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The Promise of John W. Meyer's World Society Theory: "Otherhood" through the Prism of Pitirim A. Sorokin's Integralism

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Abstract

Times of societal turbulence are painful for social theories tending towards optimistic accounts of the world. In the current sociological mainstream, so-called World Society Theory (WST), proposed by John W. Meyer and his colleagues, is one of the most contested examples. We discuss WST core conceptual assumptions with special emphasis on the concept of "Otherhood", which receives limited attention in literature but is central for the "promise" of World Society Theory in times of multiple crises, associated with ongoing global pandemic and its expected consequences. Analyzing recent debates, we outline directions for World Society Theory further development. We argue that important contributions to WST scholarship may come from another "grand theory", Integralism, elaborated by Pitirim Sorokin in middle twentieth century, which remains ignored in discussions about WST. Integralism, including its central concept of "Altruism", may be helpful in comprehending ontological grounds of "Otherhood", which may go beyond pure social construction. Integralism also allows expanding the analysis of causes, content, mechanisms and global macro-historical dynamics of "Otherhood", stimulating its more nuanced comprehension, including theoretical and empirical distinction between its various types. Integration of Pitirim Sorokin ideas in debates about WST is important for its further elaboration, including its optimistic and, thus, highly valuable "promise" for the global world and related implications for the practical role that social science can play in global development.

Keywords World society theory · Integralism · Otherhood · Altruism · Global societal dynamics · Crisis

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Introduction

Problematic socio-economic dynamics of the latest years, including the recent global pandemic, made more and more widespread the term "crisis" in debates about social reality in public and academic circles (Karabag 2020). This situation may have significant consequences for sociology, as an institutionalized professional practice around the globe. The possible effects for the discipline from economic and social turbulence may go beyond issues like decrease in funding and prestige, which have already been a trend in recent decades (Savage and Burrows 2009; Burrows and Savage 2014; McKie and Ryan 2015; Sorokin 2016). No less possible and important are deeper transformations in the professional "ethos" of sociologists, including explicit and implicit ethical accounts they give to social reality and its dynamics, which, in turn, may have impact on broader society. The last 15 years have already shown increase in sociologists' pessimism about the present and futures of humanity worldwide, manifested in a rise in anti-neoliberal, anti-capitalist rhetoric and related politicization on a global scale (see Streib 2017; Hookway 2015; Sorokin 2016, 2018). Moreover, a recent tendency (especially, after 2016) is the rise of the radical-right mobilization and its celebrated legitimacy, the results of which have been fragmentation, social tensions (Corbett and Walker 2019), and the following attempts to justification of nationalism in its various manifestations in the academic field (see Alvarez and Rangan 2019).

On the one hand, it is perfectly normal, and even desirable, that social scholars reflect actually observed reality from an ethical perspective. On the other hand, crises, however severe they may be, do not last forever, while sociology's important goal since its emerging in the second half of the nineteenth century has been to understand and explain decades or even centuries of transformations. It may be a serious limitation if social thought preoccupies itself with pessimistic accounts of "long" macro-historical dynamics, determined by the negative tendencies observed in a relatively "short" present. In this case, the capacity to comprehend the possible "positive" historical trends decreases, which limits the potential for contribution to their further advancement in practice.

An important aspect of the emerging "global professional culture" in sociology is seemingly morally neutral choices of objects for investigations as well the interpretative lenses that, actually, stress conflicts, inequality, discrimination, etc. (rather than progress or solidarity) (see Sorokin and Froumin 2020; Streib 2017; Meyer and Risse 2018). Modernization theory, increasingly criticized nowadays, is a vivid manifestation of the difficulties that "optimistic visions" face in contemporary social sciences (see Gilman 2018).

However contested the status and legitimacy of sociology may be, our discipline is never the less constitutive for the comprehension of the social world that modern systems of science and education shape and spread. The concept of "Scientized Environment Supporting Actorhood" by John W. Meyer (2010) directly stresses the importance of universities in mobilization of actorhood (see also Schofer et al. 2020). Theories, which we as sociologists produce and promote in our research and teaching activities, are not simply hypotheses to be tested for the sake of pure knowledge accumulation. They are also competitive pictures of reality that millions of students and broader non-academic audiences observe (even if in "adapted" versions), sometimes, believe and, occasionally, even try to implement in practice.

Times of crisis are especially painful for theories tending towards optimistic accounts of social world and its dynamics. In the current sociological mainstream, so-called World Society Theory (WST), also sometimes referred to as World Culture theory or World Polity theory (Carney et al., 2012), is one of the most influential and therefore, contested examples (see Farrell 2018; Steinmetz 1999; Downey et al. 2020). The variety of World Society concepts is large, and not all of them share similar positive visions (see Meyer and Risse 2018; see also Heintz and Greve 2005). In the present paper, we focus on, perhaps, the most influential version of WST proposed by John W. Meyer and his colleagues. We discuss WST core conceptual assumptions and some recent empirical findings, trying to comprehend its optimistic and, thus, highly valuable (under the current conditions of global crisis) "promise" for the global world as well as its implications for the international communities of social scientists. We also analyze recent debates about this theory, showing that, ironically, criticism towards WST confirms some of its basic assumptions and conceptual claims (Meyer 2010, Meyer and Risse 2018).

The main goal of this paper is to demonstrate a significant potential for further development of research basing on WST, associated with several elaborations of "Integralism" - a methodological, theoretical and philosophical approach, proposed by Pitirim Sorokin in the middle twentieth century. "Integralism" remains generally ignored in debates about WST by both sides, proponents and critics. Our primary focus will be on the possible contribution of Integralism to understanding and further research in the WST concept of "Otherhood", which remains relatively little discussed in literature though bearing high potential (Meyer 2010).

We argue that several ideas of Pitirim Sorokin are highly relevant and may provide significant contribution to further research on "Otherhood" in the following directions. First, Integralism may help in comprehending the ontological nature of "Otherhood" by analyzing the latter through the prism of Sorokin's concept "Altruism". Second, Integralism offers methodological elaborations, which may advance empirical analysis of "Otherhood", including classification of its manifestations and mechanisms, with taking into account the role of "Integral Leaders" and "Integral Leadership". Third, Integralism provides broader framework for looking at the macro-historical cultural dynamics of the global world with special interest to transitions between different supra-cultural systems. Combining Pitirim Sorokin's ideas with elaborations of John W. Meyer regarding "Otherhood" allows discovering new dimensions in the optimistic promise of World Society Theory, valuable in the current times of crisis.

New Institutionalism, Otherhood and the Promise of World Society Theory

In contrast with neighboring political science or economics (Zafirovski 2019), but more similar to psychology (Mironenko and Sorokin 2020), sociology does not have a single dominant theory or methodological approach. Sociologists also vary significantly in terms of different "modes" of professional practice (Burawoy 2005, Sorokin 2016), most significant division, arguably, being between "professional" and "public" sociologies, with different national contexts and traditions diverging in their inclinations (Sorokin 2015). Another possible distinction between theories and approaches in social

sciences refers to the explicit and implicit moral accounts they give to social reality and its dynamics (see Sorokin 2018, Gorski 2013, Black 2013).

On the "pessimistic" side, there is, first of all, a variety of approaches sharing direct and explicit negative (though different) interpretations of the ways in which two major forces, the "market" and the "state", shape current societal dynamics, often with an emphasis on the resulting consequences and challenges for civil society (Burawoy 2015, Sorokin 2016, 2018). Also noteworthy are many seemingly neutral accounts by mainstream (especially, research on inequality, discrimination, migration, education, mobility, etc.), however bearing implicit negative comprehension (see Streib 2017). Major sociological theories usually do not produce optimistic "grand promises" as evident in such influential approaches as field theories (Bourdieu, Fligstein, Giddens (see Fligstein and McAdam 2011)), neo-Marxist and critical realist approaches (see Archer 2013), feminist theories, post-colonial theories, World System theory or various social mobility and stratification theories (see Meyer and Risse 2018).

The "optimistic" side of sociological spectrum is much smaller. With decline of traditional "modernization" approaches (see Gilman 2018), one of a few remaining influential major general sociological theories offering distinctive positive "promise" to the global world - is World Society Theory (WST), in its interpretation by J.W. Meyer (for brief overview of other "positive" approaches see, for example, Stebbins (2020)).

WST is a part of a theoretical strand elaborated in the last 40–50 years, the so-called "phenomenological new institutionalisms" (Meyer 2010) or "phenomenological macroinstitutionalisms" (Meyer 1999: 125). It found inspiration in writings by Berger and Luckmann as well as in earlier elaborations by Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, G.H. Mead, E. Goffman and some others (Meyer 2010). Nowadays institutional thought is visible in a significant part of academic discourses, especially in American and European sociology (there is, for instance, The Institute for World Society Studies in Bielefeld, Germany[1]). WST has also had profound influence on such fields as education research, organizational studies, research environmental issues, globalization, etc., aside of general social theory (see Meyer 2000, 2010, 2019a; Schofer et al. 2020).

World Society Theory reflects so-called "phenomenological" institutional thinking, which is different from more "realist" approaches in the following major aspects (Meyer 2010, 2019a).

First, it stresses the culturally constructed and increasingly rationalized nature of actors, including individuals, organizations and nation-states. In contrast to dominant in the 1960–80s and still influential approaches, World Society Theory questions that actors are bounded entities, which always perform pure "self-hood", assumed by concepts linked to rational choice theory in sociology as well as in economics and political science. "Social structure" in "phenomenological" institutionalism is not "a few rules", existing beyond the "borders" of rational actors maximizing their profit (Meyer 2010; Meyer and Risse 2018). It is rather a complex, multilayer and often internally contradictious set of "scripts", "models", and "myths" (Meyer 2019a). Actors may fully internalize these "scripts" and "models", may take them "for granted" (or, at least, believe that others do so), but sometimes they are also capable of their critical appraisal, comparison, selection and manipulation. This may lead to "decoupling", a

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break between, first, the real behavioral practices and symbolic manifestations, and, second, various symbolic manifestations, models and scripts, performed by a single actor (Meyer 2019a, 2010; Meyer and Risse 2018).

WST also argues that the scale of cultural environment supporting major models of actorhood is becoming global, encompassing the whole world, largely due to tremendous expansion of higher education (hence "*World Society* Theory"). In a "stateless" global modernity, World Society is a powerful cultural construction, an "imagined community" (Meyer 2010, Meyer and Risse 2018). Cultural frame of World Society transcends the borders of particular countries and becomes the symbolic reality that states have to adjust, even if their contexts are not really adequate to the models of actorhood (and, especially, "Otherhood") coming from the morally legitimate World Society.

Second, WST claims the essential role of "Otherhood", guided by other principles than pure egoistic self-interest, usually emphasized by political scientists and economists (Meyer 2010). "Otherhood" is a broad concept, sometimes interpreted as communicative practices, observation and evaluation without actual intervention (Werron and Holzer 2009). According to Meyer, "Otherhood" is a cultural core of modernity, producing expanding set of "scripts" and "models", elaborated, supported and widespread by the so-called "disinterested others" (2010). These are primarily, scientists, professionals and consultants (on individual level) and international organizations and universities (on organizational level), not engaged in productive activities in their traditional understanding in industrial economy terms. In our reading of J.W. Meyer, it is "Otherhood" as a major principle of social organization – what bares the optimistic grand vision of WST and its promise for the future. According to Meyer, "intrinsic to the notion of legitimated actorhood is the idea that empowerment carries responsibility for other actors and the whole rationalized system" (Meyer 2019a: 280). The concept of "Otherhood" is among four key words and is devoted a special section in one of the most cited papers in World Society scholarship in *Annual Review of Sociology* (Meyer 2010, cited more than 350 times in Scopus). However, the notion of "Otherhood" remains relatively little discussed in mainstream social sciences. It appears only four times in titles of papers, indexed in Scopus (after excluding a few cases using words like "m/otherhood" and "br/otherhood"); amongst key words it appears only 10 times (of which two are papers by J.W. Meyer himself).

This may be partly because this concept is innovative and, in some ways, counter-intuitive to what social scholarship takes for granted. "Otherhood" implies two things. First, the real activity in contemporary societal settings by individuals, organizations and nation-states is largely about not performing action oneself, but ensuring that others produce proper actorhood. Second, the ultimate goal of actorhood (and, thus, the measure of its properness) – is not the concrete outcome relating to accumulation of some kind of useful "assets" (like money or power) but the correspondence with abstract universal ethical principles, which may or may not be of practical use from "instrumental" point of view.

In his recent paper (2019a: 280), Meyer claims the growing significance and "prominence" of "Otherhood" in contemporary social dynamics. He also argues for the importance of its further empirical analysis, for which an idea of a continuum is suggested: "from postures principally of self-interest to those focused entirely on the interests of the collective and/or of other actors" (2019a: 280). Therefore, further

elaboration of this concept is encouraged, including, probably, both theoretical and empirical aspects.

Importantly, WST tends to focus on positive aspects of global development in terms of both: the nature of "myths", "scripts" or "models" it transmits and the methods by which those are implemented, in contrast to widespread negative accounts of global dynamics typical for the so-called "political economy" approaches (Downey et al. 2020). The nature of World Society "myth", according to Meyer, is expanding rationalization, which implies that individuals and organizations are culturally and structurally empowered to act for (and in the name of) the principles and values of progress, knowledge and justice. In a sense, over the last centuries the mandate for legitimate "actorhood" gradually moves from the domain of religious mystery ("God") – to the "real" state and corporations; and then, finally, − to a human being and his or her purposeful collective organization as "little gods" culturally constructed and supported (see more Meyer 2000; Meyer and Jepperson 2000). The driver of rationalization and, thus, progress, associated with increased actorhood in the name of democracy, human rights, environment protection, etc. – is higher education. In their recent paper, Meyer and colleagues provide extensive empirical confirmation of an array of positive consequences in social, political and economic dimensions, central for World Society, associated with wide spread of university education (Schofer et al., 2020).

Therefore, World Society Theory is peculiar for its "grand" yet optimistic vision of not only global social dynamics, but also of the role of academic communities and, especially, universities. The conception of "Scientized Environment Supporting Actorhood" (Meyer, 2010) explains high statuses of scholars and university professors globally, which goes far beyond the traditional economic considerations of technical utility (for instance, those under human capital framework (Kuzminov et al. 2019)). Perhaps, no other authoritative social theory of the present days sees the status of a (social) scientist and the cultural role of academic institutions that high, transcending utilitarian functionalism. This is what makes especially valuable the "promise" of World Society Theory for sociologists.

Critical Debates about Institutionalism and WST

Discussions about WST are vivid and active. Briefly summarizing, they rotate around two questions central for the whole broader debate about phenomenological institutionalism in sociology: first, how can institutions change and, second, how can they have consequences for real behavior (see Przeworski 2004; Farrell 2018). To be more precise, literature elaborates on the following criticisms: insufficient attention to the mechanisms and causes of institutional change, overlooking the nature of actors, simplifying the logics of actorhood, underestimating the issues of power and ignoring the diversity of interrelations between actors and their cultural and structural environments (Carney et al. 2012; Farrell 2018; Downey et al. 2020).

In Clemens and Cook's (1999: 442) description, institutionalism tends to focus on institutions as enduring constraint, to the extent that the capacity of these "institutions to constrain political action and policy variation appear[ed] to marginalize the processes of conflict and innovation that are central to politics". Fligstein and McAdam express similar critiques (2012: 28). According to Farrell (2018), another important set of difficulties for sociological institutionalism lies in demonstrating institutional effects.

Because rationalism effects ritual invocation more than real behavior, its implications are uncertain (2018: 37). On these grounds, new institutionalism is accused of underestimating heterogeneity in actual social practices.

WST attracts significant criticism on the outlined conceptual grounds (Carney et al. 2012; Farrell 2018; Downey et al. 2020; Steinmetz 1999). Scholars working in "political economy" strand (including, primarily, World System theory proponents, elaborating on Wallerstein's ideas), emphasize its underestimation of the role of power and domination, especially, political power in explaining societal dynamics (Downey et al. 2020; Steinmetz 1999). From their point of view, World Society should be seen as arena of economic exploitation, political coercion and cultural struggle rather than conformity and shared beliefs. Others accuse WST in an attempt to put ultimately Western understanding of a human being and society as universally valid, thus, discriminating against local realities and cultures (Carney et al. 2012). Importantly, WST scholars are also accused of creating and supporting a certain type of a "church" (2012: 386), which "blends" faith and science in the analysis of Western liberal project and its core ideas like human rights, science, progress and, above all, rationalization – while in reality powers of coercion are much stronger that those of a good will.

Perhaps, the biggest part of a problem with WST legitimacy today is that western societies and global world in general are partly losing faith in the American liberal project (Porter 2020; Smith 2017), so central for WST logics (Meyer 2010; Meyer and Jepperson 2000). The ideals of democratic citizenship and liberal globalization were much less questioned in earlier times, especially before the 2008 global crisis and during the first decade after the collapse of USSR, manifesting the end of the Cold War, which could be celebrated as one of the most powerful confirmations of the grand "promise" of WST (see Meyer and Risse 2018). However, even in their recent paper empirically demonstrating the positive consequences of higher education's global expansion (Schofer et al. 2020), John W. Meyer and colleagues express uncertainty, whether under current conditions we may expect continuing of positive trends empirically observed in the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the 21st. They admit: "sustained attacks on the university are within the realm of future possibility and could undermine many of the effects observed in this article" (Schofer et al. 2020: 15).

Some Newest Elaborations within Sociological Institutionalism and WST: Response to Criticism and the Importance of "Otherhood"

In what follows we will, first, briefly describe how sociological institutionalism in general (and WST in particular) responded to the outlined critiques; second, formulate issues, which remain problematic (especially under recent trends in social, economic and political development often referred to as "crisis"). After that, in the next session we will discuss the potential of Pitirim Sorokin's Integralism in bringing the debates about WST further with the special focus on the issue of "Otherhood", so far insufficiently discussed in literature.

Recent papers on sociological institutionalism demonstrate full awareness of the issue of institutional change and the role of actors' activity in transforming institutions

(see special volume of Research in the Sociology of Organizations (2019[2]), see also Meyer and Risse 2018). Institutional work, institutional entrepreneurship and institutional logics are among the most vibrant fields of studies for institutionalists, each focusing on various aspects of transformative agency (see Greenwood et al. 2017; see also Meyer 2019a). Actorhood is now recognized as tremendously differentiated and often contested: "multiple dimensions are involved, and these produce inconsistencies and conflicts" (Meyer, 2019a: 282). Issues of political coercion and selfish behavior going contrary to formally declared values of justice and equality – receive explicit and clear recognition in contemporary World Society scholarship. In brief, it argued that: first, different and largely unequal groups usually do not passively and uniformly absorb the global scripts but proactively interpret them, often following their own interests in competitive environments (Meyer 2019a, b; Meyer and Risse 2018). Second, under weak regulatory powers on the global level (as there is no global state in "realist" terms) there may be even an increase in actorhood, undermining the very ideas of liberalism (as with recent attacks on education (see Schofer et al. 2020)).

However, despite all its turbulence, World Society remains, at least, to some extent, an integrated "imagined order" (Meyer 2019a), "imagined community" (Meyer 1999), and at the core of social dynamics (and the relating turbulence) is "the enormously expanded status of the human individual as central actor in the social world, and putative manager of the universe" (Meyer 2019a: 275–276). Thus, the grand promise and optimistic vision of an individual as a central figure remains. However, increasingly different and even contesting are various versions of actorhood (including "Otherhood"), intensively produced and promoted. Instead of a world of top-down straightforward rationalization, a classical bureaucracy in Weberian style, we see empowered actorhood: "increasing complexity, with multiple dimensions of purpose and responsibility" (2019a: 276).

Thus, the problems of institutional changes, the effects of institutions on actual behavior, the role of political coercion, conflicts and manipulations – are not only recognized by recent World Society scholarship (as a part of broader phenomenological institutional research guided by J.W. Meyer' ideas), but are central to the current stage of theory development. On a normative level, WST does not imply that western culture is at any respect better than any other culture – it is claimed only that western culture historically is, perhaps, closer to the emerging global culture compared with non-European cultures (Meyer and Risse 2018). Of interest, however, is the discussion on the relevance of idea of "ren" from Chinese traditional culture for World Society developement (Meyer and Risse 2018).

For Meyer the key question in research on WST has long been that about the "cultural authority" (1999: 139) of the core elements of World Society, like science or law, which hold a "magical status" (1999: 139), going far beyond the power of instrumental rationality, political coercion or other types of traditional enforcement. Crucially, World Society, for John Meyer, rests upon "ultimate moral authority" and "conceptions of human (and nation-state) actorhood derived from these sources" (1999: 139). With a certain simplification, the fundamental question is why do actors

[2] Research in the Sociology of Organizations. Agents, Actors, Actorhood: Institutional Perspectives on the Nature of Agency, Action, and Authority: Volume 58. Emerald Publishing Limited. https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/doi/10.1108/S0733-558X201958

(individuals, organizations and nation-states) voluntarily do something not directly corresponding with their egoistic interests? Implicitly this question concerns the ontological status of "Otherhood".

As noted above, "Otherhood", as a concept within new institutionalist line of thought remains relatively little discussed in current literature (see for notable exclusions Werron and Holzer (2009) and Zapp (2020)). Revealing the true content of modern social life, legitimated (and, in a sense, causally determined (Meyer and Risse 2018)) by cultural dynamics, the concept of "Otherhood" is, perhaps, one of the most provocative innovations of WST (though partly built upon earlier ideas by Max Weber, G.H. Mead as well as Berger and Luckmann). In the remaining part of the paper, we outline several questions concerning "Otherhood" and try to demonstrate the relevance of Pitirim Sorokin ideas for their further exploration. These questions fall into three groups. First, what is the ontological nature of "Otherhood"? Does it imply only and purely social construction? Second, what does "Otherhood" mean in reality, in real social practice? How to address "Otherhood" empirically, especially, on micro-level? What distinctions or typologies may be useful for a more nuanced and detailed comprehension of "Otherhood"? Third, what are the macro-historical dynamics of "Otherhood" development? How does it relate to broader context and processes than western liberalism development and, ultimately, western-style rationalization?

Integralism and World Society Theory: A Comparison

"Integralism", proposed by Russian and American sociologist, Pitirim Sorokin, in 1930s – 1960s, was largely forgotten or ignored by western sociological mainstream (as well as by social science in his homeland, Russia) until late twentieth century (Nichols 2012, 2019; Sorokin 2015). Nowadays, the interest in this theoretical approach is to some extent increasing (Sorokin 2018; Nichols, 2020; Mangone and Dolgov 2020; Cimagalli 2020) – however, it is not often analyzed in terms of concrete contributions to existing mainstream sociological theories. The general impression from the literature is that Integralism attempted such a fundamental renovation of social science, that it can hardly be helpful for improving concrete existing mainstream theories (see, for example, Mangone and Dolgov (2020), Jeffries (2005), or Krotov (2012), or Sorokin (2015)).

Integralism is an ambitious project, a truly "grand theory". It aims to become a starting point in the next ("Integral") stage of development of humanity, including transformations not only in the academic sphere but also in all major societal institutions towards the "indivisible trinity" of "the true, the beautiful and the good" (Nichols 2020). Its potential goes far beyond relatively narrow issues of filling the gaps within other theoretical approaches in sociology. However, it does not mean that this type of possible contribution has no value. The integration between some elements of Integralism with other major theoretical stands may be highly fruitful. As an example, we well further try to show that Integralism can be useful in the outlined above debates on WST. We will begin by briefly comparing two theories and then proceed to discussion of possible contributions from Integralism to WST debates in regards of the possible research agenda concerning "Otherhood", which, as demonstrated above, remains under elaborated in current literature.

Both theories are remarkable for their interest in the "positive" side of human nature, seen embedded in and (to a certain extent) "phenomenologically" constructed by complex and, in some cases, controversial sociocultural environment. For Meyer, the major manifestation of World Society, is expanding "Otherhood", for Sorokin, "Altruism" is in the focus; both concepts imply, at least partly, unselfish behavior (in contrast to egoistic maximizing profit action remaining in the center of mainstream social science). Both theories also emphasize societal dynamics conditioned by, on the one hand, logics of macro-historical cultural development, and, on the other hand, purposeful agency of actors on various levels (individuals, organizations, nation-states). Both theories see individuals in modern societies as capable of not only reproduction of internalized cultural "scripts" but also of their critical and creative interpretation, and even manipulation.

The two theories also have a number of important differences in theoretical, methodological and normative respects. To begin with, methodologically Integralism accepts intuitive methods (labeled counter-scientific by the majority of current sociological communities) (see Nichols 2020, 2012). Theoretically, Sorokin emphasizes somewhat more "realist" approach to a human being, compared with WST; that is, Integralism claims human beings are more concrete, bounded entity, not totally reducible to the cultural and structural environment, while John Meyer tends towards more phenomenological understanding and argues that individual actorhood is a fundamental feature of structure itself (Meyer and Jepperson 2000: 117). At the same time, WST acknowledges that actual activity may be "decoupled" from structure (Meyer and Jepperson 2000; Meyer 2010). Finally, Integralism offers strong explicit normative account to social reality guided by the unity of the three elements mentioned above: "the true, the beautiful and the good". This feature distinguishes Interalism not only from John W. Meyer's theory but also from the whole tradition of the so-called "value-free" social science (Black 2013) as well as the dominant approaches in current "value-involved" sociology (Sorokin 2018), which pays little or no attention to the issues of "beauty" (see more Nichols 2020).

Each of the outlined differences may stimulate fruitful developments in research drawing on possible intersections between WST and Integralism. As a starting step, we analyze several ideas from Integralism applicable to the concept of "Otherhood" and relevant for the current debates about WST.

"Otherhood": The Integralism Perspective

Integralism underlines "Altruism" (implying love, kindness and, in general, unselfish behavior) as an important factor in societal dynamics (see Mangone and Dolgov 2020; Cimagalli 2020). On the one hand, this idea partially intersects with Meyer's idea of "Otherhood" as a type of actorhood, constitutive for World Society. On the other hand, "Altruism" has different ontological nature. According to WST formula (partly drawing on Weber and Mead ideas), "Otherhood", despite all its importance for global transformations, is grounded on a social construction, hence, it is an entity of a "soft" ontological status. Moreover, even as a social construction, "Otherhood" is not the primary one, being a result of rationalization, which is the most fundamental trend in the cultural development of modern world (Meyer and Jepperson 2000; Meyer 2010; Meyer and Risse 2018).

Integralism, in contrast, may treat behavioral manifestations of "Otherhood" as expressions of ontologically distinct macro-power. This idea partly intersects with the metaphor of "force" (from *Star Wars*) which John Meyer and Ronald Jepperson (2000) use in their influential paper in "Sociological Theory" (2000: 105) to describe the rationalization of representations of the spiritual world and the rise of the agentic actor in the end of twentieth century. The difference is that for Meyer this "force" is a social and cultural construction rooted in rationalization, while for Sorokin (which, ironically, may be closer to the original idea in *Star Wars* stories), the "force" is ontologically real and it is primarily about mutual support, altruism, love, kindness and solidarity (and by far not rationalization only).

According to Sorokin, altruism also reflects fundamental human needs, lying close to what Abraham Maslow called "self-actualization" (see Daniels 1982). Importantly, Maslow personally supported this interpretation by Sorokin, which is evident from the collective monograph published in 1959 (Maslow 1959). The Russian tradition in philosophy and psychology of late 19th-early twentieth century offers conceptual grounds for claiming that "doing good to others" is an essential human need, not limited to the results of appropriation of external cultural models and scripts (see, for instance, Mironenko (2018) concerning Mikhail Vladislavlev' intellectual heritage).

Another argument justifying research in psychological (thus, micro-) foundations of "Otherhood" and, hence, World Society as a whole, − comes from ongoing research on evolutionary psychology, trying to discover the genes responsible for altruism (see review in Thompson et al. 2013). Thus, despite criticism of the very idea of trying to find micro-foundations of social reality claimed by Meyer (2019b), such attempts may prove useful, if only one admits that these micro-foundations refer not only to social and cultural construction but also to actual physiological and psychic features of a human being. Such holistic approach fits well to Pitirim Sorokin's call for integrating efforts of different disciplines, overcoming rigid specialization and fragmentation of knowledge (see Sorokin 1956).

From Integralism perspective, altruism, solidarity, kindness and the diversity of unselfish behaviors may be (and often definitely are) culturally "scripted". For instance, fundamentally important, according to Sorokin, is the role of family, often neglected by research focusing on "progressive" modern institutions (Sorokin 2002: 39). However, in addition to being supported by sociocultural environments, and, thus, (at least, to some extent) culturally legitimized, these behaviors may be inspired by a principally different mechanisms – a fundamental human need linked to the ontologically real "energy of love" (Sorokin 1991). A question arising here is to what extent does the current global "myth" of World Society (as a social construction), or its particular manifestations (for instance, human rights ideology) represent the ontologically real phenomena (like, for instance, what Sorokin called "energy of love")? Perhaps deeper and more nuanced empirical analysis of various manifestations of World Society may be helpful in answering this question.

Thus, under Integralism approach (and in line with recent calls by John Meyer (2019a)), sociological study on "Otherhood" (including unselfishness and altruism) has to go deeper in the analysis of real practices. Of interest are not only macro-phenomena, directly linked to ideological mottos of liberalism and politically and culturally legitimated by formally responsible institutions or groups (international organizations, universities, professional consultants, political leaders, academics, etc.). Empirical

research should tackle all the variety of micro-level occasions manifesting altruism, solidarity and kindness, however, seen in connection with broader cultural dynamics.

Sorokin understood that empirical analysis of altruism requires special methodology. He elaborated and conceptualized five core dimensions for empirical analysis of altruism (or "love"): intensity, extensity, duration, purity and adequacy (2002). In short, *Intensity* varies depending on the scale of contribution that a person can do to other's well-being. *Extensity* implies the scope of unselfish behavior, which may be limited, for example, to family or go further toward all human beings. *Purity* ranges from being a means to a selfish end to motivation without selfish expectations. *Adequacy* refers to the relations between subjective motive and objective consequences. *Duration* concerns the time span from the shortest moment to the whole life of an individual. Sorokin preliminary tested this methodology in the research on "American good neighbors" (1950). Recent studies prove this methodology to be efficient (see Levin and Kaplan 2010; D'Ambrosio and Faul 2013).

Recognizing the fundamental "need" for "Otherhood", determined from not only "outside" but also "inside", − may become another important contribution to understanding "Otherhood" and various mechanisms for its mobilization, emphasized by WST (Meyer 2010, 2019a; Schofer et al. 2020). Moreover, the link between "Otherhood" (or, in Pitirim Sorokin words, "Altruism", "love", "kindness") as "internal need" and that as "externally promoted model" – may be a fruitful domain for further research where studies on solidarity can intersect with elaborations from WST and globalization studies. The existing literature does not incorporate these ideas of Pitirim Sorokin's Integralism (see Smith et al. 1998; Miller 2010; Stacey 2018).

Contributions from Integralism can be helpful also in revealing the concrete mechanisms and actual forces, which support the wide spread of unselfish behavior. As mentioned previously, WST primarily focuses on the role of officially legitimate institution of education and the groups of professionals, teachers and scientists as symbolically empowered creators and transmitters of rationalized myths and models (Meyer 2010; Schofer et al. 2020). Integralism questions the utility of official science, technical professionals and bureaucracy in increasing solidarity and altruism and suggests moving the focus of interest to the role of family and the so-called "integral leaders". "Integral leaders" are spiritual guides aiming at sociocultural transformation who go beyond existing social differentiation and bridge fragmented social groups and institutions (examples of Integral leaders are M.Gandhi or M.L.King (Sorokin and Lunden 1959; see also Dolgov 2015)).

The concepts of "Integral leader" and "Integral leadership" may be helpful in theoretical distinction between, on the one hand, actorhood by political elites driven by narrow self-interests, and, on the other hand, real transformative power of individuals to change institutions and bridge previously antagonistic groups, thus, performing more pure and true altruistic "Otherhood". As mentioned above, the majority of current criticism towards WST focuses on the field of international politics, claiming that its dynamics does not always fit to the optimistic vision of "Otherhood" (see Carney et al. 2012; Farrell 2018; Downey et al. 2020). Importantly for the current times of political and economic crises, when official declarations from institutionally legitimate "neoliberal" leaders receive less and less trust and the conflict rhetoric is increasingly widespread (Downey et al. 2020), the interest to (and the search for) potential "Integral leaders" – may be helpful from both theoretical and practical points of view.

Finally, another source of innovation from Integralism to WST scholarship may be expansion of the framework used for the analysis of macro-cultural dynamics. Integralism applies macro-historical lenses, covering not only Western world of the last several centuries, but rather, the history of the whole humanity from the Ancient times. Such perspective allowed Sorokin to combine negative account of the institutional organization of the Western (American) and Eastern (Soviet) world, existing by middle twentieth century, with the more positive view on the humanity and its futures in general.

Through the lenses of Integralism, the last 75 years of the history of the Western world, obviously, do not look the ultimate triumph of human dignity and progress (an over-optimistic account often associated with WST and heavily criticized in literature (Carney et al. 2012)). However, it is also not mere hopeless increasing domination of the "market" and the "state", as portrayed by political economy scholarship (Downey et al. 2020). For Integralism, cultural transformations and ideological struggles of the recent decades are parts of more fundamental dynamics, relating to much longer cyclic change between supra-cultural systems. This change involves transitions between two different "ideal types" of cultural systems: "Ideational" and "Sensate", with various options in between. Each of these types has its own system of truth and knowledge. According to Sorokin, there are four dimensions in which cultural systems differ from each other: "(1) the nature of reality; (2) the nature of the needs and ends to be satisfied; (3) the extent to which these needs and ends are to be satisfied; (4) the methods of satisfaction" (Sorokin 1957: 25). In "Ideational culture": (1) reality is perceived as nonsensate and nonmaterial; (2) the needs and ends are mainly spiritual; (3) the extent of their satisfaction is the largest, and the level, highest; (4) the method of their fulfilment or realization is self-imposed minimization or elimination of most of the physical needs (Sorokin 1957: 27). In the "Sensate" cultural systems, on the contrary, reality is perceived trough the physical senses and the relationship between individual and society is instrumental: "…Sensate reality is thought of as a Becoming, Process, Change, Flux, Evolution, Progress, Transformation. Its needs and aims are mainly physical, and maximum satisfaction is sought of these needs" (Sorokin 1957: 27). The method of meeting the needs in this type of cultural system depends on a modification and exploitation of the outside physical world.

According to Sorokin, all other forms of cultural systems may take elements from the "Ideational" and "Sensate" systems combining them in a variety of ways. On the intersection between the two poles, Sorokin finds possibility for evolving an "Idealistic Culture Mentality". "This is the only form of the Mixed class which is — or at least appears to be — logically integrated. Quantitatively it represents a more or less balanced unification of Ideational and Sensate, with, however, a predominance of the Ideational elements. Qualitatively it synthesizes the premises of both types into one inwardly consistent and harmonious unity" (Sorokin 1957: 28–29). (See more detailed analysis of different types of cultural systems in Mangone (2018)). Chronologically, Sorokin observed fluctuations between "Ideational", "Sensate", and, occasionally, "Integral" cultural systems throughout the human history (with each cycle adding new elements and emphases) beginning with Ancient times (before VI century BC – "Ideational" cultural system) and until present ("Sensate" cultural system).

Theoretical recognition of the two "ideal" types of supra-cultural systems with fluctuations in between allowed Sorokin to see fundamental limitations of "Sensate"

culture grounded on the principles of natural sciences and "the truth of senses". It also stimulated him to envision the future of societal change beyond the "iron cage" of rationalization – towards "Ideational" or "Integral" culture. Perhaps, one of the most interesting questions arising from this for debates about WST is: to what extent can "Otherhood" (or, at least, some types of it) be attributed to the manifestations of "Ideational", and not "Sensate" culture? What if different types of "Otherhood" co-existing in social reality – reflect the struggle between these two different cultural systems in the times of their tectonic shifts? This would explain why we observe different and often conflicting types of "Otherhood". On the one hand, manipulations for egoistic purposes driven by material values and covered by humanistic declarations (for instance, by political elites, emphasized in WST criticism). On the other hand, real occasions of a more pure "Otherhood", evolving on a macro-level and reflected, for instance, in literature on alternative modes of democracy (see Jossa 2019 or Adler 2019). The main results of a comparison between John W. Meyer' New Institutionalism and Pitirim A. Sorokin' Integralism, including general characteristics of the two theories (part 1) and the more detailed analysis relating to "Otherhood" and "Altruism" (part 2) are briefly summarized in Table 1 (see below).

Discussion

In times of crisis, the "positive" perspective is especially valuable. Literature discusses our discipline's inclinations towards negative accounts of social reality and its macro-historical dynamics, which may be detrimental for both sociology and the world it inhabits (Streib 2017; Sorokin and Froumin 2020). After the fall of modernization theory (Gilman 2018), the World Society scholarship is, perhaps, the most influential theoretical strand offering "positive" view of the world. Though actively discussed and quite productive in recent decade, this theory remains under estimated (and, perhaps, under elaborated) in several respects. Ironically, critical debates about this theory provide good illustration for several of its core assumptions. Under tremendously expanded and diverse demand for justice, equality, and universal celebration of a human being (however different the manifestations of the latter might be) – we are likely to observe a huge tension and dissatisfaction about the actual realities, when "simple differences come to be seen as conflictual or inconsistent" (Meyer and Risse 2018: 26–27).

The critics insist that institutionalist theories do not adequately explain institutional change, do not account for institutional effects and ignore the transformative role of actors (Carney et al. 2012; Farrell 2018; Downey et al. 2020). Such claims seem not to notice that WST (especially in its most recent elaborations (Meyer 2019a)) is precisely about the structured activity of actors (actorhood) in changing institutions and the related effects in various respects (for the case of societal effects of higher education see Schofer et al. 2020). Ultimately, according to Meyer and Jepperson, actor agency is itself a central structure of the system because "much of modern structuration exists in the formation, standardization, enactment, and celebration of agentic actorhood" (2000: 117).

Somewhat paradoxically, the concept of "Otherhood", central for WST, has attracted little attention so far. At least partly, it might be due to the almost

Table 1 John W. Meyer' New Institutionalism (and "Otherhood") and Pitirim A. Sorokin' Integralism (and "Altruism"): a comparison

Part 1. General characteristics of the theories	New institutionalism	Integralism
Focus on the "positive" side of human nature	Both theories share interest in the "positive" side of human nature. Special focus is on unselfish behavior.	
Recognition of the interplay between culture and agency in societal dynamics	Both theories see societal dynamics as conditioned by, on the one hand, logics of macro-historical cultural development, and, on the other hand, purposeful agency of actors.	
The role of agency in societal changes	Both theories analyze the role of "transformative" agency in societal development, criticizing structural determinism and approaches explaining changes as driven solely by technical and functional "utility".	
Disciplinary focus	Sociology	Inter-disciplinary approach (sociology, philosophy, psychology, etc.), with the central place of sociology
Methodological approach	Corresponds to current standards of mainstream social sciences	Accepts intuitive methods contrary to current standards of mainstream
Normative position	No explicit normative stance, however with implicit positive view on the transformative potential of human actorhood (including Otherhood).	Strong explicit normative stance aiming towards the unity of "the true", "the beautiful" and "the good".
The core factor(s) in societal dynamics	Progressing rationalization (not to be confused with the concepts of "rational behavior" in "rational choice" approaches)	Evolving of the universal power of solidarity, altruism and love ("energy of love") conditioned by the cyclic changes between supra-cultural systems
Historical and geographical context, which frames the analysis of societal dynamics	History of the West, with special interest in evolution of Christianity	The global history, including the West and the East, beginning with Ancient times
Characteristics of global societal dynamics by the second half of the twentieth century	Rapid progress of rationalization (basing on western liberal ideologies)	Beginning of a gradual shift from "Sensate" to "Ideational" or "Idealistic" supra-cultural system
Part 2. "Otherhood" and "Altruism"	"Otherhood" (New institutionalism' perspective)	"Altruism" (Integralism' perspective)
Ontological nature	Socio-cultural construction (not having strong "real" ontological grounds on macro or micro levels).	A phenomenon having "real" ontological grounds on macro ("energy of love") and micro (human needs) levels, but also supported by socio-cultural constructions.
Major mechanisms for expansion	Rationalization and institutional differentiation (mostly through formal organizations)	Grassroots initiatives, bridging fragmented groups and institutions ("Integral leadership")
Major agents supporting expansion	Academics, consultants (on individual level), international organizations and universities (on organizational level)	Family and "Integral leaders"

revolutionary innovativeness of this idea. Its claim goes beyond the simpler thesis that a significant part of social life is framed by larger cultural "myths", which is to a various extent typical for all variations in phenomenological institutionalisms (see Meyer 2010). The concept of "Otherhood" also implies something less intuitively accessible: that society (presumably filled with "real" purposeful actors) is, in fact, an arena where primary role is attached to the highly legitimate dis-interestedness in assuring that others conduct in accordance with ethical principles having almost religious authority. However, these principles themselves are also subjected to contestation and, therefore, dynamic change.

The major goal of this paper is to demonstrate that in further elaboration of the concept of "Otherhood" helpful might be several insights from a theory, remaining almost totally ignored by both proponents and critics of WST. This is the so-called Integralism, proposed by Russian and American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin in the mid-twentieth century, several decades before John W. Meyer formulated foundations of his phenomenological new institutionalism and World Society Theory.

Using theoretical lenses of Integralism, we reviewed major assumptions underlying the optimistic "promise" of WST in light of existing critical debates and with account to recent empirical findings. To summarize, we outline three prospective directions for further research in "Otherhood" on the intersection between World Society scholarship and Integralism ideas. Some of these directions correspond with the recent claims by WST founder, John W. Meyer (2019a).

First, ontological status of "Otherhood" may require clarification in terms of its foundations in micro- and macro-levels, which may go beyond pure and ultimately social construction, emphasized by WST. On the micro-level, possible grounding of "Otherhood" (as, at least partly, unselfish behavior) may be found in personal needs – a topic highly elaborated in psychology, including, famous theory of A. Maslow, who supported Sorokin in the exploration of the connections between Altruism and personal needs (see Maslow 1959). On the macro-level, research in ontological foundations of "Otherhood" might address the question (however, more problematic from methodological point of view) about the possible connection between the macro socio-cultural constructions relating to World Society, and hypothetically (according to Sorokin) ontologically real "energy of love" (Sorokin 1991). Possible objects for empirical investigation on macro-level might be principally new collective cultural phenomena and visionaries, emerged in recent decades in opposition to the dominating, presumably, less "humanistic", "solidarity-oriented" and "kind" modes of otherhood. This task also implies careful empirical analysis on the level of "real" practices, thus, uncovering the secrets that critics claim, contemporary institutionalism hides beneath the illusive concept of "decoupling" (Farrell 2018).

Second, analysis of "real" practices (and not only symbolic representations) has long been recognized a task of paramount importance by World Society scholarship (Meyer 2010; Meyer 1999). However, there is still insufficient progression in elaboration of methodological tools, especially in regards of "Otherhood", including its possible division and typology. We argue that, aside from other elaborations, existing in the current studies in solidarity and altruism (see Jeffries et al. 2006), of special importance is the methodological idea about five continuum-like nexuses, proposed by Sorokin: intensity, extensity, durability, purity and adequacy (see Levin and Kaplan 2010). This approach corresponds to the recent idea of John Meyer to use similar continuum-based

approach in analyzing "Otherhood" (2019a). Another set of potentially relevant concepts for empirical analysis of "otherhood-in-practice" is "Integral leaders" and "Integral leadership". In contrast to the dominant strand of research within WST, these concepts focus on "Otherhood" in cross-institutional bridging. They also suggest interest in the role of social movements but from a solidarity- and not conflict-oriented perspective, employed by mainstream social movement studies and their interpretations in general social theory (Fligstein and McAdam 2012).

Third, Integralism offers broad historical framework for comprehending global sociocultural dynamics. WST so far remain focused, almost exclusively, on the history of western world as the context for formation of major cultural "myths" of modernity. At the same time, increasingly relevant are the questions about the extent that other macro-cultural traditions correspond or, perhaps, even contribute to the World Society development. For Integralism, human societies have always bared important similarities in the field of norms and values, even before any global social constructions come to being, for the reason of the ontologically real "power of love", which had always been there. Interestingly, recent elaboration in Chinese philosophy demonstrate that genuinely non-Western societies may also have their claims in terms of how *their* cultures shape the global standards (see Meyer and Risse 2018). Of value might be comparative analysis of contemporary cultures in terms of how do they relate to each other, copy each other, interpret each other, or, maybe, compete with each other in this joint macro-level grand enterprise of making and re-making the World Society. Finally, for the analysis of perspectives of global societal development, highly valuable may be the idea about transitions between supra-cultural systems: "Ideational", "Sensate" and, possibly, "Integral". The role of "Otherhood" in this dynamics may be essential.

Conclusion

With global pandemic and evolving socio-economic crisis, absolute majority of contemporary societies, which literature sometimes refers to as "World Society", are facing, by no means, hard times. So does sociology as professional practice. A crisis is usually two-fold, combining threats and opportunities. On the one hand, it gives rise to dissatisfactions and disappointments, bringing doubts about whether we (as colleagues, professionals, citizens or humans in general) are going the right way. On the other hand, it provides grounds for new visions, more adequate to the changing circumstances, but also demands new efforts in making these visions reality. The role of sociology, since it emerged as a science (or the idea of science), is fundamental in both: creating a vision and helping to bring it to life (see Burawoy 2005).

It is not an easy intellectual enterprise to give a comprehensive account of the current negative events and tendencies, meanwhile sustaining positive vision of the long perspective. In our view, World Society theory, in its interpretation by John W. Meyer and his colleagues, succeeded in this accomplishment. The "promise" of World Society Theory is, in short, that rationalized actorhood of individuals, organizations and nation-states directed by the legitimate faith in progress and justice, manifested by tremendously expanded systems of "Otherhood", including education, − will find its way to a better life, however turbulent it might be. It means, however ironically, that the WST may itself be subject to criticism and development. We hope that ideas concerning

possible contributions from another "grand theory", Integralism by Pitirim Sorokin, elaborated in middle twentieth century, will help in the related debates. Integration of Pitirim Sorokin ideas in debates about WST is important for its further elaboration, including its optimistic and, thus, highly valuable "promise" for the global world and related implications for the practical role that social science can play in global development.

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