

Civilization: Definitions and Recommendations

Some Definitions of Civilizations

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Some Early Definitions of Civilizations

Civilizations have distinctly different settlement patterns from ordinary societies. The word civilization is sometimes defined as "a word that simply means 'living in cities'" ([Standage](#) 2005:25). Non-farmers gather in cities to work and to trade. Compared with other societies, civilizations have a more complex political structure, namely the [state](#). State societies are more stratified than other societies; there is a greater difference among social classes. The [ruling class](#), normally concentrated in cities, has control over much of the surplus that constitutes wealth and exercises its will through the actions of a [government](#), [bureaucracy](#), technocracy, plutocracy, meritocracy, ad-hoc-cracy, and military.

The term civilization has been defined and understood in a number of ways in a situation when there is no widely accepted standard definition. Sometimes it is used synonymously with a term culture. Civilization can also refer to society as a whole. To nineteenth-century [English anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor](#), for example, civilization was "the total social heredity of mankind;" in other words, civilization was the totality of human knowledge and culture as represented by the most "advanced" society at a given time.

Some most popular definitions of civilizations will be reviewed and compared to find the most important components, which should be a part of a standard/composite definition.

Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975):

- “Civilizations are intelligible fields of historical study . . . which have greater extension, in both space and time, than national states or city or city-states, or any other political communities.” (Toynbee 1935, I: 44-45)
- “Civilizations are institutions of the highest order—institutions, that is, which comprehend without being comprehended.” (I: 455)
- New spiritual insights allow for the birth of a new religion and ultimately a new civilization (Toynbee 1935).

Carroll Quigley (1910-1977):

“Civilization is a producing society with an instrument of expansion.” (Quigley 1979: 142). This definition does not mean very much until one understands that an instrument of expansion consists of varying social organizations that combine to satisfy human needs by providing group security, interpersonal power relationships, material wealth, companionship, psychological certainty, and understanding (101). This “temporary” definition adds that this society becomes a civilization only when it has writing and city life, a requirement not repeated in the replacement definition, since Quigley concluded that some producing societies had met the six needs without necessarily having writing (Andean) or city life (early Western) (142).

Some Contemporary Definitions of Civilizations

Philip Bagby:

“Civilization, let us agree then, is the culture of cities and cities we shall define as agglomerations of dwellings many (or to be more precise, a majority) of whose inhabitants are not engaged in producing food. A civilization will be a culture in which cities are found [1963 (1958) 163].”

Steve Blaha:

“Effective working definition (especially by archaeologists): a grouping of at least several thousand people with a common culture, usually a common language, usually a geographic locale, some significant (usually monumental) buildings and architecture, and a political structure that is not necessarily unified” (Blaha 2002 and provided for this review).

Andrew Bosworth:

“Civilization is fundamentally a cultural infrastructure of information and knowledge that serves survival and continuity. What distinguishes a civilization from a culture is that this infrastructure, having reached a critical level of complexity, becomes autonomous from constituent cities, nations, and empires. In ordinary cultures, the passing of information and knowledge may depend upon imitation or oral communication; in civilizations, this cultural memory, etched into clay or drawn into papyrus, takes on a life of its own (“The Genetics of

Civilization: An Empirical Classification of Civilizations Based on Writing Systems, *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 2003, 49:9). Johann P. Arnason is difficult to sift, since he is focusing on how to study civilizations rather than studying them himself. He observes, nevertheless, that “the concepts of culture and civilizations have developed in close connection with each other. There is no doubt, however, that the concept of culture plays a more dominant role in this shared development. . . . interpretations of culture can focus on forms of social life as well as on the constitutive patterns of meaning which make such forms durable and distinctive; the need to clarify the relationship between the two levels of analysis leads to various definitions of civilization The simplest solution is to construct a concept of civilization on the basis—and within the limits—of a more comprehensive concept of culture.” Arnason then cites as a particular example of this kind of definition, that of Philip Bagby (1963), who, he says, thinks “civilizations can be set apart from primitive cultures inasmuch as they are ‘cultures of cities’ and therefore marked by more complex social structures which accompany urbanization. . . . (2003:1-2).”

Shepard Clough:

Interestingly, he begins that by noting already in 1951 that “Many authors who have addressed themselves to the question of civilization have shied away from an attempt to define civilization and hence have failed to make clear what forces contribute to upward or downward trends of achievement.” He then cites Toynbee, Spengler, Huntington and Kroeber as examples of such authors before concluding that “at the very outset the author must endeavor to explain what is meant by the term civilization.” And, at last (drum roll?): “It refers to achievements in such aesthetic and intellectual pursuits as architecture, painting, literature, sculpture, music, philosophy, and science and to the success which a people has in establishing control over its human and physical environment [1957 (1951): 2-3].

Rushton Coulborn:

“(A) new kind of society, to which I apply the epithet ‘civilized’ began to come into existence from the fifth to the third millennia B.C. in the Old World and in the second millennium B.C. in the New World. I confine the word ‘civilization’ to the culture of those new, unprecedentedly large societies which then began to emerge and to similar societies which have succeeded them in later millennia. ‘Civilizations’ and ‘civilized societies’ are thus distinguished from each other. A ‘civilization’ is mental. It is cultural—a vastly complex and always developing series of human thoughts and feelings, but not of actions, except those very limited actions required to form and express thoughts and feelings (1966: 404).”

Nikolai Danilevsky, 1871:

As translated by Sorokin comes close to a definition in describing the uniformities of civilization in three of five “laws:”

“Law 2. It is necessary that a people enjoy political independence if its political civilization is to be born and developed.

“Law 3. The basic principles of a civilization of one historico-cultural type are not transmissible to the peoples of another historico-political type. Each type creates its own civilization under the greater or lesser influence of alien—preceding or synchronous—civilizations.

“Law 4. A civilization of a given historico-cultural type reaches its fullness, variety, and richness only when its ‘ethnographic material’ is diverse and when these ethnographic elements are not swallowed by one body politic, but enjoy independence and make up a federation or political system of states.”

(Translated from Russia and Europe, 1871, by Pitirim A. Sorokin in *Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis*, 1950, 50, 60).

Christopher Dawson, 1955:

“The fact is that a civilization of any but the most simple and archaic kind is a far more complex phenomenon than the philosophers of history have realized. No doubt it is always based on a particular original process of cultural creativity which is the work of a particular people. But at the same time it always tends to become a super-culture—an extended area of social communication which dominates and absorbs other less advanced or less powerful cultures and unites them in an oecumene,” an international and intercultural society, and it is this extension of the area of communication that is the essential characteristic of civilization as distinguished from lower forms of culture (*The Dynamics of World History*, 1956: 402).

Laina Farhat-Holzman:

A civilization must have a concentration of people in one or more urban area. It must have (at a minimum) division of labor and specialization (people supported by the community to perform professional specialties), and it must have a surplus of food (wealth) to be used in support of such specializations (army, priesthood, centralized governance). At a minimum, it will have a large area influenced by its specializations (technological, military, artistic, and religious) (e-mail to Targowski 2007)”.

And Felipe Fernandez-Armesto:

In his book entitled—guess what?—*Civilizations*: “(W)e inhabit or are entering an intellectual world in which nothing is pinned down and definitions always seem deceptive: a ‘processual world’ in which no process is ever complete, in which meaning is never quite trapped, and in which distinctions elide, each to the next. I get impatient with wrigglers into word games: I want every enquiry to aim, at least, at saying something definite. Most traditional definitions of civilizations, however, have been overdefined: excessively rigid, contrived and artificial—

imposed on the evidence instead of arising from it (2001b, 9.)

Dario Fernandez-Morera:

“A Civilization is indicated by the presence of a city or cities, with constructions of relatively long standing and also relatively long standing public monuments of a religious or political nature. This would exclude groups of wooden houses forming a village or a group of villages forming an association of villages. That is not a civilization, but a culture of some kind which has not yet reached a civilization stage” (provided for this review).

"A civilization has a city or cities with monuments of certain permanence. An archeologist who finds evidence of such characteristics will have found a civilization. A culture, on the other hand, does not have cities with monuments. For instance, the Maya were a civilization, with urban centers such as Palenque, Bonampak and Tikal with lasting monuments of various kinds. In contrast, Polynesians do not have cities or permanent monuments and therefore constitute a culture, more or less fascinating, but not a civilization. How long a civilization lasts depends on a number of variables, among them climactic conditions, the power of its enemies and the coherence and resiliency of its internal structure. In turn, the coherence and resiliency of this structure will depend on other factors, such as unity or disunity in language, religion and race. Some of these factors may be strong enough to make up for other weaknesses. For example, the civilization of the Greek Roman Empire (the so-called “Byzantine” Empire) comprised several ethnic groups, but was unified by religion (Christianity) and language (Greek), so it managed to last nearly a thousand years in the face of many internal dissensions and many external and powerful enemies which included Islam, Persia, Slavic and Germanic invaders, and several Turkish groups.” (Dario Fernandez-Morera in private correspondence to the author).

Andre Gunder Frank:

“In reality there are and have been no civilizations, societies, cultures, ethnicities and even states in and of themselves. There are NO essentialist intrinsically self-contained entities. To claim, identify, and to study any such makes NO sense whatever and only beclouds reality. There are only connections and relations within and among such alleged civilizations 2001, quoted online by David Richardson).”

John K. Hord: 1992:

“Civilization (generic definition). The presence of a formal knowledge system, togetherwith the people subscribing to it.” “Civilization (individual specimen): a formal knowledge system orinteracting group thereof, with the people subscribing to it/them, which as a group recognize the same procedures (rules and institutions of change) as valid and binding (1992: 133).” Of course this

definition depends on an understanding of formal knowledge systems, which is what the cited article is about.

Samuel P. Huntington:

“A civilization is the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species. It is defined by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people (‘The Clash of Civilizations?’ 1993, Foreign Affairs v. 72, #3 .”

Shuntaro Ito quotes the definition by Edward Tyler:

“Culture or civilization . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other customs and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” While he agrees that civilization includes all that Tyler mentions, he adds that civilization emerges only “after the “Urban revolution which created city states, a legal system, social stratification, and the creation of scripts.” He adds: (W)e may say that civilization . . . continues into the present day Scientific Civilization. Therefore, civilization is a special and developed form of culture, a specific higher state of culture (1998: 5-7.)

Feliks Koneckzny 1952 (1935):

“Let us consider rather which are in reality the largest extant fractions of humanity. . . . (T)here exist and have always existed natural associations on the largest scale, and so powerful that they are more powerful than all the powers and armies. These are civilizations. They resist every attempt at the artificial creation of large-scale associations which take no account of civilization. . . . Civilization is the sum of everything which is common to a certain fragment of humanity; and at the same time is the sum of everything by which that fragment differs from other. And since...everything without exception is included in communal life, civilization includes no more (On the Plurality of Civilizations (Translated from O weilosei ciwilizacy, 1935).

Jaroslav Krejci:

Like Kroeber and Coulborn, he resists giving a definition. But the following can be pieced together. “Civilization . . . starts with the division of labor and with the process whereby people become urbanized and literate.” “When used to designate a species . . . the term implies a certain advanced level of socio-cultural development. Conventionally this is associated with the following facts of social life: division of labor, city life, some knowledge of how to make metal tools and, in particular, knowledge of writing.” “In the word (civilization) itself there is no particular value judgment except the general acknowledgement that the society itself is generally above the level of so-called ‘primitive societies’. (2004: 8-9).” (Parentheses mine)

A. L. Kroeber:

Though his list of civilizations is similar to others (Melko 1969, Nature of Civilizations: 20) he refuses to distinguish civilizations from other cultures. I didn't find any reference to a definition of civilizations in his 1944 Configurations. In the 1948 second edition of his Anthropology he writes: "By many anthropologists, ever since Tylor, the words "civilization" and "culture" are often used to denote the same thing; and always they denote only degrees of the same thing. (9 n. 4). In the 1957 Style and Civilizations he elaborates, but has not changed his mind: "Like many anthropologists, I use the word civilization almost synonymously with the word culture. At any rate I try to put no weight on the distinction." He continues: "There is a widespread usage of the term civilization as meaning advanced or literate or mainly urban culture. With this usage I do not quarrel, but I have tried to choose between the two near synonyms in such a way that the reader would realize in any given situation whether I meant the more general or the more slanted sense (150)." Might one conclude that Kroeber thinks that that civilization is culture in a more slanted sense?

Ross Maxwell:

"Civilization consists of those forms and patterns created in support of, or associated with full time independent specialists (2000: 34)." This sparse definition is made in the context of Maxwell's view that regardless of whether civilizations have cities or writing, they can be distinguished by the presence of independent specialists who support the culture, but cannot exist without support for others since otherwise they must produce food and shelter, in which case they are not specialists.

William McGaughey:

"What is a civilization? Is it a human community—a society—located in a particular place and time with government and social order, or is it a more abstract cultural configuration that describes the state of society at particular times in history? A civilization is a type of human community or society that has achieved a certain level of culture. It is contrasted with primitive communities lacking this culture. The culture must be comparatively advanced or developed. It would include large-scale political organization and sophisticated expression in a medium such as writing. The term "advanced" implies (perhaps wrongly) that the culture is superior to others. He emphasizes the role of communication in cultural advancement as follows (McGaughey 2000):

Name of Civilization	Communication Technology	Institution of Power
Civilization I	ideographic writing	imperial government
Civilization II	alphabetic writing	world religion
Civilization III	printing	commerce and education
Civilization IV	electronic recording and broadcasting	media of news and entertainment
Civilization V	computers	the Internet

One recognizes that each medium of communication, whether utilizing written

languages or images captured in electronic form, creates a certain kind of public space in which certain thoughts or intelligible messages can be expressed. This is the cultural aspect of civilizations. There is also, however, an aspect having to do with the structure of society. In my view, all human societies go through a process of development extending from primitive, tribal society to more complex societies that have a pluralistic structure of institutions. The various institutions become fully developed at certain times in world history (e-mail to Andrew Targowski, Jan. or Feb. 2008).

Mattews Melko, the president of the ISCSC (1983-1986):

“Civilizations are large and complex cultures, usually distinguished from simpler cultures by greater control of environment, including the practice of agriculture on a large scale and the domestication of animals (1969: 8).”

For now let's say a civilization is a large society possessing a degree of autonomy and internal integration, an agricultural economy, religion, stratification, warfare, usually cities and writing, or some other method of keeping long term records, as well as central government at least at a regional or urban level (2002: 69).

Melko says also that “civilizations are reifications in the sense that Europe and the Indian Ocean are reifications. There is a plurality of civilizations, some having existed for several thousand years. They vary in size, but many are large, and they have a varying degree of economic and cultural integration. Their boundaries are vague and vary over time, and they often overlap one another. They are remarkably persistent and once established, rarely terminate.”

Melko attributes his above statement to Gunder Frank:

“In reality there are and have been no civilizations, societies, cultures, ethnicities and even states in and of themselves. There are NO essentialist intrinsically self-contained entities. To claim, identify, and to study any such makes NO sense whatever and only beclouds reality. There are only connections and relations within and among such alleged civilizations (Gunder Frank, 2001, quoted online by David Richardson).”

“A civilization is a large society possessing a degree of autonomy and internal integration, an agricultural economy, religion, stratification, warfare, and usually cities and writing, or some other method of keeping long term records, as well as central government at least at a regional or urban level” (Melko, Unpublished, 2007).

W. M. Flinders Petrie:

In his path opening book, *The Revolutions of Civilisation*, 1911, gives no hint of a definition, not even in an opening section entitled “The Nature of Civilisation.”

Carroll Quigley:

“... a producing society with an instrument of expansion.” [1979: 142 (first ed. 1961)]

But the definition doesn't mean very much until one understands that an instrument of expansion consists of varying social organizations that combine to satisfy human needs by providing group security, interpersonal power relationships, material wealth, companionship, psychological certainty, and understanding (101). A producing society is one that increases wealth in the world as distinguished from societies that merely use already existing resources (76). (I wonder if a civilization that used natural resources to an extent that exceeded wealth produced would cease to be a civilization?) This "temporary" definition adds that such a producing society becomes a civilization only when it has writing and city life, a requirement not repeated in the replacement definition, since Quigley had concluded that some producing societies had met the six needs without necessarily having writing (Andean) or city life (early Western) (142).

These three sentences occur within two pages. Since the second and third sentences begin paragraphs, I have given them new paras and quotation marks, but I think they could be linked as one para with four dots between each sentence. These citations are from the second edition of *The Evolution of Civilizations*. but are identical or very close to the 1961 first edition.

Lee Daniel Snyder, the president of the ISCS (2004-2007):

Uses the term culture-system approximately as others use civilization. He writes: "A Culture-System is a complex cooperative community of human beings in a continuous process of 1) preserving its integrity and the integrity of its shared behavior patterns against internal disintegration (fragmentation) and external attack and 2) adapting its structures to changing historical circumstances" (Snyder 1999: 50).

Pitirim A. Sorokin (first president of the ISCS):

". . . the immense and infinitely diverse universe of the total culture of Egypt or India, the West or China, consisting of many billions of cultural phenomena, is certainly not, and cannot be, intergrated into one causal or meaningful-causal system. Assuredly it represents the co-existence of a multitude of cultural systems, of a supersystem (not present in eclectic cultures), and congeries that are partly mutually consistent, partly meaningfully indifferent, and partly contradictory. The whole field of all the cultural phenomena of each of these "cultures," "types," or "civilizations" is a sort of dumping ground where billions of cultural phenomena are thrown together (1950, *Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis*: 209)."

Oswald Spengler:

(from the Atkinson translation, so the original German may give something slightly different). Civilization denotes the later phase of what he refers to as high or great cultures. While Spengler never gives a definition, but in one section, summing up, we can put a few sentences together that come close. "What gives

this fleeting form world meaning and substance . . . is the phenomenon of the Great Culture.”

“Cultures are Organisms, and world history is their collective biography.”

“Culture is the prime phenomenon of all past and future world history (Italics Spengler.) [1980 (1932) 104-105].

Andrew Targowski:

A civilization is an info-material structure developed by humans to cope effectively with themselves, nature, and their Creator (God or Big-Bang). It is a vibrant ‘interface’ which differentiates civilized humans from animals and primitive tribes. The model of a civilization recognizes the following elements (dimensions): Human Entity—organized humans in the pursuit of civilization; it is an existence-driven community. Culture—a value and symbol-guided continuous process of developing patterned human behaviors, feelings, and reactions, based upon symbols, learning from it and being a product of it. Cultures do not satisfy needs, rather, they demand values and define symbols. Infrastructure—a technology-driven additive process of acquiring and applying material means (2004: 93-95).

Andrew Targowski attempted to extract “a composite definition” from these definitions (a few more being added after this attempt) as follows:

“Civilization is a large society living in an autonomous, fuzzy reification (invisible-visible) which is not a part of (a) larger one and exists over an extended period of time. It specializes in labor and differentiates from other civilizations by developing its own advanced cultural system driven by communication, religion, wealth, and power within complex urban, agricultural infrastructures, and others such as industrial, information ones. It also progresses in a cycle of rising, growing, declining and falling (letter to Melko, Feb. 2008).”

Roger Wescott:

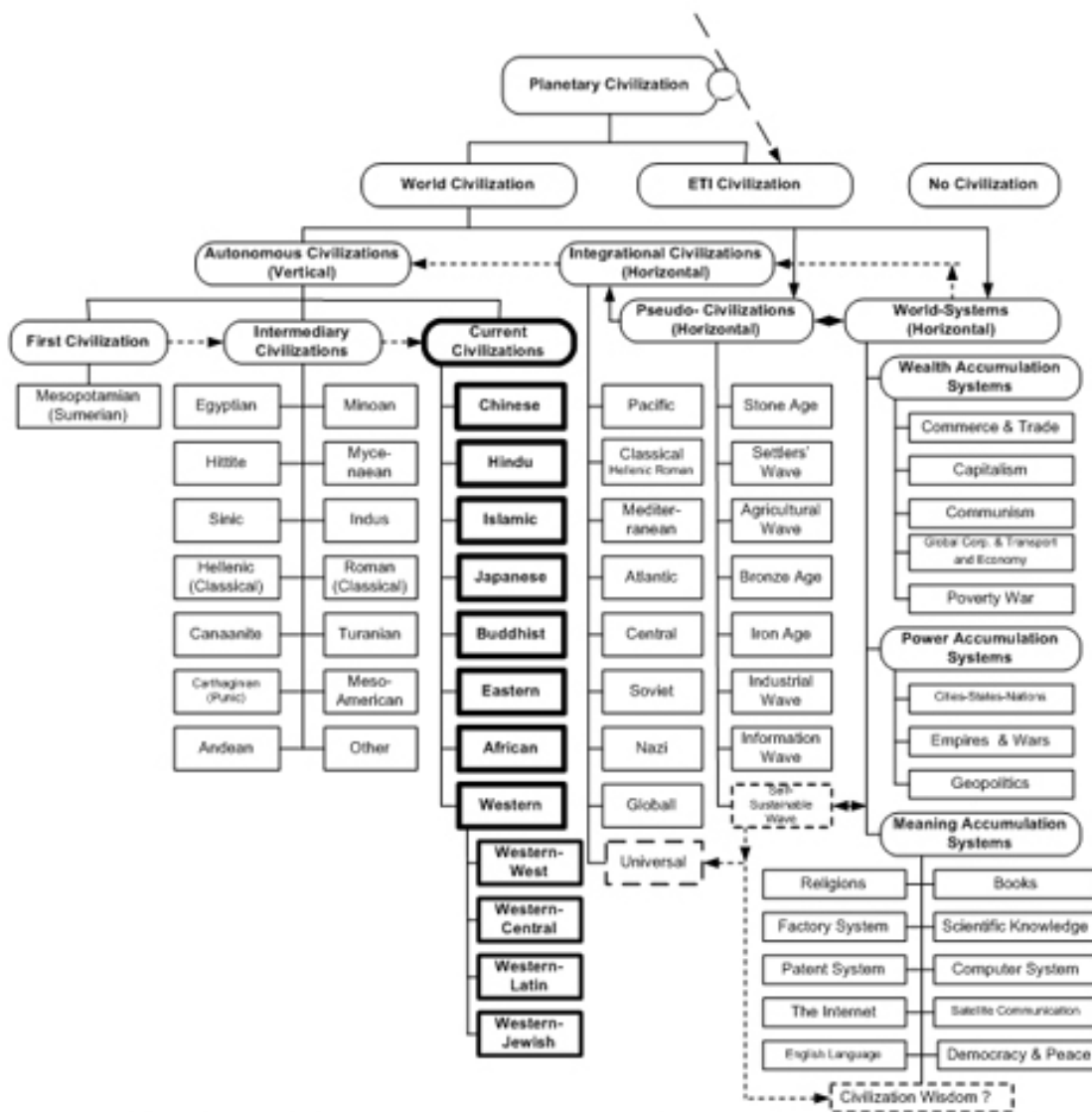
An anthropologist, he loved to enumerate civilizations while declining to define them. He professed that he followed Kroeber in perceiving civilizations as a term for cultures that have developed to a certain level. If we can take his definition, and add his perception of levels of development, we probably have a picture of what most of us would call a definition. He gives a number of definitions of culture, but I’ll draw from those he calls “adequate but unconventional,” since he subtitles his last book: “An Unconsensual View.” “Culture is . . . behavior which is deliberately taught. . . . It focuses and manipulates both perception and consciousness in such a way that each member of a culture acts, without being aware of it, simultaneously as a hypnotist and a hypnotic subject. . . . The proportion of our behavioral repertory which we inherit socially from our deceased ancestors vastly outweighs the proportion which we invent for ourselves, either individually or collectively.” Civilizations come to be perceived when they achieve “villages, stone polishing, herding, tillage, weaving (and) pottery.” They are widely perceived by civilizationists when they acquire “towns, masonry,

metallurgy, industry, literacy, wheels, warfare, bureaucracy, standardization, class-stratification, professionalism, schools, science (and) fine arts, , , There is, needless to say, nothing conclusive about the above trait-list (2000: 191-192, 118-119.)”

David Wilkinson:

“A civilization” = “a city-state, cities-state, or tightly linked politico-military network of such states that are not a part of a larger such network (e-mail to Andrew Targowski, 2007).”

Some Classifications of Civilizations



The 2008 Classification of Civilizations of the Planet Earth (ETI – Extraterrestrial Intelligence) (Targowski 2008)

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Recommended readings on civilization

Editor's Note

Spring, 2007

Joseph Drew

A census of the membership of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations would likely show that almost everyone involved with the organization either is, has been, or will be a faculty member. And for most of the members, this means at the university level.

It is also a fact that the members have never been able to agree, except within broad parameters, what constitutes a "civilization."

Therefore, one might ask how these experts on civilizations introduce and teach the subject. Is there a common substance to the discipline? If so, of what is this comprised?

To find out, I decided to begin by surveying the editors of this journal. Mostly this is because we are in constant communication and, as a result, I figured that they would be quickest to answer my query. The question was: What literature do you use or recommend in teaching the comparative study of civilizations?

I. Dr. Walter Benesch

A prolific author and longtime member of the faculty at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, Dr. Walter Benesch, Manuscript Editor, responded to the request in a decidedly philosophical vein. He wrote:

The problem with the request from my point of view is the decision on 'fields to be covered' as in comparative technologies, literatures, social problems-classes-structures, philosophies, religions and theological systems, political structures, etc. ad infinitum."

Thus - rather than a list, I would suggest an extensive 'History of the World' basic text: one of my favorites would be an updated J.M. Roberts "History of the World" (Knopf) or a similar universal history. This provides a good reference text for events, movements, and periods.

I would couple this with a large format (oversize) "Atlas of World History" which provides maps and dates. There are several of these around - Harper Collins did a good one several years ago - but something more recent would be better.

Once one has two or three such general reference texts then one can add additional materials according to the direction in which one wants to go with the course. Here, again, the challenge is tricky - for example a basic overview of technologies, sciences, literatures, philosophies---but then an emphasis on reading as much original source material as possible - novels, poems in case of literature, scientific treatises (even if simplified) in case of science, particular philosophers in case of philosophy.

For example - and it just happens to be mine - I started out writing a comparative logic book which had students mastering logical systems from a number of traditions. When one US university publisher sent the manuscript back with the comment "Americans don't think like that" - I changed the title to a 'comparative introduction to philosophy' but kept the logics and, as a result, it is a useful approach to civilizations via the logical systems that different traditions have developed. It also offers insight into contemporary physical theory where logical boundaries are being crossed with considerable success in both physics and biology. Macmillan London liked it and printed it.

I don't really care for the term 'civilization'. I prefer 'traditions' - and prefer the idea of a comparative approach to 'traditions,' which leaves the areas open so one can then discuss/compare the ways in which different aspects of different traditions around the world influence the development of everything from physical science to religion to literature.

II. Prof. David Wilkinson

From the somewhat sunnier clime of Southern California, Prof. David Wilkinson, Book Review Editor, took an approach shorn of excess verbiage but relatively thorough in scope.

His suggested list is as follows:

Spengler, Decline of the West

Toynbee

1. Two volume abridgement, A Study of History
2. Reconsiderations
3. One volume Jane Caplan 1972 update of A Study of History
4. Civilization on Trial and The World and the West

Quigley, Evolution of Civilizations

Melko

1. Nature of Civilizations
2. General War in World History

Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations

Melko & Scott, Boundaries of Civilizations

Ford, Richard and Talbott, Palmer Sorokin and Civilization

Sanderson, Civilizations and World Systems

Frank, ReOrient

Frank and Gills, eds., The World System

Gills and Thompson, eds., Globalization and Global History

Denemark et al, eds., World System History

III. Professor Matt Melko

Professor Matt Melko of Ohio, Peer Review Editor, launched a full and thorough attack on the subject. He wrote as follows:

I taught the course to undergraduates in 15 and 10 week segments, as well as to graduate students over 20 weeks.

At the time I used my *Nature of Civilizations* which may still be available from Porter Sargent at its original \$4.50 price, and is readable, covers the basics. Quigley's *The Evolution of Civilizations* was reprinted in 1979 by Liberty Press and may still be available; it is salty, opinionated, interesting, and includes enough case chapters for this purpose.

You can then assign library reading from the Atkinson Spengler, the original Toynbee (not the abridgement), and Kroeber's *Configurations or Style and Civilizations*, which is also short enough to use as a supplementary.

Among current authors you might give them a taste of Snyder, including a diagram and a challenge to replicate (who would try?). Also, among our members, Blaha has some wonderful charts for students that apply Toynbee, and projects into the past and future, but you need to warn the students that this is an example of extreme durationism and is what happens when a physicist is allowed to study civilizations. Under your new Senator's guidance, there should soon be a law against this.

(Editor's Note: this particular editor resides in Washington, D.C., where we have taxation without representation. However, if he is referring to the campus on which I work, then he means the new United States senator from Virginia, Mr. Webb; perhaps the organization's leadership may wish to pose such a challenge to him.)

You can only present the general ideas and give some cases as examples.

One student said to me that she didn't like the course because what can you do about civilizations?

Oh, I like Felipe Fernandez-Arnesto's book *Civilizations*. Despite the title he is rather anti-civilizationist, and the first chapter makes a good case against, dismissing the time between Toynbee and Huntington -- oh yes, you will want to mention him -- as kind of empty.

The course was always fun to teach.

In addition, my suggested list of key civilizational references would be as follows:

M. F. Ashley Montagu, editor, 1956, *Toynbee and History*, Boston, Porter Sargent. Sample of Toynbee's critics.

*Philip Bagby, 1963 (1958), *Culture and History*, University of California Press.

Set up the civilizational theory he would develop, but then he died suddenly.

George Basala, 1988, *The Evolution of Technology*, Cambridge University Press.

*Stephen Blaha, 2002, *The Life Cycles of Civilizations*, Pingree-Hill. Our physicist successor to Iberall, working from Toynbee, extreme durationist, but the diagrams are fun, may be interesting to students.

2004, "Lee Daniel Snyder: Macro-History," *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 51: 125-127. What Blaha thinks of Snyder.

Franz Borkenau, 1981, *End and Beginning: On the Generations of Cultures and the Origins of the West*, Columbia University Press.

*T. Downing Bowler, 1981, *General Systems Thinking: Its Scope and Applicability*, North Holland. Best book on general systems, underlies both civilizational and world systems.

*Fernand Braudel, 1972, 1976 (1966), *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2d rev. ed. 1966 trans. Sian Reynolds, v. 1 Harper & Row, v. 2, Harper Torchbooks. Contains much interesting material on civilizations derived from a time and space specific situation.

E. H. Carr, 1962, *What is History?* Knopf. Clear and controversial basic book.

Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas D. Hall, 1997. *Rise and Demise: Comparing World-Systems*. Westview Press. Unreadable, but best world systems overview.

K. N. Chaudhuri, 1990, *Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean From the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge University Press. Good example of macrohistorical writing.

*Mark N. Cohen, 1989, *Health and the Rise of Civilization*, Yale University Press. With McNeill's plagues, a view we may not sufficiently take into consideration.

*Paul Costello, 1993, *World Historians and Their Goals*, DeKalb, Northern Illinois University Press. Readable, perceptive. Alas, McNeill says Costello has taken other directions in his career.

*Rushton Coulborn, 1956, *Feudalism in History*, Princeton University Press. In the second half of the book, summarizing contributions by other scholars, Coulborn takes off on his own.

*1958, *The Origin of Civilized Societies*, Princeton University Press. Justifies Coulborn's self perception as the first normal science civilizationist.

*1966, "Structure and Process in the Rise and Fall of Civilized Societies," 1966, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 8: 404- 451. Coulborn puts his civilizational theory together in 50 pages.

1969, "A Paradigm for Comparative History?" *Current Anthropology*, 10: 175-178. Coulborn sees what most of us in the ISCS do as normal science.

Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*. Sorry, haven't got date or publisher at hand, but it is his basic work on intercivilizational ecological transactions.

Christopher Dawson, 1948, *Religion and Culture*, Sheed and Ward. Toynbee's classmate, an early contributor to civilizational theory.

*1968 (1933) (1922), *Enquiries Into Religion and Culture*, Liberty Press. Contains the 1922 article in which he first articulated a cycle theory, before he had read Spengler or Toynbee.

1956, *The Dynamics of World History*, Sheed and Ward.

*Jared Diamond, 1997, *Guns, Germs and Steel*, Norton. imaginative theories of civilizational origin and exchange, bane of Sted Noble.

Joseph Drew, 2001, 2002 "Editor's Note," *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 44: 1-6; 47: 1-4. These two made my current manuscript.

*Greg Easterbrook, 2003, *The Progress Paradox*, Random House. How things are getting better, grist for the idea of progress and the globalists.

*William Eckert, 1992, *Civilizations, Empires and Wars: a Quantitative History of*

War, McFarland. In which Bill puts his ideas together.

*Brian Fagan, 2004, *The Long Summer: How Climate Changed Civilization*, Basic Books. The ecological setting for all of our studies.

*Laina Farhat-Holzman, 2000, *Strange Birds From Zoroaster's Nest*, Oneonta NY, Oneonta Philosophy Studies. A Creationists view, Zoroaster being the creator.

*John Farrenkopf, 2001, *Prophet of Decline: Spengler on World History and Politics*. Louisiana State University Press. Follows Spengler beyond the Decline.

Yale H. Ferguson and Richard W. Mansbach, 1996, *Polities: Authority, Identities, and Change*, University of South Carolina Press. Comparative world historical study of political systems.

*Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, 2001, *Civilizations: Culture, Ambition, and the Transformation of Nature*, Free Press. In many respects an anti-civilizationist but a great writer with challenging hypotheses.

*Andre Gunder Frank, 1998, *ReOrient*, University of California Press. The title, I hear, is Wilkinson's. My colleague and adversary makes a singular reorientation concerning China and the West.

Frank and Barry K. Gills, 1992, "The Five Thousand Year World System," *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 18: 1-79. An overview of civilizational interaction.

Frank and Gills, editors, 1993, *The World System: Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand?* London, Routledge. View of the field from many perspectives as it was then developing.

Thomas L. Friedman, 1999, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Better book on globalization than his current *Flat Earth*, which is Talmud to this Torah.

Pieter Geyl, 1955, *Debates With Historians*, Groningen, Wolters, Meridian Paperback. 1974, Rev. ed., London. One of the sharper critics of Toynbee.

Arthur De Gobineau, 1966 (1854), *The Inequality of Human Races*, tr. by Adrian Collins, Los Angeles, Noontide. Nineteenth Century precursor of the field.

Eiji Hattori, 2000, *Letters From the Silk Roads*, tr. Wallace Gray, University Press of America. On civilizational interactions across Asia.

*Samuel P. Huntington, 1996, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster. Challenging book, a punching bag for the rest of us.

Ibn Khaldun, 1958, (c. 1377) *The Muquaddimah*, translated by Franz Rosenthal, Pantheon. Comparative in method, but concerns only one civilization.

Jane Jacobs, 1985, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*, Vintage Books. Jacobs applies her original theories to the world.

*Vytautas Kavolis, 1972, *History on Art's Side*, Cornell University Press. Includes his cyclical theory combining stress, event and culture over periods of a century or two.

Feliks Koneczny, 1962 (1935), *On the Plurality of Civilisations*, tr. by Anton Hilckman, London, Polonica, 246-326. Another contemporary of Toynbee's

independently working similar territory

*A.L. Kroeber, 1944, *Configurations of Culture Growth*, University of California Press. A masterful book on how art, science and philosophical movements arise, fulfill and decline. Has many macrocultural applications.

1957, *Style and Civilizations*, Cornell University Press. In which Kroeber summarizes his ideas in a series of lectures, and then goes on to introduce and criticize others, including contemporary civilizationists, he perceives to be working on similar idea.

Thomas Kuhn, 1962, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, University of Chicago Press. Provides basis for Coulborn's view of a civilizational paradigm and is itself an example of a Kroeberian pattern.

*William H. McNeill, 1963, *The Rise of the West*, University of Chicago Press. The original, more Western, more civilizational view of world history.

*1976, *Plagues and People*, Doubleday. The historical relation between plagues and civilizational development.

*1989, *Arnold J. Toynbee: A Life*, Oxford University Press. Satisfying biography.

*J. R. and W. H. McNeill, 2003, *The Human Web*, Norton. Presents more of a systems view of history.

*Matthew Melko, 1969b, *The Nature of Civilizations*, Boston, Porter Sargent. Readable introduction. Contains an annotated bibliography indicating books thought most relevant at the end of the Sixties.

1990a, "The Jews as Bearers of Mesopotamian Civilization," IS CSC Meeting, Urbana, IL, IS CSC Archives. Of interest to you, Joe, though you may have been at the meeting.

*2001a, *General War Among Great Powers in World History*, Mellen. Study of great power wars in ten civilizations. Wilkinson preface.

*Melko and Leighton R. Scott, editors, 1987, *The Boundaries of Civilizations in Space and Time*, University Press of America. IS CSC sessions on this broad subject from 1978-1985. Participants wrote short papers, commented on each other's. The discussions were taped, transcribed and edited.

George Modelski, 1987, *Long Cycles in World Politics*, University of Washington Press. A durationist looking at cycles of power.

1996, *Two Lectures on World History*, Lisbon, Fundacao Luso- Americana.

*W. M. Flinders Petrie, 1911, *The Revolutions of Civilisation*, London, Harper. Christopher Dawson insists that he, Spengler and Toynbee were all influenced by this little book.

Karl R. Popper, 1964 (1961) *The Poverty of Historicism*, 3rd ed., Harper Torchbooks. The staunch opponent of all views of historical cycles.

*Carroll Quigley, 1979 (1961) *The Evolution of Civilizations*, Liberty Press. Beautifully written book on civilizational cycles, developing the idea that civilizations could reconstitute themselves. Quigley was a member of the IS CSC until his death in 1976.

*J. M. Roberts, 1993, *History of the World*, Third Edition, Oxford University Press.

Very useful on the origin and diffusion of civilizations

*Lee Daniel Snyder, 1999, Macro-History--A Theoretical Approach to Comparative World History, Mellen, Magesterial, flexible durationist, Not for beginners. Melko preface.

Pitirim A. Sorokin, 1937-1941, Social and Cultural Dynamics, American Book Company. Too long; his abridgement is better.

*1957, Social and Cultural Dynamics, abridged edition, Porter Sargent. Presents the theory of worldwide long term fluctuations of sensate and ideational culture.

“Let anyone who can do better do

better.” “Thus far history has followed the course I have set for it.” J

*1963, Modern Historical and Social Philosophies, paperback edition of 1950 Social Philosophies. Sorokin’s view of Historical philosophers, including the civilizationists of his time, whose views

sometimes nearly equaled his. Cf. Kroeber’s Style and Civilizations.

*Oswald Spengler, 1980 (1932) (1917-1921), The Decline of the West, Charles Atkinson Translation, Knopf. Der founder. The translation is readable, the ideas are still exciting.

*Arnold J. Toynbee, 1934-1961 A Study of History, Oxford University Press. Full of wonderful ideas, but someone ought to write a book locating them.

*1946, A Study of History, abridged by D. C. Somervell, Oxford University Press. Necessary, but often misses or crunches crucial ideas.

*1961, Reconsiderations, vol. XII of A Study of History. Basically a book in itself.

*Immanuel Wallerstein, 1974, The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century, Academic Press. Regarded as the founding book of World Civilizations.

*Robert G. Wesson, 1967, The Imperial Order, University of California Press. Civilizational empires.

*1978, State Systems, Rutgers University Press. Companion book on multistate systems.

*David Wilkinson, 2005, Fluctuations in the Political Consolidation of Civilizations/World Systems.” Comparative Civilizations Review, 52: 92-102.

Wilkinson, a wonderful, droll and concise writer, has written only book, and that not relevant. This article summarizes a massive amount of previous work, and comes to a remarkable conclusion.

(Comment from the other editors: We thank Prof. Melko for this wonderful list. He promises an additional list, as well.)

IV. Dr. Laina Farhat-Holzman

Our ever-sparkling Editor, Dr. Laina Farhat-Holzman – who writes wonderful columns for the press on such subjects weekly – kindly sent her suggestions in for this note. She said:

I never taught a year-long Comparative Civilizations course, but I have had the

special problem of teaching a 15-week course in World History. I had to really focus on what I thought the students ought to know.

I used the Rand McNally Atlas of World History. This provided an excellent basic text with maps (very useful for students who didn't know geography). By the time we went from prehistory to mid-20th century, they saw the world map often enough to become familiar with it. The texts were dense, but very good. Because Rand McNally is British, they ignored the Indians of the Americas. I used an excellent text--Kingdoms of Gold, Kingdoms of Jade, by Brian M. Fagan, to fill in on Pre-Columbian America.

If I were doing a two-semester class, I would add Jared Diamond's Guns, Germs, and Steel. I would also use Plagues and Peoples by James O'Neill.

This is a very pared down list. I provided my students with a much more extensive recommended readings list.

V. Dr. Midori Yamanouchi

This journal's former Managing Editor, Dr. Midori Yamanouchi, was recently elected to be Vice President for Academic Affairs at Lackawanna College (congratulations on the new post, Dr. Yamanouchi!) in Pennsylvania. Nonetheless, she took the time to respond to the query. In her remarks she focused on books on Japan that might be of interest to students of comparative civilizations.

1. Sansom, George. A Short History of Japan. (This title has been re-published in the last few years by a publisher other than the original one.)

Although it was originally published nearly thirty years ago, this is by far the best book on Japan's history. Sir George Sansom worked closely with an outstanding Japanese scholar of history who was also a good friend of his.

2. Murasaki Shikibu (Lady Murasaki). Tale of Genji (translation of Genji Monogatari). I believe that there are a couple of excellent English translations.

By general repute, this is the supreme masterpiece of Japanese prose literature. The book was written in the very beginning of the 11th Century in Japan. Lady Murasaki, the author, portrays some aspects of the very fascinating life of the court.

This was during a period when, while male members of the elite were spending a great deal of time studying Chinese classics, women wrote in the vernacular. This is the most famous of such writings.

Another outstanding female author of the period was Sei Shōnagon.

VI. Joseph Drew

For myself, I think that it is best to begin with broad introductions, having had that experience myself as a college student. I learned the most from Columbia's two volume set, Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West and the comparable three-volume set entitled Introduction to Oriental Civilizations. Similar texts in the Oriental Humanities and (Western) Humanities courses – twenty or

thirty in each—helped round out much of the fact-based portion, when added to general books dealing with world history.

If one overlays with these such important conceptual works as the basic writings of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and, especially, Max Weber, plus a basic review of the modern great thinkers (I would propose From Hegel to Nietzsche by Lowith, Consciousness and Society by Hughes, and Raymond Aron's two volume set, Main Currents in Sociological Thought and perhaps Talcott Parsons' magisterial Theories of Society), one might then approach the subject with both some essential knowledge and a broad theoretical framework.

VII.

But these are only the picks of the editors. What do you suggest? Please write in and I'll cheerfully publish a second round on the books we think students should read in order to be exposed intellectually to the comparative study of civilizations.

Joseph Drew
Spring, 200