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Subscriptions should be sent to ISCSC Treasurer David Hahn, Metropolitan College of New York, School for Management, 431 Canal Street, New York, NY 10013. Membership includes two printed issues of the journal per year.

Submitts 
The Comparative Civilizations Review publishes analytical studies and interpretive essays primarily concerned with (1) the comparison of whole civilizations, (2) the development of theories and methods especially useful in comparative civilization studies, (3) accounts of intercivilizational contacts, and (4) significant issues in the humanities or social sciences studied from a comparative civilizational perspective.

By “a comparative civilizational perspective” we mean (1) the use of evidence from more than one civilization (the various national traditions of the modern West being regarded, in this respect, as constituents of a single civilization) and (2) a method likely to throw new light either on the origins, processes, or structures of civilizations or on the problems of interpreting civilizations.

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ISSN: 0733-4540 
ISBN: 978-0-9835126-6-0
Editor’s Note

Years ago, Dr. Laina Farhat-Holzman joined the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations as a California scholar expert in Persian history.

An incisive thinker, armed with extensive knowledge of the history of civilization, Laina possesses a critical mind that never stops challenging received explanations for the events humanity has faced, and the patterns and meanings of our sojourn over the past several thousand years. She has worked professionally for many years as an editor and professor, a writer of books that probe the intersection of the currents of history and religion in Iran and elsewhere, a skilled debater on topics of the day in both the U.S. and abroad, and a weekly author of commentary on current events. An indefatigable world traveler, she has also been for many years a Bay Area leader on the analysis of global concerns.

Soon after we met, Laina and I teamed up, and together we have headed the editorial section of this journal. For the felicitous results, she must be given all the credit.

At the annual ISCSC meeting held in beautiful Monmouth University, New Jersey, early this past summer, Laina announced that she was leaving editorship of the journal in order to concentrate more intensively on her opinion columns, which are followed nationally and internationally and which appear at least twice a week in Northern California newspapers, and on her ever-expanding series of scholarly books.

Over the summer she reminisced, writing down some of her key thoughts about these years at the CCR. They are published below.

On behalf of the members of the Editorial Board, the international society, and the many dozens of authors you have mentored over these years, and in recognition of continuous and extensive labor offered by you without any financial recompense whatsoever, my observation is: thank you, Laina. What the CCR has become – the journal of record on comparative civilization and the intellectual flagship of the ISCSC – would have been impossible without your cheerful leadership and active intellectual architecture over the past decade and a half.

Joseph Drew
Washington, D.C.
Autumn, 2014
Memories of an Editor

I recently stepped down after fifteen years as an editor of the *Comparative Civilizations Review*. This was an enjoyable but heavy task, and one that I will certainly miss.

When I first signed on as an editor under the leadership of Joe Drew, we were in complete agreement about what sort of journal we wanted to see. Both of us had other writing and editing experience over the years, and for us both, we believed that even scholarly articles should be readable. Too many scholarly journals are so rigorous that it requires real motivation to wade through some of the overly-footnoted materials. We realized that scholars need to publish in refereed journals for their career promotion, but at the same time, readers should also be considered.

Editing *Comparative Civilizations Review* brought another problem that single-issue journals do not have: multiple disciplines. Our readers are not necessarily reading articles in their own areas of expertise. We had to make the assumption that our intended audience was liberally educated, able to make sense of articles not overly specialized. Our mission was to explore those issues that extended over the globe and throughout history.

Producing our journals twice a year required a non-ending process of soliciting papers (many from our annual conferences), sending them out for peer review, getting the reviews, and tactfully guiding the authors into making the needed corrections to their manuscript (or suggest that they submit to another journal). We then needed to get a revised paper back from the author in a timely fashion; edit it (often three editors carry out this task for each paper), then create a final document that would go to the publishers. The publishers would typeset the articles in the journal, and then Joe and I would go through the laborious task of line by line editing to make certain everything was correct.

We did this twice each year, year after year, for the past 15 years. We hope that the journal was and continues to be read and enjoyed by not only our own members, but others through libraries and now online, as well.

Several colleagues were a particular delight to work with--most especially, the late Matt Melko, who is my model for a perfect scholar and gentleman. He was an early and scholarly believer that mankind’s proclivity to general warfare has greatly declined. (His work on warfare offers astonishing statistics that make peace a larger part of the human experience than we might imagine.) Melko was also a superb Peer Review editor; he seemed to know everybody--a roster of extremely diverse experts.

Another colleague that I particularly enjoyed was the late Steadman Noble, who became a scholar late in his life. He worked as a civil engineer in Washington, DC, and, upon his retirement, he seemed to have moved into the Library of Congress and read everything!
Steadman was our best specialist on prehistoric mankind. He claimed to be bored by anything later than 300 AD, and definitely preferred the Caves of Lascaux to ancient Rome. An example of pure Steadman can be found in the Spring 2001 journal: “How Humans Domesticated Themselves, Invented Agriculture and Became Civilized.”

In that same journal, by the way, is my own offering on how a work of literature can become the vehicle to a nation’s identity: “The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi: An Icon to National Identity [Iran].”

One of the most fascinating series we published was by Robert Duncan Enzmann and Donald Thomas Burgy: “Reading Europe’s Paleolithic Writing.” We had several editorial meetings to decide whether to print this series because it was so original, and I am happy to say that we took a chance. The fact that one of the authors was a code breaker by trade was a deciding factor. See the Fall 2004 issue for one of these articles.

Until we got our journals online (thanks to Editor Connie Lamb and her school, Brigham Young University), we had materials that only a dedicated few were able to read. Now we are available to what I believe will be a greatly growing audience.

Best of luck to my replacements. I will happily keep reading.

Laina Farhat-Holzman
Can Civilization Save Us?
A Study in Civilizational Analysis and Legal History

Toby E. Huff
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Let me say at the outset that I have no illusions that I can provide solutions to all the threats--climate change, ecological destruction, civil wars, terrorism, etc.--that we face today, because we civilizationalists operate at a high level of analysis.

On the other hand, I do believe that we can identify a number of civilizational complexes that emerged only in the West and that will be indispensable for guiding whatever efforts can be made to ameliorate the threats we face.

Civilizational Analysis

Just to be clear about the level of analysis with which I operate: I mean by the term civilizations social entities that tend to be multi-ethnic, often multi-lingual and even multi-national but which share underlying religious, legal, and philosophical assumptions. Consequently such formations have very large-scale coherence. The fundamental symbolic and institutional structures of such entities produce transnational effects that give both coherence and developmental design to the whole configuration. From this point of view, "A civilization constitutes a kind of moral milieu encompassing a certain number of nations, each national culture being only a particular form of the whole." As Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss put it,

social phenomena that are not strictly attached to a determinate social organism do exist; they extend into areas that reach beyond the national territory or they develop over periods of time that exceed the history of a single society. They have a life which is in some ways supranational.

I take Europe as the exemplar of that kind of civilizational formation. Other examples of this kind of formation would obviously include the Islamic world, China, Indian, and Russian Orthodox civilization. Of course there are many mixed cases but here I only want to set out the extraordinary consequences of the European civilizational development, set against the background of the divergent developments of Islam and China.

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2 Durkheim and Mauss, ibid, p. 810.
The Formative Period

During the High Middle Ages, especially the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Europe experienced a great transformation that put it on an entirely different footing than any other part of the world. This was above all a great legal revolution that laid the foundations for what are now seen as modern political institutions. These include the rise of parliamentary democracy, the foundations of what we know as due process of law, the very idea of elective representation in all forms of corporate bodies, and not least of all, the legal autonomy of cities and towns. All of these innovations contributed to the establishment of elements of constitutionalism that became the hallmark of modernity.

Moreover, this broad legal transformation laid the foundations for the rise and autonomous development of universities that enabled the unfettered pursuit of modern science that has continued to the present. Furthermore, the structural stability of these new institutions gave a new measure of predictability, providing a new foundation for economic development that has been called the "commercial revolution" of the thirteenth century. This legal revolution is the too-little-discussed foundation for the rise of modern capitalism as well.

At the center of this development one finds the legal and political principle of treating collective actors as a whole body--a corporation, or corporate entity. This is the fundamental basis of all forms of legal autonomy--that is, the legal autonomy of cities and towns, and professional associations such as doctors and lawyers, but also charitable organizations and, of course, the foundation for the legal autonomy enjoyed by different kinds of business and commercial organizations. The now infamous recent Supreme Court decision in the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* is clearly based on this early modern legal notion of legally autonomous entities referred to as corporations.

But let me add just one more aspect of the legal revolution that has been completely lost from view by all of our fashionable digital presentism. That is, consider for a moment what the idea of legal autonomy means in the sphere of government and legislation. It

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3 This assessment was first announced by Harold Berman in his landmark study, *Law and Revolution. The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).


means that some public body--some corporate entity, some group of citizens--is capable of composing and promulgating new laws that transcend Biblical injunctions, customary law, Quranic legal prescriptions, or even edicts issued by an Emperor in China. But of course, that power of autonomous legislation did not exist in Chinese, Islamic, or Indian law of the early modern period. The same applies to Russia. This was an entirely European developmental outcome.

In short, any adequate appreciation of the medieval legal revolution in Europe puts before us the realization that the vast landscape of freedoms and powers of modern institutions, including the idea of due process of law, are European medieval inventions--spelled out by the canonists--without parallel anywhere else in the world. Those innovations stand at the very heart of what we think of modern political institutions, especially parliamentary democracy, constitutionalism, election by consent, and not least of all, the institutional structures protecting freedom of thought and expression. Accordingly, I want to set out a brief compass of the nature of institutional innovations so that we can see the connection with the present moment. Once having grasped those connections, we might not be as pessimistic about the future of "civilization" or the putative "decline of the West."

Due Process of Law

Now let me say just a few words about the idea of “due process of law”--something I believe all Americans and Europeans consider vital to the whole political process.

Although this development drew heavily on the tradition of the rediscovered Roman Civil Law (Corpus Juris Civilis), it was the canonists--and some civilians--whose creative and innovative work defined the whole process. What the European medievals did was to spell out just what due process meant, how it was to be applied, when, and to whom. By the end of the twelfth century, this new system had been formally articulated as the ordo iudiciarius (the system of legal procedure).²

Perhaps the first to define the idea of due process was Stephen, Bishop of Tournai (1138-1203). According to him,

The defendant shall be summoned before his own judge and be legitimately called by three edicts or one peremptory edict. He must be permitted to have legitimate delays. The accusations must be formally presented in writing. Legitimate

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It is also notable in our context that virtually all records, whatever they be--the initial complaint to the court (the *libellius*), summonses, testimony, reports or contracts--were presented in writing and filed away. These records became part of the official court records, kept by proctors or notaries in an official location, always bearing the signature or Seal of the official acting head of the court; not as in the case of Islamic law, irregularly filed by the judge or his clerk in the "qadi's diwan," his private files usually maintained in his home. So insecure were such documentary arrangements in Islamic law that until the last decade of the twentieth century, specialists in Islamic law had concluded that such records did not exist. Even so, very few have ever been recovered, and it was only with the Ottomans after the sixteenth century that a building was actually designated in cities and towns for that purpose.  

To amplify the view of Stephen of Tournai stated above, it should be noted that European legal doctrine (that was articulated by scholars in legal treatises, established in court cases and declared in Papal decretals), expected that every trial must involve a plaintiff and a defendant, advocates for those two parties, the appearance of witnesses, the presence of court recorders such as clerks, proctors and notaries who record the names of those present at the trial, what was said, and so on. This was established legal procedure by the end of the twelfth century-- all worked out by legal scholars who were attached either to the Papal court or to the schools and emerging universities. It was not just worked out as a matter of "customary practice" but ensconced in major textbooks used all across Europe from the thirteenth century onward-- Tancred's *Ordo iudiciale* [1214-16] and Durand's *Mirror for Judges (Speculum iudiciale)* [ca.1271]). There were also Papal letters and official statements (*concilia*) circulated across Europe and adopted as mandatory by local courts.  

What is notable about this new court procedure was that it was a man-made set of consensual ordinances. Though it had earlier roots in Roman law, and though some jurists who articulated its contours believed that it had earlier foundations (if not origins)

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10 James Brundage, "The Practice of Canon Law," in *Medieval Origins*, chapter 10; and the sources in the previous note. Tancred: "the service of advocates is essential in lawsuits," as cited in ibid, p. 171.
in Biblical stories of Adam and Eve being tried by God, it was a set of juridical conventions, restated and refined by a broad group of scholars and Popes in the second half of the twelfth century. Numerous letters by Pope Alexander III as well as Pope Innocent III contributed to the definition of due process.\(^\text{11}\) What this tells us is that the European medievals were constantly engaged in the process of legal innovation, of refining and articulating the rules and procedures that they felt necessary for the smooth, efficient and just working of their legal system.

At the same time Romano-canonical procedure specified that each court was meant to run according to a calendar—once the plaintiff's complaint was presented, the presiding judge would establish a date for a hearing along with specified sessions for the hearing of the testimony of witnesses. Although legitimate delays were granted to those who applied, all proceedings were determined by a court schedule, not the whim of the defendant.\(^\text{12}\)

Furthermore, when a limited number of witnesses were scheduled to be heard (during three or fewer sessions), the opposing advocates prepared a list of *questions to be put* to the witnesses by the judge (or official examiner) for close questioning individually and in private. Every effort was made by the interrogatories provided to the judge and by the opposing attorneys to separate direct evidence from hearsay testimony. The witnesses were sworn to tell the truth "the whole truth and nothing but the truth about everything they knew in connection with the action in which they were to testify."\(^\text{13}\) They were also cautioned to testify only about events they had seen and heard, "but not about what they believed or thought they heard from others."

An example of such close questioning comes from the Canterbury Court of England in the thirteenth century in the case of Master Robert de Picheford concerning the ownership of a church in the Diocese of Lincoln. The interrogatories submitted on behalf of the defendant Thomas de Nevill stated,

> First, the examiners are to hear what the witnesses say of their own motion and to enquire as to the source of their information about each of the articles [submitted by Master Robert]. If they say that Robert was in possession of the church of Houghton as rector by himself or others from 26 July to 3 August 1268, they are to be asked whether they know this from seeing, hearing, knowledge, belief or public report. If they say seeing, ask where, when, the nature of the possession whether natural or civil, mental or physical, and how long before the feast Robert possessed the church and whether continuously or at intervals.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^\text{11}\) Pennington op. cit., pp. 13-17.

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol71/iss71/18
In another case from the same court, the witnesses were to be asked, "how they know [that the defendant's submissions to the court] are true, who made the proposition on behalf of the monks, before whom, the year, month, day, hour, place, those present, etc; what tithes were at stake, how they happened to testify; whether they are clerks or laymen." As I suggested earlier, you will not find this kind of a clearly articulated due process of law in Islamic, Chinese, Indian, or indeed, Russian law during the period we are talking about.

Second, I need to point out that these elements of due process that evolved in Europe over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were also applied to the prince and the Pope alike. In contrast, we need to notice that there were no equivalent legal structures and protocols that could be called upon to restrain czars, sultans, emirs and emperors in the other civilizational areas of the world. The legal apparatus and legal conceptions such as these outside Europe were simply absent. The developments we are talking about are, of course, examples of what we mean by the imposition of the rule of law, not the rule of men. That process is never complete and is ongoing. But the European medievals made huge strides in that direction.

Let me reiterate that this new system of law with its clear definition of due process and other legal innovations was carried all across Europe because the Church set up ecclesiastical courts wherever it went. Beyond that, civilian lawyers were trained in the same system because they might be called upon to defend a case in an ecclesiastical court and because the new legal system was being recognized as the ius commune, the common law of Europe.

Islamic Law

Now to make these comparative civilizational contrasts clearer, let me add here just a few comments on Islamic law and its very different history. While it is true that there were customary rules governing Islamic legal procedure, the process tended to be highly informal, even though it began by translating a plaintiff's claim into the language of Islamic law by the judge. A plaintiff could approach the qadi very informally, perhaps walking with him in the qadi's court yard, while explaining his religious problem. The

15 Ibid, p. 211, the Case of The Prior and Monks of Stogursey c. John de Winton, Rector of Over Stowey, Diocese of Bath and Wells, 1271-1272.
17 On the very belated development of Russia's legal system, see Harold Berman, "The Rule of Law and the Law-Based State (Rechtsstaat)" with Special Reference to the Soviet Union," pp. 43-60 in Toward the "rule of law" in Russia?: Political and Legal Reform in the Transition Period, edited by Donald D. Barry (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1992).
judge would then, perhaps with the assistance of this clerk, translate the petitioner's complaint into legal language necessary for a formal hearing. This stands in contrast to the European situation where nothing could be done before seeking the counsel of an attorney, specifying the justiciable issues. For as medieval legal scholar Dorothy Owen put it, in the later middle ages of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,

>a clerk could not resign his benefice, appoint an official deputy, or conduct an election, a layman could not begin or continue a cause in an ecclesiastical court, or bring a will to probate if he did not employ a legally qualified proctor to draw up and present the appropriate documents. A bishop's or archdeacon's affairs could only be carried on with legal advice from men skilled in the law (iurisperiti). A royal government needed to be represented in diplomatic business by men skilled in the Roman (civil) law...18

The rules of Islamic procedure, however, used throughout the classical and early modern period tended toward customary procedure, and were entirely based on Quranic injunctions. Consequently, even later Islamic manuals of legal procedure contain no reforms or innovations,19 nothing like the European innovations codified in the thirteenth century.

Most notable of missing conceptions was that of the defense attorney--such a conception did not exist in Islamic20 or for that matter in Chinese law.21 Consequently, the vital process of cross-questioning all witnesses (as noted above) did not exist in Islamic law. To be sure, judges did question witnesses, but it tended to be less than impartial as the judge ended up siding with one side or the other with the judge explicitly rejecting the witness testimony or other evidence presented. Of course there was no jury system. The judge in effect served as judge and jury (or prosecutor and jury) in simple and complex cases.

One of the consequences of this absence of a defense attorney, especially in criminal cases, was that the judge generally accepted police reports without questioning by counsel. This attitude persisted in many Muslim countries all the way to the twentieth century, and one can see it operating in late twentieth century Afghanistan. Looking at several dozen cases ruled on by the highest courts in Afghanistan in the early 1970s--long after the system had been (incompletely) displaced by a European code system--one finds the judges rarely summarizing or carefully evaluating the evidence presented by police

19 See the manuals of Nawawi, al-Mawadi, Ibn Rushd, and the Almamgiriyah.
authorities, or that of other witnesses. Such evidence is simply accepted at face value, with all attention given to the question of punishment.  

Likewise, we have all heard of the recent decisions of Egyptian judges, condemning to death, in one case over 500 accused, and in the other 600 accused, obviously without proper procedures or careful weighing of evidence. Moreover, the Egyptian system was reformed and reorganized following European Civil law protocols a century ago, but inculcating Western legal culture and sensibilities maybe something quite different.

It was possible in Islamic law for a plaintiff or witness to be represented by a wakil, an "agent," but that agent need not be formally trained in law. A brother with no legal training can represent a sister, and in fact, suppress the sister's actual testimony. Nor was there any punishment for perjury. Put differently, there was no conception of "a member of the bar" who was a sworn official of a professional body or association. There were no independent associations of legal or, for that matter, medical practitioners.

On the other hand, "professional witnesses" (shâhids) were used from early times, and in some countries, all the way into the twentieth century. These were individuals selected by the judge and examined for their religious purity (adl). Then they were certified to supply and verify information presented to an Islamic court. Their testimony was not subjected to cross-questioning. Moreover, if a judge were dismissed or retired, then his professional witnesses were also dismissed, and all disputed cases in which they testified could then be re-litigated.

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23 *New York Times* April/May 2014.
24 This happened in the case of Salim vs. 'Abd al-Rahmân in Morocco in 14th century; see David Powers, *Law, Society and Culture in the Maghrib 1300-1500* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), chapter 1.
China

In this short presentation I cannot give more than a brief hint at the differences between Western and Chinese law. As noted earlier, Chinese law had no place for formally trained attorneys, and anyone who attempted to enter into the legal deliberations of second or third parties was considered a legal trickster. The conception of a formal trial with defense attorneys, public witnessing, and public announcement of trial verdicts was unknown. As more recent scholarship has shown, Chinese "court opinions" were published privately, not by an official court. They "were not court verdicts themselves but documents justifying the verdicts with reasoned opinions." The problem here, as in the Afghan case law mentioned earlier, is that without the intervention of advocates for the defense and a tradition of carefully weighing all the evidence, judges give much higher credence to the views of the police and other public officials; the result is rule of men, not the rule of law as established by standard (and contestable) legal procedure. This was why the Europeans developed the ordo iudiciarius, legal procedure that became due process.

Just how this lack of standard defense procedures has been carried over to the twenty-first century in China can be seen in the murder trial of Madame Gu, the wife of a high Chinese official, Bo Xilai, who had been dismissed from office.

Bo Xilai was removed as the top official in a major Chinese city (Chongqing), then removed from the Communist Party. The big story, however, was his wife, Madame Gu, who was accused of murdering a British businessman. The trial, which seems to us an exceedingly brief show trial in Stalinist fashion, lasted barely one day. Madame Gu and her co-defendant had their own attorneys replaced by state-appointed officials so that in effect she had no defense. Very little evidence was presented, all of it produced by government officials in secrecy, and none of it could be challenged or debated in court. Moreover, any kind of recording or note-taking was expressly forbidden by court officials. Consequently it is far from clear what was actually said during the trial or how the evidence against Madame Gu was collected. All sorts of questions were left unanswered, but public interest was so strong that officials felt compelled to add more to
the public record by posting their expanded official account of the trial on the Web the day after the event.\textsuperscript{32}

The whole proceeding was shrouded in mystery while only snippets here and there were revealed to the public. Madame Gu was said to have confessed to everything and was at peace with the official proceedings. She was sentenced to death for murder, but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

In a word, even the wife of a high Chinese official in the twenty-first century had no legal rights in a murder trial that was conducted from beginning to end in secrecy, entirely lacking the kind of formalized due process known to Europe since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. While some observers might think this was the influence of Communist rule, it is far more plausible to suggest that Madame Gu's trial was merely the extension of the authoritarian quasi-legal procedures that governed China for centuries, all the way back to the Ming Dynasty.

**Synthesis**

If we return now to our original question about who or what can save us from the present crises of climate change, ecological destruction, terrorism, civil wars and so on, it seems to me that only the institutional and techno-philosophical tools evolved in Western civilization over several centuries are likely to aid us. It might also be noticed that this constellation of institutions is what some political scientists have labeled "modern political institutions," which are the backbone of the democratization process.\textsuperscript{33} Unfortunately those observers were unaware of the medieval foundations of these institutions, and hence unaware of the great difficulty of establishing them elsewhere and, above all, unaware of their embeddedness in the unique legal history of the West. At the same time, I have accented the fact that all these civilizational complexes, rooted in the unique legal history of the West, have been absent in the Muslim world, in China, and even in Russia, so that volatility in those places--both economic and political--is a highly likely scenario in the future.\textsuperscript{34}

In any case, it is this institutional apparatus represented by constitutionalism, parliamentary democracy, due process of law, and an open public sphere along with the


\textsuperscript{34} On the very belated development of Russia's legal system, see Harold Berman, "The Rule of Law and the Law-Based State (Rechtsstaat)" with Special Reference to the Soviet Union," pp. 43-60 in Toward the 'rule of law' in Russia? Political and Legal Reform in the Transition Period, edited by Donald D. Barry (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1992).
unfettered pursuit of science incubated in Western universities that will enable us to find the solutions to the travails we face.

In this light, it seems to me unlikely that solutions to the global problems mentioned earlier will come from the Middle East, China, Russia, or even India. Of course, all of these civilizational areas have large resources of one sort or another, including large human populations, but for different reasons their institutional and educational structures, as well as their public spheres, are weak or even non-existent. We can imagine all sorts of wonderful innovations ("billions" of innovations) coming out of the new digital age, as Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee do, but if the institutional apparatus and the cultural permission to innovate freely is absent, as it is in so many parts of the world, many people will be disappointed.

I do not dismiss the great wealth of human capital that these societies have, but rather expect that in the long run, in the absence of the essential legal and institutional structures of the West, the creative and highly driven individuals in those areas will turn up in the West--not only, but especially in the United States--contributing to scientific, technological and economic innovation here.

Beyond that, those who dismiss the potential leadership of the West, whether that of the United States or the greater European community, have almost totally overlooked the scientific and technological innovations that have been powering the rapid economic growth of the West and the world for the last two centuries or so.

At the very moment when observers have been declaring the "decline of the West" (or of the United States), we have been witnessing the ICT or Internet Revolution that is based on a variety of scientific and technological innovations made entirely in the West, some of them stretching back to the late nineteenth century.

The first of these underlying, and revolutionary, innovations was the invention of the transistor, or microchip that emerged from the Bell Labs in 1947. That path-breaking innovation depended on the new theory of quantum physics of the 1930s that explained how a cascade of electrons could be unleashed in certain solid state materials such as silicon (and others even better) under certain conditions. These advances paved the way for the invention of computers on a chip (computers that did not use vacuum tubes), and hence both high speed computers and miniaturized computers could fit on any tiny device.

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such as heat and energy control devices, traffic lights, and ultimately on satellites and cell phones.\(^{38}\)

The second major innovation for these purposes was the discovery of wireless transmissions. This was a revolutionary discovery of the 1880s in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, leading to the first commercial uses of wireless in radio and telegraphic communication. It was the German scientist Heinrich Hertz, working with the implications of James Maxwell's mathematical equations, who discovered that wireless signals are indeed transmitted by certain electric circuits (1888). Much more had to be done to get a practical application such as Marconi achieved in the 1890s.\(^{39}\) Television followed later.

Third, and now I skip to the creation of the Internet, it needs to be recalled that it was the US government that pioneered the development of this area by funding the DARPA team (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) in the 1960s and 1970s that invented the hardware and software allowing computers to talk to each other, thus making the Internet possible.\(^{40}\) This new communication system was then further developed and made available to Everyman by the invention of the World Wide Web protocols created by Tim Berners-Lee in 1990, and which are still with us.\(^{41}\) The most recent advances in wireless communication and miniaturization of everything are obviously an extension of those earlier scientific and technological breakthroughs along with recent advances in materials science.

So it bears emphasizing that none of these innovations occurred in China, India, or Japan. The latter, Japan, had no computer industry until a frustrated American engineer and entrepreneur took the technology to Japan in the 1980s.\(^{42}\) Likewise, Japan was not on the Internet path, primarily because Japan did not use typewriters from the beginning of the twentieth century as Americans and Europeans did, and so it went in a different direction (a more symbolic path), but provided no Internet leadership.\(^{43}\)

Now if we were to bring in the many hot, new cutting edge scientific fields of today--the DNA revolution of the 1950s enabling genetic engineering, the revolutions in


\(^{40}\) Among others, see The Internet Society, "A Brief History of the Internet," online: http://www.internetsociety.org/internet/what-internet/history-internet/brief-history-internet


biochemistry and microbiology (and each of these brings in highly sophisticated subfields such as immunology, virology and others too numerous to mention), and then nanotechnology (which emerged only in the last twenty years), not forgetting "green technology"-- then we would only begin to grasp the many areas of scientific revolution that have been spawned in the West during just the last thirty to forty years that, again, find their roots in late nineteenth century research, much of it pioneered in Europe, and virtually none outside the West. The book by Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, above, tells us of even more breathtaking inventions that may have major impacts on social and economic development.

Of course there will be great innovators who will emerge from outside the West, but the impact of their innovations, especially societally and globally, will be almost completely muted unless they emigrate to the West.

In short, all the institutional apparatus that we associate with modern political institutions -- that is, constitutionalism, parliamentary democracy, due process of law, some notion of election by consent, the rise of universities and the unfettered pursuit of science -- are all unique civilizational entities bearing a Western signature, whose innovative vigor is too vibrant to write off. Whether all of this can save us is a question for the future.

44 On the singularity of European advances in all the basic sciences (and electrical studies) in the 17th century, see Huff, Intellectual Curiosity and the Scientific Revolution: A Global Perspective (Cambridge UP 2011). For sketches on other revolutionary advances see Yasuyuki Motoyama, Richard Appelbaum, and Rachael Parker, "The National Nanotechnology Initiative: Federal Support for Science and Technology, or Hidden Industrial Policy?" Technology in Society 13 (2011): 109-118; Kendall Smith, "Medical Immunology: A New Journal for a New Subspecialty," Medical Immunology v. 1 (2002): 1-17. According to Smith, "...100 years ago at the beginning of the 20th century it was hoped that it would not only be possible to prevent infections by vaccination, but also to treat them effectively with antibodies. Medical immunology was born." (p. 2).
Thoughts on Religion, Culture, and Civilization

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Abstract: I attempt to disentangle the compact knot composed of culture, religion, and civilization. Often the difference between secularists and believers is construed along the lines of a religious “culture” unable to join a more progressive civilization. The identification of culture with religion and of civilization with more general, civic phenomena summarized under the heading of civilization is widespread. I analyze different points of view, which classify “Secularism as Civilization,” “Civilization as Evil,” or “Religion as Evil.” I also consider the converse point of view, which sees religion as a sort of civilization that is opposed to culture.

Finally, I trace the term culture with the help of a few words from Matthew Arnold who delimits culture from the above idea of civilization. Arnold believes that culture “is best described by the word interesting.”

From a certain point onwards, Islam was no longer “interesting.” Values would be hermetically codified up to a point that this religion offered no intellectual challenge. At present, Islam is losing even more of its cultural appeal, offering few pleasures and entertainment that could be seen as intrinsic to Islam. Islam has submitted to the identification of concrete cultural items with general civilizational guidelines. A civilizational understanding of religion in the fundamentalist sense is more and more emphasized and the distinction between culture and religion is becoming more and more distinct.

Introduction

Many Christian and Muslim believers share the view that secular culture is sterile, purely technical, monotonous, and culturally poor. Christian theologian John Betz holds that “the modern world, insofar as it is a secular world (…) is mindless, heartless and gutless” (Betz: 338) and Muslim cultural critic Ziauddin Sardar is convinced that the aim of all secularists is “to dominate, isolate, alienate, decimate and finally bore all cultures to death with uniformity” (Sardar: 185). For Sardar, secularism spells the end of history in the form of monoculture while “religious worldviews recognize diversity of spiritual experiences” (185).

Curiously, secular people attack the believers’ position from the same angle. Often they perceive religion’s refusal to recognize cultural values because they are “merely cultural” as nihilistic and interpret this anti-cultural attitude as a refusal of precisely those values that are dearest to them. Even more, they find the dogmatism with which religious people often tend to define their values incompatible with their own ideas of how values should
be presented. In other words, though they are not strictly opposed to the idea that religion can be incorporated into culture, they find religious values, once they are spelled out in purely religious and not cultural terms, incompatible with the values of culture. In light of this paradoxical constellation, it becomes necessary to distinguish culture from another term: civilization.

In this article I analyze the relationships between religion and culture as well as between religion and civilization by using thought patterns or paradigms that I believe to be common in Christian, Muslim, and secular traditions. I show that many false ideas about both religion and secularism can be traced to misconceptions about how religion relates to culture and civilization respectively. I am operating with four paradigms: (1) secularism is civilization and therefore “good” while religion is culture and therefore “evil”; (2) secular civilization is “evil” while religion is culture and therefore “good;” (3) religion is civilization and therefore “evil” while culture is “good”; (4) religion is civilization and therefore “good” while culture is “evil.” In the end, I show that only by integrating religion into culture can religion avoid both religious and scientific dogmatism.

1. Culture, Religion, and Civilization

Often the difference between secularists and believers is construed along the lines of a religious “culture” unable to join a more progressive civilization. According to Edward Jayne, it has been assumed that “primitive people are consummate believers; in contrast, civilized people possess a residue of belief, but they are also skeptical—and the more skeptical, the more civilized” (Jayne 1993). The identification of culture with religion and of civilization with more general, civic phenomena summarized under the heading of “civilization” is indeed widespread. Often civilization is believed to be “better” because it is more universal than both culture and religion.

1.1 Culture and Civilization

Before analyzing the relationships between religion, culture, and civilization, it is necessary to define the difference between culture and civilization as precisely as possible.

The distinction between culture and civilization is not very well embedded in the English language, but has proved to be relatively meaningful in other European languages. “Culture” (from the Latin cultura) is the older term and corresponds to the Latin etymology both in form and content; “civilization” (from the Latin civis) was coined at a later stage and evolved rapidly, especially during the eighteenth century in France and subsequently in England.
Roughly put, the distinction can be established in the way that the former refers more specifically to material, technical, economic and social facts while the latter conceptualizes spiritual, intellectual, and artistic phenomena – individual or collective concrete human expressions rather than abstract systems. Especially the German usage of the word *Zivilisation* has always alluded to some utilitarian, outer aspect of human existence that is subordinated to *Kultur*, which was itself perceived as the “real” being of humans, society, and their achievements. Norbert Elias found that civilization as a concept has always had an “expansive” character and that it describes a process referring to something which is constantly in motion and is constantly moving forward (Elias 1978: 5). Culture fulfils the opposite function as it delimits; and it exists only through this delimitation. Being the expression of a people’s individuality, the term culture is conceptually powerful only as long as it excludes most phenomena from itself. Accordingly, the French began to use the word culture as a synonym for everything that can be acquired through education (manners, arts, and sciences for example); the Germans cut “culture” down to more personal and individual expressions linked to art and philosophy.

Johann Gottfried Herder (1774) opposed all generalizing forces of civilization and made the distinction between culture and civilization very explicit by equating civilization with the most alienating forms of industrialization. Around 1880, a consistent opposition of civilization and culture is firmly established in German philosophy; German Romanticism develops an idealist notion of *Kultur* while in France, the term *civilisation* adopts more and more general and supra-national connotations.

In this article I use the terms culture and civilization in the way they have been defined by Herder and Elias. I avoid E. B. Tylor’s (1958) broad definition of “culture” as a phenomenon embracing everything; Tyler’s concept of culture was meant to free culture from its elitist connotations to which it had become attached through the work of his contemporary Matthew Arnold, whose ideas will be the subject of the last section of this article.

### 2. Four Paradigms

The following four subsections examine the relationships between culture, religion, and civilization by crystallizing four paradigms that I believe to be firmly rooted in current discourses on culture, religion, and civilization. First it will be shown how secular civilization can be seen favorably by defining its position in opposition to religion that is believed to be “backward.” Since this secular attitude defines itself as progressive civilization, the more backward religion is seen as culture. Next I describe the contrary pattern, through which secular civilization is defined as an evil element from which religion-culture must be protected. Then I describe the paradigm which sees religion as civilization and believes that this “good civilization” needs to be used to combat “evil secular culture.” Finally, I describe the contrary version of this paradigm, which sees
religion as civilization and declares it to be “evil” while culture is seen as “good.” The four paradigms can be listed like this:

- **(A)** Good secular civilization vs. evil religion-culture
- **(E)** Evil secular civilization vs. good religion-culture
- **(I)** Good civilization-religion vs. evil secular culture
- **(O)** Evil civilization-religion vs. good secular culture

All above propositions see culture and civilization as dichotomies. Given the symmetrical character of the entire system of oppositions, the relationships between the four paradigms can be rendered with the help of the Aristotelian square of oppositions:

The top axis of the diagram perceives civilization as secular and culture as possibly religious, but both propositions differ through their contrary relationship. The A-proposition sees civilization as good and religion as evil while the E-proposition inverts the good and bad values. On the bottom axis, religion is identified as civilization and culture as secular. Again, through the subcontrary relationship, the positive and negative values are distributed differently.

The propositions on the left vertical axis see civilization as “good.” The subalternative relationship leading from ‘A’ to ‘I’ lets civilization appear once again as good but for different reasons. The same is true for the right vertical axis, which sees civilization twice as evil but each time for different reasons. The contradictory relationship that traverses the square diagonally links entirely opposed mindsets.
2.1. Good Secular Civilization vs. Evil Religion-Culture (A)

From a Western perspective, the ‘religion equals culture’ equation has frequently appeared in unison with another equation: that of ‘secularism equals civilization’. When Muslim countries were colonized by Europeans, the aim was to bring civilization to uncivilized Muslims and democracy to those living under autocratic regimes. For the French who invaded Northern Africa, “Islam was not to be evaluated as a theology, but as a culture, in the sense employed by Herder, Kant, or Schiller” (Massad 2007: 13). Of course, this culture was supposed to be an inferior culture; but as “culture” it could be opposed to civilization that would stand for modernization. In the end, even religious people began to believe in this paradigm: Saba Mahmood mentions those Egyptians who still today “consider such quotidian attention to religious practice to be passé, or uncivilized” (Mahmood 2005: 44).

In this context, Muslim religion with its fundamentalist outgrowths could come to represent the contrary of civilization. Martin Jacques finds that “the dominance of the West for the last two centuries has served to couch the debate about values overwhelmingly in terms of those that are civilized, a synonym for Western values, against those that are backward (Muslim)” (Jacques: 397). The paradigm surfaces regularly in everyday politics. In 2011, U.S. First Lady Laura Bush declared in a radio address that “civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror—not only because our hearts break for the women and children of Afghanistan” (Ahmed 2011: 195). Her husband had expressed the same idea earlier and more graphically – in the form of a false dichotomy – declaring that there is “no neutral ground in the fight between civilization and terror (…) because there is no neutral ground between good and evil, freedom and slavery, and life and death” (Stevenson 2004). Though religion is not explicitly mentioned, it is clear that the non-civilized item is fundamentalist religion.

In all those cases, religious fundamentalism represents non-civilization par excellence. Consequently, Thomas Friedman uses the above pattern, announcing that he has detected the “real problem” of terrorism, which is a clash of backwardness with civilization. He quotes the Arab-American psychiatrist Wafa Sultan in his New York Times editorial:

The clash we are witnessing (...) is not a clash of religions, or a clash of civilizations. (...) It is a clash between a mentality that belongs to the Middle Ages and another mentality that belongs to the 21st century. It is a clash between civilization and backwardness, between the civilized and the primitive, between barbarity and rationality. (...) It is a clash between human rights, on the one hand, and the violation of these rights, on the other hand. It is a clash between those who treat women like beasts, and those who treat them like human beings. (Friedman 2006)

This is a simplification, because fundamentalist “backwardness” tends to see itself as civilization, which means that it is not against civilization but wants another kind of
Fundamentalism tends to opt not for the A-proposition but for the I-proposition (“good civilization-religion vs. evil secular culture”) as will be shown below, and thus interprets religion as civilization. Second, also the “other side” (here simply called “civilization”) is more complex than the civilization-backwardness dichotomy suggests. “Western civilization” is composed of everything the left axis of the square has to offer, that is, it is composed of secularists as well as of religious people whose ideas about “religion and culture” or “religion and civilization” are not necessarily identical.

Terry Eagleton confirms the A-proposition. By writing that religious fundamentalism is opposed to “all values dear to civilization,” he establishes the religious view as a “merely cultural” view undermined by relativism to which he opposes the secular, “civilizational” view based on firm enlightenment principles. For Eagleton, “the line runs between civilization (in the sense of universality, autonomy, individuality, rational speculation, etc.) and culture if we understand by this all those unreflected loyalties and spontaneous convictions” (Eagleton 2008: 46, my italics).

2.2. The Contrary: Evil Secular Civilization vs. Good Religion-Culture (E)

Others agree that civilization is secular and that religion is culture, but they see civilization as the “evil” element from which religion-culture must be protected. While in the above cases culture (and religion, with which it was equated) has been criticized as being incompatible with modern standards of civilization, culture (with all its relativism) can also be used in order to express one’s opposition towards civilizational progressivism. However, this is a complex approach. Many will think, when hearing of “religion vs. civilization” confrontations, of fundamentalism and religious terrorism that seems to be so much against all values dear to civilized people. However, contrary to what is often assumed, playing out religion against civilization is not the typical fundamentalist strategy. It will be shown below that fundamentalists tend to see their religion rather as civilization and lean more towards the I-proposition.

Sardar formulates an E-proposition because for him,

On one side is militant, dogmatic secularism, which claims the realm of literature as its new religion, an absolute where unlimited freedom should be exercised by the high priests of modern culture, the artists. On the other, there is the religious worldview wherein freedom of thought and expression arises from the existence of the sacred and the ideas of respect for sanctity, tolerance for others and responsibility in the exercise of freedom. (Sardar 2003: 231)

It is also possible to encounter the E-proposition (“evil secular civilization vs. good religion-culture”) in the form of an internal social critique, for example when Muslims reflect upon the relationship between religion and their society. Here universal social structures (which are, because of their universal character, easily identifiable
civilizational structures) can be declared evil while the individual religion-culture will be declared good. For example, Islam (as a religion) can be identified as ‘feminist’ while Muslim society can be seen as ‘misogynistic’ (cf. Massad 2007: 155). This means that Islam as religion-culture has a positive potential but, so far, its values could not be implemented within the general and civilizational structures of Arab society because such structures are not receptive of those values. In any case, this scheme reinstates the belief that religion should be seen in opposition to civilization, but this time holding that (Arab) civilization is bad and that their religion-culture is good.

2.3. Good Civilization-Religion vs. Evil Secular Culture (I)

From a Muslim perspective, religion can very well be understood as coming closer to civilization, be it only because of the intimate connection that exists between the concept of *din* (religion) and the idea of *medina* (city). The prophet Muhammad migrated from Mecca to Yathrib whose name would then be changed to Medina, which means city. *Din* developed thus very early from a community of believers into a civic society representing not only faith, but also civilization; and fundamentalist equations of Islam with the state merely confirm the ‘religion is civilization’ equation.

However, to see religion as civilization is not a uniquely Islamic characteristic but the pattern occurs in America where religious fundamentalists once declared that “Christianity was the only basis for a healthy civilization” (Marsden: 12). Here, religion was supposed to be civilization and not culture. Reinhold Niebuhr explains that “we had a religious version of our national destiny which interpreted the meaning of our nationhood as God’s effort to make a new beginning in the history of mankind” (Niebuhr 1952: 4). In general, Protestantism has been interpreted in America as a civil religion, because in America, just like in Islamic countries, religious and political values were, as Alexis de Tocqueville observed in the 1830s, “so intertwined as to be inseparable” (from Boyers 1992: 227).

Very often evangelical Christians present their “Intelligent Design” theories in a *scientifically* sophisticated fashion, which implies that they want to appear – at least temporarily – as not merely religious. When talking about creationism or bioethical imperatives, they most often do not base their arguments on an aspect of Christian law, but rather on a natural law (see Vattimo 2007: 93). If it is not science, it is “common sense” that will be used as an extra-religious basis. This is particularly true for the U.S. where the frequent appeal to “common sense” in evangelical discourses denotes the curious ambition to define religion and science on an equal ground provided by Enlightenment. Marsden writes that

> In a nation born during the Enlightenment, the reverence for science as the way to understand all aspects of reality was nearly unbounded. Evangelical Christians and liberal Enlightenment figures alike assumed that the universe was governed by a
rational system of laws guaranteed by an all-wise and benevolent creator. The function of science was to discover such laws, something like Newton's laws of physics, which were assumed to exist in all areas. (Marsden 2006: 15)

The attempt to redesign religion as a form of civilization is repeated in a very explicit fashion by Muslim reformist and puritan movements such as Wahhabism. This is what distinguishes Wahhabism from other forms of Islam, which have traditionally permitted more of a fusion of religion and culture, even in the sense of an integration of religion into culture. Ahmed writes that prior to the 1960s, “religious piety and practice across the Muslim world were rooted in Muslim traditions of learning and practice and at the same time they were rooted to some extent in local traditions and practices” (Ahmed 2011: 96). One of the most important changes since the 1960s is that Wahhabism, with its clear distinction between civilizational religion and relativist (secular) culture became more influential all over the Muslim world.

Religious people pertaining to the paradigm of the I-proposition tend to perceive the lack of anything absolute within the secular model as a moral deficiency that will sooner or later turn this “culture” into a technocratic civilization because it contains no real values. However, contrary to the proponents of the E-proposition, they do not suggest to replace secular culture with religious culture but to replace secular culture with religious civilization. The recent spectacular rise of fundamentalism, which follows a strict “religion as religion” line, aims to exclude culture from religion and must therefore be identified as an I-proposition paradigm, seeing religion as civilization.

2.4. Evil Civilization-Religion vs. Good Secular Culture (O)

A critique of the above I-proposition can be formulated with the help of the O-proposition paradigm. Like the I-proposition, the adherents of the O-proposition assume that religion is civilization, but they intend to combat this religion-civilization with the help of secular culture. Secular people who base their decisions on culture and not on a god often find that any search for truths more absolute than those provided by culture, can easily “kill culture” because a religious culture based on absolute truths will turn culture into a rigid model of civilization. They find that civilizational rigidity often adopts a form of both stubborn scientific progressivism and religious dogmatism. Those secular people believe that critically evaluated standards of sincerity are sufficient for the construction of a culture. In other words, their secularism is cultural: it is not opposed to religion per se, but only to any religion that pretends to be civilization.

2.5. How some Scholars Disregard the Square

The square becomes dysfunctional when culture and civilization are not correctly identified, which happens very often. Often the analysts’ vocabulary shifts randomly between culture and civilization. For example, anything religious can superficially be
classified as belonging to culture, even when it displays many traits of civilization. Historian Bassam Tibi, for example, calls values like democracy and human rights “products of cultural modernity” (Tibi 1998: 24, my italics) and does not consider the possibility of classifying them as civilization.

The most flagrant problem is that reality is often forced into either the top or the bottom axis while all vertical movements are ignored. In other words, critiques of certain positions are most often formulated by adopting the contrary position (thus by moving horizontally on the square), but rarely by applying subalternative or contradictory inferences. Eagleton, for example, lumps all “religion” together in the form of an E-proposition and does not consider the existence of the I-proposition. As a result, he presents religious fundamentalism as an attitude opposed to civilization (moving from his own A-proposition to an E-proposition), which is just as hasty as equating religion with culture. Many people will actually find that Eagleton is right with regard to religion: is religion not able to contradict scientific civilization by declaring, for example, that evolution does not exist? However, religion questions evolution not on the basis of a relativist culture, but on the basis of a religion that claims to be more absolute than science. This position should be identified as an I-proposition, which opposes civilization-religion to secular culture. Such vertical interferences are rarely undertaken.

Wahhabism makes the same mistake. For Wahhabism, absolute values defined by a puritan ideology represent the basis of everything -- just like for Eagleton values such as universality, autonomy, individuality, and rational speculation represent the basis of (secular) civilization. Paradoxically, Wahhabism speaks out against precisely those “cultural” values that many secular people cherish as values of civilization: democracy, political structures of pluralism, human rights, and liberal tolerance, because for them, those values are merely cultural. The reason is that it does not consider the existence of the square’s top axis.

2.6. Overcoming the Square

The preceding section has shown that the square is too often used in a limited fashion. Another problem is that the four positions and five logical connections indicated by the square do not necessarily reflect existing conditions. The problem with the square is indeed that it is too rigid: sometimes social reality is forced into the square, most probably because its logical coherence is so tempting. Similar to Tibi, Leila Ahmed amalgamates culture and civilization when writing that “the Western meaning of the veil [is] a sign of the inferiority of Islam as religion, culture, and civilization” (Ahmed 2011: 45). In principle, Ahmed attributes to “Westerners” the A-proposition (“Good secular civilization against evil religion culture”) though it is obvious that this is reductive.

With regard to the veil it can be said that many Western people are likely to accept this item as a cultural symbol and are only disturbed by its religious connotations; and then
again, they are not disturbed by those connotations because they find this particular religion inferior or opposed to their own religion or civilization, but rather because they find the dogmatic way in which the religion is practiced incompatible with the standards of their culture. In other words, they are disturbed by the fact that this practice, which should be called ‘cultural’ in every sense of the word, emphasizes its universal value by advertising itself as a civilizational religion.

This means that they do not lean towards the A-proposition to which Ahmed attempts to pin them down, but rather towards an O-proposition because they are opposed to “civilization-religion.” At the same time, they do not oppose “civilization-religion” by building around them a bulwark of “secular culture” (as the O-proposition would indicate), but rather by adopting an attitude that does not exclude “religion-culture” either. In other words, what is lacking on the square is a combination of the E- and the O-proposition. This new proposition would be named “Evil civilization-religion vs. good religion culture.”

Thinking outside the square does not seem to be on the mind of many people writing about religion. Sometimes this leads to absurd constellations. It has been show above how Betz (who is a representative of the E-proposition) depicts those who are secular as prototypical enlightenment people who see reason as the only foundation of culture. For Betz, the fact of looking back at tradition (something that enlightenment so often spurns) automatically implies a looking back at those items that he sees as the essence of culture: religion and faith. Curiously, Eagleton, though coming from the contrary end of the square (A-proposition), offers very similar assumptions. His argument, as it appears in the quotation in which he identifies culture as “all those unreflected loyalties and spontaneous convictions” (Eagleton 2008: 46), is that secular enlightenment people can only be against religion because religion is merely cultural.

Eagleton’s position must be understood as a direct reaction to a post-secular pattern relying very much on the fusion of religion and culture. In the context of this argument, Eagleton decides to refuse the influence of tradition because he prefers universal values and reason. In the end, however, his argument plays into the hands of adherents of the E-proposition, such as Betz and Sardar. Like them, Eagleton equates culture with religion and condemns both because of their relativism. The above new proposition (“Evil civilization-religion vs. good religion culture”) would solve this conundrum. We need to look at this new paradigm more closely.

3. Overcoming the Square through “Sweetness and Light”

The first purpose of the above exercise has been to disentangle the paradox of culture (as part of religion and at the same time as a quality that can be seen as opposed to religion) by distinguishing culture from civilization. It has been shown that the four paradigms attributed to the square of oppositions are solid but that they can also be reductive. The
second purpose has been to show that the square is too rigid and unable to reflect all cases. It can function as a useful tool of conceptualization, but at the same time, it prevents the appropriate conceptualization of the “religion-culture” option. The “thinking inside the square” reacts to a dogmatic concept of religion as civilization in an equally dogmatic fashion. An extension of the logical model is required in order to show that cultural forms of religion represent the most efficient means able to deconstruct civilizational forms of religion.

In order to provide such an extension, I want to trace the term culture with the help of a formula coined by Victorian critic and poet Matthew Arnold. Also, Arnold most clearly delimits culture from the above idea of civilization. For Arnold, culture is a state of civilization containing both truth and beauty as well as another quality that he names “sweetness and light” (Arnold 1869: 19). This concept of culture is interesting in the present context because it insists on “aesthetic” components on the one hand, but also remains linked to a certain quality of enlightenment. Arnold’s insistence on culture’s aesthetic quality (beauty) in combination with “light” is unusual. Though “light” is clearly connected to enlightenment, Arnold’s notion of “light” does not reduce culture to civilization; on the contrary, the “light” metaphor can even suggest a religious dimension of culture. In Arnold’s model of culture, the enlightenment heritage is not rejected but confirmed; on the other hand, culture becomes “sweetness and light” not through the blunt adherence to enlightenment’s scientific, universal, and rational principles, but rather through subtle reflections on the self and the other, which can produce “sweet” qualities such as tolerance.

Arnold is not the only person to describe culture in this stylistic-existentialist way. Almost a hundred years later, the English art critic Clive Bell does the same, though he chooses to name the quality in question not culture but civilization: “tolerance, receptivity, magnanimity, unshockableness, and taste for, and sympathy with pleasure, are prime characters of civilization” (Bell 1973: 168). Bell also refers to a certain kind of aesthetic sensitivity and insists that “the civilized man will be highly perceptible to aesthetic impressions, and to aesthetic impressions not of one sort only” (124).

Apart from that, at least partially, Arnold’s and Bell’s use of the term culture is not very different from how some religious people use the term religion today: culture is “the great help out of our present difficulties” (Arnold 1869: viii), and it is able to oppose the sort of materialism emergent “in a Britain that holds that coal and iron constitute the greatness of England” (19). This culture is opposed to a civilization based on universality and rational speculation.

At the same time, it is opposed to fundamentalist notions of religion because it is not dependent on absolute qualities, truths or essences. Bell singles out “puritans” as the enemies of culture because “for all their good intentions, [they] are the enemies of good,
because they make it more difficult than it need to be for themselves and everyone else to enjoy good states of mind” (Bell 1973: 177).

3.1 Culture Must be “Interesting”

It is relatively easy to define culture negatively as the opposite of scientism and puritanism, and it has been shown that the square of oppositions encourages such one-dimensional definitions.

However, what are the positive qualities of culture?

There is a term to which Arnold attributes much importance in his writings on culture: culture “is best described by the word interesting” (170). Culture is “interesting” because it provides subtle reflections on the world and on ourselves. Interesting are those phenomena that we can submit to critical examination – after which we will perhaps not even agree with them – but which we will still perceive as being beneficial for the development of our cultural or intellectual environment. This is why “interesting” things are often precisely those things that are subtle. “Subtle” comes from the French “souple,” which means soft, flexible, and open -- that is, the contrary of rigid. A good portion of relativism is enclosed to the project of “being subtle” by definition; but blunt relativism is the contrary of subtle.

It is not far-fetched to link Arnold’s ideas from 1869 to our contemporary “postmodern culture” that is so often the red cloth of all believers. Like postmodern culture, Arnold’s “interesting” culture is suspicious of all forms of prophetic revelations as well as of transcendental purity and immediate truths or unmediated self-certainties. Still, its aspect of “sweetness and light” is the contrary of the dark and nihilistic scenario that (E-proposition) believers often attribute to the secular or – in particular – to the postmodern situation that they identify with the A-proposition. The source of Arnold’s light is neither rational Enlightenment nor God, but culture itself, which manages to be interesting just because it is culture.

5. Can Religion be Interesting?

When religion turns out to be interesting for both cultural and civilizational reason, the rigid logic of the square has been overcome. A priori, religion can be interesting for all the reasons pointed out in the preceding section, which is why in the history of humanity, religion has often attracted the world’s brightest minds. And when it fell into decline, it often was because the features displayed by religion were too dogmatic. Then values or “the good” would be hermetically codified up to a point that religion was no longer interesting because it offered no intellectual challenge.
In other words, religion was civilization, and secular culture was opposed to it (I-proposition). This happened, for example, to Islam. While Islam employed for several centuries the best philosophers and scientists available for its development, in the tenth century, it ceased being subtle and went along a path that made it unable, in the words of Malek Chebel, to “equip itself with a critical history” or to maintain a critical approach towards its sources of tradition (\textit{usul al-fiqh}) (Chebel 2006: 31).

Instead of thinking critically, it began to focus on immediate (often “natural”) truths as well as on small theological details; and whenever “details begin to dominate the spirit of a religion one can conclude that it is obsolete” (32). Muslim lawyers would now codify the Islamic law and reduce Islam to a ‘cult of fiqh’, or jurisprudence. Worse, “religious scholars feared that the proliferation of written texts would undermine their authority and control, and prevented the emergence of printing in the Muslim world for over three hundred years. This stopped creative thought, and centralized authority in a few hands” (Inayatullah & Boxwell 2003: 18).

In the end, Islam gained a lot of questionable “truths” but lost anything that could be called “interesting.” In a climate of orthodoxy and formalism, one “no longer thinks as serenely as in the past, and every invention is considered as treason” (Chebel: 34). Long lists of things forbidden do not lead to light but to obscurantism. When Chebel concludes that “the ninth century appears as the grave of free thought” (70), he could as well say that it appears as the grave of culture if we understand culture as a movement nourished by the ambition to create interesting and subtle thoughts as well as expressions of sweetness and light. However, in spite of the excessive preoccupation with concrete details, Islam will also be afflicted by the opposite ailment: as a civilization it becomes too abstract, and its teachings can no longer be linked to concrete regional or cultural ideas: “too vast, too large and without spinal column, the Islamic community becomes a generous idea that is often thought of but which translates nothing in geostrategic terms” (34).

Islam’s particular problem is that it has always been torn between the extremes of universal civilization and individual culture, between a supra-national “way of life” based on unconditional truth on the one hand and communitarian identity politics on the other. Can one and the same institution fulfill both promises? Can one and the same institution be both culture and civilization?

It seems that at present Islam is losing even more of its cultural appeal, offering few pleasures and entertainment that could be seen as intrinsic to Islam; what it offers are mainly universal instructions about cultural activities that are forbidden. Bell’s qualities like “tolerance, receptivity, magnanimity, unshockableness, and taste for, and sympathy with pleasure” (Bell: 168) have moved to the background. Nor is there present Islam “perceptible to aesthetic impressions, and to aesthetic impressions not of one sort only” (124).
As a result, subjects will most likely be tempted by ways of life and entertainments offered by other cultures and keep Islam only as a form of civilization. This civilization can then most comfortably be expressed as an anti-Western, anti-imperialistic ideology or provide detailed instructions about how to behave or represent the sharia. To call this a “civilization” might appear paradoxical given the concreteness of those Islamic prescriptions about cultural details. The problem is that those details do not create a culture but rather a paranoiac identification of concrete cultural items with general civilizational guidelines. In any case, the outcome will probably not be what Arnold has described as sweetness and light.

It is true that in the case of the sharia, the status of “sharia as civilization” is sometimes difficult to recognize because the sharia is increasingly not used as a universal legal code but rather as an affirmation of cultural identities, which represents a paradox. Olivier Roy explains this paradox by pointing out that while “the criterion of an Islamic cultural identity is looked for in the sharia, as a legal norm it should actually be thought of outside the frame of cultural contingency” (Roy 1999: 27). In Muslim emigrant circles, for example, one likes to define the sharia “not as a legal system but as a body of cultural norms defining a way of life more than a legal status, an identitarian horizon more than a civil code” (26). At the same time, the sharia continues to regulate the life of a religious international community that exists beyond cultures.

Roy concludes very aptly that the strong desire for the sharia can only denote the cultural crisis of Islam: Islamic religion can no longer be lived culturally and spontaneously in a self-evident fashion. Normally, cultures can be lived spontaneously without recurring to general laws. The paradox exists in the fact that the Islamic culture project is restricted to the ambition “to ground Islamic identity on a body of norms spelled out as legal rules” (26). Strictly speaking, this codification of religion-culture kills culture by turning it into a religion-civilization unable to develop naturally and organically. And, of course, it cannot develop organically in contact with other cultures. What is supposed to be “culture” develops rather ideologically and abstractly almost as if it were a science.

The above considerations have shown that Islam has lost its “interesting” cultural appeal not once but twice: first, in the tenth century, when it gave in to a stubborn form of mysticism and cut itself off from both reason and culture; second, more recently, when it began to define itself as a “cultural civilization.” The second step is not typical for a religion, but more akin to Western Enlightenment civilizations. “Cultural civilizations” appear when a scientifically grounded civilization isolates itself from everything that cannot be positively evaluated. Critics of Enlightenment have therefore long held that a civilization exclusively based on Enlightenment principles will be well-organized and technologically advanced but disenchanted because it is lacking those features that could qualify it as culture: it is no longer subtle and interesting.

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1 The hypothesis about the “disenchantment of the world” through technology and intellectualization comes from Max Weber.
The case of Islam is different. When Islam entered the stage of a scientifically grounded civilization by believing that in this “civilization-culture” everything should be positively evaluated, it went directly from mysticism to positivism, thus circumventing culture twice. First it omitted the step that Enlightenment undertook when it was forcing itself to see religion in terms of culture. Second it circumvented culture when refusing to accept critical evaluations of absolute civilizational values in terms of cultural critiques.

Culture, as it is understood in post-Enlightenment western societies, is supposed to settle right in the middle, on a critical ground able to accommodate different positions and to consider both abstract and concrete manifestations of human ingenuity. This is how culture avoids both religious and scientific dogmatism. To see culture like this also means to deconstruct the oppositional logic suggested by the square of oppositions. In a word, it means to advance the “Evil civilization-religion vs. good religion-culture” proposition.

Conclusion

The preceding section has described how civilizational religion kills not only secular culture but also religious culture. Apart from that, it has been shown that any civilizational religion has difficulties to progress -- that is, it has difficulties to formulate its position in terms of progressive civilization. Only the new paradigm called “Evil civilization religion vs. good culture-religion” is able to amend this situation. The new paradigm is not merely one ready to confound everything that this article has tried to disentangle. Confusions happen when one thing is seen as the other, while I suggest a model of coexistence. Within this model, all elements remain distinct. As a result, really “interesting” constellations can appear. This happens, of course, only on the condition that all elements are allowed to play equal roles.

In our post-secular post-modernity, religions should stop seeing “absolute civilizational religion” and “relativist culture” as opposites. Then they can make religion more “interesting.” In other words, religion should be turned into culture (1) without abandoning religious elements and (2) without designating secular civilization as an “evil” element.

In the Western world – with the obvious exception of American puritan fundamentalism – secularization has brought religion very much on a “cultural level” – at least for a large part of the population.

In the Muslim world the contrary is the case. Under Wahhabist influence, a civilizational understanding of religion in the fundamentalist sense is more and more emphasized, and the distinction between culture and religion is becoming more and more distinct. Cultural versions of Islam, like the spiritual or ‘mystical’ tradition of Sufism, are suppressed. What religion lacks in those cases is a relevant combination of culture and civilization or...
simply “sweetness and light.” In the end, this is the reason why it has difficulties progressing – both as a culture and as a civilization.

I suggest that Muslims embrace postmodernism in its truest form: not just as a post-secular ideology but as an attempt to integrate secularism and religion. In that way Islam could also organize a cultural fight against monolithic and standardized global capitalism or other political or secular phenomena by which it has always been so intrigued. The current identification of religiosity with terrorism on the one hand, and of secularism with the philosophy of technocrats on the other, does not help to amend the situation.

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https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol71/iss71/18


Essay: The Great Literary Utopias Have a Nightmarish History

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Literary utopias, a seemingly modest form of fiction intended for amusement and contemplation, have had a surprising history. They have been a source of conscious civilizational design that has been taken seriously by some very powerful leaders, more often than not with dire consequences.

Plato's Republic, written 2500 years ago in ancient Greece, was the first to explore seriously what it would take to create a perfect society. Thomas More, one of England's greatest Renaissance intellectuals, redesigned Plato's Republic for his own time a thousand years later. His Utopia reflected the European fascination with the entirely novel civilizations discovered in the New World. One can better understand one's own culture through comparison with that of another.

Both Plato and More contemplated the conditions needed to support a perfect state. They considered geography, economy, and the ethical nature of leadership required to produce such a state. Most essential were social equality, even of the sexes; careful population control; rigorous education for commonality of values, and rule by only the most mentally fit.

Utopias leaped from the pages of literature with the birth of the United States. Our Founding Fathers, familiar with the works of Plato and Thomas More, reflected their vision for our country. But other readers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were thinking about these ideas, too; among these were Marx, Lenin, Hitler, Mao, and Pol Pot.

Today we have seen that dystopias are more real than utopias. The newest dystopians among us are Al Qaeda and its imitators, imagining a brave new world under a caliphate. This is, of course, just one more fantasy utopia. The anarchists are their real model.

Types of Utopian Fiction

From the time that human beings had the leisure to think, there have always been those who did not like how their cultures were organized. One of the quatrains of Omar Khayyam (the Rubaiyyat), as translated by Edward Fitzgerald, expresses it best:

“Ah Love! Could thou and I with Fate conspire  
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
Would not we shatter it to bits----and then  
Re-mould it neared to the Heart's Desire!”
He expresses in this verse what others have felt from antiquity, that the world should be organized much better. Some who felt this way imagined paradises, fantasies, satires, and even today, imaginary brave new worlds (such as the cinema version in *Avatar*). But one Athenian genius, Plato, tried “to grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,” and the key here is *entire*. He was the first to attempt to analyze what makes a republic function and how to design a better one. His fictional *Republic* has gone on to live and to influence the world in an astonishing way, including creating some societies that are not ideal utopias, but are nightmares.

According to that master of Utopian analysis, Lewis Mumford (*The Story of Utopias, 1922*), there are two kinds of literary utopias: fantasy and reconstruction. The fantasies and satires make fun of existing society and create an imaginary alternate universe, or are elaborate imaginings of either life after death or “brave new worlds.” The construct utopias seriously attempt to imagine a perfect state, one that explores all aspects of a human society. Plato's *Republic*, written 2500 years ago in ancient Greece, was the first to seriously explore what it would take to create a perfect society.

Thomas More, one of England's greatest Renaissance intellectuals, redesigned Plato's *Republic* for his own time. His *Utopia* reflected the European fascination with the entirely novel civilizations discovered in the New World. One can better understand one's own culture through comparison with that of another.

A perfect state, they both said, would have enough land to feed itself, access to the sea or waterways for trade, every citizen working at what each did best, the best brains educated for unselfish leadership, absolute equality of all goods (to prevent corruption of the leaders), women freed from domestic duties to participate in all work for which they were qualified, all meals eaten together with cooking chores shared, and strict birth control (having no more children than could be fed). The children were to have community education so that they would all be citizens with a common culture.

Utopias leaped from the pages of literature with the birth of the United States. Our Founding Fathers knew the works of Plato and More, which is reflected in the totality of their vision for our country. But other readers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were considering these ideas, too. The French Revolution also gave rise to the Anarchists, who were convinced that only by destroying all existing states could a perfect utopia arise.

Jonathan Swift in the eighteenth century wrote *Gulliver's Travels*. He was the first to take a very sour look at utopias and the first to recognize the dark underbelly of utopias (dystopias). Alas, his was a voice in the wilderness.

Marx, Lenin, Hitler, Mao, and Pol Pot translated Plato's and More's small nation-state idea into nightmare empires. All of them (except for Hitler) embraced the communist idea of totally sharing all property (at least in theory). They all liked putting women to...
work, demolishing the notion of the biological family. They all had a ruling class, indoctrinated for that job, and an unthinking culture of obedience and loyalty to the state. Hitler was more in line with the anarchists who believed in a brave new world that only would come in the future after everything else was destroyed.

Today we have seen that dystopias are more real than utopias. In addition to nightmare empires, we have home-grown pseudo-religious cults, run almost exactly like Plato's and More's states, except that the leaders are insane. The newest dystopians among us are Al Qaeda and its imitators, imagining a brave new world under a caliphate. This is, of course, just one more fantasy utopia. The anarchists are their real model.

**Plato’s Republic**

Four hundred years before the Christian era, the Greek Philosopher Plato wrote *The Republic*, part of a series of dialogues that were held with the brightest of Athens’ thinkers, all friends of Socrates, the mentor whose ideas Plato brought to the world. We know Socrates through his protégé’s writing, thoughts that have had enormous effect on the world and continue to do so today.

The Greek culture of that time differed from any others in that all sorts of new ways of organizing society were tried and critiqued. It was a period of social disintegration too, the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War, in which it was clear that many mistakes had been made by citizens and their leaders.

This was not a civilization that could be ruled by a single autocrat (as was the Persia of that time). It was a world in which experimentation was possible, and with few exceptions, thinkers could challenge all accepted wisdom without penalty. The exception, unfortunately, was Socrates himself; he finally ran afoul of the powers that be over concerns that his free-wheeling ideas were corrupting the youth.

The period during which Greek thinkers could examine, speculate, and criticize their own societies was, alas, brief; the Greek city-states fell to a variety of autocrats and empires: Alexander the Great (a student of Aristotle), the Romans, Byzantine Christianity, and ultimately the Ottoman Turks.

However, thanks to Plato, we do have what must have been the first attempt to construct mentally the perfect society, a republic, from the ground up. He charted what Socrates and his companions devised as requirements for the perfect society:

- **Geography.** The favored geography of utopias is islands or sea coasts, finite places surrounded by the sea—both as protection and open for trade. For both Plato and More, these were the geographies of ancient Greece and England. As
part of that geography was climate: recognition that only temperate climates could provide enough food and relative physical comfort for a good society.

- **Size.** The Greeks of Plato’s time already had the concept of a commonwealth, a larger society that shared language, gods, and for the most part, similar institutions. But for his imaginary republic, he envisioned it being able to be seen from a hilltop; he expected those who lived within these limits to share common gods to worship, common theaters and gymnasia, and a multitude of common interests that could be satisfied only by their working together, playing together, thinking together. The ideal commonwealth, Mumford tells us, would be a city region—a city that was surrounded by enough land to supply the greater part of the food needed by the inhabitants and convenient to the sea. [Mumford, 33.]

- **Agriculture.** The terrain was mountainous, providing different soils and climate zones for a variety of agricultural and industrial uses. There would be evergreen trees at the summit for the woodcutter, going down the slope to the herdsman and their goats, further down for the cultivator and his crops, and finally culminating where the river (valleys usually have rivers) meets the sea. It was essential in his republic that there be enough food for the population, and if there was not, the population was to reduce itself, either by moving pioneers to found a new colony elsewhere or exerting population control.

- **Economy.** Plato makes the point that the economy should be modest, that people should be happy with sufficient corn (grain) and wine, have clothes and shoes, and build houses for themselves. People would work hard, benefitting from outdoor labor with healthy bodies. There must be a common standard of living (no very rich or very poor). Plato wanted a lifestyle neither impoverished nor luxurious, something between the styles of Athens and the military dictatorship of Sparta. When asked should we moderate our wants or should we increase our production (today’s big question), he opted for moderating our wants.

- **Ideal Population Size.** For Plato, the ideal size was to be a community where a speaker could be heard by everybody; 5,040 was his selected number of citizens. This may still be so in New England’s Town Hall meetings and for many town planners. This population was to share certain institutions and ways of life with similarly educated people. Without this basis, such communities would be doomed to break apart, a phenomenon we are seeing today even in nation-states.

- **Work.** A diversity of work and professions is needed by the healthy commonwealth, a good thing when we consider the variety of human talents and capabilities. Systems such as India’s caste system do not allow for the variability of children born into a family with an inherited trade. While Plato recognizes that heredity and apprenticeships are good for providing skilled professionals, he
recognizes that each individual should be able to find a calling that suits him more in another trade. Plato’s Republic has class differences (workers and craftsmen have different educations than the leadership class or those devoted to the state’s defense or military). Yet he allows for talent (and merit) to rise to the top. This is the beginning of the notion of a meritocracy.

- **Values.** Plato identified four human virtues to each category (class) of people: wisdom, valor, temperance, and justice. Wisdom is appropriate for the rulers, the Guardians. Valor is for the defenders, the auxiliaries. Temperance (agreement) belongs to all classes. And Justice is the ultimate cause and condition of all of them. Justice (the perception of fairness) is essential for the health of a society.

- **Property.** Plato worried about the corrupting effect of too much luxury on a society. He wanted his people healthy, industrious, and satisfied with simplicity. The craftsmen and farmers should have such property as might be needed for their occupations and simple and pleasurable property for their homes. But the warriors were to have their own culture, and that included only the equipment they needed for service. All other property was to be held in common. Also original in Plato’s concept was that the warrior class women were permitted an equal place in the life of the camp, gymnasiuims, and military academy.

  The Guardians, the ruling class, was to be the most controlled to prevent any abuse of the great power they were given. They had to be not only mentally fit for this class, but also the most just, avoiding any corrupting influence of money or property. He also worried about anything smacking of hereditary power. Plato proposed a system of common marriage. “The wives of these guardians are to be in common, and their children are also common, and no parent is to know his own child, nor any child his parent.” He managed the incest problem by having all children born in the same year to be barred from breeding among each other; they were to be siblings.

  This is not easy to do, and has been attempted only by one dystopian modern dictator, Hitler, with the program of Aryan genetic manipulation, called the “Lebensborn,” with all the women and children the common property of the SS breeders.

  The problem of family power has dogged all societies from the beginning of civilization. How does one keep a family from monopolizing privileges? For Plato, and only for the Guardian Class, it was to eliminate marriage and family life altogether. For the rest of the society, children with talent were to be recognized and those without it, even when born among the Guardians, were either to find their own lower level or, if handicapped, to be abandoned at birth.
Education of Guardians. Unlike the rest of the society, which was free to enjoy normal family life and simple pleasures, the Guardians were to be a very disciplined lot. Every part of their lives and education was for the purpose of keeping the Guardians disinterested (to avoid abuse of power and corruption). They lived in common barracks, none had his own home or storehouse; they were on the public payroll, which supported them because of their superiority of brains and integrity (not a large number in any society). These Guardians first served in the military class (auxiliaries), where military preparation (not constant warfare) shaped their valor. There they increasingly practiced leadership (much like today’s military). After the age of 50, those who were qualified devoted themselves to philosophy and rule. The business of the Guardian was to manufacture liberty. They had nothing to do with marketing, industry, graft, bribery, theft, rules established by the ordinary people themselves. They are responsible for the basic constitution of how good people can flourish in a good society.

More’s Utopia

While Plato is the first to deliberately imagine what it would require to produce a perfect republic, Sir Thomas More’s Utopia, written as a lark over a long weekend of leisure in the company of some of Europe’s greatest intellectuals (including Erasmus), was based on the newly popular Plato’s Republic, but with changes reflecting a Christian, rather than pagan world, and technological changes of his own time, sixteenth century England.

Geography. Like Plato’s, his utopia is small and finite, and, like Britain, surrounded by water. It is the first of the island utopias. It is made up of city-states and their rural areas.

Economy. Agriculture is the economic base. Some people live on their farms year round, but everybody, even from the cities, take time to work on farms (perhaps at planting or harvesting times) so that they can be competent farmers when needed. City magistrates draw up lists of those who will help with the harvests as required. (China and the USSR both adopted this idea.)

Technologies. Agricultural technologies are designed to provide enough to feed the state and a surplus for trade. More describes the world’s first incubators, designed to provide great surpluses of poultry and eggs.

Social Mobility. As did Plato, More avoids creating caste systems in his society. Although most families follow their own special occupation, a boy whose genius lies another way may be adopted into a family plying that trade.
• **Work Loads and Labor Rules.** More, like Plato, has a horror of idleness, but in his Utopia, everyone (including women) is expected to be industrious, including princes, rich men, and healthy beggars (all notoriously idle). With everybody working, work could be done in less time than it was in More’s age. He included public works among the tasks that could be dispatched in little time if everyone were working. The only people exempt from hard labor were the magistrates and students, who, if they were doing their work properly, were industrious enough.

• **Distribution of Goods.** Monthly festivals provided for exchanges of urban and agricultural goods, overseen by the Magistrates to make certain they were fair. The family was the unit of distribution; there were no private entrepreneurs. Each city was divided into four equal parts, surrounding a central marketplace. The goods were taken to a storehouse and each family head selected what his family needed. No money was exchanged. (To each according to his needs...?) More justifies this system for eliminating fear of want; a productive society produces plenty.

• **Diet.** Renaissance England produced far more good food than did Plato’s Greece. Plato wanted his people to have a simple palate: bread, wine, olives, green herbs, and fish: nothing imported. He also stressed that if the Republic wanted meat, they would require more land than needed for their simple diet--and that might require taking land from somebody else, one of the origins of warfare. More, however, allowed for herbs, fruits, and bread, but also fish, fowl, and cattle for meat and cheese. In addition to the monthly apportionment of goods in each town, he provided for an annual distribution in the entire country, equalizing the goods among all the various regions.

• **Gold and Luxuries.** Gold was only to be used to make chamber pots; it was not a medium of exchange nor was it used for adornment. Conspicuous display was absolutely forbidden. It is interesting to consider how this sat with the conspicuously displayed nobility of England.

• **Town Design.** In his Utopia, all of the towns were designed alike. They were usually on the side of a hill; almost square, two miles per side, facing a river. There was a high, thick wall; the streets designed for carriages and sheltered from the wind; and the houses were connected and built in a row, much as we can see in Bath today. (This did become an eighteenth century model.) The streets were broad, and in back of the houses were gardens, which everyone had to keep up. There was competition among homeowners to have excellent gardens. This, thinks More, is a useful kind of competition.

• **Community Dining.** In Plato, the common dining hall was only for the military and Guardians. In More, it was obviously a means for producing community
solidarity and an opportunity to socialize the children. The work of shopping, cooking, and serving was shared, a much better use of women’s time than if each had to spend the day providing for a family. The dining hall even had a common nursery and chapel, a great benefit to women with small children. The midday meal was simple and without ceremony (so that people could get back to work). However, the evening meal was designed to give pleasure. More was not as suspicious as Plato of the arts, music, delicious food, conversation, and merriment. More recognized that man is a sensual being and that we should not ignore this aspect.

- **Government.** More’s Utopia, unlike Plato’s, was not exactly a republic, but did have participatory governance of sorts. Each group of thirty families chose a magistrate (Philarch) yearly, and those 200 Philarchs serve as a senate tasked to choose the Prince out of a list of four candidates, named by the families (not clear how chosen). The Prince was elected for life, unless impeached for attempting to enslave the people. The government’s duties were to regulate commerce, travel, crime, and war.

- **Slavery.** Even today, unfortunately, work that is obnoxious to human beings is done involuntarily, as can be seen throughout South Asia, Africa, and in the global trafficking of women and children. We have not yet eliminated slavery.

In Plato’s time, slaves were captured in warfare but never constituted a permanent caste, except for women. The same holds true for More, but warfare is no longer the major means of acquiring slaves for those occupations no one else wants, such as butchering beef for food. Warfare would be infrequent, and the Utopians used strategy, propaganda, and corruption to undermine an enemy rather than always resorting to force. But when using force, they made sure that the soldiers were not their best people. This is a way to weed out undesirables. More did not think much of a military establishment.

Slaves were acquired through the law courts: people who had committed venial crimes, such as violating the limited permission to travel (being a runaway); un chastity and adultery were crimes punished by slavery. Divorce was accepted when a couple agreed that they were incompatible; but there was a novel attempt to avoid such incompatibility: young couples were introduced before marriage naked; no surprises here and no forced marriages. I suspect this was More’s little joke. (There was a *Star Trek* episode showing such a marriage custom in one of the other planets.)

- **More’s Ultimate Values.** Summarized by Louis Mumford [78]: “To cultivate the soil rather than simply to get on with a job; to take food and drink rather to earn money; to think and dream and invent, rather than increase one’s reputation;
in short, to grasp the living reality and spurn the shadow--this is the substance of
the Utopian way of life….In this Utopia of the World every man has the
opportunity to be a man because no one else has the opportunity to be a monster.
Here, too, the chief end of man is that he should grow to the fullest stature of his
species.” This is a highly admirable vision indeed, and extraordinary in his time
and place of birth.

Dystopia Arrives

Jonathan Swift, an eighteenth century Anglo-Irish satirist, wrote the brilliant Gulliver’s
Travels, a book that should be rescued from children’s literature and should be part of
literary utopias. Swift was not enamored of utopias, nor was he dazzled by the spate of
travel books fascinating readers in his time. Marco Polo’s travels across Asia and the
many adventurers in awe of the New World’s strange civilizations were popular in Swift’s
day. He refused to be enchanted.

Gulliver’s Travels gives us a hero named Gulliver, hinting broadly at “gullible.” This
imaginary traveler has four adventures, of which only the first two are still popular, which
is a shame. Book One covers Gulliver shipwrecked upon an island of very small human
beings (we are talking in inches here), the Lilliputians. It is like looking at human beings
through the wrong end of a telescope. They are tiny, perfect-looking little beings who
are, at first acquaintance, utterly charming. However, he finds out how much they are
like the most frivolous and nastiest beings of his own civilization, much to his distaste.

His second adventure is to flee to another island, this time peopled by giants. To them,
he looks just like the Lilliputians had looked to him. He is the pet and darling of a young
girl. These giant human beings are as if seen through the right end of a telescope with
every flaw apparent. He sees giant pores and is overwhelmed by their smell. But they
too have a society not really different from his native civilization. He is not enchanted.

The third adventure (and my favorite) is to an island dominated by another island, actually
a flying saucer that threatens the natives with destruction if they do not obey them and
provide them with food. The men living on the flying saucer are mad scientists engaged
in all sorts of ridiculous scientific projects financed by government grants. Their wives
are normal women with appetites unsatisfied by these absent-minded professors. Wives
frequently run away with their coachmen, tolerating abusive lovers rather than remaining
married to the scientists.

The final adventure is to an island in which the horses rule and humans fill their zoos.
They have a truly wise civilization and the caged animals, monkey-like humans, are
disgusting and wild. To get wisdom directly from the “horse’s mouth” is wonderful
indeed.
At the end of the work, Gulliver returns home, completely disgusted and embarrassed by his human condition. He takes refuge in the stables, talking to the horses.

This work is not, of course, a utopian blueprint as were those of Plato and More, but rather a cautionary tale warning people about human nature, which he did not admire.

**Aldous Huxley**, a twentieth century British-American writer, wrote the next great dystopian novel after Swift. In the time between them, only imaginative technological utopias were written, of little use to us pursuing utopian policies. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries were also periods of experimentation, with many small groups attempting to live out utopian ideals. The United States is still a home of utopian experiments, such as those of the Mormons and the Mennonites, both of which have survived; and the Shakers, Jonestown, and the Davidians in Waco, all failed, the last two disastrously.

Huxley wrote during the early and late parts of his life two of the most important contemporary explorations of utopian fiction. In the 1920s, he wrote *Brave New World*, taking the title from the line in Shakespeare’s final work, *The Tempest*. In this play, the naïve Miranda sees the first human beings other than her father, with whom she has lived alone since babyhood. She is dazzled by a “brave new world that has such people in it.” The line, of course, is very funny considering how terrible some of these people actually were.

Huxley used the framework of most utopias since More: a traveler arriving from a very different world, introduced to the utopia. He also leaned heavily on the technological utopias of the past and had a tongue-in-cheek assessment of Henry Ford, the devisor of assembly-line technologies. In this case, the technologies were devoted to eliminating the family (including the mother) by incubating and using science to shape the outcomes of these children. “Our Ford” has replaced “Our Lord” by way of religion, and for the first time ever, “mother” was a nasty pornographic notion.

*Brave New World* was a warning against unquestioned trust in science, and it posited that if a society really wants great elites in its leadership, it cannot program everything in the test tube. The best human minds are very difficult for a society to control. Even as tight a utopia as this one risks rebellions and even revolutions. We can never have total control over human complexity.

Huxley’s last work before he died was *Island*, where he, like the greats before him, tried his hand at designing a perfect society on an island, a society characterized by intelligence, simplicity of wants, and a spirituality not poisoned by organized religion. His people were modern, educated, and were bonded by the use of a drug, soma, that kept them civil. (Huxley had just discovered LSD, and was an enthusiast.)
Like the other utopias, a stranger comes to the island and the utopia is explained to him. It certainly appears to be a lovely society but it has one problem: it has no way of defending itself from a not-as-lovely neighboring island. The mid-twentieth century distaste for war biased Huxley against dealing with defense issues. His utopian island was invaded and enslaved.

**Utopias in the Modern World**

The twentieth century has witnessed three major attempts at designing a civilization and three smaller attempts. The largest designed societies were the USSR, from the end of the Russian Revolution to its collapse in 1979; the Nazi experiment, which owed more to ancient Sparta than to the intellectuals Plato and More, which ran from 1933 until its disgrace and collapse in 1945; and the Chinese Communist State, which ran from 1954 to its much more relaxed state today. At the height of their utopian runs, each became more classic dystopias, nightmare worlds, than anything like their literary utopia models. However, their debt to these precursors is evident, particularly in certain institutions that they adopted.

One small but horrible utopian experiment was carried out in Cambodia, the vision of a western-educated Cambodian communist, Pol Pot. Pot took seriously the Marxian attack on class privilege and set about exterminating the entire middle class of his country, resulting in the death of one-third of his population. He deported people from cities, considering cities dens of corruption, and worked the urban population to death in the countryside. Wearing eyeglasses was enough to get a person sent to a work camp to die. This was one of the worst cases of putting an imaginary utopia to the test, making it the ultimate nightmare world.

Israel was founded as a utopian ideal, a small modern state with a commonality of values and room to experiment with a variety of model villages. There was never any of the coercion and totalitarian force found in the dystopias described above. In Israel, these utopias were tiny, voluntary, and experimental. Some have survived as a variety of designed small societies, the Kibbutz movement, today.

The other utopia is the only nation-state-designed society in the world today, Singapore. Singapore began as an unlikely candidate for utopianism, being a breakaway city-state that removed itself from Muslim Malaya. Singapore was an unpromising and fly-bitten Chinese ethnic backwater. It is today one of the most prosperous, and from all accounts, happiest of nation states thanks to that rarest of leaders, Lee Kuan Yew, who modeled himself after Plato’s dream leader, a Philosopher King. He was not a king, but he certainly was the unquestioned genius who created an exceedingly unusual city-state. Singapore’s example would be almost impossible to replicate elsewhere.
Dystopians

The Russian Revolution emerged out of the collapse of the Russian Empire, a 500-year-old backward, authoritarian, but slowly modernizing society. The revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks, based their notions of governance on Karl Marx’s mid-nineteenth century critique of Capitalism. They enforced values already present among the Russian peasant farmers: equality among themselves—a village value. But they expropriated the land of the former aristocratic landowners and, instead of distributing it among the peasants, took it into state coffers. Thus the peasants had new feudal masters, the Soviet Government itself. The state also expropriated all industries, an industrialization process not yet modernized. Instead of having companies run by industrialists and stockholders, the State assumed this power.

- **Agriculture and industry**, the two most important elements of the Soviet economy, were thus abandoned to state functionaries with no vested interest in success. The country continued to suffer from unsatisfactory harvests, disinterested agricultural workers with no reason for diligence, and the same thing happened in the industrial sector. To this day, Russian agriculture is inadequate and Russian manufacture produces nothing that anyone outside of the country seems to want to buy.

However, the Soviets diligently enforced collectives in both agriculture and industry, which was utopian, but in practice discouraged ambition and excellence and ultimately created economic disaster.

- **Commonality of Culture**, essential to both More’s and Plato’s utopias, is a difficult thing to have in a country of (then) 11 time zones, with myriad ethnicities, languages, religions, and cultures. The Soviets attempted to get this commonality by force, planting Russian-speakers throughout, assuring there could be no upward mobility without a Russian education, and severely punishing anybody who dared complain about it. Resistant ethnic groups were uprooted from their native turf and replanted in the vastness of Siberia, among hostile neighbors. The consequences of this policy eat at Russia today, with a resurgence of terrorism and guerilla warfare.

- **Cultural Practices**. Whereas both Plato and More emphasized moderation in foods and luxuries, avoiding their corrupting influences on leaders, the Soviet system only moderated the food, clothing, and housing of the majority of subjects. The leadership itself quickly became very much corrupted by access to goods and services not available to their subjects. Simultaneously, their intrusive secret services kept terror as a weapon to use against any incipient complaints from the masses.
Another cultural practice not found in either Plato’s or More’s utopian visions was the all-pervading nostrum that has dogged all classes of Russians from their inception, alcohol. Alcohol became a substitute for food or warmth for many, and for the leadership class, it fueled dangerous behavior.

- **Current Prognosis.** The Soviet Union has collapsed, followed by two decades of chaos and close anarchy. Today, a leader from the former Soviet establishment, Vladimir Putin, rules in a parody of democracy. His visions are not utopian; he is far more pragmatically trying to restore Russia’s influence over Russia’s former subject states. There is nothing utopian in his vision and without the temporary flow of funds from the energy sector (Russian luck, not excellence), they may well sink into the backwater from which they rose.

**The Nazi German Empire**

It is strange to think that out of one of Europe’s most dazzling countries, home of extraordinary geniuses in music, art, philosophy, and literature, and even one genius in state-building, Prime Minister Otto Von Bismarck, could become a dystopia that nearly destroyed Europe. Under the utopian imagination of Hitler, his totalitarian Germany set about creating a “brave new world” with nothing but the Aryan Race (an imaginary concept) to run it. He imagined a “thousand-year” reign of Nazi rule in which his utopia could be played out. Instead, he was stopped 12 years after he began, almost completely destroying Germany.

In his notion of commonality of culture, one of the hallmarks of utopias, he ordered the murder of all of his and his conquered countries’ Jews (Europe’s treasure of intellectuals and artists); he did the same with the small population of European Gypsies; and then decided that all Slavic peoples should be a permanent class of slaves.

He dabbled in an experiment to produce an entire class of Aryan citizens who would only owe their allegiance to him, eliminating any concept of family. He kept specially selected young women in what can only be called brothels to be impregnated by his elite Aryan special services to produce perfect Aryan babies throughout his realm. This was, of course, based on Plato’s description of Sparta.

**The People’s Republic of China**

It is amazing to think that a country as large as China, as diverse in the ethnicities it contains, and with such a long history of centralized authority and relatively well-run governance, could fall into a utopian fantasy under the control of a very small group of totalitarian utopians. But out of the chaos of the Chinese Revolution rose a new empire designed as a laboratory for utopian ideals.
• **From Each According to His Abilities, To Each According to his Needs.** This theory eliminated the whole concept of enlightened self-interest. It imagined that people would work hard, indifferent to reward for such work, and unselfishly share the fruits of their labor with those who needed it. Incentive vanished in the blink of an eye. The sharp end of this theory was force, not voluntary unselfishness.

• **Community was to replace Family.** Most utopias do not like family life. They replace it with the commune, the common dining hall, the common rearing and indoctrination of children, and group labor for projects ordered by the State. China picked up More’s notion of urban populations annually assisting the farmers with their labor. For More, this was to make everyone competent at food cultivation; in China, it was used to punish, or to keep in line, middle class intellectuals. Cambodia used it to exterminate its middle class.

• **Status of Women.** Modern utopias supposedly emancipate women from being the property of a husband. Many also pick up Plato’s suggestion that among the guardian classes, sexuality be liberated from marriage to something once called “free love.” This was tried, but never became popular. Marriage survived the assault. But again, as in More’s Utopia, modern utopian movements recognized that there would be need for female labor, which was wasted in the individuality of family life.

• **Commonality of Values.** Every utopia is designed to foment common values among the participants. In a way, this is the idea of the consent of the governed. China has always had a commonality of basic values from its inception. A difference is that under the Marxist utopia, new values would be taught, strengthened with propaganda, and enforced. It was a simultaneous action of denigrating the old values and propping up the new ones.

• **Economic Transformation.** Although China has a long history of autocracy, in reality, it was governed by the rules of the Mandarins, civil servants culled through layers of examinations for their positions. In this case, China has always had a system that resembled that of Plato’s Guardians. But China has also had a long history of entrepreneurism and the rewards earned from it. The Marxist utopian system had no room for that, believing that there should be a classless civilization in which everyone was equal.

China’s headlong plunge into this utopian structure was only sustained by reigns of terror and ruthless compulsion. Their desire to reform agriculture resulted in famines; the attempt to multiply their manufacturing capacity resulted in the stupid system of establishing furnaces in each village, an enormous waste of labor and the death of incompetent workers.
Their single success was in communizing the nation’s health system. Village women were trained to provide basic health instruction and care throughout China. Although not a sophisticated system of modern medicine, it greatly improved national health through new sanitary practices and better water supplies.

With the death of utopian Mao Zedong, whose last years were dogged by insanity, China had the good luck (and intelligent governance) to open to the West and climb out of the utopian straightjacket. It is now thriving economically, socially (with a burgeoning modern middle class), and materially in almost every way. Even Chinese entrepreneurialism has returned, and with it the emergence of a class of ultra-rich and powerful.

The Current Dystopians

Utopian visions die hard. Although there are no longer any nation-states trying to enforce a single vision of society on its population, cults, usually wrapped in the mystique of religion, are still trying to mirror Plato and More. Cults such as Jonestown and the Branch Davidians both came to bad ends, largely because their respective leaders were not philosopher kings; they were thugs drunk with total power.

The best example of dystopian nightmare is North Korea, whose family dynasty of leaders has not been philosopher kings; they have been monsters. Albania, until the fall of the Soviet Union, was an outlier of dystopian misery. It is no longer so, and North Korea is not destined for longevity either.

Other dystopias still with us are not the descendants of Plato or More; they are the products of another ideology, the fantasy of the perfect and just realms mirroring an imagined perfect world of early Islam. The nation-state of Saudi Arabia is the only country totally governed by the imagined utopia of the time of the Prophet Mohammad. It continues to function because of its petrochemical wealth, authoritarian governance, and an almost closed-off society. It is teetering on the brink of destruction from within. It cannot seal itself off from the currents of the modern world much longer.

Some militant Muslim cults have taken up arms to retake lands once ruled by Islam. Although their efforts are more addressed to areas already Muslim, they are attempting to establish imagined utopian purist Muslim governance, undoing all the trappings of modern global values. They oppose education, western dress, modernization for women, and any of the arts and cultures of the global society. Their notions of a utopia do not sit well with their conquered populations. They too are in failure mode.

Anarchists are still with us. They fall into the category of imagined, not constructed utopias. Their mode is destruction, and they begin with no organized governance, which quickly melts in the light of reality. The Bolsheviks imagined a utopia in the future as all
governments melt away. Their anarchism was quickly replaced by totalitarianism and big sticks. The Nazis also envisioned a thousand year empire peopled by only Aryans. Their vision paralleled that of ancient Sparta, a military elite presiding over a world of non-person slaves.

Conclusions

Literary utopias, inconsequential among the greatest works of literature, have had an unexpected influence since the Renaissance. They have inspired designed societies not only in Europe and America, but in Russia and China, with a number of satellite countries of the big powers.

Almost all of these utopian experiments have morphed into dystopias, resulting in the deaths of millions of people and global war. None have remained, with the exception of North Korea. All the rest have morphed into more ordinary political and social arrangements. But we must never overlook the seductiveness of utopian dreams and nightmares.

Recommended Readings

Marx, Karl: The Communist Manifesto, 1848.
More, Thomas: Utopia, published 1516 in Latin
Plato: The Republic, written about 380 BC.
Swift, Jonathan: Gulliver’s Travels, 1726.
Criminal Justice Models and their Influence on Civilization: A Comparison of East and West

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Criminal justice systems in the world generally seek two major goals: punishment of crime (in turn, protection of society) and protection of individual rights. These two goals are often in conflict with each other in the delivery of justice; sometimes satisfying one would inevitably mean sacrificing the other. Criminal justice systems in different countries differ in the actual execution of their criminal procedure, which has an immediate and long term impact on society, culture, and ultimately the rise, fall, or marginalization of their civilization(s).

Some would prefer to pursue the punishment of guilty at the cost of individual rights, while others would insist on the preservation of rights even if that means the marginalization of criminal investigation and prosecution. This false dichotomy can be better understood as a continuum, with the focus of crime control on one end, gradually adding the protection of rights while lowering the priority of crime control simultaneously.

Generally, the U.S. and China are representatives of these two tendencies, with the U.S. sitting on the side of rights’ protection and China on the crime control side. Differences in the balance of these two goals play a major role in shaping the operational philosophies of the two systems. Legislative, structural and procedural features of the two systems are reflective of these philosophies and are deeply rooted in the cultural, political and historical make-up of these two countries.

![Figure 1. Map of China from CIA World Factbook 2014](image-url)
Articles 123-135 in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China (1982), describe the judicial system of the PRC. It consists of two major components: the people’s court system and the people’s procuratorate system, consisting of a 4-level hierarchy: the basic (local) level, the municipal (intermediate) level, the provincial (higher) level, and the national (Supreme) level. The procuratorates serve essentially as state entities for legal supervision and they have specific powers and functions that are similar in nature to prosecutors in the United States. They also investigate and decide which cases will be prosecuted in addition to providing other oversight. They also supervise legal aspects of the people’s courts, prisons and how judgments are carried out.

One might see the procuratorate as China’s public prosecutor by a different name. But the difference in titles reflects the different roles they each play in their respective criminal justice systems. While commonly called the District Attorney at the state level and U.S. Attorney at the federal level, public prosecutors in the U.S. are considered officers of the court, opposing defense attorneys in a virtually equal position. As governmental officials, their job descriptions are limited, for the most part, to representing the government in courts. On the other hand, the Chinese procurators are embedded much deeper into the concerted crime fighting effort by the government: not only do they work more closely with an accusatorily-minded judge in criminal trials, they also exercise key supervisory power (not simply coordinating) over criminal investigation by the police, issue warrants for search and arrests, and are put directly in charge of investigation into corruption crimes by government officials.

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2 At both the state and federal level, the Attorney General usually heads the department of justice, which makes him or her the leader of state and federal law enforcement. The district attorneys and U.S. Attorneys in the field offices do not generally impose authority over local law enforcement other than coordination and resource allocation. Their primary duty is legal representation and criminal prosecution.
The wide range of power invested in the hands of a procurator can be largely explained by the desire to fight crime more directly and efficiently. However, one can see the potential of abuse when so much power is concentrated in the hands of one agency. At times, concerns over the abuse of power outweigh the need to repress crime. This to a large extent provides the rationale for relative compartmentalization of investigative, prosecutorial and judicial power in the U.S. system.

The hierarchy of China’s court structure begins at the lowest level with the Basic People’s Court and rises up to the Supreme People’s Court.

The Basic People’s Court consists of local level courts that adjudicate criminal and civil cases of first instances. Criminal cases carrying penalty of death or life imprisonment, as well as certain foreign civil cases, are excluded from jurisdiction at the Basic People’s Courts. The Basic People’s courts can request certain important cases be transferred to a higher court.

Intermediate People’s Court handles first instance jurisdiction in some cases, including those transferred to it from the Basic People’s Court; major cases dealing with foreign parties; counter revolutionary charges; criminal cases subject to life imprisonment or death and crimes committed by foreigners. This type of court also hears appeals and protests.

The Higher People’s Court has jurisdiction in the first instance in cases assigned by law or transferred from lower courts and major criminal cases which impact the entire province. The Higher People’s Court also hears cases of appeals or protests against judgments and orders of lower courts.

The Supreme People’s Court has original jurisdiction over cases that have been assigned to it by law, or over cases that it decides it should try. It has jurisdiction over appeals or protests from the Higher people’s court and Special People’s Courts.

In addition to the Higher, Intermediate and Basic Peoples Courts, the following courts also report to the Supreme People’s Court. They are: the Maritime Court, the Military Court of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), the Railway Transportation and Forest Affairs Courts. These courts, small in number and size, function as auxiliary to the main frame of the court system, with limited jurisdiction in highly specialized areas that might not be suitable for a regular court to cover.

Unlike the separation of trial courts and appellate courts in the U.S. court system, the Chinese courts are differentiated by levels, not functions. In other words, all courts, except the Basic People’s Courts function as trial courts and appellate courts at the same time. Trial jurisdictions are allocated among courts at different levels based on the nature
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and gravity of cases specified by the Criminal Procedural Law, the Civil Procedural Law, and the Administrative Procedural Law.

This structural feature actually presents a procedural glitch: the Supreme People’s Court sits as a trial court with no upper court available for appeal. It rarely tries cases of first instances. At such a time, the defendants would have virtually no way to exercise their constitutional right to appeal. To this day, this issue is not addressed legislatively and is essentially circumvented in judicial practice: the trial jurisdiction of the Supreme People’s Court’s is provided by law for cases of national importance or cases it decides to try. This leaves enough room for interpretation, which helps to keep the Supreme People’s Court, in essence, an appellate court.

The provincial Higher People’s Courts are essentially the highest level any case of first instances can go, regardless of importance. In the last three decades, a handful of top ranking government officials were tried for a variety of crimes, including several members of the Politburo. None of them were tried by the Supreme People’s Court; instead, they were all heard by the Higher People’s Courts, which left them opportunity for at least one round of appeal.3

The U.S. court system is a dual judiciary system of which the two constituent parts (federal and state) function independently of each other. The federal judiciary system includes district courts, circuit courts of appeals, and the United States Supreme Court. The state system includes trial courts at the local and state levels, intermediate courts of appeal, and state supreme court. The primary agents working alongside each other are the judge, prosecutor, and defense lawyer.4

An observer from China can easily identify several structural features of the U.S. court system that distinguish it from the Chinese system: the overlapping judiciary systems, the separation of trial courts and appellate courts, and the relatively limited and comparatively simple role played by the public prosecutor.

The U.S. system, as in China, has its own structural glitch: the potential for violation of the Fifth Amendment’s protection against double jeopardy because of the dual system structure. The Fifth Amendment prohibits a person from being “subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb”. So when a person is acquitted, convicted, or punished for an offense, he or she should be free from future prosecution based on the same facts.

3 The Supreme People’s Court initially tried only one case in the history of the People’s Republic of China, which is the “Gang of Four” case, where four top ranking government officials, including Jiang Qing, wife of Chairman Mao ZeDong, were tried and convicted for treason.
But the “dual sovereignty” doctrine that recognizes federal and state as two different jurisdictions thus allow a federal prosecution of an offense to proceed regardless of a previous state prosecution for the same offense⁵, and vice versa⁶. Although the Supreme Court stands behind this arrangement on legal grounds⁷, the nature of its logic (that one can be held responsible for one action twice if there are two sets of rules overlapping in coverage) has caused reluctance among the federal law enforcement agencies to exploit the condition.

These two systems, despite their many differences, show something in common: pragmatic wisdom when trying to balance two key interests of the justice systems, namely, legality, based on the formal institution, and legitimacy, proven by substantive protection of rights.

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**Figure 3. Legal System in China**

source *Law Info China*

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⁷ *United States v. Lanza*, 260 U.S. 377 (1922)
Methods of Punishment

From a comparative point of view, Chinese and U.S. punishment methods look similar at higher levels, but they begin to diverge at lower levels of seriousness.

Both systems retain death penalty provisions despite the international trend of abolition; both reserve death penalties for only the most serious types of offenses. Imprisonment (including life-long and termed) is the most commonly used punishment in both systems. Both systems punish some individuals by imposition of a fine.

Some punishment methods show subtle differences in the ways they are imposed. For example, seizure of property can be used as a punishment for certain types of property crime in China. It sounds similar to what can happen in the U.S. but bears key differences from American criminal forfeiture rules. In the U.S., seizure is normally imposed only upon property believed to be proceeds or instruments of crime. Property subject to seizure under the Chinese law can be all or part of a person’s legal property, regardless of its relationship to a crime.

Many in China find its legal property seizure practices to be an effective deterrence to crimes for profit. However, taking of legal property beyond the scope of a fine can be and often is controversial.

Another punishment appearing similar but differing in execution is the deprivation of political rights. In China, all inmates are stripped of their political rights including, but not limited to, the right to vote. The penal code also allows the imposition of such deprivation as either a follow-up to imprisonment or as a stand-alone penalty. The Chinese penal code provides that for the duration of this penalty, one cannot run for public office, cannot head a public enterprise or organization and cannot vote. In addition, individuals may not exercise freedom of speech and press.

By comparison, the deprivation of rights is used in more limited scope in the U.S., usually involving voting restrictions and in some circumstances, beyond incarceration. A prisoners’ right to vote is handled differently from state to state, with the majority not allowing inmates to vote while imprisoned. Once the terms are served, most rights are reinstated. However, this position varies between states and political perspectives. In that sense, the deprivation of voting rights, in a general sense, is not used as a punishment, but more as a security measure preventing abuse by a special population.

Some might consider these differences nuances and not substantial. We find them consistent with general orientations of the two systems. The Chinese system, concerned about public safety and social control, tends to be more aggressive when it comes to stripping criminals of their rights, be it property, political or civil. The U.S. system,
concerned more about the government’s infringement upon people’s rights, treads more carefully when it comes to taking those rights away, even from known criminals.

One right bearing crucial importance is the offenders’ right to judicial process (or due process, as referenced by the U.S. Constitution). Differences in how the two systems deal with this issue can be seen in societal and civilizational impacts of the past, present and long term future.

In most Western legal systems, punishment for criminal activity is handled only by courts. By contrast, China has different levels of punishment based on value or damage. Thus it also uses an “administrative penalty” outside the judiciary to manage public security infringements that are not considered a “crime”.

According to Xia Yong, Dean of the Criminal Justice School, Zhongnan University School of Economics and Law, in essence, theft can be a criminal offense if the amount stolen is above 500 Yuan (Chinese currency), but it is considered an administrative violation if below that amount.

Administrative penalties were first enacted in 1986 and amended in 1994 by the Chinese legislature. Administrative penalties may result in a term of confinement or a fine. A person may be charged with an administrative violation for disturbing the social order, endangering public safety, infringing upon the rights of others, or encroaching upon public or private property.

Where an act is not deemed serious enough for referral to the courts, the Chinese police may handle a case. In fact, according to Dean Xia, Chinese police usually settle more cases administratively than as criminal cases each year. (Xia 2002). The existence of administrative penalties helps to increase the efficiency of the court system by removing large numbers of minor cases from the crowded court dockets.

Penalties associated with administrative violations of the public security are classified into three categories:

1. Warning
2. Fines ranging from one to 200 Yuan (or in certain circumstances up to 5,000 Yuan) or
3. Detention ranging from one day to a maximum of fifteen days.

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9 According to recent changes in the penal code and judicial interpretation, the threshold of criminalization for theft has been raised to 1000 Yuan.
Interestingly, the appropriate jurisdictional authority may administer warnings and fines up to 50 Yuan on the spot. Fines exceeding 50 Yuan may be imposed if there is no objection by the offender. If a person does not accept a fine exceeding 50 Yuan or if there are other penalties involved, different procedures are initiated. These involve: 1) Summons; 2) Interrogation; 3) Presentation of evidence; and 4) Ruling.

After being summoned to the respective public security entity, an offender will be interrogated and an investigation will be conducted. The investigation is not to exceed 24 hours. An offender or victim may protest the ruling of the public security entity or the people’s governments of townships or towns. He or she may petition to the public security entity at the next higher jurisdictional level within five days after receiving notice of the ruling. The next higher level shall make a new ruling within five days after receiving the petition.

When an offender protests this ruling, he or she may file a petition within five days with the Local People’s court. The case is then handled by the courts. If a mistake was found to have been made by the lower level public security entity, an apology shall be made to the offender and all fines or confiscated property will be returned. Where the legal rights or interests of those who have been punished have been violated, an individual may also be compensated. (Xia 2002).

This method of handling many cases via administrative processes that would otherwise be criminal, impacts citizens, the court process and society. It ameliorates to a large extent the stigma of a criminal offense, helps to reduce a large caseload of the overall courts system, and can provide an incentive to social order and acceptable behavior of citizens. Indeed, the title of Xia’s paper is “Administrative Punishment as a Means of Social Control.”

Deprivation of liberty, no matter how slight, without a judicial process would be unconstitutional in the U.S. This concern has been raised by scholars in China as well; attention has been called to the lack of qualified and impartial adjudicators, prudent decision-making mechanisms, and effective means for legal challenges. Nonetheless, this particular approach of punishing minor offences is widely supported in the Chinese system for three major reasons: First, only a very short term imprisonment may be imposed. Second, the system is very efficient in handling minor cases. Third, it avoids the unnecessary label of “criminal” that might cause secondary deviance. Apparently, it is yet another example of choosing public security and social control over protection of rights.

**Criminal Procedure**

Law in the United States stems from four primary sources; constitutional law, statutory law, administrative regulations and common law. The Constitution of the United States is the primary source and all other laws are subordinate to the Constitution. The United
States uses precedent as a means for making decisions in court and previous cases serve as guides for subsequent cases before the court(s). The United States system considers that there is presumption of innocence until proven guilty, allows for plea-bargaining, trial by jury, and the right to a speedy or quick trial. A flow chart of Sino-American criminal procedures is illustrated in Figure 4.

The reader can identify a number of differences between the criminal procedures of the two countries as reported in Figure 4. Some are inconsequential technicalities. However, others reflect crucial differences in core values.

The following are what the authors deem to be the defining differences:

1) The Jury
The right to be tried by an impartial jury is provided by the Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. It applies to federal criminal procedures by its own right, and to the state criminal procedures via the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The concept of a jury trial has been deeply rooted in the American idea of justice and many students of law admit they would have a difficult time imagining how a criminal justice system would function without it. In China, the jury system is a relatively foreign idea.

The literal translation in Chinese for the term “juror” is “accompanying judge.” In the Chinese system, the term is used, but it refers to a significantly different entity, the lay judges who sit on the judge’s panel and serve the same function as a professional judge.

From a Chinese point of view, the two systems are not that different as far as the jury feature is concerned. They both have in their criminal procedure a component called “accompanying judge,” that is, a “jury” member. But this type of “jury” system is not recognized by Western observers, many of whom would rather call it “People’s Assessor” instead. This is an interesting case of lost in translation.

The key difference between the two systems is that the U.S. jury is a separate institution in the courtroom, working independently from the judge both in terms of purpose and decision-making. The Chinese people’s assessor is imbedded in the judge’s panel, united in purpose with and greatly influenced by the professional judge(s) on the panel. Working so closely with the professional judge, the people’s assessors generally are unable to do what the American jury was designed to do: protect the defendant from an arbitrary and capricious decision by taking a substantial portion of judicial power from the judge’s hands.

10 Comparing US and Republic of China’s Criminal Justice System. (Page 3)
Figure 4. Ling Zhou & H.D. Rhodes 2014
2) The Effect of a Plea

It may be argued that the American jury system has an Achilles heel, to wit, the high demand for allocation of time and resources. A jury trial, in comparison to a bench trial without jury, requires additional personnel, extra procedures, and normally longer deliberation so as to meet the needs of twelve people to reach agreement. When a serious matter is being weighed, or complex fact digested, the additional time is justifiable. However, it is harder to justify the additional time for minor offenses with simple facts that swamp the courtroom on a daily basis. This is one reason the American system invented the “plea bargain” as a remedy.

Beginning at the arraignment, a defendant may enter a guilty plea. Thereupon, a judge may skip trial and proceed directly to the sentencing stage. So, in the American system, the plea of guilty may substantially alter court proceedings. It is utilized fully today, alleviating the court’s burden while avoiding a jury trial, the defendant’s constitutional right.

One may argue that very few guilty pleas at arraignment arise from the good conscience of the defendant. The plea is commonly used by defendants as leverage to bargain for a more favorable outcome of the case and the prosecutors frequently are under pressure to complete their caseload in a timely fashion. If a lesser charge can entice a guilty plea, it will in turn save a potentially lengthy (sometimes unwinnable) trial, so most prosecutors would consider this a step forward. Hence the term “plea bargain.” Of course, constitutional rights are not technically infringed upon in such a situation since the right to a jury trial has been given up voluntarily.

In contrast, the Chinese criminal procedure recognizes a guilty plea, regardless of the time it was entered, only as a confession extracted by investigation.

The Chinese criminal justice system includes a stated policy of “leniency on confession, harshness on resistance” (坦白从宽，抗拒从严). There is a somewhat similar concept in U.S. practice, whereby a defendant who professes innocence but is found guilty may receive harsher treatment simply because of continued claims of innocence. But the Chinese policy should in no way be interpreted as the Chinese version of the plea bargain. Why? Because all confessions of a crime must be independently verified just as any other evidence obtained must be. Thus, a guilty plea (or confession, in essence) will not alter the criminal proceeding substantively.

The police or the procurator uses this policy to entice cooperation from the accused, but not nearly to the extent of a plea bargain in the U.S. This is primarily because, unlike a U.S. prosecutor, who can use his or her prosecutorial discretion to lower or raise the seriousness of charges and penalties asked for, the procurators in China are permitted only to file charges based on the facts and according to the law. Without discretion, there is simply no position to bargain. The most one can expect in return for a confession to
Chinese authorities is the consideration of the court during sentencing. The penal code provides for confession as an alleviating factor for the seriousness of a crime, therefore justifying a relatively milder punishment. But the decision is in the hands of the judge and not up for negotiation.

It is said by some that the Chinese system does not need the plea bargain because, unlike the U.S. system, there is no pressing need to speed up the pace of criminal proceedings. This brings us to the third difference between the two systems.

3) The Pace of Proceedings
When it comes to the pace of criminal proceedings, both an American looking towards the Chinese system and a Chinese looking toward the American system are likely to be surprised. The American observer would likely cry out “too quick!” and the Chinese observer “too slow!”

To put this comparison into perspective, we compare two actual capital cases handled by the two systems: the Scott Peterson case of the U.S. and the Ma Jiajue case of China.

Both cases featured severe crimes of extreme cruelty. Peterson, a California businessman, was accused of murdering his pregnant wife in December 2002, presumably so he could be free from the marriage and be with his lover. He was arrested on April 18, 2003. Ma, a biology student of Yunnan University, was accused of murdering four of his classmates in February 2004, allegedly over trivial disputes. He was arrested on March 15, 2004.

The two events happened about 14 months apart. Peterson’s arrest took longer as a result of his apparent deception during the investigation. Ma was named the prime suspect almost immediately and caught as a fugitive shortly after the crime. Both men were brought to justice in a reasonably swift manner. However, if we take the time of arrest as the official starting point of criminal proceeding, the pace and progress of the cases show significant differences.

Following his arrest, Peterson was officially charged with murder on April 21, 2003; he plead not guilty. A preliminary hearing was held on October 29, 2003. As a result of the preliminary hearing, two charges of murder were filed against him on November 18, 2003. A few months later, in February 5, 2004, trial began with the selection of the jury. On May 27, 2004, jury selection was completed, enabling the fact-finding to begin. On November 12, 2004, the jury convicted Peterson on the two charges of murder. On December 13, 2004, almost two years after the victim, Laci Peterson, was reported missing, the jury recommended the death penalty for Peterson. He was not formally sentenced to death for another three months, on March 16 of 2005. However, the criminal proceedings continued. On July 5, 2012, eight years after being sentenced to death and several rounds of appeals, Peterson filed an automatic appeal to the California Supreme
Court. As of this writing, Scott Peterson continues to be held in San Quentin State Prison in California, awaiting the final conclusion of his case. Peterson may continue to file further petitions through the federal court systems if his appeal were denied by the California Supreme Court. His case may continue for years to come.

If the Peterson case raises Chinese readers’ eyebrows for its crawling pace, the Ma case likely sends chills down American readers’ spines for the opposite reason. Almost immediately after his arrest on March 15, 2004, a charge of murder was filed against Ma by the Kunming People’s Procuratorate. His trial began on April 22, 2004, and he was convicted on April 24. Because Ma did not file for appeal, the Yunnan Higher People’s Court automatically initiated the Death Penalty Confirmation process. And on June 17, 2004, less than 4 months after the crime was reported, the Higher People’s Court confirmed Ma’s death penalty and he was executed the same day.

Differences in pace between the two systems are not easily explained. The presence or absence of a jury in criminal proceeding is a major factor. Even in the U.S., a bench trial can be swift. Another important reason is the dynamic in the courtroom during trial, be it unilateral or contentious. This brings us to the next major difference between the systems.

4) The Dynamics of the Courtroom Work Group
Generally, the U.S. courtroom work group consists of the judge, the prosecutor, and the defense attorney. Other than the jury (or the people’s assessors in China’s case), they are the major players in the courtroom and to a large extent determine how things move forward in the criminal proceedings.

They are grouped together because they interact with one another on a routine basis and share commonalities relating to occupation, education and experience. Although not formally, the courtroom work group is a type of social organization, with its own values, norms, and accepted practices (Neubauer 1996, 70-76). And the members each are dependent upon the others to accomplish their goals in the criminal proceedings.

The same characterization applies to the Chinese courtroom. With closer inspection, one might even say that the courtroom work group in the Chinese system brings the nature of such a group to the next level. If one would paint a picture of a typical U.S. criminal trial as the prosecutor and the defense attorney fighting in front of a neutral judge for the fate of the accused, he or she might describe the Chinese criminal trial as the judge, aided by the prosecutor, coming down hard on the accused, while the defense attorney barely puts up a fight. Comparative criminal justice study has specific terms for each of the above scenes: the former is known as the adversarial trial model, and the latter accusatorial trial model.

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A tenet of comparative criminal justice study is that the difference between the adversarial model and the accusatorial model is highly related to the criminal justice system’s orientation on rights’ protection or crime control.

- In the adversarial model, the most powerful player, namely the judge, is to a large extent limited to a passive role, while the accuser and the accused present arguments against each other from equally entitled footing. The benefit of this model is that the government is stripped of its administrative power, left only with the tools of evidence and logic, and carries the need to prove the burden of proof. Thus it is hard to wrong an innocent man, but it is correspondingly difficult to convict a guilty one.

- On the contrary, the accusatorial model moves the judge out of the passive position, charges him with the fact-finding authority. And the roles of the prosecutor and defense attorney are also changed subtly, from representatives of each side (regardless of the fact), to judge’s aids in the search for truth, each from a different perspective. The benefit of this model is if everyone is working together to uncover the truth, the truth (or assumed truth) will be revealed much faster. Of course, even with all parties acting impartially, the rushed procedure itself risks a higher chance for errors. To advocates of the adversarial model, that is simply the price to be paid for swift justice.

The distinct features of each model and their pros and cons demonstrate why the U.S. criminal justice system is described as adversarial in nature and the Chinese accusatorial.

**Underlying Cultural Foundations**

The value of equality as experienced in each culture is another vantage point from which to understand the two systems.

Both cultures emphasize the importance of equality in maintaining social order. The great Chinese philosopher Confucius once said: “It is not the insufficiency, but the inequality that worries me.” It resonates deeply with the famous observation by Plato about the poor and the rich being at war with each other. Therefore, both countries were constructed with the desire to promote social justice via social equality. This is seen in the phrase averring that “All men are created equal” found in the Declaration of Independence of the United States and in the statement that “each person stands equally in front of the law” found in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China.

Differences between the two cultures cause differences in how each country materializes the promises of equality. The criminal justice system, whose very existence stems from the issue of inequality, and whose operation relies on the perception of equality, highlights such differences for everyone to see.
The U.S. style of equality is deeply rooted in the idea of individualism. While the Declaration of Independence states that “All men are created equal,” all may not necessarily end up as equal. In fact, U.S. ideals of equality may endorse inequality resulting from personal endeavor: as long as everyone starts on equal footing, some say, the rich deserve to be rich, and the poor pay by being poor. A social system of individualistic equality may tend to elevate private entities while sometimes demeaning public entities such as, for example, the government. Some on the American right today argue that the former embodies the value of personal endeavor while the latter, according to them, seeks to “take from the achieved and give to the under-achiever.

Thus, when it comes to the U.S. criminal justice system, the notion of equality based on individualism can easily translate into a design that allows the protection of rights to be enhanced by personal wealth (or compromised by the lack thereof). At the core of this design are attorneys who enter the profession and are subsequently paid for their services. Many features of the criminal proceedings make lawyers even more influential in shaping the delivery of justice, such as the adversarial trial model, the jury, the plea bargain.

In the end, we are left with a criminal justice system that spares no effort to protect the rights of those who can afford it, and leaves it to governmental support, friends, and charity to cover the rights of those who cannot. One might protest the unfairness of the system, but when individualism is added into the equation, it becomes a common outcome.

By contrast, the Chinese style of equality is collectivistic at its core. While it recognizes the endeavor by individuals, it pays particular attention to the underprivileged. It is mindful that those with more stature could take advantage of their established position, causing undue harm to those in a less defensible position.

A social system of this orientation attempts to emphasize the importance of the state as a balancing force and upholder of social justice. As a result, the criminal justice system would not intentionally endorse a design that would allow manipulation based on wealth or power unless it is absolutely necessary.

The result of this is a more limited role for lawyers and fewer loopholes to be exploited by the legal professionals. We may note the lack of enthusiasm for an independent jury in China’s criminal procedures. A jury made up by lay people, lacking in basic training in legal reasoning, may be easily swayed by a highly skilled (probably very expensive) defense attorney. This creates substantial inconsistency in a jury’s decision, with the defendant’s financial resources as a primary predictor. Many Chinese feel that by removing the jury, and leaving the decision to a panel of professional judges properly trained in truth-finding and the application of law, the lawyers will be limited in the number and type of methods (tricks) to use in the courtroom, and the delivery of justice...
will be largely independent from the wealth of the defendant, and more reflective of the evidence and the law.

A 2008 report by the American Bar Association, entitled Criminal Justice System Improvements, begins by saying all of us rely on the criminal justice system to keep us safe and maintain order. We expect our criminal laws to enable the courts to separate the guilty from the innocent, to incapacitate truly dangerous individuals, and to promote deterrence and retribution for those who violate the law. We also expect the criminal law and the criminal justice system to be fair and even-handed and to enable the rehabilitation of criminal offenders. Further, we expect the criminal justice system to assist offenders who completed their sentences to re-enter the community as productive citizens and to avoid commission of crimes in the future.12

Current national policy on crime prevention, control and punishment in the United States is, however, overbalanced toward punishment. In 2014 the Executive branch of government – the President and Justice Department – have begun to re-evaluate such things as disparate mandatory sentencing laws and confinement practices that are excessively harsh. The American Bar Association Report cited above supports use of alternatives to incarceration for offenders who pose little or no threat to communities.

Criminal justice systems in China and the United States both seek to curb the proliferation of crime, maintain public safety and minimize additional offenses. Both systems use court systems, employ police, and have correctional or detention facilities. But because of ideologically different government models, there are clear differences that affect outcomes and society.

Chris Jones, Rutgers University, wrote in an article Comparison of Social Control in China and the United States13 that to bring about social compliance, the United States utilizes formal institutionalized means as it controls crime through the state and government at all levels. The views of society have less influence than institutional actions. We have an exceedingly active formal legal system. Because of that, deterrence of crime is through the police, the law, and the court system. In the United States almost all instances of crime involve use of the police as the first resort. People call the police for nearly everything. In addition to the police, the court system is used extensively. The concept of “innocent until proven guilty” is one reason why people constantly resort to the court system. Another is that there is the chance one might avoid punishment for crime.

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Social control in China sharply contrasts with social control in the United States. In China, Jones states, the main source of social control is informal. The Chinese rely on morality and family pride to deter crimes. Thus, what you do reflects strongly on your image and family’s honor. In addition, the numerous teachings of morality in early childhood have a strong impact on values and mindset. They stress that a person must have self-discipline and subordination to the family and country. The Chinese rely on the social collective to enforce crime.

Morality plays a large part in the deterrence of crime in China as it is part of early education and norms. Crime deterrence in the United States is primarily due to external factors which work to impede crimes. The difference is between intrinsic (China) versus extrinsic (United States), this argument maintains. According to Jones, a number of psychological studies have shown intrinsic factors are stronger than extrinsic motivating factors. American children are taught that committing a crime will lead to severe punishments such as jail, Chinese children are taught what it means “to be a dutiful son, a loyal official, and even a benevolent ruler”. Education and reasoning provide a much stronger and lasting effect on controlling crime.

There are fundamental differences in the effectiveness of the two systems. Each country begins with a different cultural paradigm. For the culture of the United States being individualistic is paramount; for China’s culture, it is being collective. While people in China measure crimes and deviance through morality and how it will affect their family image, people in the United States, for the most part, avoid committing crimes because of punishment. (Jones P 1-2).

References:
From Brinton To Goldstone: A Scientific Civilizational Perspective On The Theory Of Revolution

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“Revolutions are the locomotives of history.”
Karl Marx

“The revolution, like Saturn, devours its children.”
Pierre Victurnien Vergniaud

“There those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.”
John F. Kennedy

INTRODUCTION

In order to adequately investigate the complex and volatile phenomenon of revolution, we ought to place it within a relevant scientific field of knowledge. The theoretical and methodological foundations of such a field, named Civilizational Science, have been developed by Vlad Alalykin-Izvekov (Alalykin-Izvekov, 2011).

The analysis of the phenomenon of revolution and its theory draws on the work of prominent social scholars and thinkers, including Pitirim Sorokin, Arnold Toynbee, Leo Trotsky, Crane Brinton, Samuel Huntington, Charles Tilly, and Jack Goldstone. The goal of the investigation is to produce an empirical framework of the phenomenon of revolution that is explanatory and open to repeated application and testing. After laying out theoretical premises and illustrating them with examples of four revolutions from the period between the 17th and the 20th century, the authors analyze the unfolding Ukrainian Revolution and present plausible scenarios of future developments.

Sections on “Civilizational Science Perspective on the Phenomenon of Revolution,” “Theory of Revolution in the Context of Civilizational Science,” and “Case Studies of Revolutions” were written by Vlad Alalykin-Izvekov and the section on the “External-type versus Internal-type Revolutions” was written by Stephen Satkiewicz.

THE CIVILIZATIONAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE ON THE PHENOMENON OF REVOLUTION

One of the perennial features of sociocultural development is the phenomenon of revolution. Its underlying conditions, causes, symptoms, stages, sociocultural dynamics, consequences, and other relevant aspects are still poorly understood and, as a result, many people suffer during those often horrific events. Yet, as a careful scientific analysis
convincingly proves, it is often possible to explain and predict those phenomena as well as to alleviate some of their most terrible consequences.

Let us consider this phenomenon in the context of Civilizational Science in search for answers on the causes, conditions, symptoms, stages, sociocultural dynamics, and consequences of revolutions.

**THEORY OF REVOLUTION IN THE CONTEXT OF CIVILIZATIONAL SCIENCE**

**Defining Revolution**

Charles Tilly differentiates between a coup, a top-down seizure of power, a civil war, a revolt, a rebellion and other occurrences that do not transform justification for authority, political institutions or economic and social structures, and a revolution which does just that. (Tilly, 1995:15).

Samuel Huntington agrees, noting that a coup d’état in itself changes only leadership and perhaps policies; a rebellion or insurrection may change policies, leadership, and political institutions, but not social structure and values; a war of independence is a struggle of one community against rule by an alien community and does not necessarily involve changes in the social structure of either community. (Huntington, 1977: 264).

Jack Goldstone highlights the significance of the universal human quest for social justice. Of all social upheavals, the scholar notes, only revolutions combine all the elements of forcible overthrow of the government, mass mobilization, the pursuit of a vision of social justice, and the creation of new political institutions (Goldstone, 2014: 9).

Thus we arrive at a general definition of the phenomenon of revolution as a strategy of struggle for a certain vision of social justice, which at minimum leads to mass mobilization, the change of government, and the creation of new institutions.

**Revolutionary Conditions**

Scholars agree that revolution is a complex process that emerges from the social order becoming frayed in many areas at once. Jack Goldstone writes: “This is how revolutions arise – over time, a society shifts from a condition of stable equilibrium to unstable equilibrium. Then, even a small disorder can set off an accelerating movement toward greater disorder and the overturning of the existing regime.” (Goldstone, 2014: 15).

This thinker points to a general agreement among social scholars regarding the five elements that create an unstable social equilibrium from which revolutions can arise: 1) national economic or fiscal strains; 2) alienation and opposition among the elites;
3) widespread popular anger at injustice; 4) an ideology that presents a persuasive shared narrative of resistance; and 5) favorable international relations. (Goldstone, 2014: 16-18).

When these five conditions coincide, the normal social mechanisms that restore order in crises are unlikely to work. Instead, societies where these conditions prevail are in an unstable equilibrium, where any untoward event can trigger escalating popular revolts and open elite resistance, producing a revolution. (Goldstone, 2014: 19).

**Structural and Transient Causes of Revolutions**

Scholars define the structural causes as long-term and large-scale trends that undermine existing social institutions and relationships. They include: 1) demographic change; 2) shift in the pattern of international relations; 3) uneven or dependent economic development; 4) new patterns of exclusion or discrimination against particular groups; and 5) the evolution of personalist regimes. (Goldstone, 2014: 23).

According to Crane Brinton, examples of these types of causes may be the following:

- long and unresolved struggle between the monarchy and the lesser nobility over political power and revenues;
- exploitation of the peasantry, and a huge gap in the standard of living between rich and poor;
- gradual and long-range effects of the Commercial and Industrial Revolutions bring about change;
- rise of the middle class based on urbanization, and mercantile, and industrial growth;
- rise of the working class (19th century or later);
- structural unemployment and re-employment created by changes in modes of production caused by industrialization;
- more "enlightened" philosophy and greater political awareness as a result of more widespread education, greater expectations, and ideas of equality and liberty;
- immediate factors which trigger unrest and unleash the revolutionary process usually include economic problems associated with war, financial indebtedness, privation among the lower class, an inefficient and corrupt government; and
- crisis, usually of a financial nature, dividing the ruling elite and paralyzing the government. (Brinton, 1965: 27-66; 250-252).

The transient causes are contingent events or actions by particular individuals or groups that reveal the impact of longer term trends and often galvanize revolutionary...
oppositions to take further action. Among those may be, for example, spikes of inflation, defeat in war, riots or demonstrations that challenge state authority. In addition, state responses to protest can trigger wider protests. (Goldstone, 2014: 24). Still, it is the structural causes which create the underlying instability that scholars treat as the fundamental causes of revolutions. (Goldstone, 2014: 25).

**Uniformities in Revolutions**

Crane Brinton observes that the discernible uniformities in the revolutionary processes are usually as follows:

1) although the society as a whole may be on a relative economic upswing, the general ineptitude and inefficiency of the governmental machinery usually causes major financial difficulties;
2) lack of social mobility for the middle classes;
3) definite and bitter class antagonisms;
4) transfer of allegiance of the intellectuals toward social change;
5) many members of the ruling class lose faith in their old traditions and habits and/or become decadent; and
6) ineptitude in using force to suppress the revolution. (Brinton, 1965: 250-253).

In a kind of Hegelian *modus operandi*, the life-career of these tectonic events may resemble the movement of a giant pendulum, moving from the Right ("The Old Order") to the Middle ("The Moderates") to the Left ("The Radicals"), and then back to the Right ("The Thermidor"). (Brinton, 1965: IX-X)

One of the characteristic features of revolutions is the so called “dual power” (sometimes referred to as “two-fold power,” “double sovereignty,” or “two-power regime”). It reflects the moment of historical tension when two powers stand poised against each other: that of the faltering state which represents the declining social forces and that of the revolutionary institutions which speak in the name of the new. Among those who first investigated this important phenomenon was Leon Trotsky. Analyzing the English, the French, the Russian, and the German revolutions, the legendary revolutionary considers the whole revolutionary process through the prism of this concept, as a kind of a dialectical struggle of opposites in the recurring revolutionary cycles. (Trotsky, 1976)

As for the leaders, in the opinion of Eric Hoffer, revolutions are prepared by “men of words” brought to fulfillment by “fanatics,” and finally again reduced to the “measure of ordinary societies” by the “practical men of action.” (Brinton, 1965:117)
“Western-type” versus “Eastern-type” Revolutions; Revolutionary Alliances

Among a wealth of other innovative ideas, Samuel Huntington brings into the theory of revolution a concept of “Western-type” and “Eastern-type” revolutions. Other terms identifying those two patterns of state breakdown are “central collapse” and “peripheral advance.” (Goldstone, 2014: 27)

Huntington notes: “The Western revolution moves through the collapse of the established political institutions, the expansion of participation, the creation of new institutions. More elaborately, in Brinton’s terms, it evolves from the fall of the old order, through the revolutionary honeymoon, the rule of the moderates, the efforts at counter-revolution, the rise of the radicals, the reign of terror and of virtue, and, eventually, the Thermidor.

“The pattern of the Eastern revolution is quite different... In the Western revolution the revolutionaries come to power in the capital first and then gradually expand their control over the countryside. In the Eastern revolution they withdraw from central, urban areas of the country, establish a base area of control in a remote section, struggle to win the support of the peasants through terror and propaganda, slowly expand the scope of their authority, and gradually escalate the level of their military operations from individual terroristic attacks to guerrilla warfare to mobile warfare and regular warfare.

“Eventually they are able to defeat the government troops in battle. The last phase of the revolutionary struggle is the occupation of the capital.” (Huntington, 1977: 271-272).

The thinker goes on to explain that while the “Western-type” revolutions are usually directed against the highly vulnerable traditional regimes amidst dire financial and sociopolitical troubles, the “Eastern-type” revolutions are typically directed against at least partially modernized regimes, in which circumstances no quick revolutionary victory is possible. (Huntington, 1977: 273-274).

He also highlights the importance of a complicated interplay of various social forces and circumstances for a revolution to occur. He notes:

A revolution necessarily involves the alienation of many groups from the existing order... One social group can be responsible for a coup, a riot, or a revolt, but only a combination of groups can produce a revolution. Conceivably, this combination might take form of any number of possible group coalitions. In actuality, however, the revolutionary alliance must include some urban and some rural groups. The opposition of urban groups to the government can produce the continued instability characteristic of a praetorian state. But only the combination of urban opposition with rural opposition can produce a revolution. (Huntington, 1977: 277).
“External-type” versus “Internal-type” Revolutions

It is also important to distinguish between "External" and the "Internal" revolutions. "External" would convey revolutions that are conducted against external authorities, i.e. within the context of anti-colonial struggles. This would apply to the American Revolution as the archetype but also to other anti-colonial revolutions. "Internal" might be called revolutions against the internal authority of a country, and both the French and Russian revolutions would be archetypes of such.

A characteristic common to the theoretical definition of revolution is to distinguish it from other major forms of social and political unrest. Samuel Huntington for example, distinguishes revolutions from “insurrections, rebellions, revolts, coups, and wars of independence.” (Huntington, 1977: 264). Charles Tilly further differentiates revolutions from civil wars. (Charles Tilly, 1995: 15) While this is valid, it leaves open the potential neglect of the complex historical realities that revolutions have often been intertwined with, other forms of unrest. Insurrections have been important in inciting several revolutions; coups have often marked the key transitions from one stage of a revolution to another stage. In addition, revolutions have often been marked by civil wars between different factions fighting for control, and it is also undeniable that throughout history revolutions have often occurred within the context of wars of independence.

It may therefore be important for Civilizational Science, given its multi-paradigmatic nature, to further categorize revolutions based upon their possible close relationship to other forms of social and political unrest. This would especially be vital to any proper comparative study and analysis of various revolutions.

One proposed way to achieve this goal is to categorize revolutions based upon the nature of the Old Order that it is being directed against. Within this context, revolutions can be classified as being either Internal or External in nature.

We define Internal Revolution as a revolution that occurs within a given social and political entity and is largely directed against the domestic authority of the Old Order. The French Revolution can be classified as a paradigmatic example of an Internal Revolution. The Old Order was perceived as a domestically imposed form of tyranny (countrymen oppressing fellow countrymen), and the revolutionary forces sought to change or overthrow this order by replacing it with a transformed society. These forms of revolutions are often closely connected with insurrections, coups, and civil wars.

We define External Revolution as a revolution that occurs within a given social and political entity and is largely directed against the foreign authority of the Old Order. The American Revolution can be classified as a paradigmatic example of an External Revolution. The American colonies were governed from afar by Britain, and the Old Order was perceived as a foreign-imposed tyranny (foreigners oppressing fellow
countrymen). Thus, independence from Britain was vital to the overthrow of the Old Order. These forms of revolutions are closely related to, if not inseparable from, wars of independence.

**Revolutionary Waves**

In 1961 Arnold Toynbee addressed the continuing effect of the American Revolution on contemporary societies. His message was that the principles of the American Revolution continue to reverberate through the centuries to this day. The eminent scholar compared them to Sputnik, traveling around the globe and affecting more and more countries, nations, and peoples along the way. Toynbee ended with a quote from Thomas Jefferson, who famously said that “the disease of liberty is catching.” (Toynbee, 1978: 234-237).

In fact, revolutionary ideas do travel, often in waves. A revolutionary wave is a series of revolutions occurring in various locations in a similar time period. In many cases, past revolutions and revolutionary waves may inspire current ones, or an initial revolution inspires other concurrent “affiliate revolutions” with similar aims. Colin J. Beck elucidates: “It has long been recognized that revolutions come in waves, particularly those that are most transformative (e.g. Arrighi, Wallerstein, and Hopkins 1989; Goldstone 1991, 2001, 2002; Katz 1997; Kurzman 2008; Markoff 1995, 1996; Merriman 1938; Tarrow 1998; Tilly 1993). Historical accounts of revolution and revolutionary waves often stress the commonality of ideological claims and the forces of cultural change across the national boundaries as an explanation of their origins (e.g. Bailyn 1967; Chartier 1991; Godechot 1965; Palmer 1954, 1959; Sewell 1985, 1996; Sharman 2003; Wuthnow 1989). On the other hand, sociological explanations of revolution and revolutionary waves tend to place their origins in cross-national processes, for instance as war, economic pressure, and demographic change challenge state stability (e.g. Arrighi and Silver 1999; Boswell and Dixon 1990, 1993; Foran 2005; Goldfrank 1979; Goldstone 1991; Hung 2009; Skocpol 1979; Tilly 1993) or as contention diffuses across societies from an initial event (e.g. Katz 1997; Markoff 1995, 1996; Tarrow 1993, 1998).” (Beck, 2011: 167-168).

**Phases of Revolutions**

Pitirim A. Sorokin distinguishes two “inseparable” stages in the revolutionary process: the “1st Stage” and then the “2nd Stage,” or “Reaction”. According to the scholar, the first stage involves disintegration of existing legal, moral, religious reflexes, while the second one sees their reconstruction on a new basis. (Sorokin, 2008: 30; 155). N.A. Berdyaev agrees: “All revolutions ended with reactions. This is – unavoidable. This is – the law. And the more violent and furious were the revolutions, the stronger were the reactions.” (Berdyaev, 2007: 457).
Crane Brinton subdivides Sorokin’s first stage of a revolution into two phases: “Moderate” and “Radical” and adds one more – the “Thermidor.” Thus, the “classic” four-stage formula of the revolutionary cycle is born (Brinton, 1965:IX-X). Those stages are as follows:

**Phase One - The Old Order**

The Old Order usually features an autocratic regime with few or no social mechanisms to represent the emerging classes or new social forces.

Symptoms of the Old Order decaying are:

1) the state is economically weak, the government has deficits and must heavily tax;
2) the state is also politically weak, the government is ineffective and cannot enforce its policies. There is often an inept ruler on top of the governing hierarchy;
3) transfer of allegiance of the intellectuals;
4) antagonism between the old regime and the disenfranchised classes;
5) financial breakdown;
6) growing protests against the old government;
7) inept use of force by the government while repressing the rebellion; and
8) “dual power.”

**Phase Two - Moderate Regime**

A revolution begins with the moderate phase led by the upper middle class, as well as some elements of the upper classes.

Symptoms of this stage are: 1) moderates attain power, 2) a legislature is elected which may share power with a monarchy or an elected executive; 3) a constitution and other documents typical of a representative government are issued; 4) moderates have to struggle with the counter-revolutionary forces on one side and with the radicals on the other; 5) the moderates may also have to fight an internal and/or external war.

**Phase Three - Radical Regime**

In the radical regime phase, unless there are already existing institutions and experience related to representative government, a loss of control to radical populist demagogues may occur.

Symptoms of this phase are: 1) radicals take control, usually in a coup d’état; 2) the legislature is usually dominated by a dictator, dictatorial faction, or a revolutionary council; 3) this period is accompanied by violence and attempts at the total control of a society; and 4) a war (civil and/or foreign) may ensue or continue.
Phase Four - Counter-Revolutionary Regime ("Thermidor")

Instability during the radical phase leads to a counter-revolutionary phase involving return to power of the upper middle class and some elements of the upper classes. If this government is unstable, the situation may result in a dictatorship.

Symptoms of this period include: 1) radicals are repressed and moderates gain amnesty; 2) slow and uneven return to “normalcy” is seen in everyday affairs; 3) rule by a tyrant; and 4) aggressive nationalism.

Among permanent changes caused by the revolution there are usually the following:

- removal of a government based on the inherited privileges;
- establishment of a more representative government, based upon a sense of nationalism;
- government and its bureaucracy become more efficient and rational, as well as less bound by tradition;
- feudal practices are eliminated, and farmers become landowners;
- and other sweeping administrative and legal changes occur.

These changes may vary, depending on factors such as culture, institutions, historical experience, foreign intervention and wars, and the influence of neighboring countries. That there is variation in the typical underlying conditions, causes, symptoms, phases, sociocultural dynamics, and consequences of the “great revolutions” is evident.

Let us now illustrate these theoretical uniformities by taking a brief look at five revolutions: the English, the American, the French, the Russian, and, as an example of a “revolution in progress” - the Ukrainian Revolution.
CASE STUDIES OF REVOLUTIONS

The English Revolution

The Old Order: before 1628.

England is a parliamentary monarchy. King James I, and then Charles I, come into a political conflict with the parliament over revenue raising.

Moderate Phase: 1628-1641.

In 1628, the parliament passes the Petition of Rights which requires its approval of any taxation imposed by the king. Charles I adjourns the parliament and rules without it for eleven years.

When, in 1639, a rebellion occurs in Scotland, King Charles convenes the parliament in order to finance the raising of an army. Once again, the parliament refuses to cooperate. When the king orders the parliament to adjourn, the parliamentary leaders decline. This act of defiance brings an end to the period of political maneuvering, both sides take up arms, and a Civil War follows.

Radical Phase: 1641-1660.

In the Civil War, an army led by Oliver Cromwell, a leader in the parliament and a Puritan, is victorious. The parliament tries the king for treason, convicts and executes him. Cromwell establishes a military dictatorship, and Puritanism becomes the state-supported religion. The majority of the ruling elite of the English people, however, does not accept Cromwell's rule and the dictatorship survives only until his death in 1658.

Thermidor: 1660-1688.

The parliament re-asserts its authority after the death of Cromwell and invites the son of King Charles I to return from exile and to take the throne as King Charles II. The new monarch realizes limitations on the power of the king and works cooperatively with the parliament, finding allies among its conservative faction.

After a successful reign, Charles dies in 1685 and is succeeded by his brother, James II. When James begins to follow a policy of arbitrary monarchical power, and prepares to raise his son, the heir to the throne, as a Catholic, the parliament acts against him. He is deposed in 1688 as a result of the bloodless “Glorious Revolution.” The parliament issues the English Bill of Rights (1689) and then invites a new king to the throne. Thus, despite a temporary return of the Stewarts to the throne, the parliament asserts its
supremacy over the king, and it becomes clearly recognized in England as the supreme power in a constitutional monarchy.

The American Revolution

The Old Order: until 1763.

In Crane Brinton’s words, “the American case is somewhat different. Here we have an inept, colonial government in London, but not an inept native ruling class.” (Brinton, 1965: 89). In fact, the aristocratic and middle class leaders of the English colonies are among the most privileged of leadership elites in the 18th century. The English parliament is not exercising direct rule over the colonies since each colony has its own elected legislature with considerable political influence.

Moderate Phase: 1763-1775.

The end of the Seven Years' War leads the British government to try to raise revenues from the colonies. Colonial protest against the Sugar Act, the Stamp Act, the Townshend Acts, and the Tea Act leads to a standoff. The determination of the English government to enforce its will upon the colonies causes a series of political conflicts over a dozen years.

Radical Phase: 1775-1783.

According to Crane Brinton, “this period was not reached in the American revolution, though in the treatment of Loyalists, in the pressure to support the army, in some of the phases of social life, you can discern in America many of the phenomena of the Terror ...” (Brinton, 1965: 254).

Nevertheless, the Revolutionary War ensues when the British try to enforce their rule with the army and navy, and it lasts until they realize that they cannot impose their will upon the colonies. The war creates conditions which lead to the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration includes statements of a number of Enlightenment principles, such as equality of opportunity under the law and the contract theory of government. These ideas, radical at the time, challenge fundamental class inequalities, including that of inheritance as the basis for power and privilege.

The Continental Congress writes the Articles of Confederation, creating a weak central government without revenue-raising powers, while the former colonial legislatures write constitutions for thirteen separate and sovereign states.
Thermidor: 1783-1800.

Colonial resistance is effective because the rebel leaders are educated, articulate people who are experienced with government. The war has to be fought until the British government realizes that it cannot overcome obstacles of a well-organized rebellion on the other side of the ocean. Foreign powers, most notably the French, play a substantial role in the outcome. All these circumstances provide an opportunity for the rebel leadership to establish a government based upon the liberal ideals of the Enlightenment.

After the war, the revolutionary leadership soon realizes that the central government is too weak to protect the interests of people (especially the leadership who were property owners), and they write a new constitution, creating a federal government with taxing and other powers of a sovereign state. The new constitution is tested in the first administration under President George Washington when a tax rebellion is put down. The election of Thomas Jefferson as president in 1800 demonstrates that the new system can survive a change in power from one elected party to another.

A system is established which recognizes validity of elections as the basis for power. On the other hand, the same leadership elite, wealthy owners of property who had control of colonial legislatures before the revolution, dominates both political parties after the revolution.

The French Revolution

The Old Order: until 1789.

France is an absolute monarchy devoid of virtually any forms of representative government. The ruling class with its outdated government machinery is facing mounting socioeconomic and sociocultural challenges.

Among the causes of this revolution are: 1) growing financial crisis; 2) new ideas of the Enlightenment and new means of distributing the written word; 3) growth of the middle class, which lacks political power; 4) large gap in wealth between rich and poor; 5) privileged aristocracy which refuses to shoulder a share of the financial burden; 6) depression during the year 1789; 7) shortages of food and as a result, soaring food prices; 8) unemployment and over-population in Paris.

Moderate Phase: 1789-1792

King Louis XVI tries to raise revenues by calling the Estates General into session. It last met in 1614 when it was organized into three estates – nobility, clergy, and the third estate (everyone else). Since according to the existing rules each estate has one vote, an impasse develops over the voting. The Third Estate, now larger, insists that each delegate
should have one vote. France is in a depression, and soaring food prices bring great privation and hardship. Paris, especially, is a hotbed of unrest. The king calls out an 18,000 man army, which inflames tempers and fears in the city.

When representatives of the Third Estate are barred from the assembly hall, they refuse to leave and proceed with their meetings in the nearby tennis court. Popular uprising occurs when a mob breaks into the Bastille on July 14, 1789. The rebellious leadership of the Third Estate organizes to defend the city, while constituting themselves as the National Assembly. Under pressure from leaders in the city, who argue that the presence of the army outside Paris is a source of panic and hysteria among Parisians, the king disbands the army. The leaders of the National Assembly, supported by popular protest in the streets of Paris, successfully defy the government of the Old Regime. France becomes a constitutional monarchy. While the National Assembly writes a constitution and publishes the Declaration of the Rights of Man, popular discontent leads to a march on Versailles by unemployed workers. The king and his family are placed under a house arrest in the nation’s capital.

In the meantime, the inability of the National Assembly to address the nation’s economic and other problems causes them to lose control to more radical elements. Fear of foreign invasion provokes hysteria as well as concern about traitors. Meanwhile, rumors of the collapse of the monarchy have reached the countryside, where peasants begin to rise up against the landlords and claim the land as their own. The revolution spreads throughout France and is beyond the control of the revolutionary leadership in Paris. New and more radical leadership in Paris replaces the Assembly and forms the National Convention.

**Radical Phase: 1792-1795.**

As a volunteer army is raised to defend France against invasion, the People’s Courts hold summary trials of thousands of suspected traitors. The National Convention, intimidated by the Paris mob, tries and executes the king, while a patriotic army marches off to the tune of “La Marseillaise.” The revolution has stirred up a new sense of nationalism, one which greatly strengthens France in opposing the aristocratic governments of Europe. But the National Convention cannot control the course of events any more than the Assembly had. Rival factions vie for popular support, each accusing the other of treason and dragging the vanquished opposition to the guillotine.

**Thermidor: 1795-1815.**

Demands for order and stability lead to the overthrow of the radicals and assumption of power by a new, more conservative leadership. A new constitution is written providing for restricted suffrage which benefits the well-to-do. The Directory, an executive
committee, attempts to rule. Beset by threats from the aristocratic groups on the one hand, and by radicals supported by street demonstrations on the other, the Directory calls on the army to defend them against overthrow.

Napoleon, a brilliant young officer, seizes an opportunity to rise quickly in rank and rapidly maneuvers himself into power. He is successful in rallying the new patriotism of Frenchmen to his support, while he unites the country after a decade of civil strife. Napoleon presides over completion of the “Code Napoleon,” produced to replace the Old Regime’s outdated accumulation of regulations. He also reaches the “Concordat” with Roman Catholic Church, giving it control over religious affairs in exchange for undisputed mastery in secular concerns.

Summarizing his accomplishments, Bruce Porter notes: “As First Consul and later Emperor, Napoleon consolidated the three main gains of the Revolution: rationalization, centralization, and secularization.” (Porter, 1994: 134).

Napoleon now rules over a France which is more powerful than it has ever been; however, he is a military man, looking for military solutions to international problems. Failing to negotiate peace with England, he plunges Europe into a decade of war. Napoleon's military genius and French national enthusiasm lead to a series of military victories over Austria and Prussia. By 1808, he rules over most of continental Europe.

The British blockade is countered by the Napoleon's Continental System, which seeks to prevent trade between England and the continent. Those two measures combine to disrupt commercial interests and retard economic growth. In the meantime, a rebellion in Spain, supported by an English army, creates even more problems for Napoleon.

The Russian refusal to cooperate with the Continental System provokes Napoleon into an invasion of Russia. But even the occupation of Moscow does not induce the Russians to accept surrender. Napoleon is forced to abandon the ravaged city and hastily retreat in the midst of the Russian winter. Harassed by the re-grouped Russian army, the remains of his Grande Armée are all but utterly destroyed in the process.

Uprisings against Napoleon in Austria and Prussia throw Napoleon back to a defense of French borders. He finally faces military defeat at the hands of the coalition armies. With Napoleon permanently exiled, the victorious powers restore the Bourbon dynasty to rule in France, which has become a constitutional monarchy.
The Russian Revolution of 1917

**The Old Order: before 1905.**

At the dawn of the 20th century Russia is a vast empire in the first stages of industrialization with an absolute monarchy at its helm. As is usually the case in the early stages of industrialization, working conditions are horrendous and the working class is terribly exploited. The largest part of the population, the peasantry, is also notoriously oppressed in spite of some improvements since the abolition of serfdom.

An impatient intelligentsia, motivated by the example of Western Europe, desires rapid political change. The czarist government opposes it, while encouraging the country’s industrialization. This explosive combination ensures that, driven by the irresistible forces of modernization, the cumbersome juggernaut of the empire is now hurtling toward self-destruction.

**Moderate Phase: 1905-1917.**

The 1905 “Bloody Sunday” massacre of a peaceful demonstration in Saint Petersburg triggers nationwide strikes, which paralyze the economy. The emerging political forces organize a common front against the government, making demands for establishment of a constitution and a legislature. However, with the czar’s government controlling electoral rules and assuring that an obedient legislature is created, the country misses a chance to develop a more representative political system.

Next, World War I creates a crisis of such proportions that the monarchy cannot meet the challenge. Massive demonstrations and strikes lead to efforts by the Duma to form a Provisional Government, which intends to govern until a Constituent Assembly can be elected. In the meantime, as a result of the grass roots political organizing, the Soviets are formed and now constitute a separate governing body from that of the Duma (“dual power”).

Since the Provisional Government and the Soviets represent different social forces, their decisions often contradict one another. In the meantime, peasants begin to rise up and seize the land, while soldiers, most of whom are peasants, begin to desert the army in increasing numbers.

While most in the Provisional Government are moderate leaders who attempt to carry out a liberal revolution, the majority of the Soviets are members of the Social Democratic Party, a Marxist organization, expecting the socialist revolution to follow the liberal revolution. In April, 1917, Lenin arms a radical faction of the Social Democratic Party, the Bolsheviks, with a consistent plan of action to which they adhere unremittingly.
The effort by the Provisional Government to continue the war effort steadily erodes its support. Using this vacuum of power, the Bolsheviks carry out a successful revolt in November, 1917. Following the coup, they consolidate their control over the Soviets, and, since the Bolsheviks are in the minority in the newly elected Constituent Assembly, the Red Guard dissolves it by force.

Ludwig von Mises sharply observed: “Lenin dispelled by force of arms the Constituent Assembly. The short-lived “liberal” interlude was liquidated. Russia passed from the hands of the inept Romanovs into those of a real autocrat.” (Mises, 1981: 502).

**Radical Phase: 1917-1921.**

This period, which coincides with the whole duration of the Civil War in Russia, begins with the seizure of power by Bolsheviks, and involves an armed power struggle between the Bolsheviks and several rival groups.

The war effort against Germany collapses and the new Soviet government is forced to accept terms of the humiliating Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The country then faces three years of devastating civil war as the “Reds” defend themselves against several "White" armies. The civil war is accompanied by foreign intervention representing several outside powers.

In the end, although the Russian economy is disrupted and the Russian people face a massive famine, the Bolsheviks hold on to power with ruthless determination, establishing a one-party dictatorship.

**Thermidor: 1921-1985.**

Crane Brinton notes:

Thermidor in Russia has been complicated and prolonged. We may perhaps regard the period of war communism, 1917-1921, as the first main crisis of the Russian revolution. With the New Economic Policy of 1921 began Russia’s Thermidor. Lenin’s death and the subsequent rivalry between Stalin and Trotsky led up to a second crisis, or rather relapse during convalescence, which we may date at the more acute periods of violent enforcement of the first Five Year Plan. But as many an observer has noted, this secondary crisis lacked the hopeful idealism of the first, lacked its improvisations and its adventures, lacked its active foreign and White Guard enemies, and looks ... much like characteristic acts of the “tyrants” who came to power during other “Thermidors” – the Cromwellian settlement of Ireland, for instance, or the Napoleonic enforcement of the Continental System. (Brinton, 1965: 207).
Brinton observes “a similar moral let-down, a similar process of concentration of power in the hands of a ‘tyrant’ or ‘dictator,’ a similar seeping back of exiles, a similar revulsion against the men who had made the Terror, a similar return to old habits in daily life.” (Brinton, 1965: 235).

Perhaps, it would be logical to divide the long “Russian Thermidor” into several stages, possibly “Stalin’s phase” (1924-1953), “Khrushchev’s phase” (1953-1964), and “Brezhnev’s phase” (1964-1982).

Since the end of the 20th century the world may be witnessing the unfolding of the Russian Revolution of 1985, which could have been a precursor, as well as an integral part of the Revolutions of 1989. The phases of it would be as follows:


If so, Russia would be now in the Thermidor stage of its Revolution of 1985, while Ukraine may be seen passing through the Radical Phase of its Revolution of 2004.

**Extrapolation and Falsifiability of the Scientific Civilizational Perspective on the Theory of Revolution**

According to Karl Popper, any theory must at least in principle be falsifiable (for example, proven to be wrong under certain circumstances) in order to be considered scientific. In other words, a scientific theory cannot be labeled as such if it is not fundamentally refutable. But, nevertheless, because scientific theories yield predictions, even if some of the predictions happen to be inaccurate under certain conditions that does not mean that they cannot still serve as useful approximations. (Popper, 2004).

Let us see how these assumptions may apply to the civilizational perspective on the theory of revolution.

Recent scholars have noted that since the mid-1980s a number of factors have improved the prospects for nonviolent resistance overturning regimes. These developments include:

1) global norms have moved strongly in the direction of requiring elections for regimes to claim legitimacy;
2) new mass media have made it easier for the opposition almost everywhere to acquire and disseminate evidence of regime abuses;
3) the rise of an international network of activists to provide training in nonviolent resistance methods has empowered opposition movements; and
4) the end of the Cold War has reduced the willingness of the great powers to intervene militarily so as to keep rulers in power against the wishes of their own people (Goldstone, 2014: 105).

There was hope among scholars of revolution that because these developments had proven their effectiveness in the case of the successful anti-communist revolutions in the former Soviet Union and its allied states of Eastern Europe, as well as in the subsequent “color revolutions,” therefore revolutions might have now become less violent worldwide. (Goldstone, 2014:105). Perhaps sadly, though, the formula “Old Order - Moderate Phase - Radical Phase - Thermidor” outlined above appears to be reasserting itself on the world stage. In fact, some of the “non-violent” revolutions of today may merely be representing but one stage in the classic revolutionary process.

Jack Goldstone elucidates: “Most of the countries that have had “color” revolutions have not made a swift and certain transition to democracy. Instead, they have had to struggle with corrupt elites who retained their economic power, weak political parties, unreliable judicial systems and factional struggles. In many of them some backsliding and authoritarian tendencies have emerged. Even color revolutions thus conform to the general pattern of revolutions, in which the fall of the old regime is only the start of a revolutionary process that may take several years or even decades to fully unfold” (Goldstone, 204: 116).

Let us consider, for example, a “revolution in the making” presently unfolding in the Ukraine. After briefly analyzing the history of the revolution, we will present three plausible scenarios of future developments within two phases.

The Ukrainian Revolution of 2004

The Old Order: before 2004.

Ukraine is a historic land with a unique and rich culture, which displays influences of many civilizations. Not even mentioning Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Byzantine, and the Vikings, various parts of the country have been provinces of the Polish-Lithuanian, the Russian, the Austro-Hungarian, the Prussian, and the Ottoman empires, and, subsequently, of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, despite the ever-present pressures for cultural conversion emanating from the various colonial powers, Ukrainian culture, art, and literary language remained Ukrainian, undergoing a domestic process of rapid development and refinement, especially during the 19th and the 20th centuries.

The first attempt to gain status as an independent state arrives in 1917, when the Declaration of Independence on June 23, 1917 leads to the appearance from 1917 to 1921
of the predecessor of modern Ukraine - the Ukrainian People's Republic (Ukrainian National Republic). Subsequently, a civil war and a foreign invasion follow. In 1921 most of what is now Ukraine is annexed by the Soviet Union.

On August 24, 1991 the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine is adopted by the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament). It re-establishes Ukraine as an independent state; however things do not go well. While the corrupt and inept government balances precariously between the lure of Europe and a Russian policy of “carrots and sticks,” Ukraine descends to the level of the second poorest country in Europe. The nation’s Gross Domestic Product, which had been roughly equivalent to that of Poland in the 1980s, now becomes but one fourth of the level of its western neighbor.

**Moderate Phase: November 2004 - February 2014.**

The “Orange Revolution” erupts between late November 2004 and January 2005. It is a series of protests and political events that takes place in the aftermath of the run-off vote of the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election, a process marred by corruption, intimidation, and fraud.

This phase of the Ukrainian Revolution, which follows the disputed second round of the 2004 presidential election, leads to the annulment of the result and a repeat of the round. The leader of the opposition, Victor Yushchenko, is declared President, defeating Victor Yanukovych. The results of the “Orange Revolution,” however, are largely cancelled by the subsequent decade-long infighting between the moderates of various political brands. The economy is paralyzed by warfare among the oligarchs, pervasive corruption, and political infighting.

Jack Goldstone elaborates: “In Ukraine, Yushchenko spent his presidency in a fruitless power struggle with his former ally Yulia Tymoshenko. By 2006 Yanukovych had returned as prime minister, and members of Parliament were shifting their allegiance form Yushchenko to the opposition. In the 2010 presidential election, in which Yanukovych, Yushchenko, and Tymoshenko all ran, Yushchenko received less than 6 percent of the vote, with Yanukovych emerging as the winner. Once in office, Yanukovych restricted press freedoms and put Tymoshenko in jail, prosecuting her for abuse of office and other crimes. It was almost as if the Orange Revolution had not occurred” (Goldstone, 2014: 116). On the night of November 21, 2013 the “Euromaidan” bursts into existence. It is a wave of demonstrations and civil unrest which surges first in Kiev, and then in other cities. At the heart of the crisis is the decision of the Yanukovych government to stop the process of signing the Ukraine–European Union Association Agreement. This stage of the Ukrainian Revolution begins with public demands for closer integration with Europe, which rapidly evolve into stands for better government and against corruption. As a result of the standoff, the process of forming the “dual power” structures commences in Kiev as well as in other cities and regions.
Radical Phase: February 2014 - Present.

The “Euromaidan” protests turn bloody with over 100 protesters sacrificing their lives in February, 2014. Following a sudden departure of President Victor Yanukovych, the parliament moves to seal a deal with the European Union. Almost immediately, the country faces the prospect of a civil war, as well as foreign invasion. Crimea, which became a part of Ukraine in 1954, is swiftly annexed by Russia, which is pursuing its resurgent geopolitical interests.

The Western-leaning interim government has to deal simultaneously with “counter-revolutionary forces” (Russia plus disaffected ethnic Russians living in the eastern and southern regions of the country) and with the “revolutionary radicals.” (The “Right Sector” and others). Thus, it faces a threat of an external as well as an internal war. Further, while the interim leaders succeed in swiftly securing loans and assurances of support from the West, the separatist movements in the south-east of the country, along with both the massing of Russian troops along the eastern border and heavy-handed Russian negotiating tactics involving the manipulation of energy prices, foreshadow trouble ahead.

Starting in April, 2014, waves of pro-Russian demonstrations surge into a dozen eastern and southern Ukrainian cities. These soon escalate into a siege of government buildings amidst calls for parts of Eastern and Southern Ukraine to secede and join Russia. Diplomatic talks between Ukraine, Russia, the US, and the European Union in Geneva fail to achieve any meaningful results. With the pressing concern of an armed rebellion in the south-east of the country, Kyiv launches a “counter-terrorism” offensive. Next, two eastern regions announce their “independence” and armed conflict erupts.

As always, the unfolding of the revolutionary process is full of sudden “shifts and rifts” including a number with possible global implications. Especially important are two: the catastrophic crash of a Malaysian airliner over Eastern Ukraine on July 17, 2014, killing all aboard, and an attempt by right-wing radicals to storm one of the world’s largest nuclear plants, located in the Ukrainian city of Energodar, on May 17, 2014.

All this signals a combustible new phase along the volatile geopolitical fault line between Europe and Russia.

Possible Scenarios:

“Optimistic.” As a result of unprecedented diplomatic efforts, a “win-win” formula is reached between Ukraine, the West, and Russia regarding the future of the country. The civil war and further annexation beyond Crimea are avoided. Following fair and transparent elections, national pride is kindled as a new government is elected which derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. A new constitution, predicated
upon political accommodation, guarantees an equal social status to all ethnic groups. Militarily, the country is non-aligned, similar to Austria, Switzerland, and Finland.

“Muddle through.” A period of instability ensues, characterized by the Cold War-like rivalry between the West and Russia.

“Pessimistic.” Radical tendencies, starting with abolition of the Russian language as one of the Ukraine’s official languages, increase, lead to unrest. Political power in Kiev is usurped by the right-wing extremists who are ready to use any option at their disposal, including the “nuclear card.” Alternatively, the ethnic Russian separatists rule supreme in the east and the south of the country. A civil war follows. In addition to Crimea, Russia annexes parts of eastern and southern Ukraine, which it re-names Novorossiya (New Russia). Ukraine is subsequently partitioned between the West and Russia.

**Thermidor: As of the time of writing the timeframe is unknown.**

Possible Scenarios:

“Optimistic.” A relatively brief period of turmoil before returning to stability. A charismatic leader such as Abraham Lincoln or Nelson Mandela emerges, leading the process of Ukrainian unification. Investments pour in from the West and from Russia, as well from the East and from the South. Having become the “Switzerland of Eurasia,” Ukraine fulfills its historic mission as the “meeting place” for dialogue between the world civilizations.

“Muddle through.” A slow and uneven return to “normalcy.”

“Pessimistic.” During a prolonged civil war in Ukraine and in Russia, sparked in part by rivalry between the West and Russia, both Ukraine and Russia disintegrate into multiple separate ethnic regions. In the process Russia (or some of its parts) becomes a Sparta-like “petro-dictatorship” with a warrior mentality, aggressive, “trigger-happy,” competing for vital resources. All of northern Eurasia becomes a geopolitical “black hole,” reminiscent of Europe during the era of the religious wars in the 16th and 17th centuries or the Balkans during the 19th century.

The West is greatly weakened by this struggle. Already, there are predictions that the E7 countries (a group of seven countries with emerging economies) may have larger economic output than the G7 countries by 2020. (Dunkley: 2013) As a result, resurgent civilizations with large populations and cohesive cultural unity (China, or India, or others) rule the day.
CONCLUSIONS

1. Revolution as a strategy of struggle for liberty and social justice arises during periods of social and cultural change and crisis.
2. The scientific study of revolutions goes on as scholars continue to analyze their nature, causes, stages, characteristics, and consequences.
3. Fundamental ideas of scientific civilizational theory and scientific revolutionary theory correlate with and complement each other.
4. Within the framework of Civilizational Science the underlying conditions, causes, socio-cultural dynamics, and consequences of revolutions can be analyzed, modeled, and to a certain degree, predicted.
5. The “classic” four-stage formula of revolutionary development – running from Old Order to Moderate Stage to Radical Stage to Thermidor – remains applicable. Some of the “non-violent” revolutions of today may represent a stage in that process.
6. By making the phenomena of revolution more “intelligible” and predictable, a scientific civilizational analysis may help to mitigate some of revolution’s worst consequences.

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Islamic Capitalism:  
The Muslim Approach to Economic Activities in Indonesia  

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As far as property is concerned, in principle “all property belongs to God,” but God has given human beings the right to possess their own property, although a limit is set on the right to private property when it comes to what is meant for everyone and should remain public such as mountains, forests, and rivers.¹

Introduction

The fall of the Berlin Wall and dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s symbolized the collapse of the Communist Bloc. Since then, the world appeared to be moving along the path of mainstream capitalism, which is based on the idea of “wage labor and private ownership of the means of production.”² The trend of consumerism, founded on the notions of income generation and property ownership, has resulted in the definition of social relations in terms of extreme competition, and has been powerful in normalizing human behaviors towards competitive ends. This mode of society has contributed to the so-called growth of the economy that has lifted the standard of living to some extent. Healthy competitions in the market based on a capitalist mindset have been able to provide consumers with better quality services.

Nevertheless, we have to admit that modern capitalism is distinguishable by its shortcomings. Emmanuel Todd, for one, points out that capitalism could “hurt everyone,” although he believes capitalism to be a rational economic system.³ For him, even affluent members of society are no longer able to enjoy their profits, as an enormous sum of expenditure is required to sustain their property.⁴ Tugrul Keskin also argues that capitalism is far from perfect and exhibits social predicaments. These include “standardization of our daily life and destruction of diversity,”⁵ which would elevate the economy as a supreme value and would diminish the influence of religions in our society. He states that,

We have departed from the social space, or a more mechanical form of solidarity where religion used to be a dominant institution, and are moving more towards an emphasis on an economically driven society. In this new society, mass

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⁴ Ibid.  
consumption dominated every aspect of human life, including relations between people.\textsuperscript{6}

Islam, which is frequently at variance with Western values, also faces the challenges of Keskin’s “economically driven society” today. Hence the question arises as to the responses of Islam towards the extremely powerful normalizing tendencies of capitalist economies, which have been shaping most of the world with little resistance in the post-Cold War era. Would Islam offer a solution for the dwindling of influence of religion in a society? S.P. Huntington suggests that Muslims are inclined to emphasize Islam-ness in the time of economic development as they regard their faith as “a source of identity, meaning, stability, legitimacy, development, power, and hope.”\textsuperscript{7} Huntington explains that “Islamic Resurgence” is Islam’s maneuver to survive in this modern world, and yet it shows another source of the “clash” between the West and Islam. He states,

This Islamic Resurgence in its extent and profundity is the latest phase in the adjustment of Islamic civilization to the West, an effort to find the “solution” not in Western ideologies but in Islam. It embodies acceptance of modernity, rejection of Western culture, and recommitment to Islam as the guide to life in the modern world.\textsuperscript{8}

It would be of interest to observe how Muslims may deal with the current powerful capitalist economy that prevails all over the world, even in Communist China. Would the Islamic and Western attitude towards the capitalist economy differ from one another? Indonesia, one of the fastest growing economic powers and the most populous Muslim nation in the world, provides useful examples to answer the questions outlined.

**Islam and Capitalism**

Some scholars insist that Islam is no stranger to the capitalist economy. Maxime Rodinson explains that the birth place of Islam, Mecca, was a “center of capitalistic trade.”\textsuperscript{9} According to Rodinson, the economy in the Islamic world thrived after the Abbasid Revolution until the fourteenth century. Muslims at that time showed their capitalist attitudes in that “they seized any and every opportunity for profit, and calculated their outlays, their encashments and their profits in money terms.”\textsuperscript{10} Even the forbidden practice of imposing \textit{riba} or interest in Islam was practiced among Muslims in the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{11} Rodinson’s argument leads us to the idea that Islam is by no means antagonistic

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\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{8} Ibid. pp. 109-110.


\textsuperscript{10} Ibid. p. 30.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid. p. 35.
to capitalism, which encourages profit-seeking activities. There is in fact support for this in *al-Qur’an*:

> Believers, when you are summoned to your Friday prayers hasten to the remembrance of God and cease your trading. That would be best for you, if you but knew it. Then, when the prayers are ended, disperse and go your ways in quest of God’s bounty. Remember God always, so that you may prosper (al-Jum’ah: 62-9~10)

It is also true that Prophet Muhammad himself was a merchant and met his first wife Khadijah through trading activities.\(^{12}\) All of these would be sufficient to make us believe that Islam is not inherently hostile to commercial profit-making businesses.

The capitalist-friendly orientation of Islam is expressed by the term “merchant Muhammad,” which was coined by Keskin.\(^{13}\) Does it really mean that Islam totally accepts capitalist economic activities that are practiced in the West today? In fact, some Muslims believe that Islam should not follow capitalist neo-liberalism, and this side of Islam is represented by the words of “Meccan Muhammad.”\(^{14}\) We see the divergence between more conservative fundamentalist Muslims and progressive moderate Muslims in relation to economic affairs, as we see in the debate over *jihad*.

In either case, however, Islam is the “manifestation” of a capitalist economy, regardless of some Muslims’ approval or rejection of capitalism.\(^{15}\) The Islam that exists in capitalist-driven society today can never escape from the reality that the global market economy is showing no sign of contraction. In other words, Islam is able to play a certain role either in promoting or in diminishing capitalist activities. However, as the influence of capitalism is so enormous, Islam has become a pretext for fostering capitalist thought and enhancing the foundation of capitalism.

In Indonesia, for example, Islam has been employed to nurture the business motivation and ethics of the workers in some enterprises. Daromir Rudnyckyj has conducted anthropological research on a series of popular seminars held across Indonesia. These are organized under the auspices of Emotional and Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) training, which is the creation of a businessman named Ary Ginanjar Agustian. In these seminars, Islam is used as the basis of education. Krakatau Steel, which is one of the largest enterprises in the country, conducted ESQ training in 2004, and Rudnyckyi described its details as follows.

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\(^{13}\) T. Keskin, op.cit., p.9.

\(^{14}\) Ibid.

\(^{15}\) Ibid. p. 10.
In dramatic tones he (Ginanjar) told us that ESQ enhances Islamic practice and was indispensable to productivity and prosperity in the global economy. Equating Muslim virtues with corporate values, Ginanjar represented globalization as a divine challenge that could be met through the intensification of Islamic faith...The hall, darkened and cool, was filled with music conveying buoyant optimism as Ginanjar deployed metaphorically rich language to assert that globalization required employees to become different kinds of workers.\(^{16}\)

It should be noted that ESQ is meant not only for increasing productivity but also for eradicating immoral practices in businesses, such as corruption.\(^{17}\) Productivity can never increase when fraudulent practices are pervasive. The two issues are deeply interconnected. The necessity of “spiritual reform” is urged in the ESQ program, and Islam is seen as an essential means in realizing it.\(^{18}\)

One of the core creeds in Islam is that ‘good Muslims’ are able to obtain an assurance of entry to akhirat or the hereafter. Spiritual purity is an important criterion for Muslims to receive this ‘gift’ from Allah. The probability of acquiring this reward depends on the conduct of individual Muslims. Therefore, Muslims discipline themselves in order to assure their entry to akhirat, and the ESQ program emphasizes that profit is consistent with spiritual purity.

ESQ training, in fact, is an opportunity to remind Muslims of their “ultimate goal,” that is, “otherworldly salvation,”\(^{19}\) and simultaneously Muslims reaffirm that only the ones who are spiritually wholesome will be able to receive it. In other words, any religious notion with promise or fear can exercise tremendous influence over the behaviors of humans, including economical ones.

As has been seen before, Muslims encounter virtually no theological obstacles to engage in commercial activities for al-Qur’an clearly encourages them to exercise capitalist profit-making business. Although some Muslims are unwilling to be part of the Western capitalist circle, Islam can be a useful tool to enhance it by bringing about the spiritual purity of Muslims, which is linked with the degree of their belief in Allah. Muslims need to maintain Islamic virtues when involved in economic activities. This prerequisite may be a crucial factor in distinguishing ‘Islamic capitalism’ from Western capitalism.

**Rising Young ‘Capitalist’ Muslim Clerics in Indonesia**

Indonesia, which is the world’s most populous Muslim nation, is also Southeast Asia’s economic superpower. Its GDP growth was at the rate of at least six percent or higher


\(^{17}\) Ibid. p .6.

\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Ibid. p .81.
between 2010 and 2012.\textsuperscript{20} The GPD growth in Indonesia in 2013 was 5.8 percent, and the Asian Development Bank predicts that its growth will rise again to six percent in two years.\textsuperscript{21} ADB’s report also states that Indonesia’s “private consumption is expected to remain reasonably robust” in the first half of 2014.\textsuperscript{22} In addition, according to the recent World Bank report, Indonesia became the tenth largest economy in the world in 2011.\textsuperscript{23} Modern shopping malls in urban cities such as Jakarta have been mushrooming in the last decade, and consumerism is widespread throughout the archipelago.

Despite its great proportion of Muslim population, Indonesia remains a secular republic without the implementation of Islamic law or syaria. The political as well as the economic systems are similar to the ones in the West. Popular voting and a market economy are features of Indonesian society. Nonetheless, Indonesians are proud of their religions including Islam, diverse cultures, and long history. As the majority’s religion, Islam seems to be a chief moralizing force for the social life in Indonesia. Birthday celebrations and funerals are conducted in accordance with Islamic creed, and Arabic greetings are common in the country. Regardless of the depth of one’s faith, Islam is constantly appealed to for guidance in relation to social behaviors and customary interchanges among fellow Indonesians.

In the field of economy, we find several syaria-based banks in Indonesia, such as Bank Syariah Mandiri and Bank Muamalat Indonesia, and they have increased their total assets after the collapse of Suharto’s government, though the total assets of syaria banks remain relatively low.\textsuperscript{24} In the economic boom in post-Suharto Indonesian society, several Muslim clerics gained popularity through mass media and attracted a considerable and dedicated following. Followers can be seen to be animated as if they are present at a popular music concert. The clerics include Zainuddin, Abdullah Gymnastiar, Arifin Ilham, Jefri al Buchori and Yusuf Mansur, et cetera. Many of them have their own TV shows and present themselves as ‘conveyors’ of the true message of Islam. Their appearance has successfully instilled an Islamic ‘flavor’ in Indonesia, the secular republic. These personages tend to be friendly, energetic, smart, modern, and economically conscious. In fact, several of them have established their own investment institutions and have encouraged their followers to invest in it.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid. p. 3.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. p. 4.
\textsuperscript{23} The Jakarta Post, 5\textsuperscript{th} May 2014.
\textsuperscript{24} In 2001, the total assets of Islamic banks in Indonesia are 0.25% M.E. Siregar and N. Ilyas, “Recent Developments in Islamic Banking in Indonesia”, in Proceedings of the Fifth Harvard University Forum on Islamic Finance. Available at: http://ifp.law.harvard.edu/login\view_pdf/?file=Recent+Developments+in+Islamic+Banking+in+Indonesia.pdf&type=Project_Publication
One of the well-received young Muslim clerics among these is Yusuf Mansur, who is only in his late thirties. His success as an Islamic preacher and entrepreneur is second to none in modern Indonesia. His publications are widely available, and he is always the target of photo sessions for his followers. His activities are twofold: a religiously-oriented charity arm on the one hand, and secular profit-seeking businesses on the other. The former is represented by an Islamic boarding school and charitable organization called Program Penbibitan Penghafal al-Qur’an (Program for Seeding al-Qur’an Learning) which is known as PPPA. The latter consist of various private enterprises; PT Veritra Sentosa Internasional, known as VSI, is one of the largest. Multi-level marketing or MLM is VSI’s business strategy; it sells software programs that enable electronic payment for utilities such as electricity and telephone, and for prepaid telephone cards, et cetera.

However, it would be a mistake to understand these two different domains of Yusuf Mansur’s activities as operating independently. Rather, they exert influence one upon another, and Mansur is never hesitant to promote his MLM business by emphasizing both Islamic spirituality and his charisma as a preacher. His popularity and the degree of his business success seem to be mutually reinforcing. By early 2014, Mansur had already purchased several hotels near Jakarta International Airport and was ready to offer commercial accommodation for Muslim pilgrims.\(^{25}\) It is said that Mansur also has a plan to purchase Merpati Nusantara Airline.\(^{26}\) The acquisition of the hotel, for example, is for the benefit of umat or the Islamic community, and Mansur is disinclined to associate his activities with capitalistic profit-making business.\(^{27}\) He explains that there are three important elements in Islam and economy. First is niat or intention. His first priority is not money. Rather his intention is to give benefits to other people. This is only possible through worshipping Allah, he emphasizes. Next is cara or method. Western business is conducted in accordance with written regulations and rules, but he states that Muslims do not need to be formal; they do business through their hearts. Last is tujuan or purpose. Mansur states that Muslims should do business in order to enter surga (heaven). To summarize, the Islamic economy can be described by three phrases; it is done because of Allah, with Allah and for Allah.\(^{28}\)

**Islamic idea of alms or sedekah**

Yusuf Mansur emphasizes a specific Islamic tenet called sedekah (or sedaqoh) in his preaching, which literarily means alms, or alms-giving. This might be confused with well-known zakat, which also means alms and is one of the five duties of Muslims. Zakat

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\(^{26}\) Ibid.

\(^{27}\) Interview conducted by the author in Tangerang, December 28, 2013.

\(^{28}\) Interview conducted by the author in Tangerang, December 28, 2013.
is an obligatory donation to support the disadvantaged in the community. In zakat practice, Muslims are supposed to contribute 2.5 percent of their income, and it is usually collected systematically by the government in Islamic states. Sedekah, on the other hand, is based on the free will of donors. There is no strict enforcement or fixed portion in sedekah.

Mansur believes that it is absolutely permissible and even encouraged in Islam that all Muslims be involved in secular commercial activities, pursuing monetary benefits. However, he preaches to his followers not to monopolize their benefits and to offer them to Allah. Sedekah is a practical and concrete means to ‘offer’ their benefits to Allah. This conduct is tantamount to supporting the underprivileged, and one can receive keberkahan or blessing through it, and it strengthens Muslim brotherhood.²⁹ For Mansur, businesses and sedekah mould the “philosophy of business in Islam,” and it would be wrong to separate these two concepts.³⁰ He points out several verses from al-Qur’an to prove his explanations.³¹ For example, we read the following statements in the holy book:

But seek, by means of that which God has given you, to attain the abode of the hereafter. Do not forget your share in this world. Be good to others as God has been good to you, and do not strive for evil in the land for God does not love the evil-doers.(al-Qasas:28-77)

There are some who say: ‘Lord, give us abundance in this world,’ They shall have no share in the world to come. But there are others who say: ‘Lord give us what is good both in this world and in the hereafter and keep us from torment of the Fire.’ These shall have a share according to what they did.

(al Baqarah:2-201)

There are two important messages found in these verses. First is the importance of maintaining social solidarity among Muslims, which we might call Islamic spirituality. It is plausible that material gain might be over-cherished in a country like Indonesia, given its rapid economic growth. In this regard, Mansur’s idea and explanation can be understood as a reaction to pervasive self-centeredness and materialism that could fracture the sense of togetherness of Muslims. Charles Tripp is right to say that “… the danger for specifically Islamic society was capitalism’s elevation of materialism (identified with both capitalism and communism) over spirituality (identified as the defining feature of the Islamic system).³²

Another significant purport in above-mentioned al-Qur’an is the reminder of the existence of the life after this world known as akhirat. In the practice of sedekah, as we have seen,
mutual support among Muslims is crucially treasured. The ‘good heart’ of people can be the motivation of conducting charity or sedekah. However, we see another factor that promotes sedekah, namely the hope for and, with greater proportion, the fear of akhirat. Mansur is well aware of the psychology of the people and is eager to remind them of two distinctive words, suraga (heaven) and neraka (hell) to which they could proceed, depending on their behaviors in this world. The same method was employed in the ESQ training program in order to bring about professionalism and morality in private enterprise. The actual scene of the training session was well described by Rudyckyj.

The room was pitch black, the sound system was elevated to a thunderous volume, and the air conditioning appeared to be turned to its coldest setting, creating an almost refrigerator-like chill. Two films were juxtaposed with a voice-cover by the lead trainer in which he narrated the agony of death and the horrors of hell. The first film clip was from one of the climactic scenes in the Hollywood blockbuster Titanic in which hundreds of near lifeless bodies surround the sinking vessel, freezing to death in the icy waters of the North Atlantic. …another one from a Harun Yahya film called Kehidupan Alam Barzakh (Life in Purgatory). The clip depicted a visual representation of a corpse being called to account for worldly sins in the afterlife as hellacious fires burn the corpse’s body.\(^33\)

It is indeed effective to refer to a cause of severe punishment when one intends to bring about concrete social behavioral patterns, either being more professional or conducting sedekah.

**Practice and rationale of sedekah**

Mansur collects sedekah through bank transfer and direct donation during his preaching session. For example, he appeared in the event held at his pesantren or Islamic boarding school on December 28, 2013, and gave a brief sermon.\(^34\) However, it was a social interaction rather than a religious gathering. Mansur maintained his amicability towards the participants, and a sense of humor seemed to be a core feature of the session. In fact, a relaxing atmosphere prevailed in the venue. In the middle of the session, after explaining the importance of solidarity and mutual help among fellow Muslims, Mansur invited a late-teen male participant to the front and asked about his personal background and his understanding of Islam. Needless to say, the young Muslim, who seemed to feel great honor to have a personal discussion with a popular cleric, was eager to be a ‘good Muslim’ who can proceed to surga (heaven). He showed no hesitation to practice sedekah in front of his fellow Muslims, taking out a fifty-thousand rupiah bill, which is equivalent to US $5, from his pocket and handed it over to Mansur. He received great applause from the

\(^33\) D.Rudnyckyj, op.cit., p. 88.

\(^34\) This was observed by the author at Pesantren Daarul Qur’an in Tangerang on December 28, 2013.
audience and Mansur. That teenage Muslim must have been convinced that his prospect for entry into akhirat was bright and full of joy.

At the end of session, Mansur encouraged all participants to follow the way of Allah, which was shown by a young role model who had just practiced sedekah. In fact, quite a few people donated a great sum of money after the session: the equivalent of approximately US $1,000 in cash, together with some jewelry, was collected after about a half-hour session on that day. Stunningly, some even donated an ATM card and the slip that contained its PIN number.

The religious rationale of sedekah is elaborated by Mansur in his book, The Miracle of Giving, to which he interestingly gave an English-language title. First, he clearly states that there is a miraculous way of becoming rich (kaya), and to realize it is not a dream (mimpi). Not only is material success emphasized but also worldly wishes of people are listed as the possible target of the miracle, such as the issues of education of children, relationships, work, family, health, and business, etc. Mansur also tells readers to devote themselves to Allah and to remember that Allah will show the way of receiving fortunes (rezeki). The way of Allah is the way of sedekah.

A specific way of calculation, which differs from normal mathematics, is shown in the book to elucidate the process of realization of a miracle if one practices sedekah. In normal calculation, ten minus one equals nine. However, the answer of this simple calculation will be nineteen in sedekah calculation. Ten minus two will be twenty-eight and ten minus three will be thirty-seven. ‘Minus’ here means the action of ‘giving.’ If one gives out ‘one’ to others from what you possess as sedekah, unlike normal calculation, it will become tenfold by Allah’s blessing. Consequently, ten minus ‘one’ whose answer is nine becomes nineteen as ‘one’ has already become ten times more than the original value. This suggests that the larger sedekah one practices, the more reward one could receive. This calculation in fact is based on one of the verses in al-Qur’an.

He that does a good deed shall be repaid tenfold; but he does evil shall be rewarded only with evil. None shall be wronged.(al-An’am: 6-160)

Mansur also introduces another verse which states there is a reward bringing seven hundred times the original value to the faithful ones in al-Qur’an.

35 Y. Mansur, The Miracle of Giving (Jakarta: Zikful, 2013) p.XIV.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., p. XV.
38 Ibid., p .4.
40 Ibid., p. 23.
41 Ibid.
Those that give their wealth for the cause of God can be compared to a grain of corn which brings forth seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains. (*al-Baqarah*: 2-261)

In most religions, the act of charity is encouraged, and compassion is regarded as one of the highest virtues. *Sedekah*, which is one of the forms of charity in Islam, is much encouraged by Mansur, and an enormous number of people have practiced it. The sense of Islamic solidarity, a fear for *akhirat*, and the expectation of multiplying rewards seem to be a great motivation for *sedekah*. However, there is another notion of Islam that potentially promotes this Islamic charity.

Ozaral points out that the act of redistribution of individual wealth is much encouraged in Islam.\(^{42}\) In addition to the sense of social solidarity, Islam also values “the mutual social responsibility” or *al-takaful al-ijtima‘i*.\(^{43}\) To “employ their accumulated capital for the service of mankind” is the correct path for faithful Muslims.\(^{44}\) Theologically speaking, *sedekah* is an expression of the faithfulness of Muslims. However, at the same time, *sedekah* is a social system to facilitate the circulation of wealth that could foster social work that is beyond the reach of authorities. *Sedekah*, therefore, is a useful way for ordinary people to bring about social welfare.

**Activities of PPPA**

Yusuf Mansur has in fact collected a vast sum of capital as the result of his encouragement to practice *sedekah* to his followers through his religious sermons. As has been mentioned before, he has established an organization called *Program Pembibitan Penghafal AlQur’an*, known as PPPA, and this charitable Islamic body is an instrument to “redistribute” capital to society. Mansur started a simple training course for “memorizing *al-Qur’an*,” which later turned to be the more organized PPPA in the city of Tangerang, just outside of Jakarta in 2003.\(^{45}\) PPPA’s main goal is to “establish Qur’an-based civilization for Indonesia” and was officially inaugurated in May 2007. Its activities cover the areas of education, including *Rumah Tahfidz* (*al-Qur’an* learning school), national as well as international humanitarian aid, health care, social welfare for the poor, etc.\(^{46}\)

As one of its mission statements shows, PPPA emphasizes the “value of *sedekah*,” and its operational funding is based on the principle of *sedekah*.\(^{47}\) PPPA runs 3,000 *Rumah*.

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\(^{43}\) C. Tripp, op. cit., p. 55.

\(^{44}\) B. Ozaral, op. cit., p. 29.

\(^{45}\) *Programe Pembibitan Penghafal AlQur’an* means *al-Qur’an* Reciter Training Program.

\(^{46}\) PPPA: *Daarul Quran*, p.11.

\(^{47}\) Interview with executive members of PPPA by the author in Tangerang, December 28, 2013.
Tahdiz with 100,000 pupils throughout the country, and this extracurricular school does not require students to pay fees.\textsuperscript{48} Each pupil is supposed to memorize at least one verse from \textit{al-Qur'an} each day. Apart from this informal education, there are five \textit{pesantren} or boarding schools nation-wide run by PPPA. They also offer scholarships to those who need financial support, including orphans. PPPA’s religious network even includes travel agencies and television and radio stations.\textsuperscript{49}

PPPA also implements post natural disaster programs. One of the most significant of these was conducted in the village called Glagh Harjo in central Java between August 2011 and November 2011. After Mt. Merapi erupted fiercely in 2010, Glagh Harjo, which is located at the foot of this active volcano, was devastated and most of the houses were destroyed. PPPA together with local Islamic organizations conducted a village restoration program, re-building 180 houses, which amounts to more than sixty-six percent of destroyed houses, without any charge to villagers.\textsuperscript{50} Most of the villagers were by no means affluent, and their financial situation became aggravated after the disaster. The major industry in the village is stone-collecting from Mt. Merapi, for which villagers can earn about US $5 to US $10 a day. A sixty-year old male village resident stated that “it was such a great help from PPPA.”\textsuperscript{51} According to the coordinator of the program, it costs approximately US $1,000 to build a 45-square-meter house.\textsuperscript{52} PPPA also has set up a small Islamic school or \textit{madrasa} in the village in order to spread the spirit of \textit{al-Qur'an}.\textsuperscript{53}

Another one of PPPA’s significant contributions to society is the provision of reliable and affordable medical services. Two medical clinics named \textit{Daarul Quran Nusantara Clinic} known as DAQU clinic was established the in the Central Javanese towns of Magelang and Malang. The clinic in Magelang was opened in July 2013 with four medical doctors and two Islamic counselors. Dr Finah Yulia, head of the clinic, explains that patients whose monthly income is less than US $50 will be treated free of charge.\textsuperscript{54} In every room, some verses from \textit{al-Qur'an} are displayed. Both patients and the family have access to counseling with Islamic teachers in the clinic. One of the patients of the clinic explains that they like to be treated in the clinic as the standard of medical treatment there is higher than at public ones; the staff are professional; it is economical; and they find the atmosphere warm and Islamic.\textsuperscript{55}

The operational fee of PPPA depends on the donation from the \textit{umat} or Islamic community, consisting of both individual and private companies. The sum of US

\textsuperscript{48} Interview with Sunaryo Principal/Executive PPPA by the author in Tangerang, December 28, 2013.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{PPPA: Daarul Quran}, pp.18-39.
\textsuperscript{50} Interview with Kabul, former volunteer who joined the program, by the author in Glagh Harjo, January 2, 2014.
\textsuperscript{51} Interview conducted by the author in Glagh Harjo, on January 2, 2014.
\textsuperscript{52} Interview with Sunaryo Executive PPPA by the author in Glagh Harjo, January 2, 2014.
\textsuperscript{53} A twenty-three year old graduate of Indonesia’s leading university is stationed as full-time instructor.
\textsuperscript{54} Interview conducted by the author in Magelang, January 2, 2014.
\textsuperscript{55} Interview conducted by the author in Magelang, January 2, 2014.
$403,000,000-worth of individual sedekah was contributed between 2007 and 2013, while several private companies run by Yusuf Mansur have also donated US $87,000 as sedekah.\textsuperscript{56} It seems that the enthusiasm of umat for offering sedekah never ceases. PPPA received approximately US $600,000 as sedekah in August 2013 alone.\textsuperscript{57}

**Business of Yusuf Mansur and Controversy**

While Yusuf Mansur heads a charitable non-profit organization such as PPPA, he also owns several profit-making private companies. A multi-level marketing or pyramid selling company, PT *Veritra Sentosa Internasional* or VSI, established in July 2013, has been growing rapidly; its membership jumped from one thousand to fifteen thousand in six months.\textsuperscript{58} The company sells no actual manufactured products but offers a service for electronic payment for utilities. Each member is supposed to expand his/her lineage by adding ‘offspring’, and about one US dollar is obtained by a ‘parent’ when a new member joins the network. Apart from finding a new member, each ‘parent’ can receive twenty US cents when the ‘offspring’ conducts an electronic transaction. It is possible for a member to receive various hadiah or prizes when successful.

A gathering to introduce VSI was held at a restaurant in the suburb of Jakarta at the end of December 2013, and approximately thirty people attended. The seminar started with the introduction of Yusuf Mansur with a large portrait on the front screen. Iman Jaya, who presided over the meeting, listed the characteristics of VSI networking business as easiest, cheapest, fastest and most effective (to gain benefits). He also emphasized that each member will become an “owner” of the online-shop, which is, according to Jaya, a new world. The participants of the seminar were much encouraged to find their ‘offspring’, and Jaya reiterated that it was an easy task for anyone to find a few friends who could join the scheme. On the front screen, the photos of various prizes were ostentatiously shown, such as those of a smart phone, a free trip to Singapore and Mecca, luxurious European-made automobiles, and a villa.

Jaya also explained that Yusuf Mansur could be the best PR figure when searching ‘offspring’. In fact, members of VSI are allowed to use the photo of Mansur for advertisement. One of the participants of the seminar, a forty-five-year-old trader, likes the business of VSI as he trusts Mansur. He stated that it was good to have connection with other people in society, it was easy to do, and he felt happy that he could contribute to economic development.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} Interview with Tarmizi Asshidiq, Executive Director of PPPA by the author in Tangerang, December 28, 2013.

\textsuperscript{57} *DAQU* January 2014, p. 82.

\textsuperscript{58} Interview with Imam Jaya, Sales executive conducted by the author in Tangerang, December 29, 2014.

\textsuperscript{59} Interview conducted by the author in Tangerang, December 29, 2013.
The participants seem to have interests in VSI as it is less complicated as they buy a voucher first and invite their friends to join them. However, it also seems that they have much trust in Yusuf Mansur and his activities, such as *sedekah*. They seem to be willing to be a part of Yusuf Mansur’s network. A thirty-five-year old computer programmer named Faud, who is one of the members of VSI, acknowledges his motivation of joining VSI is Yusuf Mansur. He states:

I joined VIS because Yusuf Mansur’s image is very good. Although I do not know him personally, he appears on TV and we know he is a good Muslim. If the leader of VSI were not Yusuf Mansur, I would not join VSI.60

Although VSI is a commercial activity, Faud feels that he practices *sedekah* by joining VSI.61 It seems that he pays little heed to the difference between capitalist benefit seeking business and Islamic charity, believing that he will have a bright *akhirat*.62 VSI would appeal to people as it is simple, finding a few friends who like to join the scheme, and it is ‘cool’, using information technology. However, apart from these reasons, we can assume that a great majority of the members of VSI join the scheme because of its ‘Islamic charm,’ the feeling of being blessed by *Allah* brought by Yusuf Mansur.

Multi-level marketing or MLM is based on the social association of members. The essence of MLM lies in the idea that the independent owner or ‘parent’ expands his or her network by obtaining as many ‘offspring’ as possible. It is certainly handy as the members engage in no physical labor but ‘persuade’ possible offspring, whoever that might be, to join them. Should that take place in society, there is a concern that the members of MLM will consider their associates or friends as potential sources of their income, namely as mere objects—not fellow humans. There are also concerns that such relationships are based on self-centered greed and materialism devoid of humanity. Some even call attention to the inherently false logic of the MLM system, according to which the dynamics between supply and demand are simply ignored.63

We see a clear contradiction here between Islamic solidarity and the exploitative relationships of MLM. The former requires a true sense of compassion for others, while the latter’s major concern is material self-benefit. Some might think that the members of VSI disguise their intent with religious masquerade and their priority is mere individual material benefits. As long as VSI emphasizes Mansur’s religious virtue, VSI cannot escape this criticism.

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60 Interview conducted by the author in Jakarta, December 27, 2013.
61 Interview conducted by the author in Jakarta, December 27, 2013.
62 Interview conducted by the author in Jakarta, December 27, 2013.
In fact, some Islamic scholars object to businesses such as MLM. Yazid argues that the commercial activities in Islam should involve active, not passive, physical work. One of the hadiths clearly states that “it is much better for the one who searches for wood to find and carry it on his own shoulders than to ask someone or merely be given it by someone else.”64 It seems that more conventional business, such as retail, is preferred in Islamic tradition to those activities featuring MLM, which encourages ‘passive-income’ of the members.

However, Indonesia’s highest Islamic authority, Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) or Indonesian Ulama Council, has not forbidden MLM business. MUI in Bandung, West Java, has issued a fatwa or Islamic ruling on MLM that business activities that involve no actual product are regarded as a “money game” and thus are haram or forbidden. Yet, if the business contains activities that “sell” any product, it is halal or allowed.65

With regard to Yusuf Mansur’s VSI business, it seems permissible from the MUI’s point of view. However, it is still controversial as VSI is rather an unconventional business that does require almost no ‘physical work,’ and the main work of the members is to ‘ask’ others to join them. This action might clash with the essence of Islamic teaching.

We can also see controversy about Yusuf Mansur’s other activities. For example, Yusuf Mansur was questioned by the Financial Service Authority (OJK) regarding his investment business called Patungan Usaha (PU) or Joint Venture in July 2013. The members of PU are supposed to invest twelve million rupiah, which is equivalent to US $1,200, to receive an eight percent return annually. However, the authority pointed out that this investment scheme is illegal as PU had no license to conduct investment business.66 Yusuf Mansur chose to end PU and commenced a co-op type institution called Koperasi Mera Puti which would allow investors to obtain twenty percent of annual return from their investment. However, that twenty percent benefit will be divided into twelve percent of sedekah, which will be used for charity, and the other eight percent will be investors’ actual income.67

Conclusion

It is obvious that capitalist economy is no stranger to Islam as its theology encourages Muslims to engage in business activities. In this regard, Islam has much resonance with capitalist Western counterparts. Islam qua religion also shows its distinctive social function, that is, to facilitate profit-making activities. Unlike compulsory tax-like zakat,

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64 Yazid, “Anjuran mencari nafkah & seorang da’i tidak boleh bergantung kepada mad’u(murid)nya.” This hadith is HR Bukhari 147. available at: www.almanhaj.or.id
65 Keputusan Fatwa, Musyawarah Kimisi Fatwa MUI Kota Bandung, No. 291/MUI-KE/E.1/VII.
66 The Jakarta Post, July 23, 2013
67 Interview with Yusuf Mansur conducted by the author in Tangerang, December 28, 2014.
sede\textit{kah} that is based on Muslims’ free will plays a role in stimulating the economy. More importantly, sede\textit{kah} has become an essential source of funding for philanthropic activities in a given society. The concept of social solidarity and social responsibility of Muslims have been employed to facilitate Islamic orientation in a capitalist society. We should remember that this phenomenon observed in Islamic society corresponds with Western Christian society. Huntington is right that Muslims lean to Islam in a capitalist society where severe competitions and the discrepancy between the haves and have-nots are entrenched.

However, such Muslims’ enthusiasm towards their faith as practicing sede\textit{kah} is by no means indicative of “Islamic resurgence” or “the rejection of Western culture.” It originates in their psychological state of mind, namely fear and hope regarding the life after this or \textit{akhirat}, rather than ideological antagonistic conviction against the non-Islamic world.

The popularity of Yusuf Mansur in Indonesia exemplifies the Islamic modern economic model by which Islam is distinguished from the West, emphasizing the importance of \textit{Allah} together with spirituality that calls for attention to the less fortunate. Both sede\textit{kah} and MLM are assimilated into the process of ‘making a genuine Islamic society,’ which Yusuf Mansur himself publicly stated that he intends to realize. After observing Yusuf Mansur’s activities, Islam seems to function to actualize philanthropic attitudes of Muslims in a so-called money driven society. At the same time, Islam facilitates business activities such as MLM in spite of the controversy over its legitimacy in theology. If the members of VSI and other commercial businesses of Yusuf Mansur merely concentrate on pursuing the target of their “supply,” treating these people solely as a source of income, the humanitarian feature of Islamic economy will be totally lost.
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The Needham Question and the Great Divergence: Why China Fell Behind the West and Lost the Race in Ushering the World into the Industrial Revolution and Modernity

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At over four thousand years old, China is the oldest continuous living civilization in the world. In that span of time, the people of that civilization have created a sophisticated and highly developed culture unparalleled by any other neighboring nations for millennia. With a recorded history that has remained largely unbroken since the days it began, China has exercised great influence over Asia and has commanded its respect and tribute for many centuries. With a highly developed culture, many significant advances emerged in government, art, and science that were beyond the caliber of its contemporaries throughout the ancient, medieval, and pre-modern eras. This paper attempts to explain how Chinese and European maritime voyages, military technology, colonialism, industrialization, philosophy, economic systems, and religious motivation eventually allowed the West to dominate global affairs and overtake China by the beginning of the modern era.

The Zhou Dynasty, a contemporary of the Classical Greek and Roman civilizations, gave birth to the likes of Lao Zi, Confucius, Mencius, Zhuang Zi, and Sun Zi who laid the foundations of Chinese thought and culture for the next two and half thousand years. The establishment of the Han Dynasty, a contemporary of the Roman Empire, marked the first golden age in Chinese history based on Confucian philosophy, and gave China its identity establishing it as the dominant super power of Asia. While Europe toiled in the Dark Ages, China flourished in the Tang Dynasty - an era of unprecedented wealth, freedom, and cosmopolitan culture unlike anything else in the world during that time. Its successor, the Song Dynasty, was highly industrial and inventive, marked by significant advances in engineering and military technology.

China was considered by its people as “the birthplace of history, the font of religious wisdom, the inspiration of philosophical insights, the source of technological innovation. It was the Middle Kingdom. The Celestial Empire. The Center of the World” (Hawley, 2005, p. 26). The Chinese saw themselves as the preservers of culture and considered all other people “barbarians”. If this perspective of China is true, why then did the Chinese not lead the way to an Industrial Revolution that would pave the road towards the modernity we now live? What factors contributed to China’s declined international influence causing the “great divergence” that allowed the European West to dominate world affairs? These questions are collectively known as the Needham Question, named after Joseph Needham - a British scientist and Sinologist who is best known for his many books on Chinese history, culture, and contributions to the world.
Investigations of the Needham Question can begin in the early 15th century. It is here we see the initial stages of China’s lost opportunities to become the undisputed economic, cultural, and military world leader. At this time, China had just ousted the century old Mongol-dominated Yuan Dynasty. A new era called the Ming was established by the native Han people. That began what many consider to be the third golden age in China’s history, “an era of Chinese cultural revival” (Yuan, Knapp, Landman, and Veeck, 2010, p. 59), and it “was the most powerful empire in the world” (Parker, 2010, p. 2). In the year 1405, almost a century before Christopher Columbus set sail, the Yongle Emperor Zhu Di, of the Ming Dynasty, proposed to send a majestic fleet unlike the world had ever seen to travel through the ancient Arabic trade routes of the Pacific and Indian Ocean to proclaim China’s greatness to the nations abroad. These naval missions weren’t for exploration but “power projection” (Dreyer, 2006). The purpose of the mission was to establish and enhance diplomatic and trade relations with the nations inside the Indian Ocean trade network, and to proclaim China’s power to all its people. This armada was larger and more powerful than the combined fleets of Europe during that same time.

The fleet was dynamic and versatile with three hundred ships of various sizes and purposes. Some were treasure ships, believed to be either 448.8 to 493.5 feet or 390 to 408 feet in length, much larger than any other ship in the world at that time (Levathes, 1994, p. 80). Others were used as transports or battleships armed with an array of bronze cannons. The fleet, led by court eunuch Admiral Zheng, made seven epic voyages to Southeast Asia, India, Arabia, and the East coast of Africa over the span of almost 30 years. In 1433 the naval expeditions of Zheng He came to a sudden halt. The Admiral unexpectedly died during a stop in India. Meanwhile, a new Emperor had ascended the throne and ordered that the armada be recalled to China, that all ocean-going expeditions be canceled, and that the ships be either left to rot in the shipyards or burned to the ground. The promise of China creating an overseas empire and becoming the world’s undisputed naval power ceased to exist. Even so, many countries continued to make tributary missions to the Ming throne while the Indian Ocean trade network proceeded long after the expeditions were canceled.

According to historians, the cancelation of the naval voyages was considered to be one of the biggest blunders and major turning points in world history. “China was poised to seize control of the seas and colonize the world years before the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and British” (“China”, 2006). The Emperor’s decision to end the voyages is also the first of many events that caused China to unintentionally and indirectly relinquish its potential domination of the world to the Europeans. Why did the Emperor cancel these great expeditions? Why did the Chinese government not employ the pattern of expansion and colonization the Europeans would later impose upon the world? Many would argue that the Chinese culture in general was simply too pacifist, inward-looking, and perhaps even backwards to have created an overseas empire. Is this true? Was it so simple?
There are many theories as to why the Ming Emperor made his decision to command such a drastic change in policy. One logical reason is that the lavish expeditions were simply too expensive to maintain, placing to great a strain on the Imperial treasury. The Ming were also troubled with domestic issues, especially the continual raids from Mongols in the North along with incessant marauding of Japanese pirates on the East Coast that plagued major shipping lanes and coastal villages. These problems may have compelled the Emperor to cancel the voyages and focus the government’s attention and finances on the country’s national defense.

Another possible reason for this change in foreign policy was the influence of Neo-Confucianism on the government’s thought, and the management its affairs. Its teachings were conservative and indeed inward looking, having a general neglect for foreign affairs, and an emphasis on internal matters to promote self-improvement. This philosophy neglected the outside world and greatly limited China’s interaction with foreigners (whom they viewed as unimportant and insignificant) and therefore, the exchange of knowledge and the promotion of trade was hardly present, at least legally.

After Ming China had closed its doors, Europe began to send voyages of its own a few decades later. These early voyages marked the beginning of European expansion and influence around the world as Europeans began to seek new trade routes and opportunities through significant participation in the Indian Ocean trade network. Furthermore, the discovery of the New World fueled the European drive to make even more voyages to bring wealth to their respective monarchs, while extending their influence internationally (albeit at the expense of the native people of the New World, Africa, and parts of Asia). The elements that brought Europe to power and dominance in the world will be discussed later.

Nevertheless, Ming China continued to be a powerful, influential international power throughout the 15th, 16th, and even the 17th centuries. The Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese vied for the chance to trade with the Ming Dynasty but were limited to a few trading ports along the Southern coast. Evidence for China’s continued role as a super power, and misplaced pride in international affairs, stood strong and was demonstrated through a ritual in the Imperial Chinese policy known as the “kow tow” in order to grant trade requests from foreigners. It was a somewhat humiliating gesture the Europeans and other foreigners had to exercise as a prerequisite in establishing and maintaining diplomatic and trade relations with the Chinese (Wills, Jr., 2011, p. 29). It forced them to kneel and bow with their foreheads pressed against the ground in submission, admitting the superiority of China and the Emperor.

Further demonstrations of China’s authority on the world scene took place at the first and second battle of Tunmen or Tamao against the Kingdom of Portugal in 1521 and 1522, when China took naval action against the Portuguese sailors in defense of her national interests and the interests of her tributaries, in particular the Sultan of Malacca from...
present day Malaysia. Both battles proved decisively victorious for the Ming Navy (Wills, Jr., 2011, p.27-32). Even over a century after these battles, Ming Loyalist, warlord and pirate Zheng Chenggong aka Koxinga, led an overwhelming force of troops to invade Holland’s greatest colony of Formosa (Taiwan) to successfully reclaim the island as Chinese territory from oppressive Dutch colonists in 1661 and 1662. This is now known as the Sino-Dutch War (Andrade, 2012).

In the 16th and 17th centuries, China was able to exercise its military capabilities and enforce its sovereignty over its territories effectively against the emerging Western powers. Many historians even argue that China, including most of East Asia, developed on par with Europe until the beginning of the 19th century -- with both regions having the same industrial output and economic growth. With the sovereignty of China firmly defended against emerging Western powers and its economy staying very competitive, when did China’s decline and Europe’s ascension occur? What motivating factors did the West have to monopolize trade and colonize the world? What contributed to their seemingly overwhelming success?

The very beginnings of Europe’s emerging success can be traced to a series of events took place over the span of time that historians have labeled the Renaissance. The word Renaissance is a term used to describe the supposed gradual re-kindling of Europe’s Greek and Roman heritage, culture, and thought and first took root in Italy in the 15th century. This was made possible through the large amounts of both fiscal and intellectual wealth gained from the lucrative trade the Italian city-states made with the Ottoman Empire. This relationship allowed the Italians to afford the various artists and polymaths that pioneered the Renaissance (Meyer, 2012). The Renaissance sparked Europe’s renewed interest in art, culture, philosophy, and science, and was further encouraged by the invention of Johann Gutenberg’s movable type printing press. This allowed books to be printed and mass-produced for the public. This greatly stimulated education and literacy rates and played a major role in gradually bringing Europe’s less privileged population out of the so-called “Dark Ages”.

Some historical evidence also reveals that the Reformation changed learning in Europe. Gutenberg’s version of the printing press, which helped bring about the Reformation, “brought a renewed interest in reading and learning, and the Renaissance of learning that had already begun in Europe served as an impetus to what was about to happen spiritually” (Horton, Dyet, and A Beka, 2005, p. 39). The Reformation helped promote growth, learning, and scientific advancement since its doctrines did not inhibit education and learning the way the Roman Catholic Church did. The Reformation also encouraged people to read, learn, and think for themselves, instead of relying on the Church to do it for them.

The economic and social effects of the “Renaissance” helped create a growing interest to participate in the Indian Ocean trade network that was then dominated by Muslim
merchants. One notable voyage undertaken in 1492 by Christopher Columbus sought a new route to the Spice Islands in present day Indonesia. Instead he accidentally found his way to the Americas.

Columbus is one of many mariners to set sail from Europe to find trade and bring wealth to their respective countries. History shows that the motivating factors behind these voyages, factors such as wealth, religion, and reputation, were not unlike those of the Knights who fought in the Crusades. The advent of these voyages created large amounts of competition amongst the nations of Western Europe with each country working harder and harder to gain wealth and influence overseas. These voyages did not go unnoticed by the Church, which saw an opportunity to spread their centralized religion abroad. Along with the sailors and soldiers went Jesuit missionaries inspired with renewed religious fervor to convert the peoples of foreign lands to Christianity, or at least the Roman Catholic Church’s version of it. This European mentality and inspiration for voyage, conquest, and religious conversion was quite contrary to the Neo-Confucian thought that dominated the government of China. Individualism and humanism, ideals brought by the effects of the Renaissance, empowered Europeans to think and act for themselves. This would in turn benefit the society in which they live and therefore fuel the establishment of many businesses and companies that would come to profit from overseas trade and colonialism backed up by a capitalist style economy.

The wealth and overall success of the maritime voyages further developed the European states and allowed them to grow in power and influence, particularly in the field of war. The heated competition in Europe began with the establishment of colonies in the Americas, parts of Africa, and Asia. Most importantly, the competition created much advancement in military technology -- notably in gunpowder and weaponry -- throughout the 16th and 19th centuries. Military power played a tremendous role in the success of the Western nations, and it insured their ability to conquer, maintain control over their acquired lands, and to retain an even gap of competition amongst themselves. Matchlock, wheel lock, and flintlock mechanisms for hand-held firearms, breech-loading cannons, and the corning of gunpowder for a much more concentrated explosive force are a few of the innovations from the colonial era. These weapons played an important role in the decline of Chinese influence and the ascension of Europe’s.

China was the birthplace of gunpowder. It was also in China that gunpowder warfare saw its beginnings. From the Song Dynasty forward, China began mass-producing the first cannons, bombs, handguns, continuous flame-throwers, rockets, and land mines for use in warfare against the Mongols in particular. These weapons were adopted by Mongol forces and continued to be steadily developed under the Yuan Dynasty. By the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, the weapons had developed into multi-barrel hand cannons, grenades, sophisticated land mines, and rocket-propelled arrows and missiles. After the 15th century, the development of Chinese gunpowder weapons stagnated and military technology changed very little (Lorge, 2008). Western advances in weapons, however,
made gunpowder more potent, and made cannons and muskets more powerful, accurate, reliable compared to their counterparts in China. In fact, by the 1500’s the Ming began adopting Western designs for their cannons and matchlock muskets with firing methods obtained from the Ottomans.

If strong military and advanced weaponry were an important factor in securing a dominant position amongst the powers of the world, why then were the Chinese not furthering the development of their own inventions the way the Europeans did? By the 1500’s Europeans had musketeers and cannons at the forefront of their warfare, with steel weapons assigned only for use in close combat. In China it was rather the opposite. Steel weapons still comprised the mainstay of warfare with various gunpowder units assigned to accompany the traditional units. What caused the widening military technological gap between these two regions?

Firstly, China did not have the same motivating factors as the Europeans to further improve their weapons. China did not have military competition from any neighboring countries that would create a necessity to improve the weapons they already had. Secondly, China’s enemies were made up of Mongols and various tribes from the Northern and Western borders that used traditional weapons. These people were almost 100% cavalry-based warriors who used bows, spears, and sabers. The domestically produced bombs, cannons, and rocket arrows at the time were more advanced than the equipment used by the nomads. Third, the only other real, dangerous foes China faced were the rampant pirates from Japan pillaging coastal towns. Some had even made it deep inland after encountering little military resistance from the Ming armies. These pirates were mostly made up of Ronin or dishonored Samurai who had turned to a life of piracy in order to support themselves. Pirates also used traditional weapons such as bows and swords. With non-professional enemies such as these, the necessity or motivation to improve firearms did not exist. Lastly, China during the Ming was a nation that did not hold military careers in high esteem. Except perhaps the highest-ranking military officials, soldiers were considered low class and high in status only in comparison to peasants and merchants. In the Chinese view, a military career was a secondary choice for men who were unable to pass the civil service examination required to earn a prestigious position in the government. This meant that military decisions were made by government officials with no military or combat experience. These officials were only well versed in government policy, Confucian philosophy, and a thorough understanding of the Classics. Soldiers with individual skills in combat and martial arts were also favored more often than those who had actual leadership abilities. This mentality, and the widespread mismanagement of military matters by neglectful and irresponsible government officials, had a significant negative impact on the effectiveness of Ming soldiers, their morale, and the development of technology in the field of war during the latter half of the Ming Dynasty (Hawley, 2005).
Author CJ Peers (2006) effectively summarizes why Chinese weapons technology stagnated while the same technology in Europe improved. "After about 1400 Chinese military technology began to stagnate – a consequence of the low social status of soldiers, the lack of sophisticated enemies to stimulate development, and the suspicion with which the emperors… regarded innovations, especially those which might weaken the power of the state. Although in Europe gunpowder strengthened royal control by enabling governments to destroy the castles of the nobility, in China it tended instead to aid the defence; the enormous thickness of rammed earth fortifications resisted cannon fire in a way which the vertical stone walls of contemporary Europe could not" (p. 185).

The unique situation and the enemies the Ming Dynasty faced provided little motivation to further advance the gunpowder weaponry beyond those manufactured in the 15th century. Ultimately, Europe’s key advances in weapons and its military power played an important role in establishing itself as a superpower in the world by enforcing its will from the end of a cannon, from the 16th century conquests of the Americas to the Opium Wars of the 19th century.

Another major factor that contributed to China’s decline was the fall of the Ming Dynasty -- a gradual process made up of internal and external pressures both natural and political such as famine, flooding, earthquakes, government corruption, peasant revolts, and rapid inflation that finally took its toll in the early 1600’s. By the year 1644, an ethnic group from the Northeast called the Manchu took over the government of China and established the Qing Dynasty.

The Manchu were direct descendants of a nomadic group called the Jurchen Jin, rivals of the Mongols during the time of Genghis Khan. Under their regime, China expanded her borders to its largest size. However, many changes they made to government policy, and society as a whole, were detrimental to the progress of Chinese culture and science. Under the Qing Dynasty, China experienced prolonged scientific stagnation and even regression while European powers grew larger and stronger as they continued their policies of colonialism and imperialism across the world.

There are many factors that contributed to China’s continued “equilibrium” under the rule of the Qing. One notable factor was the increased government intervention and participation in the private sector. Although China’s population, economy, and industrial output bloomed under the Qing, the private sector did not exist under a laissez-faire system, nor did it enjoy the same opportunities as those of the West. The European drive to obtain wealth increased the demand for technology and the further advancement of military.

One of the largest contributing factors to Europe’s growth, and creation of the Industrial Revolution, was the implementation of the laissez-faire system, where government involvement in the private aspects of the economy was very limited, but exercised
sufficient control in order to protect the property rights of businesses and individuals. This system allowed the accumulation of wealth and power for privately owned companies obtained from colonialism, and thus paved the way for the funding of and motivation for the Industrial and Scientific Revolution experienced by the West throughout the late 18th and 19th centuries. The elements needed to create this revolution were not present in China at the same time. The culture imposed by the Manchurians was largely traditional and lacked the innovative and progressive spirit that generally marked the Han Chinese mentality. It also meant that the Manchu had a general neglect for the improvement and manufacturing of firearms since their culture largely depended on the bow for hunting and combat. This mentality contributed to their humiliating defeats in the Opium Wars.

The Industrial Revolution rapidly accelerated the advancement of the European economy, science, technology, and military, advancing them far beyond their contemporaries. An example of the developmental gap between the West and the East was demonstrated in the Opium Wars where British forces easily crushed the military of the Qing during different confrontations in the 1800’s. The Opium Wars, and Britain’s colonization of some of China’s key cities, marked the beginning of an era the Chinese call “The Century of Humiliation”. Even Japan had rapidly industrialized by the late 1800’s when the Japanese Emperor opened its doors to Westerners and trade relations were re-established (to the disapproval of the Tokugawa Shogunate). China continued to fight for a place in a rapidly changing world throughout the 19th and 20th centuries as it struggled, until 1911, to break the bonds of feudalism and government control of the Qing Dynasty, defended against Japanese invasions, and endured the takeover of the destructive Communist Party in 1949. In the West, the events leading up from the so-called Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation all the way through the Industrial Revolution allowed Europe to take the lead in international affairs by the 19th century and create a world heavily influenced by European culture, religion, and language.

Today, China is the second largest economy in the world and is finding its place amongst the world’s industrialized nations thanks to drastic reforms that took place within the Communist Party in the past few decades. Despite the social and economic damage caused by Communism, China has not forgotten its glorious history and great cultural heritage. China is looking to the lessons of the past to help rebuild on the principles that made it great during the dynastic eras of the Han people. Today the world is witnessing the Chinese Renaissance, the awakening of a nation that has enjoyed greatness and prosperity throughout most of history. Perhaps it may someday soon witness China’s emergence as the center of the world’s attention. Napoleon Bonaparte is commonly believed to have prophetically once said “Let China sleep for when she wakes the world will shake.”
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This book analyses the relationship Culture-Nature during a long period in history, from the Bronze Age (3000 B.C.) until A.D. 2000, making a retrospective of the environmental crisis in an extensive geographical area. The book draws important analogies among the phenomena of ecological degradation observed in ancient and modern civilizations, making it easier to spot similarities and differences between periods in history and also to think about the consequences of this issue today and in the future.

Sing Chew, Professor of Sociology at Humboldt State University, makes a broad study of the relationship of civilization, its productive processes, and nature. For him, the relationship Culture-Nature throughout history has always been characterized by great ecological degradation. His main point is that environmental issues are not new in our planet. Chew innovates in adding an environmental perspective to the debate about the rise and fall of civilizations, and he even makes predictions about the future of the planet. For him, the history of civilizations is the history of ecological degradation.

World Ecological Degradation, published in 2001, is the first of three books. The second, The Recurring Dark Ages, was published in 2006, and the third, Ecological Futures in 2008. The object of this review is the first book of the trilogy, with 217 pages (33 of bibliography) and nine chapters.

In the first chapter, “Ecological Degradation over World History,” Chew presents the main concepts, propositions and processes that define the relationship Culture-Nature through history: accumulation of capital, urbanization and population growth. The author asserts that deforestation has been a consequence of the economy of civilizations for at least 5,000 years. The other seven chapters are chronologically organized and discuss different civilizations, their economic activities, political and social rules, and ecological degradation. The book ends with the different concepts and approaches to environmental conservation, from ancient times until the year 2000.

Chew presents his theory in a standardized manner, examining each civilization in terms of economic structure, social organization, population distribution and hinterland status. Next he discusses the way each society interacts with nature and the changes of its natural habitat, detailing the impacts of its social and economic processes. He sees a bridge
between the level of necessity of natural resources and the demands of economic activities in each civilization.

Chew reviews the types of environmental impacts that characterized each civilization, from the Bronze Age until the year 2000, offering the reader a grand historic perspective and highlighting the environmental singularities of each region as a consequence of how its natural resources have been exploited. He shows that deforestation, soil runoff, salinization, air and water pollution, loss of biodiversity, climate change and other environmental problems are in no way new, but were present in Mesopotamia, Harappa, Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire.

For the author, ecological degradation is a consequence of the way civilizations interact with the natural environment and of how different economic activities are organized. The intensive use of natural resources and excessive consumption typical of many civilizations can lead to what he calls ecological stress. Throughout history we can observe limit situations, when several elements of nature were damaged in an interrelated way, affecting the environment as a whole. An environmental disaster of such magnitude can interfere with the reproductive capacity of a civilization and can lead to its decline and fall.

Chew believes that there is a close relation between environmental damage and resource accumulation, urbanization and population growth. These three are deeply rooted in the history of civilizations and are associated with great environmental loss through deforestation and landscape transformation.

By making intensive use of natural resources, urbanization leads to changes in the surrounding areas and also in distant areas. Urban spaces have been constantly used with total disregard to their natural characteristics. This reckless use caused serious problems of landscape transformation such as floods, landslides and even disease outbreaks. In many civilizations, urbanization has also been also associated with deforestation, hydrological destabilization, and air and water pollution.

Population growth combined with urbanization required the intensive use of natural resources to respond to the need for food, goods and tools. To satisfy this demand, deforestation began, and the search for ore (gold, silver, iron, bronze, among others) was intensified. Forests were chopped down to give place to agriculture and the exploitation of natural resources. The ever growing urban centers needed wood to produce energy and to respond to the internal demand for resources. These cities had also a great need of wood to construct their buildings, palaces and temples, and also for the construction of vessels that were the carriers of the intense trading activities between urban centers in Mesopotamia, Harappa, Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire. Forests were also wiped out in the fight for territories during military campaigns, wars and conflicts.
Chew calls attention to the most serious environmental issue that civilizations experienced in the past and still experience now: deforestation. This has always been considered a huge problem in civilizations worldwide. For Chew, the intensive use of wood is immediately related to ecological degradation and is to be considered a proxy in understanding the relationship Culture-Nature at any specific time and place.

In the journey through the intricate relationship Culture-Nature, it is interesting to see how contemporary environmental issues and conservationist preoccupations are historically manifested. For example, in Greece when water and air pollution started to be felt more clearly, the concern about conserving natural resources started. Climate change felt in Mesopotamia, Harappa and the Roman Empire, and pollution caused by heavy metals, lead poisoning, animal extinction (rhinoceros, crocodile, among other species) were problems faced by the Roman Empire. Government regulation to protect forests, water basins and woodlands were an initiative of the Roman Empire. Researches shows that conservationist concerns appear in periods where ecological degradation is more intensive.

Besides his sociological perspective, Chew also reflects on the phenomena of ecological degradation from the viewpoint of human geography. He analyzes the size of the phenomenon in different points in time as well as the connections between different elements of nature and society, examining its causes and specificities in each moment in history. In this sense, his broad approach is closer to the idea of Society-Nature than to the idea of Culture-Nature, as he defines it. In his geographical perspective, Chew sees the environment as a reflection of the action of society upon nature, in which humanity is a determining factor due to its overwhelming impact potential when compared to other animals. (Galvão, 2009). Geographically speaking “one must think of the environment in a social perspective that actually includes economic and political interactions of society in the process of historical construction” (Galvão, 2009).

In considering Chew’s theoretical and methodological contribution, it is important to say that most research on environmental issues focuses on the economy’s impacts on nature, while very few studies try to understand how the changed environment affects the economy and how it can prevent societies from growing and even lead to their fall. In this way, the contribution of Chew is fundamental.

Regrettably, many research studies still approach the elements of nature and society in a fragmented and dissociated way, forgetting that Man does not live in isolation; he interacts continuously with all elements of nature (Aguiar, 2012). In this way, ecological degradation cannot be analyzed only in a Nature-Society dualist perspective. There are a great number of interactions between all elements involved that must be identified and analyzed (Aguiar, 2012). But in analyzing the process of ecological degradation in many civilizations, Chew presents a few examples of the consequences of this degradation to society.
The book gives enlightening information on the connection Nature-Society and brings important methodological contributions; and some concepts and principles can also be used in the definition of guidelines to protect the environment. It is specially recommended to university students and environment researchers in different areas of knowledge.

In the end, Chew surprises the reader by examining civilizations that had a balanced and harmonious relationship with nature, as opposed to those marked by environmental damage caused by economic forces. Chew constructs reflections that could make us think about the future, and changes in how we relate to nature today.

We live in a period of constant change, both local and global, which leads to great uncertainty. The way contemporary society relates to the environment is already considered one of the factors that contribute extensively to environmental problems and disasters. If we compare this present trend with the careers of past civilizations studied by Chew, it seems that we are once more reaching a limit in the support capacity of the environment.

Many environmental movements in the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century stand out for their radical protests that aim to raise awareness of the global environmental issues. Many international conventions aim to protect natural resources such as forests, humid areas, and biodiversity. In the 1980s, scientific evidence on human carbon emission started to cause public concern, leading to the Climate Change Conference of 1990. Environmental issues, though not new, are more complex today and represent a huge challenge to governments, to society, and to the economy of all countries.

In the context of uncertainty and globalization in the world in which we live, reflections brought by Chew, instead of discouraging more effective initiatives to change mentalities, should invigorate the debate about environmental protection, and inspire us to try to find new ways to balance the relationship Society-Nature.

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What began as a book that would be a resource for new artisan cheese makers turned into a book that tracks the history of western civilization, a history in which cheese plays a larger role that one would have ever guessed. Kinderstedt’s research turned into an undergraduate course at the University of Vermont (a big cheese state) that would integrate cheese science and technology. Cheese has been an enormous part of our civilizations from Neolithic times to today.

I read this book because I am an artisan cheese lover, and have even made a pilgrimage to Parma, Italy, where Parmigiano Reggiano, called “the king of cheeses,” has been produced for the past 1,000 years. This book made that journey even more significant for me.

Although almost all cultures have some sort of simple cheeses, such as the yogurt cheeses that the Mongols developed out of mares’ milk, it is only in the West that the great technology of cheeses developed, a process begun in earliest human civilization after the domestication of ruminant animals.

Milk quickly spoils but cheese, a food transformed by technology, can keep, making it a value-added product. The history of this process began some 9,000 years ago in Southwest Asia, a region in which cattle, sheep, and goats had been domesticated. All of these animals provided a variety of useful products, particularly sheep and goats providing wool. But all of them in breeding seasons did have surplus milk, which our ancestors wanted to use around the year.

Beginning about 17,000 years ago, the post-glacial global warming began to establish what has come to be known as Mediterranean climate, hot dry summers and cool wet winters. Wild cereals such as wheat, rye, and barley, along with legumes such as beans, peas, and lentils, began to thrive. The extensive stands of wild cereals extended in an elongated swath from the Jordan River Valley northward through inland Syria and to what is now southeastern Turkey. This became, with the advent of hunter-gatherers, “the fertile crescent,” mother of civilization for much of the Old World.

Between 11,000 and 9,500 BC, the earth had one last cycle of extreme cooling which wiped out these early settlements. But around 9,500 BC, there was a sudden intense episode of global warming, increasing the average annual temperature by as much as 13 degrees Fahrenheit over just a couple of generations. This was followed by slow but
steady warming for the next two millennia, resulting in a global climate that we still have today.

As humans in the Fertile Crescent developed food crops, they found that such crops attracted sheep and goats, especially near mountains such as the Taurus Mountains of southwest Anatolia and the Zagros Mountains of western Iran. The farmers found an opportunity to begin herding these animals, taking them from the lowlands in the winter to the mountains in the summer, a pattern that still exists in the migrations of Iranian tribal peoples.

Mixed farming and rapid population growth brought profound cultural change: the blossoming of the Neolithic (New Stone Age) period. Architecture bloomed, as did a new widespread appearance of religious symbols and shrine building. Humans then had moved beyond the status of a slightly revised and more efficient version of the eating and breeding machines that had preceded them. To use biblical language, says the author, humans were made in the image of God.

The archeological record tells us that until 7,000 BC, animals were raised for meat. It took generations of careful breeding and handling until sheep and goats were developed to have more milk than just needed for their young, and for these animals to permit humans to milk them. At the same time, intensive grain cultivation and population explosion produced widespread environmental degradation and erosion. Pastoralism and milk production were probably a response to this disaster.

Adult humans in Neolithic times were almost universally lactose intolerant (as many Asians are today). But they found that cheese, a product made by boiling milk, made this foodstuff digestible. The invention of pottery enabled milk to be stored, transported, and cooked. Ceramic pots with drain holes were the first sieves for draining the whey from curds formed either by heat or by adding a small amount of rennet (from the intestines of animals). The entire agricultural and herding revolution was characterized by the ability to store food, a need that cheese met.

According to Kinderstedt, cheese and religion have a long relationship. There are many references in the Bible to cheese being a gift for the deity (or in polytheist societies, gods). Several chapters are devoted to all of the inventions that emerged in primeval times that had something to do with farming--ceramics, metallurgy, animal husbandry, and cheese-making-- and the uses of these products in trade and religion (temple gifts).

Kinderstedt traces cheese development across the world from the Fertile Crescent across to India. China, however, never developed a culture of cheese making.

The Mediterranean world was early in developing cheese and the various technologies that produce varieties, some of which we know today: feta and ricotta, and somewhat
later, the dry grating cheese such as Pecorino. But it was in northern Europe that the amazing cheese culture that we know today had its origins. The north was more hospitable to raising cattle, the most favored herding animal of the Indo-European peoples. Of these, the Celts were the specialists among cheese makers, and their descendants, the French and north Italians, still are.

Very interesting chapters involve cheese in the Greek religions, with a good deal on the diet of the earlier (and hardier) Athenians (cheese, barley cake, ripe olives and leeks). There is much interesting material on the very elegant cheeses developed by the Romans which were important trade and luxury goods as well as a culinary boost to their diets.

Italians, beginning with the Etruscans, were always enthusiastic cheese makers. The Italian genius showed itself in the connection of cheese making and pigs, an important source of meat that can be smoked and preserved in other ways. The pigs would consume the whey extruded during cheese making, a symbiotic development still used. Parma is not only the source of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, but the equally famous Parma hams (prosciutto). These foodstuffs have been raised together for millennia.

With the advent of Christianity throughout the late Roman world, systematic cheese making became the norm. The chapters on the manor, monastery, and age of cheese diversification are fascinating. Monasteries in France have always been known for their splendid cheese making. I visited one monastery in the Auvergne region of France that sold in its gift stores the most marvelous brie-type cheese and all sorts of honey confections. The ethic of work promoted by the monastic movement produced such wonders.

Over time, peasant cheese makers in northwestern France fine-tuned their simple practices and storage conditions in ways that rendered them predictable and desirable. This was a process that continues to this very day in the production of European and now American artisan cheeses.

The author covers the extensive cheese making in England and the Netherlands, and introduces the development of factory-produced cheese which began to replace artisan farm cheese. The industrialization movement came at the same time as other practices that replaced female practitioners. Medicine went through such a transformation too, eliminating the midwife practitioners and replacing them with male doctors and hospitals.

The one good element that emerged with the industrialization of cheese making was that, for the first time, standardized instructions (recipes) for specific cheese varieties could be reproduced anywhere. Dairy schools were created during the latter half of the nineteenth century.
However, both the transfer of cheese making to male industrialists and midwifery to medical doctors produced unanticipated consequences: terrible cheese and high maternal death rates. Both female practices have had a revival today, to the benefit of both cheeses and maternal outcomes.

The author may have been focused on the evolution of cheese, but its connection with other aspects of history figures substantially in this book. The section on Holland’s role as cheese provisioner of all Europe was fascinating. Their cheeses, which were solid, round, and encased in wax, traveled well and brought in much revenue.

But more interesting than the cheese was the very fact of the identity of a country that would never have come into being without great human intervention. During the Middle Ages, much of Holland was uninhabited or sparsely populated, a wasteland consisting of waterlogged peat bogs and maritime salt pastures. It wasn’t until the fifteenth century, writes Kinderstedt, that commercial dairying began to emerge in Holland as a significant element of the economy. Despite the unpromising and sodden terrain, cheese making figured from the late Neolithic in this area because one could not grow much food in the salt marshes, but in the ridges formed by oceanic activity on the coast, the people could raise cattle and survive on dairying.

The miracle of Holland began from the tenth century onward, when the Dutch undertook massive land reclamation. They laboriously drained the fields with drainage ditches, built low dikes, all despite having a chronic labor shortage (this was the period of recurring cycles of Black Death). The aristocrats and churchmen recruited the necessary labor force by offering serfs their freedom and almost absolute, exclusive property rights to the land that they reclaimed in return for their labor. (The labor shortages in other parts of Europe were treated in much the same way, changing the social pecking order for the better.)

But in Holland, there were unexpected consequences. The reclaimed lands were not good for grain raising. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the production of bread cereals collapsed, brought on by an ecological crisis of largely human making.

Draining the peat bogs produced the sinking of landmass, opening the country to devastating oceanic flooding, made worse by a gradually rising sea level. They were losing their country. However, in an amazing example of human determination and ingenuity, says Kinderstedt, many Dutch peasants chose to adapt their agriculture and fight the North Sea. They developed the polder system, enclosing their fields with dikes and pumping out surface water to create permanent dry lands. In 1408, the windmill, once used for grinding grain, was adapted to pump water from a polder.

The soil still was not good enough for wheat, but it was fine for barley and hops, and gave rise to artisan beer brewing. Other farmers dropped grain cultivation for dairy cattle. The Dutch created a lucrative trade (in exchange for wheat that they imported) in their hearty
artisan cheeses and beers. In addition, the rise of Calvinism in Holland further encouraged the entrepreneurial spirit that was already part of their culture.

Between 1500 and 1700, Holland’s economy expanded, probably more rapidly than any other in Europe. Kinderstedt shows the interrelationships of trade, religion, ethnic temperament, and the growth of the nation state. Holland has been an amazing case study of what determined human beings can do.

The rest of the book tracks the modern evolution of cheese making, beginning with factories and systematic production, but then going on to today’s wonderful artisanal cheeses and the governmental rules for keeping them pure and safe. Who would have thought that cheese could be such an important part of human history?
Daniel Richter’s *Before the Revolution* provides a broad historical sweep of the dynamics between groups, settlements, and settlers, as well as between the populations inhabiting North America and the engaged European powers circa 1492 to 1774. For those of us accustomed to using the revolution and 1776 as our reference point for the start of the American nation and its character, it is a long needed wake up call. Though we are aware that Europeans have been systematically interacting with the continent since Columbus’s voyage in 1492, as Americans our understanding of American character, behavior and society is almost entirely post-revolutionary. Our official heroes and references are the founding fathers, upon whom we look with nostalgia for a supposed time when virtue and talent seemed to reign. At the same time, our intellectual reference for enduring American character and behavior is the 1830s Jacksonian revolution, which gave formal power to the white middle class and championed the values of the common man. These values, in the observations of Alexis de Tocqueville, were work, making money, individualism, and the promotion of equality -- to the detriment of merit and intellect. (Tocqueville felt that this situation was saved only by the American capacity for creating quick associations for mutual benefit, a penchant that he felt resulted in a vibrant civil society but a weak government.)

Richter paints for us a dramatically different picture. His picture is of an America that, for most of the 275 years prior to its becoming an independent country, was a cauldron for the collection of the flotsam and jetsam of not only a distressed Europe but also the remnants of those local North American Indian populations who had lost up to 90 percent of their population to European-brought diseases. In that cauldron, things did not meld. Rather they alternated between being settled on the bottom of the vessel and swirling around whenever some outside force (usually conflict) stirred the pot.

To give structure to that phenomenon of periodic repositioning, Richter provides a simple framework for understanding what seem to have been 40-50 year cycles of alternative organizing principles for the colonial political economy. Richter characterizes six such, in their order of appearance, as: Progenitors (the agriculture based societies of the pre-European indigenous population), Conquistadores (those who came to conquer that population and extract its wealth), Traders (those who established opportunistic relations primarily for the exchange of European goods for furs), Planters (a relatively elite group that established both small and large agricultural plantations to produce goods for local, Caribbean and European markets), Imperialists (who sought to establish an imperial style domination of the American political-economy by the British Crown after the restoration of the Monarchy in 1660), and the Atlanteans (those commercial interests that regularly plied their trade across the Atlantic and up and down the Atlantic coast of North America).
The resulting characteristics of that pre-revolutionary stew were far different than the shared American character identified by Tocqueville. As related by Richter, to see America before the Revolution was to see: 1) an incredibly heterogeneous population (British, Scots, French, Dutch, Africans, Germans, Irish, Basques, Jews, Swedes and settled Indians); 2) the continuous economic, political and military alliances and encounters between European settlements and the surrounding Indian tribes; 3) the key role that mutually antagonistic Christian Churches played in the ordering of public life; 4) a dramatic lack of social, economic and political equality -- with much of the population being pauperized bonded laborers; the majority of the others surviving as indigent farmers or craftsmen, and a small but dominating political, propertied and religious elite; and 5) the constant presence and influence, through their representatives, of various Europe overlords. All of these strands were clearly different from the money-motivated individualist mediocrity of equality that characterized America per Tocqueville.

Richter does a good job of chronicling the key events, circumstances and relationships. His book is a valuable reference text for envisioning those times. However, he draws no deep lessons from that period in terms of understanding post-revolutionary times, nor does he extract any larger message as an insight on society and civilization per se. In fact Richter sort of consciously punts on the question of greater meaning to be garnered from those times when he ends the book with the quote: “After all,” wrote black Atlantean Olaudah Equiano quoting the prophet Micah, “what makes any event important, unless by its observation we become better and wiser, and learn ‘to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God’?”

Such an ending I find spiritually warming but intellectually lacking. Richter’s book raises a host of questions: How did this diverse “before the revolution” world so quickly morph into a perceived single shared national character? What elements of that pre-revolutionary past, if any, can enrich our understanding of present day America? Are there lessons to be learned that have a large relevance to our understanding of the development of human societies and civilizations?

Personally, I think one can draw larger lessons from this study in terms of understanding the difference between a society and a civilization. What we see in Richter’s book is clearly not America as a civilization or even a sub-set of Western Civilization. America appears as an amalgamation of transacting and transecting fragmented cultures. Certainly it evolved its functional ways and organizations as needed, but it did not begin its journey to an “American Civilization” until it had created its national identity and corresponding independent institutions. It is as if American before the revolution was a supersaturated solution of diverse whirling elements, none truly dissolved. Somehow, from this solution, between 1776 and 1830, under the dynamic circumstances of revolution, independence and territorial expansion, precipitated out a perceived American character. By the time
Tocqueville came to America in 1832 that character had been sufficiently formed for him to characterize it in a way still pertinent today:

… it is easy to perceive that almost all the inhabitants of the United States conduct their understanding in the same manner, and govern it by the same rules, that is to say, that without ever taking the trouble to define the rules of a philosophical method, they are in possession of one, common to the whole people…(that is) to evade the bonds of system and habit, of family maxims, class-opinions, and in some degree, of national prejudices; to accept tradition only as a means of information, and existing facts only as a lesson used in doing otherwise and doing better; to seek the reason of things for oneself, and in oneself alone; to tend to results without being bound to means, and to aim at the substance through the form--and if I seek among those characteristics the principle one which includes almost all the rest, I discover that, in most operations of the mind, each American appeals only to the individual effort of his own understanding. (Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*. Book I, Chapter I. “Influence of Democracy on the Action of Intellect in the United States”)

Oh well, maybe Richter, as an American, is leaving the resolution of any questions of greater meanings to the individual efforts of our own understandings? If you are interested in such questions, read the book. It is worth the effort.
In 1850, at Yale University, the annual football match of freshmen vs. sophomores was underway. A freshman spectator on the sidelines dressed in a long robe with his long hair in a queue was trying to understand this mass of bodies pushing against each other when he saw the ball pop loose from the group. He picked it up and ran as fast as he could toward the goal line. The players stood in amazement for a moment, then a sophomore ran after the freshman and pulled on his queue. The pain made Yung Wing drop the ball, which he kicked across the goal line winning the game for the freshman team – a true upset. The boys hefted Yung to their shoulders in celebration. Thus begins the book *Fortunate Sons* about Chinese students in America, in particular the Chinese Educational Mission of 1872-1881, which Yung Wing championed and directed.

This introductory story demonstrates that the book reads like a novel – like historical fiction – except that it is true and well documented. The book is divided into three sections. Part I tells of Yung Wing who was brought to America by a Christian missionary. Yung graduated from Yale and returned to China with the goal of encouraging the Imperial Court to send Chinese students to the United States for education in western knowledge. The book describes his work and eventual success in the creation of the Chinese Educational Mission (CEM) and his return to America to direct the program. Part II explains the journey of the 120 Chinese students, thirty per year for four years, and their experiences living with New England families and attending school. Part III details their return to China when the mission abruptly ended and then follows a few of them through their lives and activities. It provides an overview of Chinese history from the 1880s into the 1900s, including the French attack on Foochow, the war with Japan, the demise of the monarchy, and the struggle to modernize China.

In 1847, at the age of 19, Yung Wing was taken to America by a missionary-teacher, Reverend Samuel Brown, who schooled Yung while serving in China. Rev. Brown lived in Connecticut, so Yung lived there too and was the first Chinese student admitted to Yale University, graduating in 1854. He returned to China and the rest of part I explains his adjustment back in his homeland, the challenges China was facing, the corrupt Qing dynasty, the increasing European presence, and Yung’s work to earn money for his own stability. He helped found an arsenal with purchased Western technology, which produced guns and cannons. He also aided in establishing an engineering school near the arsenal where local Chinese students could train in designing, building, and operating the Western machines. He finally became a mandarin, in recognition of his knowledge and abilities. He promoted the idea that China should send students to America and pay for their education at the finest colleges there, with the idea that they would become the future
leaders of China unburdened by antiquated thinking and superstitions (p. 85). They would learn Western skills that would help their country to modernize.

In the late 1800s China was ravaged by poverty, population growth, and aggressive European armies. Driven by a desire for progress and reform, called the Self Strengthening Movement, the Chinese Imperial Court agreed to send students under the direction of Yung Wing to America to study at New England’s finest schools. The students chosen to go (with their parent’s permission) were 11-14 years old and were expected to stay in America for 15 years, going to high schools and universities to learn skills that would help them advance China toward modernity. The students sailed across the Pacific Ocean, landing in San Francisco in September 1872. To these boys, mostly from poor families in Southern China, the bustle of the city, the strange language, the hotel amenities, and the new technology were amazing and difficult to comprehend. “They could never, it seemed, ring an electric bell often enough and giggle as it emitted its metallic trill, or turn on a faucet and stare, hypnotized, at the never-ending stream of fresh water. They rode the elevator, up and down and up again” (p. 94). The book provides short snippets of U. S. history to provide context, including the Chinese who came to America to work on the railroad or other menial jobs and who settled in Chinatown, San Francisco, the opening up of the Western U. S., the completion of the transcontinental railroad, and the educational system. The students traveled by train across the United States where they saw vast open plains, high mountains, native Americans, buffalo, fields of grain, and as they drew nearer to their destination, the change in scenery to green forests, church steeples, and developed cities. They settled in with welcoming families in Hartford, Connecticut and began their American schooling. They learned English quickly, made new friends, and participated in American sports and culture. They were also provided instruction in Chinese traditions and language so they would not forget. In 1891, due to the growing anti-Asian sentiment on the American West coast, and fear among the Imperial Court that the students would become too Westernized, the mission was closed after nine years and most of the students returned to China.

When the students returned home, they had to overcome the suspicions of their countrymen in an environment deeply resistant to technological and cultural change. In fact they were first imprisoned and interrogated for a few days before they could go home and finally reunite with their families. The book follows the lives of Yung and a few others that provide an overview of about 20 years of Chinese history and the work of these particular students. The students most mentioned (with their American nicknames) are: Yung Leang (Byjinks Jonnie), Tong Shao-yi (Ajax), Liang Ju-hao (Cold Fish Charlie), Tsai Ting Kan (Fighting Chinee), Jeme Tien-yau (Jimmy), Liang Dunyan, who was an excellent baseball player, and Cai Shaoji. Yung Leang, who was a nephew of Yung Wing, was assigned to a naval academy along with a handful of other CEM graduates. He was seriously wounded when French naval ships stationed there attacked the Chinese fleet in August 1884 over a minor scuffle. Tong and Liang, who were
cousins, were dispatched to Korea, which figured prominently in the dispute between China and Japan. As bureaucrats, they encountered widespread corruption and the determination of Dowager Cixi of the Qing dynasty to stay in power. Some of the students fought in the first Sino-Japanese War, which China lost. They watched in dismay the Boxer Rebellion against imperialist powers in 1898-1900 because, to them, the Boxers represented all that had been stifling China’s growth.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, mission graduates were sprinkled throughout the empire, and it seemed that the American-educated boys would be able to guide their nation toward progress. Liang Dunyan, Tong Woo and Cai Shaoji were secure in midlevel positions in the Qing’s hierarchy; Liang Ju-hao was entrusted with running the all-important Beijing–Shanhaikuan railway line. Jeme helped build other railways and became a national hero. Liang Dunyan helped establish a preparatory school to teach English and other subjects; the school later became a university. He and others convinced the United States to use the Boxer Indemnity Fund to pay for more students to study in America. When the Republic of China was established in 1912 with Yuan Shikai as the newly elected president, Tong Shao-yi was named prime minister; Liang Dunyan was appointed minister of foreign affairs with Cai Shaoji and Liang Ju-hao as his deputies; and Tsai Ting Kan was now senior advisor to the president. Unfortunately, although Yung Wing’s American-trained students had helped achieve the goal of the mission to modernize China, he did not see this good work happen. Yung had married an American but she died young. He had two sons and moved back and forth between his native land and adopted country, dying in 1912 in the United States, penniless and quite alone. However, his vision of Chinese youth being educated in America was not lost, but revived later, and since the first mission, thousands of Chinese students have studied in the United States and other Western countries.

The first author, Liel Leibovitz, has a Ph.D. from Columbia University and his main focus is on video games and interactive media research and theory. He has written several books with Jewish themes, one on video games, and he and Matthew Miller also wrote the book, *Lili Marlene: the Soldier’s Song of World War II*. Both authors live in New York City.

There are several other published works that discuss the Chinese Educational Mission to varying degrees. Much of Leibovitz and Miller’s book is based upon the autobiography of Yung Wing, *My Life in China and America*, published in 1909. In 1954, the China Institute of America published a small book in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Yung Wing’s graduation from Yale titled, *A Survey of Chinese Students in American Universities and Colleges in the Past One Hundred Years*. It provides descriptions about Yung and his first group of students and other later Chinese student groups. For a detailed assessment of the CEM, readers should consult Edward Rhoads’ book called *Stepping Forth into the World: the Chinese Educational Mission to the United States*. The author gives specifics about each of the 120 students of the CEM program and what they
accomplished in America. He provides statistics and scholarly analysis, and discusses their work upon returning to China. There are also other books that discuss the CEM, China’s search for modernity, the perceptions of those involved, and the results of Chinese-American transnational activities.

*Fortunate Sons* is a fascinating read because it includes dialogue and story lines like a novel. But it also includes considerable history, biography and culture. There are a few pictures, mostly of people, and the content is documented with 14 pages of notes. However, it would be helpful to the reader to have maps, especially of China, and a glossary of the student’s names (and nicknames) that are mentioned in the book and a short blurb about them because it was hard to keep them straight.

Leibovitz and Miller’s book is a captivating story rather than a scholarly rendition, which makes it a good introduction to the topic and very enjoyable to read while providing insights into the mission, its participants, and its impact upon the students and countries. It also reminds us of how long exchanges between these two countries have existed and the risks and rewards that these connections have produced.
This is a large and expansive tome that traces the history of the Roman Empire from the earliest archeological remains in Italy to the Merovingian line of Frankish kings in the ninth century who claimed to replace the Western Roman Empire with a Christian version. The book consists of 41 chapters and the epilogue, which adds a cursory treatment of the Byzantine Empire until the fall of Constantinople to Ottoman Turks in 1453. Historical narrative is interrupted by lengthy analysis of Roman art, culture, literature, architecture and construction (Chapters 9, 14, 17, 22, 23, 28) for each of several periods during the Empire. Explorations of archeological pieces are accompanied by pictures of statuary, buildings and detailed reproductions of floor plans that help visualize the innovations that Dunstan’s expert eye has discerned. His fascination with the remains of buildings can be explained by his academic expertise in the archeology of classic antiquity. In fact, this volume is the third produced by Dunstan, following similar books on Egypt and Greece.

As befits an encyclopedic treatise, the narrative is plain and straightforward, without affect or flourish. Even with his unfolding of myriad details, it does not take the reader long to realize that Dunstan has little admiration for Roman culture. He scarcely disguises his conviction that Roman religion, philosophy and literature are inferior to earlier Greek achievements and suggests Roman efforts are imitations of the genius of Ancient Greece. This discipleship to Greece, he notes, actually culminated in the Byzantine Empire which replaced Latin with Greek.

The narrative of nearly a thousand years of history, in 596 pages, has necessarily selected some subjects for curtailed treatment while dwelling on others. For instance, he adopts a quasi-clinical perspective about homosexual behaviors among men, telling readers that Romans admired the ability to assume the male position in all sexual encounters, heterosexual as well as homosexual. Despite this excursus, there is little description of the seamy side of history from the Julian dynasty that is dramatized in the TV series “Rome.” While the televised series humanized ruthless political intrigues and indulgent sexual behaviors in dramatic character development, Dunstan is content merely to mention them.

This is not to suggest that Dunstan is without moral perspective. He pictures typical Roman behavior at virtually all levels of society to have been endemically bloodthirsty and murderous, circumstances he finds repellent. I was reminded of an episode in the award-winning TV show, “The Sopranos.” In one scene, Tony Soprano and his New Jersey “muscle” are torturing an Orthodox Jewish man who operates an old-age home but who refuses to pay a required kick-back. Despite his pain, the Jew taunts the Mafiosi by
reminding them that his people have suffered through the ages and endured all types of persecution, dating back to Roman times. “Where are the Romans now?” he asks defiantly. Tony Soprano pauses and then answers: “You’re looking at them.”

Dunstan is largely reliant on Latin historians of each period, such as Tacitus and Suetonius. This reliance has the virtue of capturing the attitudes towards events and persons in the full flush of historians from those days. But the liability of his approach is also acknowledged, inasmuch as these writers often had the transparent political agenda of flattering their patrons and besmirching their enemies. Dunstan interprets the bias of each source, selecting for the reader some to be believed and others to be doubted. Unfortunately his opinions are rarely supported with footnotes or references to academic sources. The lack of critical review muddles his opinions. For instance, the narrative of the Emperor Julian (pp. 361-363), known as “the Apostate,” reports he confiscated property given to Christians by his predecessor, Constantine. Dunstan says that Julian intended this action against Christians to unite polytheists and reconvert Christians to Roman religion. Lower on the same page (p. 446), however, he writes: “To fan the discord always raging in the church, he [Julian] recalled those bishops Constantine had banished…thereby encouraging them to continue their divisive quarrels over point of doctrine.” If Julian’s vengeful policy was to foment Christian divisiveness, how can Dunstan cast it as an effort for greater unity?

In another place, the reader is told that Caligula was justifiably assassinated because Dunstan judges the historical sources to be accurate (pp. 286-87). Dunstan bemoans the assassination of Nero (pp. 296-97), however, because that Emperor had “praise for all things Greek,” adding that Nero’s admiration for Greece earned him “significant numbers of admirers.” With these kinds of contradictions, it is hard to separate Dunstan’s predilections from the facts.

Happily, Dunstan frequently provides reliable insights that ring true. For instance, he repeats – although without attribution – Alföldy’s observation that the rise of the empire was linked to the rise of Rome’s equestrian class (pp. 100-03, et passim). Because the senatorial class under the republic could not engage in commerce, its wealth was dependent on land-holding or latifundia, he says. The equestrian order, however, used its military vocation to head the armies to enrich itself by creating monopolistic commerce with the conquered countries. Thus Caesar was the most famous, but not the only member of the equestrian class to learn that the spoils of war could buy votes with the Roman populace and easily achieve actual political power greater than that reserved to the Senate.

The other threat to the power of the Senators that Dunstan describes in detail was the redistribution of their lands to compensate Roman soldiers at the end of service. While consuls such as the Gracchi (pp. 136-143) subordinated the interests of the Senators to those of military commanders, the landholders were often powerful enough under the Republic to thwart such reforms. Gaius Gracchus lost power in 122 BCE and died when
faced with mob violence (p. 143). The issue was resolved only later under Octavian who distributed to the soldiers lands that were located outside Italy. This created Roman colonies within conquered territories while preserving the interests of the Senators in Italy.

Dunstan’s narrative is content with describing the power base of successive emperors, generally avoiding class analysis. Some emperors are “good” (Chapter 20, pp. 310-329) because they established stable and efficient government. In that environment, literature and art flourished. However, readers will not find in this volume an explanatory dynamic for either the rise or the fall of the Roman Empire. In fact, the only brief treatment of Roman civilizational dynamic is contained in a short endorsement of Gibbon’s eighteenth century analysis (pp. 522-24). This endorsement is paired with a dismissal of competing theories. If not for the ability of readers to turn his avalanche of details into patterns of social dynamics, this book might be described as a series of “missed opportunities.”

Dunstan’s grumpy complaint against analytical theories is another major flaw in this ponderous volume. For instance, the treatment of Emperor Justinian (pp. 526-531) fails to mention the plague that decimated the population, and which might easily be the major reason for Justinian’s failure to reunify the eastern and western parts of the Empire in the sixth century. Dunstan relies extensively on dated sources from antiquity and the eighteenth century, without updating his analysis with cogent contemporary insights on, for instance, environmental factors.

Dunstan’s volume also wrestles with how to portray Christianity. While his narrative cannot escape description of the impact of the new religion on the Empire, he decides to devote two chapters (29-30) to Jesus, the Apostles and the early church. These chapters fail to display the level of expertise utilized in his treatment of Roman history. In fact, they betray his negativity towards Christianity. He fiercely defends the analysis of Gibbon that sees the rise of Christianity “as a tragedy producing the greatest internal weakness of the Empire” and insists that “the conversion of Rome to Christianity fostered a dangerous pacifism that drained the Empire of military vitality” (p. 522).

I also found his uneven presentation of religious persecutions to reflect bias. There is only one sentence about the brutality against Christians under Nero (p. 293), and no description of martyrdom as carnage for sport under Domitian, Marcus Aurelius and Diocletian. In contrast, descriptions of Christian persecution targeting polytheists carry considerable detail and none too flattering characterizations of Christians (p. 502). Shortchanging the violence done to Christians in the persecutions by polytheists, I think, deprives of context the violence later perpetrated by Christians against their former persecutors. I would also criticize the general lack of original analysis because it renders the book very much like a collection of facts that can be found easily by computer-wise students on the Internet. I found repetitions of the same information, at times with the
same words. This suggests to me that the book was cobbled together from previously composed materials on the specific topics.

These critical observations should be balanced by an appreciation for the achievement of collecting so much material and placing it in ordered fashion in one book. The volume has a valuable chronological chart that enables quick review of events. The index is complete and the bibliography inviting. I view it as a source of data and facts about people, places and artistic production that will be useful to those seeking to go beyond this book’s content and enter into civilizational analysis.
Richard Miles, *Carthage Must Be Destroyed: The Rise and Fall of an Ancient Civilization*  
Penguin, 2012

Reviewed by Mariana Tepfenhart

Richard Miles is a professor of history at the University of Sydney and a Fellow Commoner of Trinity Hall, at the University of Cambridge. He has extensive knowledge of the ancient world. He wrote about the Punic wars, the Romans, the Vandals of North Africa and hosted on BBC a television series – Ancient Worlds. He also directed archeological excavations in Carthage and Rome.

The title was inspired by the famous statement of the Roman senator, Cato the Elder, “Delenda est Carthago” – “Carthage must be destroyed” - which sealed the fate of that Mediterranean city. The book provides a sweeping yet vivid narrative of about ten centuries of developments that led to the destruction of Carthage, after three Punic Wars. The book is a comprehensive history of Carthage, from its origins to its demise. The purpose of the book is to recreate the lost world of the great North African metropolis and to “reassess some of the comfortable historical certainties that underpin many of the modern West’s assumptions about its own cultural and intellectual heritage.”(22). Miles wants to prove that Western civilization is not founded exclusively on Roman and Greek cultures but is indebted to other cultures and people as well. The author uses primary sources, secondary sources and the latest archeological discoveries. However, he points out that the Greek and Roman sources are negative and clichéd. They promote the image of cruel, unmerciful people, untrustworthy, cheaters who practiced child sacrifice to appease their gods. It was this version of the history of Carthage that was adopted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Western Europe.

Miles commences his story with the roots of the Carthaginians in Phoenicia – the land of the color purple. The Phoenicians’ prosperity was the result of their outstanding mastery of the sea. They created a network for trade with merchants stationed in foreign ports as royal agents who were treated more like ambassadors. By the eighth century they established colonies in Sardinia and southern Spain where they found a large supply of silver and iron. Carthage was a Phoenician colony and became a major manufacturer of terracotta, ivory items, and jewelry. Although it was the Phoenicians that discovered the silver mines in Spain, Carthaginians exploited the mines, which became the source of the city’s wealth. They gained control of part of what is today Tunisia and became a maritime and trading power.

Richard Miles makes a great effort to introduce the reader to the Mediterranean world of that period and to describe the relations between very diverse people, both competitive and cooperative. A reasonable consequence of this interaction is the exchange of the ideas in every field. One aspect is the religion. Highly important for the Romans and the
Carthaginians is Heracles, the son of Zeus and a human mother, who is used for propaganda reasons by both people, to show that the gods were on their side.

Miles also comments on the ritual of child sacrifice to honor their god, Baal. By analyzing the latest archeological discoveries in Tunisia, the author states that this was not as widespread as was described in the written sources. It was a practice known in Middle East as “molk,” which the Carthaginians, like the Phoenicians before them, did resort to as a ritual in times of crisis for the benefit of the whole community. Evidence suggests that the children offered for sacrifice were from the elite families. Sometimes animals and birds were substituted for humans.

The study continues with the reasons for the conflict. Miles stated that Carthage and Rome were competing for resources but also started to fear each other. He presents in great detail the battle for Sicily, a territory that both the Romans and the Carthaginians claimed. This set the stage for the first Punic War (264-241 BC) that the Romans won.

The impact of the war was devastating. The Carthaginians were expected to pay huge war reparations to Rome and also had to pay the mercenaries who made up their army. They realized they needed resources, materials and manpower. The focus of the book moves to Spain where the Barcid clan, prominent in Carthage, established a protectorate and took hold of the silver mines.

Next, Miles introduces Hannibal, using the work of the Roman historian Livy. He emphasizes Hannibal’s tactical ability, bravery and endurance but also “his all-consuming ambition” (Livy, 231). Hannibal used propaganda extensively to portray himself as a favorite of the gods and a savior of Hellas from a tyrannical Rome. This propaganda was central to the success of the Carthaginians.

The author depicts the journey of Hannibal’s army across the Alps, the hardship, exertion and loss of people not to enemies but to cold, hunger and steep precipices. Despite all these obstacles, the Carthaginians inflicted a terrible defeat on the Roman army.

Hannibal was a skillful general who turned his army into a formidable machine that defeated the Romans. However, he had a poor understanding of the Roman mentality. Instead of striking at the time when the Romans were weak, he allowed them to re-group and attack later. There are different interpretations to explain the hesitation of Hannibal in front of the gates of Rome, but Miles attributes it to an account of Heracles’ sojourn in Rome, found in a history written by Silenus. Hannibal, according to this account, wanted to present himself as a new Heracles, who came to free the people of the region.

The tables turned for the Romans when a new general was appointed commander of the Roman Army. He was Publius Cornelius Scipio. The ancient sources reveal that he borrowed and improved on “many of the strategies that Hannibal himself had deployed
to such great effect” (299). Miles also explains how Scipio used the propaganda machine to show his people that he was the favorite of the gods. He defeated the Carthaginians in the Iberian Peninsula, and thus destroyed their power base. The book continues with the campaign launched by Scipio against Carthage, which ended with a decisive victory for the Romans, at the Zama.

Despite the military defeat, the Carthaginians managed to prosper economically. Marcus Porcius Cato, a Roman senator, famed for his ascetic life, led an embassy to Carthage and was alarmed by what he found. He started to lobby for the total destruction of the city. He argued that once the Carthaginians paid the indemnity, it would become again a challenge to Rome. He emphasized the suffering of Rome and used all available stereotypes to persuade his fellow senators of the necessity to eliminate totally this threat. The Roman historian Livy presents the Carthaginians’ defeat as “divine retribution” (361) for their vices, which are contrasted with the Roman virtues. It was a needless, unjust and savage conflict that ended in 146 BC. The world of the Western Mediterranean was Roman.

In concluding, Richard Miles argues that the debt that Rome owed to Carthage is difficult to assess not because of lack of achievements but because the Greeks were better at claiming ownership of all the advances. The Romans benefitted from the economic and political infrastructure put in place by the Carthaginians in the territories they inhabited. Rome destroyed a strong rival. The sacking of the city was a profitable business. They took the wealth of the city, the works of art and the people and shipped them to Rome. This huge wealth would eventually lead to the decline of Rome, fuelled by the greed and ambition of the elite.

Miles challenges the stereotypes and myths that characterize traditional understanding of the Punic Wars. Featuring an extensive array of selections from major Roman and Greek sources, combined with the latest archeological discoveries, the book offers an insight into the political, social, religious, cultural and economic aspects of the Roman and Carthaginian civilizations. It is vividly written and accessible and provides fascinating observations about a vanished world.
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