

INTEGRALISM AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: A COMPARISON OF SOROKIN AND SELIGMAN

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Pitirim A. Sorokin's Integralism, which advocates the synthesis of the truths of faith, of reason, and of the senses, accords well with traditional Christian and Catholic approaches to the philosophy of science. Sorokin's writings on this topic include a prophetic dimension, in which Sorokin argues that social scientists would soon abandon the dominant but moribund paradigm of the Sensate cultural supersystem, and seek a new approach based on Integralist principles. Recently, in the field of psychology, a movement calling itself "Positive Psychology" has appeared, which likewise calls for a fundamental reorientation of its professional discipline. This paper examines the emerging model of Positive Psychology, especially as articulated in the works of two of its main proponents, Martin E. Seligman and Christopher Peterson, in order to determine the extent to which it is congruent with Sorokin's Integralism, and thus the extent to which it might contribute to a reformed social science that recognizes an explicitly spiritual dimension of human personality, human behavior and social order.

INTRODUCTION

Pitirim A. Sorokin's paradigm of Integralism offers an approach to social science that is highly compatible with traditional Christian doctrine, as well as with modern Catholic (especially papal) teachings concerning science and religion, and particularly such papal teachings as *The Splendor of Truth (Veritatis Splendor)* and *Faith and Reason (Fides et Ratio)*. For these reasons, the Integralist perspective is potentially of great interest to contemporary social scientists who seek to affirm spirituality explicitly in their teaching, research and publication activities.

Integralism emerged out of Sorokin's four-volume major work, *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (1937-1941), which analyzed shifts in the dominance of what he termed "culture mentalities" over 2500 years in Europe and the United States (see Ford 1996). Sorokin postulated two major types of mentalities, Ideational (or spiritual) and Sensate (or secular), as well as a balanced intermediary variant called Idealistic. *Dynamics* attempted to document an alteration between the two major mentalities that was punctuated by periods of social, cultural

and psychological crisis. Indeed, Sorokin concluded that the contemporary West was in the throes of one of its greatest upheavals—the “crisis of our age”—and that the Sensate culture that had been dominant since the sixteenth century, but which had become increasingly moribund, would soon give way to a new Ideational or Idealistic system.

In his analysis of the crisis and his predictions of change, Sorokin’s reasoning was dialectical. In the original edition of *Dynamics* he focused almost exclusively on what might be termed an internal or intra-civilizational dialectic. Utilizing what he called the “principle of limit” (Sorokin 1941: 694-714), he argued that culture mentalities were repeatedly transformed into their opposites because of the insufficiency of their fundamental premises, namely, either that “reality is exclusively spiritual” or “reality is exclusively material.” In later works, he also considered the transformation of culture mentalities by means of what might be termed an external dialectic. Thus, in *Russia and the United States* (1944), he asserted that interaction between the opposed systems of capitalism and communism was gradually leading toward an intermediate system that contained the better features of each type. In a similar manner, in the one-volume edition of *Dynamics* (1957), and again in *The Basic Trends of Our Time* (1964), he pointed toward the possibilities for change arising from an East-West dialectic. Thus, in the later edition of *Dynamics* (1957: ii-iii), he wrote:

We all know that up to roughly the fourteenth century the creative leadership of mankind was carried on by the peoples and nations of Asia and Africa. . . . The Western, Euro-American, peoples were the latest in taking the creative leadership of mankind. They have carried this torch only during the last five or six centuries. During this short period they discharged their creative mission brilliantly, especially in the fields of science, technology, Sensate fine arts, politics, and economics. At the present time, however, the European monopolistic leadership can be considered as about ended. The unfolding of the history of mankind is already being staged on the much larger scenery of Asiatic-African-American-European cosmopolitan theater. And the stars of the next acts of the great historical drama are going to be: besides Europe, the Americas, Russia, and renascent great cultures of India, China, Japan, Indonesia, and the Islamic world.

This process of change might also be referred to as an inter-civilizational dialogue.

This predicted transformation of all major spheres of Western culture, according to Sorokin, would also necessitate a new type of social science based on a new set of assumptions about the nature of reality (including human nature) and the ways in which it can be known. This would be Integral social science (see Johnston 1998; Nichols 2003). Sorokin sought to delineate the new paradigm through systematic critiques of contemporary sociological theory and research, especially in his books on *Fads and Foibles in Sociology (1956a)* and *Sociological Theories of Today (1966)*. At the present moment, Sorokin's Integral approach may be regarded as "an incipient paradigm which has the potential of moving the social sciences to higher levels of integration, understanding and creativity" (Jeffries 1999: 37).

This paper further explores these issues by examining a recent movement in the field of psychology, a second incipient paradigm that is called Positive Psychology. I shall examine the major assumptions and stated objectives of Positive Psychology through an analysis of recent works by major figures in the movement, and shall then compare these with the assumptions and objectives of Sorokin's model. This will provide a basis for discussion about the potential contributions of both approaches to a social science that accords with Christian and Catholic principles.

THE INTEGRALIST PERSPECTIVE

Sorokin characterizes his approach as a creative variant on a school of thought that is as old as human experience. This perspective, in many important ways, is quite congenial to a Christian and Catholic outlook (see Jeffries 2001), but is not completely identical with it (see Nichols 2001). Thus, Sorokin states: "My ontology represents a mere variation on the ancient, powerful, perennial stream of philosophical thought represented by Taoism, the Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita, brilliantly analyzed by the Hindu and Mahayana Buddhist logicians. . . and reiterated by the great Muslim thinkers and poets" (Sorokin 1963: 373). Within Christianity, Sorokin also sees numerous representatives of Integralism, including St. Thomas Aquinas. As he explains: "In Christianity it was expressed by many Church Fathers, like Clement of Alexandria, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Origen, St. Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus Confessor, John Scotus Erigena, St. John of Damascus, and later on by Hugh of St. Victor, St. Thomas Aquinas, Nicolas of Cusa, and by many Christian mystics like St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, Meister Eckhart, Ruysbroeck, Jakob Boehme, and others" (Sorokin 1963: 373-374).

Sorokin's Integralism postulates a three-dimensional reality that is known by humans through three corresponding channels of cognition (see Johnston 1991, 1995). Thus, there is a physical aspect of the universe that is partly comprehended through the five organs of sense. In addition, there exists a realm of ideas that is understood by means of human intellect and reason. Finally, there is an elusive dimension beyond the reach of the senses and reason, which is known through intuition. The functioning of the three channels of cognition makes it possible for humans to adapt successfully to the complex universe in which they find themselves. In other words, Integralism, though a very challenging approach conceptually, contains a strong pragmatic element that posits a human species that manages to cope with its immense and mysterious surroundings.

The assertion of three channels of cognition raises the question of relationships among them. Are all equal, or is there some hierarchy of knowledge and understanding? Does knowledge occur simultaneously in all channels, or is there a sequence of phases (as in Locke's famous dictum that "there is nothing in the intellect that has not first been in the senses")? Do the three types of knowledge remain distinct, or are they somehow combined (as in the Hegelian formula of thesis, antithesis, synthesis)?

Sorokin argues for a relationship of complementarity among the three channels, in the sense that each provides a type of knowledge that is not available to the others. Thus, the channels make harmonious contributions to the total knowledge of human beings. There is, however, also a corresponding process of mutual correction, because each channel, operating in isolation, is capable of error. As he argues:

The organs of the senses, not controlled by reason or intuition, can give us but a chaotic mass of impressions, perceptions, sensations, incapable of supplying any integrated knowledge Likewise, mere dialectic speculation cannot guarantee to us any valid knowledge of empirical phenomena Finally, intuition uncontrolled by the truth of reason and the senses goes very easily astray Each of these sources and systems of truth misleads us much more easily when it is isolated from, and unchecked by, the other sources and systems of truth than when it is united into one integral whole with the others. (Sorokin 1941: 763-764.)

In a later work, Sorokin (1956a) also summarizes these relations of complementarity and mutual correction under the heading of "epistemic

correlation.” This can be described as a two-sided dialectic of cooperation and conflict, in which knowledge arises through the continual interplay of faculties. Despite the logical possibility of epistemic stalemates or paralysis, Sorokin consistently emphasizes the triumph of integral cognition. The warrant for this optimistic conclusion seems to be the historical record of human achievement, especially as manifested in diverse civilizations or cultural supersystems that include religious teachings, great works of art, scientific discoveries and technological inventions. Thus, successful cognition is made visible through creativity.

Although Sorokin grants formal equality to the three channels of cognition, a strong case can be made that he actually accords primacy to intuition—which he also refers to as “the truth of faith.” Thus, in his initial statement of “the integral theory of truth and reality” (*Dynamics*, Vol. IV: 746-764), he presents the following argument for intuition as the foundation of all knowledge:

Why do the basic postulates of any science, from mathematics to physics, appear to be unquestionably valid and their axioms axiomatic? Since by definition they are ultimate postulates and axioms, they cannot be based upon either logic or empirical experience; on the contrary all the subsequent logical propositions and empirical theories are based upon the postulates and axioms. The only source of the self-evident character of such postulates and axioms is intuition. In this sense, it is not a derivative of, but the condition and basis of the truth of reason and of sensory experience. (Sorokin 1941: 748-749.)

Thus, all truth springs from faith (see also Sorokin 1956b).

Reason apparently occupies the second place in the integralist model, perhaps because of its ability to transform sensory data into higher order creations (e.g., the laws of natural science). Sensory knowledge thus ranks third, though it is by no means devalued or treated negatively by Sorokin. Despite its limitations, sensory knowledge is vital to human health and is just as indispensable to the total matrix of knowledge as are its two counterparts.

The primacy of intuition highlights the importance of the transcendental and spiritual in Integralism, which was an obstacle to its acceptance by mainstream sociologists operating within the paradigm of twentieth-century science (see Johnston 1995). Its seeming foreign

character is partly explicable in terms of its roots in the Russian intellectual tradition. Indeed, there are striking similarities between Sorokin's Integralism and major writings in the Russian religious philosophy of "intuitivism" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see Zenkovsky 1953; Edie et al. 1965). Particularly close resemblances can be found the works of Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900)—frequently cited by Sorokin—who is best known for his conception of "Godmanhood." Solovyov articulated the concept of "integral knowledge," which he attempted to elaborate in an unfinished 1877 work, entitled *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*. The following characterization of Solovyov's work, by Catholic historian Frederick Copleston, illumines parallels between Solovyov's system and Sorokin's later Integralism:

He [Solovyov] argues . . . that the empiricists, in their reductive analysis into impressions, failed to grasp what actually exists and that pure empiricism, relying simply on sense experience, would fail to understand anything. At the same time he sees the development of rationalism as culminating in the reduction of being to pure thought. In their different ways both empiricism and rationalism fail to grasp what is, real being. Yet both express truths and correspond to real aspects of the human being. We cannot understand reality without sense-experience, and we cannot understand it without ideas or concepts and the rational discernment of relations. What is needed is a synthesis of complementary truths, of distinct principles. In general, Solovyov saw the intellectual life of western man as having undergone a process of fragmentation. Not only had science, philosophy and religion become distinct spheres but they were often regarded as opposed to one another The creative activity of man as manifested in art was regarded as having no real relation to the pursuit either of truth or of the good. In brief, the unity of the truth, the good and the beautiful as different aspects of being had been lost sight of. (Copleston 1988: 213.)

This broken unity of the true, the beautiful and the good would often be cited by Sorokin as a basic feature of "the crisis of our age."

The primacy of intuition in Integralism also accounts for another spiritual dimension of the model, namely, Sorokin's advocacy of altruism as the best means of overcoming the social and cultural crisis (see Matter 1975; Johnston 1991). In an intensive period of

research and writing extending from the late 1940s through the late 1950s, Sorokin published a series of works examining “the mysterious energy of love” that also attempted to create a new field in social science, which he called “amitology” (see especially Sorokin 1948, 1951, 1954). Thus, altruism takes knowledge provided by intuition—such as the knowledge of the sacredness of all human life, and knowledge of the rightness of the Golden Rule—and applies it adaptively to meet the challenge of history (see Johnston 2001). Sorokin’s work on altruism shows how he, like his predecessor Solovyov, would reunite what he liked to call the “indivisible trinity” of the true, the beautiful and the good. There is also an echo here of the intuitionism and altruism of Leo Tolstoy, a major influence on Sorokin (see Nichols 1998), especially his treatise, *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (1961).

THE APPROACH OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Toward a New Scientific Paradigm

The positive psychology movement begins with the desire for a fundamental reorientation of scientific work that is rooted in a new vision. Thus, as Seligman (2002: 6) notes, “psychology has badly neglected the positive side of life. For every hundred journal articles on sadness, there is just one on happiness.” In the same way, Peterson and Seligman (2004: 4) open their study of character strengths and virtues with a rejection of negativism, saying: “We disavow the disease model as we approach character . . . we believe that character strengths are the bedrock of the human condition.” Thus, in a manner analogous to Sorokin’s Integralism, Positive Psychology represents an “incipient paradigm” (Jeffries 1999) within its specialized scientific field.

Learned Optimism

An important application of the emerging positive approach to psychology appears in Seligman’s 1991 work on learned optimism, which developed from his earlier work on learned helplessness. He begins by identifying two contrasting temperaments, optimism and pessimism, based on more than two decades of professional observation (see also Gillham 2000).

The defining characteristic of pessimists is that they tend to believe that bad events will last a long time, will undermine everything they do, and are their own fault. The optimists, who are confronted with the same hard knocks of this world, think

about misfortune in the opposite way. They tend to believe defeat is just a temporary setback, that its causes are confined to this one case. The optimists believe defeat is not their fault: Circumstances, bad luck, or other people brought it about. Such people are unfazed by defeat. Confronted by a bad situation, they perceive it as challenging and try harder. (Seligman 1991: 5.)

This dichotomy of temperament, however, does not mean that people are permanently trapped in negativism, for Seligman offers the hopeful message that “pessimism is escapable.” Indeed, “Pessimists can in fact learn to be optimists . . . by learning a new set of cognitive skills.” (1991: 5.)

Although he begins at the level of the individual, Seligman makes it clear that he considers both optimism and pessimism to have a fundamental social aspect. In particular, he links personal pessimism to the broader malaise of the “age of the self” that has resulted from the decline of larger communities. As he notes:

In many ways extreme individualism tends to maximize pessimistic explanatory style, prompting people to explain commonplace failures with permanent, pervasive and personal causes. The growth of the individual, for example, means that failure is probably my fault—because who else is there but me? The decline of the commons means that failure is permanent and pervasive. To the extent that larger, benevolent institutions (God, nation, family) no longer matter, personal failures seem catastrophic. (1991:286.)

As a strategy for escaping the trap of individualism that breeds pessimism, Seligman proposes self-sacrifice, engagement and community service. Among his practical suggestions (1991:289) are the following: setting aside a percentage of taxable income, and then giving it away personally to selected causes; replacing some personal activity with another that serves the well-being of the community; parenting so that children learn how to give away possessions.

Character Strengths and Virtues

One of the most important works in the movement of positive psychology is the ambitious volume, *Character Strengths and Virtues* (2004), coedited by Peterson and Seligman. According to the authors (2004: 5), positive psychology “focuses on three related topics: the

study of positive subjective experiences, the study of positive individual traits, and the study of institutions that enable positive experience and positive traits.” As an initial step in pursuit of this agenda, Peterson and Seligman seek “to unpack the notion of character—to start with the assumption that character is plural—and we do so by specifying the separate strengths and virtues, then devising ways to assess these as individual differences” (2004: 10).

The work is thus designed to facilitate professional discourse, and the authors regard it as analogous to other standard classification manuals, such as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and the International Classification of Diseases*. They hope to “provide a common vocabulary for basic researchers and clinicians, allowing communication within and across groups of professionals as well as with the general public” (Peterson and Seligman 2004: 3).

On the basis of a broad crosscultural survey, the authors conclude that there are six universal virtues: wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. Peterson and Seligman (2004: 13) speculate that these virtues may have emerged because they are “grounded in biology through an evolutionary process that selected for these aspects of excellence as means of solving the important tasks necessary for survival of the species.”

Most of the volume is devoted to fleshing out this framework of virtues in terms of some two dozen “character strengths.” According to the authors (2004: 13), “Character strengths are the psychological ingredients—processes or mechanisms—that define the virtues. Said another way, they are distinguishable routes to displaying one or another of the virtues.” For example, the virtue of justice may be expressed through the character strengths of citizenship, fairness, or leadership. In the same way, the virtue of transcendence becomes visible through the character strengths of appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, and spirituality. The complete listing of virtues and character strengths appears in Table 1.

TABLE 1: VIRTUES AND STRENGTHS OF CHARACTER

<i>VIRTUE</i>	<i>STRENGTHS</i>
<i>Wisdom & Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Creativity (Originality, Ingenuity) •Curiosity (Interest, Novelty-Seeking) •Open-Mindedness (Judgment,Critical Thinking) •Love of Learning •Perspective (Wisdom)
<i>Courage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Bravery (Valor) •Persistence (Perseverance, Industriousness) •Integrity (Authenticity, Honesty) •Vitality (Zest, Enthusiasm, Vigor, Energy)
<i>Humanity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Love •Kindness (Generosity, Altruistic Love) •Social Intelligence (Emotional Intelligence)
<i>Justice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Citizenship (Social Responsibility, Loyalty, Teamwork) •Fairness •Leadership
<i>Temperance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Forgiveness and Mercy •Humility and Modesty •Prudence •Self-Regulation (Self-Control)
<i>Transcendence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence (Awe, Wonder) •Gratitude •Hope (Optimism, Future-Mindedness) •Humor (Playfulness) •Spirituality (Religiousness, Faith, Purpose)

Operating as they do with a psychological rather than a theological perspective, Peterson and Seligman do not approach the virtues in terms of obedience to a divine lawgiver or a call to discipleship. Rather, they seem to suggest that people are drawn to the exercise of character strengths and virtues by the evident benefits that result. These include both the good society and the fulfilled individual. Seligman has further explored the individual fruits of the virtuous life in a book on happiness.

Authentic Happiness

As Seligman notes, the field of psychology has had very little to say on the subject of human happiness. Indeed, “for every hundred articles on sadness, there is just one on happiness” (Seligman 2002: 6). In his book, *Authentic Happiness* (2002), Seligman provides a personal statement about social science and the ultimate questions of life. A life grounded in character strengths and virtues, he argues, can be intensely meaningful and joyous.

For purposes of the present analysis, what is most relevant in the volume is Seligman’s treatment of the transcendent dimension of life, and his engagement with traditional Judeo-Christian theology. He begins with a personal expression of deep yearning, combined with a humanistic stance toward science and spirituality.

I also hunger for meaning in my own life that will transcend the arbitrary purposes I have chosen for myself. Like many scientifically minded Westerners, however, the idea of a transcendent purpose (or, beyond this, of a God who grounds such purpose) has always seemed untenable to me. Positive Psychology points the way toward a secular approach to noble purpose and transcendent meaning—and, even more astonishingly, toward a God who is not supernatural. (Seligman 2002:14.)

The heart of this conception is a “God” of destiny, rather than of origins, a reality that emerges or evolves from human creativity and moral goodness.

Seligman further explicates his dissent from traditional (i.e., Biblical) teachings about God. According to his understanding, the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition has four basic properties: omnipotence, omniscience, goodness, and the activity of creating the universe. It is the last of these that Seligman considers untenable, because “the Creator property is so contradictory to the other three properties” and “runs afoul of evil in the universe” (Seligman 2002: 258-259).

Seligman's alternative is to postulate a universe that is evolving toward a higher state, through the complementary processes of natural selection and cultural selection. This latter dynamic results in "win-win" outcomes and an overarching movement toward ever-increasing complexity that should be regarded as greater goodness. As he puts it:

in the very longest run, where is the principle of win-win headed? Toward a God who is not supernatural, a God who ultimately acquires omnipotence, omniscience, and goodness through the natural progress of win-win. Perhaps, just perhaps, God comes at the end. (Seligman 2002: 260.)

Thus, in traditional Christian language, God becomes "omega only," rather than the "alpha and omega" of the Book of Revelation.

For Seligman, the prospect of participating in this evolutionary process can make life intensely meaningful and worthwhile.

This is the door through which meaning that transcends us can enter our lives. A meaningful life is one that joins with something larger than we are—and the larger that something is, the more meaning our lives have. Partaking in a process that has the bringing of a God who is endowed with omniscience, omnipotence, and goodness as its ultimate end joins our lives to an enormously large something. (Seligman 2002: 260.)

Such a life, he concludes, can be properly described as "sacred," in the sense of a rejection of self-centeredness and a consecration to seeking the highest good of all persons. This is altruism, conceived in long-term, planetary or cosmic dimensions, which, in its non-theistic manner, perhaps bears a resemblance to the "hymn of the universe" of Teilhard de Chardin (1969).

CONCLUSION: INTEGRALISM AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

On the basis of the above exposition, it is clear that there are both fundamental similarities and important differences in the works and larger incipient paradigms of Sorokin and Seligman. With regard to common ground, it is significant, first of all, that both reject the dominant negativistic approaches in their fields and seek positive, affirming alternatives. Second, both thinkers are responding to a

perceived sociocultural crisis, which they regard as pervasive and debilitating. Sorokin sees the crisis in all major compartments of culture (art, science, law, etc.), while Seligman frames it primarily in terms of an attitude of self-centeredness. A third major area of agreement is their anti-relativistic stance which asserts the validity of universal standards of goodness. Fourth, both Sorokin and Seligman explicitly recognize transcendence, beginning with transcendence of the ego and extending to the idea of a spiritual dimension of reality. In accordance with this view, both emphasize the importance of altruism and love in group life. These must be rooted in freedom and self-determination, which Sorokin and Seligman support in opposition to the deterministic emphasis that has characterized modern social science. Both authors, finally, celebrate the sacred value of the human person, thereby breaking the silence of the social sciences on this issue.

At the same time, however, there are very noteworthy differences between Integralism and Positive Psychology. To begin with, there are significant contrasts of methodology. Sorokin, despite his marshalling of vast amounts of numeric data, became increasingly skeptical of the possibility of valid quantitative measurement of basic social and cultural phenomena. Seligman (along with his collaborators) by contrast, is committed to quantification as a means of making the study of character strengths and virtues respectable within the highly quantified field of psychology. This may indicate that the Seligman-Peterson stance, while dissident, is ultimately more pragmatic and less radically prophetic than Sorokin's approach. Furthermore, in his major work, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, and in the numerous later writings that emerged from it, Sorokin practiced a dialectical method based on the idea of the interplay of opposites (and their transformation into one another), especially within systems and over long periods of historical time. Integralism, in other words, is fundamentally dialectical (though much closer to a Confucian dialectic of complementarity than to the Hegelian-Marxian variant that is more commonly associated with the term "dialectic"), whereas Positive Psychology does not explicitly develop this approach.

More importantly for present purposes, Sorokin's approach is generally theistic, whereas Seligman postulates what might be termed a "non-theistic theology" in which "God" (for lack of a better term) "comes at the end." Consistent with his mystical emphasis, Sorokin asserts the primacy of the "truth of faith" or intuition. The same premise, however, is not found in Positive Psychology. Sorokin's view of a God of love in whose image human beings are created (and are therefore also creators themselves) is obviously strongly influenced by

Christianity, whereas the works of Seligman and his collaborators are at most only slightly influenced (at least explicitly) by Christianity. Finally, for all the above reasons, Sorokin's Integralism is much closer to Catholic doctrine than is Positive Psychology (as seen most clearly in his treatment of St. Thomas Aquinas, medieval mystics and the Church Fathers). As Jeffries (2003: 15) has noted:

A Catholic variant of integralism is one in which faith, reason and the senses constitute a harmonious system with faith being foundational. An exemplar of an integralism of this nature can be found in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas Such a system is also that of John Paul II, who explicitly distinguishes these three sources of truth (John Paul II 1998: 41-48, Nos. 28-35). There is a "unity of truth, natural and revealed" in which the revealed truth of faith, the philosophical truth of reason, and the scientific truth gained through research complement each other in a unified system of non-contradiction in which revealed truth is foundational (John Paul II 1998: 47-48, Nos. 34-35) In a Catholic variant of integralism, the truth of faith is the body of fundamental ideas contained in Sacred Scripture and the Apostolic Tradition as interpreted by the Magisterium of the Church

The fundamental similarities and differences between Sorokin's Integralism and the Positive Psychology of Seligman and Peterson are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2: INTEGRALISM AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Areas of Agreement

<i>Integralism</i>	<i>Positive Psychology</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Rejection of negativistic sociology •Response to sociocultural crisis •Universal standards of goodness •Recognition of transcendence •Centrality of altruistic love •Emphasis on education for altruism •Emphasis on self-determination (free will, personal responsibility) •Sacred value of the human person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Rejection of negativistic psychology •Response to sociocultural crisis •Universal standards of goodness •Recognition of transcendence •Importance of altruistic love •Emphasis on education for virtues •Emphasis on self-determination (free will, personal responsibility) •Sacred value of the human person

Areas of Disagreement

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Critical of quantitative measurement •Strongly influenced by Christianity •Concept of personal God •Primacy of truth of faith (intuition) •Dialectical/dialogical methodology •Closely accords with Catholic doctrine on faith and science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Committed to quantitative measurement •Slightly influenced by Christianity •Concept of non-spiritual god •No primacy of truth of faith •No dialectical/dialogical methodology •Less in accord with Catholic doctrine on faith and science
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Social scientists committed to Christian and Catholic perspectives can find much cause for rejoicing in the works of both Sorokin and Seligman. Although Sorokin's approach is much closer to the Catholic ideal, the research and writings of Positive Psychology are also in accord with many Church teachings—indeed, perhaps more than their authors realize. Peterson and Seligman (2004: 48), for instance, note that all the virtues they examine were analyzed by St. Thomas Aquinas:

within the Seven Heavenly virtues, Aquinas enumerated what we believe are the six core virtues: He presents the four cardinal virtues by name, invokes transcendence with the virtues of faith and hope, and humanity with the virtue of charity.

Both Sorokin and the positive psychologists have set an example by pushing social science beyond its “comfort zone” of modern secular humanism. In so doing, they have pointed toward a much grander vision of the universe, of human nature, and of the possibilities of a future human social life rooted in peace, justice, love, humility and other traditional virtues.

Perhaps, with the hindsight of centuries to come, Sorokin and Seligman will be seen as major figures in the shift toward an explicitly spiritual social science. Should such a transformed social science appear, the concepts of character strengths and virtues will be perceived through new eyes and new ears: no longer as mere notions of speculative philosophy and theology, but as basic concepts within scientific discourse. Furthermore, this development will be entirely in accordance with recent efforts to create a “public” social science (e.g., Burawoy 2004; Burawoy et al. 2004) that reaches out beyond the confines of the academic world. As Jeffries (1999: 46) has put it, “This explicit emphasis of theory and research upon the Golden Rule and other widely recognized ethical traditions will provide a shared universe of ideas for a potential discourse between social science and the general public.”

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