



International Relations and Sociology: Discussion

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1. War is no longer a struggle for pieces of the earth but for the earth itself. The late war, as Harold Issacs has said,² "did not decide the issue of human progress but the identity of the main protagonists . . . the globe is crushed in helpless agony between two super-nationalist entities . . . in so far as they represent different social and economic systems, the issue is fraudulent because neither is pregnant with any decent promise for mankind. . . . Between (them) . . . the peoples of the earth are caught in a condition of permanent war."

2. The great question is whether we are yet come to an inevitable choice between them: Will there be a *political interlude* between the late war and the war that seems to be coming up? If there is not, and especially if there is not inside the United States, then our free political function as social scientists is terminated. War means an end to really free work in social science. Only between wars are there political interludes during which free ideas might become relevant to the turn of affairs.

Do we *really* have *already* to choose? Or, is not Sartre correct when he asks so wisely, ". . . who forces us to choose? Is it really by choosing between totalities simply because they are given, and by going over to the stronger, that one makes history? Or, on the contrary, is it not rather that historic action is never reduced to a choice between given realities . . .?" Is it not our political job, as social scientists, alerted to world affairs, to refuse to capitulate, as experts, to frozen political alternatives which lead to war, and to address ourselves to a third camp of the intellect, to project its image of world culture and to seek ways by which it might be constructed?

3. If we refuse to choose between the two camps into which the world is being polarized for war, and if we try to find a way of enlarging the political interlude between wars, then should we not in that interlude recognize that the center of world political initiative is now the United States? If that is so, then a grave responsibility is imposed upon us as a vanguard of world citizenship. I think that it is so. Western Europe is incapable of political initiative; what happens in Europe, clutched in the squeeze play, is more a result of what Russia and the United States do, than what any power on the peninsula of Europe tries to do. Unlike Russia, the United States emerged from the late war with produc-

tive facilities intact and potential greatly increased. The chance of men who would act for economic and political freedom, no matter how small and difficult, and perilous is still larger in the United States, a parliamentary democracy than in Soviet Russia, a totalitarian state. And power gained in America, when harnessed to the idea, will count for more because of the industrial weight of this country in foreign affairs.

4. If America is the center of world political initiative—the place of decision for what the cultures of the world will be like a quarter of a century from now—then, can we trust, can we believe, that those who are now deciding for America will make the decisions that will avoid war and build a world of peace and freedom and security? And if our answer is no—and that is my answer—then should we not consider how the distribution of power within the United States might be decisively modified. Is not that question now the key to world politics which we as politically alert social scientists should figure out how to turn? The only way for us to try and create new alternatives for European, and for world culture, is to try and create new political choices within the political economy of the United States of America.

DISCUSSION

John W. Gardner

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In discussing collaboration between the social science disciplines, I find it useful to divide the fields into two groups. On the one hand there are the fields of sociology, social psychology, and anthropology. These three fields have made real progress toward interdisciplinary collaboration. On the other hand there are political science, history, economics, and the related field—the still pretty amorphous field—of international relations. These fields too have made important strides toward collaboration among themselves. The great rift in the social sciences today is *between these two groups*.

Every thoughtful person who has taken a serious look at the whole range of the social sciences is convinced that great gains will come from what has been called the "interpenetration of the social sciences." Now the point I wish to make is that in attempting to accomplish this interpenetration, the greatest problem—and I think personally the greatest promise of exciting gains—lies in bridging the gap between sociology, anthropology, and psychology on the

²H. R. Isaacs, "South Asia's Opportunity," *Modern Review*, December, 1947.

one hand and history, political science, economics, and international relations on the other.

The topic for today's panel has to do with the bridging of this gap. I should like to take just a little liberty with the topic as assigned, and talk not just in terms of sociology but in terms of sociology, social psychology and cultural anthropology. I see no clear boundaries between these fields, and I assume that the practitioners in each field will in the years ahead become less and less distinguishable from those in the neighboring fields.

I think that there are a variety of contributions which sociology, psychology, and anthropology can make to the field of international relations. Consider the problem of method. For the most part, the field of international relations has taken its methodology from the historians. No one would wish to deny that the methods of the historian have their importance and their place. But they have, from our point of view, most serious limitations in dealing with certain sorts of data. This will become clear to you if you examine the current literature on international affairs. Vast amounts of energy are expended in *narrative accounts* of what happened at a given time and place. Methodological standards are chiefly useful in producing more and more scrupulously *accurate narratives*, so that what you work toward is a sort of highly scrupulous, highly literate journalism. Now this is a perfectly respectable pastime, but I think most of us would regard it as placing a rather low ceiling on methodology in the social sciences.

The up-to-date sociologist or social psychologist is driven by his training to take a very different point of view. In the first place, he is constantly seeking to arrive at certain generalizations concerning group behavior. It always sounds a little pompous to say that we are trying to arrive at "universal laws" governing human behavior in groups—pompous because we have made only the most modest advance in that direction. Nonetheless, that is exactly what we are trying to do, and regardless of the degree of success, the very effort colors our whole approach. It helps us, for example, to avoid the sins of indiscriminate data collecting, and forces us to attempt the development of a conceptual structure within which we can order our data. It leads us to set up hypotheses concerning relationships between the variables with which we are dealing, and to test these hypotheses through systematic observation and investigation. It leads us to constant reshaping of our conceptual schemes as we find our hypotheses

faulty. And finally, it leads us to a constant search for more effective methods of gathering and processing the data by which we test our hypotheses.

I think that we would all readily admit that in terms of our aspirations the results of this striving have been very modest; but I am sure we would all argue stubbornly that in the course of the struggle we have developed methods which have enriched the social sciences.

In order to describe another sort of contribution which the sociologist, social psychologist and anthropologist can make to international relations let me turn to the field of area studies. The term *area study* describes an interdisciplinary approach to problems of understanding a given world area. Area study programs are a relatively new development in the study of international relations, and to my mind they represent precisely that point at which sociologists can best contribute to the international relations field. The "area approach" is made to order for sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists. In fact, men from these disciplines would find it hard to understand how the field of international relations has survived as long as it has without area studies. They would find it difficult to believe that anyone could ever have seriously entertained the hope of understanding international affairs without understanding the social and cultural contexts out of which various sorts of national behavior develop. This is so obvious to the sociologist that it hardly needs emphasis. Yet many experts in the field of international relations are still not entirely sensitive to the importance of area studies, and apparently still believe that you can understand the "relations" between two countries without an intensive study of the countries themselves.

This is a misconception which the sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists are well fitted to correct. I believe that the most effective contribution which men from our fields are likely to make is the insistence that international relations constitute a form of group behavior; that the groups involved are living, functioning, societies; and that unless one understands the social forces operating in these societies one will not understand the particular aspect of group behavior labeled international relations.

Much of the literature on international affairs leaves one with the impression that the world is little more than a series of chancelleries, a small group of heads of state, foreign ministers, and generals who play out the drama of international relations in terms of certain traditional

ambitions and power relationships which history has handed them. I know that this is something of a caricature, but back of the caricature is a real distortion of emphasis. And it is a distortion which the sociologist is peculiarly fitted to correct. He will insist that one cannot evaluate the behavior of a country without understanding the social institutions and societal structure of that country. He will want to know, for any given country, what social institutions permit the rise of certain types of leadership; what there is in the myths, the needs, and the frustrations of a people that makes it possible for their leaders to manipulate them in certain directions; why they ignite in explosive support of certain causes and remain indifferent to other causes. And so forth. These questions could be elaborated endlessly. The point is that the sociologist will want to know how much of the behavior of the nation on the international scene can be regarded as a more or less inevitable outcome of social forces at work within the country. (And lest I seem to have spoken lightly of the field of history, let me point out that in pursuing this question the sociologist is likely to find that his strongest and surest allies will be the historians.)

Now the point that interests me, or perhaps I should say the point that perplexes me, is this: in the field of area study, which is interdisciplinary by its very nature, you will find linguists, geographers, historians, philosophers, ethnobotanists and others, but almost no sociologists or social psychologists. This is understandable when one considers the stubbornness with which most sociologists and social psychologists have ignored the rest of the world in the recent past; but why it should continue to be the case in a day when every graduate student recognizes the importance of cross-cultural study is quite beyond me. The rapidly developing field of area studies offers the perfect invitation for sociologists and social psychologists to come out of their cultural shell. I think that they should accept the invitation.

DISCUSSION

Paul E. Smith

U. S. Office of Education

For this opportunity to discuss with you some of the projects and activities involving the exchange of students, teachers and professors in which the U. S. Office of Education is currently engaged, I am grateful. May I outline the programs involving the students so that we might

have a backdrop against which I may place some people that are significant, and so that I may ask some questions.

In 1936 at Buenos Aires, accredited representatives of the American Republics gathered to discuss ways of bringing the peoples of various nations closer together. One of the outcomes of the meeting was the Convention of Inter-American Cultural Relations which provided for the annual exchange of two graduate students from each signatory nation. The Convention included conditions of application, selection, value of the fellowship, and other related details.

Since the beginning of the program about 160 different students had come to the United States by September, 1947. That a larger number has not come is due to the fact that the fellowships may be renewed for a second year, and renewals have occurred in many instances where the student's academic record warranted and where the type of training he received required a longer period of time for its completion.

Although all of the signatory States have sent students to the United States, not all of them have been financially able to receive our students. Nevertheless, between 1939 and 1942, approximately 30 graduate students from the United States went to 11 American Republics to pursue graduate study or research. As a result of World War II, graduate students from the United States were not sent to Latin America under the Convention after December, 1942, although we continued to receive students from those countries. It is hoped that the reciprocal part of the program will be resumed in 1948.

What have these exchanges meant to the individuals, to their countries, and, indeed, to the world? Would that I could answer this question now! I can, however, give partial answers because I know some of the outcomes. In Panama, for example, the young man who was trained in library science at the University of Chicago is now the Director of the National Library of Panama. He has enlarged the library service to the country so that his people can get books. Not only does he include bookmobiles but boatmobiles in his efforts to reach people in inaccessible places. For those who have their eyes on the export account, I can assuage their misgivings by indicating that the air-conditioning equipment for the National Library of Panama is labeled "Made in U.S.A." The \$10,000,000 worth of library equipment bears a similar mark, and I rather suspect that one would discover on hasty inspection that the