

PHENOMENON OF CIVILIZATION: PITIRIM A. SOROKIN'S INTEGRALIST APPROACH AND ITS LIMITATIONS

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ABSTRACT. *During his remarkable academic career Pitirim A. Sorokin published about forty books and some five-hundred articles and essays addressing the subject of civilizations in some of his most important works. Due to the rapid globalization and related profound and multifaceted transformation of the world, interest to the macro-level sociocultural entities as well as the “longue durée” sociocultural processes is on the rise once again, prompting more systemic, and most importantly, more scientific, studies of this multifaceted, and, therefore, elusive phenomenon.*

The paper presents an extraordinary evolution of the Pitirim A. Sorokin's views on this subject by analyzing a number of the scholar's milestone works, published over the span of almost 30 years, such as “Social and Cultural Dynamics” (1937), “Society, Culture, Personality. Their Structure and Dynamics: A System of General Sociology” (1947), “Modern Historical and Social Philosophies” (1963), and “Sociological Theories of Today” (1966).

In those seminal works the scholar introduced a sophisticated analytical apparatus into the civilizational theory and research, achieving a more systemic understanding of this complex phenomenon, yet failed to recognize that civilizations do not belong exclusively to the realm of culture, and therefore, a comprehensive scientific investigation of it ought to comprise a much broader field than culturology.

In our publications we have suggested that such a field of the Civilizational Science is presently forcefully emerging, developed its theoretical and methodological foundations, and proposed within its framework a number of solutions to some of the humanity's most pressing global problems.

In a sense, we are continuing from where Sorokin has stopped and, thus, by a large measure, this paper acknowledges, as well as celebrates the Pitirim A. Sorokin's contribution to development of the Civilizational Science.

KEYWORDS: *Pitirim Sorokin, civilization, civilizational science, philosophy of civilization, scientific civilizational theory*

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I expected the progress of peace but not of war; the bloodless reconstruction of society but not bloody revolutions; humanitarianism in nobler disguise but not mass murders; an even finer form of democracy but not autocratic dictatorships; the advance of science but not of propaganda and authoritarian dicta in lieu of truth; the many-sided improvement of man but not his relapse into barbarism.

Pitirim A. Sorokin, 1937.

Introduction

During his remarkable academic career the Russian-American macrosociologist, (macro)historian, and (macro)philosopher Pitirim Alexandrovich Sorokin published about forty books and some five-hundred articles and essays (Johnson 1999:25; Sorokin 1991:VI) addressing the subject of civilizations in some of his most important works (Sorokin: 1966, 1963, 1947). Due to the rapid globalization and related profound and multifaceted transformation of the world, interest to the macro-level sociocultural entities as well as the “*longue durée*” sociocultural processes is on the rise once again, prompting more systemic, and most importantly, more scientific, studies of this multifaceted, and, therefore, elusive phenomenon.

The publication presents an extraordinary evolution of the Pitirim A. Sorokin’s views on this subject by analyzing a number of the scholar’s milestone works, published over the span of almost 30 years, such as “Social and Cultural Dynamics” (1937–1941), “Society, Culture, Personality. Their Structure and Dynamics: A System of General Sociology” (1947), “Modern Historical and Social Philosophies” (1963), and “Sociological Theories of Today” (1966). In those seminal works the scholar introduced a sophisticated analytical apparatus into the civilizational theory and research, achieving a more systemic understanding of this complex phenomenon, yet failed to recognize that civilizations do not belong exclusively to the realm of culture, and therefore, a comprehensive scientific investigation of it ought to comprise a much broader field than culturology.

In our previous publications we have suggested that such a field of civilizational science is presently forcefully emerging, proposed its methodological foundations, as

well as illustrated our approach with a number of conceptual models (Alalykin-Izvekov, 2011a, 2009). In a sense, we are continuing from where Sorokin has stopped and, thus, by a large measure, this article acknowledges, as well as celebrates the Pitirim A. Sorokin's role in and contribution to the development of civilizational science.

1. "Social and cultural dynamics" (1937–1941)

In the early years of his scholarly career Sorokin had espoused a positivistic attitude toward the sociocultural dynamics of history until the devastating cataclysms of World War I (1914-1918), Russian Revolution (1917) and Russian Civil War (1917–1923) have radically altered the scholar's philosophical outlook. The results of the scientist's 10-year long *tour de force* effort to explain the "governing dynamics" of sociocultural universe became known as the four-volume *opus magnum* "Social and Cultural Dynamics" (further referred to as "Dynamics").

The scientist solemnly deliberates his experiences in the Preface of this monumental achievement: "This work has grown out of my efforts to understand something of what has been happening in the social and cultural world about me. I am not ashamed to confess that the World War and most of what took place after it were bewildering to one who, in conformity with the dominant currents of social thought of the earlier twentieth century, had believed in progress, revolution, socialism, democracy, scientific positivism, and many other "isms" of the same sort. For good or ill, I fought for these values and paid the penalty. I expected the progress of peace but not of war; the bloodless reconstruction of society but not bloody revolutions; humanitarianism in nobler disguise but not mass murders; an even finer form of democracy but not autocratic dictatorships; the advance of science but not of propaganda and authoritarian *dicta* in lieu of truth; the many-sided improvement of man but not his relapse into barbarism. The war was the first blow to these conceptions. The grim realities of the Russian Revolution provided the second. If anybody had seriously predicted in 1913 a small fraction of what has actually taken place since, he would have been branded then as mad. And yet what then appeared to be absolutely impossible has indeed happened. (Sorokin 1937: IX)

Sorokin continues on the evolution of his concept:

All this naturally gave rise to insistent questioning. What were the reasons, the causes, and the meaning of these surprises? The leading principles of the social science that I had learned did not help much in my attempt to understand. Quietly, sincerely, only for myself, I began to meditate, to study, and to look for the answer. This personal quest has continued for a number of years. For a long time I was groping in darkness. Various hypotheses were tried and found inadequate. After many trials and errors the central idea of this work emerged. Step by step it developed and crystallized. After preliminary tests of its truth, I

undertook its systematic elaboration ... The result is the present group of volumes. (Sorokin 1937: IX)

While laboring on his monumental task, the scientist has discovered, that the “unchartered territory” where the quest for the “ultimate truth” has taken him, had been a “playground of other giants,” and, willingly or not, found himself in the illustrious company of “philosophers of history.” He contemplates the field of expertise which he was cultivating: “Of the semi-historical disciplines which it resembles, it is nearest to what often is styled Philosophy of History. Since almost all great sociological systems are a brand of philosophy of history, and since most of the great philosophies of history are a sort of sociology of cultural change, I do not have any objection to the use of this name by anyone who fancies it to describe the present work.” (Sorokin 1937: x).

Once having realized, that his own “philosophy of history” is but one of macrotheories attempting to explain the evolution of sociocultural universe from various perspectives and angles, Sorokin never tired to analyze his predecessors and contemporaries scholarly and creative achievements, as well as in the attempts to reconcile his concepts with other theories of large sociocultural entities and systems. Some of the most influential, and comparable in scale to Sorokin’s, works in the field of “philosophy of history” at the time have been the treaties on origin and evolution of civilizations by Nikolai Danilevsky, Oswald Spengler, and Arnold Toynbee. Yet, initially, Sorokin finds their concepts of civilization vague, unsystemic, and, therefore, “unscientific.” In fact, the subject “civilization” in “Dynamics” cannot even be found in the monograph’s Index and, instead, the reader is referred to “culture.” (Sorokin 1937: 713). In its stead, the scholar proposes a concept of “cultural supersystem,” the theory of which he brilliantly and richly develops. Michele Richard reminds us the main precepts of the theory in his Introduction to “Dynamics” as follows.

“Sorokin’s data on Graeco-Roman and Western civilization exhibit a pattern of current fluctuation between what he calls “sensate” and “ideational” value-systems. During a sensate period all aspects of life are dominated by a materialistic world view, and economic and scientific activities flourish, particularly during the “active” sensate phase. During the “passive” phase hedonistic values prevail, and in the final “cynical” stage the sensate mentality negates everything including itself. Ideational periods, in contrast, are spiritually oriented, and social relationships are familistic rather than contractual. Ideational periods move from the “ascetic” to the “active” (expansionistic) mentality, but finally degenerate into “fideism” (a desperate will to believe).”

When civilization shifts from one of these “supersystems” to the other, there is a stormy period of transition marked by increases in the intensity and magnitude of wars and revolutions, and by general social disorganization (increasing rates of crime and mental illness, breakdown in family structure, etc.). Sorokin’s “law of polarization” states that during such periods violence and egoistic behavior increase, but there is a counterbalancing increase in altruistic behavior (love, self-sacrifice, and

mutual aid). At the same time, government becomes increasingly coercive during these periods. Sometimes, however, there is a harmonious combination of the best elements of the two supersystems; a blend of faith, reason, and empiricism. These “idealistic” periods seem to be of shorter duration than the other two supersystems, but in any case the time frame is variable for all three. History does not repeat itself in detail (as Nietzsche suggested) but only in its general conformations.

But what causes these shifts to take place? Sorokin invokes two principles to account for change. The first is the principle of “immanent determinism”¹; a sociocultural system, like a biological system, unfolds according to its inherent potentialities. External factors can only serve to accelerate or retard the system’s growth, but they cannot alter the nature of the system itself ... The second is the “principle of limits,”² which states that the number of basic cultural forms is small, and that growth cannot continue indefinitely in one direction. Both the sensate and the ideational principles are one-sided and incomplete; the more exclusive and dominant one principle becomes, the more limited it becomes. Finally, it exhausts its creativity and begins to wane, permitting its complementary opposite to ascend once more.” (Sorokin 1991: viii-xi).

Such, according to the “early” Sorokin’s views, is the true solution to the problem of “philosophy of history,” which, in the scholar’s mind, is a magnificent, if at times horrifying parade of juggernauts of “cultural supersystems,” eternally replacing each other in the process of sociocultural evolution. Elsewhere, we elaborate on the Sorokin’s approach in much detail, as well as visualize it in a number of conceptual models. (Alalykin-Izvekov: 2009).

2. “Society, culture, personality. their structure and dynamics: a system of general sociology” (1947)

In this encyclopedia-size volume (referred to further as “SCP”) Sorokin addresses some of the contemporary civilizational theories, mainly, those of Danilevsky, Spengler and Toynbee. The scholar re-affirms his theory of “cultural supersystems,” essentially not considering the analyzed theories as valid, and dedicating to the whole subject of “civilizations” in the voluminous 742-pages book only a few pages.

The classification of contemporary theories of civilizations can be found in Part 7, entitled “The Dynamics of Cultural Processes,” within the content of Chapter 35 “The Conception of Cultural Systems.” Sorokin briefly introduces the classifications of Danilevsky, Spengler, Toynbee, and Kroeber, as well as highlights the essential

¹ *Editor's note*: “Immanent determinism” is the basic Biocosmological (neo-Aristotelian) principle which has the direct relation to Aristotle’s fundamental intrinsic (internal) teleodrive causes (*c.Efficiens*, *c.Finalis*, *c.Formalis-Entelecheia*).

² *Editor's note*: In turn, “principle of limits” apparently has (although implicitly) the relation to Aristotle’s fundamental principle of synchronous and dynamic existence of the two main (autonomic) spheres for the given thing – Potentiality and Actuality. Essentially, the Potentiality-Actuality distinction in Aristotle (their autonomy and interdependence) is a key element that is linked to everything in Aristotle’s physics and metaphysics.

value of cultural systems versus cultural congeries for survival and prosperity of relevant social groups. (Sorokin 1947: 539–540) A more detailed analysis of the above mentioned theories we encounter in Part 7 entitled “The Dynamics of Cultural Processes” within the discourse of Chapter 43 “Modes of Change of Systems, ‘Civilizations,’ and Congeries.” (Sorokin 1947: 638–643) The scientist would like us to consider the following triad of interconnected issues: 1) are “civilizations” *Ganzheits* (coherent wholes), causal unities, meaningful unities, meaningful-causal unities,¹ or simply a dump of social and cultural “congeries;” 2) what is their mode of change; 3) does a “univariant” model reflect the development of all “civilizations.”

First, Sorokin contemplates the “nature of civilizations.” Addressing his “opponents” theories, the scholar asks: “If their “civilizations” are not meaningful systems, what are they? Why and how have these thinkers arrived at the conclusion that they are unities? The answer to the second question is that they confused two different things: *an organized or “as if organized” group and a cultural system.* Their very classification of the “civilization” – be it Egyptian or Sumeric, Greek, or Roman, Arabic or Iranian, Chinese or Hindu – is really a classification of *social groups* and not of systems of culture. Even as a classification of social groups it is not quite consistent. *Most of their “civilizations” are really the language groups* as a unbonded group in our sense; others are either the unbonded *state groups or nations* as a three-bonded groups united by the ties of common language, state and territory; still others are partially territorial, partially religious groups. Such “civilizations” as Greek are first of all the Greek language group, because Greece hardly ever was united into one nation or state. Such “civilizations” as Roman or Spartan or Ottoman are mainly the state groups, because Sparta differed from other Greek states not by language but by being an independent state. The same is true of the Ottoman empire, a multitude of subjugated language groups with different religions and mores, never amalgamated into a single nation. “Civilizations” such as the Russian, Chinese, or Iranian denote essentially nations. “Civilizations” like Toynbee’s Buddhistic Chinese, or Islamic or Hindu or Near East Christian are mainly religious or territorial groups. Finally, such “civilizations” as the Hellenic did not represent even any organized group; during the short-lived unification by conquest, by under Alexander the Great, the Hellenic world was a conglomeration of groups, united neither by state, language, religion, territory or any other bond. Still less did it represent any even remotely unified culture. Except for the scattering of Greek exploiting settlers, and Hellenized barbarians, and the superficial diffusion of various odds and ends of Greek or Roman culture, there was no social or cultural unity. In a word, the Hellenic world, was just a vast “dump” of most heterogeneous social groups and cultural systems and congeries.” (Sorokin 1947: 640).

Having made the conclusion, that none of “civilizations” in its totality can be regarded as a “closed causal system,” Sorokin turns to the second inquiry, that on the

¹ *Editor's note:* Again, we find distinctly the direct relation of Sorokin’s notion of “civilizations” as “coherent wholes, causal unities, meaningful unities, meaningful-causal unities” – to the Aristotelian supersystem of rational knowledge (essentially, of scientific Organicism, in the light of the Biocosmological approach).

mode of civilizational change, by saying: “Contrary to the claims of Danilevsky, Spengler, and Toynbee none of the “civilizations” taken as a whole can change in a meaningful-causal togetherness as the real systems and supersystems change. None of the “civilizations” can change as a unified causal system. Not being a meaningful-causal or causal unity none of the “civilizations” can be born as a unified system; they cannot grow, cannot pass the stages of childhood and maturity, then die, because social and cultural dumps cannot be born, organically grow, and then die. What has not been a unity cannot grow as a unity, and cannot be disintegrated, since it never was integrated. All the sweeping conclusions made by their authors from the false premise of the unity of such “civilizations” are untenable. To illustrate this let us take “the death of civilizations” so categorically stated by the partisans of the criticized theory. First, hardly any of their civilizations have ever died *in toto*, as a unified organism¹. As a matter of fact, a large part of their total culture, many systems and subsystems, have passed into other cultures and are still alive even in the contemporary western culture. Take, for instance, the oldest “civilization,” the Egyptian. Many Egyptian religious and ethical systems and subsystems have passed into the cultures of other groups, particularly into the Jewish culture; through the Bible and through the early cults of Isis and Osiris they came into Christianity; they are living now through the Christian religion as well as through others closer to the Egyptian at the present time. Similarly the Egyptian political system and their law-norms have passed into the cultures of the Hellenistic world, thence to the Roman empire and to the most of the European states. The same is true of Egyptian art; even the contemporary art of the West still shows traces of Egyptian influence, in pattern, style, and even content. Many other systems, subsystems and congeries of the total Egyptian culture are still alive. One is not obliged to subscribe to the extreme theories of G.E. Smith and W.J. Perry in order to see that a considerable part of the old Egyptian civilization has never died at all but still forms an element of other cultural systems as a distinct Egyptian system or subsystem.” (Sorokin 1947: 641–642).

Contemplating the evolution of civilizations, as well as the process of interaction between them, Sorokin adds: “What really died out of the total Egyptian civilization was language, the independent Egyptian state and some other systems and congeries. As the Egyptian “civilization” in the theories of Danilevsky, Spengler, and Toynbee is the total culture of the Egyptian language, territorial and state group (Egyptian nation) the disappearance of the Egyptian language and state led these authors to the conclusion that the total Egyptian culture and civilization had died. Baselessly making the total Egyptian culture one system, they no less baselessly concluded that with the death of some of many systems and congeries of this civilization, the total Egyptian civilization died. Still clearer is the situation with the newer Graeco-Roman civilization, which is also much nearer to our own. An enormous part of this “civilization” has never died and is still very much alive. Greek and Latin language

¹ *Editor's note:* Treating “civilization” as “a unified organism” – unified to its “meaningful-causal or causal unity” – is indeed the example of a true scientific Organicist approach (i.e. the sample of true neo-Aristotelism).

systems; Greek and Roman art as a living art imitated by and influencing the contemporary architecture and sculpture, painting and drama; and Roman and Greek philosophical and ethical systems; Roman law, especially the *Corpus Juris Civilis*; Greek and Roman political and military organization, and many other vast cultural systems and subsystems are living and functioning, both in their Greek and Roman forms and as the formative elements of many western culture systems. The creations of Phidias and Praxiteles, Homer, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Thucydides, Herodotus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle; of Cicero, Horace, Virgil, Lucretius, their creations and hundreds of other Graeco-Roman cultural systems are carrying on a very vigorous life. The notion of the death of the total Graeco-Roman “civilization” is derived mainly from the disappearance of the Greek and Roman state systems as living realities and from the relegation of Latin to the Christian clergy, scholars, and classically educated groups. But the death of these groups does not mean the death of a civilization. On the contrary, almost all of the great Graeco-Roman cultural systems are very vigorously alive. They make up a very large part of the western “civilization.” With a slight modification the same can be said of practically all other “civilizations.” The Chinese, Russian, Islamic, Arabic, Hindu, and Jewish civilizations continue to exist even as language, state, territorial groups, not to mention their continuance as sociocultural realities. The languages and state systems of some have disappeared, but the bulk of their religious, philosophical, ethical, legal, aesthetic, and other systems and congeries continue to function with all three components of human members, meanings, values and norms, and a vast assortment of vehicles. Moreover some, like the Hindu, the Chinese, the Arabic, are even showing clear signs of a political renaissance. Only perhaps a few either small or very old “civilizations” like the Hittite, the Sumerian, the Mayan, have in large part died, but even these have survived in at least a few systems and congeries.” (Sorokin 1947: 642)

Next, the scholar takes on the third issue, namely, whether the “uniform” model can be applied to the evolution of all civilizations, by saying: “The basic difference between these theories and my own begins with the fundamental premise. They regard their “civilization” as a real unity; I regard it as a conglomeration of various systems and congeries, only in small part integrated meaningfully-causally, in larger part unified through indirect causal bond, but in still greater part an unintegrated conglomeration of systems and congeries. They view each civilization as an organism or “species” that follows the biological life-cycle of growth, youth, maturity, old age and death. For me such a life-cycle is neither logically nor factually tenable. Unintegrated cultures cannot grow, age or decline; they need not have identical life-cycles, occurring only once and ending always with death. They cannot have a uniform life career.” (Sorokin 1947: 643)

The scientist then forcefully concludes:

In my works instead of these false premises, a more valid and precise distinction between the cultural systems and supersystems and cultural congeries and conglomeration of congeries is carried through, with the

necessary distinction between the meaningful unities, meaningful-causal, direct and indirect causal unities and, finally, spatially adjacent congeries. Meaningful-causal systems and supersystems change in togetherness, congeries not in togetherness; purely causal unities change in togetherness, if they are close unities, but this togetherness is purely causal, very different from the meaningful-causal togetherness. The total cultures that are little integrated change mainly in the way of congeries. Total cultures that are highly integrated up to the vastest possible sensate, idealistic, and ideational supersystems, change in these supersystems as meaningful-causal unities. Changing in this way, such total cultures shift from one supersystem to another, and having run their cycle repeat it, without dying or being “petrified” for a thousand or more years¹. In the rest of such total cultures, some of their minor supersystems and systems may change in causal dependence on the changing of the dominant supersystem, but this causal dependence does not make them a meaningful part of the dominant supersystem. Finally, a part of the total culture that is a real congeries to the dominant supersystem changes as congeries do. The real picture of the change of so called total cultures or civilizations is thus much more complex than the partisans of their alleged unity claim ... And there is hardly any doubt that the proposed conceptual framework is more valid than the too simple theories of the unity of civilizations. (Sorokin 1947: 644)

As we have just observed, in “SCP” Sorokin focuses on the Danilevsky’s, Spengler’s and Toynbee’s theories, essentially making conclusion, that most of their “civilizations” are not much more than cultural and social “congeries” with real sociocultural systems “few and far between” them. Notably, the scholar uses “civilizations” in quotation marks as if indicating, that those are “un-scientific” terms, as well as quite non-flattering expressions, such as “false frame of reference,” “false premises,” and “fallacious conclusions” (Sorokin 1947: 643). While recognizing “the outstanding significance and scientific importance” of the discussed approaches (Sorokin 1966: 240), the scholar will continue criticize the theories of Danilevsky, Spengler, and Toynbee, which he will label “totalitarian,” in his later works (Sorokin 1963: 205–243; Sorokin 1966: 214–240).

Thus, in the civilizational analysis circa 1947, Sorokin presents his theoretic paradigm as the only one that is valid and will stand the test of time. Yet, despite the unflattering verdict on the “totalitarian” theories of civilization, his rigorous and insightful analysis (perhaps, even “imperceptibly” to the scholar himself), reveals to a careful observer the profoundly important qualities of the civilizations’ “protean” nature, namely, that they can assume an infinite amount of manifestations, some of

¹ *Editor's note:* One more essential moment is that civilizations as “meaningful-causal unities” and integrated “vastest possible sensate, idealistic, and ideational supersystems” have their real existence in the dynamic run of their cycles. Essentially, the latter (their dynamic cyclic – Triadic nature) cannot be studied, in principle, from the standpoint of modern ‘scientist – monolinear and unified – foundations of science, but urgently calls for the rehabilitation of true Aristotelism (scientific Organicism, Biocosmology).

which may not be obviously “visible” at all. Many years later, as if intuitively sensing the “ultimate truth” about the nature of civilizations, Sorokin will utter, referring to other, similarly elusive sociocultural entities: “the term covers rather a series of different phenomena” (Sorokin 1966: 84) and “many vast unified wholes are discreet and do not have perceptual concreteness.” (Sorokin 1966: 41) For the time being, however, the scholar’s quest had to be continued.

3. “Modern historical and social philosophies” (1963)

Tellingly, the original title of the book (referred to further on as “Philosophies”) used to be “Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis.” (Sorokin 1950; 1952) Reminding us of the scholar’s turbulent experience with history-making as a prominent revolutionary, a leading social scholar, a high-profile politician, and a top-level political “expellee,” Sorokin does not hesitate to observe that “philosophies of history” always were a characteristic feature of an age of change, transition, and crisis – an astute observation, which seems to be acutely relevant in the 21 century.

The scientist starts with a review of “philosophies of history” in the chapter entitled “Man’s Reflection on Man’s Destiny in an Age of Crisis.” It provides us with a brief, but comprehensive survey of them through the ages – from “The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage,” to the Ibn Khaldun’s “Prolegomena,” to the Giambattista Vico’s “New Science” and other seminal works of the past. In the subsequent chapters author analyzes the theories of giants of contemporary civilizational thought, such as Nikolai Danilevsky, Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, Walter Schubart, Nikolai Berdyaev, F.S.C. Northrop, Alfred L. Kroeber and Albert Schweitzer.

It is easy to see, that in “Philosophies” Sorokin analyzes the sociocultural theories in a less categorical and, instead, more conciliatory fashion, depicting an epic quest of many scholars for the Holy Grail of truth. The scholar notes: “It looks as though all these authors vaguely feel and partly know that there is a kind of vast cultural entity or deep cultural undercurrent, which largely determines most of the surface ripples of the sociocultural ocean. The authors try to grasp its properties, to map its course and area and to clarify its influence upon the surface of cultural phenomena. They seem to agree in some points and in others not; but underlying all discussion is the fundamental agreement that some sort of vast unified cultural systems live and function in the sociocultural ocean.” (Sorokin 1963: 276)

Already in the book’s Preface Sorokin remarks, that one of the earlier analyzed by him “totalitarian” theories was undergoing (perhaps, not without his influence) a significant transformation. Clearly envisioning reconciliation on some “points of agreement,” he comments on the Toynbee’s evolving pattern of civilizational thought: “In the twelfth volume of his *Study of History: Reconsiderations*, published in 1961, this eminent historian and philosopher of history introduced several important changes of his theory of history as it was developed in the first six volumes of his monumental work. Among these changes, particularly important is the replacement of his theory of the univariant life-cycle of all civilizations by that of a multivariant life-course of different civilizations.” Sorokin then quotes the British

macrohistorian's own "confession": "I have been at fault in having been content to operate with the Hellenic model only. Though this particular key has opened many doors, it has not proved omniscient. For example, it has not opened the door to understanding of the structure of Egyptian history." Next, Sorokin jubilantly concludes: "Accordingly, his univariant model of the life-cycle of all civilizations is replaced now by at least three different models of the life-course of civilizations exemplified by the Hellenic, the Chinese, and the Jewish civilizations. In its present form Toynbee's theory of historical uniformities recurring in the life-course of the *Hochkulturen* is in greater agreement with my own theory of change of cultural and social systems and also with the theories of A. Kroeber, and F.S.C. Northrop, ... and with the philosophies of history expounded by J. Ortega y Gasset, F.R. Cowell and others. (Sorokin 1963: Preface)

Foreshadowing his conclusions about most of the significant "philosophies of history," Sorokin then highlights a number of uniformities shown by a number of art evolution concepts. He notes: "One of the earliest and most stimulating currents in the recent upsurge of "intelligible readings of historical events" appeared in works dealing with art-phenomena. Either earlier than most of the subsequent philosophers of history (except Danilevsky) or simultaneously with them, a number of thoughtful investigators of art-phenomena discovered several uniformities in the change, development, and cycles of art-phenomena, and of sociocultural processes in general. A considerable fraction of these generalizations "scooped" many formulations made later by various philosophers of history." (Sorokin 1963: 11) Then again, a few pages later: "The theory presented there (in "Dynamics" V.A.I.) is not irreconcilable with other theories mentioned above. In a number of points it agrees with the best of other theories; in the points where it deviates, the difference is largely due to the different goals of various investigations of art-phenomena." (Sorokin 1963: 45) And, a bit further: "Many general theories of culture or civilization have ... been preceded by similar theories about the types and dynamics of art phenomena. The total contribution of these art-theories to the recent "intelligible reading of historical events" is enormous." (Sorokin 1963: 48)

The thinker also stops using quotation marks around the word "civilization," seemingly indicating that instead of considering it as some kind of a "pseudo-entity," he now recognizes it as a "valid" scientific term. Instead, the scholar starts using the term civilization habitually, as an operable scientific tool, for example, when analyzing Danilevsky's theory of "historico-cultural types": "Does this mean that Danilevsky denies that one civilization has any influence on another? That he denies any "interpenetration" of the elements of one civilization into another? No, for his third law applies only to the civilization taken as a *whole*, in all its essential individuality. This law does not apply to the elements of a civilization. These can be transmitted and can penetrate from one civilization into another." (Sorokin 1963: 63)

Last, but not least, the scholar introduces six (later to become thirteen) briefly outlined below "points of agreement" between the analyzed "historical and social philosophies": 1) civilizations do exist as and along with other vast cultural entities and systems; 2) the number of those has always been very small; 3) each of these

basic types of cultural prototypes is different from the others; 4) each of the vast cultural systems is based upon some “major premise” or “philosophical presupposition” or “prime symbol” or “ultimate value” which the supersystem or civilization articulates, develops, and realizes in all its main compartments, or parts, in the process of its life-career; 5) each of these supersystems, after its objectification and socialization in empirical reality, becomes a meaningful-causal unity; 6) civilizations and other vast cultural entities and supersystems share certain common properties. (Sorokin 1963: 276–279)

Accordingly, Sorokin ends his deliberation of the “modern historical and social philosophies” with the following rather inclusive statement: “These general characteristics, systematically studied in my works, are explicitly or implicitly present in all the theories discussed. In the case of a few of these traits the authors differ somewhat as to details; but these minor disagreements do not abridge the major agreement in regard to the characteristics mentioned.” (Sorokin 1963: 279)

4. “Sociological theories of today” (1966)

This book (which is further being referred to as “Theories”) concludes the Sorokin’s long, illustrious and in many ways unique scholarly career. In it, the scholar summarizes his analysis of structure and evolution of psychosocial and sociocultural universe.

Notably, he dedicates 254 pages in the 676-pages volume to the analysis of civilizations and other vast cultural entities and macrosystems, adding a number of theories to the ones that were already examined in “Philosophies.” The scholar also attempts to place the civilizational studies in a “proper” scientific framework, noting the emergence of a new field of culturology or cultural morphology (Sorokin: 1966: 204-207) and referring us to the essential points of it, as outlined by Othmar Anderle:

The lethal threat to which the Western World has been exposed since the end of World War II, has awakened an awareness, among the peoples of the Occident, that they form a community with a destiny ... The expression of this unity has been discovered in the concept of civilization (Hochkultur) which, since Spengler’s *Decline of the West*, has been on everybody’s tongue and has become replete with content. ... The concept of civilization has become, for us, a dominant historico-sociological category, similar to the earlier concept of nation, which was a predominant historico-sociological category before. ‘Thinking in terms of civilizations has supplanted thinking in terms of nations. ...’ This has become apparent also in science, where the emphasis has been shifted from peoples and nations to more comprehensive structures and processes in civilizations. ... Since Spengler, we have called the science which deals with what is formal in the structural aspects of cultural phenomena “cultural morphology. (Sorokin 1966: 94–95)

Sorokin then introduces a based on the rigorous criteria classification of culturological theories, in which they seem to peacefully “coexist,” while

complementing each other in reflecting, analyzing and explaining various aspects of the sociocultural universe:

1. “Totalitarian” theories of the complete integration of the total culture of individuals; of small groups or preliterate and civilized culture areas (we can call these theories macrosociological totalitarian); and of vast cultural continents, civilizations, high cultures, national cultures, cultures of the East and West, and so on (which can be called macrosociological totalitarian).
2. Intermediary theories of culture integration which claim that only a part of any total culture – of individuals, small and large social groups, small and vast culture areas, including civilizations, high cultures, and so on – is integrated into a multitude of small and big cultural – causal and meaningful – systems. In great civilizations and high cultures the integrated part can be unified into a few vast supersystems, but none of the total cultures of even a single individual, of even the smallest culture area, and still less of any social group, cultural continent, civilization, or high culture is completely integrated into one – causal and meaningful – system. In any total culture there is always a coexistence of several different cultural systems subordinated to, coordinated with, neutral, and contradictory to each other, and a coexistence of many cultural congeries within the systems and outside of them. In highly integrated total cultures, there may be one or two dominant or main supersystems, several other systems, or minor supersystems, and a multitude of congeries.
3. Theories of the ideal or highest or “normative” or genuine vs. spurious cultural systems which bestow the name of culture or civilization not upon all causal or meaningful cultural systems but only upon those that they consider to be the systems of genuine or highest unified cultural values.
4. Seminominal theories of cultural systems represent the formal classification of cultural phenomena into several artificial divisions. Some of these theories imperceptibly merge into either purely nominal or singularistic-atomistic theories. (Sorokin 1966: 157–158).

The scholar elaborates on his systemic approach: “The recent crop of macrosociologies of culture is not exhausted by the totalitarian theories, ... for there are also certain non-totalitarian theories. The non-totalitarian theories do not share the basic assumption of the totalitarian theories that the total culture of any individual, group, or area, and especially of vast “cultural continents” called civilizations is a completely unified causal or meaningful or meaningful-causal system. Such an assumption, these theorists point out, is neither warranted logically, nor supported by relevant empirical evidence: it is largely due to vague and loose criteria of unity or integration expressed in such unclear terms as “interdependence,” “coherence,” “adjustment,” “prime symbol,” “style,” “function,” and the like. As soon as we apply more rigorous criteria of unity, we realize that total cultures or civilizations are only

partially united into many cultural systems and congeries that coexist with the dominant system, if it is present in a given total culture or civilizations. This conclusion, reached by many scholars of culture, has induced them to approach the study of the problems of civilizational or cultural *Ganzheiten* from a different standpoint. Instead of assuming the total integration of the whole civilizations or of any total culture, these scholars have proceeded in a less postulational and more inductive way in their investigation of cultural wholes.” (Sorokin 1966: 241)

Sorokin goes on to enumerate the briefly summarized below twelve criteria of his culturological analytical apparatus:

- 1) these “culturologists” defined rigorously the nature and criteria of civilizations or cultural unity;
- 2) armed with their rigorous criteria of cultural *Ganzheiten*, they proceeded to survey and to study various cultural systems, small and vast, given in the total cultural universe of man;
- 3) they discovered the existence of an enormous number of various causal and causal-meaningful cultural systems in the total culture of mankind as well as in that of any population, any social group, any culture-area, any individual;
- 4) further study of cultural *Ganzheiten* disclosed that most of these small cultural systems have been combining together and producing vaster meaningful and causal-meaningful cultural systems, which, in turn, have formed still vaster cultural *Ganzheiten* up to the vastest possible cultural supersystems;
- 5) many culturologists have concentrated on a study of vast cultural systems like language, science, philosophy, religion, law, ethics, fine arts, politics and economics (again, in their ideological, behavioral, and material forms). Out of this sort of studies have grown *special, cultural sociologies*: the sociology of language, of science, of religion, of philosophical *Weltanschauungen*, of law, of fine arts, of ethics, of political, economic, and other *cultural systems*;
- 6) some cultural sociologists have gone still further and discovered the existence and functioning – not in all but in some of the total cultures – of still vaster supersystems that unify in themselves a large portion of many cultural unities. The theories of “material” and “non-material,” of “sacral” and “secular,” of “reality-culture” and “value-culture,” of “ideational, integral, and sensate” cultural *Ganzheiten* are examples of the vastest supersystems rightly or wrongly discovered by some of the culturologists;
- 7) in most of their studies of vast cultural systems and supersystems the culturologists deal with real cultural *Ganzheiten* whose important parts articulate consistent and complementary sets of meanings-values-norms in ideological-behavioral-material forms and are bound together by the triple causal dependence of each important part upon the other important parts, of all important parts upon the whole system or supersystem, and of the whole system or supersystem upon its important parts;

8) as a result of these findings, the total cultures of individuals, groups, or culture-areas appear to be causally and meaningfully unified exactly in those portions of total culture which have cultural systems and supersystems. This means that any such total culture is, at least, partly unified;

9) many of these systems and supersystems are not territorially bound to any definite contiguous territory;

10) the totality of these mutually harmonious systems unified into one supersystem gives to each total culture (that reaches this level of integration) its *dominant* physiognomy, style, or individuality;

11) not all the total cultures of individuals, of groups, or of culture-areas reach this high degree of unification. Many of these have only a multitude of small systems and a few vast systems meaningfully neutral or contradictory to each other and causally independent from each other ... In Danilevsky's terms, such total cultures are largely "ethnographic material" in the total cultural universe of man;

12) even the highly integrated total cultures are never integrated in 100 percent of all their cultural phenomena, for there always coexist several vast systems and a multitude of small systems and congeries meaningfully neutral or contradictory to the supersystem and causally independent from it." (Sorokin 1966: 241–244)

"Armed" with his systemic approach, as well as with the based on it rigorous classification of culturological theories, Sorokin presents us now with concisely outlined below thirteen "points of agreement" between them:

1. In the boundless ocean of sociocultural phenomena there exist vast cultural systems, supersystems, or civilizations that live and function as real unities. Danilevsky calls these supersystems "cultural-historical types"; Spengler calls them "high cultures"; Toynbee refers to them as "civilizations"; Kroeber as "high-value patterns"; Schubart, as the "prototypes of culture"; Northrop as "world cultures"; Berdyaev, as "great cultures"; Sorokin calls them "cultural supersystems."

2. Due to the triple interdependence¹ of the whole system and its parts, these vast supersystems tangibly condition most of the surface rippling of the sociocultural ocean.

3. Without an adequate knowledge of the supersystem we can hardly understand the structural and dynamic properties of all its important parts, just as without a sufficient knowledge of a whole organism, of its gross anatomy and gross physiology of its organs, tissues, and cells.

4. The macrosociological theories give to us, speaking figuratively, a gross anatomy and physiology of the whole cultural universe.

5. The theories agree that the total number of vast cultural supersystems has in the whole human culture been small. The total number of

¹ *Editor's note:* And, substantially, as we can emphasize – their triple 'interdependence' is in their dynamic cyclic manifestation and dominance, and, thus realizing the organism's entire ontogenesis.

Danilevsky-Spengler-Toynbee's "civilizations" does not exceed some 30; R. Westcott gives to us a list of about 300, but the list includes not only world civilizations but also continental, national, provincial, and local civilizations. The world civilizations in this list do not exceed 15. If we take the vastest cultural supersystems or prototypes, most of the examined theories offer to us only two: Northrop's aesthetic-theoretic; Becker's sacral-secular; Ortega's classic-crisis; the dichotomists' material-nonmaterial; civilization-culture, technological-ideological; Kroeber's reality-culture and value-culture; Sorokin's ideational, idealistic, and sensate (plus eclectic); and Schubert's harmonious, heroic, ascetic and messianic. If instead we take other classifications of vast cultural formations, such as Paleolithic-Neolithic-copper-bronze-iron-machine civilizations or hunting-pastoral-agricultural-industrial or "rural-urban" or any other classification base either upon main types of religion or of economy or of the type of family and kinship or of government or of solidarity (*Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft*, "mechanical-organic") or Saint-Simon's critical-organic or Comte's theological-metaphysical-positive or Vico's civilizations "of the age of gods, of heroes, and of man," the number of the basic types still remains very small.

6. Each of the vast cultural systems is based upon some major premise or philosophical presupposition or prime symbol or ultimate value that the supersystem or civilization articulates, develops, and realizes in the process of its life-career in all its main compartments or subsystems.

7. Each of these supersystems, after its objectification and socialization in empirical reality, becomes a meaningful-causal unity.

8. The theories agree on the general characteristics of systems, supersystems, and civilizations. Explicitly or implicitly almost all the examined theories ascribe to it the following properties: a reality different from that of its parts; individuality; triple (general and differential) interdependence of parts upon one another and upon the whole system and of the whole system upon its parts; the preservation of its individuality or its "sameness" in spite of a change of its parts; the change in togetherness of all important parts; the self-directing (immanent) change and self-determination of its life-career with external forces either accelerating or slowing up, facilitating or hindering the unfolding and realization of the potentialities of a system or supersystem, sometimes even destroying it, but hardly ever transforming it into something radically different from its inherent potentialities; the selectivity of a system or supersystem in taking in the congenial and in rejecting the uncongenial elements of the external world; and the limited variability of a system or supersystem.

9. The theories agree in their rejection of the linear conception of the life-course of systems and supersystems and of historical processes generally in favor of either cyclical or rhythmical or continuously varying conceptions.

10. The theories all have a tangible similarity of the “phases” or “prototypes” of cultural supersystems or civilizations surveyed. The phase of growth or “spring” of Danilevsky-Spengler-Toynbee’s civilizations is similar in several traits with Sorokin’s ideational, Schubart’s ascetic-messianic, Kroeber’s “religiously dominated,” Northrop’s dominantly aesthetic, Berdyaev’s barbaric-religious, and Becker’s sacral prototypes. The phase of decline of civilizations in Danilevsky-Spengler-Toynbee-Koneczny’s theory resembles Sorokin’s overripe sensate, Schubart’s heroic, Northrop’s theoretic, Kroeber’s secular, Berdyaev’s humanistic-secular, Schweitzer’s decline of civilizations, and Ortega’s crisis civilization.

11. The eleventh similarity consists in an affirmation by most of the theories examined (with the exception of Danilevsky’s and Spengler’s) that the whole life-process of various civilizations, supersystems, or prototypes follows different courses in their genesis, growth, life-patterns, life-span, blossoming and withering, decline and resurrection.

12. The theories examined unanimously diagnose our time as the time of the greatest crisis, as the end of the epoch of domination of the sensate–theoretic-secular –Promethean-scientific-technological culture dominant during the last four or five centuries and as a transition period toward a now emerging messianic-integral-new medieval-aesthetic-theoretic prototype of civilization or culture.

13. All theories stress the coming reevaluation of hitherto dominant values, including a radical reconsideration of methods and ways of cognition. Practically all the theories expect, in the culture to come, a reunification of the supreme values of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness – hitherto separated from one another – into one “*summum bonum*.” (Sorokin 1966: 378–382)

The scholar concludes his analysis of similarities and uniformities in the examined culturological theories with these remarkably conciliatory and compromising remarks:

Agreement in these thirteen items strongly suggests the rough validity of these conclusions: Otherwise, a concordance could hardly be achieved on the part of distinguished scholars so different from one another in their philosophical background and their methods, in the starting points and the materials of their study, in their mentality, personal preferences, and life-history. Despite the shortcomings of these theories, each of them brings into the open one or more important aspects of cultural realities; each of them enriches our understanding of the structure and nature, relationships, and processes of macrocultural unities and, consequently, of the whole cultural universe, including our own personality and behavior. (Sorokin 1966: 378–382)

5. Pitirim A. Sorokin's critics

Undoubtedly, the scholar had his critics. His book "Hunger As a Factor in Human Affairs" (1921) about horrifying consequences of the revolution had been seized and destroyed by the Lenin's government in an almost medieval fashion. (Allen 1963: 273).

In the West he has been at times called "a Tartar who has struck an alliance with neo Thomism" (Johnston 1999: 114), "the Saint Augustine of contemporary sociology" (Johnston 1999: 148), a "utopian philosopher," (Johnston 1999: 187), and an "armchair theorizer" (Johnston 1999: 213). Contemporary Western sociologists and other social scientists had, for example, the following serious difficulties with the Sorokin's *opus magnum* "Social and Cultural Dynamics."

There was widespread agreement among critics that Sorokin was biased in favor of Ideational and Idealistic cultures; unscientific, metaphysical, and often authoritarian in his analysis; guilty of reification; theoretically simplistic in the development of concepts and use of ideal types; statistically naive and empirically unsatisfying; historically inaccurate and frequently imprecise in representing the works of his forerunners; culpable of poor writing, the overuse of neologisms, and prolixity; and dominated by his values and scornful of science."¹ (Johnston 1999: 125)

Acknowledging, that that may be correct to some degree or another, the scholar's "arch-rival" and a great British civilizationist Arnold Toynbee, however, sees his main contribution to the human knowledge as a pathfinder:

But it is, of course, as an intellectual pioneer that Sorokin has made his mark on the history of thought about human affairs. A pioneer condemns himself to be corrected and surpassed. This fate is on the pioneer's own head because in the intellectual field, at any rate, one need not be a pioneer unless one chooses. At least, one need not report one's findings and thereby draw fire (and Sorokin has, fortunately, reported his findings circumstantially). A pioneer's sketch map will be corrected by his less enterprising successors, the surveyors; his trail will be progressively straightened out, underpinned, surfaced, and double-tracked; his axe's blaze marks on tree trunks will be replaced by neon signs. All these improvements will overtake his pathfinding work; and, the quicker they do, the more eloquent will be their testimony to his achievement. Later generations do not spend time and energy on improving pioneer trails that lead nowhere. The trail on which they work is always one that has proved its value; and, in all their subsequent

¹ *Editor's note:* This reaction clearly shows that Sorokin's civilizational heritage is hardly (if at all) understandable from a standpoint of modern "scientific method", i.e. from the Dualist (Anthropocentric), Positivist foundation of science. Exclusively the rehabilitation of Aristotle's scientific Naturalism (Organicism, Biocosmology) could advance the relevant basis for the proper understanding and use of Sorokin's theory.

improvements on it, there is one thing they cannot do to its discoverer. They cannot supersede him. Even when his work has been completely overlaid, it will still remain invisibly on the map. Daniel Boone's trail, for instance, still lives today in the radar beam that a pilot gratefully follows in navigating his plane from Washington D.C. to St. Louis. (Allen 1963: 68–69)

Barry V. Johnston, the author of Sorokin's scholarly biography, agrees:

Sorokin was one of sociology's most stimulating and controversial statesmen. In a six-decade career his works opened new fields and broadened traditional sociological concerns. Sorokin crafted major contributions to the study of social mobility, war and revolution, altruism, social change, rural sociology, the sociology of science and knowledge, and sociological theory. (Johnston 1999: IX)

In his work "On Giants' Shoulders: The 1961 Salzburg Meeting of the ISCSC", Michael Palencia-Roth says:

Sorokin closed the conference with some remarks that were autobiographical, ceremonial, and congratulatory. He noted his initial reluctance to attend the conference as well as his pessimism concerning its quality. But, happily, he was surprised by the excellence and focus of the discussions. Day by day, the quality improved. He is now leaving the conference convinced of the necessity and importance of civilizational analysis, of the need for congresses like this one, which he considers to have been unique. He characterizes the study of civilizations as a mission.

6. Pitirim A. Sorokin as a precursor of civilizational science

Prompted by his life's most extraordinary professional and personal circumstances, Pitirim A. Sorokin developed and presented in "Dynamics" a thoroughly supported by convincing data comprehensive theory of the sociocultural universe evolution. While laboring on this monumental work, the scholar realized, that his theory represents but one of the "philosophies of history," and since then never stopped to thoroughly study other sociocultural theories, particularly those of the phenomenon of civilization. With publication of "Society, Culture, Personality," "Social Philosophies in an Age of Crisis" (later renamed "Modern Historical and Social Philosophies), and "Sociological Theories of Today," Sorokin vigorously continued his quest for the "ultimate truth" about sociocultural universe.

In his earlier analysis the scholar concluded, that the "totalitarian" theories by Danilevsky, Spengler and Toynbee are based on "false premises," since their "civilizations" *do not*: a) represent causal and/or meaningful entities; b) change (are born, develop and disappear) as systems and /or unities; c) evolve in a uniform fashion. Simultaneously, Sorokin made a profoundly insightful observation, that the

analyzed theories “cover rather a series of different phenomena,” yet did not develop this prescient notion into a concept of a new interdisciplinary scientific field.

While continuing his analysis of various concepts, from the theories of art evolution to the “totalitarian,” “non-totalitarian,” “culturological,” “idealized,” and ending with the overarching “dichotomy” schemas, Sorokin recognized the remarkable similarities and uniformities in them. First intuitively, and then applying the based on rigorous and systemic criteria classification of culturological theories, the scholar concluded, that those concepts greatly enrich and complement each other, and introduced initially six and then thirteen “points of agreement” between them and his own theory.

The scholar then placed civilizations within the realm of then emerging discipline of culturology¹, “elevating” them from the status of “cultural and social congeries” to that of “vast cultural entities” and “cultural supersystems,” as well as irrevocably bringing the esoteric “philosophies of history” into a systemic, if “cuturologically-biased,” scientific paradigm.

While agreeing with most of the Sorokin’s precise, profound and sophisticated analysis, we would like to differ on two important points: 1) civilizations, in our view, ought to be studied not by culturology, but by macroculturology and for an obvious reason. Nobody highlighted importance of the macro-level analysis better than Sorokin himself: “A substantial knowledge of all the main cultural systems and supersystems equips us with knowledge of all the macroscopic aspects of the whole cultural cosmos. This knowledge greatly complements the knowledge of microscopic cultural phenomena obtained through microsociological research. By its very nature, microsociological research cannot successfully study macrocultural realities: They are too big to be examined microscopically – not microscopes but powerful telescopes are needed for their investigations. For a fuller knowledge of sociocultural realities both macrosociological as well as microsociological studies are indispensable. (Sorokin 1966: 379); 2) in addition to macroculturology, civilizations are to be studied by the other macro-realms of civilizational science. (Alalykin-Izvekov 2011a, 2009)

In “Theories,” the last major work of his, Sorokin presciently inquired: “Shall we view the sociological theorizing and “system-building” as perfectly needless and irrevocably obsolescent, or shall we deeply regret the scarcity of such systems and of their creators among the younger generation of sociologists and renew our efforts in creating ever better and grander systems of science”? (Sorokin 1966: 45). By establishing the methodological foundations of civilizational science, we have answered with enthusiastic “yes” to the scholar’s call for opening up new scientific horizons and creating new scientific paradigms.

¹ *Author's note:* Notably, Russia which expelled Sorokin in September of 1922, now not only widely publishes his scholarly *oeuvre*, but recently introduced the mandatory courses of culturology, featuring extensive civilizational analysis, into all levels of its educational system (Alalykin-Izvekov 2011b: 26).

Conclusions¹

1. By developing his theory of cultural supersystems, Pitirim A. Sorokin made a seminal contribution to studies of the macro-level sociocultural phenomena and the long-term sociocultural processes.

2. By thoroughly analyzing the contemporary theories of civilization and other large-scale cultural entities and systems, placing them within the framework of culturology, and developing a systemic classification of culturological theories, Sorokin decisively brought the civilizational theory and research into and made it a part of the framework of science.

3. Over the span of almost 30 years, the Sorokin's views on the phenomenon of civilization underwent a significant evolution, thereby "elevating" civilizations from the status of "cultural and social congeries" to that of "vast cultural entities" and "cultural supersystems," as well as irrevocably bringing the esoteric "philosophies of history" into a systemic, if "culturologically-biased," scientific paradigm.

4. Although the scholar has never considered civilizations as anything but vast cultural entities, nor he entertained a notion, that this multifaceted phenomenon may be studied in the context of a new interdisciplinary field, by shaping the scientific paradigm of civilizational studies, Sorokin's prescient analysis has been instrumental in establishing the methodological foundations of civilizational science.

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¹ *Editor's note:* The topical Triadic scholarly approach of Pitirim A. Sorokin requires the urgent Triadologic substantiation of the contemporary foundation of science (which is the main aim of the BCA's activity), thus rehabilitating and actualizing the true potentiality and great capabilities of Sorokin's sociocultural theory. Especially, this is urgently needed nowadays, in Sorokin's words, for building "the progress of peace but not of war; the bloodless reconstruction of society but not bloody revolutions; humanitarianism in nobler disguise but not mass murders; an even finer form of democracy but not autocratic dictatorships; the advance of science but not of propaganda and authoritarian *dicta* in lieu of truth; the many-sided improvement of man but not his relapse into barbarism." (Sorokin 1937)

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