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### The ISCSC Celebrates the 130th Birth Anniversary of Pitirim A. Sorokin, the Founding President, with a Contemporary View of His Legacy

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## **The ISCSC Celebrates the 130th Birth Anniversary of Pitirim A. Sorokin, the Founding President, with a Contemporary View of His Legacy**

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### **Abstract**

This study analyzes the legacy of Pitirim Sorokin, founding President of the ISCSC, in terms of his methodology, the scope of his works, and his acceptance by his American peers. He was perceived as a prophet rather than a scientist. Furthermore, he was a hidden anti-Leninist who lived through and was obsessed with crises, and, being spiritually cultivated, he perceived altruism, the Absolute, God, love, duty, sacrifice, grace, and justice as the only solutions that can reconstruct and save humanity. His theory of social and cultural dynamics is like Marx's socioeconomics; however, it was reconfigured to sound different, since he was a staunch anti-Communist as well



as someone who had been sentenced to death and later pardoned by V. Lenin. It appears that his stay in the U.S. was aimed more at developing a theory of how to reconstruct humanity from a big-picture point of view than to develop sociological solutions for the actual processes of industrialization, urbanization, and mechanization, even though he kept the very prestigious position of being founding chair of the Department of Sociology at Harvard University. This study found that his prophetic predictions have not taken place in the last 70+ years since the publication of his first book on humanity's dynamics and future.

### **Introduction**

The International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (ISCSC) was formally established in 1961 at a meeting in Salzburg (Austria). It was organized by historian Othmar Anderle and attended by fellow historians Arnold J. Toynbee and Rushton Coulborn. Sociologist Pitirim Sorokin (1889-1968) was our society's first president. He was one of the most original, talented, and controversial figures in American sociology.

His spectacular rise from a miserable childhood in Czarist and Bolshevik Russia to the Olympian heights of Harvard University surprised many of his peers and followers. However, it should be remembered that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian intellectual elite was equal to the intellectual elite of Anglo-Saxon nations.

Among the Russian elite of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, one can mention the names of writers such as Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Turgenyev, Pushkin, Nabokov, and Gogol; composers such as Stravinsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Scriabin, Mussorgsky, and Tchaikovsky; ballet dancers (from the Bolshoi Theatre); and scientists such as Lomonosov, Tsiolkovsky, Pavlov, Kondratiev, Kantorovich, Danilevsky, Altshuler, Lifshitz, Mendeleyev, Sikorsky, and others.

Thus, it is not a surprise that Sorokin, coming from Russia, was the founding chair of the Department of Sociology at Harvard. It should, however, be somewhat of a surprise that such a famous American university organized such a relevant department at such a late time. By 1930, Sorokin had already been the chair of the Sociology Department at the University of St. Petersburg from 1919-1922.

However, it is incredible that Sorokin, despite being poor in his youth, was anti-Bolshevik and was a private secretary of the first and unique democratic prime minister, Alexander Kerensky (1881-1970). Sorokin luckily survived his death sentence by the Bolshevik “court” and was pardoned by V. Lenin due to intervening friends. In the meantime, he was completing his education and doctorate in a revolutionized country engaged in World War I, where hunger existed in almost every home. He eventually got permission to leave the country in 1922, going into exile. At just the age of 33, he was already a recognized scholar abroad. President Edvard Benes and Prime Minister Thomas Masaryk offered him a special scholarship and job at Charles University in Prague. Eventually, after receiving invitations from American universities to speak about the Russian Revolution, he and his wife Elena left Europe for the U.S. in 1922.

The year 1922 was a good year for immigrants, including the Sorokins. From 1890 to the mid-1920s, millions of new immigrants arrived from southern and eastern Europe. To old immigrant generations of WASPs (white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants) was added new generations of PIGS (Polish, Italian, Greek, and Slavic). In total, about 3.2 million people immigrated from Russia (Poles and other Slavic peoples are included in the count). Approximately 44 percent were Jews escaping pogroms in Russia.

Another surprising fact is that, within seven years, Sorokin (who immigrated not knowing English) was recognized at some American universities (he worked at University of Minnesota and widely traveled) as a very impressive scholar-sociologist publishing on the Russian Revolution, social mobility, sociological theory, and rural sociology, which resulted in his being asked to organize the Department of Sociology at Harvard. In such a short time, he had established himself as a leader in American sociology.

## Sorokin: A Scientist or Prophet

From 1930 to 1944, the Department of Sociology at Harvard prospered under Sorokin's leadership, attracting an entire generation of young scholars who in their own right would have a profound impact on the discipline. During that period, Sorokin published his *magnum opus*, entitled *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. However, he also became involved in a bitter battle with rival Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) for control of the department. Parsons was an American sociologist who served on the faculty of Harvard University from 1927 to 1973, and he was one of the most influential structural functionalists of the 1950s. As a functionalist, he was concerned with the elements that played an essential role in society.

Parsons ultimately deposed Sorokin and transformed the Department of Sociology into the Department of Social Relations. The conflict between Sorokin and Parsons was so vicious that even today, in the official history of the department, Sorokin is not mentioned, even though he founded the department and chaired it for fifteen years. Sorokin nevertheless stayed on at Harvard, where he established the Center for Creative Altruism in 1946; however, outside of this, he continued to work in relative obscurity. In 1961 he tried to move to the Philosophy of History and went to Europe, where, in Salzburg, he was elected the founding president of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilization, with strong support provided by the father of the study of civilizations, Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975), who saw in Sorokin, a creative scholar of his same age. Sorokin highly regarded Toynbee's theory of civilization.<sup>1</sup> This positive regard was very rare, for Sorokin was highly critical of his peers. Sorokin's love of the study of civilization, however, did not last long, and in 1963, he was in the end recognized for his accomplishments and elected president of the American Sociological Association (ASA).

Sorokin approached the study of sociology from a big-picture point of view, examining dynamic changes at the level of an entire nation. As a survivor of the Russian Revolution, he understood that societal change impacts the whole society, while American sociologists approached things from a more small-picture point of view, including the study of industrialization, urbanization, as well as technological progress triggered by mechanization and motorization. Sorokin argued that the American approach was provincial.<sup>2</sup> Very often he broke with conventions, frequently ridiculing and taunting his less adventurous colleagues. In revenge, they looked at him as an intellectual heretic and colorful provocateur, not as a scholar in times when sociology wanted to be rigorous science. As a result, Sorokin's ideas have either been consistently ignored or misunderstood for more than a quarter century.

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<sup>1</sup> P. Sorokin. (1950). *Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis*. Boston: Beacon Press, 120.

<sup>2</sup> M. F. Ashley Montague (1938). Letter to the Editor. *American Journal of Sociology*, 44: 282-284

Furthermore, he was not hospitable towards his students. They were overwhelmed by the supremacy and power of Sorokin's intellect, and they often found him unfriendly, challenging, and too critical of their scholarly work.<sup>3</sup> Some graduates observed that Sorokin was a man of considerable learning but very little wisdom and common sense.<sup>4</sup> It appears that Sorokin was doctrinaire, which is typical for revolutionaries who are ready to die for the ideal. His attitude was not compatible with his consensus-seeking American peers. Therefore, eventually, he was by-passed and purposely forgotten. This was unfortunate for sociology since, besides its popular inductive method, Sorokin's deductive, prophetic approach was crucial for defining societal trends, disruptive processes, and phenomenal agents.

Because Sorokin's approach was forgotten, nowadays sociological research is mostly based on studying the past, which assumes the linear development of society; however, in the present age of high technology, the rule instead is that the future will be full of disruptive solutions which cannot be proven statistically. Hence, contemporary globalization and digitalization are accepted by political leaders who lack assistance from knowledgeable and wise sociology and economics-oriented deductive research carried out for the sake of the common good.

### **Sorokin's Bible: *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (1937-1941)**

Sorokin's book *Social and Cultural Dynamics* was published in four volumes during the very troubling times of 1937–41, and it was revised in 1957. His book can be compared in scope to the works of Toynbee<sup>5</sup> and Spengler.<sup>6</sup> Sorokin classified societies according to their *cultural mentality*, which can be:

- *Ideational* (reality is spiritual) – This is the view that reality is an immaterial, everlasting Being.
- *Sensate* (reality is material) – This mentality views reality as that which is perceived by the sense organs and by no other means. It is atheistic or agnostic. Its underlying goal is the mastery of the observable world for the sake of physical gratification. Its epistemology is empirical.
- *Idealistic* – This view combines the best of the other two mentalities, with the addition of reason as a way to knowledge.

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<sup>3</sup> B. V. Johnstone. (1995). *Pitirim A. Sorokin: An Intellectual Biography*. Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 95.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 103

<sup>5</sup> A. Toynbee (1934-1939) - the six volumes of his main work, *A Study of History*, were published by Oxford University Press.

<sup>6</sup> O. Spengler. (1918-1922) *Der Untergang des Abendlandes: Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte [The Decline of the West: Outlines of a Morphology of world history]*, *Gestalt und Wirklichkeit; Welthistorische Perspektiven (in German)*, 2 vols. – *The Decline of the West*; an Abridged Edition by Helmut Werner (tr. by F. Atkinson).

- *Logico-meaningful* clusters – These are the result of the integration of cultural elements such as events, relationships, and objects that branch from the same set of values or criteria of truth and that appear to somehow fit together into a shared worldview. They are clusters of attitudes which couple these periods of different orientations together.
- *Congeries* – These are cultural elements that are not compatible with any pattern and which do not give the impression that they “belong” with other items.
- Also:
  - The senses tell us about everyday sensory spectacles;
  - Intuition gives us abundant feelings, which are our only source of deep communion with the absolute;
  - Reason orders and evaluates data gathered by the senses and intuition;
  - The combination of these three gives us the “integralist” system of truth. Hence, Sorokin himself uses integralism in his investigations.

Sorokin argued that major civilizations advance from an ideational to an idealistic mentality, and eventually to a Sensate mentality. Each of these phases of cultural development not only attempts to define the nature of reality, but also stipulates the nature of human needs and goals to be satisfied, the degree to which they should be fulfilled, and the methods of fulfillment. Sorokin interpreted contemporary Western civilization as a Sensate civilization dedicated to technological progress, and he prophesied its fall into decadence and emergence of a new ideational or idealistic era.

According to Sorokin, Western culture is now in the third Sensate epoch of its recorded history. Table 1 summarizes his view of this history.

**Table 1: Cultural Periods of Western Civilization According to Sorokin<sup>7</sup>**

Period	Cultural Type	Begin	End
Greek Dark Age	Sensate	1200 BC	900 BC
Archaic Greece	Ideational	900 BC	550 BC
Classical Greece	Integral	550 BC	320 BC
Hellenistic – Roman	Sensate	320 BC	400
<i>Transitional</i>	<i>Mixed</i>	400	600
Middle Ages	Ideational	600	1200
High Middle Ages, Renaissance	Integral	1200	1500
Rationalism, Age of Science	Sensate	1500	present

<sup>7</sup> J. Uebersax. (2010). Culture in Crisis: The Visionary Theories of Pitirim Sorokin. *Satyagraha*. Accessed 7.12.2019 from <https://satyagraha.wordpress.com/2010/08/19/pitirim-sorokin-crisis-of-modernity>

Sorokin examined a wide range of world societies. In each, he believed he found evidence of a regular alternation between Sensate and Ideational orientations, sometimes with an Integral culture intervening.

These periods can last a very long time — up to several centuries, in fact, such as the Sensate (materialistic) society of Western civilization, which has been active the last six centuries from the Italian Renaissance (1500) up to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Sorokin writes:

*The organism of Western society and culture seems to be undergoing one of the deepest and most significant crises of its life. We are seemingly between two epochs: the dying Sensate culture of our magnificent yesterday, and the coming Ideational or Idealistic culture of the creative tomorrow. We are living, thinking, acting at the end of a brilliant six-hundred-year-long Sensate day. .... The night of the transitory period begins to loom before us and the coming generations — perhaps with their nightmares, frightening shadows, and heart-rending horrors. Beyond it, however, the dawn of a new great Ideational or Idealistic culture is probably waiting to greet the men of the future.*<sup>8</sup>

However, just a general analysis of historic episodes contradicts his judgment. Western civilization during the last 600+ years has had periods of Ideational orientation, such as the French, Mexican, and Russian Revolutions. It is untenable to hold that, during these revolutions as well as World War I and World War II, societies held a Sensate orientation based on materialistic well-being, which was leading to their decadence (perhaps except Berlin in the 1920s).

Even accepting, for the moment, Sorokin's typology of societal orientations, it is difficult to view the Middle (Dark) Ages as Ideational, even taking into account the rise of Christianity in that period.

Furthermore, it is almost impossible in reality to separate the Idealistic orientation from the Sensate orientation, particularly in Western civilization; however, Sorokin could not analyze them together all the time (although he does identify the Integral [Idealistic] orientation as sometimes existing), for otherwise, he would be considered a Marxist. This is because the Sensate (material) orientation is similar to Marx's base (the substructure composed of the production forces and relations of production) and the Ideational orientation is analogous to Marx's superstructure, composed of culture, institutions, structures of political power, roles, rituals, and the state.

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<sup>8</sup> P. Sorokin. (1937-1941). In *Critic of the Sensate Culture: Rediscovering the Genius of Pitirim Sorokin*. Intercollegiate Study Institute. October 8, 2014. Accessed 7.12.2019 from <https://isi.org/intercollegiate-review/critic-of-the-sensate-culture-rediscovering-the-genius-of-pitirim-sorokin>.

Marx analyzes these structures together (Sorokin's Integral orientation), emphasizing that the base influences the superstructure.

In a liberal democracy, it is the opposite: the superstructure influences the base. However, in turbo-capitalism, the base impacts the superstructure, which is taking place today in Western civilization.

Today, about 70 years after Sorokin's typology of these periods, a more realistic Grand Model of Civilization has been presented, shown in Figure 1.<sup>9</sup> This model is based on short periods of alternating Analysis and Design within extended periods of human curiosity, estimated to be approximately 400 years apart. This model is organized by two criteria: information and energy. Based upon its synthesis, the following observations can be made about the development of civilization:

- Four inventions — print, the steam engine (internal combustion), the computer, and the Internet—have decided the directions of civilization's development in the last 500 years. Print liberated thinking, and as a result, the internal combustion engine was built, which provided humans more time to spend on education. Consequently, they designed the computer, which helps in improving the control of processes and the utilization of resources. Finally, the Internet has revolutionized communication among people in the world.
- Every 400 years, a great curiosity occurs, which leads towards geographical discoveries, new inventions, and undertakings in cosmic and life sciences. During shorter periods, a civilization's development alternates through the two phases of Analysis and Design.

This is similar to a democracy where one party rules while the opposite party analyses the situation and prepare its design to rule the next time it is elected.

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<sup>9</sup> A. Targowski (2009). *Information Technology and Societal Development*. Hershey, PA & New York: Premier Reference Source, p. 170.

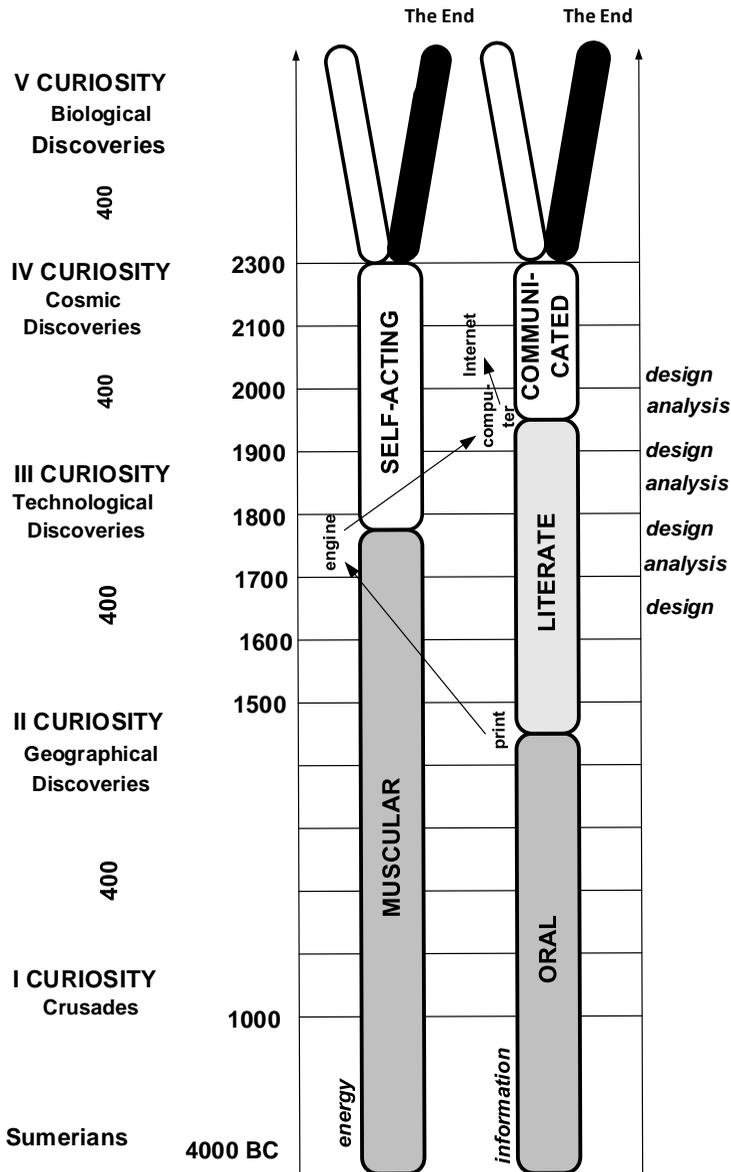


Figure 1. The Info-Energy Grand Model of Civilization's Development (Targowski 2009).

Sorokin originally formulated his view of social and cultural dynamics in terms of three major processes:

- A significant shift of mankind's creative center from Europe to the Pacific;
- A progressive disintegration of the Sensate culture;
- The first signs of the emergence and growth of a new Idealistic sociocultural order.

In the same work, Sorokin put forth extraordinary effort to understand the relationship between (a) war and peace and (b) the process of social and political change. Contrary to popular wisdom, he indicated that the magnitude and depth of war develop in periods of social, cultural, and territorial expansion by a nation. In short, war is just a function of development and social decay.

Are his assumptions valid today? About 70 years have passed since Sorokin's publication of these assumptions, which have been full of grand events, such as globalization. The “shift of creativity,” however, did not move from “Europe to the Pacific;” rather, production was outsourced to Asia due to its cheap labor. The Chinese provided many patents in the 2010s, but this has mostly been in the digital sphere, which is a technology that can be easily enhanced from a home computer and is mainly based on early Western solutions in business and science.

On the other hand, it is true that the “progressive disintegration of the Sensate culture” has taken place, mostly due to substantial inequality in Western civilization, which may lead to social unrest and perhaps even revolution. For example, so-called “progressive Democrats” in the U.S. would like to switch from Capitalism to Democratic Socialism in the 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections.

Is Sorokin right that Socialism in the U.S. will drive American society “toward a new Idealistic orientation”? For example, will single-payer health care insurance enhance the speed and quality of the physical well-being of the citizens? However, will health care be better organized than in Canada and the United Kingdom, where the waiting time for service can be weeks and months and where in the U.K., people over 65 do not have the right to access the full range of health care options?

### **Sorokin’s View of Civilization in the Context of the Early Leaders of the Study of Civilization**

In *Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis* (1950),<sup>10</sup> Sorokin critically assesses the theories of civilization in world history advocated by Nikolai Danilevsky, Oswald Spengler, Arnold J. Toynbee, Walter Schubart, Nikolai Berdyaev, F. S. C. Northrop, Alfred L. Kroeber, Albert Schweitzer, and other authors.

Sorokin believes that recent systems of social philosophy and the philosophy of history have been indicative of a decaying Sensate order heading recklessly for chaos and eclecticism.

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<sup>10</sup> P. Sorokin. (1950). *Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis*. Boston: Beacon Press.

According to Sorokin, these early theories all appear to take this social disintegration into account and are impacted by it in one way or another. His assessment of these theories is as follows:

- The general character of Nikolai Danilevsky's (1822-1885) philosophy of history<sup>11</sup> and the contemporary tension between Europe and Russia makes his views startlingly up to date. His Russia and Europe are more alive today than they were 80 years ago.<sup>12</sup> Europe does not consider Russia as one of its parts, and regarding Slavs more generally, Europe perceives them as something quite alien to itself but at the same time something that cannot be used as mere material to be exploited for their profit, as they exploit China, India, Africa, and Latin America. In fact, Europe sees Russia and Slavichood not only as something foreign but also as an unfriendly force.<sup>13</sup> Sorokin also endorses Danilevsky's view of civilization, and finally, he agrees that Danilevsky's Pan-Slavism-oriented integration would be a different civilization and would be able to compete with Western civilization.
- Furthermore, Sorokin believes that Pan-Slavism reflects the strategy of the Eastern, (formerly) Soviet-led Bloc. He provides the example of Slavic Poland,<sup>14</sup> which "Europeanized" but did not accommodate "Western values" (the Protestant cult of having a good work ethic), instead opting to keep "Slavic ones" (somehow things will work), presenting a deplorable example of a distorted and unbalanced cultural "mongrel."<sup>15</sup>
- Sorokin's evaluation of Danilevsky's contribution was well-placed up to 60 years after it was made. However, after Poland entered NATO (1999) and the European Union (2004), a new Polish generation has eagerly applied Western values. Surprisingly, in 2016-2019 the Polish government switched from the powerful Weimar Triangle group of France-Germany-Poland to the Pan-Slavic Visegrád Group within the EU, composed of Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary (non-Slavic).
- Oswald Spengler's (1880-1936) Hegelian dialectical "Idea in itself" [the World-as-History and "the Idea in its otherness" (the World-as-Nature)] are positively accepted by Sorokin since Spengler rejects the linear development of civilization.

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<sup>11</sup> N. Danilevsky. (1869). *Russia and Europe: A Viewpoint on the Political Relations between the Slavic and Germano-Romanic Worlds*. *Zaria (Dawn magazine)*.

<sup>12</sup> Sorokin, 1950, 50

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 51

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 70

<sup>15</sup> A dog of no definable type or breed.

Sorokin accepts Spengler's Grand Culture as the essential concept needed for the study of human development, which is composed of several stages.

- The last is the stage of civilization, which is reflected in urban development, and as such, is the last stage before the fall of a given Grand Culture. He contests, however, Spengler's assumption that all cultures pass through similar stages in their life-cycles and that each of them passes from one stage to another in about the same length of time. In connection with this, he also contests that there are 50, 100, 300, and 600-year periodicities in the historical process.<sup>16</sup> Sorokin does not like Spengler's rigorous periodization and the life-cycle of Grand Cultures, which include birth, growth, maturation, and decline just as nature passes through Spring-Summer-Fall-Winter. In contrast, Sorokin thinks that cultures have clusters (organized entities) and congeries (unorganized entities), which pass through Ideational, Senate, and Idealistic (Integral) stages lasting very long periods (several centuries).
- Both authors (Spengler and Sorokin) are mistaken. According to contemporary views, civilizations (Grand Cultures) do not die since they transform into new civilizations. For example, Western civilization is transforming into Global civilization in the 21st century.<sup>17</sup> Without doubt, Global civilization has "genes" from Western, Roman, Greek, and even Sumerian civilization in its "DNA," which all developed in the last 6000 years or beyond, going back as far as the times when homo sapiens sapiens first arose. Figure 2 illustrates this process.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 111

<sup>17</sup> A. Targowski. (2015). *Global Civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. New York: NOVA Science Publishers.

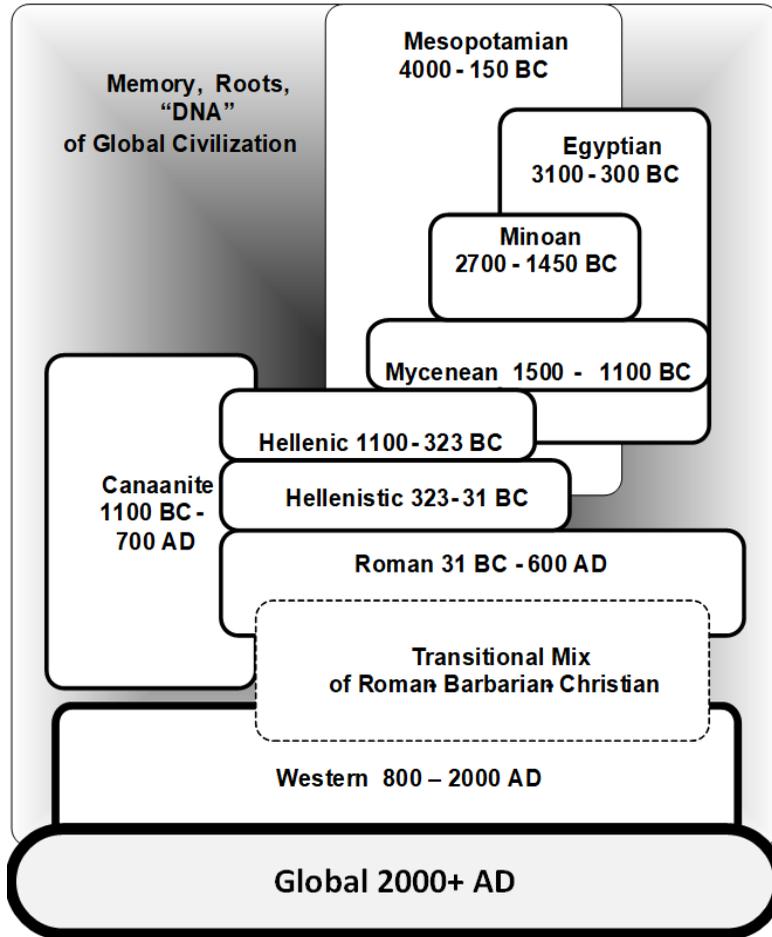


Figure 2. The Memory, Roots, and "DNA" of Global Civilization (The Targowski Model)

Figure 3 depicts a general model of a civilization's life-cycle.

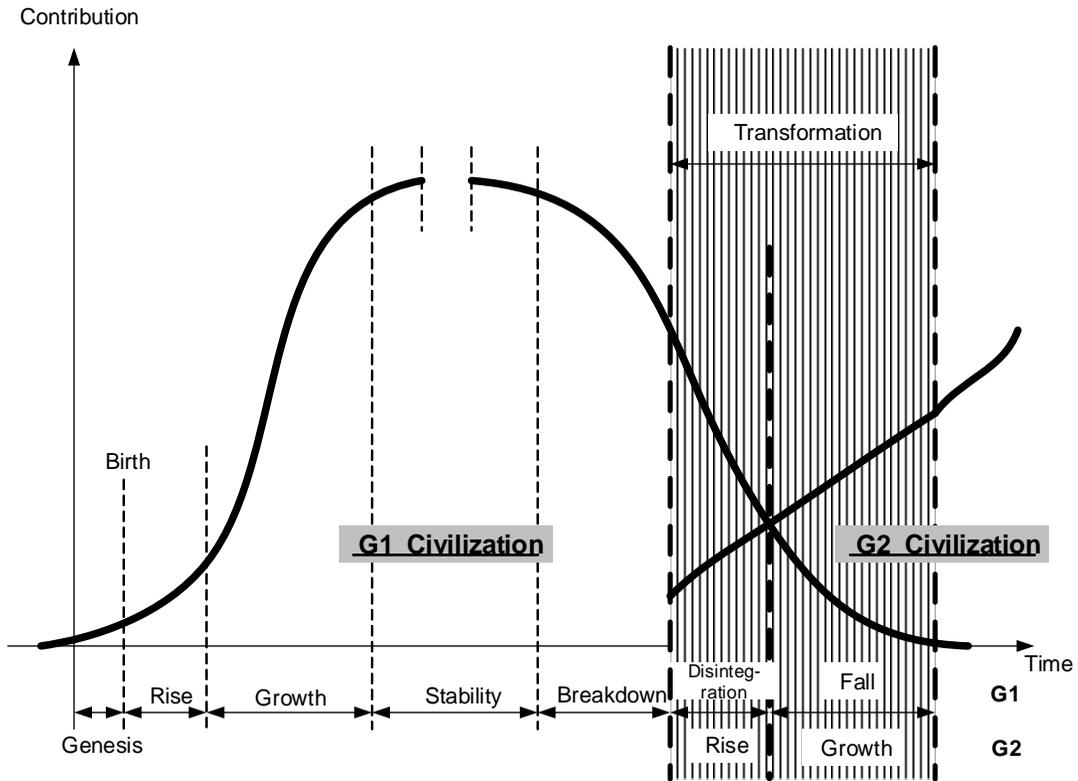


Figure 3. The Life-cycle model of civilization, G-generation of a civilization.<sup>18</sup>

- Arnold Toynbee's (1889-1975) theory of civilization is highly regarded by Sorokin. He gives him a pass in this very positive statement:<sup>19</sup>

Such is the general framework of Toynbee's philosophy of history. He clothes it in a rich and full-blooded body of facts, empirical verification, and a large number of sub-propositions. The main thesis, as well as the sub-propositions, are painstakingly tested by the known empirical facts of the history of the twenty-one civilizations studied. The work as a whole is a real contribution to the field of historical synthesis.

Sorokin accepts Toynbee's concept of civilization (which is different from Sorokin's), as can be seen by the following statement:<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Targowski, 2009, 50.

<sup>19</sup> Sorokin, 1950, 120.

<sup>20</sup> Sorokin, 1950, 206.

By “civilization” Toynbee means not a mere “field of historical study,” but a unified system whose parts are connected by causal and meaningful ties: Civilizations are wholes whose parts all cohere with one another, and all affect one another reciprocally...It is one of the characteristics of civilizations in the process of growth that all aspects and activities of their social life are coordinated into a single social whole, in which the economic, political, and cultural elements are kept in a nice adjustment with one another by inner harmony of the growing body social.

- Sorokin’s evaluation of Toynbee’s theory of civilization was essentially correct. Toynbee’s contribution and foundational knowledge about civilizational development are still substantial and essential information even after 70 years.
- Alfred L. Kroeber’s (1876-1960) theory of civilization is, to a certain degree, accepted by Sorokin. However, Sorokin does take issue with Kroeber’s Integrational orientation, since for Sorokin Ideational and Sensate orientations are separate during most periods of civilizational development. Furthermore, Kroeber is mistaken in chiefly relying on a Sensate source — the Encyclopedia Britannica — for his data; thus, he is biased in favor of Sensate achievements.<sup>21</sup>
- Sorokin’s aversion to Sensate-oriented sources of data, such as those used by Kroeber, appears to be too subjective an accusation. Nowadays, Kroeber is appreciated for his definition of civilization as an objective set of technological and informational activities as well as his definition of culture as a subjective set of elements, including religion.<sup>22</sup>

Sorokin was not afraid to generalize about civilizations, making on-point statements such as his view that Greek civilization glorifies the beautiful to such an extent that it does not have any rivals among other civilizations. He was also of the view that the main contribution of European civilization (today, Western civilization) is the realization of science; of Semitic civilizations, religion; of Roman civilization, law and political organization of an empire, of Chinese civilization, the practical and useful; and of Indian (or Hindu) civilization, imagination and fantasy, together with some mysticism. Moreover, he believed that when a civilization accomplishes its task, it is bound to die.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> R. Simpson. (1953). Pitirim Sorokin and His Sociology. *Social Forces*, 32, no. 2: 125

<sup>22</sup> Targowski, 2009, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Sorokin, 1950, 66.

With the same ease, Sorokin evaluates great people, which can be seen in his statement that Georges Cuvier<sup>24</sup> was better than Aristotle; that Laplace was more intelligent than Archimedes; that Kant thought better than Plato; that Napoleon was a more extraordinary military genius than Caesar or Hannibal; and that Canova<sup>25</sup> understood beauty better than Phidias or Praxiteles.<sup>26</sup>

Sorokin also states that he found neither a linear evolution nor repeated cycles of social change in history, but merely “fluctuations” and “never-ending variations.” However, this view would not be accurate if, by “cycles, one means recurring, patterned, predictable events or relationships. Sorokin argues that history ever repeats itself and yet never repeats itself, and thus both of these seemingly contradictory statements are true and are, in fact, not contradictory at all when properly understood since identical recurrent sociocultural processes are impossible.<sup>27</sup> In the final analysis, Sorokin takes the following view:

- Western civilization has thus far completed two cycles that take on the following form: Ideational, Idealistic, Sensate, Chaos. We are now coming into an age of Chaos, from which we will then be transferred into an Ideational period. Wars, revolutions, famines, and epidemics can be predicted to surge in number and force since that is what occurs when a Sensate culture is dying, and its Ideational successor has not yet risen from its ruins. However, it appears that this is a cyclical theory in the long term (over multiple centuries).
- Sorokin published his book in 1941 during World War II, which had already lasted two years—long enough for one to perceive Chaos on the rise. Indeed, the war was raging in Eastern Europe and Russia. The U.S., however, was quietly preparing for the war in an organized manner, and eventually, due to a better and stronger organization than Germany and the Axis powers, the Allied Forces won the war, including the Soviet Union, where the stable totalitarian government minimized chaos. Perhaps Sorokin was also influenced by the Great Depression (1926-1941), which was cured due to the New Deal and WWII. After World War II, the winners (but also Germany) entered a period of intense reconstruction in their post-war economies with a smile on their faces, which led to the so-called fabulous 1960s—a time that was not chaotic but rather happy and organized.

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<sup>24</sup> Jean Léopold Nicolas Frédéric, Baron Cuvier (1769 – 1832), known as Georges Cuvier, was a French naturalist and zoologist, sometimes referred to as the "founding father of paleontology".

<sup>25</sup> Antonio Canova (1757-1822) was an Italian Neoclassical sculptor, famous for his marble sculptures. Often regarded as the greatest of the Neoclassical artists, his artwork was inspired by the Baroque and the classical revival, but he avoided the melodramatics of the former and the cold artificiality of the latter.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 67

<sup>27</sup> P. Sorokin. (1957). *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 674-675.

The exception was Eastern Europe, whose occupation passed from Germany to the Soviet Union and where chaos was surely present, although mitigated by slow central bureaucratic planning. Perhaps that period was, in fact, the Ideational in the post-chaos period. Notably, however, the Marshal Plan (1948) had already been supporting the reconstruction of Europe (Western) into an economic miracle. Then why did Sorokin not state in his updated editions (like in 1957, in the second printing by Porter Sargent Publisher in Boston) that Western civilization was no longer in a stage of Chaos but in a new Ideational stage?

Regardless, we were still in the same Western civilization, which was contradictory to Sorokin's rule. Moreover, what about not recycling but transforming a declining civilization into the next kind of civilization? Long-lasting civilizations may be alternatively involved in stages of Analysis and Design. For example, during the past 5,000 years, Chinese civilization has passed through the stages Analysis and Design many times without transforming into another kind of civilization.

### **Sorokin on the *Crisis of Our Age* (1942) and *The Reconstruction of Humanity* (1948)**

Pitirim Sorokin was removed from the chair of the Sociology Department at Harvard in 1944 after a longstanding conflict with his "employee," sociologist Talcott Parsons, who to a certain degree represented the contrary opinion that American sociologists held about Sorokin's research. Except for a few peaceful years when Sorokin arrived in the U.S. (1922-37)<sup>28</sup>, he was in constant crisis since his childhood in Czarist and Bolshevik Russia. Hence, he decided to theorize about the crisis from a sociological point of view.

He published the book *The Crisis of Our Age* in 1942.<sup>29</sup> The book was published during World War II in Europe, eventually reaching the Soviet Union and, having moved across the Pacific, Japan. However, the author never mentioned World War II; instead, he analyzed the Greek and Roman wars in just a few pages.<sup>30</sup> He witnessed (although behind the gates of Harvard) the Great Depression (1929-41) in the U.S., but he did not consider it to be a crisis and never mentioned it! Likewise, Nazism and Communism were never analyzed as the source of "the crisis of our age." He mentions Hitler several times, mostly in the introduction, and while Stalin is also mentioned several times, this was only done while listing similar politicians but not as a factor of the war in 1939 and the crisis of the Soviet society, which was very well known to Sorokin.

<sup>28</sup> Between 1937-41, Sorokin published his *magnum opus*, titled *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, which triggered sharp criticism of his research.

<sup>29</sup> P. Sorokin. (1942). *The Crisis of Our Age*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 212-17

In this book, the author mostly analyzes the dynamics of war, applying his criteria associated with the Ideational, Idealistic, and Sensate mentalities, namely, the fine arts, science, truth, philosophy, religion, ethics, law, and so forth. He touches on the issues of suicide, mental diseases, impoverishment, syncretism, quantitative colossalism (in Greek and Roman world), and diminishing creativeness. In the book's conclusion, he criticizes the popular views that the roots of the crisis are in the following:<sup>31</sup>

- Maladjustment of a purely economic, political, or biological nature,
- Mild religious therapy, and making churches more attractive and entertaining
- The magic of power in education and changing misguided curricula
- The evils of biological deterioration, poor heredity, inferior races, negative selection, and uncontrollable birth,
- Sunspots, climate misbehavior, cosmic factors, and so forth.

Sorokin writes that remedies have often been applied but have not eliminated the crises. The roots of the crisis are deeper than those factors: namely, our sensory organs may malfunction, and our perception of reality can be wrong and too material. This leads to mechanistic materialism and vulgar utilitarianism, which controls modern culture. He believes "the remedy" lies in transforming the agonizing Sensate to the Ideational or Idealistic/Integral culture,<sup>32</sup> with greater glory to God.<sup>33</sup> The ultimate solution is to be found in practicing new idealistic values of the Absolute, God, love, duty, sacrifice, grace, and justice.<sup>34</sup> These values may look good on paper, but they are utopian. Sorokin, as a leading sociologist, provides unrealistic solutions for the very pragmatic-oriented citizens of Western civilization. He reminds one of the paths of Leo Tolstoy, who experienced a spiritual awakening<sup>35</sup> and, by the end of his life, believed he was Jesus in the second coming.

Fortunately, when Sorokin was put aside by Harvard, he obtained substantial funds from Eli Lilly, the CEO of big pharma Lilly, to create the Center for Creative Altruism at Harvard in 1946. Very soon after, he published the book *The Reconstruction of Humanity* in 1948.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 308-310

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 316

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 318

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 324

<sup>35</sup> Some are of the opinion that Tolstoy inspired and provoked the Bolshevik Revolution.

<sup>36</sup> P. Sorokin. (1948). *The Reconstruction of Humanity*. Boston: The Beacon Press.

As an excellent erudite scholar, he treats the topic comprehensively. In the beginning, he disqualifies the efforts of democracy, the United Nations, World Government, Capitalism, Communism, Fascism, Socialism, education, science, technology, practiced religion (organized), legalism and ethics, and the fine arts from reconstructing humanity. His solution is in promoting altruism in all areas of human encounters. He asks, “can it be achieved?”<sup>37</sup>

He understands that a “tough-minded” person may not believe in his solution; however, humanity, if it is going to continue as a Sensate culture, will disappear. This means there is no other better solution than his to reconstruct humanity. “It is for humanity itself to decide its destiny!”<sup>38</sup>

Was Sorokin correct in believing that altruism will eliminate crisis? No, he was wrong. The remedy lies in practicing a Wise (sustainable) Civilization, where tolerance is of the highest value. We now understand this premise.

## Spirituality 2.0

The solution for reconstructing humanity lies in applying a universal set of values that assure the survival of humanity, according to Targowski.<sup>39</sup>

The first pre-condition of the planned architecture of a Wise Civilization is that civilians should adopt the second stratum of a complementary pseudo-religion called “Spirituality 2.0”. This will not supersede any of the existing Religions (1.0), as it would not only be heresy and an unheard of revolution impossible to win but also unnecessary and harmful. This new religion is not about fighting religion but about its development at a global level rather than in particular regions. Spirituality 2.0 would teach a complementary morality based on the essential values of the world’s current religions. These values are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The complementary values of Spirituality 2.0

Civilization	The Values of Religions 1.0 as a Contribution to Universal-Complementary Spirituality 2.0
African	Spiritual contact with ancestors
Buddhist	Morality
Chinese	Worship of elders and the family
Hindu	Moderation
Islamic	Reward and punishment

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 236-240

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 241

<sup>39</sup> A. Targowski. (2015). *The Limits of Civilization*. New York: NOVA Science Publishers, 134-136.

<b>Civilization</b>	<b>The Values of Religions 1.0 as a Contribution to Universal-Complementary Spirituality 2.0</b>
Japanese	Co-operation with and the worship of Nature
Eastern	Sacrifice and altruism
Western	Free election, tolerance, and technology
Global	Human and citizen's rights, international law, free flow of ideas, people, goods, and services
Universal-Complementary	The above plus wisdom, kindness, conditional forgiveness, equal access, sustainable development

The total of the above values is the morality of Spirituality 2.0, which will control the need for developing a Universal (Complementary) Civilization (UCC). One shared by the world, UCC would not be a cluster of the other civilizations; rather, it would be the highest level of the world's civilizations. In this way, an American, a Pole and any inhabitant of Earth will at the same time observe the moral values of at least two civilizations. One can imagine practicing three or more civilizations at the same time, such as when a couple living in Western Civilization each come from another civilization. This civilizational mix creates a complex cloud-like model of civilization, which will need to be practiced so that tolerance towards others can be applied locally and globally.

The question of how to successfully enforce Spirituality 2.0 remains. It will probably take several or more generations, for it took Christianity more than 300 years to be legally recognized. Today, thanks to the excellent systems of social communication, it should take a shorter amount of time than that. The enforcement of Spirituality 2.0 ought to start at school and college, but up to five generations will need to pass before positive effects of that process become visible. Spirituality 2.0 will surely not succeed with adults, and it will not work by being backed by laws — not at the beginning, at least. This religion must be enforced within all the civilizations of the world, which might be unfeasible. These civilizations will believe this process to be an assault against their religions, and they will seek to ridicule Spirituality 2.0 in the eyes of their followers. The paradox of the potential conflict is that this spirituality stands against fighting other religions — it is meant to complement the religions and allow them to continue their missions for the sake of humanism.

However, failing to enforce Spirituality 2.0 as a practice of UCC will make it impossible to eliminate or reduce the conflicts and wars that stem from the clash of moralities both now and in the future. For the time being, I know of no better solutions. More on this topic was contributed by A. Targowski and M. Celinski in their (edited) book *Spirituality and Civilization Sustainability in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> A. Targowski and M. Celinski (Edt.). (2013). *Spirituality and Civilization Sustainability in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. New York: NOVA Science Publishers.

## Conclusion

Pitirim Sorokin embodies the phenomenon of world sociology for the following reasons:

1. Coming from a difficult childhood during times of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution, he completed university study and advanced to become a chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of St. Petersburg. He became a private secretary of the democratic Prime Minister Alexander Kerensky, was sentenced to death and later removed from his death cell by V. Lenin, and escaped to Czechoslovakia, where President Benes and Prime Minister Masaryk provided him with a professorship at the University of Prague. Soon after, he emigrated to the U.S. and, without prior knowledge of English, became the leader of American sociology within only several years! It is a remarkable and unheard-of achievement. However, this dramatic heritage impacted his utopian intellectual contribution tremendously.
2. Despite his 37 books and 400 scholarly papers, he was forgotten and had a shadow cast upon his works. His American peers saw him as a prophet rather than a scientist, and they criticized him for the following reasons:
  - a. Sorokin used a large number of co-workers from a pool of Russian emigrants to provide him with statistical research. However, they were dispersed throughout the country with limited communication tools and were without Sorokin's supervision. This led to mathematical errors and inconsistencies, which Sorokin did not edit or elaborate upon within the integrated team. What is worse, he did not pay much attention to this data in his writings.
  - b. Sorokin's terminology was confusing. He used Sensate for a materialistic orientation, Ideational for a spiritual orientation, and Idealistic for an integrational orientation. He desired that all sociological research be based on these orientations, which he believed he had proven in his many books. However, those terms were misleading. For example, the last Idealistic orientation means the integration of the two other orientations. This sounds like the ideal orientation (challenging to achieve), while in practice, material and informational (spiritual) orientations take place during every period of human existence. Furthermore, he believed the Idealistic stage was the last developmental stage of society. His criteria and way of analyzing were detached from practice.
3. Sorokin's prophetic predictions based on his colossal writings about the fate of humanity did not come to pass within 70 years, as was verified in this study.

4. Who was Pitirim Sorokin — this man with a “Russian soul” disguised as an American sociologist — based on his prophetic ideas? He was anti-Lenin,<sup>41</sup> and he wanted to define an anti-Bolshevik theory in English to reconstruct humanity for eternal happiness. In order to do so, he did the following:
  - a. He copied Marx’s base and superstructure into the Sensate and Idealist orientations, but contrary to Marx, he separated them (wrongly) and, only as an exception, saw them together in the Integrated orientation.
  - b. He argued that only a widely applied altruism could reconstruct humanity. This is a hidden strategy of Communism, “to each according to his needs.”
  - c. He was not interested in the daily social issues of Americans, such as industrialization, urbanization, mechanization, and so forth since his goal was to examine how to reconstruct humanity worldwide.
  - d. He was motivated by a spiritual awaking, believing that the Absolute,<sup>42</sup> God, love, duty, sacrifice, grace, and justice will make for a happy society. If he had lived longer, would he have joined one of the American communes or organized such a commune?
5. American social sciences should accept Sorokin’s big-picture approach and combine it with a small-picture approach, for example:
  - a. Universities should provide a service course on “civilization development” for every student.
  - b. History should offer civilization-oriented curricula.
  - c. Sociology should investigate diversification vs. unification in the globalizing world.
  - d. Economics should clarify that cheap labor is not suitable for consumers because it minimizes their number.
  - e. Psychology should clarify how individuals and society can advance from a state knowledge to that of wisdom.
  - f. Business science should investigate the issue of a labor-free economy.
  - g. Communication sciences should clarify how to write for those who do not read (they scan) and how to apply virtual civilization wisely.
  - h. Political science should clarify how to balance representative and direct democracy.
  - i. Computer Information Systems should include curricula on how to design ethical IT systems.

At the end of analyzing Pitirim Sorokin’s place in history, one can emphasize his contributions to the study of civilizations as the founding president of the ISCSC. His administrative skills and fame helped the organization to acquire the membership of prominent intellectuals like A. Toynbee, Othmar Anderle, Benjamin Nelson, Roger

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<sup>41</sup> A true anti-Lenin individual is Polish worker Lech Walesa, who led the Solidarity Revolution that liberated Poland from the Soviet Block in 1989.

<sup>42</sup> The theory of everything.

Wescott, Carroll Quigley, David Wilkinson, Michael Palencia-Roth, C.P. Wolf, Vytautas Kavolis, Matthew Melko, Walter Benesch, Shuntaro Ito, Wayne Bledsoe, Lee Daniel Snyder, David Rosner, Toby Huff, Lynn Rhodes, Joseph Drew, Michael Andregg, Laina Farhat-Holzman, William McGaughey, Ricardo Duchesne, Michael Dudley, Vlad Alalykin-Izvekov, Connie Lamb, W. Reed Smith, Ashok Kumar Malhorta, Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, Adan Stevens-Diaz, Stephen Borthwick, Oleg Benesch, Huei-Ying-Kuo, Pedro Geiger, Fang Hanwen, Juri Abe, Hisanori Kato, Wallace Grey, Tseggai Isaac, Hermenegilde Rwantabagu, Lyuba Michalcova, Valentin Andreyev, Barry Johnson, Dong-Hyeon Jung, Soojin Jung Yonsei, Cheol-hun Park, Evy Johanne Haland, Richard Zinser, Dario Fernandez-Moreira, Ross Maxwell, Lee Stauffer, Taylor Halverson, Stephen Satkiewicz, Peter Hecht, Norman Rothman, Stephen Blaha, Marek Celinski, Samuel Huntington, and others. He also helped to arrange meetings with prominent speakers such as Talcott Parsons, Hayden White, Immanuel Wallerstein, Gordon Hewes, André Gunder Frank, Marshall Sahlins, Lynn White Jr., Jeremy Sablof, and others.

Unfortunately, within two years, Sorokin was elected president of the American Sociology Association (ASA), and he abandoned our Society and “civilization.” Due to the cultural and historical orientations of the early members, the Society’s focus was directed at early civilizations and their micro-elements and impact. The hot issue was “Athens vs. Jerusalem.” We lost the big-picture focus and also lost “civilization” to “culture” as an academic curriculum of study.

However, a younger generation of academics was bored listening to the never-ending debates on what civilization is. Fortunately, our late member (also from Harvard) Samuel Huntington awoke not only our Society but the whole world to the fact that, since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the New World Order is controlled by the *Clash of Civilizations*, which he argued for in his famous book published in 1996.<sup>43</sup> That book explained to me what is happening in the world and motivated me to join the ISCS.

Also focusing on “civilization” was our past late president, Matthew Melko (1930-2010), who in scholarly and precise language, explained the *Nature of Civilizations* (1969).<sup>44</sup> Stephen Blaha, atomic physicist, published<sup>45</sup> endless mathematical models on civilization’s dynamics.

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<sup>43</sup> S. Huntington. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

<sup>44</sup> M. Melko. (1969). *The Nature of Civilizations*. Boston: Porter Sargent.

<sup>45</sup> S. Blaha. (2002). *The Rhythms of History: A Universal Theory of Civilizations*. Pingree-Hill Publishing; S. Blaha. (2002). *The Life Cycle of Civilizations*. Pingree-Hill Publishing; and other works.

Likewise, one of the founding members, David Wilkinson,<sup>46</sup> is most sincere when he argues that all main-stream civilizations are merging into a Central civilization.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, his Central civilization has recently been transforming into Global and Virtual civilizations.<sup>48</sup> The former is broad and worldwide, but the latter is the most “Central” since it is a single entity and yet everywhere.

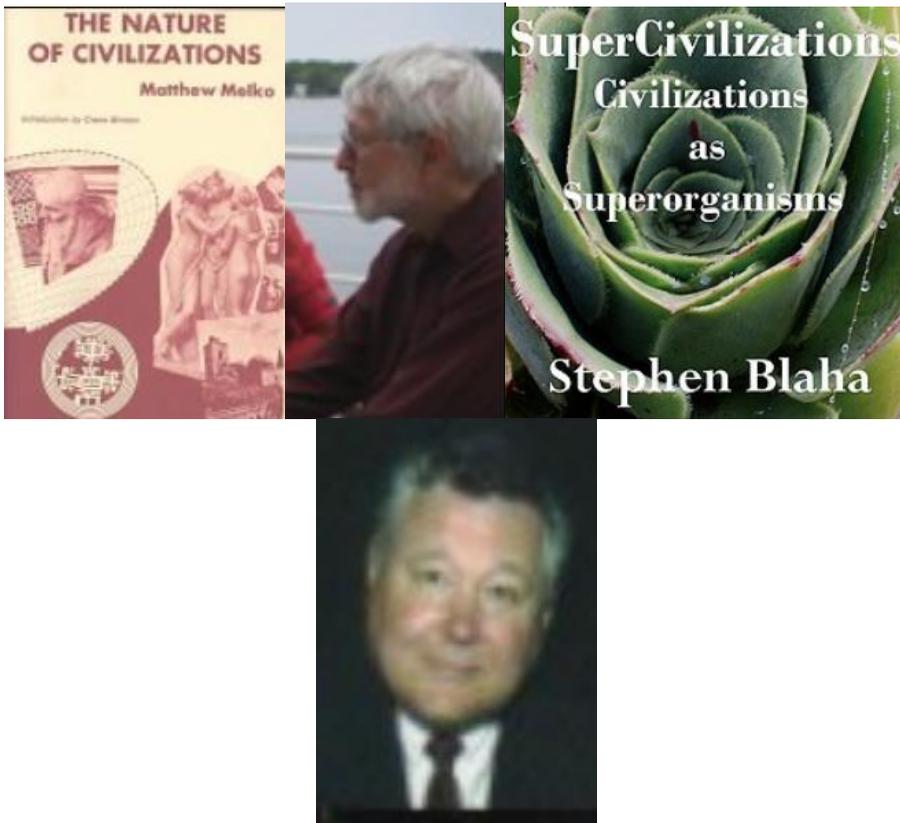


Figure 4. Matthew Melko (late), Stephen Blaha, and David Wilkinson belong to a group of researchers who investigate civilization as the entire unit. Also, Andrew Targowski investigates civilization as the entire unit, mostly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> D. Wilkinson. (Fall 1987). Central Civilization. *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 17, no. 17:31–59.

<sup>47</sup> According to D. Wilkinson, Central civilization emerged about 1500 BC with the integration of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations, and then engulfed the Aegean civilization in 560 BC, the Indic civilization in 1000, the New World after the Age of Discovery, and finally the Far Eastern civilizations in 1850.

<sup>48</sup> A. Targowski (Ed). *Virtual Civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. New York: NOVA Science Publishers.

<sup>49</sup> A. Targowski’s books (some co-edited); *Chinese Civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2014), *African Civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2015), *Japanese Civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2016), *Western Civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2015), *Virtual Civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2015), *Global Civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2014), *The Limits of Civilization* (2015), *Information Technology and Societal Development* (2009), *Informing and Civilization* (2016), *Spirituality and Civilization Sustainable* (2013), *Wisdom in the Context of Civilization and Globalization* (in press).

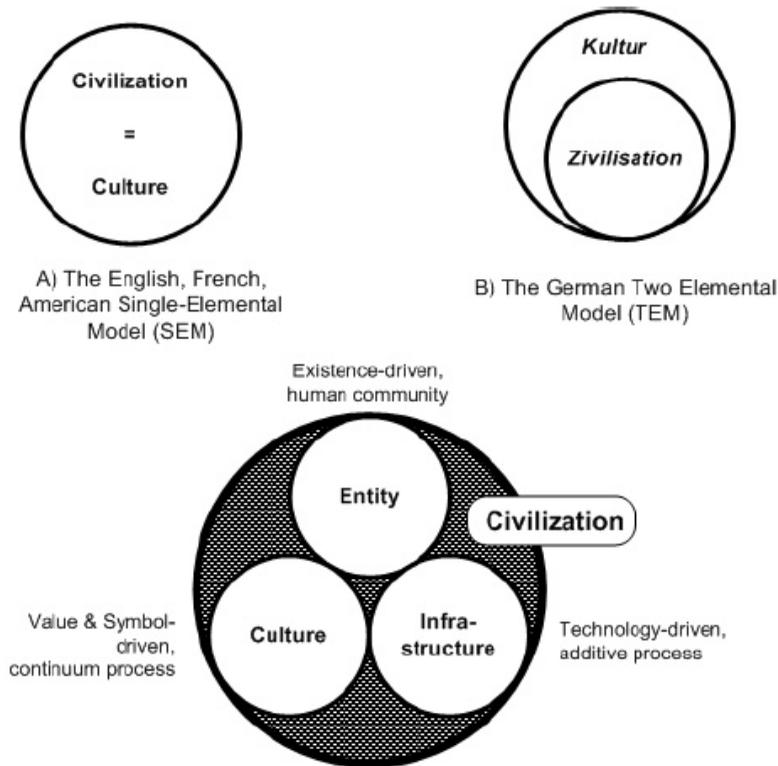


Figure 5. The Targowski Three Elemental Model of Civilization (TTEM)<sup>50</sup>

Unfortunately, due to the early definition of civilization that it is a grand culture, we have a well-developed curriculum of the study of culture when the issues of civilization are lost.

Why is the study of civilization essential and even critical for humanity? Because it investigates the *sense of life*<sup>51</sup> at the level of an individual in the broader context of the philosophy of active history treated like the vast and complex organism called civilization. Hence, the *sense of life* is confronted with the *sense of civilization* not only in a subordinated relation of person to civilization but with some optimism and arrogance of the 21<sup>st</sup> century perhaps allowing for the control of civilization to reach its sustainability. After all, we are self-directed, and we think that we are rational. Therefore, civilization is our horizon of sense which should be composed of purpose, wisdom, goodness, and beauty. The sense of life should be known at a young age, not to lose a life. We think about it when we are old, too late!

<sup>50</sup> A. Targowski (2009). *Information Technology and Societal Development*. Hershey and New York: Information Science Reference, p. 14

<sup>51</sup> J. Kuczyński. (1981). *Sens życia (Sense of life)*. Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza.

Sorokin was searching for the ideal of humanity but was utopian. His medication for the crisis was altruism. Civilization and sense of life were beyond his interest. Pitirim Sorokin was a prophet without a country.<sup>52</sup> Fortunately, since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, he is recognized as an important Russian intellectual whose vast publications are steadily translated from English to Russian by the scholars of the Sorokin-Kondratiev Institute as a part of the Kondratiev Foundation. Pitirim Sorokin and Nikolai Kondratiev<sup>53</sup> knew each other since graduate studies in St. Petersburg, and both were in the Kerensky government. Kondratiev is famous in world economics for so-called Kondratiev Waves<sup>54</sup> but was less fortunate than Sorokin since he was executed at the age of 46 in 1938, while Sorokin was pardoned by Lenin and lived well in the United States. Unfortunately, there he was disconnected with the American reality due to the baggage of being a Russian in exile and perhaps because of his projection of a prophetic altruistic future for the whole world.

However, Sorokin's integralistic focus on *society, culture, and personality* is worth investigating in contemporary civilizations. Today the question is how to live in Virtual civilization without losing the skills needed for acting in Real civilization. Unfortunately, Pitirim Sorokin cannot answer this question. However, if he were among us, he would provide a surprising answer.

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<sup>52</sup> E. Tiryakian (2013). Introduction to the Transaction Edition, Updating Sorokin. In E. Tiryakian (Ed). *Sociological Theory, Valuse, and Sociocultural Change*. Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers. pp. vii-xxiii.

<sup>53</sup> Nikolai Dmitriyevich Kondratiev (1892-1938) was a Russian economist who was a proponent of the New Economic Policy (NEP), which promoted small private, free market enterprises in the Soviet Union. He is best known for proposing the theory that Western capitalist economies have long term cycles of boom followed by depression

<sup>54</sup> It is stated that the period of a wave ranges from forty to sixty years, and the cycles consist of alternating intervals of high sectoral growth and intervals of relatively slow growth. A new technology removes some jobs but that technology may employ those who were removed.