GLOBALIZATION, POST-MATERIALISM AND THREEFOLDING[1]

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Abstract

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and the Battle of Genoa in July 2001 in Italy captures the present power configuration of the world. Three worldviews are struggling for control over the future of the planet. These three worldviews are characterized and labeled, broadly, as Jihad, McWorld, and Civitas. McWorld is the world of the dominant materialistic modernity that governs the world. Jihad is the fundamentalist response of tradition, not just Islam, to McWorld. The world of Civitas is the world of post-materialism seeking a more spiritual approach, different from McWorld and Jihad, to world challenges.

An elite form of globalization associated with McWorld has taken over the planet with disastrous consequences. This elite form of globalization is forcing humanity to ask fundamental questions about the nature and meaning of human existence, about societies and civilizations, and about the nature of nature and humanity’s relationship with it. The questions of McWorld cannot be answered from the consciousness of McWorld nor Jihad. It requires a post-material consciousness, perspective and action to address the problems spawned by elite globalization today.

Fortunately, there is a massive awakening throughout the world today in connection with a more spiritual approach and response to the challenge of McWorld.

Ronald Inglehart documents the broad contours of this new awakening. Paul Ray details the identity dynamics in the construction of new identities within Civitas and the expression of these re-framed identities as the new social movements. Thus we see that these value shifts are not only active in the head. They also find behavioral and social expression in the world as new social movements and, ultimately, as civil society.

With this development, postmaterialism has entered a new phase in its expression in the world. For the values may be there but, without the freeing of the spiritual energies latent in cultural life, the values of Civitas will remain unrealized in society. With the rebirth and activism of civil society, comes the effective liberation of cultural life from the domination of economic and political powers (and their media and academic allies in cultural life) driving elite globalization.

The Battle of Seattle and the Battle of Genoa is understood in this way: that, from now on, it is no longer the economic and political institutions of McWorld, nor the cultural institutions of Jihad that will shape globalization. The cultural institutions of Civitas, expressed in its civil society, now also becomes its own effective force in world affairs and provides an alternative mode of cultural presence as compared with the fundamentalist culture of Jihad which aims to dominate society in its own way. Global civil society is now a third global force joining the state and the market in a tri-polar struggle for the future of the world.

Jihad is the cultural equivalent of McWorld’s economy. Both seek to dominate all aspects of social life, albeit in different ways. The civil society of Civitas seeks to avoid both these extremes. It recognizes the importance of the respective autonomy of culture, polity, and the economy and strives to find a meaningful integration of these different realms of society towards the attainment of comprehensive and authentic sustainable development.

This activism of the global civil society of Civitas is resulting in introduction of a new social process potent enough to transform the elite globalization of McWorld. This process is threefolding. In essence, threefolding means the interaction of the three autonomous realms of society (culture, polity, and economy), through any of its three institutional powers or three key institutions (civil society, government, and business, respectively), to advocate for or to achieve genuine or comprehensive sustainable development.
The paper provides an extensive discussion of the scope of threefolding, the kinds and phases of threefolding, its relationship to worlds of Jihad, Civitas and McWorld, and its tremendous potential for realizing the spiritual culture of Civitas in all realms of society.

The paper concludes with a picture. As humanity enters into the 21st century, it finds itself engaged in a battle for three different kinds of future: the world of Jihad, McWorld, and Civitas. This is the battle among the fundamentalist world of Jihad, the materialistic globalization process of McWorld, and the new, post-modern spirituality of Civitas. No one can predict the outcome of this battle which will be intense. The outcome will depend to what extent humanity can wake up to its post-material potentials, incorporate the positive elements of Jihad and McWorld, and consciously work with vigilance to attain the world of Civitas.

The Setting

Globalization, its nature and its direction, is one of the most contentious issues today. The conflict over globalization is not only philosophical and scientific, existing not only in the halls of academe and the universities. This conflict is writ large in the structure and dynamics of the world as different worldviews of globalization compete for the minds, hearts, and hands of billions of human beings throughout the planet.

This conflict has deep relevance for the emerging discourse on modernity and post-materialism. One of the contending worldviews that aim to shape globalization and the future of the earth is increasingly a post-materialist worldview, one that I call, Civitas, for reasons to be explained below. But beyond its deep and concrete relevance to the post-materialist discourse, we need to understand what is at stake in the conflict of worldviews that stirs the planet today. For what we envision, individually and globally, so we shall be.

September 11 and the Battle of Genoa

Before the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on New York City, one of the most debated events in world affairs was the tragic battle of Genoa. A little over two months before September 11, the Presidents and/or Prime Ministers of the powerful G-8 countries met in the Italian city of Genoa to discuss how to further advance their neo-liberal economic and materialistic version of modernity. They were surrounded by around three hundred thousand (300,000) activists who were protesting G-8 policies and initiatives in the world.

The vast majority of the protestors was peaceful and espoused active non-violent resistance against G-8 policies and programs. However, the protests ended up in violence and a major tragedy. The Italian police shot and killed a young protestor. Millions watching the television were horrified to see how the police then ran their vehicle over the dead body of the young activist. The police said that a small group of violent anarchists provoked the police. Activists said the police, pretending to be activists, infiltrated the ranks of the protestors and provoked the violence themselves.

The Battle of Genoa was only one of a series of massive street demonstrations that have rocked the normally placid world of decision makers in such institutions as the World Economic Forum (WEF), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the UN Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and others. The world has seen the battle of Seattle, the Battle of Washington DC, of Melbourne, of Prague, of Quebec, and other major cities in the different continents of the world.

The tragedy of the Battle of Genoa merely emphasized the new phase that the debate over globalization had reached. Thousands of activists clearly sent a very powerful signal that they were ready to die for their values, for their version of a different planet, one that, among others, is more spiritual, free, just, equitable, sustainable, compassionate, and tolerant of cultural differences, and based on an economy of solidarity, instead of competition.

Shortly thereafter, the tragedy of September 11 struck. Terrorists hijacked two airplanes and smashed them into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, symbol of American economic power. A related group of terrorists hijacked another plane and plowed it through the Pentagon, symbol of American political power. The attacks on these two icons of US economic and political power in the world killed over five thousand Americans. Shortly therefore, George W. Bush, Jr., President of the United States, declared war on terrorism all over the world.

The September 11 tragedy surfaced another key front in the battle of worldviews that has engulfed the world.
time traditional and religious fundamentalism challenged the prevailing and dominant materialistic neo-liberal economic conception of modernity

**Whose World: Jihad, McWorld, or Civitas?**

These two events, occurring almost simultaneously from the perspective of history, clearly illustrate the three worldviews and the attendant value systems that are waging “war” against each other for the future of the planet. 

I must emphasize that these three worldviews have their own internal diversity within them. And that, also, in the case of one world view (Civitas), it is possible to find elements in the other world views that are of value to it. However, there is enough of a convergence on basic principles that one can characterize the different perspectives into the three world views that are now contending for the future of the planet.

The September 11 tragedy dramatically displayed the fault lines between the world of “Jihad” and “McWorld”. This is the clash between the world of tradition and religious fundamentalism versus the materialistic modernity of the world economy, respectively. Barber (1996) already pointed to the deep conflict between these two worldviews and approaches to the world.  

“Jihad” refers to any worldview that would resist the onslaught of the modern global economy by reasserting the primacy of religious and indigenous traditions. In its resistance, “Jihad” often takes the form of “fundamentalism” where there is often a one-sided exposition and practice of tradition in its attempt to resist the modern world. Thus “Jihad”, although it comes from the Islamic word for “holy war” is not only about fundamentalist Islam. It is also about fundamentalist Christianity, Hinduism, and so on. It refers to any form of fundamentalist reaction of the onslaught of the modern world economy. Because “Jihad” feels overly oppressed by modernity, it often feels the need to resort to violence to protect its world and to gain the attention of the world.

McWorld refers to the worldview implicit in the modernity of neo-liberal economics and liberal democracy. The term, “McWorld” is derived from the MacDonald fast food outlets found in most countries in the world. However, the MacDonald food chain is only one of many such western economic powerhouses that dot the world, a symbol of McWorld. It is a powerful testimony to the success of McWorld and its neo-liberal materialistic worldview, before which the different civilizations and religions of the world must now bow before its power. 

McWorld is the world of Francis Fukuyama (*The End of History*) and Thomas Friedman (*The Lexus and the Olive Tree*) There are many variations within this worldview. However they are inwardly unified in their radical belief in the reality of a competitive “free market” that can churn out endless and cheap products and services to satisfy the demands of hyper-consumerism that has been created by the billions of dollars of advertisements of the believers of this “free” market. They also believe that liberal democracy is the best form of governance despite widespread criticisms of its failure and the need to distinguish between formal and effective democracy. 

The Battle of Genoa and its predecessor battles starting in the Battle of Seattle revealed the other major fault line in the battle of worldviews for the shape of tomorrow. This time it was the battle between McWorld and “Civitas”. I derive the word “Civitas” from global “civil society” that has been active in the various battles against the forces of materialistic modernity in the past two and a half years and beyond.

Civitas is the world view of tens of millions around the world who are alienated from both McWorld and Jihad. They see McWorld as the rough and tough world of social Darwinian competition where the rich get richer, the poor get poorer, the powerful more powerful, and the weak more oppressed. They have little faith in what they see as the mania for “economic growth”

At the same time, Civitas is not attracted to the fundamentalist world of Jihad which they see as a repression of human individuality and freedom and as a return to the past which can no longer exist in a world of globalization dominated by transnational corporations and their elite partners in politics and culture.

Civitas criticizes the many kinds of “undesirable forms of growth” that accompany the economic growth of McWorld. The McWorld’s form of globalization, from the perspective of Civitas, is “elite globalization” which benefits a few and harms the many.

They criticize McWorld for mass producing “ruthless” growth which increases the disparity between the rich and
the poor. Ruthless growth means that the income of around 400 billionaires is equivalent to the income of around 3 billion of the world’s poor. Civitas criticizes the “jobless” growth in McWorld, where automation and the migration of factories to cheaper locations is displacing millions of workers.

Civitas is also concerned about the “voiceless” growth in McWorld where governance and democracy in McWorld is declining at an alarming rate and where more and more citizens do not effectively participate in decisions that affect their future. Civitas criticizes the “rootless” growth of McWorld, where world culture is increasingly homogenized and more and more a reflection of the materialism of the West, especially of the USA. They do not believe with McWorld that the answer to the disappearance of over 700 indigenous peoples around the world due to modernization is to collect their genetic materials and store these in a human gene bank.[11]

Civitas is alarmed with the “futureless” growth of McWorld, the rampant destruction of nature which increasingly threatens the future of humanity. Civitas is asking McWorld, for one of many examples, how it will solve the problem of global warming which is spawning weather destructive of human property and agriculture around the world.

In place of McWorld’s competitive neo-Darwinian economy, Civitas want to install an economy of solidarity or an economy of association. Instead of liberal democracy, they want to have true, effective, and direct democracy as the true means to achieve justice and equality in the planet. Instead of consumerist materialism, Civitas wants a more spiritual and free culture which respects the diversities of culture around the world.

Civitas wants to develop a deeper and more sacred respect for the Earth, and not view it as mere resource that can used and disposed of in an unsustainable manner like McWorld. Civitas believes that the earth is a living being and should not be subject to military domination as intended in the Star Wars project of United States of America, whose elite powers are the prime animators of McWorld.

The Spiritual Challenge of McWorld’s Elite Globalization

From the post-materialist perspective of Civitas, there is an even deeper challenge coming from the elite globalization of McWorld. The current debate is not simply about perspectives and beliefs. It is about McWorld’s total rejection of all previous spiritual understandings of the meaning of human existence, the human condition, and the very essence of nature. It is about the total transformation of the planet to a materialistic paradise (or nightmare, from the point of view of Civitas), devoid of any sacred dimension.

McWorld is taunting Civitas and Jihad. “Advance a more spiritual conception of nature, society, and the human being. If not, I will realize, before your very eyes, a world of genetically engineered nature, a cyborg humanity, and a society where human beings are reduced to the status of satiated and entertained animals.”

A cover issue[12] of Newsweek entitled “The Stem Cell Wars” is symptomatic of the future that McWorld wants to create and which Civitas is resisting with great effort. It is the battle of McWorld and Civitas over the embryo, over the future of the human being. It is a battle where, tactically, Jihad is joining forces with Civitas.

Stem cells are those cells in the developing human embryo that have the potential to become different kinds of tissues - brain tissues, heart tissues, muscle tissues and so on. McWorld sees the potential of stem cells for curing a range of illnesses through the replacement of damaged tissues with genetically engineered stem cell tissues. But Civitas says that McWorld medicine is the beginning of a slippery slope where the human being is becoming a commodity. In the words of Jeremy Rifkin, quoted by Newsweek: “the child becomes the ultimate shopping experience in the post modern world.”

Civitas perceives itself as opposing a new kind of eugenics. It is no longer political eugenics like the one that the Nazi’s practiced. For Civitas it is a kind of eugenics of the marketplace. Civitas sees that, piece by piece, the parents of the near future will be making decisions of what kind of genes their children will have. McWorld’s biological science believes that phenotypic traits are totally encoded in the genes. So that genetic transfers can produce its corresponding phenotypic including behavioral expression.[13]

In this “stem cell wars” we clearly see a battle of worldviews. McWorld says that the human being is just genetic material, and, therefore does not see ethical problems with the biotech procedure. “What’s the ethical problem?! The human being is just a biochemical machine. Its parts get worn out so we are merely replace it with spare parts derived from stem cells. So what’s the big deal?”

Civitas, of course, will say. “No, human beings are not biochemical machines. They are spiritual beings which
cannot be reduced to genetic sequences.

There is a very interesting footnote in this battle. The apologist of McWorld, Francis Fukuyama, has written a more recent book. In the book, *The End of History*, Fukuyama wrote that humanity has now reached the end of history. Why? The epochal battle between communism and capitalism is finished. Capitalism and the liberal form of democracy won. There is no more history, because all of history was just a struggle between that, those social forms. This is a bit of a simplification of Fukuyama’s view but this is it in essence.

But in his recent work, Fukuyama re-adjusts his views. He admits that he has made a mistake. He writes that miscalculated the rapid evolutionary trajectory of gene technology. Specifically Fukuyama was concerned about the impacts of germline therapy in medicine. In germline genetic therapy, the traits achieved through genetic manipulation are transferred to the next generation.

Fukuyama writes that he has made a mistake because the end of history will come from another arena of life. In essence he is concerned that the end of history is coming because, with genetic manipulation of the human being, it will be the end of human beings as we know them. With this radical transformation of the human being, then it will be the end of history as we conventionally know it. [14]

This is a shocking statement from a prophet of the neo-liberal capitalist McWorld. For him the end of history would not come through capitalism as we understood it but it’s going to become the end through biotechnological manipulation of the human being. We will no longer have the human being as we understand what human being to be.

So there is in humanity today a battle not only a battle of stem cells. What we are seeing is a battle for the very soul and spirit of humanity.

For Civitas this is the essence of their whole challenge to the elite globalization of McWorld. They see that McWorld suppresses the true human spirit and individuality. They resist McWorld in the latter’s attempt to banish the human spirit to a biochemical mechanical prison. Combined with the rights to patent human life[15], for Civitas, McWorld is imposing a high tech, modern form of slavery.

It is clear that McWorld’s elite globalization is issuing a spiritual challenge to humanity. In this particular case, it is asking the question: What does it mean to be a human being? If Jihad or Civitas do not answer this question, at all the different levels in which this question has been answered by McWorld, then to that extent will we all slowly lose our humanity, including those who inhabit McWorld, in the process of elite globalization.

We can apply a similar methodological examination of the other issues under debate among Jihad, McWorld and Civitas.

What is society? What kind of society do we want? Do we want a society dominated by economic forces that fuel the commodification of nature and human beings to be sold for a price? Or do we want an economy that’s embedded in the larger more spiritual values of society? Do we want to live in a society that has a just and sustainable economy of solidarity? Or do we want to live in a society that is a pure expression of the economic logic of neo-liberal capitalism which forces us to live in despair amidst the other kinds of undesirable growth that inevitably accompany it?

What does it mean to inhabit a planet as humanity? What does it mean to have planetary consciousness? Do we want, with Civitas, to develop an experience of the planet that nurtures our latent spiritual and compassionate potentials? Or do we want, with McWorld, to develop the means for the totalitarian control and militarization of outer space?

Meanwhile, McWorld, courtesy of the US Department of Defense, is developing “Star Wars”, its version of planetary consciousness. Star Wars is not about developing a consciousness of our full humanity. It is about “full spectrum dominance” of outer space and the planet. It is about control of “rogue states” and networks which are moving away in rebellion against the interests of McWorld. It is about using dozens of military technological innovations, including the use of massive laser guns stationed in outer space capable of destroying a pin-pointed target on the surface of the earth. [16]

What is the nature of nature? Is there, as Civitas thinks, a sacred dimension to nature and deep relationship between the spirit in nature and the spirit in the human being? Or is nature, as McWorld sees it, simply raw material
for its giant machines, material to extracted, pulverized, transformed, used and thrown away as waste and material to alter, clone and patent for profits? Is the vast web of nature simply a biochemical machine that produced its diversity of life forms through the survival of its fittest in the struggle for existence? Can the worldview of McWorld justify its attempt to re-engineer the genetic code of the biosphere on the basis of its fetish for materialistic, one-sided search for efficiency and profits?

What is essential to realize is that, in all such questions, McWorld is forcing tradition-breaking, unprecedented materialistic answers to a world often powerless to resist its instruments of power.

We are at the threshold of an utterly new world, one basically alien to human history and the human spirit. For McWorld is ready to move from the materialism of cognition to the materialism of the will and its technological projections. It is ready to speed up the process of exosomatic evolution where the human gradually externalizes itself into all kinds of technological artifacts. It is ready to remake human beings, nature, and society into its image of technological utopia where humanity is basically chained to a purely material existence devoid of any meaning and compassion. And this is and will continue to be labeled as “progress”.

McWorld’s is actually digging the grave of traditional humanity. Even aspects of McWorld, which are blind to the coming technological utopia of cyborgs, nanotechnology, and genetically engineered nature, will enter the grave of civilization together with Jihad.[17] For McWorld cannot solve the problems created but its own framework and consciousness. Only those aspects of McWorld totally attuned to becoming part of cyborg humanity, dominated society, and engineered nature will not mind the mechanization of their soul and spirit.

Nor can Jihad have the inner strength to put the genie of “instrumental reason” back into its technological bottle. For Jihad has not learnt to deal with egotistic individuality and its instrumental reason that now dominate the world. It will take the Civitas to usher in a different world and heal the shattering and destructive legacy of McWorld.

Civitas, Cultural Creatives, New Social Movements, and Civil Society

The emergence of Civitas reveals that there is a will to address the fundamental questions about human existence that McWorld is forcing the world to answer. So the question arises. Is there world of Civitas sustainable? Will it have lasting power in the face of the powerful challenges that McWorld is spewing into the world?

Fortunately, the world of Civitas rides on the crest of a massive awakening throughout the planet. This spiritual awakening tens of millions of individuals has profound and creative responses to the urgent and threatening questions being asked by McWorld.

On a broad level, Inglehart (1990) describes the emergence of post-materialistic values that indicate the unease of tens of millions of humanity over the direction that McWorld has taken.[18] However, at the level where values transform themselves to action, to an actual encounter of Civitas with McWorld, then the researches of Paul Ray on “cultural creatives” become crucial.

Paul Ray and Sherry Andersen (2001) recently published their work on cultural creatives by a ground-breaking book of that title: Cultural Creatives; How 50 Million People Are Changing the World “. In this book, Ray and Andersen, on the basis of 15 years of research interviewing over a hundred thousand people, identified 50 million Americans who are “cultural creatives”. From preliminary data in Europe, Ray says that there may be as many as 70 million or more cultural creatives in Europe.

And why cultural creatives? Because the values of this group of individuals have helped shaped the social history of the United States and Europe. These values were not just privately held. Individuals who held these post-materialist values mobilized them, in many diverse ways, to change the world. So these were cultural values that became creative of and in the larger society.

One central discovery of this book that is germane to this whole discourse on globalization and post-materialism is this. There is a very large overlap in the values structure of those cultural creatives involved in social movements and those active in the consciousness movements. Cultural creatives tend to become key participants and/or leaders in so-called new social movements.

Cultural creatives have been and continue to be active in the various new social movements that have surfaced since the end of the Second World War. These new social movements include the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, the student movement, the women’s movement, the anti-war movement, the New Age
movement, the human potential movement, the anti-nuclear energy movement, the sustainable agriculture movement, the alternative health movement, the solidarity movement, the anti-establishment movement, and so on.

There is an important characteristic of these new social movements (NSMs). They are all based on the reframing of existing dominant or received realities and new identities are constructed out this reframing of the world.

In the environmental movement, for example, Rachel Carson, in *Silent Spring*, reframed the issue of pesticide pollution as an issue dealing with the death of nature.[19] Readers of her book who then became environmentalist reconstructed their identity on the basis of this framework of viewing nature.

This process is the essence of activist understanding of post-materialistic consciousness. McWorld frames the world in a specific way. The activist in Civitas rejects this frame, constructs an alternative frame, and constitutes his or her identity within the context of that new frame. Individual activists and other activists interact in a similar way to construct a collective identity which is basically in opposition to McWorld. As this process continues to scale up, more and more individuals construct their identity along the lines of their alternative framework. Ultimately, the stage is reached wherein the various groups, with convergent identities, come together to form a new social movement.[20]

Civitas, essentially, is made up of many social movements where various facets of McWorld have been re-framed and alternative modes of cognition and behavior, based on new identities, have been constructed. When this process of coming together is strong enough in a country or specific issue area, then we see the emergence of what we call, “civil society” or, in its global expression, “global civil society”.

**Civil Society as Third Global Power**

It is at the level of global civil society that the culture of Civitas becomes visible as third global power. With the Battle of Seattle and thereafter, global civil society has joined the state and the market as one of the three global powers that now shape the world.[21]

Let us recall the Battle of Seattle. At the end of the 20th century, news of this watershed event flashed around the world. The global media reported the dramatic details of an unusual confrontation to hundreds of millions of listeners and readers. Some immediately saw that the event was a global social earthquake of the highest magnitude. Others understood only gradually that the foundations of the world’s social life had been shaken. Afterwards, important national and international gatherings would pay homage to the event, justifying their own visions, programs and activities in light of it. This event continues to haunt those responsible for the most powerful version of materialistic modernity that has ever expressed itself on this planet. This historic event is now known as the "Battle of Seattle.”

Participants of the World Trade Organization (WTO) summit had arrived in Seattle confident to the point of complacency. Arriving along with them, however, were 50,000 demonstrators from all over the world and all walks of life, ready to offer well-organized, articulate resistance. By the waning moments of the last day of the WTO summit, as economic and government leaders from 135 countries tried desperately, but in vain to hammer out a new trade agreement, an unforgettable lesson had been etched in the psyches of the participants of the battle and the journalists who covered it.

The lesson was this: the fate of the world would no longer be determined by a bi-polar power struggle between business or the private sector (especially large transnational corporations) and the governments of nation states. The WTO had reflected this bi-polar power structure to its very core. Now, a third global force had emerged with elemental strength to contest the monopoly of the two other powers (economics and politics) over the fate of the earth. The third force is global civil society.

We now live in a tri-polar world where the forces, capacities, and resources to change the world are clustered in the hands of business, government, and global civil society. In many countries, cities and towns are also characterized by this constellation of forces. Three global powers are now determining the understanding and fate of burning social issues.

Civil society understands that society as a whole has three realms: the economic, the political, and the cultural. It realizes that it dwells in the cultural realm just as naturally as business dwells in the economic realm and government dwells in the political realm. It sees that it can wield cultural power to achieve its ends just as effectively as governments wield political power and businesses wield economic power to achieve their ends.
In Seattle, global civil society used cultural power to counterpoise principled cultural values against the narrow profit motive and economic power of many in the private sector and the control motive and political power of most government agencies. The outcome of the WTO talks was thus determined by civil society’s advocacy for such fundamental values as freedom, justice, democracy, respect for nature, spirituality, fair trade, and human rights—especially the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.

The Battle of Seattle, during its time, was the latest and most prominent expression of an ongoing global struggle that has become more and more visible in the past several years before the event. Previous to Seattle, global civil society had, through well targeted consumer boycotts, neutralized the operations of selected transnational corporations. Pepsi, for example, had to withdraw from Myanmar after students in the United States called for a global boycott of Pepsi. Similarly, global civil society had defeated the secret plans of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the club of rich governments of the world, to have a Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI). This MAI was to have been even more powerful than the WTO Agreement and would have conferred on transnational corporations tremendous powers over nation states.

The battles, before and after Seattle, are about globalization and the global powers that are contending to shape it. The outcome of these struggles will determine how globalization will unfold on the earth in the coming decades of the 21st century.

Threefolding and the Realization of the Civitas World

McWorld’s worldview and values permeate the economic, political, and cultural realms of the societies that it influences. If Civitas wants to achieve a similar expression in the world, it must come to grips with the expression of its worldview and values in the cultural, political, and economic realm of societies around the planet without collapsing the three realms of society into one.

In McWorld, the economy strives to subjugate polity and culture to its own ends. In Jihad, culture strives to achieve external control over the economy and polity. In Civitas, there is a healthy respect for the autonomous but interactive and mutually dependent realms of society and, therefore, Civitas tries to harmonize these three in pursuit of sustainable and human development.

To achieve this, Civitas has to use a transformative social process, one that is potent enough to transform elite globalization of McWorld into its image of comprehensive sustainable development. Civitas has, in fact, found this potent social transformative approach. It is a process that goes by the name of social threefolding. And in achieving this, Civitas relies on its vibrant culture, expressed in global civil society, to start the process moving.

In social threefolding, individuals, active in the realms of the three major powers of the world—business, government and civil society, come together, where appropriate, and mobilize their unique economic, political and cultural perspectives, talents, and resources to create a vastly different and more beneficial kind of globalization. However, as seen in the case of the Battle of Seattle and Genoa, the possibility of this coming together, unfortunately, often has to be preceded by the confrontation of the global civil society of Civitas with the governmental and market powers of McWorld.

To fully appreciate threefolding, we need to understand further why our world is now tri-polar in a number of ways. Initially we saw, there are now three contending powers that reside in the world—global civil society, government, and business.

But there is something else that makes our world tri-polar. It is now tri-polar because global civil society has now enabled culture to emerge with enough force to actual countervail the power of the economy and polity. Though its emergence, civil society also simultaneously gives birth, consciously or not, to cultural life as an autonomous realm within larger society. Without the autonomy of cultural life, vis a vis the state and the market, it is not possible to have a socially transformative expression of the post-materialist world of Civitas.

Therefore it is important to realize that the emergence of global civil society not only means the emergence of a third global force that has joined the state and the market in their attempt to shape the world. It also means that, with global civil society, the free and spiritual cultural life of humanity, connected with Civitas, has now freed itself from the domination of McWorld’s political and economic dynamics. Therefore we now need to connect, with more rigor, the three global institutional powers (government, business, and civil society) with the three realms of society (polity, economy, and culture) if we want to know how Civitas can actually successfully contend with both McWorld and Jihad for the future of the world.
From social science, we learn that there are three realms in social life or three subsystems in society—cultural, political, and economic. The interactions of these three realms determine what kind of social life or society we have. We live in a healthy society if the three realms mutually recognize and support each other and develop their initiatives with awareness of their potential impacts on the other realms. We live in an unhealthy society if one realm dominates and tries to subjugate the others. For example, in that destructive form of globalization of McWorld which we call "elite" or "corporate globalization," one sphere of society, the economic, dominates over the justified concerns of the political and cultural realms. In addition, economic and political institutions, in general, have only a vague understanding and appreciation of culture and the role it plays in social life.

Businesses as institutions derive their force from their work, destructive or otherwise, in the economy. Their natural habitat is the economy. Governments as institutions gain their power, legitimate or not, from political life. They naturally inhabit the realm of polity. And the institutions of civil society derive their strength, desired or not, from their defense and articulation of the worldviews and values of cultural life. Their natural habitat is culture. Businesses have economic power. Governments have political power. And civil society organizations have cultural power. None has a monopoly of power.

This is the reason why we can now say that civil society, government, and business are the three key institutions of social life. Each of these powerful institutions has the potential to "represent," in its own way, the realm of society from which each is active—civil society represents culture; government represents polity; and business, the economy.

The three institutions may be "institutional powers of a tri-polar world," but they are not necessarily aware what social realms actually constitute this "tri-polar" world. Nor do the institutional powers necessarily know which social realms they inhabit and have affinity with. They may only be aware of their opposition to each other and not necessarily whether they come from the economy, polity, or culture.

For example, if a civil society activist thinks that civil society belongs to the political realm, then this indicates a usage reminiscent of being an "institutional power" in a tri-polar world. Civil society, in this case, is merely aware of its power but not which social realm it comes from. Or worse, none of the three may think that the cultural realm is of any importance and all three would therefore prefer to inhabit either the political or economic realms only.

The term key institutions of social life, on the other hand, implies that the actors within these institutions have a definite and clear idea as to what the three social realms are and which one their institution belongs to. Business, for example, is aware that the three social realms are economy, polity and culture and that its realm is the economy.

In terms of time sequence, it is normal for civil society and the other institutions to be aware first that they are an institutional power in a tri-polar world. Later on, they become aware that they are key institutions of social life. And, as we shall see, this makes a big difference in societal transformation and evolution, in general, and in threefolding, in particular.

We can now understand how the different worlds work. Civitas, Jihad, and McWorld would like to organize there three realms of society in their own way. They organize culture, polity, and the economy to fully express its post-materialist, or traditional, or materialistic modern worldviews and values. The different worlds of Civitas, Jihad, and McWorld are different ways of aligning culture, polity, and the economy in a society to ensure their alignment with the worldviews and values inherent in their own worlds. When these three worlds clash, their conflict often begins at the level of culture and then gradually spreads to the other realms of society, to a struggle over the economic and political direction of the world.

Operational Considerations in Social Threefolding

Generally speaking, threefolding means the autonomous interaction of the three realms of society, through any of its three institutional powers or three key institutions, to advocate for or to achieve genuine or comprehensive sustainable development.

Conventional sustainable development often just means environmentally sound economic development, which entails the almost impossible attempt to make McWorld’s neo-liberal economic models of development compatible with the environmental concerns of Civitas. Granted that this attempt is doable, success is highly unlikely because of structural defects in neo-liberal economic theory. This synthesis is still not enough and is too narrow. Often business concerns dominate the discourse on conventional "sustainable development."

Comprehensive sustainable development of Civitas, on the other hand, starts with the premise that there are three key institutions that represent the three realms of society, and thereby potentially the wholeness of social life. These
three realms will bring perspectives appropriate to the realm to which they belong. Business will bring economic concerns. Government will bring political concerns. Civil society will bring cultural, social, ecological, human, and spiritual concerns. Comprehensive sustainable development therefore considers seven dimensions of development: economic, political, cultural, social, ecological, human, and spiritual.

Because of this requirement for a more comprehensive conception of development, threefolding succeeds more easily when the cultural creatives in the civil society of Civitas meet the cultural creatives in the business and government institutions of McWorld. There is inherent understanding at the level of worldviews and values, thereby facilitating the development of trust and mutual respect. However, in the battle of ideas, the civil society of Civitas often faces the governments and businesses of McWorld in threefolding efforts.

Two Aspects of Threefolding: Process and Substance

Having clarified the general idea of threefolding, we can now focus on an important related aspect of threefolding: the connection between threefolding process and threefolding substance.

The autonomous interaction of the three institutions (process) is just a means to the end of genuine or comprehensive sustainable development (substance). No abstract program (substance) can be created by any one institution of society. In threefolding, the concrete program is created in conflict, dialogue, or partnership, that is, in active processes between the three institutions of society. Out of these processes will come the concrete measures needed to achieve genuine or comprehensive sustainable development.

Threefolding is first and foremost a social process. Out of this social process, the substance of threefolding emerges. Without a genuine threefolding process, there can be no authentic threefolding substance. This is the reason why the term, threefolding, is used in an active sense denoting a process, a social activity, not a finished social product.

A threefolding process is complete and authentic if there is meaningful and true participation by all three key institutions of society, all of which are aware of the social realm from which they come. A multi-stakeholder process is not necessarily a threefolding process, since all three key institutions are not always represented in such a process. There can even be a multi-stakeholder process whose participants belong to various sectors of the same realm—government, for instance, or business. But this is not a threefolding process, because all three key institutions are not represented. The very term multi-stakeholder leads to fuzziness and an unhealthy mixing of the representatives of the different realms of society.

In threefolding, substance is complete if the different dimensions of development are present. As we have seen, business brings in the economic dimension. Governments bring in the political dimension of development. And civil society brings in the cultural, social, ecological, human, and spiritual dimensions of development. Of course, all the dimensions of development cannot be achieved in the very beginning. But they must be consciously taken into account in the process and substance of threefolding.

Kinds of and Stages in Threefolding

Threefolding cannot manifest in a complete way during its first appearance in social life. There are different kinds of threefolding and there are different stages through which authentic threefolding will have to pass. Threefolding, like a human being, passes through the stages of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood and therefore the actual concrete manifestations of threefolding can vary with time and place, depending on the actual conditions of social life.

According to this analogy, advanced threefolding (adult phase) will have to first pass through two earlier phases: de facto threefolding (childhood phase) and conscious threefolding (adolescent phase).

De facto threefolding results when one of the three global institutional powers asserts its autonomy and defends its realm from perceived or real invasions from the two other powers and realms of society. In recent history, de facto threefolding initiatives came almost exclusively from civil society. In the past decade, the civil society of Civitas has been defending the cultural realm from the increasingly totalitarian tendencies of McWorld’s various governments and businesses as well as Jihad’s cultural totalitarianism. In any region, country, or global arena where civil society successfully asserts its autonomy, de facto threefolding emerges.

In de facto threefolding, civil society is in a critical and often "rejectionist" mode. The Battle of Seattle is one of the best examples of de facto threefolding.
While de facto threefolding may not be perfect, it is, however, an important sign that a real possibility for threefolding has emerged and that there are inherent possibilities in the situation that can be harnessed for the greater ends of humanity. Furthermore, de facto threefolding is often a first necessary step for Civitas, especially in situations where McWorld governments and businesses are often too full of their political and economic power to genuinely listen and do something about the concerns of Civitas.

**Conscious threefolding** results when the three institutional powers recognize that society has three realms and that they themselves are the three key institutions of these three social realms. In conscious threefolding, the three key institutions are aware that they have consciously entered into a social process that mobilizes the unique perspectives, strengths, resources, and capacities of the cultural, political, and economic realms of society. The three key institutions know that, in conscious threefolding, they place their respective talents towards the pursuit of comprehensive sustainable development, balancing economic, political, and cultural, social, ecological, human, and spiritual imperatives of development.

The substance of conscious threefolding will increasingly include consideration of the seven dimensions of development. Politics and economics will remain as important considerations. But increasingly ecological, social, cultural, human and spiritual considerations will enter into the program details of comprehensive sustainable development efforts.

In conscious threefolding, civil society is in a critical engagement mode. Philippine Agenda 21 (PA21) is an exemplar of conscious threefolding at work. PA21 articulates a conscious threefolding image of society and has an understanding of the three key institutions of society and the realms from which they are active in. Civitas in the Philippines, through its civil society, convinced the McWorld government of the Philippines to officially adopt PA21 as its framework of sustainable development for the country.

The slow and uneven implementation of PA21, however, is an object lesson of what can happen when the worldview of Civitas tries to find expression in the governments and businesses of McWorld. Most of the agencies of the McWorld government in the Philippines actively or passively resist PA21 even if there are several directives from the Office of the President to mainstream PA21. The few in McWorld government or business that see the value of PA21 have conceptual and operational difficulties in translating PA21 in action.

Increasingly, however, civil society in the Philippines are starting to undertake pro-active actions to make the Civitas worldview in PA21 into a reality. Essentially the strategy is to strengthen the presence of Civitas in culture, polity, and the economy and then create conscious threefolding partnerships between these Civitas institutions in the three realms of society. Or, as an alternative, the strategy is to find cultural creatives with enough decision-making power in the three realms of society and create threefolding partnerships among them.[23]

Conscious threefolding is more difficult to achieve than de facto threefolding. "Rejectionists" within Civitas civil society, whose identity is deeply defined by the protest mode, do not want to have anything to do with business and government institutions of McWorld.

Similarly even "Critical engagers" within the civil society of Civitas are hesitant to engage in conscious threefolding because they have to discern whether the "tri-sector partnerships" proffered by government and business are opportunities for transforming McWorld or traps by McWorld to co-opt civil society to its mode of working. The United Nations, the World Bank and other such McWorld organizations are now launching initiatives to solve poverty and other social issues using the tri-sector partnership approach. Civil society of Civitas has to judge these proposals one by one to determine the authenticity of these efforts in wanting to achieve a better world.

**Advanced threefolding** is the adult phase of threefolding viewed from a developmental or evolutionary perspective. In advanced threefolding, mutual trust and respect are established and institutionalized, something that still has to be continuously worked for in conscious threefolding. In advanced threefolding, the substance of the different realms represented by the three key institutions is so well understood that creative, albeit radical new initiatives start to increasingly determine the substance of the threefolding process.

For example, in conscious threefolding, many aspects of McWorld’s neo-liberal economics will still be active in the debates on threefolding substance. And the same will be true with many conventional approaches to governance. In advanced threefolding, only true empirical discoveries of neo-liberal economics will be retained, and these will be placed within the context of an economics of solidarity or associative economics and not an economics of competition that are characteristic of Civitas. Thus the concept of an open market will be retained, but price and profits as signals for economic decision-making will be removed from their central position. Instead, price and profits...
will be among the considerations for economic associations as they try to ensure that the human needs of all are adequately satisfied by the economic system.

In advanced threefolding, process concerns are mostly understood, implemented, and institutionalized. Thus advanced threefolding is preoccupied with mobilizing threefolding processes to further elaborate and implement advanced threefolding substance.

One test for entry into the phase of advanced threefolding is whether the government of McWorld voluntarily removes its control over education, which is the responsibility of the cultural realm. Another test is whether businesses of McWorld stop the commodification of labor and stop speaking of "labor markets," as if the work capacities of human beings were just like dead commodities to be bought and sold in the market and subject to the "law" of supply and demand.

A further test, a tough one indeed, is whether nature, including land, is no longer commodified in the economic system of McWorld. Instead, in advanced threefolding, the far-reaching vision of land trusts as advocated by Civitas is understood and implemented on a wide scale.

In advanced threefolding, civil society is not only critically engaged. Its role and task is widely recognized and institutionalized by Civitas, McWorld, and Jihad. Increasingly the worldviews and values of Civitas begin to provide the framework context for integrating whatever worldview elements and values of McWorld and Jihad can be harnessed for comprehensive sustainable development.

Because of this, for example, gift money from surplus of the McWorld economy, goes directly to civil society as a right, not out of the arbitrary kindness of business institutions. Both business and government of McWorld and Jihad fully understand and appreciate the role of civil society in, among others things, the formation of social, human, and ecological capital that is so essential for the continued vitality of both business and government.

In the end it may be that it would be impossible for key aspects of McWorld and Jihad’s culture, polity, and economy to integrate with those of Civitas. However, it is part of the inherent worldview and values of Civitas to be inclusive and respectful of diversity and, therefore, attempt to harmonize conflicting situations within a larger unifying context.

**Kinds of Threefolding Not Mutually Exclusive**

There is no inherent conflict between the three different kinds of threefolding. De facto threefolding is an essential task of civil society. Just as, without a child, there would be no adolescent; without de facto threefolding, conscious threefolding cannot take place. Existing business, government and cultural powers of McWorld and Jihad often have to be forced to yield the cultural space that they long to occupy. These political, economic and cultural powers often need to be awakened by the demonstration of the cultural power of Civitas in order to appreciate the reality of civil society and the free cultural realm.

Even when conscious threefolding is being undertaken, de facto threefolding often still needs to take place and is taking place. Because institutions are inhabited by people, there are such things as institutional habits. And problematic institutional habits often die hard and need to be countered by the activism of civil society.

Similarly, when de facto threefolding has been achieved, it is important to try to work towards conscious threefolding, where appropriate. For no amount of de facto threefolding can create a new world that moves towards the comprehensive sustainable development of Civitas. There has to be a genuine understanding that there are three realms in society and that none of the key institutions can dominate the other whether in McWorld, Jihad, and especially in Civitas. This understanding is fundamental to conscious threefolding and, in turn, the pursuit of comprehensive sustainable development. Only conscious threefolding has the power to truly shape globalization away from elite globalization and towards comprehensive sustainable development.

Again, the maturing process is similar to that of a child. He or she must pass on to the adolescent phase and not want to remain in the phase of childhood. Otherwise, all kinds of psychological pathologies manifest themselves and the child cannot fully mature as a productive, loving, and creative adult.

Table 1 summarizes the similarities and differences of the kinds of, and phases in, threefolding.

**Table 1. Characteristics of the different types of threefolding**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>De Facto</th>
<th>Conscious</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy of culture established, consciously or unconsciously.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciously recognizes the 3 realms of society.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciously recognizes the 3 key institutions in the 3 realms of society.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciously includes the substance of the 3 realms although not completely harmonized.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciously alters substance of 3 realms towards comprehensive sustainable development. Substance of 3 realms finally harmonized.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Threefolding As Permanent Revolution in the Creation of a New World*

Threefolding is a permanent revolution because the citizens of society are mobilized actively in the three realms to restructure the mode of operations so as to create a better and newer world. Threefolding is a balanced way to bring about social structural change through healing and social wholeness instead of an undirected or totalitarian destruction or control of society.

Threefolding brings in an integral and holistic approach to the process and substance of development. As a social process, threefolding can either initially increase conflict but ultimate harmonize the fault lines between the three global forces that inhabit the tri-polar world. The quality of the social interaction of the three global forces—now understood in threefolding as the three key institutions of social life—will determine the directions of globalization and whether or not this interaction will be able to resolve the burning social issues of our times and those of the generations to come.

*The Future of Planet Earth*

As humanity enters into the 21st century, it finds itself engaged in a battle for three different kinds of future: the world of McWorld, Jihad, and Civitas.

McWorld’s materialistic modernity is rushing towards the creation of the human cyborg, genetically engineered nature and a world dominated by a few superpowers with weapons of mass destruction. Jihad fundamentalism, whether Muslim, Christian, Hindu, or whatever, is appalled by this utter neglect of the sacred traditions of humanity but spawns of its breed of violence and intolerance.

In this struggle joins the post-modern spirituality of Civitas. Jihad views Civitas as inconsequential. The real battle is with McWorld.

For McWorld, the battle is with both Jihad and Civitas. Both stand in the way of world conquest. McWorld has launched an all out war against the terrorist aspects of Jihad. In this way, McWorld unsuccessfully tried to characterize the civil society of Civitas as identical with the terrorist groups of Jihad. As an alternative, McWorld seeks to co-opt and incorporate the vital aspects of Civitas and nuance its culture, polity, and economy with trappings of Civitas.

Civitas is engaged in a struggle with both Jihad and McWorld. As a first stage, Civitas, through its civil society, resists the aggressions of McWorld and Jihad and establishes cultural spaces for it to flourish. Once achieved, it seeks to win over elements of Jihad and McWorld to its new conception of society and the different possibilities for culture, polity, and economy within Civitas society. The convening by Civitas of its World Social Forum as a direct challenge to the World Economic Forum of McWorld is a signal to both Jihad and McWorld that Civitas is not only about opposition. It is also about alternatives, a more human and spiritual approach to globalization and the shaping of societies. [24]

In this process, Civitas will need to draw deeper on its inner resources, which is the basis of its strength. Civitas
understands the force of its presence is intimately connected with its more advanced capacity to construct newer and more meaningful identities for humanity.

But Civitas cannot be a preacher in this regard. It must undertake the painful inner journey necessary to construct new social identities for a world torn between Jihad’s rigid dogmatism of tradition and the exuberant and destructive materialism of McWorld. Civitas knows that amidst the thousands of artificial identities that are possible in the global village of cyberspace, the individual has to encounter its own spirit. If not, then the identity of that individual will be fused with the artificial identities of McWorld and the fundamentalist identity of Jihad.

Civitas does not have the institutional control of governments and businesses that Jihad and McWorld have. However, it is tapped into the power of the free human spirit and the latter’s capabilities to construct a different world. Civitas knows, in this regard, a deep irony embedded in the process of elite globalization. It realizes that, at this very point in the history of humanity when McWorld’s elite globalization has launched the most powerful attack on the human spirit, that just at this very point, the human spirit can globalize itself and re-shape elite globalization.

Through civil society, Civitas has the power to mobilize the spiritual values of tens of millions of individuals around the world, spiritual values won through inner struggles and pain. Through social threefolding, Civitas can mobilize its civil society to be a force not only of for the liberation of the cultural spaces of societies, but also a force for mobilizing strategic allies in governments and business, and, together, to create a new world from out of the delegitimized sheaths of McWorld and Jihad.

No one can predict the outcome of this battle which will be intense. The outcome will depend to what extent humanity can wake up to its post-material potentials, incorporate the positive elements of Jihad and McWorld, and consciously work with vigilance to attain the world of Civitas.

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[3] See, for example, the series of volumes on post-materialism edited by Roland Benedikter for Passagen Publishing House based in Vienna, Austria.


[9] The forthcoming description of the different undesirable forms of growth is taken from the UNDP Human Development Report for 1996 which is a ground-breaking empirical study of the human, social, and ecological
impacts of neo-liberal capitalism around the world.


[12] This is the July 9, 2001 issue of *Newsweek*.


[15] The ominous legal beginnings of this journey towards the commodification of the human being can be found in Article 27 of the TRIPS, the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights Agreement which forms part of a number of agreements contained in the World Trade Organization.


[22] Most of the cultural creatives are found in civil society. However, an increasing number of either starting their own businesses or are joining businesses which they view as having the potential to move towards Civitas. A smaller number of cultural creatives are also found in the governments of McWorld. They, together with cultural creatives in conventional McWorld businesses, are faced with the more difficult task of trying to achieve change from within.