

Chapter 1 : Pitirim Aleksandrovich Sorokin | American Sociological Association

Sorokin and Civilization is a festschrift to Pitirim Sorokin, one of the most famed figures of twentieth-century sociology and first president of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (ISCSC).

Sorokin Harper and Row: Sorokin revised and abridged in one volume by the author, Transaction Books: Their Structure and Dynamics by Pitirim A. Sorokin in Review edited by Philip J. Harper and Row, [STT] The organism of the Western society and culture seems to be undergoing one of the deepest and most significant crises of its life. We are seemingly between two epochs: We are living, thinking, acting at the end of a brilliant six-hundred-year-long Sensate day. The oblique rays of the sun still illumine the glory of the passing epoch. But the light is fading, and in the deepening shadows it becomes more and more difficult to see clearly and to orient ourselves safely in the confusions of the twilight. The night of the transitory period begins to loom before us and the coming generations—perhaps with their nightmares, frightening shadows, and heart-rending horrors. Beyond it, however, the dawn of a new great Ideational or Idealistic culture is probably waiting to greet the men of the future. A full half century after its appearance, hardly a page of The American Sex Revolution is dated, and readers today will look repeatedly at the publication date for reassurance that the book was actually written during the supposedly tranquil years of the Ozzie and Harriet era. The harmful trends that Sorokin described in his book, many of which were cause for only moderate concern in their own time, would become much more extreme in subsequent decades, and today are generally acknowledged as a major source of social and cultural decline in what is not inaccurately described as a "post-Christian" West. These include declining birth rates and diminished parental commitment to the welfare of children; vastly increased erotic content in movies, plays, novels, magazines, television shows, radio programs, song lyrics, and commercial advertising; increased divorce, promiscuity, premarital sex, extramarital sex, homosexuality, spousal abandonment, and out-of-wedlock births; and related to these developments, a growing increase in juvenile delinquency, psychological depression, and mental disorders of every description. So extreme have some of these trends become, particularly since the late s, that many today can look back nostalgically upon the s when Sorokin issued his warnings as a period of great social stability, "family values," and dedication to traditional Christian understandings of sex, marriage, and child rearing. The American Sex Revolution begins with stark acknowledgment that a radical change in sexual mores and sexual practices has come about in America in the 20th century whose effects permeate all aspects of American life. Our civilization has become so preoccupied with sex that it now oozes from all pores of American life! Whatever aspect of our culture is considered, each is packed with sex obsession. Its vast totality bombards us continuously, from cradle to grave, from all points of our living space, at almost every step of our activity, feeling, and thinking! We are completely surrounded by the rising tide of sex which is flooding every compartment of our culture [and] every section of our social life. While we may not think of a sexual revolution the way we do a political, economic, or social-class revolution, the effects of the American sex revolution may be just as momentous as those of the more familiar kinds of social upheavals. It is changing the lives of men and women more radically than any other revolution of our time. This is a dramatic change from the practice of the great novelists of the 19th century like Tolstoy and Flaubert, Sorokin explains, who "depicted illicit passion as a tragedy for which hero and heroine alike paid with their lives or by long suffering. Sex obsession in what Sorokin calls the "pulp" or "sham" literature"i. In addition to the trends in literature, The American Sex Revolution offers trenchant sketches of the trends towards greater sexualization in several other areas of American arts and media including painting, sculpture, music, films, plays, television shows, radio broadcasts, commercial advertising, and the popular press. Other developments in American culture richly documented in the book include a trends in law making divorce much easier to obtain; b trends in social science in which "sex-obsessed ethnologists produce fables about primitive peoples which extol promiscuity, recommend premarital and extramarital relations, and throw into the ashcan all arguments for our existing institutions of monogamous marriage and family as obsolete and scientifically indefensible" [Margaret Mead is the unnamed target here]; and, c trends in ethics and moral philosophy whereby "new beatitudes have been

successfully spread throughout our nation" such that divorce and spousal desertion are no longer punished by public obloquy, while "continence, chastity, and faithfulness are increasingly viewed as oddities"â€"ossified survivals of a prehistoric age. Much of the rest of The American Sex Revolution is devoted to spelling out in very concrete terms the harmful effects of these multiple developments upon the well-being of individuals, families, and society at large. Contrary to what is sometimes said about the greater creativity of bohemian intellectuals and other sexual profligates, history, Sorokin says, shows unmistakably that any society given over to sex obsession, such as ancient Greece and Rome in their later stages, loses the self-discipline, sensitivity, sense of purpose, and dedication to a demanding task that is necessary for any kind of great creative achievement. Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, and others are sometimes held up as examples of great creative artists who led sexually dissolute lives. This shows, some say, that sexual dissoluteness either has little effect upon creative output or may even enhance it. But such claims, Sorokin says, are refuted by the historical record. The illicit liaisons of Mozart and Chopin had a clearly depressive influence upon their artistic lives he points out, and poor Schubert was led to an early grave by the venereal disease he contacted through his sexual adventures. Most of the greatest achievements in Western philosophy and fine arts were the product of creative personalities who, in their personal lives, were anything but sexual adventurers. Sorokin offers a long list: These, and many of the other great creators of Western culture "were in their sex life either normal from the standpoint of the prevailing standards of their society and period, or were more continent than their contemporaries. He draws heavily in support of this contention from the extensive research of the British anthropologist J. Unwin whose *Sex and Culture*¹ presents a richly documented theory of cultural flourishing and decline in which the social control of sexuality plays a key role. Unwin illustrates his views with innumerable examples taken from both literate and preliterate cultures. In their early phases, Sorokin explains, each of these cultures observed great modesty in their visual arts in the way they depicted the human body, but in their later phases their art became increasingly preoccupied with eroticism and sexualized display. A tendency in this direction could also be seen in Italy during the late Renaissance and early modern period, Sorokin says, but the Catholic Counter- Reformation and the ascetical strains in early Protestantism temporarily turned back this trend. By the early 20th century, however, Western society rapidly abandoned its older religious restraints and moral values regarding sex and plunged headlong into a sexual revolution whose harmful consequences for the overall health and well-being of society can hardly be overstated. This revolution in sexual mores occurred in Europe shortly before it occurred in the United States, but by the middle of the 20th century Americans were rapidly catching up to their European counterparts and in some respects even surpassing them. This is because those brought up in the period before the sex revolution often retain much of their older ways of discipline and restraint, and even their children have solid parental role models to look back upon as a partial restraining influence. Such a society is marked by advanced dissipation, diminished creativity, antisocial behavior, and general economic and cultural decline. The judgment of history is unmistakable: Sorokin describes this policy as follows: During the first stage of the Revolution, its leaders deliberately attempted to destroy marriage and the family. Free love was glorified by the official "glass of water" theory: The legal distinction between marriage and casual sexual intercourse was abolished. The Communist law spoke only of "contracts" between males and females for the satisfaction of their desires either for an indefinite or a definite periodâ€"a year, a month, a week, or even for a single night. One could marry and divorce as many times as desiredâ€" Bigamy and even polygamy were permissible under the new provisions. Abortion was facilitated in state institutions. Premarital relations were praised and extramarital relations were considered normal. Within a few years juvenile delinquency rose in Russia; hordes of wild, undisciplined, parentless children became a menace to the stability of the new regime; lives were wrecked; divorces, abortions, mental illness, and domestic conflicts of all kinds skyrocketed; and work in the nationalized factories began to suffer. Recognizing their mistake, the totalitarian leaders of the Soviet Union made a complete about-face at the end of the s, Sorokin explains, and essentially reestablished the status quo ante. The "glass of water theory" was declared to be counterrevolutionary, abortion was prohibited, the freedom to divorce was radically curtailed, and both premarital chastity and the sanctity of marriage were officially glorified by the Soviet state. The result was that by the middle of the century Soviet society

displayed "a more monogamic, stable, and Victorian family and marriage life" than that found in most non-communist countries of the West. ASR One of the most interesting discussions in *The American Sex Revolution* is about the effect of loose sexual mores on the ability of a population to reproduce and sustain itself. One might think that a culture that encourages early sexual experimentation, premarital and extramarital sexual relationships, casual sex, multiple lifetime partners, women who say "yes" rather than "no," and many other features of a sex-liberated society would produce more babies and have a higher birth rate than a sexually more restrained or sexually "repressed" society. But the very opposite is the case, Sorokin shows, and historically societies that are in the grip of a sexual revolution, he says, will, within a generation or two, begin to start declining in population. In explaining this fact, Sorokin says that communities whose members become preoccupied with the hunt for sexual excitement and sexual pleasure usually do not want to be burdened by the obligations of raising children whose care presents great obstacles to the realization of these goals. Whether through abortion, infanticide, contraception, or the involuntary sterility that sometimes results from venereal disease, the birth rate in such societies will dramatically decline. European aristocrats were notorious for their sexual libertinism, and the attitudes and behavior patterns engendered by such class-based sex obsessions, Sorokin says, were so unfriendly to the demands of raising substantial numbers of children that it is not surprising that these aristocratic families often failed to produce enough children to continue their family lines. This trend can be seen, he says, among aristocratic families in England, France, Germany, Sweden, Russia and many other places as well. He offers many examples. In medieval Nuremberg, for instance, there were patrician families in existence at the end of the 14th century, but a century later there was barely half this amount. What is true of aristocratic families can become true of whole cultures, Sorokin says, with the result being severe depopulation. Men and women in sex-obsessed societies may or may not marry, but if they do marry their marriages are frequently childless, or produce only one or two offspringâ€”which is not enough to sustain the existing size of the group. As a consequence, Sorokin explains, the population first becomes stationary and then begins to decline. If low birth rates are combined with increased longevityâ€”that is, if fewer people die before maturityâ€”the age distribution of the population begins to shift radically upward. There are then fewer and fewer young people in the society and a preponderance of middle-aged and older people. This kind of situation, Sorokin says, has a disastrous effect upon the economic, technological, artistic, and military vitality of the society involved, and the society rapidly declines. A nation largely composed of middle-aged or elderly people enfeebles itself physically, mentally, and socially, and moves toward the end of its creative mission and leadership. Contrary to the image created by much of modern literature, psychology, and film, the inner world of the sexually liberated is one of inner turmoil and tension. The sexual adventurer, he explains, is dominated by his lusts and sexual desires, and is perpetually bombarded by external stimuli that challenge his weak internal control mechanism. He is a house divided against itself. The hunt for new sexual thrills is inseparable from the sex-obsession itself, and this inevitably leads to conflicts between the sexual libertine and the many persons and groups whose norms and interests he has transgressed. In such a situation, says Sorokin, the libertine cannot achieve real peace of mind. He is subject to alienation, depression and a variety of mental disturbancesâ€”not to speak of the danger of venereal disease, unwanted pregnancies, and the possibility of being maimed or murdered by an aggrieved party. And he usually must lie or dissimulate about what he is doing. The contemporary reader inevitably conjures up thoughts about some of our past presidents. Sexual liberation, Sorokin contends, is really not what it is cracked up to be in so much of our modern art, literature, movies, and songs. By contrast, Sorokin says, the more integrated personalities that reject the allurements of sexual liberation and seek to bring their animal or "lower self" into harmony with the "higher self" of their moral and spiritual values are more likely to lead an orderly life that is free from the kinds of conflicts experienced by the more profligate. Such a person can follow a clear-cut path of action determined by his highest valuesâ€”which most frequently involve a loving marriage and dedication to spouse and children. And he will attain a moral integrity and inner peace of mind beyond the comprehension of the sexually dissolute and disorderly. Such an integration of personality is always difficult to achieve, but it is much more difficult, Sorokin says, in a sex-saturated culture such as our own. It is nevertheless a goal well worth struggling for. In the penultimate chapter of *The American Sex*

Revolution Sorokin comments on "America at the Crossroads" in words with such contemporary resonance that it is hard to believe they were written almost two generations ago: As a consequence, in spite of our still developing economic prosperity, and our outstanding progress in science and technology, in education, in medical care; notwithstanding our democratic regime and way of life, and our modern methods of social service; in brief, in spite of the innumerable and highly effective techniques and agencies for social improvement, there has been no decrease in adult criminality, juvenile delinquency, and mental disease, no lessening of the sense of insecurity and of frustration. If anything, these have been on the increase, and already have become the major problems of our nation. What this means is that the poisonous fruits of our sexmarriage- family relationships are contaminating our social life and our cultural and personal well-being. Our trend toward sex anarchy has not yet produced catastrophic consequences. Nevertheless, the first syndromes of grave disease have already appeared. The new sex freedom, of course is only one factor. However, the sex factors and the accompanying disorganization of the family are among the most important contribution to these pathological phenomena. Periods of great social disorder and calamity, he says, open opportunities for both degradation and ennoblement. In what he calls "the law of polarization" which he has written about extensively in other works "troubled times are seen as ones in which the majority of the people in a society usually respond to disorder by becoming more disorganized, self-centered, and immoral. At the same time, however, a minority of the population responds to social stress" be it from war, famine, plague, revolution, genocides, or whatever "by reintegrating their personality upon a higher moral center and becoming more decent, loving, and holy. Sorokin puts sexual revolutions in the same category as other social disturbances and believes they present an opportunity for the more morally determined to detach themselves from the surrounding corruption of their society and devote themselves to a higher and nobler calling than the pursuit of bodily pleasure. For young people, in particular, Sorokin says, this is one of the great challenges of our time and a critical step in the movement away from a dying narcissistic culture to the beginning of a new, spiritually revitalized creative culture.

Who Was Pitirim Sorokin? Pitirim Sorokin was one of the giants of 20th century social thought. In terms of the scope and focus of his interests he is most readily compared to Comte, Tocqueville, and Weber, though in terms of the sheer breadth and weightiness of his literary output he even overshadows these.

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Sorokin and Civilization is a festschrift to Pitirim Sorokin, one of the most famed figures of twentieth-century sociology and first president of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (ISCSC). He was a giant of the twentieth-century stage in the larger world as well.

He has with him a vaccine which will prevent the spread of this epidemic, but a terrible blizzard turns his journey into the stuff of nightmare. A trip that should take hours turns into a metaphysical odyssey, in which he encounters strange beasts, apparitions, hallucinations and dangerous fellow men. Fantastical, comic and richly drawn, *The Blizzard* at once answers to the canon of Russian writers and makes a fierce statement about life in contemporary Russia. This is an age of great calamities. War and revolution, famine and pestilence, are again rampant on this planet, and they still exact their deadly toll from suffering humanity. Calamities influence every moment of our existence: Like a demon, they cast their shadow upon every thought we think and every action we perform. In this classic volume, Sorokin attempts to account for the effects these calamities exert on the mental processes, behavior, social organization, and cultural life of the population involved. In what way do famine and pestilence, war and revolution tend to modify our mind and conduct, our social organization and cultural life? To what extent do they succeed in this, and when and why do they prove less effective? What are the causes of these calamities, and what are the ways out? In dealing with these problems Sorokin tries to give a detailed description of the typical effects of famine and pestilence, war and revolution, such as have repeatedly occurred in all major catastrophes of this kind. To use academic language, he attempts to formulate the principal uniformities regularly manifested during such calamities. This book is a forgotten masterpiece of explanation and prediction. It opened new fields of study and broadened the scope of existing specialties. He was a giant of the twentieth-century stage in the larger world as well. He debated with Trotsky, exchanged ideas with Pavlov, and received a personal invitation to meet with President Masaryk of Czechoslovakia. He was, to paraphrase Joseph Ford, a scholar among statesmen and a statesman among scholars. The volume is divided into four parts: Merton; "Sorokin and American Sociology: Nichols; "Sorokin as Dialectician" by Robert C. Sorokin and *Civilization* will appeal to all those with an interest in cultural and historical processes and the life and theories of Sorokin. Carle Clark Zimmerman Language: University of Saskatchewan Format Available:

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A prodigious zeal for work, combined with enormous erudition, has led him to write more than thirty volumes, many of which—for example, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, *Social Mobility*, and *Contemporary Sociological Theories*—have become classics. His writings cover practically all fields of sociology, including the sociology of knowledge, the sociology of art, political sociology, social stratification, methodology, and theory. He was elected president of the International Institute of Sociology in 1929 and president of the American Sociological Association in 1931, and has received many other honors. His career may be broadly divided into two periods: With a broad foundation in philosophy, psychology, ethics, history, and law, he came to sociology by way of criminology and soon rose in the Russian academic ranks. In his student days Sorokin was politically active in the revolutionary circles of the noncommunist left; he participated in the Russian Revolution, was a member of the Constituent Assembly, secretary to Prime Minister Kerensky, and editor of the news-paper *Volia naroda*. The experiences of the revolution led Sorokin to make a radical break with the optimistic view of one-directional, material progress. Since he has been in the United States, his major sociological concerns have revolved around the processes of social organization, disorganization, and reorganization, within a panoramic view of history that stresses periodic fluctuations as the heart of social change. Analysis of sociocultural systems. Total reality is a manifold infinite which transcends any single perspective; it encompasses the truth of the senses, of the rational intellect, and of suprarational, hyperconscious faith, intuition, or insight. All three modes of cognition must be utilized in the sociological endeavor to systematically study sociocultural phenomena. These sociocultural phenomena are not randomly distributed but form coherent aggregates. Although there is no meaningful integration of all the socio-cultural items that coexist in a particular setting, sociological analysis can reveal a hierarchy of levels of integration. The highest level of integration of sociocultural meanings and values is reflected in major social institutions. All such high-level sociocultural systems those whose scope transcends particular societies are existentially organized around fundamental premises concerning the nature of reality and the principal methods of apprehending it. The range of major alternatives is limited: Correspondingly, there are three irreducible forms of truth: At various periods of history the possible basic premises are in various phases of development, and in any well-defined period of history the five principal cultural systems law, art, philosophy, science, and religion of a complex society exhibit a demonstrable strain toward consistency in their expression of reality. Cultural integration, for Sorokin, is by no means a static condition. He considers social reality to be an ever-changing process but one with recurring uniformities. Moreover, the process within socio-cultural systems is a dialectical one, for the very accentuation and predominance of one fundamental *Weltanschauung*, or basic perception of reality, leads to its exhaustion and eventual replacement by one of the two alternative *Weltanschauungen*. Another source of change is the necessarily incomplete state of integration; the mal-integration of complex parts is one of the sources of the ever-unfolding change of a system of organization. Sorokin has asserted that the maximal development of a sociocultural system emerges only after centuries. Sorokin located three major types of such patterns along a solidarity-antagonism continuum: The collapse of one integrative base and the emergence of an alternative dominant ethos are attended by prolonged periods of social crisis, wars, and other man-made disasters. Sorokin diagnosed the Russian Revolution and World War I as symptoms of vast upheavals in the sociocultural system of Western society, and as early as the 1920s he forecast further social calamities; his prophecies were borne out by the depression of the 1930s and World War II. At a time when the problem of social change and social disruption at the societal level was receiving minimal attention, Sorokin, in such systematic and comprehensive works as *The Sociology of Revolution* and *Man and Society in Calamity*, was formulating theories of sociocultural change and conducting investigations of the impact of disaster and revolution on inter-personal behavior. At the end of World War II, Sorokin did

not believe that the West had emerged from its phase of immanent crisis into a period of harmonious international development. Since then he has remained an alert critic of what he considers to be the major trends of modern society, including the concentration of power in irresponsible hands and the anarchization of sexual norms, both typical of the waning phase of sensate systems. A knowledge of these is vital if sociology is to prepare for the likely aftermath of the sensate epoch. Thus, Sorokin appears as a successor to Comte because of his interest in consensus, to Durkheim because of his interest in solidarity, and to Kropotkin because of his interest in mutual aid. Use of quantitative data. Although Sorokin has occasionally been seen as a theorist who is opposed to quantitative analysis, he has always used quantitative documentation for his theoretical interpretations. His own early work, *Social Mobility*, codifies and interprets a vast array of data showing that social mobility is a basic feature of present Western societies, although rates of mobility and systems of stratification have varied in different periods of history. His work conceptualizes social mobility broadly; it suggests types and channels of social mobility, analyzes both the structural and functional aspects of mobility including dysfunctional features, and relates the general phenomenon of mobility to its complement, social stratification. Sorokin has been active not only as a writer but also as a teacher and a promoter of sociology as a discipline. At the University of St. Petersburg he was the first professor of sociology. After leaving Russia, he taught at the University of Minnesota from 1918 to 1921, and then at the University of Chicago from 1921 to 1928, where he was the first professor of sociology. In 1928 he established at Harvard a new department of sociology, which soon attracted such able students as R. K. Merton, Talcott Parsons, and others. Yet his seminal studies are gradually being rediscovered; sociologists are coming to appreciate his systematic approach to the study of social change and especially his recognition of the role of wars and revolutions in such change. *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology*. *Fluctuation of Forms of Art*. *Fluctuation of Systems of Truth, Ethics, and Law*. *Fluctuation of Social Relationships, War, and Revolution*. *Basic Problems, Principles, and Methods*. *Time-budgets of Human Behavior*. *Harvard Sociological Studies*, Vol. 1. *A System of General Sociology*. *Who Shall Guard the Guardians? The Autobiography of Pitirim A. Sorokin*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. London and New York: Oxford University Press. Sorokin as Historical and Systemic Analyst. Pages in Charles P. Loomis and Zona K. Loomis, *Modern Social Theories: Translated by John F. Sturges*. Essays in Honor of Pitirim A. Sorokin. Cite this article Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

Chapter 4 : Sorokin and Civilization : Joseph B. Ford :

Sorokin has interpreted the contemporary Western civilization as a sensate civilization, dedicated to technological progress and prophesied its fall into decadence and the emergence of a new ideational or idealistic era.

Historical forerunners[edit] Interpretation of history as repeating cycles of Dark and Golden Ages was a common belief among ancient cultures. The Saeculum was identified in Roman times. In recent times, P. Sarkar in his Social Cycle Theory has used this idea to elaborate his interpretation of history. He wrote that each civilization has a life cycle, and by the end of the 19th century the Roman-German civilization was in decline, while the Slav civilization was approaching its Golden Age. A similar theory was put forward by Oswald Spengler " who in his *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* also argued that the Western civilization had entered its final phase of development and its decline was inevitable. The first social cycle theory in sociology was created by Italian sociologist and economist Vilfredo Pareto " in his *Trattato di Sociologia Generale* Sociological cycle theory was also developed by Pitirim A. Sorokin " in his *Social and Cultural Dynamics* , He interpreted the contemporary West as a sensate civilization dedicated to technological progress and prophesied its fall into decadence and the emergence of a new ideational or idealistic era. Alexandre Deulofeu " developed a mathematical model of social cycles that he claimed fit historical facts. He argued that civilizations and empires go through cycles in his book *Mathematics of History* in Catalan , published in He claims that each civilization passes through a minimum of three year cycles. As part of civilizations, empires have an average lifespan of years. He also stated that by knowing the nature of these cycles, it could be possible to modify the cycles in such a way that change could be peaceful instead of leading to war.

Contemporary theories[edit] One of the most important recent findings in the study of the long-term dynamic social processes was the discovery of the political-demographic cycles as a basic feature of the dynamics of complex agrarian systems. The presence of political-demographic cycles in the pre-modern history of Europe and China , and in chiefdom level societies worldwide has been known for quite a long time, [3] and already in the s more or less developed mathematical models of demographic cycles started to be produced first of all for Chinese " dynastic cycles " Usher At the moment we have a considerable number of such models Chu and Lee ; Nefedov , , , ; S. Malkov, Kovalev, and A. Malkov ; Malkov and Sergeev , a, b; Malkov et al. Recently the most important contributions to the development of the mathematical models of long-term "secular" sociodemographic cycles have been made by Sergey Nefedov, Peter Turchin , Andrey Korotayev , and Sergey Malkov. The basic logic of these models is as follows: After the population reaches the ceiling of the carrying capacity of land, its growth rate declines toward near-zero values. The system experiences significant stress with decline in the living standards of the common population, increasing the severity of famines , growing rebellions etc. As has been shown by Nefedov, most complex agrarian systems had considerable reserves for stability, however, within 50" years these reserves were usually exhausted and the system experienced a demographic collapse a Malthusian catastrophe , when increasingly severe famines, epidemics , increasing internal warfare and other disasters led to a considerable decline of population. As a result of this collapse, free resources became available, per capita production and consumption considerably increased, the population growth resumed and a new sociodemographic cycle started. It has become possible to model these dynamics mathematically in a rather effective way. Note that the modern theories of political-demographic cycles do not deny the presence of trend dynamics and attempt at the study of the interaction between cyclical and trend components of historical dynamics.

Sorokin and Civilization by Joseph B. Ford, , available at Book Depository with free delivery worldwide.

Sorokin served as the 55th President of the American Sociological Association. The address was later published in the December issue of the American Sociological Review Volume 30, Number 6, pages 1-10. The following article by Barry V. Johnston entitled "Sorokin Lives! It is reproduced in its entirety below.

Centennial Observations Pitirim Aleksandrovich Sorokin was one of the most colorful, erudite and controversial figures in American Sociology. A Komi peasant, Sorokin was born on January 21, 1888, in the village of Turya located in the cold, remote regions of Northern Russia. Sorokin was three when his mother died and the family split up. His younger brother, Prokopiyyu, stayed with a maternal aunt. He and his older brother, Vassiliy, took to the road with their father, a craftsman and icon maker, who moved frequently in search of work. When Sorokin was eleven, the family again split and he and Vassiliy were on their own. They worked as itinerant artisans wandering the Komi homelands. The Komi are highly literate, hardworking, and deeply religious. With education came political awakening. At fourteen, he was part of the organized resistance to the Czar and politics became intertwined with education in a dynamic mix. He had also been jailed six times for political defiance. They were cleaner, books were provided and treatment was more humane. Sorokin advanced academically and politically. He founded the first sociology department at the University of St. Because he as a highly vocal and persuasive anti-communist, during his last incarceration, Lenin ordered him shot. Only pleas from former political allies persuaded Lenin to exile him instead. Sorokin and his wife, Elena, whom he married in 1917, left Russia in September 1924. There, in six years, he wrote six books. Four of them defined their fields at the time: He came to Harvard as a positivistic, comparative and scientific sociologist. By he had moved towards a broadly based philosophy of history. His magnum opus, the monumental *Social and Cultural Dynamics* spanned 2, years and attempted to isolate the principles of social change as they were manifested in his studies of art, philosophy, science, law ethics, religion and psychology. Diagnosing the times as those of a decaying sensate civilization, Sorokin speculated that we were moving towards a difficult and bloody period of transition. With these concerns in mind his research turned to: For the next twenty years he wrote prolifically on war, integralism and altruism. As a humanistic scholar he wanted to understand the conditions which led to war and the methods by which they could be treated and reduced. Similar values informed his later works on revolution and institutional violence. Philosophically his middle Harvard years witnessed a shift from empiricism to integralism as the foundation for knowledge. Recognizing that science produced limited, highly circumscribed truths, Sorokin sought a more comprehensive basis for knowledge. Integralism combined empirical, rational, and supersensory aspects of knowing into an epistemology for grasping total reality. This artful blending of Eastern and Western philosophy fused the truths found in the trinity of human existence; i. Integralism would free us from the pitfalls of one dimensional thought and instrumental knowledge. It was a necessary corrective to past domination by a purely instrumental, shortsighted and often destructive form of knowledge. Sorokin further argued that sociologists spend too much time studying destructive social behaviors. If we wished to improve the human condition, we should learn how to make people more humane, compassionate and giving. This concern led Sorokin to a decade-long study of altruism and amitology. The Center sponsored many theoretical and practical research projects including seven books by Sorokin. Mainstream sociologists were often skeptical about these projects and Sorokin became somewhat of a margin figure in the discipline. Even so balanced a critic as Lewis Coser believed that the altruism studies did not merit discussion as a contribution to sociological theory Coser, However, in the s the pendulum of neglect and silence began to swing in the other direction. These books restored Sorokin to active consideration by American sociologists. Timasheff, Bernard Barber, Alex Inkeles and many others demonstrated that serious sociologists were taking Sorokin seriously. The greatest honor, however, was yet to come. In April rank-and-file sociologists spoke out in support of Sorokin for the Presidency of the American Sociological Association. Hence they organized a campaign to get his name on the Presidential ballot. The effort was successfully. Sorokin was nominated and won the election. Not only was

this the first victorious write-in nomination, but the membership spoke unequivocally in honor of Sorokin by giving him sixty-five percent of the presidential vote. He won by perhaps the largest margin in any election up to that time. These events returned Sorokin from the neglected backwaters of scholarly obscurity to a position more consistent with the contributions he had made. When Sorokin died in , it was with the dignity of an accomplished scholar. Intellectually his works opened new fields of study and broadened the scope of existing specialties. This was particularly the case in rural sociology, social mobility, war and revolutions, altruism, social change, the sociology of knowledge, and sociological theory. The lasting value of his work was in part captured by the "Sorokin lives" buttons worn by young dissident sociologists at the ASA meetings in San Francisco. He had captured in these works the very essence of the society against which they were protesting. Sorokin lived for them because he understood human pain and its relationship to social structure. He was a prophet because he saw what could, and perhaps ought to be done in society and attempted to move his brethren towards that vision. At times he was, like they were, intemperate, challenging and difficult. However, both were necessary and as a master of his craft, Sorokin left behind a discipline that grew, broadened and was enlivened by his presence. The room in a peasant house is poorly lighted by burning dry birch splinters that fill the room with smoke and elusive shadows. I am in charge of replacing each burnt splinter in the forked iron holder that hangs from the ceiling. A snowstorm howls outside. Inside, my mother lies on the floor of the room. She is motionless and strangely silent. Nearby, my older brother and a peasant woman are busily occupied. Father is away, looking for work in other villages. I do not understand exactly what has happened but I sense it is something catastrophic and irreparable. I am no longer as cold and hungry as I was a short time ago; yet I suddenly feel crushed, lonely, and lost. Howling storm, fugitive shadows, and the words "died" and "death," uttered by my brother, and "poor, poor orphans," mumbled by the peasant woman, deepen my sorrow. Next I recall the funeral service in the village church. My mother lies in a coffin as my father, brother, and the villagers silently stand with candles in their hands, and the priest, the deacon, and the reader intone funeral prayers and perform the last rites. I do not understand the words, but the "dust to dust" and the gesture of the priest throwing a handful of earth into the coffin are impressed on my memory. With the funeral service over, the coffin is placed upon a sleigh to be driven to the cemetery. My brother and I are seated upon the coffin. Father, priest, and villagers walk behind the sleigh. The snow glistens brilliantly under the cold, blue, and sunny sky. After some time - I do not remember why - my brother and I leap down from the coffin and walk home. Arriving there, we climb up and lie down under the "polati" a sleeping loft in peasant houses in northern Russia. We are silent and subdued This is my earliest memory. I was then about three years old. Of my life before this death scene, I remember nothing. Masters of Sociological Thought 2nd ed. Reflections on Life and Sociology.

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His elder brother, Vasily, was born in , and his younger brother, Prokopy, was born in . In the early s , supporting himself as an artisan and clerk, Sorokin attended the Saint Petersburg Imperial University in Saint Petersburg where he earned his graduate degree in criminology and became a professor. After the October Revolution , Sorokin continued to fight communist leaders, and was arrested by the new regime several times before he was eventually condemned to death. After six weeks in prison, Sorokin was released and went back to teaching at the University of St. Petersburg, becoming the founder of the sociology department at the university. In , Sorokin was again arrested and this time exiled by the Soviet government, emigrating in to the United States, and became a naturalized citizen in . After months in hiding, he escaped from the Soviet Union in and emigrated to the United States , becoming a naturalized citizen in . Sorokin was professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota from to , when he accepted an offer of a position by the president of Harvard University , where he continued to work until . One of his students was writer Myra Page. It is a personal and brutally honest account of the revolution and of his exile. Sorokin was also interested in social stratification, the history of sociological theory, and altruistic behavior. The theory of social differentiation describes three types of societal relationships. The first is familistic, which is the type that we would generally strive for. It is the relationship that has the most solidarity, the values of everyone involved are considered, and there is a great deal of interaction. Social stratification refers to the fact that all societies are hierarchically divided, with upper and lower strata and unequal distribution of wealth, power, and influence across strata. There is always some mobility between these strata. People or groups may move up or down the hierarchy, acquiring or losing their power and influence. Whether internal to a nation or international, peace is based on similarity of values among the people of a nation or between different nations. War has a destructive phase, when values are destroyed, and a declining phase, when some of values are restored. Sorokin thought that the number of wars would decrease with increased solidarity and decreased antagonism. He suggested that major civilizations evolve from an ideational to an idealistic, and eventually to a sensate mentality. Each of these phases of cultural development not only seeks to describe the nature of reality, but also stipulates the nature of human needs and goals to be satisfied, the extent to which they should be satisfied, and the methods of satisfaction. Sorokin has interpreted the contemporary Western civilization as a sensate civilization, dedicated to technological progress and prophesied its fall into decadence and the emergence of a new ideational or idealistic era. Helen Baratynskaya , with whom he had two sons. Sorokin died on 10 February , in Winchester, Massachusetts. A Russian Orthodox service was held at home for the family, followed by an eclectic service at the Memorial Church of Harvard University. In March the Sorokin Research Center was established at the facilities of Syktyvkar State University in Syktyvkar , Republic of Komi, for the purpose of research and publication of archive materials, mainly from the collection at the University of Saskatchewan. The first research project "Selected Correspondence of Pitirim Sorokin: American Book Company, Types, Factors, and Techniques of Moral Transformation. Templeton Foundation Press Original work published Social and Cultural Dynamics: Who Shall Guard The Guardians? Porter Sargent Publishers,

Chapter 7 : Joseph Ford Quotes (Author of Sorokin and Civilization)

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Traditional sexual mores have been dismissed as outdated, especially in an age of artificial contraception and abortifacients that dissociate procreation from a fundamentally life-giving act. Society has reduced sex to a pleasurable pursuit, and as a result, sexual promiscuity and libertinism are increasingly common. Progressives praise the sexual revolution as a period of enlightenment, whereby now people can freely engage in the pleasures of sex divested of its biological consequences. Even today the sexual revolution is viewed by some people of all generations as an unquestionably good nexus of beliefs and actions. Unwin tangentially addressed this question in *Sex and Culture*, an evaluation of the sexual practices and morality of 86 different cultures. Productive activities designated an advancement within society or a societal flourishing, such as the development of algebra or the power to harness electricity. Thus, the sexual energy of human beings could be re-directed towards other aspects of civilizational advancement, such as technological progress, art, architecture, or conquering other peoples. To anticipate an objection: After a careful evaluation a variety of civilizations—including the Romans, Greeks, Sumerians, Moors, Babylonians, and Anglo-Saxons—a clear pattern emerged for Unwin: The evidence is that in the past a class has risen to a position of political dominance because of its great energy and that at the period of its rising, its sexual regulations have always been strict. It has retained its energy and dominated the society so long as its sexual regulations have demanded both pre-nuptial and post-nuptial continence. But what exactly were those strict sexual attitudes and regulations that contributed to societal flourishing? For Unwin, the fabric of society was primarily sexual, and heterosexual monogamy was the optimal arrangement for planning, building, protecting, and nurturing the family. If enough heterosexual partners made a monogamous commitment, civilizational energy was directed toward promoting the firmest societal foundation possible: Unfortunately, each civilization allowed its success to alter its moral code and actions. The consequences of the myth that sexual activity and its impacts could be confined to the private sphere soon became apparent. Premarital, extramarital and homosexual relationships proliferated and individuals began placing their individual desires over the common good. An increase in promiscuity corresponded to a subsequent decrease in the social energy required for civilizational maintenance and innovation. Ultimately, each civilization became less cohesive, less aggressive, and less resolute. Civilizations in this liminal phase then collapsed from either 1 an internal anarchic revolution, or 2 conquest by invaders with greater social energy. Despite the differences between civilizational cultures, environments, and time periods, Unwin saw a clear civilizational cycle throughout: These societies lived in different geographical environments; they belonged to different racial stocks; but the history of their marriage customs is the same. In the beginning each society had the same ideas in regard to sexual regulations. Then the same struggles took place; the same sentiments were expressed; the same changes were made; the same results ensued. Each society reduced its sexual opportunity to a minimum and displaying great social energy, flourished greatly. The one outstanding feature of the whole story is its unrelieved monotony. It is no secret that America is the current world superpower, and the increasingly liberalized attitudes towards sex in our nation parallel those of the 86 civilizations during their periods of decline. It is also true that American society has achieved an unprecedented amount of scientific and technological progress, and many would argue that American progress has cast aside ancient notions of the importance of sexual propriety. Over 5,000 years of human history argue for the prevalence of this same mentality in all of these extinct civilizations, and not one of them has managed to break the cycle. Whatever the case, the importance of sexual morality in everyday life should not be overlooked due to its strong correlation with civilizational flourishing. Sexual restraint and ethics are not products of an ancient past that progress can suddenly replace; they are arguably the lynchpin of all of the technological and scientific progress of today. For example, it is possible that civilizational decline caused increasing promiscuity, or that both decline and promiscuity are related to a yet-to-be-identified variable. But acknowledging the fact that causation is not implied does not necessarily mean that the two variables are not causally related. Get our book, free! Join as a member now and get a free copy of *The*

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Chapter 8 : Pitirim Sorokin - Wikipedia

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Chapter 9 : Social cycle theory - Wikipedia

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