

Review of: "Carl Friedrich and the Cancellation of Pareto"

Cayce Jamil¹

¹ University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This article discusses the growing influence of Vilfredo Pareto among some academics at Harvard during the interwar period. Carl J. Friedrich (someone who I was entirely unfamiliar with before reviewing this article) sharply criticized Pareto's theory of elites which, in part, led to the "cancellation" of Pareto. To Friedrich, Harvard embraced democratic ideals and understood Pareto's ideas about the circulation of elites to be incompatible with this political vision. Friedrich's leadership, along with Harvard's important relationship with the federal government, around WWII made him an critically important figure during this time. While Friedrich tried to differentiate democracy from elitism, he covertly included a defense of bureaucratic rule.

The only major suggestion I have for the paper is to point out the similarities in Friedrich's thought with Saint-Simonian thought which was en vogue at Harvard at the time. Saint-Simonian ideas experienced a renaissance a at Harvard, particularly through the writings of Edward S. Mason, the dean of Harvards' Public Administration program, from 1947-1958. I also see that Mason and Friedrich edited the 1940 book *Public Policy* together. I'd be curious if Friedrich ever explicitly mentions Saint-Simon in any of his works? Like Saint-Simon, Friedrich tries to weave together a technocratic vision of society based on the "capabilities" individuals while attempting to maintain democratic characteristics. Mason's 1931 article "Saint-Simonism and the Rationalisation of Industry" would be worth looking at. There was also a 2020 paper by Ludovic Frobert titled "Industrialism in the mirror: Edward S. Mason, reader of the Saint-Simonians" that might be helpful. The Harvard school seemed to play an integral role in assimilating Saint-Simonian theory into American public policy.

Some minor things: On the second page, you mention the "thought brigade" dominating the Kennedy administration but don't define it. A sentence about what it was would be nice. Similarly, on the eighth page, you mention the "German special path" but not describe what it was.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed this article and think it contributes significantly to understanding the rise and fall in popularity of Pareto and the elite theorists within academia as well as the rise of Saint-Simonian ideas among some elites in the mid-20th century. Also, I'm a big fan of Stephen Turner's work and I am humbled to be able to review a paper for him :).