Raymond Aron’s “Machiavellian” Liberalism

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Recent interest in Raymond Aron in Anglophone scholarship has centered on his “Cold War Liberalism.”¹ Often paired with Isaiah Berlin and Karl Popper, Aron is presented as an anti-Marxist and anti-Communist thinker who defended a “negative” or “minimum” version of liberalism, one sometimes associated with what Judith Shklar identified as the “liberalism of fear”: what needed to be avoided first and foremost was cruelty.² As such, rather than propose a positive or indeed coherent political theory, Aron, like all good liberals, defended certain values, such as pluralism and tolerance, drawn from an idealized vision of England, and advocated for prudence and moderation in the face of perilous Cold War politics.

Beyond that general characterization, Aron evades easy categorization.

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¹ Stuart Campbell, “Raymond Aron: The Making of a Cold Warrior,” Historian 51, no. 4 (1989): 551–73; Brian Anderson, ed., Raymond Aron: The Recovery of the Political (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 1–18; Jan-Werner Müller, “Fear and Freedom: On ‘Cold War Liberalism,’” European Journal of Political Theory 7, no. 1 (2008): 45–64; Aurelian Craiutu, Faces of Moderation: The Art of Balance in an Age of Extremes (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 60; Or Rosenboim, The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 27; Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins, The Other Intellectuals: Raymond Aron and the United States (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

² This Aron is obviously linked to the Aron theorist of international relations, he who had the ear of Henry Kissinger. Stanley Hoffmann, “Raymond Aron and the Theory of International Relations,” International Studies Quarterly 29, no. 1 (1985): 13–27.
Is he, as he has often been depicted, a Tocquevillian “liberal”? That has been the prevailing association, avowed by Aron himself in the introduction to his classic sociological study *Les étapes de la pensée sociologique* (1967): He declared his admiration for the “limpide et triste” (clear and sad) prose of Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, and was, in turn, labeled a “liberal triste.”

But that is not the full story. In the introduction to *Les étapes*, Aron confesses that while he had been reading Marx for thirty-five years, he had turned to Tocqueville only in the previous ten years as a way of criticizing Marx. Ultimately, however, he would never hesitate between *Capital*, whose “mysteries” never ceased to intrigue him, and *Democracy in America*: if his conclusions belonged to the “English School” of Tocqueville, then his “training” was in the “German School” of Marx. Brining Marx—and, in particular, critics of Marx—back into the fold (Aron would continue to write on Marx long after *Les étapes*), links Aron the anti-Marxist and anti-Communist “Cold War liberal” to Aron the Tocquevillian thinker on modern democracy.

This article will argue that the anti-Communist Aron and the Tocquevillian Aron are tied together by the early twentieth-century elite theorists of democracy whom he dubbed the “Machiavellians”: Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, and Robert Michels. Through his engagement with those thinkers, Aron was able, on the one hand, to articulate his anti-Marxist critique of totalitarianism during World War II and the Cold War and, on

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3 Daniel Mahoney, *The Liberal Political Science of Raymond Aron* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1992); Jeremy Jennings, “Raymond Aron and the Fate of French Liberalism,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 2, no. 4 (2003): 365–71; Michael Behrent, “Liberal Dispositions: Recent Scholarship on French Liberalism,” *Modern Intellectual History* 13, no. 2 (2016): 447–77.

4 Hoffmann, “Aron et Tocqueville,” *Commentaire* 8, no. 28–29 (1985): 200–212; and Campbell, “The Tocquevillian Liberalism and Political Sociology of Raymond Aron,” *The Historian* 53, no. 2 (1991): 303–16.

5 “Je continue, presque malgré moi, à prendre plus d’intérêt aux mystères du *Capital* qu’à la prose limpide et triste de *La Démocratie en Amérique*,” Raymond Aron, *Les étapes de la pensée sociologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), 21; translated by Richard Howard and Helen Weaver as *Main Currents of Sociological Thought* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998). I cite the French editions and all translations are my own. Giulio De Ligio, *La Tristezza del pensatore politico: Raymond Aron e il primato des politico* (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2007).

6 “Mes conclusions appartiennent à l’école anglaise, ma formation vient surtout de l’école allemande,” Aron, *Les étapes de la pensée sociologique*, 21.

7 Aron, *D’une sainte famille à l’autre: Essai sur le marxisme imaginaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969) and *Le Marxisme de Marx* (Paris: Éditions de Fallois, 2002). For Aron’s critique of Marx, see Mahoney, “Aron, Marx, and Marxism,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 2, no. 4 (2003): 415–27.
the other, to develop his theory of democracy based on the anti-Marxist “fact of oligarchy” that these authors had, on his account, first demonstrated.

The importance that Mosca, Michels, and in particular Pareto played in the development of Aron’s thinking has been highlighted before, not least by Stuart Campbell’s study “The Four Paretos of Raymond Aron” and Serge Audier’s more recent Raymond Aron: La démocratie conflictuelle. Audier even develops what he calls a “Tocquevillian-Machiavellian” paradigm to interpret Aron’s democratic theory. Recognizing how Aron’s thought was influenced by the Machiavellians’ take on the hierarchical nature of modern society, Audier adds a Tocquevillian dimension to underline how Tocqueville had identified a specific egalitarian dynamic to modern life. While Audier is undoubtedly correct in underlining this Tocquevillian dynamic, he is mistaken to think that the Machiavellians did not grasp the disappearance of old aristocracies: quite the opposite, their whole point was to show that even in modern egalitarian democracies that had overthrown their aristocratic class, elites continued to rule, either through their theories of the “ruling class” (Mosca), “circulation of elites” (Pareto), or the “iron law of oligarchy” (Michels). Moreover, Aron, in his desire to criticize Marxism, was so taken by these theories because they were developed in explicit contradistinction to the Marxist notion that once the proletarian revolution was accomplished all hierarchies would melt away—that the “government of people,” as Engels put it, borrowing from Saint-Simon, would give way to the “administration of things.”

By attending to the fundamental Machiavellian elements of Aron’s thinking, we can see that Aron’s liberalism was not simply a negative or minimalist one. Rather, in articulating a theory of democracy based on the “fact of oligarchy,” notably in his seminal Démocratie et totalitarisme (1965), Aron was able to elaborate a positive theory of democracy (a “Constitutional-Pluralist” regime), which he actively defended against totalitarianism (a “Party Monopolistic” regime). The Machiavellian basis of his thought also provides a coherence to his political theory, from elaborating his critique of totalitarianism on the international sphere to developing his sociological theory of hierarchical modern democratic society on the
domestic. Moreover, beyond political theory, international relations, and sociology, there is reason to believe that these elitist notions underpinned his work in the philosophy of history too.11 In *Dimensions de la conscience historique* (1961), Aron explains that history is the interplay between two central notions, *drama* and *process*. If *process* attempts to account for the necessary transformation of society, notably in this case the development of industrial society, *drama* captures the contingent actions of men within this longer history. If *process* is concerned with structural factors, *drama*, for Aron, is the fact of a small number of individuals—or, in other words, of an elite.12

This Machiavellian dimension to Aron’s thought undermines recent attempts to classify him as a “neo-liberal.”13 Aron was no doubt a “new” type of liberal for the later twentieth century,14 much like Tocqueville had been for the nineteenth, willing to think politics in the “gros temps” of the Cold War. Indeed, in 1938 he attended the now infamous Colloque Walter Lippmann where the term was first coined.15 But the epithet “neo,” particularly in terms of its contemporary meaning, seems not to capture him well. Many of the participants in the Colloque—Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich von Hayek, Wilhelm Röpke, and Aron himself—rejected the term or did not use it.16 What we now identify as neoliberalism developed later, in the 1970s, and is associated with the rising influence of Milton Friedman, Gary Becker of the Chicago school, and public choice theorists James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock of the Virginia school.17 But that type of

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11 Iain Stewart, “Existentialist Manifesto or Conservative Political Science? Problems in Interpreting Raymond Aron’s *Introduction à la philosophie de l’histoire,*” *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire* 16, no. 2 (2009): 217–33.
12 “Taˆchons de de´ gager la loi de la ne´ cessite´ industrielle a` l’oeuvre dans le drame des guerres et des empires, l’action de quelques-uns donnant forme et figure au proce`s d’in- dustrialisation,” Aron, *Dimensions de la conscience historique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2011), 238.
13 Perry Anderson, “Dégroingolade: The Fall of France,” *London Review of Books*, September 2, 2004 and “Union Sucre´e: The Normalizing of France,” *London Review of Books*, September 23, 2004.
14 H. S. Jones and Stewart, “Positive Political Science and the Uses of Political Theory in Post-War France: Raymond Aron in Context,” *History of European Ideas* 39, no. 1 (2013): 35–50.
15 Nicholas Gane, “In and out of Neoliberalism: Reconsidering the Sociology of Raymond Aron,” *Journal of Classical Sociology* 16, no. 3 (2016): 261–79.
16 Audier, “The French Reception of American Neoliberalism in the Late 1970s,” in *In Search of the Liberal Moment: Democracy, Anti-totalitarianism, and Intellectual Politics in France since 1950*, ed. Stephen Sawyer and Stewart (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 167–68.
17 Daniel Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Angus Burgin, *The
neoliberalism, which wished, particularly in Becker’s Chicago school incarnation, to extend economic logic to all aspects of life, is far removed from the type of political liberalism Aron wanted to defend, which formally drew from a group of Francophone liberal thinkers (Montesquieu, Tocqueville, Constant, Guizot) utterly foreign to the economic thinking of the Chicago school: a political liberalism premised on a clear separation between economic and political spheres.

Nor can Aron’s thought be subsumed under the banner of Hayek’s libertarianism. As Jan-Werner Mueller succinctly puts it: “Aron explicitly criticized Hayek’s notion of liberty for being one-dimensional and ahistorical, and argued that the advanced industrial societies of the West had managed to find a synthèse démocratique-libérale which had absorbed the socialist critique of a purely negative understanding of liberty.” Moreover, Aron was willing to entertain a degree of economic planning and welfare redistribution, something that was anathema to Hayek and led, on the latter’s account, to The Road to Serfdom (1944). For Aron, democracy—that is to say politics—came first, with the market as a tool to help foster political liberties; whereas for Hayek, the market needed to be defended from the encroachments of democratic politics. If Aron was “in” the neoliberal moment, he was not, to channel Churchill, “of” it.

Aron’s openness regarding market planning and social redistribution—whether or not for conservative reasons, and whether or not he would have defended the same ideas under different historical circumstances—has led Audier to argue that Aron is best understood as a “social-liberal,” one willing to try to reconcile socialism (Aron identified his own intellectual roots as coming from the left) with liberalism. Aron’s attempts to combine liberty and equality link him to Tocqueville, but also, this article contends, to the Machiavellians.

Building on Campbell and Audier’s work, the first section will deepen...
our understanding of Aron’s engagement with the Machiavellians by tracing his intellectual dialogue with Pareto and addressing how that provided him with important intellectual tools to critique totalitarian regimes on the one hand and develop a positive theory of democracy on the other. Particular attention will be given to the shift in Aron’s appreciation of Pareto, from seeing him in his early days as an apologist of Fascism to seeing him as a fellow-in-arms critic of totalitarianism and defender of democracy. The ex-Trotskyist James Burnham’s now forgotten book, The Machiavellians: Defenders of Liberty (1943), played a key role in this change of heart, and it is Burnham who was first to dub the elite theorists “Machiavellian.” The second section will attend to Aron’s often overlooked sociological writings of the 1950s and 1960s, where he developed, through his engagement with the Machiavellian thinkers, his concept of a “divided” (divisée) and “unified” (unifiée) elite as the basis for distinguishing liberal-democratic from non-democratic regimes. How Aron articulates the move from political sociology to political philosophy, notably in Les étapes and Démocratie et totalitarisme, will be of particular interest.

Aron’s “Machiavellianism” has led Audier, building on John Pocock’s The Machiavellian Moment, to posit a French postwar “Machiavellian moment” encompassing Aron, Maurice Merlau-Ponty, and Claude Lefort. And although his concerns about the corruption of political regimes tie in well with the themes of the original Florentine “Machiavellian Moment,” Aron did not develop the type of “non-domination” republicanism that characterizes Quentin Skinner and Philip Pettit’s work. Instead, as Audier has argued, Aron’s “Machiavellianism” centers on a “conflictual pluralism” that sees liberty as emerging from within the space opened up by competing parties, interests, and groups. And that conception of liberty, this article submits, emerged through his engagement with his own Machiavellians—Pareto, Mosca, and Michels—instead of Machiavelli as such.

The French moment did not die, however, with Aron. The theme of “conflictual pluralism” is present throughout the work of many of the

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23 John Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).
24 Audier, Machiavel, conflit et liberté (Paris: Vrin, 2005); Warren Breckman, Adventure of the Symbolic: Post-Marxism and Radical Democracy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).
25 Quentin Skinner, Liberty Before Liberalism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Philip Pettit, Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
26 Audier, Machiavel, conflit et liberté, 28.
members of the Centre Raymond Aron that was founded in his name: not solely in Lefort’s work, but also in the work of Pierre Manent, Bernard Manin, and Pierre Rosanvallon, to name but three. Indeed, Rosanvallon’s dialogue with Michels and Moisie Ostrogorski—a figure almost entirely forgotten today—dates back at least to his time as a young autogestionnaire. The third part of this article will thus explore the legacy of Aron’s Machiavellianism and how its figures were used to address new questions, notably regarding representation. In conclusion the article will ask whether, with our political system awash with money, Aron’s critique of the “plutocratic” nature of modern democracies still captures something essential about the world we live in today.

I: ARON, PARETO, AND BURNHAM

Aron engaged with Pareto throughout his entire career. He was still finishing his PhD when his first published piece, “La sociologie de Pareto,” appeared in Max Horkheimer’s *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (1937).27 In that article, Aron was critical of Pareto, presenting him as a proto-Fascist thinker: by rejecting the Marxist idea of a forthcoming proletarian revolution that would eliminate class inequality by affirming the historical, social, and political persistence of elites, Pareto’s sociology seemed to Aron a theory that the reactionary bourgeois could seize on to fight a rear-guard action against revolutionary forces. Yet Aron also drew three key insights from Pareto, which he retained throughout his life. First, he adopted Pareto’s idea that the sphere of politics was autonomous from the economic and social spheres—a highly significant move in a French context dominated by Marxist accounts of the primacy of economics and Durkheimian views on the preeminence of the social.28 Aron’s view of the primacy of politics is crucial to understanding how, even though the modern world is characterized as an industrial society, the type of political regime that goes with it, democratic or not, is ultimately a political question—a question that Aron explored in a trilogy of lectures at the Sorbonne throughout the 1950s and

27 Aron, “La sociologie de Pareto,” *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 6, no. 3 (1937): 489–521.
28 Giulio De Ligio, “The Question of Political Regime and the Problems of Democracy: Aron and the Alternative of Tocqueville,” in *The Companion to Raymond Aron*, ed. José Colen and Elisabeth Dutartre-Michaut (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 119–35; and Mahoney, “Introduction: Raymond Aron and the Persistence of the Political,” *Perspectives on Political Science* 35, no. 2 (2006): 73–74.
1960s: Dix-huit leçons sur la société industrielle (1963), La Lutte des classes (1964), and Démocratie et totalitarisme (1965).29

Second, Aron drew on Pareto’s sociology to sketch a definition of Fascist leadership: a hypocritical demagogue who is willing to use any type of myth to excite the crowds but ultimately defends the interests of the elites.30 Over time, most notably in Les étapes, Aron developed this interpretation of Pareto the analyst, rather than the spokesman, of Fascism. Aron blames the rise of the Fascist leader on the liberal bourgeoisie, who, losing their nerve in face of communist agitation, were willing to throw in their lot with a violent elite.31 This is quite perceptive in terms of explaining the rise of both Mussolini and Hitler, who relied at first on traditional conservative elites to cement their power before disposing of them, and it also offers Aron his third insight derived from Pareto: that liberalism has to be defended, sometimes even with force.

When the article was reprinted some forty years later in the Revue européenne des sciences sociales (1978), Aron explicitly distanced himself from the early version, explaining in a brief preamble that the views expressed there no longer represented his current views.32 What had changed? In a seminal article published in 1986, based on an interview with Aron conducted one year before his death in 1983, Stuart Campbell analyzed the “four Paretos” in Aron’s work,33 which Aron himself had identified in “Lectures de Pareto” (1973): the fascist Pareto, the authoritarian Machiavellian Pareto, the liberal Machiavellian Pareto, and Pareto the cynic.34 There is much to be said about reading Aron’s Paretos in this way: we have already explored the fascist Pareto, and it is true that during his wartime journalism Aron started to use the more analytical Pareto—what Campbell identifies as the “authoritarian Machiavellian Pareto”—as a way of making sense of rising totalitarianism in Europe, whether Fascist, National-Socialist, or Communist. Indeed, the first piece he wrote for La France libre was entitled “Le machiavelianisme, doctrine des tyrannies

29 On Aron and “convergence theory” see Mahoney, “The Totalitarian Negation of Man: Raymond Aron on Ideology and Totalitarianism,” in Colen and Dutartre-Michaut, The Companion to Raymond Aron, 137–48.
30 Aron, “La sociologie de Pareto,” Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung 6, no. 3 (1937): 516–19.
31 Aron, “La sociologie de Pareto,” Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung 6, no. 3 (1937): 518–19.
32 Aron, “La sociologie de Pareto,” Revue européenne des science sociales 16, no. 43 (1978): 5–33.
33 Campbell, “Four Paretos,” 287.
34 Aron, “Lectures de Pareto,” in Machiavel et les tyrannies modernes (Paris: Editions de Fallois, 1993), 263–67.
modernes” (1940). Aron was editing La France libre from London as part of the wartime effort under de Gaulle, with whom he had an often fractious relationship.35 Inspired by his mentor Elie Halevy’s L’Ere des tyrannies (1938),36 Aron set out to analyze both the rise of Fascism and Communism through the lenses of “Machiavellianism.”37 Fascism on this account, as we saw above, adopted a Machiavellian/Paretean philosophy, while Communism adopted Machiavellian tactics.38

These four Paretos offer undeniably helpful prisms through which to interpret Aron’s work, but it would be a mistake to think of them as somehow temporal and sequential, following Aron’s own development. It’s more helpful to attend to the shift from Aron’s early view of Pareto as a proto-Fascist to his more positive view of Pareto—a Pareto who ultimately served the cause of liberty—as Aron himself acknowledged in the 1982 interview.39 And that shift came about as a result of his discovery of Burnham in the 1940s. Indeed, we have already explored the evolution of the “Fascist Pareto,” from apologist of Fascism in the prewar writings to analyst of Fascism postwar. Pareto the cynic is present throughout Aron’s writing on Pareto, from his early 1937 piece on “La Sociologie” to his later 1967 Les étapes and his 1974 “Lectures de Pareto”—although it is a point well made that Aron’s own cynicism would increase in his later life.40 Finally, it seems difficult to disentangle the so-called “authoritarian” from the “liberal” Machiavellian Pareto of the 1940s/50s to 1960s, the Pareto used both to critique totalitarianism and to develop a theory of democracy, an inseparable task in the context of the Cold War.

James Burnham, a disappointed Trotskyist turned reactionary critic of bureaucracy, is best remembered for his 1941 book The Managerial Revolution. While that book is going through a mini-renaissance in the era of Donald Trump,41 his 1943 follow-up, The Machiavellians: Defenders of

35 Aron, “Le machiavelisme, doctrine des tyrannies modernes,” in Aron, Penser la liberté, penser la démocratie (Gallimard: Paris, 2005), 115–24. See also Aron, “L’Homme contre les tyrants,” in Penser la liberté, 107–384 and in Machiavel et les tyrannies modernes.
36 Stewart, Raymond Aron and Liberal Thought in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).
37 Nicolas Guilhot, After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
38 Campbell, “Four Paretos,” 289.
39 Campbell, “Four Paretos,” 287.
40 Aron, “La sociologie de Pareto,” Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung 6, no. 3 (1937): 519–20; Aron, Les étapes, 20; Aron, “Lectures,” 263. On Aron’s cynicism, see Campbell, “Four Paretos,” 297–98.
41 Julius Krein, “James Burnham’s Managerial Elite,” American Affairs 1, no. 1 (2017): 126–51. American Affairs was launched in 2017 to “help explain Trumpism.” See further Alan Wald, “From Trotsky to Buckley,” Jacobin, September 15, 2017.
Liberty, is now almost completely forgotten. Aron had met Burnham and was very taken by the book. He personally arranged for it to be published in the “Liberté de l’esprit” series he was directing at Calmann-Lévy in 1949.\textsuperscript{42} In an 1949 article, “Histoire et politique,” Aron registered his debt to Burnham, explaining that Burnham’s reading of Pareto and the other Machiavellians who proposed a more “realistic” or “pessimistic” account of power, in which power was needed to check power, served as a critique of Communist millenarianism. Regimes that aim for the highest level of perfection are in fact the ones most likely to use oppressive and totalitarian means to achieve it,\textsuperscript{43} whereas a divided elite (“divisées”) would make do with imperfection.\textsuperscript{44}

That Aron outfitted his critique of millenarian Marxism with a more positive formulation of what a society should look like when it is committed to upholding liberty suggests that the Machiavellian authoritarian and the Machiavellian liberal Pareto go hand-in-hand. It also underlines how Aron’s understanding and more positive postwar reappraisal of Pareto and his Machiavellian colleagues hinged on Burnham’s influence. Indeed, by emphasizing how counter-powers serve as the best guarantors of freedom, Pareto and the Machiavellians, on Aron’s account, fundamentally furthered the cause of modern liberty, as intimated in the subtitle to Burnham’s book.\textsuperscript{45} As Aron would fully theorize in both his sociological and political writings of the 1950s and 1960s, competition among political, social, and economic elites yields space for liberty to flourish.

\section*{II: DIVIDED AND UNIFIED ELITES}

In the second chapter of \textit{Démocratie et totalitarisme}, “From philosophy to political sociology,” Aron questions the relation between political philosophy, which he defines as the exercise of judging political regimes, and sociology, which comprises a factual study of different regimes.\textsuperscript{46} He starts with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} James Burnham, \textit{Les Machiaveliens: Défenseurs de la liberté} (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1949).
\item \textsuperscript{43} “Souvent les prophètes de la société parfaite sont précisément ceux qui édifient la société la plus oppressive,” Aron, “Histoire et politique,” in Aron, \textit{Penser la liberté, penser la démocratie}, 533.
\item \textsuperscript{44} “Les élites les plus supportables sont celles qui sont divisées. . . . Il n’y a pas de société parfaite, mais il y a des degrés dans l’imperfection,” Aron, “Histoire et politique,” 533.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Aron, of course, might have gleaned counter-powers from Montesquieu, but the latter does not offer the reflections on elites within a modern industrial society that the Machiavellians do.
\item \textsuperscript{46} “De la philosophie à la sociologie politique,” Aron, \textit{Démocratie}, 38.
\end{itemize}
Aristotle, whose *Politics* combined political sociology—in its classification of regimes into monarchies, aristocracies, and polities alongside their corrupted versions, tyranny, oligarchy and democracy—and political philosophy—in that it judged these regimes according to a human telos.\(^{47}\)

In a contemporary sociological text, one we’ll have occasion to return to, Aron points out that when Aristotle comes to the detailed description of the ancient Greek cities, he leaves aside his abstract classification and posits instead a perennial conflict between oligarchy and democracy, between the rich and the poor, between the rulers and the ruled.\(^{48}\)

Nevertheless, what follows in *Démocratie* is a potted history of ideas, where Aron discusses the relation between sociology and politics in figures such as Montesquieu, Hobbes, Marx, and Popper. Montesquieu’s new classification of regimes into republic, monarchy, and despotism will serve as the opening for the later *Les étapes*, where Aron examines the passage from political theory to sociology by exploring how Montesquieu, after elaborating his new conceptual schema, will turn to studying the political sociology of these regimes, by analyzing both their material (climate, geography) and social (religion, commerce) causes.\(^{49}\)

But the notion of a conflict between ruler and ruled will return in Aron’s work. He locates the birth of modern political sociology in the nineteenth century, notably with the work of Comte and Marx. This modern sociology reveals two significant points: that all regimes are essentially defined by the struggle for power, and that it is always the few who rule.\(^{50}\) These two new “savoirs” Aron attributes to the Machiavellians, and to Pareto in particular: while Marx was right to identify the conflictual nature of politics, he was mistaken to think that the class struggle would come to an end after the proletarian revolution, and that the “rule of the (few) men” could be replaced with the “administration of things.” Pareto’s answer to Marx was that conflict would continue in the future, and the question of politics would continue to be “who rules?”\(^{51}\)

Aron had already developed this Machiavellian critique of democracy—that all regimes are in fact oligarchic, that the few always rule—in his 1950s lectures. Collected in *Introduction à la philosophie politique*, these

\(^{47}\) Aron, *Démocratie*, 38–41.

\(^{48}\) Aron, “Catégories dirigeantes ou classe dirigeante?,” in Aron, *Études Sociologiques* (Paris: PUF, 1988), 88.

\(^{49}\) Aron, *Les étapes*, 27–52.

\(^{50}\) Aron, *Démocratie*, 51.

\(^{51}\) “Le vrai problème est de savoir qui gouverne . . . le fait qu’un petit nombre d’hommes exercent le pouvoir,” Aron, *Démocratie*, 49–50.
lectures were first delivered at the École nationale d’administration (ENA), which was established by de Gaulle after the war to train the future high civil service in charge of reconstructing the country, and which continues even today to furnish France with a large portion of its political class, notably Emmanuel Macron. In the lectures, Aron explicitly cites Pareto, Mosca, and Burnham as the originators of this theory and, moreover, argues that once the oligarchic nature of democracy has been stated, the constitution of the oligarchy and its relation to the masses become the key political questions.52 In Démocratie Aron goes further still, criticizing the Machiavellian conception as being too “cynical”—a throwback to the discussion of Pareto above—as it concentrates solely on the struggle for power and overlooks the fact that one can still judge between regimes to see which one is best.53

Thus Aron wishes to practice a type of political sociology that does not simply affirm the Machiavellian struggle for power and is not grounded on an Aristotelian telos of human nature. Instead, based on the “fact of oligarchy” that modern sociology has brought to light, it evaluates the legitimacy of existing regimes.54 Indeed, in the rest of Démocratie, Aron compares the Western European and American “Constitutional-Pluralist” regimes to the Eastern “Party Monopolistic” regime of the USSR, and he comes down heavily in favor of the former. But to get a better sense of the make-up of these regimes, we must return to Aron’s sociological writings of the 1950s and 1960s, where he developed his theory of the “divided” and “unified” elite.

Aron fleshed out his theory of elite rule in three key sociological texts of the 1950s and 1960s—“Structure sociale et structure de l’élite” (1950), “Classe sociale, classe politique, classe dirigeante” (1960), and “Catégories dirigeantes ou classe dirigeante?” (1965). Building explicitly on Pareto, Mosca, and Michels, and read again through Burnham,55 Aron presented what he calls a “synthesis” of Marx and Pareto.56 It is in the 1960 text,
“Classe sociale, classe politique, classe dirigeante,” that the notion of the “fact of oligarchy” first appears, alongside Michels, its originator, although Aron had already theorized that if one can talk of democracy as government “for” the people, it would be a mistake to talk of government “by” the people, because it is always the few who rule. The theme of Pareto’s “cynicism” returns here too, with Aron admitting that one could—as he had done in the past—read these Machiavellian thinkers as being proto-Fascists in their rejection of socialism.

Throughout these writings, Aron develops the primary notion that societies are determined by the relation between what he calls either the classes or catégories dirigeantes—what in English we might term the political classes (the plural is key)—and the classe or personnel politique, namely the more directly political class or politicians. This is an anti-Marxist point: Aron stipulates that the political superstructure is not determined by the relation between social classes (capitalists versus the proletariat), as Marx would have it. Rather the regime is defined by the relation between the “ruling classes”—social, economic, bureaucratic elites—and politicians. By “ruling classes” Aron gives trade union leaders, captains of industry, the high civil service, judiciary, and military as examples, namely leaders of the different spheres that make up society (masses, money, bureaucracy, military).

In elaborating this theory of elite rule, Aron builds on each of the earlier Machiavellian thinkers. From Michels he borrows the “iron law of oligarchy,” but transforms it into a “fact” that itself needs to be evaluated, and from which other sociological questions emanate: How is this oligarchy formed? Who is in it and how are they recruited? From Pareto he takes the notion of “elite,” namely those who are the leaders in their respective fields, and he uses Mosca’s term of the “ruling class” to designate them. But on the basis that there is not one ruling class, but in fact as many as there are spheres without which governing would be impossible—the

Aron, Démocratie, 363 and Aron, Mémoires: 50 ans de réflexion politique (Paris: Julliard, 1983), 34, 392–98.

57 Aron, “Classe sociale,” 149, 155.
58 “Il y a des gouvernements pour le people, il n’y a pas de gouvernements par le people,” Aron, “Structure sociale,” 121–22.
59 Aron, “Classe sociale,” 149, 161.
60 The Ruling Class is the English title given to Mosca’s main work.
61 Aron, “Classe sociale,” 151, 154, 157; Aron, “Catégories dirigeantes,” 187, 193.
62 Aron, “Classe sociale,” 157.
63 Aron, “Catégories dirigeantes,” 193–94.
economy, workforce, military—he turns Mosca’s term into a plural, ruling classes, and comes up with a new term, the political personnel, to designate politicians in the strict sense of the word.

Aron articulates the relation between the ruling classes and political personnel through the notion of a “divided” or “unified” elite, namely whether political, economic, social, military, and legal elites find themselves within the same institution, for example a unified political party, or whether they are divided within themselves—whether they have their own independent institutions that are in competition with one another. The question is whether all the political, economic, social, and other decisions will be made by the same people, at the same time, and within the same institutions, or whether these decisions will be taken by different people, at different—and often conflicting—times and going in conflicting directions, in different settings.

That is, for Aron, the difference between a divided and unified elite, and the regime is determined by how the relation between different elites is organized constitutionally. Aron, however, is not of the belief that a unified elite eliminates conflict. Quite the contrary: conflict is inescapable; it is part of the genetic make-up of society. If all the interests are centralized in a common institution, conflict manifests itself outside the bounds of institutions and constitutions, most likely through violence. Thus it is apparent how and why Aron favors a divided elite. Indeed, in these writings, Aron engages in a fruitful debate with C. Wright Mills’s The Power Elite (1956), which posits the existence of a united elite, one that makes all its decisions in common and for its own benefit: a theory criticized by Robert Dahl in Who Governs? (1961), which argued instead that elites are more inclined to compete than to cooperate. Based on his view that conflict always manifests itself, Aron rejects Mills’s thesis as conspiracy theorizing. He explains that he is not convinced the examples Mills provides are clearly of collusion. Instead, he posits that reality is to be found somewhere between the two extremes—Mills’s power elite and Dahl’s polyarchy—between pure collusion and pure competition.

A ruling class will never be purely unified

64 Aron, “Classe sociale,” 151.
65 “La différence fondamentale entre une société de type soviétique et une société de type occidental, c’est que la première a une elite unifiée et la seconde une elite divisée,” Aron, “Structure sociale,” 123.
66 Aron, “Structure sociale,” 139.
67 Aron, “Macht, Power, Puissance: Prose démocratique ou poésie démonique?,” in Aron, Études Politiques, 171–94.
68 Aron, “Classe sociale,” 151, 156, 162; Aron, “Catégorie dirigeantes,” 191, 200.
69 Aron, “Catégories dirigeantes,” 201.
or purely divided—the “ideal-types” posited by Kant and Weber, two thinkers who strongly influenced Aron—but elites will be more or less divided.

While Aron can see how a unified elite might be more efficient in its rule, his own preference is division. He explains that when a unified elite concentrates within its grasp all political, economic, and social power, the masses find themselves defenseless against it. He expresses a preference for dialogue between the rulers and the ruled that is constitutionally organized; like conflict, dialogue between the two always happens, but when it is formally organized bloodshed can be avoided. In the end checks and balances are still the best guarantor of liberty, and, like all good liberals, Aron offers a romanticized version of the English “Establishment” as his ideal ruling class: one situated between the two extremes of unity and division, which is open to talent and is willing to assimilate within it the opposition’s leaders.

In Démocratie et totalitarisme, Aron uses his notions of a “unified” and “divided” elite to analyze the political systems of the East and the West, classifying the former as a “Party Monopolistic” regime, one where the totality of the ruling classes are concentrated in the Party, and the latter as a “Constitutional-Pluralist” regime, which allows for structured competition between different political parties, and where the ruling classes are divided. The emphasis on political party here comes from Michels, who concentrated his “iron law of oligarchy” in his study of modern, highly centralized and hierarchical, political parties. The Machiavellians—Pareto, Mosca, Michels, Burnham—are again at the center of his reflections; indeed one of his chapters on the Western “Constitutional-Pluralist” regime is entitled “The oligarchic character of the Constitutional-Pluralist regimes.” And the ideas developed in his sociological studies provide the bedrock upon which Aron constructs his own democratic theory: Mosca’s political personnel, the “fact” of oligarchy and the further political questions it

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70 Reed Davis, “The Phenomenology of Raymond Aron,” European Journal of Political Theory 2, no. 4 (2003): 401–13.
71 Aron, “Classe sociale,” 165.
72 Aron, “Structure social,” 124–25.
73 Aron, “Classe sociale,” 162.
74 Aron, “Structure social,” 142.
75 Aron, “Classe sociale,” 155.
76 See also Aron, La lutte des classes, in Aron, Penser la liberté, penser la démocratie, 1088–98.
77 “Du caractère oligarchique de régimes constitutionnels-pluralistes,” Aron, Démocratie, 128–32.
raises, and government for rather than by the people. Even ruling class conspiracies surrounding Jesuits, Free-Masons, and petrol companies make an appearance.\textsuperscript{78}

His conclusions are the same as the Machiavellians’ too: he attributes directly to Mosca the thought that a divided “Constitutional-Pluralist” regime provides the “best guaranties for the governed.”\textsuperscript{79} As he explains in his \textit{Introduction à la philosophie politique} lectures, if human nature, as the Machiavellians had pointed out, should be understood pessimistically, then democracy is the least worst regime because it legally regulates competition between groups, leading to what Audier terms the “conflictual balance of social forces.”\textsuperscript{80} If one is looking for a “realistic” regime, then democracy, being the best of the worst regimes, is actually the best regime possible.\textsuperscript{81} Yet keeping to his idea that extremes are to be avoided, he also in \textit{Démocratie} expresses concerns about a too-divided elite, one which would be too dispersed, unstable, and inefficient to be able to rule effectively.\textsuperscript{82} Democracies have to find the right balance and not fall into demagogy.\textsuperscript{83}

\section*{III: THE “MACHIAVELLIAN MOMENT” AND THE CENTRE RAYMOND ARON}

The emphases in \textit{Démocratie} on corruption and the imperfection of the political regime\textsuperscript{84} echo some of the themes of the Florentine “Machiavellian Moment” that Pocock first theorized in 1975. For Pocock that moment—which he would subsequently extend to seventeenth-century England and the work of James Harrington, and to eighteenth-century American debates over virtue and commerce—was marked by a dual reflection entertained by the original Machiavellians (Machiavelli, Savonarola, Guicciardini, Gianotti): the problem of elaborating a non-transcendental account of the passage of time, while confronting the temporal finitude of the republic—what

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[78] Aron, \textit{Démocratie}, 128–32, 149. Interestingly Aron, himself Jewish, does not mention anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.
\item[79] “Le régime constitutionnel-pluraliste est celui qui donne le maximum de garanties aux gouvernés,” Aron, \textit{Démocratie}, 134–35.
\item[80] “L’équilibre conflictuel des forces sociales,” Audier, \textit{La démocratie conflictuelle}, 46.
\item[81] Aron, \textit{Introduction à la philosophie politique}, 135–36.
\item[82] Aron, \textit{Démocratie}, 149.
\item[83] Aron, \textit{Introduction à la philosophie politique}, 56.
\item[84] Aron, \textit{Démocratie}, chaps. 9–11 and 18–10, pp. 166–219, 337–70.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Machiavelli attempted to address through his notions of “virtue” and “fortune.”

It is certainly the case that with his wartime writings on the Machiavellian threat of totalitarianism to Western liberal-democratic regimes, and his studies of the inevitable corruption of the “Constitutional-Pluralist” regime, Aron, who also lived through de Gaulle’s forceful passage from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic, which he attempted to account for in the introduction to Démocratie, mirrored the concerns of his Machiavellian predecessors. In large part due to his lifelong engagement with Weber’s work on political rationality, Aron thought long and hard about how to formulate a secular account of time, notably through his work on the philosophy of history that had been the subject of his dissertation.

This has led Audier to posit a postwar “moment machiavélien français,” encompassing Aron, the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and the political philosopher Claude Lefort. There is little doubt that “Machiavellianism” served as an important conduit for these authors’ thinking about contemporary politics, but as Audier has correctly noted, that thinking was quite removed from the “Neo-Republicanism”—with its focus on non-domination—that has characterized the subsequent work of Skinner and Pettit. Instead, the French Machiavellians’ thinking was marked by “conflictual pluralism,” and in Aron’s case that was articulated less through Machiavelli than his own Machiavellians: Pareto, Mosca, and Michels. For Aron liberty emerges from within the space in which different parties, interests, and groups compete, and thus this ties his conception of liberty closely to Mosca’s theory of “legal defense,” namely the constitutional structure set up to organize institutionally and channel productively the antagonism between different social forces. Moreover—and although the name of the French Republic might lead to some confusion—what Aron was ultimately concerned with was the survival of western liberal-democracy, and not “republics” as such.

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85 Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, xxiv.
86 Aron, Démocratie et totalitarisme, 9–19.
87 Aron, “La rationalité politique,” Commentaire 156 (2016): 725–42.
88 Aron, Mémoires.
89 Audier, Machiavel, conflit et liberté.
90 Audier, Machiavel, 28.
91 Cf. John McCormick, Machiavellian Democracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
92 Audier, “A Machiavellian Conception of Democracy? Democracy and Conflict,” in Colen and Dutartre-Michaut, The Companion to Raymond Aron, 155.
93 Emile Chabal, A Divided Republic: Nation, State and Citizenship in Contemporary France (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 135–57.
However, in contrast to Audier’s claim, the French Machiavellian moment ended neither with Aron nor with Merleau-Ponty and Lefort: a strong case can be made for the inclusion within the moment of the Centre Raymond Aron itself, of which Lefort was a member. Originally launched as an informal groupe de réflexion by François Furet in 1977, the seminar in political philosophy at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales formally morphed into the Institut Raymond Aron in 1984, before becoming the Centre de recherches politiques Raymond Aron in 1992, and transforming itself yet again in 2009 into its present incarnation, the CESPRA (Centre d’Etudes Sociologiques et Politiques Raymond Aron). At its peak the Centre brought together many of the leading French political thinkers—Aron, Furet, and Lefort, of course, but also Pierre Manent, Marcel Gauchet, Pierre Rosanvallon, and Bernard Manin—and is known for having renewed the study of democratic theory and having been at the forefront of the rediscovery of the French liberal tradition, notably through studies of Condorcet, Constant, Guizot, and Tocqueville.94

The French Machiavellian theme of “conflictual pluralism”—mediated through Aron’s own reflections drawn from Mosca, Pareto, and Michels—is central to the work of many of the Centre’s members. Pierre Manent, for instance, one of Aron’s inheritors, completely grants in his Cours familial de philosophie politique (2001) that political sociology has demonstrated the undeniable oligarchic nature of modern democracies, within which political parties play an important role: all rather reminiscent of Michels.95 Manent defines democracy as the “organisation of separations,” suggesting that modern politics is organized around two oppositions: represented/representatives and the more classic “separation of powers,” or divided elite.96 It is within these two oppositions that modern liberty is to be found: Aron’s point all along.97

Bernard Manin’s classic Principes du gouvernement représentatif (1995) accepts the “oligarchic” or “elitist” nature of elections, which he readily attributes to Pareto.98 And he also affirms Michels’s critique of the

94 Hugo Drochon, “Democracy, Anti-Totalitarianism and Liberalism,” Politics, Religion and Ideology 18, no. 3 (2017): 333–36.
95 Steinmetz-Jenkins, “Why did Raymond Aron write that Carl Schmitt was not a Nazi? An alternative genealogy of French liberalism,” Modern Intellectual History 11, no. 4 (2014): 572; Pierre Manent, Cours familial de philosophie politique (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 24–25.
96 Manent, Cours familial, 29–31. For “l’organisation de la compétition,” see Aron, Démocratie et totalitarisme, 348.
97 Manent, Cours familial, 28.
98 Bernard Manin, Principes du gouvernement représentatif (Paris: Flammarion, 2012), 189–90.
The French Machiavellian themes, and their authors, are also evident in the work of another prominent member of the Centre Aron, now a professor at the Collège de France, Pierre Rosanvallon. Rosanvallon has used these themes and authors to address what has been the guiding thread of his own reflections, namely the “crisis of representation.” That crisis is the by-product of the decline of the political party, which, at its apex at the turn of the twentieth century, offered a synthesis between the ancients corps intermédiaires and modern forms of individualism and singularity. Embedded within a pluralistic institutional framework and allied to a rise of syndicalism, the political party provided the stability to the Third Republic within which Rosanvallon thought he had found the synthesis of Lefort’s understanding of democracy as conflict and Furet’s quest to end the French Revolution. As the new intermediary body, the political party had momentarily resolved, at the end of the nineteenth century, the conflicting legacy of the French Revolution—liberté et égalité—thus ensuring the stability of the regime.

That the political party should be so central to Rosanvallon’s thinking means that Michels and Ostrogorski—whose legacy includes all the political terminology surrounding “party machine,” “party boss,” “omnibus party,” and “single-issue” parties, and whose emphasis, much like Michels, was on the modern centralized, hierarchical, and highly bureaucratized political party—feature strongly and consistently throughout Rosanvallon’s work. Indeed, while he was still an auto-gestionnaire syndicalist in the late

99 Manin, *Principes*, 265–67.
100 Manin, *Principes*, 207–8.
101 Manin, *Principes*, 306–8.
102 Gregory Conti and William Selinger, “The Other Side of Representation: The History and Theory of Representative Government in Pierre Rosanvallon,” *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* 23, no. 4 (2016): 533–54; Andrew Jainchill and Samuel Moyn, “French Democracy between Totalitarianism and Solidarity: Pierre Rosanvallon and Revisionist Historiography,” *The Journal of Modern History* 76, no. 1 (2004): 142–43.
103 Conti and Selinger, “The Other Side of Representation,” 552.
1970s, he was writing of the dangers of centralization facing trade unionism that Michels and Ostrogorski had identified. In a series of short articles in Faire, the syndicalist journal he edited—“Avancer avec Michels” (1977), “Trois textes pour un débat” (1978), and “Connaissiez-vous Ostrogorski?” (1979)—Rosanvallon concurred on the existence of an “iron law of oligarchy” but argued that this was a present political problem that needed to be resolved, presumably through his decentralized and self-organizing auto-gestionnaire movement, rather than a past historical preoccupation.104

Rosanvallon’s engagement with Michels and Ostrogorski offered a bedrock upon which much of his subsequent reflection was built, and that engagement survived his transition into academia: a transition that was mediated, as he recognized in an interview with the Journal of the History of Ideas, through his encounter with Lefort, whose Machiavel resonated with the “realist” sociologists Michels and Ostrogorski.105 He would go on to write the introduction to an abridged edition of Ostrogorski’s La démocratie et les partis politiques (1979), which he edited, as well as the preface for Paolo Pombeni’s translation into French of his Introduction à l’histoire des partis politiques (1992). Michels, Ostrogorski, and indeed Pareto were central to his historical trilogy: Le sacre du citoyen (1992), Le peuple introuvable (1998), and La démocratie inachevée (2000). Finally, he would write the entry on political parties for Raynaud and Rials’s Dictionnaire de philosophie politique (1996), and the Machiavellians would be one of the great traditions he would discuss in his inaugural lecture to the Collège de France in 2002.106

In fact, one of Rosanvallon’s latest projects, Le Parlement des invisibles (2014), can also be read as premised on Michels and Ostrogorski: the idea

104 “Avancer avec Michels, c’est considérer la difficulté démocratique comme un problème politique et non pas comme un problème historique,” Rosanvallon, “Avancer avec Michels,” Faire 17 (1977): 31–34; Rosanvallon, “Trois textes pour un débat,” Faire 35 (1978): 55–57; and Rosanvallon, “Connaissiez-vous Ostrogorski?,” Faire 50 (1979): 23–26.
105 Javier Fernández Sebastián and Rosanvallon, “Intellectual History and Democracy: An Interview with Pierre Rosanvallon,” Journal of the History of Ideas 68, no. 4 (2007): 703–15.
106 Moisie Ostrogorski, La démocratie et les partis politiques (Paris: Seuil, 1979), 7–21; Paolo Pombeni, Introduction à l’histoire des partis politiques (Paris: PUF, 1992), ix–xvi; Rosanvallon, Le sacre du citoyen (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 497; Rosanvallon, Le peuple introuvable (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), 247, 290; Rosanvallon, La démocratie inachevée (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 30, 263–64, 293, 401; Rosanvallon, “Partis,” in Philippe Raynaud and Stéphane Rials, Dictionnaire de philosophie politique (Paris: PUF, 1996), 525–9; Rosanvallon, “Inaugural Lecture, Collège de France” in Moyn, ed., Pierre Rosanvallon: Democracy Past and Future (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 41–42.
of Raconter la vie was to offer those who were “mal-représentés” the opportunity to explain their existence. This lack of representation, especially for the new working class—the “invisibles”—comes from the professionalization of political parties and the “iron law of oligarchy” that eats away at political life (Rosanvallon’s main target is the French Socialist Party, which had traditionally integrated the French working class into the political regime). As Conti and Selinger have pointed out, Rosanvallon has difficulty articulating how the “crisis of representation” he so adroitly documents might be addressed, notably because he has refused to undertake the type of political sociology that Michels and Ostrogorski—and Aron in their wake—practiced, which gave them a basis upon which to ground their proposals. It is true that in its previous incarnation Raconter la vie was more of a literary “representation-narrative” than an in-depth sociological study, but in 2016 the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail, Rosanvallon’s old trade union, conducted a detailed sociological study of 200,000 of its members, and that project, entitled Parlons Travail, has now been merged with Rosanvallon’s original Raconter la vie to create Raconter le travail, which brings some much needed sociology to Rosanvallon’s historical and political work.

CONCLUSION

Drawing directly from Pareto’s critique of 1920s Italy, which he characterized as a “demagogic plutocracy,” Aron applied his own theory of the key relation between the personnel politique and the catégories dirigeantes to his contemporary France. And his conclusions were much the same as Pareto’s: behind the façade of democratic politics, where rhetoricians dominate, lurk the rich financiers, because much money is needed to win elections and to govern. Thus, modern democracies are dominated by the rich, financiers, industrialists, businessmen, and entrepreneurs. Aron was writing in the 1960s, but, with the political system awash with money, there is no reason to think that things have changed drastically since then. Indeed, with the Occupy Movement and their rallying critique of “the one percent,” the

107 “Il y a là comme une sorte de loi d’airain des organisations en général, et de la vie politique en particulier,” Rosanvallon, *Le parlement des invisibles* (Paris: Seuil, 2014), 14.
108 Conti and Selinger, “The Other Side of Representation,” 556–58.
109 Rosanvallon, *Le parlement des invisibles*, 23.
110 Aron, *Introduction à la philosophie politique*, 56; Aron, *Démocratie*, 130.
election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, and Brexit, the relation between elites and democracy has been forcefully brought back onto the political agenda. Are these elites divided or unified? What are the constitutional structures within which they operate? How do they recruit their members? What is their relation to the non-elite? These questions are as urgent to us now as they were to Aron.

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