

PITIRIM SOROKIN AND HIS SOCIOLOGY

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PITIRIM A. Sorokin has long been one of the leading figures in American sociology.

This paper will describe his career briefly and discuss some of his main contributions to sociological thought.

Sorokin was born in a Russian peasant village in 1889. From there he went to St. Petersburg for his secondary and higher education. In 1913, at the age of only 24, he became co-editor of *New Ideas in Sociology*, a journal devoted primarily to translations of foreign sociological writings but with original Russian articles as well. In 1914 he began teaching at the Psycho-Neurological Institute in St. Petersburg; in the same year he published his first book, *Crime and Punishment*. In 1916 he started to teach at the University of St. Petersburg, continuing until the outbreak of the Revolution in 1917. Sorokin wrote seven books in Russian before he came to this country, including a two-volume *System of Sociology* in 1919. Not even his experiences during the revolutionary years, when he was a starving fugitive much of the time, made him cease his scholarly labors altogether.

During his early years Sorokin was an optimistic social revolutionary, three times imprisoned by the Czarist government for revolutionary activity. He emerged from the Revolution embittered and conservative. At the outbreak of the Revolution, Sorokin became one of the founders of the All-Russian Peasant Soviet and of the Council of the Russian Republic, both revolutionary organizations. When Alexander Kerensky became prime minister of the provisional government in 1917, Sorokin was chosen as his private secretary and as editor-in-chief of the governmental newspaper, *The Will of the People*. He was elected a member of the Constitutional Assembly in 1918. Before and after the Bolsheviks ousted Kerensky, Sorokin was a vigorous opponent of Bolshevism while an undoubted progressive.

Sorokin's hostility to the government was reciprocated with a vengeance. After the October Revolution in 1917 a large part of his activities consisted of organizing resistance to the Bolshevik regime, and when this failed, of fleeing half-starved through the woods to escape imprisonment.

Finally he was arrested, imprisoned, and sentenced to death; and only through the intervention of friends was he saved from execution and allowed eventually to exile himself from the Soviet Union on pain of execution. He fled to Czechoslovakia where he found friendly asylum under the aegis of such notables as Thomas Masaryk and Edouard Benes.¹ Soon after going to Czechoslovakia, Sorokin was invited by Professors E. A. Ross and E. C. Hayes to deliver a series of lectures on the Russian Revolution at the Universities of Illinois and Wisconsin. He accepted this invitation, and the United States has been his home ever since. After lecturing for a time at Wisconsin and Illinois, Sorokin moved to the University of Minnesota in 1924. Here he established himself rapidly as a leader in American sociology. The roles of Professors Hayes and Ross in bringing Sorokin to this country have not been sufficiently recognized.²

Sorokin became head of the newly formed Department of Sociology at Harvard University in 1930. He remained in his position unusually long for a Harvard departmental chairman; chairmanships at Harvard normally rotate every three to five years. He did not enjoy administrative work, and asked several times to be relieved of his chairmanship; his request was granted in 1943. At that time some members of the Departments of Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology at Harvard established the Department of Social Relations. Sorokin neither opposed nor approved this experiment. He limited his activity in it to teaching during one semester per year, and set up and became director of the Harvard Research Center in Altruistic Integration and Creativity, a unit separate from the Department of Social Relations.³ The objective of this new center is scientific research in the nature of altruism and

¹ Sorokin, *The Sociology of Revolution* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1925), p. v.

² Sorokin has provided details of his coming to the United States, especially of his relationship with Hayes and Ross, in a personal letter to Professor Howard W. Odum, June 24, 1952.

³ These details are from a letter from Sorokin to Professor Howard W. Odum, August 5, 1953.

egoism, with the hope of discovering means by which altruism may be fostered and egoism combated. That the ultimate aim of Sorokin's new program is social action does not mean that research is not the chief business of the Center; Sorokin and his associates feel that more knowledge is needed before guided social action can be wisely undertaken. Much of Sorokin's published work since the Center was established has grown out of its investigations.

SOROKIN'S INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Sorokin's first book in English was *Leaves from a Russian Diary* (1924), a description of his ideological change during the Revolution. It is not surprising that a man who underwent the experiences recounted in Sorokin's diary emerged with his faith in the beneficence of human institutions shaken. He saw the Russia he knew crumble and give way to a Communist regime. Many of his closest friends died of disease or starvation or were executed. Trade, industry, and agriculture came almost to a standstill over large areas of the country, and the starvation of millions augmented the death toll from the Revolution. Sorokin spent these years in constant fear for his own life and for those of his wife and friends. He was spirited from one end of European Russia to the other, hiding from the police in the homes of friends and sympathetic peasants. Once he was captured and condemned to death, and stayed in a filthy prison for weeks awaiting his turn to die. During this period Sorokin changed from an optimistic liberal to one of the severest critics of the contemporary scene. Let him speak for himself, describing his state of mind after slinking through the woods for some weeks, half-starved and half-clothed, to escape capture by the government:

We continued to wander over the bosom of Nature, occasionally wishing we could see a little of civilization. In free moments we talked a little about the Revolution, and doubts which had been born in my mind at the beginning of the upheaval grew to full size. In this wild forest the utter futility of all revolution, the vanity of all Socialism and Communism became clear to me. . . . Many dazzling illusions, beautiful dreams in whose reality I had once believed, I lost during my meditations in the forest.⁴

⁴ Sorokin, *Leaves from a Russian Diary*, rev. ed. (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950), pp. 171-172.

The Sociology of Revolution (1925) is strongly colored by Sorokin's revolutionary experiences. He explains revolution, not in terms of historical or socio-economic movements as commonly conceived by writers on revolution, but as a destruction of the precarious balance between reason and disorganized antisocial instincts, with uncontrolled impulses coming to the fore. Since revolution results from the victory of man's upset biological drives over civilized reason, violent revolution is a disaster. Sorokin does not attempt to explain why unreason overcomes reason at certain times but not at others; his analysis is essentially psychological rather than sociological or historical. This book bears the imprint of Freud, Pavlov, Pareto, and others who stress the nonrational aspects of behavior. A behavioristic influence is manifested continually; Sorokin speaks of reflexes of property, the stimulus to obedience, the reactions to authority. His main purpose is to chart the course of internal events in typical revolutions. Every revolution, he says, follows a cycle of license, reaction, repression, and new equilibrium. The belief seems implicit that no revolution really alters the state of affairs materially; the French Revolution, for example, is treated not as a triumph of democracy or of the bourgeoisie but simply as a temporary outburst of animalism like every other revolution.

Social Mobility (1927) was a major contribution to sociology. Sorokin deals with mobility of two kinds: horizontal, or movement from place to place, and vertical, or movement up or down the social ladder. He finds that while there is some vertical mobility in all societies, societies vary widely in the emphasis they place on mobility as a value and in the ease and means of social ascent and descent. Contemporary western society, for example, stresses mobility more and provides more avenues for it than medieval society. Sorokin demonstrates that the upper classes in most societies have been superior mentally and physically to the lower classes. He attributes these differences mainly to inherent biological causes, and fears that the "racial fund" of vigor and talent may be depleted through differential fertility. He finds that high mobility has historically been associated with versatility, invention, and discovery; but also with cynicism, social isolation of the individual, skepticism, moral disintegration, and suicide.

Contemporary Sociological Theories (1928) is a

textbook in which a number of theories about human behavior are presented and evaluated. The theories considered are not merely sociological in the narrow sense, but are drawn from all the social sciences. Sorokin attacks more theories and propositions than he endorses, but his demolition is convincing and the reader is usually led to agree with him.

During his stay at the Universities of Wisconsin and Minnesota, Sorokin grew interested in rural sociology. The study of rural life had become a specialty at Wisconsin under Charles J. Galpin, and was well-cultivated at Minnesota by Carle C. Zimmerman and others. Sorokin's increased concern with rural sociology was a major step in his "Americanization" as a sociologist. His skill in treating social data quantitatively had already been revealed in *Social Mobility* and *Contemporary Sociological Theories*; it reached a peak in his two collaborative works on rural sociology.

Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology (with Carle C. Zimmerman, 1929) is devoted mainly to a consideration of rural-urban differences in physique, temperament, and other traits. Theories of earlier writers are searchingly evaluated. The authors cite studies of migrants from country to city to find out which types of rural people—if type selection occurs—are likely to leave the farm for the metropolis.

The *Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology* (with Zimmerman and Charles J. Galpin, three volumes, 1930–1931) is a mine of valuable source materials. These volumes transcend the usual parochial limitations of rural sociology. The authors evidently believe that rural sociologists have no reason to use different methods of inquiry from those used in other branches of sociology. They do not treat the rural world as though it existed in a vacuum. There appears at times what looks like a defense of the countryside against the claims of the city, but this does not mar the usefulness of the materials presented.

Sorokin left Minnesota for Harvard after the publication of the rural studies. At Harvard he set to work on a monumental inquiry into the history and nature of world civilization up to the present. He spent several years on this enterprise, and in 1937 he published the first three volumes of *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. A fourth volume appeared in 1941. The *Dynamics* is the most ambitious sociological attempt in recent

years, being comparable in scope to the works of Toynbee and Spengler. Sorokin was fully aware of the magnitude of his task:

Starting with an investigation of a sociocultural system and its properties, we have studied systematically the structure and composition of the total culture; the main "how's" of its change, of its space and time uniformities, of the rhythms, periodicities, tempi, and other basic aspects of sociocultural Becoming. Having clarified the main "how's" we passed to a study of the "why's" involved. Why the change? Why the rhythms, periodicities, and tempi? Why the fluctuations, trends, and cycles? And finally why the super-rhythm of Ideational, Idealistic, and Sensate phases? These problems answered, our study nears its close.⁵

Sorokin's principal tool in analyzing cultures and explaining their changes is his classification of cultures and all their manifestations into three main types: Sensate, Idealistic, and Ideational—coupled with his concept of "logico-meaningful" integration of cultural elements.

Events, relationships, and objects which are logico-meaningfully integrated are those which stem from the same value premises or criteria of truth, which seem somehow to fit together into a common *Weltanschauung* or cluster of attitudes. Thus a Gothic cathedral, a treatise in scholastic philosophy, and the allocation of greater prestige to clergymen than to tradesmen are logico-meaningfully integrated because they all stem from the religiously oriented culture mentality which prevailed in medieval Europe. Similarly integrated are the picture of a sparsely clad woman on the jacket of a novel, a pragmatic philosophical work, and an emphasis on material wealth as a prime goal, because these reflect a mentality oriented toward earthly and sensual pleasures. Cultural items which are not consistent with any pattern—which do not seem to "belong" with other items—are called "congeries."

The three principal types of culture integrations—Ideational, Idealistic, and Sensate—never exist in pure form; they are ideal types. In recognition of this Sorokin adds a Mixed category. Actually there are only two polar types of culture mentalities, the Ideational and the Sensate. The Idealistic is a mixed type combining the virtues of the polar types without their vices.

The extreme Sensate mentality views reality

⁵ Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, IV (New York: American Book Company, 1941), 773.

as that which is perceivable by the sense organs, and no more. It is atheistic or agnostic. It does not concern itself with the absolute or immutable, believing that all things are in flux. Its underlying goal is the mastery of the observable world for the sake of physical gratification. Its epistemology is empirical.

To the Ideational mentality, reality is immaterial, everlasting Being. Its objectives are spiritual and its ways of achieving them involve man's adjustment to the existing world rather than his manipulation of the world to bring it into line with his wishes. Faith and revelation are its roads to truth.

The Idealistic mentality is a synthesis of Ideational and Sensate elements with Ideational predominating. It combines the best of the other two mentalities with the addition of reason as a way to knowledge. In the Idealistic view, reason is a sort of apex in an epistemological triangle with faith and sensory observation at the lower points. Sorokin's own outlook is Idealistic.⁶

The history of all societies has been a fluctuation of these three great supersystems of integration. On the basis of an exhaustive study of art forms, systems of truth, ethics, and law, social relationships, war, and revolution during the past 2,500 years in the Western world, and of less thorough excursions into Oriental civilizations, Sorokin finds that all elements of a culture except a few minor ones (congeries) are usually integrated under whichever supersystem is in sway at a given time. The culture of the early Middle Ages was Ideational; that of the thirteenth century was Idealistic; our own is Sensate. Elaborate charts and graphs trace the rise and fall of cultural supersystems and their components during the recorded history of the West.

Why do culture mentalities change? Sorokin does not believe that change can be interpreted adequately by reference to "this or that external factor." Instead he finds "immanent self-regulation and direction." No one part of a cultural system can be held to cause the others to change,

⁶ Lewis Mumford's plea for a balance between the technological mastery of the objective world, in which the twentieth century excels, and the inner and subjective as expressed in art, which he finds underemphasized in today's world, corresponds fairly closely to Sorokin's encomium for the Idealistic culture mentality. See Mumford, *Art and Technics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952).

any more than one could maintain that a boy's growth in stature during puberty makes his whiskers grow.

Besides explaining the movement of history and the nature of society, Sorokin provides us with a new system of truth, superior to all others because it encompasses all others. Sensory observation, while essential, has been overemphasized in recent years. Reason, he feels, has accounted for a greater portion of the world's enlightenment than most modern thinkers give it credit for. Finally, Sorokin makes a case for intuition and faith, which have been neglected for some time, as valid sources of knowledge. None of these, he says, can lay claim to being the sole way to knowledge; each has its proper and necessary sphere. The senses tell us about mundane sensory phenomena; intuition gives us fruitful hunches and is our only source of deep communion with the absolute; reason orders and evaluates data gathered by sense and intuition. The combination of these three gives us the "integralist" system of truth. Sorokin himself uses integralism in his investigations.

In *Time Budgets of Human Behavior* (with Clarence Q. Berger, 1939) Sorokin and his collaborator had a number of subjects keep detailed records of their behavior for four weeks, listing what they did, when and for how long they did it, and, for half the investigation period, why they did it. The same subjects were asked to predict their activities for varying lengths of time, listing separately any activity in which they expected to engage for five minutes or longer on specific days. It was found that the more distant the day for which predictions were made, the less accurate the predictions were; and that people who led regular, clocklike lives were better predictors of their own behavior than were relatively disorganized persons. Therefore, reason the authors, we would be rash to attempt any "scientific" social prediction and planning, in view of the unforeseeability of human actions.

The Crisis of Our Age (1941) is a short and highly readable popularization of some of the ideas first presented in the *Dynamics*. We are going through a profound crisis. The nature of this crisis is misunderstood by those who seek to explain it in terms of such factors as democracy, liberty, totalitarianism, communism, militarism, international rivalries, and the like. Sorokin does not deny the importance of these factors, but he

sees them as manifestations of a deeper movement: the decline of an overripe Sensate supersystem. He predicts that we will pass through several stages in our process of decline and renaissance: crisis, ordeal, catharsis, charisma, and resurrection.

Man and Society in Calamity (1942) is a study in pathological human behavior. It extends the findings of *The Sociology of Revolution* into new areas of social life. In the four major varieties of social calamities—famine, pestilence, war, and revolution—there occurs a “polarization” of types of action. Most people become bestial and degraded, sinking so low in famine as to eat their own children, while a few people are ennobled and made altruistic by the crisis.

Sociocultural Causality, Space, Time (1943) is another restatement of some of the principles of the *Dynamics*. It is aimed primarily at a scientific audience, being written in a less popular vein than *The Crisis of Our Age*. It is less concerned with tracing the fluctuations of sociocultural phenomena and with a call for social action than with expounding the principles and modes of analysis that underlie Sorokin’s integralist sociology.

Russia and the United States (1944) might be termed wartime propaganda for the peace. In it the Russian in Sorokin overcomes the anti-Bolshevist. He argues that American and Russian culture have so much in common that these two nations, destined to be the leading postwar power centers, will have a secure basis for friendship. Both nations exemplify unity in diversity. Their cultures favor breadth of outlook, cosmopolitanism, and a healthy self-esteem tempered with tolerance of other societies.

Society, Culture, and Personality (1947) represents a summation and culmination of Sorokin’s scientific inquiries before he began his research program in altruism. In it are synthesized a vast array of facts and analyses of social structure, culture, and personality as viewed by the sociologist. Types of human groups, the bonds that hold them together, and the interaction within and between different groups are explored. *Society, Culture, and Personality* proceeds from the microscopic to the macroscopic, from the nature of human associations to the rise and fall of sociocultural supersystems.

The Reconstruction of Humanity (1948) presents another description of the contemporary crisis, a rejection of various explanations of the causes of

our plight and remedies for it, and a call for altruism to smooth our path to a new age. Recognizing the interdependence of social, cultural, and personality phenomena, Sorokin has little faith in analyses and cures which treat only limited segments of life. He disposes of a number of “quack cures for war and impotent plans for peace”: democracy, the United Nations, world government, capitalism, communism, socialism, fascism, education, science, technology, religion, legal and ethical cures, prosperity, the fine arts, and others. Sorokin feels that it is necessary to get at the root of things, to attack the “basic premise” of modern culture, not merely its products. The basic premise is the Sensate scheme of values, which must give way to an Idealistic or Ideational world-view if we are to avert catastrophe.

Since the superstructure of such a sociocultural system is built upon its major premise, a rational change of the entire system in a desirable direction must concentrate first upon this major premise.⁷

We must transfer man’s attention from the sensual, conscious, and subconscious levels to the superconscious and the Infinite Manifold: that true reality which can be comprehended only through the interplay of sense, reason, and intuition.

Our situation calls for increases of altruism and of familistic as opposed to contractual or compulsory social relationships. Altruistic actions are those that are performed not from any expectation of pleasure or utility, but because the actions are deemed worthy in themselves. Familistic relationships are those permeated by mutual love, devotion, and sacrifice. They are exemplified by the relationships between the members of a devoted family. In familistic relationships one finds the highest development of altruism. Sorokin suggests steps that might be taken toward increasing the prevalence of altruism in our society. He favors legislation “limiting the freedom of marriage and divorce; discrediting panderers in all their high-brow and low-brow forms; and depriving irresponsible parents of certain privileges, including the right to neglect and demoralize their children.”⁸ He believes that the schools “must establish a carefully elaborated system for developing altruism in their pupils. They must

⁷ Sorokin, *The Reconstruction of Humanity* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1948), p. 99.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

instill in them a set of universal values and norms, free from superstition and ignorance as well as from the degrading, cynical, nihilistic, and pseudo-scientific theories of our time."⁹

In *The Pattern of the Past* (1949) Sorokin and Pieter Geyl, a Dutch historian, criticize Professor Arnold J. Toynbee's views on the rise and fall of civilizations. Sorokin's chief argument is that the civilization, as Toynbee conceives it, is not the proper unit of study. Toynbee, like the functional anthropologists (says Sorokin), wrongly assumes that a civilization is an integrated system without congeries elements.

In *Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis* (1950) Sorokin presents and evaluates critically the theories of world history propounded by Nikolai Danilevsky, Oswald Spengler, Arnold J. Toynbee, Walter Schubart, Nikolai Berdyaev, F. S. C. Northrop, Alfred L. Kroeber, Albert Schweitzer, and other writers. He finds that recent systems of social philosophy have been symptomatic of a decaying Sensate order heading pell-mell for chaos and eclecticism. The theories under consideration all appear to take this social disintegration into account and to be influenced by it in one way or another. Northrop's and Kroeber's theories agree fundamentally with those of Sorokin, he says. Northrop in positing his dichotomy between an esthetic and a theoretic component in cultural phenomena makes his greatest mistake in lumping elements together in his esthetic component some of which Sorokin considers Sensate and some Ideational. Kroeber errs chiefly in relying on a Sensate source, *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, for his data; this source is riddled with bias in favor of Sensate achievements. Though the other authors are guilty of more mistakes than Kroeber or Northrop, there are several major areas in which they all agree. Sorokin believes that these areas of agreement among experts represent valid findings.

Sorokin's Harvard Research Center in Altruistic Integration and Creativity produced its first book in 1950: *Explorations in Altruistic Love and Behavior*, edited by Sorokin and featuring three articles by him. Many sociologists confronting a book in which are asked such questions as "Can Eros be separated from Agape?" may find themselves on unfamiliar ground; perhaps this is why this book, edited by one of the leading men in

the history of sociology, has received scant attention in our journals. Since it has been unduly neglected, and since it is the start of a potentially fruitful chapter of Sorokin's scholarly life, it will be considered in some detail here.

The lead article by Sorokin is entitled "Love: Its Aspects, Production, Transformation, and Accumulation." The various forms of love—religious, ethical, ontological, physical, biological, psychological, and social—are discussed. Sorokin surveys the forms of love and prescriptions for its furtherance in a number of cultures, Eastern and Western, ancient and modern. While ranging over all the major religions in quest of worthy maxims about love and analyses of it, he finds the ancient scriptures of India the most valuable source of knowledge in this area. Love can be analyzed into five components or dimensions: intensity, extensity, duration, purity, and adequacy. Sorokin expresses regret at the nonscalar nature of these dimensions and the difficulty of defining their quantitative relationships. The five dimensions of love are reminiscent of the Sensate Jeremy Bentham's felicific calculus.

Sorokin speaks of the love for humanity of Jesus, Gandhi, and other spiritual leaders as "unrequited." Since all they got for their altruistic actions was martyrdom, he reasons, the source of their love-energy must be sought outside the customary human channels.

The most probable hypothesis . . . is that an inflow of love comes from an intangible, little-studied, possibly superempirical source called "God," "the God-head," "the Soul of the Universe," the center of the highest energy in the universe, the "Ultimate and Highest Value," the "Heavenly Father," "Truth," and so on.¹⁰

Love-energy is a very real thing. It "is even more imperishable than any other form of energy, including radioactivity; not a particle of it is lost."¹¹ This energy can be stored up in institutions and organizations. Mortification of the flesh helps to produce love-energy; such practices as the isolation of the hermit have been found effective.

As a beginning in the empirical description and analysis of love, Sorokin reports two studies he has made of affiliative and hostile tendencies in human beings. The processes of love production in

¹⁰ Sorokin (ed.), *Explorations in Altruistic Love and Behavior* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950), p. 41.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

two groups, one composed of nursery-school children and the other of Harvard students, are described.

A number of other writers, mainly psychologists and biologists, contribute articles dealing with various aspects of altruism. Ashley Montagu, the distinguished anthropologist, has a chapter on the biological basis of altruistic cooperation. Montagu has since published a short book in which he points out the overemphasis by Darwin and his followers on tooth-and-claw competition in evolution and makes a scientific case for a belief in cooperation, quoting liberally from the works of leading modern biologists.¹² Montagu and Sorokin agree that there is a firm biological basis for human altruism.

Altruistic Love (1950) is a study of the lives and characteristics of 3,090 Roman Catholic saints, 415 Russian Orthodox saints, 500 contemporary Americans honored for neighborly deeds on Tom Breneman's "Breakfast in Hollywood" radio program, and 112 individuals commended for neighborliness by a group of Harvard students. In an effort to find out what makes a saint or a good neighbor, Sorokin and his assistants catalogued such things as the age, sex, marital status, family size, socio-economic background, political views, and type of altruistic behavior of their subjects. In this way Sorokin hopes to make the first steps toward discovering what kinds of people are likely to become saintly or neighborly, and eventually to lay the groundwork for producing more of these types than we have heretofore been blessed with.

The Meaning of Our Crisis (1951) is the last book by Sorokin available to the writer. It is another concise indictment of the ills of our world, with remarks on totalitarianism and on the "law of polarization" in time of crisis, whereby ordinary people turn into saints or sinners.

SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOROKIN'S THOUGHT

Sorokin's work in English fits nicely into three periods: (1) an early period of miscellaneous writings, (2) sociocultural dynamics and social criticism, and (3) altruism.

His early period began when he came to this country and ended when he left Minnesota for Harvard. The broad range of his interests during

¹² Ashley Montagu, *Darwin: Competition and Cooperation* (New York: Henry Schuman, Inc., 1952).

these years can be illustrated by listing his books: *Leaves from a Russian Diary*, *The Sociology of Revolution*, *Social Mobility*, *Contemporary Sociological Theories*, *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, and the *Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology*. Sorokin began this period a disillusioned former liberal but an adherent of some of the approaches common in the social science of the time. Strong traces of behaviorism and Paretanism appear in his earlier writings of this period, especially in *The Sociology of Revolution*. A paramount idea is that human actions are irrationally determined. In *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*, written toward the end of this period in 1929, the behavioristic emphasis has become less noticeable and the conservative social values which are to be strongly featured in Sorokin's later works begin to appear.

After going to Harvard in 1930, Sorokin began his monumental study of world civilization which led to the work for which he is best known, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. This work set the tone for the condemnation of our Sensate culture which is prominent in all of Sorokin's writings since 1937. Sorokin's extensive study convinced him that our civilization is overly materialistic, disorganized, and in imminent danger of collapse. He spent the next dozen years in warning the public of the danger and seeking a way out.

By the late 1940's he began to see what he felt was a solution. What is needed urgently, he decided, is an understanding of the ways in which altruistic behavior can be fostered. Only by making men more altruistic can we attack the Sensate major premise on which our society is foundering. In 1946 Sorokin established the research center in altruism, and since 1950 his books have been the product of this center's program. His interest in altruism has developed logically from his study of social and cultural dynamics. He is attacking the roots of the problems he first raised in the 1930's.

EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The enormous amount of historical and statistical material gathered together in *Social and Cultural Dynamics* has probably been Sorokin's greatest contribution to date. He and his assistants did a more complete and systematic job of classifying cultural items and tracing their fluctuations than anyone before or since has attempted. Staggering numbers of artistic and literary works, legal and ethical codes, and forms of social relationships

are classified, and their changing proportions of Sensatism and Ideationalism are graphed. Sorokin has shown quantitatively, where others have only argued qualitatively, to what extent fluctuations in thought patterns parallel fluctuations in other departments of life. His numerical time charts should enable historians in the future to delineate the boundaries of such periods as the Middle Ages and the Hellenistic Age with a precision never before possible.

Sorokin's miscellaneous contributions to sociology are many. *Contemporary Sociological Theories*, in which he classifies and evaluates a number of schools and individuals, has probably not been surpassed; its continued wide use today, 25 years after it was published, attests its quality. His ventures in rural sociology bring together a large variety of theories and investigations in a form which allows an average student to benefit from them. His analyses of the structure and functioning of diverse social groups and collectivities, most concisely presented in *Society, Culture, and Personality* but scattered also through the *Dynamics*, provide many suggestive insights.

His research in altruism has not yet proceeded far enough to lend itself to valid judgment; we must wait and see what comes of it.

Sorokin's division of cultural supersystems into Ideational, Idealistic, and Sensate types and his treatment of how the different aspects of life vary according to which supersystem is dominant can be considered a sociology of knowledge.¹³ He views the relation between ideas and the social situations of thinkers from the direction opposite to that which has been customary in this field. Mannheim and Durkheim have investigated the role of social existence in forming men's ideas; to Sorokin, ideas lie back of social existence. Sorokin frequently inveighs against one-cause theories of society, but it may well be asked if he has not assigned causative priority in his system to beliefs about the supreme good and ultimate reality.¹⁴

¹³ The sociology of knowledge may be defined roughly as the study of the relation between ideas and the social backgrounds of the men who produce ideas. Historians have dealt with this problem for years, but the name "sociology of knowledge" seems justified on the ground that sociologists like Mannheim and Durkheim have brought new approaches and insights to the field.

¹⁴ Jacques J. Maquet in his study of Mannheim's and Sorokin's sociologies of knowledge states several times that Sorokin makes ideas the dominant causal force

Actually he is unclear, or perhaps contradictory, on the matter of what causes sociocultural change. One usually has the impression in reading his work that a society's view of reality and goodness—its major premise—once incorporated into its culture and institutions, determines everything else, within broad limits. In his more recent works he often says that our Sensate major premise is causing all our trouble and is what needs to be changed. At other times, however, he speaks of immanent self-regulation, and argues against the "fallacy" that any one part of a sociocultural system causes other parts to change. He frequently warns against an attempt to explain sociocultural change on the basis of "this or that external factor"—by which he means factors external to the system whose change is being studied—yet at times he acknowledges that external factors can affect a system. His resolution of this seeming difficulty appears to be that external causes can accelerate or retard, reinforce or hinder the unfolding of the potentialities of a system, and can even kill the system, but cannot change the basic nature of the system or its inner potentialities; but this is not always clear to the reader.

Sorokin's sociology of knowledge has been criticized on the ground that he quantifies the unquantifiable, that one cannot properly use index numbers and time series to study such subjective things as musical masterpieces and beliefs about reality. This does not seem a valid criticism so long as he confines himself to tracing the potency and influence of such mental products and does not try to assess their value or truth. He has, unfortunately, allowed innumerable value judgments to mar the objectivity of his work, but the writer does not believe that any appreciable bias has crept into his delineation of cultural supersystems or his description of their fluctuations. Certainly one will not err in placing a painting of a Christian saint in a different category from a magazine picture advertising a shiny new Buick, or the Bible in an opposite class from a racy novel. Perhaps the classifications of family and other social relationships are open to more question, since personal values are less easily excluded from categorizations of this kind; but even if we did not choose to accept the Sensate-Idealistic-Ideational classification we would be indebted to

in history. See Maquet, *The Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. by John F. Locke (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1952).

Sorokin for showing how types of social relationships have fluctuated.

A more serious methodological question arises from Sorokin's implicit assumption that the mass culture of a period is adequately represented in its visible remains. This assumption is particularly dangerous when applied to societies where mass education is lacking or power is oligarchic. Can one deduce from the priestly writings of the Middle Ages that the peasants of that day were occupied with thoughts of God to the exclusion of thoughts of the stomach and sex glands, any more than one can infer from today's scholarly writings that most Americans are deeply concerned with nuclear physics, sonnets, and the music of Bach and Beethoven? Similarly it is questionable whether the cathedrals of the Middle Ages necessarily indicate that piety at that time was universal, any more than the pyramids of Egypt make it evident that the Egyptian masses were mainly interested in the welfare of the Pharaohs in the world to come.

The threefold classification of Sensate, Idealistic, and Ideational supersystems is open to the same objections that are raised against all such systems. Sorokin at times seems to be forcing his data to make them fit. This is especially true when he tries to distinguish between Idealistic periods and Mixed or eclectic ones. The only distinction appears to be based on an evaluation of the Idealistic type as a sublime, harmonious blend and of the Mixed type as an unintegrated hash. The criteria for this distinction are nowhere made exact or operational. Sorokin nevertheless does not seem to torture his data to make them fit his pattern to nearly the same extent as Toynbee, Spengler, and other global systematizers.

A number of critics have intimated that in reading the *Dynamics* the words "good" and "bad" might profitably be substituted for Ideational and Sensate. They are not quite correct in this. Sorokin prefers the Idealistic mentality to either of the two polar types, since he finds in it a balance of their best elements and an absence of their excesses and blind spots. In the Idealistic culture mentality we have a healthy cultivation of the whole man; neither his animal needs nor his capabilities for spiritual striving are neglected.

While Sorokin favors the Idealistic mentality above all, he seems to prefer the Ideational to the Sensate. Repeatedly he condemns the contemporary Sensate culture in no uncertain terms. We are sinking deeper into the "muck of the

sociocultural sewers."¹⁵ Our literature and art are "physio-dirty," dealing with "rogues, gamins, ragamuffins, hypocrites, mistresses, profligates . . . prostitutes; the victims of gigantic passions, unbalanced and abnormal."¹⁶ We try to make our prisons better than our first-class hotels, thus favoring criminals over noncriminals.¹⁷ Our literature is "standardized pabulum."¹⁸ We are afflicted with insecurity, unhappiness, empiricism, music critics, and baseball players.¹⁹ While Ideational culture is not perfect, those who condemn it are "intellectual lilliputians"²⁰ writing "tittle-tattle."²¹ Idealistic culture is harmonious;²² it requires an intellect far above average;²³ it is sublime;²⁴ it is marvelous.²⁵

Throughout the *Dynamics* and Sorokin's more recent books one sees condemnations of our present Sensate culture like those presented above. These nonscientific elements are not segregated from the body of the work and labeled as editorials rather than news; on the contrary, the whole of the *Dynamics* is interlarded with asides on the horror of the twentieth century. Many critics have found these infusions of sentiment objectionable in a writer who states that "the task of an investigator is to indicate the essential characteristics of each culture, leaving the evaluations to the sense or nonsense of others."²⁶ Assuming that Sorokin is an investigator, he has gone beyond his allotted task.

Sorokin makes no secret of being a philosopher as well as a sociologist when he outlines his new epistemology, the integralist theory of truth. This new system of truth encompasses reason, observation, and intuition, and he believes it is therefore superior to any one of the three taken alone. Some questions come to mind concerning this epistemology, particularly regarding the validity of intuition. By intuition he means the way of cognition, different from sensory perception or logical-mathematical and syllogistic deduction

¹⁵ Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, IV, 775.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 644.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 500.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 659.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 565, and II, 52.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 93.

²¹ *Ibid.*, I, 134.

²² *Ibid.*, I, 75.

²³ *Ibid.*, I, 143.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 321.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 102.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 678. Similar statements are made in I, p. 669; and in II, 14.

and induction, that comes from a supersensory source. The value of intuition, says Sorokin, is demonstrated in three ways: (1) Most scientific discoveries have resulted from intuitions; they have only been confirmed, not originated, by observation and logic. (2) Inspiration is the source of beauty in art and poetry. (3) Intuition affords us our only deep communion with the Absolute.²⁷ One could object that: (1) No scientist would deny the occurrence or value of "hunches"; but many would deny that a hunch *per se* demonstrates anything; it merely suggests, perhaps rightly and perhaps wrongly. (2) Intuitional inspiration in the creative artist or in the scientist may be nothing more than a name given to a psychological process which has not yet been adequately described in naturalistic terms. (3) No one has proved to the satisfaction of all competent thinkers that there is any such thing as the Absolute; or that, if there is, we are actually in communion with it when we think we are. One can show only by intuition itself that there is such a thing as intuition in Sorokin's sense.

The objection that his epistemology is not of demonstrated validity could of course be raised against anyone, not merely against Sorokin. No one has ever proved the validity of any theory of truth except as a workable tool within an agreed-upon frame of reference. As a workable tool, however, intuition cannot be said to rank with observation and logic for most scientific purposes. Nearly all men of sound mind think and see in much the same way, and can reach substantial agreement on matters of observation and logic if their assumptions are the same. (This is a very important "if.") Intuition, however, is too indefinable, too subjective, and too much affected by men's social backgrounds. Intuitions of the Absolute cannot be subjected to any satisfactory test of universal validity. What shall we do if Sorokin intuits that reality is an Infinite Manifold while I intuit that reality is myself and that all else is but an illusory creation of my brain?

Sorokin and some of his followers are on treacherous ground when they try to show that intuition, logic, and the senses are all valid, though all incomplete, as sources of truth. In the words of Jacques J. Maquet, who agrees with Sorokin:

The fact that none of these three answers to the question of the nature of reality has succeeded in eliminating the other two, is explained by the partial validity of each one of them. Actually, if one of the

three answers were completely true, it would give an adequate knowledge of reality—it would allow the best adaptation to reality. It would be incomprehensible that such an attitude would not eliminate the other two. If, on the other hand, one of the attitudes were entirely false, its total inadequateness to reality would prevent it from surviving long.²⁸

This position is vulnerable. It is questionable whether any idea which helps men to get along here on this planet is therefore ultimately true. That an idea is useful proves only that it is useful. Men have always believed, with pleasant consequences, a great number of things which are utterly wrong. The argument is weakened further by the fact that Sorokin describes the contemporary mentality as one which denies the existence of anything beyond what our senses can perceive, while the Ideational and Idealistic mentalities affirm the existence of a supersensory world. These belief systems are mutually exclusive; one or the other of them simply has to be wrong.

Sorokin states a number of times, and most reviewers and summarizers of his work repeat, that he finds in history neither linear evolution nor recurring cycles of social change, but merely "fluctuation" or "incessant variation." This does not seem correct if by cycles one means recurring, patterned, predictable events or relationships. The conclusion that seems to emerge from the books is this: Western civilization has thus far made two journeys through a cycle which runs as follows: Ideational, Idealistic, Sensate, Chaos. We are now entering an age of Chaos, from which we will move into an Ideational period. Wars, revolutions, famines, and pestilences can be expected to increase in number and intensity, since that is what happens when a Sensate culture is dying and its Ideational successor has not yet risen from its ashes. This would appear to be a cyclical theory.²⁹

²⁸ Maquet, *op. cit.* Sorokin expresses such a viewpoint in *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, IV, 741-743.

²⁹ Sorokin in analyzing his curves of historical change in various compartments of life recurs repeatedly to the notion that things fluctuate but do not change in a circular or linear fashion. See, for instance, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, II, 33, 203, 226, 251, 273, and 513; III, 131, 160, 192, 247, 357, and 481; and IV, 732 ff. His curves do indeed seem to show, first, that fluctuation in each area of life such as the amount of warfare, the forms of art, the dominant ethical beliefs, and so on, does not proceed in a line or in cycles throughout history; and second, that there can be found few, if any, invariant correlations between certain types of change

²⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, 746-761.

Sorokin is more consistently an advocate of social action in *The Reconstruction of Humanity* than in any of his other books. Apart from disagreements with his political philosophy, which stands well to the right of center, one might legitimately question some of his recommendations on more objective grounds. In the field of politics, for example, he favors stripping nations of their sovereignty and political parties of their power. He recommends disarmament and the setting up of a world government (pp. 161-165). These recommendations may come as a surprise to a reader, since on pages 17-24 of the same book Sorokin has attempted to refute the arguments in favor of world government, particularly the assertion that the coexistence of a multitude of sovereign states is the cause of war. Sorokin would like the salaries of government officials in the new world state to be low, so that no one would enter politics for purposes of greed. It is doubtful that one could show that where political salaries are lowest, political morality is highest; indeed, arguments have been advanced for an opposite belief. The value of any one of Sorokin's recommendations for planned change in the schools, in government, or elsewhere becomes suspect if we accept his finding in *Time Budgets of Human Behavior* that planning is useless because human actions are unpredictable.

In seeking to demonstrate that the Godhead is in one department of life and certain changes in another department. For example, during a change from a predominance of totalitarian to democratic governments, wars may be either increasing or decreasing in number and severity, and sexuality in literature may be either waxing or waning. On the over-all level of sociocultural supersystems, however, he does appear to have established a cycle which runs from Ideational through Idealistic to Sensate, with an increase of calamities and disturbances when Idealistic gives way to Sensate and when Sensate bows to Ideational. Western civilization has run this course twice, and Sorokin predicts for the immediate future a rise in calamities, followed by an Ideational period. Each of these types of dominant mentality is associated, though not perfectly, with the domination of certain forms in the lesser compartments of life, especially in those which are pre-eminently "mental" such as religion and art. If there were no such association, no period would be integrated and all would be made up principally of congeries. If there were no uniformities in social change, but only trendless fluctuation, Sorokin could scarcely predict the decline of our present Sensate culture and the emergence of an Ideational one.

a source of altruism, Sorokin departs from the accustomed paths of social analysis and arrives at an integralist explanation for the altruism of great leaders like Jesus, Gandhi, and St. Francis. Since the love of these men for humanity is unrequited, he says, the usual view that love is a response to being loved by others will not suffice in these cases; we must consider the new and little-studied possibility that men of this kind receive an inflow of altruism from God or some hitherto unknown source.³⁰ This explanation is in fact not a new one, and it has been studied, or at any rate talked about, frequently and at great length. It is perhaps permissible to question whether the love of Gandhi and Jesus was in fact unrequited. Little children came to Jesus, and lepers sought him that they might be cured. Thousands of Indians followed Gandhi to the sea to make salt with him in defiance of the British colonial government. Few of us receive this much love from other people.

By 1950, Sorokin had fully freed himself from the restrictions of conventional sociology. In a statement reminiscent of Keats, he said:

Metaphysically, Truth (science, religion, philosophy), Beauty (the fine arts), and Goodness (ethics) are three main value-aspects of one Undivided Godhead or the Manifold Infinity. Empirically, each "energy" of this trinity can be transformed into other [sic] two energies: Truth is transformable into Beauty and Goodness, Goodness into Truth and Beauty, and Beauty into Truth and Goodness. Real Truth is beautiful and good; real Beauty is true and good; and real Goodness is true and beautiful.³¹

Probably the most general criticism that can be made of Sorokin's work is that he has not kept his promise to investigate social events dispassionately and let others evaluate them. It is regrettable that he has not, for his infusion of metaphysics and crusading zeal into sociological works has obscured for some of the more naturalistically inclined sociologists the value of his many contributions to historical and sociological analysis. It would be good if someone would abstract from Sorokin's works all that is written in such a way as to fit the conventional, naturalistic social science orientation and bring it together in one place,

³⁰ Sorokin (ed.), *Explorations in Altruistic Love and Behavior*, p. 41.

³¹ Sorokin, *Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950), p. 270.

separated from that part of his writings that is more metaphysical and evaluative than sociological in the usual sense. Similarly, his normative and hortatory writings could be collected and freed from the encumbrance of any more purely

sociological analysis than is necessary to make their meaning clear. If this were done his sociology might win a fairer hearing than it has been accorded among sociologists, and his call to action still not be sacrificed.

A CONCEPTUAL SCHEME FOR THE SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS*

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INTRODUCTION

PROCESSES through which agents of government are selected constitute fundamental elements in the structure of modern society. One of the most important of these procedures in non-totalitarian states is the election campaign. This is a complex process in which two or more candidates for the same administrative, judicial, or legislative office contend for the approval given by a particular electorate in a final ballot which ends the contest.¹

From the societal standpoint, election campaigns seem to serve two major functions in addition to the choosing of governmental officers: they reinforce group values and they provide one of the important means for defining policy. Thus, the sociological study of such campaigns would seem to require a framework of concepts which would facilitate: (1) a clearer understanding of the relationship between an election campaign and the social conditions within which it occurs; (2) the identification of the important variables and their interrelationships operative in determining the outcome of election campaigns; and (3) the specification of the characteristics of election

campaigns which, on the one hand, reinforce values, and, on the other, define policy.

A conceptual scheme to fill these needs was formulated and used by the writer in a study of the five gubernatorial campaigns of the late Eugene Talmadge of Georgia.² It is the purpose of this paper to present the main outlines of this conceptual framework.

First, a few remarks to make clearer the relationships between the character of a society and the general nature of campaigns are set forth. Secondly, the nature of certain key clusters of variables in the internal structure of an election campaign is briefly sketched and, at the same time, a typology for classifying particular manifestations of each of these variable clusters in various campaigns is presented. Subsequently, combinations of these types of components will be used to suggest a general classificatory system for total campaign structures. Next, some preliminary exploration of the usefulness of the two extreme types in this classificatory system is made. And finally, some propositions about the factors conditioning the outcome of election campaigns are formulated.

SOCIETAL SITUATION

Every campaign is an outgrowth from its encompassing society and develops within a particular situation.³ The internal structure of a

² Willis A. Sutton, Jr., *The Talmadge Campaigns, A Sociological Analysis of Political Power* (unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C., 1952).

³ W. I. Thomas, "The Behavior Pattern and the Situation," *Publications of the American Sociological Society: Papers and Proceedings*, 22 (1928), pp. 1-14; Edmond H. Volkart, *Social Behavior and Personality:*

* Read before the sixteenth annual meeting of the Southern Sociological Society, Chattanooga, Tennessee, March 29, 1953.

¹ This phenomenon is a part of the broader field of politics which has frequently been defined as the study of all struggles over power. See: H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds. and trs.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford Press, 1946), pp. 77-78; Joseph S. Roucek, "Political Behavior as a Struggle for Power," *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 6 (July 1941), pp. 341-351; and Harold D. Lasswell, *Politics, Who Gets What, When, How?* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1936), p. 19.