. Then there are Pareto’s fellow classical elitists. We might well ask whether some of the traits identified as perhaps existing more at the higher echelons of the political parties, support and permit some further development of Michels’ warnings concerning the potential for political bureaucracies to be harnessed to serve the interests of party leaderships rather than their followings or wider constituencies. It would doubtless be possible to show how this test of Pareto’s theory has generated further findings which might now be related back to classical sociology. This book does not attempt this, but is content to have used Pareto’s theory to develop and test new, thought provoking hypotheses likely to be of interest to many political sociologists, psychologists, and
indeed practitioners. It is hoped that this exercise has established a bridge running from classical sociology to political psychology which can allow new routes to be opened between these disciplines.
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