

## Love: Through the Lens of Pitirim Sorokin

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Joseph G. D'Ambrosio,  
Anna C. Faul,  
& Research Fellow

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Abstract:

*Understanding the virtue of love has challenged scholars for centuries but in recent years science has produced substantial scholarship in understanding the complex meanings that we attribute to the word "love." This article explores love through the lens of Pitirim Sorokin, an eminent Harvard sociologist, who developed an intricate framework to understand what he called "other-regarding or altruistic" love. It is proposed that his theoretical framework can act as a gauge of love-producing actions helping guide humans to more authentic, meaningful and engaged relationships. Conflict continues to increase in the world both on a micro and macro level and having a theory of love that can help reduce the devastation conflict creates is necessary for our continued human existence.*

**"H**ate begets hate, violence engenders violence, hypocrisy is answered by hypocrisy, war generates war, and love creates love. Unselfish love has enormous creative and therapeutic potentialities, far greater than most people think. Love is a life-giving force, necessary for physical, mental, and moral health...only the power of unbounded love practiced in regard to all human beings can defeat the forces of inter-human strife, and can prevent the pending extermination of man by man on this planet" (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 13).

The word "love" is difficult to define because it serves different purposes and carries various meanings (Berscheid, 2010). In many ways, society forfeited an understanding of love to mystics, poets, philosophers, theologians, songwriters and lovers, failing to provide an operationalized definition of what it means to love one another. In the 50s Maslow noted that although love was a central part of human life empirical research literature hardly mentioned it (Maslow, 1954). During the late 50s and 60s, researchers touched on love through the lens of attachment and interpersonal attraction theories (Bowlby, 1958, 1969; Harlow, 1958; Heider, 1958). The 70s and 80s witnessed love as a topic for behavioral scientific study (Rubin, 1970; Weis, 2006). Biological, taxonomical, and implicit and cultural theories were developed, that included psychometric and neuropsychological approaches in attempts to help explain what we mean by the word "love" (Berscheid, 2010; Sternberg & Weis, 2006). The 2000s have seen the focus shift toward observable behaviors that represent love (Levin & Kaplan, 2010).

Long before love became a subject for the scientific journals, Pitirim Sorokin, one of the most prominent sociologists of the twentieth century, some who call the father of modern sociology, created an entire treatise on the subject of love (Oord, 2005; Sorokin, 1954a). Hailed as one of the most extensive treatments on love by Hazo (1967) it was not until 2000s that Sorokin's work was applied to the scientific study of love (Levin & Kaplan, 2010; Post, 2003). Besides having an outstanding academic career, Sorokin was a prolific and insightful writer who wrote volumes of works on sociology. What made him different is that he devoted much of his scholarship to a topic that many believe has no place in the empirical and scientific world that guides research. This was especially poignant during his day when positivism and scientific thought filled the halls of academia. In spite of the resistance he met with his peers, which has been fully documented (Johnson, 1995; Sorokin, 1954a), Sorokin is able to merge the boundaries of philosophy, psychology and sociology with his research on love. His approach

emanated from the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian tradition of “Integralism,” that brought together knowledge from religious, scientific and realistic perspectives of society and culture to academic study (Johnson, 1995). The purpose of this article is to add to the understanding of “love” as conceptualized through the lens of Pitirim Sorokin. His understanding most closely relates to “compassionate love” that has recently been operationalized in the literature (Oman, 2011; Underwood, 2009). While Sorokin’s explanation of love aligns with many descriptions of love discussed by Erich Fromm (love is an activity), (1963), Soren Kierkegaard (love emanates from a supernatural source) (1949), Max Scheler ( love is an act and movement) (1954), Sigmund Freud ( the life instinct is love) (1949), Carl Jung (love expresses itself in the form of compassion, philanthropy and social service) (1928) and so many others who looked at love as either acquisitive or benevolent, Sorokin developed an intricate analytical schema that is missing in other explanations of love.

Sorokin conceptualized a heuristic model of love from an other-regarding or altruistic viewpoint and applied his theory to actions that promote the virtue of love. He believed that other-regarding or altruistic love actions are of paramount importance to the world (Sorokin, 1954a). The continued violent crises in the world attest to the need for a theory that can guide humanity to a more peaceful co-existence. Sorokin developed an elaborate analytical model to explain love and its production, accumulation and distribution. He analyzed love’s causes and effects, the higher and lower forms of love, the human and universal significance of love and its implications for other areas of study. He defined love as “a meaningful interaction or relationship between two or more persons where the aspirations and aims of one person are shared and helped in their realization by other persons” (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 13). One should neither hinder another, nor cause pain or sorrow, rather, one should offer love that exudes itself in a way that allows another to flourish. Many benefits come from love, namely, one can escape from loneliness, beautify one’s own life and others, make one “noble and good, and experience the freedom that love provides when it is done without obligation or constraint”(Sorokin, 1954a, p. 12).

Sorokin’s theory promotes his understanding of “integral truth” that unifies the ideational, idealistic and sensate mentalities and combines the empirical truth of the senses, the rational truth of reason, and the super rational truth of faith (Johnson, 1995). He spent considerable time discussing the human mental structure, creativity and cognition in a way that is indicative of his time and culture. Sorokin explained that the supraconscious is indispensable for the practice of “sublime love,” the crux of which is understood as benevolence. He posits that the goal of mankind is to become aware that our true core or supraconscious is not our body, our unconscious, bio-conscious or socio-conscious egos “with all their trappings,” but the manifestation of a highest ideal that he identifies as the supraconscious. The supraconscious is an axiom of true love emanating from our connection with the Supreme Being that Sorokin refers to as “God.” Sorokin believed that everyone has a supraconscious that can guide him or her, devoid of ego, in pursuit of supreme love of the “highest moral value.” He referred to a supreme love that “transcends our conscious ego and the relational - hedonistic, utilitarian, and eudemonistic - interests,” of humans but that is not possible without divine aid (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 126). It is in this premise that Sorokin aligned with the belief that humans can overcome anger and conflict if they are able to develop human character that is energized by a divine presence, the product of which is love. Sorokin acknowledged that this belief is questioned by many “scholars of both the social sciences and humanities” (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 98). He seemed to imply that a circle of love envelops us, although it is inaccessible by humans on a conscious level but always accessible on a supraconscious level. Sorokin attempts to verify his understanding with empirical evidence in an extensive analysis of the supraconscious (Sorokin, 1954a). He viewed our supraconscious as a connection with a divine presence that originates and provides love to humanity. This reasoning is the antithesis of many who believe that humans are materialistic, egoistic, self-interested and motivated by what is pleasurable/good or painful/bad (Hudson, 1980). The debate about man’s innate nature,

was at the forefront of intellectual circles during the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and continues until today (Frantz, 2005). The belief that humans are motivated by benevolence and duty aligns with Sorokin's understanding of the supraconscious (Sorokin, 1954a).

Another important focus of Sorokin's theory is that loving character can be developed, produced, accumulated and distributed. He looked at love as energy that theoretically can be manipulated as is done in manufacturing processes based on physical, chemical and biological phenomena. He acknowledged that love energy begins at its "unorganized natural stage" (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 37). Love is produced by the interaction of human beings but there is no method to assure that love and not hate is produced. Typically, this production takes place in families or small groups that reduces as the group grows. He posits that in order to produce love a society must support cultivation of what he calls "apostles or heroes of love" that can spread love energy. He encourages the fields of science, philosophy, religion, technology and the fine arts to act as gigantic power stations that can support this process (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 41). This has to be coupled with love production in what Sorokin referred to as the "rank and file," (i.e. the great mass of people) that populate our cities, by their abstinence of hateful actions toward one another and by groups and institutions that will give space for the rank and file to produce love. He also posits that in order for the rank and file and group production to increase, there must be a total cultural shift that values love over hate and freedom over bondage. Love, like other forms of energy, can be accumulated and stored in individuals, groups and culture. In order for the world to change it is necessary to paradigmatically shift from a disorganized production state to an organized state that intentionally reorganizes around the principles of love. Distribution of love can occur once accumulated in relation to the particular needs of persons and groups. Sorokin stated that this is not a "utopian musing" rather a realizable matter (Sorokin, 1954a).

Sorokin explored both the human and cosmic dimensions of love and explained them as forms that encompass the totality of love. He labeled love's composition as forms of being, namely, religious love, ethical love, ontological love, physical love, biological love, psychological love and social love. Together these forms of love allow a complete explanation of love in its human and supernatural existence. He explained that these forms of being can be metaphorically depicted as an iceberg with the psychological and social forms being the part of the iceberg that we see and the other forms, namely, religious, ethical, ontological, physical and biological, as under water and not visibly seen but present nonetheless, (Sorokin, 1954a) as depicted in figure 1 below:

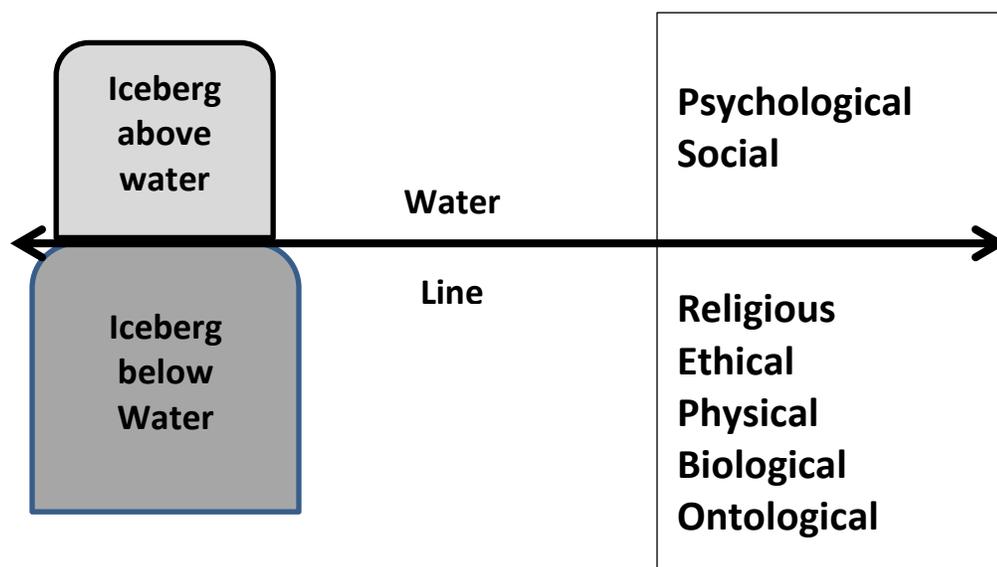


Figure 1. Multidimensional Theoretical Forms of Love

Sorokin used this understanding of love to guide his research of different cultures, societies, religious figures, mystics, religions, literature, reformers and common citizens (Sorokin, 1954a; Sorokin, 1950, 1958). The religious aspect of love is identified as a higher power that Sorokin called God. This ultimate source is both the “qualitative and quantitative infinity” that is the “infinite cosmos of love” (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 3) and is derived from a higher power. This inflow of love forms the basis of his energetic understanding of love that is used throughout his theory. He referred to this aspect of love from the Greek definition of love as a synthesis of eros and agape. By combining these concepts he forged love into an explanation of the human striving for divinity in union with God. His belief in a higher power as the source of love permeates his work.

Ethical love is enmeshed with goodness itself and inseparable from truth and beauty. It is the aspect of love shown by the way people promote truth that is pure and beautiful because it is untarnished by impure motivation or action.

Ontological love is the greatest form of “unifying, integrating, harmonizing, creative energy or power” (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 6). Sorokin explained ontological love as the core of love that makes the world function and without which would cause collapse of the physical, biological, and sociological world. He likened love to an “ontological power,” not just an emotion, which is formulated as an energy that can be used to counteract evil, destroy death and engender immortality.

The physical aspects of love are shown as the physical forces that “unite, integrate, and maintain the whole inorganic universe in endless unities” (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 8). It is that energy that unites us and is what he referred to as a unified organized cosmos.

The biological counterpart of love is based in the generation of cellular cooperative interactions that bind all things. This amounts to a life force or vital energy that guides and directs human-kind (Sorokin, 1954a). This reasoning is in line with laws of quantum physics that developed in the 1920s and are popularized today (O'Murchu, 2004). The biological aspect of love is grounded in the basic processes of life that causes cells to unite to create living things. It is that love that brings people together to procreate and without which would be the end of civilization.

The psychological aspect of love includes the emotional, affective, volitional, and intellectual elements of the love experience. It expresses itself in the form of “empathy, sympathy, kindness, devotion, admiration, benevolence, reverence, respect, adoration and friendship. These experiences are contrary to “hatred, enmity, dislike, envy, jealousy, antipathy, and other forms of hate” (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 10). Love in the psychological realm is “altruistic” by its nature because in its true form it is devoid of ego. For example, in true friendship one does good things for another because it is good for that person, not because anything is desired in return. Psychological love fills our loneliness, beautifies our life and gives us true freedom marked by fearlessness and power that gives us the highest peace of mind (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 11).

The social aspect of love is “meaningful interaction or relationship” with another who shares mutuality of connectedness. Sorokin referred to the terms, “solidarity, mutual aid, cooperation” to connote forms of social relationship encompassing love (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 13). Sorokin also made a binary distinction between acquisitive and benevolent inclinations much like the psychological theorists of the 70s. Unlike other theorists, he believed that pursuit of selfish goals was love but of a lower order.

The examples given in this article refer to the psychosocial domains of love conceptualized by Sorokin because they are the 'visible' forms of love that can be understood more easily than the other forms of love posited. However, while the psychological and social are the visible empirical forms of love, it is important to understand that love, as a whole, cannot be fully realized without its religious, ethical, physical, biological and ontological aspects.

In addition to the seven forms of love, Sorokin posited five dimensions that make up an analytical model of love. He believed that the five dimensions are "manageable and not too complex" and "serves us in many theoretical and practical ways". They can be expressed as vectors that can be used to explain love in each of the love forms. Levin described the forms of love and dimensions as two axes with the forms of love looked at as nouns and the dimensions as adjectives (Levin & Kaplan, 2010). The five dimensions are as follows: 1) the intensity of love, 2) the extensity of love, 3) its purity, 4) its adequacy, and 5) its duration. Sorokin acknowledged that because of the indistinct nature of love the dimensions had both scalar and non-scalar characteristics. It is difficult to know the range of how many times greater one act of love is from another or whether it is lower, higher or equal to another act. Although, it is possible to empirically witness acts of love and know that one act is greater than another. For example, holding a door for someone is a much lower act of love than risking one's life for another. While the range of love is not scalar, the actions associated can be scalar and measured quantitatively (Sorokin, 1954a). To Sorokin this was of little consequence because if scalar measurement was not appropriate, measurement could be accomplished by innate knowledge or rational reasoning (Sorokin, 1954a).

It must be noted that although Sorokin referred to the ways and power of love he interchanged the word "love" with "altruism" throughout his work. He referred to acts that produce and maintain the psychological and/or physical good of others as altruism (Sorokin, 1958). He further described the varying types of altruism on an egoism-altruism scale, with one extreme being the pursuit of one's own good at the expense of another, to those other regarding acts that produce and maintain the good of others. He referred to non-altruistic behavior of those who help because they are being paid, and pseudo-altruism as those that preach love but don't practice it.

### The Five Dimensions of Love

Although Sorokin did not promote psychometric analysis of the five-dimensional model, for purposes of understanding, "scalar" terminology will be used below to outline an understanding of love from the lens of Sorokin. Ironically, Sorokin was adverse toward efforts to create psychosocial rating scales, and labeled them "illusions," "sham mathematics" and "quantiphrenia" because he believed that the only valid mathematical social science was quantification of observable events, such as behaviors (Sorokin, 1958). Therefore, the following analysis of the five dimensions focuses on behaviors that explain different parts of Sorokin's conceptualization of love.

**Intensity.** Actions vary widely in respect to the intensity of love actions. These are actions that result in some emotional or physical loss. The intensity of one's actions can range from a minor act of kindness, for example giving up a seat on a bus for someone, where emotional or physical loss is little, to the boundless, all-giving, and all-forgiving love actions such as giving one's greatest values, for example, one's life or one's health (Sorokin, 1954a).

When someone gives a few cents to the hungry from a large possession of money, the action is low in intensity but still an action of love. When someone offers up a seat to another person in a bus, the action is low in intensity but still an action of love. However, when one gives something of personal value to someone else, for example, giving up self-care as a long-term caregiver for the sake of the person receiving care, or sacrificing one's own life to save another, those actions are at the highest possible level of intensity (Sorokin, 1954a). If one is willing to take up a cause of civil rights, for example, knowing that one's life can be at risk, such actions are of high intensity (Post, 2003). Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela come to mind as examples of people who expressed love of high intensity.

Sorokin is of the opinion that the zero point of intensity on a scale is neither love nor hate but if an action falls below zero it represents hate, above zero it represents love, although ranging from low love to high love. When someone preaches love but does not practice it, the intensity of love is near the zero point. When the preaching of love is used to mask selfish and hateful hypocritical actions, these actions fall below the zero point and become hateful actions and the antithesis of intensive love actions. (Sorokin, 1954a).

**Extensivity.** Extensive love actions vary from "the zero point of love of oneself only, up to the love of all mankind, living creatures and the whole universe" (Sorokin, 1954a). It can be understood as actions that are given without regard for who the receiver is or how different they are from the giver. Between extensivity degrees "lies a variety of extensivities: love of one's own family, a few friends, love of all the groups one belongs to, to loving the whole universe" (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 16). According to Sorokin, narrow love is when it is applied to only a few persons intimately known by the giver. Wide love, on the other hand, is love of all living creatures, regardless of how different or similar they are to the giver (Sorokin, 1958). The zero point of love extensivity according to Sorokin is, loving oneself only. Narrow and wide love actions can be applied in similar fashion to hate actions, starting with hating oneself, and growing wider into hating the whole world and viewing everyone as his/her enemy (Sorokin, 1958).

The high end of extensivity has been compared to "agape" love extended in the Judeo-Christian theologies. Extensive love is "unlimited, freely given, sacrificial love" and not dependent on the worthiness of the object (Post, 2003). Mother Theresa is an example of someone who achieved high extensivity by her actions with the poor and discarded. Highly extensive love is in contradiction to limiting love actions that are directed to a small group and purposefully refrained from sharing love with others or the rest of humanity. We see this daily as we watch the news and see one group oppressing another group or taking resources for their group at the expense of another. Extensive love is focused on the good of another simply because that person exists (Post, 2003). One who generates hate toward another or toward humanity would measure on the negative side of the extensivity scale.

**Purity.** Pure love actions are those actions that are performed because of the inherent value of love itself, not for the sake of pleasure or utility (Sorokin, 1958, p. 64). These are actions that are motivated by love alone without expectations. Purity of love ranges from love motivated by love alone, without the taint of a "soiling motive" of utility, pleasure, advantage or profit, down to a "soiled love" where love is but a means to a utilitarian end where love is only the "thinnest trickle in the muddy current of selfish aspirations and purposes" (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 17). Actions that are high in purity are not generated with the potential desire to create a reaction from the receiver of love. Rather, they are generated for the sake of the love that is shared, even when negative reactions from the receiver may ensue. Actions that are motivated only by uni-directional love, with no regard for how the receiver acts or reacts, is love at the high end of the purity scale. Purity is "...love for love's sake, asking nothing in return, letting your position always be that of the giver. Pure love knows no bargain, no reward. Love knows no

fear, no rival” (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 17). Sorokin uses the statements of saints of the Occident and the Orient to describe this love: “...each loved God and would love Him even if He were to condemn them to an eternal hell, for such a lover are perhaps the most striking expressions of the purest love” (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 17). Sorokin does however admit that in pure love actions a certain amount of pleasure or utility may follow as a by-product of love actions. However, if these other regarding actions are mainly performed for the sake of pleasure or utility, it is impure love that measures very low on the pure love scale (Sorokin, 1958). On the other hand, Sorokin did acknowledge that conduct opposed to love conduct is anti-loving or egoistic. Such actions are actions of hatred and enmity (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 63). This places actions that are guided by hate on the negative side of the purity scale.

Although it seems difficult to distinguish between intensity and purity, Sorokin attempts to differentiate intensity from purity by attaching a greater thought process to actions that speak of intensity. These actions seem to be those where people willingly make active decisions to incur emotional or physical loss for the sake of another. With pure love, it seems there is less cognition involved and love is given spontaneously, just for the sake of love. These are acts that intuitively respond to the needs of others, without involved cognitions. Although some utility may be involved in these actions, it comes as a by-product and not as a carefully thought out process. Also, with purity no bargaining is involved and the actions of the receiver, either hateful or loving, are of no consequence to the giver. With intensity, Sorokin does not discuss the reactions of the receiver. He only focuses on the act of giving, and the willingness to incur emotional or physical loss.

*Adequacy.* Adequate love actions are those where the motive to love aligns with good and loving consequences for another. They can be simple actions that align; for example, in a relationship if one partner chooses to cook a special meal because he/she is aware that their over-worked partner enjoys coming home to a home cooked meal, the motive to love aligns in positive consequence for his/her partner. In more difficult situations, a divorcing individual may decide to show love by giving his/her former spouse the house if the former spouse is going to be the main caregiver of the children. This will be an act of adequate love where the objective consequence is stability for the former spouse and children. It becomes “wise and creative love” and is at the top of the adequacy scale.

Adequate love varies from a complete discrepancy between the subjective goal of the love action and the objective consequence to the receiver, up to their complete unity (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 17). Throughout Sorokin’s writings he referred to an objective standard that guides society. Meeting the standard makes you a “good neighbor” or an “Apostle” of love. No society can be satisfactory without a mix of “apostles”, who are great altruists and “good neighbors,” who are ordinary people doing acts of good will without any legal duty or moral obligation, devoid of advantage or profit (Sorokin, 1950). Understanding the objective standard makes it easier to differentiate between adequate and inadequate other-regarding actions as well as anti-adequate or hateful actions.

Sorokin differentiates between wise and creative love actions and love actions that are “inadequate, unwise, ignorant, or blind” (Sorokin, 1954a). Wise and creative love actions are “devoid of harmful effects for the other party while blind love actions prove harmful to the other party”(Sorokin, 1958, p. 64). In cases of wise and creative love actions, the subjective goal unifies with the objective consequence. In cases of “inadequate, unwise, ignorant or blind love” actions, the subjective goal is in disagreement with the objective consequence, sometimes up to a point of causing harm. Sorokin refers to the unity of the subjective and objective as “adequate love” and the disagreement of the subjective and objective as “inadequate love”(Sorokin, 1954a).

Inadequate love takes on two forms. The first is where a love action is subjectively authentic, but its objective consequences is very dissimilar or even opposite to the subjective goal of the love action; and second, where there is no subjective goal to express a love action but the objective consequences of the action, even though it may not have a love intent, benefits another and appears as love. Sorokin gives the example of a “mother who truly loves her children and wants to make them lovable (honest, industrious, and good) and begins to pamper them, satisfy all their needs yet fails to discipline them. Through such actions she spoils her children, and makes them capricious, irresponsible, weak, lazy and dishonest”(Sorokin, 1954a, p. 17). In such a case the goal of the mother (i.e. to give great love to her children) differs greatly from the consequences that occur to the children (i.e. the children become spoiled). This type of inadequate or blind love is not guided by truth or wisdom. It also ends up not being in agreement with its objective consequence and ultimately destroys itself instead of benefiting the beloved (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 18).

The second type of inadequate love is where there is no subjective intention to share love but even though motivated by something else it objectively results in a loving consequence. These actions can range from those cases where there is no love motive to those where love is a dominant characteristic and finds expression in activities and achievements that benefit another. These types of activities are where one acts with another goal, such as composing a song or writing a book, and through the beauty of the song or book, it touches and transforms another’s soul. While the creators may not intend great love toward others, the result cannot help but create love because as Sorokin says, love is created by “the unity and mutual transformability of these forms of energy” (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 19).

Sorokin discussed conduct opposed to loving actions as anti-loving or egoistic representing actions of hatred and enmity. It is assumed that adequate hate can be seen as hate actions where the subjective hate actions are united with the objective negative and harmful manifestations to the receiver.

***Duration.*** “Duration varies from the shortest possible moment to years or throughout the whole life of an individual or a group” (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 16). Continuous and durable love is the highest expression of duration while a short moment is the lowest expression of duration (Sorokin, 1958). Duration has to have a love component or else it is not enduring love. An example provided by Sorokin of long, enduring love, is that of a mother caring for a sick child for the child’s whole life or the great apostles discharging their love mission throughout their lives (Sorokin, 1954a). In Sorokin’s autobiography he uses the example of his father’s love for his mother. She died at a young age, leaving him to care for three young children. He never remarried and remained faithful to her to the end of his life, even though her death turned him into a broken man. Sorokin noted that “love that transcends the death of the beloved and endures to the end of the lover’s life is a rarity today...transcendent love has been, and still is, the finest, the holiest and most beautiful ideal in human life – truly immortal and sublime” (Sorokin, 1963, p. 17).

The negative side of duration emanates from actions that are full of hate where a person chooses to use hate as the motive that drives his/her world. This forms part of anti-love actions described by Sorokin (1954a, p. 63) that are egoistic and hateful in nature. People who allow hate to fill their lives get consumed by this hatred, and allow all their actions toward others to be driven by hate alone.

## The Multidimensionality of Love

The dimensions of love conceived by Sorokin are multidimensional and are therefore, both independent and dependent on each other for a true understanding of love to be developed. If one were to be high on each dimension then one would have achieved supreme love that is transcendent. For most people they may be high on one dimension and low on another because transcendent love is difficult to achieve. For example, one could be quite high on intensity by giving something of value to another person that is an emotional or physical loss to oneself, but only done one time in a lifetime which is low on duration (Sorokin, 1954a).

In order to fully understand the interplay of these constructs, it is necessary to look at the combinations that the dimensions can provide. Measuring high on all dimensions is rare and is less frequently found in the world. Different combinations of dimensions are more likely. For example, as extensive love increases, intensive love many times decreases. It is necessary to keep people closer in order to keep giving intensive love. By keeping them closer people tend to understand what is important to each other or the group so that high intensive love can be given. The more love is expanded and extensive love increases, intensive love has a tendency to decrease. This is because the energy used to love many dissipates accumulated love energy. For example, if a person expends extensive love energy on a large group of people, the intensity of this love will be diminished. There will not be enough love energy left for the large group that will allow for intensive love that requires knowledge on an intimate level and an understanding of what people really need.

When durational love is measured with intensive love it tends to decrease with an increase in durational love. It is difficult to maintain intensive love for a long period of time without an inflow of replenishing love. If love is returned then intensive love has an option to increase over a longer period of time. The relationship between intensive love and pure love are fairly uni-directional, as one increases, the other follows. If love is of low intensity, pure love will generally be low too.

Intensive love and adequate love exhibit a rather “indeterminate and loose” relationship (Sorokin, 1954a, p. 29). The love actions could be intensive (great emotional or physical loss) yet fail to align with what the receiver needs. The relationship of extensive love and adequate love is bi-directional. This is because it is harder to love adequately and objectively and evaluate the consequences of love actions when the magnitude of extensive love increases (Sorokin, 1954a). For example, it is difficult to align with a larger group and really understand what will be a love action that objectively will be good for the group, because it is difficult to have knowledge or wisdom of many in comparison to a smaller more intimate group.

The relationship between durational love and pure love is fairly consistent. The purer the love, the more lasting it tends to be. This is exhibited when one loves purely, expecting nothing in return. In these cases, the relationship tends to last longer because the need for reciprocity is non-existent. There is a positive relationship between pure and adequate love. Pure love, or loving for love’s sake, tends to be adequate because it almost always is for the good of the other because it takes the other’s interest into account. A pure subjective act almost always takes the objective consequence into consideration before the act is carried out because the intention has to be a perfect manifestation of love in order to be considered pure love.

## Application

Sorokin's operational five-dimensional theory of love encourages appraisal of actions toward others that are useful for daily human interaction. The breadth of perspective allowed by viewing actions as intensive, extensive, pure, adequate or durational permits people to gauge love actions from a salutogenic perspective, which is much needed for the continued survival of our species. Consciously reflecting on individual or group actions from the five-dimensional perspective can help in promoting in and out-group love. The theory can be implemented across different love constructs (romantic, companionate, parental, etc.).

From a micro perspective, inculcating the five dimensions may help interpersonal relationships flourish. Being willing to emotionally or physically lose something precious for another (intensive love), knowing that the loss will benefit others (extensive love), understanding that love actions will not be returned (pure love), aligning with another's needs (adequate love) and doing it for a long time (durational love) will encourage the flourishing of humans guided by love as envisioned by Sorokin.

From a macro perspective, the intentional and deliberate use of the five-dimensional theory would enable organizations or countries to gauge their actions from the virtue of love that promotes growth and harmony versus pathogenesis. For example, a company whose sole goal is to create capital for its investors may make different decisions if love of others was included in their decision-making schema. If they realized that increasing capital at the expense of humanity would be anti-extensive love that hurts the organization and society, they may be reluctant in making decisions for profit only. For countries that have conflict, analyzing difficult international decisions from the five-dimensional perspective may bring us together as one world, rather than a group of competing entities. Imagine if countries were willing to take actions that result in self-loss (intensive love), benefit those outside their borders (extensive love), demand nothing in return (pure love), align with other countries' needs (adequate love), and do it consistently over a long term (durational love). If this occurs our world would become a generative beacon of love, with war and suffering unnecessary. As Sorokin said, this is achievable and is not the path for only spiritual masters, rather, it is the path for the common human being (Sorokin, 1954a, 1954b).

## Conclusion

The application of Sorokin's five-dimensional theory is applicable across cultures and is a way to understand the virtue of love that can be used to guide humanity to a peaceful and harmonious existence. The time has long come to embrace a new way to conceptualize love. The virtue of love, through the lens of Sorokin, provides an analytical framework that is timely, easy to understand and has the potential to change human interaction. Failure to embrace love at this point in history may be tantamount to creating our own destruction. Only the virtue of love has the potential to save us.

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Address correspondence to:

Dr. Joseph G. D'Ambrosio,  
Kent School of Social Work,  
University of Louisville, Louisville,  
Kentucky, 40292;  
[joe.dambrosio@louisville.edu](mailto:joe.dambrosio@louisville.edu),