

SOCIAL MOBILITY

BY

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To

LEO PETRAJITZKY

THIS WORK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

PROFESSOR SOROKIN is already known to American readers as the author of two intensely interesting books describing the great Russian Revolution.

In this volume Professor Sorokin has made available to American readers the principles of Social Mobility first described in his earlier Russian volumes and for that reason inaccessible to most American social scientists. Although the following study introduces us to a point of view and an analysis of social relations which laid the basis for Professor Sorokin's reputation as a European sociologist, he has now gone beyond his earlier study and assembled new historical and quantitative data descriptive of a phase of the social process that has great scientific as well as practical interest.

Books on social organization hitherto written in English have done little more than state working hypotheses for future study and formulate empirical principles of relationships. In this book is assembled for the first time in accessible form a vast amount of factual evidence and quantitative data. To the author's inferences from these data we may not always agree, although he is careful to indicate the possibilities of alternative conclusions and to offer the reasons for his own inferences.

Present interest in the diffusion of culture has tended to withdraw attention from an equally important social process, namely, that of vertical social mobility. In this volume Professor Sorokin outlines with great clarity the principles that seem to cover the upward and downward circulation of individuals in the social system. He has shown the relation of this process to social stratification and social change. The book thus represents the first thoroughgoing attempt to describe social mobility in terms of social stratification and social distance. It is therefore a contribution of first importance to the study of social evolution.

F. STUART CHAPIN

PREFACE

OUR society is a mobile society *par excellence*. An intensive shifting of individuals from position to position and a great circulation of social objects in horizontal and in vertical directions are probably the most important characteristics of contemporary Western society. To them is due its dynamic character. They are responsible for many of its traits, its virtues and shortcomings, and its political and social organization. Our psychology and behavior and hundreds of other important phenomena are considerably conditioned by the intensive social mobility of contemporary Western society. Without an attentive study of social mobility it is impossible to understand many fundamental social processes, many aspects of social organization, and the very essence of "social physiology."

This explains why the phenomena of social mobility should be studied most carefully by a sociologist; and why, during the last few years, my own attention has been given to an investigation of these phenomena. In *The Sociology of Revolution*¹ I have tried to study their abnormal forms. In this book I endeavor to give a general theory of vertical mobility of individuals and social objects. An investigation of this problem presupposes a preliminary study of social stratification and social organization in its vertical aspect. Hence, the character of the book, which is a treatise in social mobility, as well as in social organization.

I am quite aware of the defects of this book. Part of them, however, may be excused by the pioneer character of the study, since the path which I had to take is not much trodden.

Speculative sociology is passing over. An objective, factual, behavioristic, and quantitative sociology is successfully superseding it. This explains why I have tried to avoid basing my statements on the data of "speech reactions" only; why in the book there is not much of speculative psychologizing and philosophizing; why, wherever it has been possible to obtain reliable quantitative data,

¹ Published by J. B. Lippincott Company in 1925.

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I have preferred to use them instead of purely qualitative description. For the same reason I have tried to avoid an "illustrative" method, consisting in confirmation of a statement by one or two illustrative facts. Still used extensively in sociology this "method" has been responsible for many fallacious theories in the field of social sciences.¹ It is time to declare a real war on this "plague of sociology." Trying to avoid it I have endeavored to support each of my principal statements by at least a brief survey of the whole field of the pertinent facts and by indicating at least the minimum of literature where further factual corroboration may be found. When I have not been sure that a certain relationship is general or firmly established, I have stressed its local or hypothetical character.

Another "plague" of sociological theories has been their permeation with "preaching or evaluating judgments" of what is good and what is bad, what is "useful" and what is "harmful." Sociological literature is inundated with "preaching works," 90 per cent of which are nothing but mere speculation, often quite ignorant, given in the name of science. As the primary task of any science is to face the facts as they really exist; and as such "preaching" only compromises the science itself, it must be avoided by all who care for and understand what science means.² This explains why the book, with the exception of a very few casual remarks, is free from such "preaching."

Trying to face the facts I naturally do not care at all whether my statements are found to be "reactionary" or "radical," "optimistic" or "pessimistic." Are they true or not—this is the only thing that is important in science. If disfiguring the facts of sociology in the interests of the upper classes is a crime against science, no less a crime is disfiguring the reality in the interests of the lower classes. Either of these crimes should be fought by scientific sociology.

In conclusion it is my duty to express my deepest gratitude

¹ See its criticism in SOMLÓ, F., *Zur Grundung einer beschreibenden Soziologie*, Berlin, 1909; STEINMETZ, "Classification des types sociaux," *L'Année sociologique*, Vol. III, p. 55 ff.

² See the appropriate statements of GIDDINGS, FRANKLIN H., *The Scientific Study of Human Society*, Chap. III, 1924.

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to the people of the United States of America, where I found the most hospitable shelter, the possibility to work, and the most instructive social school. Among many institutions of this great country I am especially indebted to the University of Minnesota to whose faculty I have the honor now to belong. Among many persons who have generously helped me in various ways I am particularly indebted to the President, Dr. Lotus D. Coffman, to the Board of Regents, and to the administration of the University of Minnesota; the head of the department of sociology of the University of Minnesota, Professor F. Stuart Chapin; the President of Vassar College, Dr. Henry Noble MacCracken; Professor Edward Cary Hayes; Professor Edward A. Ross; the director of the Institute of International Education, Dr. Stephen Duggan; former Ambassador of Russia, Professor B. A. Bakhmetieff; Professors M. I. Rostovtzeff, Charles A. Ellwood, Charles H. Cooley, Franklin H. Giddings, Stewart Paton, Howard W. Odum, Emory S. Bogardus, Ernest W. Burgess, Ellsworth Faris, Robert E. Park, Samuel H. Harper, E. Woods, John L. Gillin, Francesco Cosentini, Leopold von Wiese, Gottfried Salomon, and many others. For a suggestive criticism of the manuscript I am indebted to Professor F. Stuart Chapin and Edward Cary Hayes. For a bibliographical help, to Professors Earl Hudelson, Donald G. Paterson, and Charles Bird. For an efficient service, to the staff of the Library of the University of Minnesota.

P. S.

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