

2017

Globalization Tumult and Civilizational Greatness

Pradip N. Khandwalla
Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/mgdr>

 Part of the [Anthropology Commons](#), [Economics Commons](#), [Geography Commons](#), [International and Area Studies Commons](#), [International Business Commons](#), [Other Business Commons](#), [Sociology Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Khandwalla, Pradip N. (2017) "Globalization Tumult and Civilizational Greatness," *Markets, Globalization & Development Review*: Vol. 2: No. 3, Article 5.

DOI: 10.23860/MGDR-2017-02-03-05

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/mgdr/vol2/iss3/5>

This Article is brought to you by the University of Rhode Island. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Markets, Globalization & Development Review* by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons-group@uri.edu. For permission to reuse copyrighted content, contact the author directly.

Globalization Tumult and Civilizational Greatness

Cover Page Footnote

This article is adapted from the first chapter of the author's book on Civilizational Greatness.

Markets, Globalization & Development Review



Globalization Tumult and Civilizational Greatness

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

– Mahatma Gandhi

A Crisis of Greatness?

In the second decade of this new millennium, political winds in many parts of the world began to gather momentum with strong themes of nationalism and achieving national greatness or recovering and regaining lost greatness.

In India in 2014, Narendra Modi came to power, propelled by promises of “better days ahead”, and visions of a united and excellent India. After coming to power, he launched campaigns for a clean India – physically and metaphorically as well, to fight entrenched corruption – and also the “Make in India” initiative to make India a manufacturing powerhouse.

The underlying theme of the successful Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom was to disentangle Britain from the EU so that the lost glory and greatness of Britain could be recaptured.

In preparation for the 2016 U.S. presidential election, Donald Trump trademarked the “Make America Great Again” slogan on October 8, 2015, and – like India’s Modi – campaigned hard to “drain the swamp” of corruption in Washington, DC; to abrogate or renegotiate trade deals that were unfavorable to America; and to bring bag thousands of jobs to America and to restore prosperity and ‘greatness’.

In France, the outside candidacy of Emmanuel Macron succeeded in part by offering an alternate vision of globally-oriented French greatness that countered the xenophobic reversal to an insular Frenchness offered by Marine Le Pen.

The intensely swirling themes of national greatness evident in such campaigns require a careful, dispassionate and stable analytical perch. Indeed, it is very useful to step back from the hubbub of global politics and to ask the fundamental question: “What makes a civilization great?” I address this question, with particular emphasis on India.

Elements of Greatness of Civilizations

In this essay, I want to share some ideas on how to create a great civilization, especially in the context of modern India. These ideas, indeed, may be relevant to many other developing societies, and possibly even to First World societies.

A civilization comprises of not only individuals, but also numerous and varied collectivities of people. These range from families to communities to enterprises to government bodies to educational and other institutions; and more comprehensively, the society or nation as a whole. I want to distinguish between culture and civilization. Culture is the way of life of a people. Civilization is both urban and urbane, and is featured by relatively sophisticated and benign economic, political, and social systems. Culture is scripted by humanness; civilization by humaneness. I explore how we can align and alter individuals, collectivities, and systems in such a way that they can contribute to civilizational greatness in our modern context.

Social scientists such as Gordon Childe have tended to see 'civilization' as a cultural evolution of primitive societies into urbanizing habitats (Childe 1936). In a historical context, some ancient civilizations – such as the Egyptian, the Greek, the Chinese and the Indian – have been called great because they had towns and cities while the rest of the world was living in relatively primitive rural or forest communities. Besides, these few civilizations had made distinctive and lasting contributions to the evolution of global civilization.

In the ancient context, the historian Arnold Toynbee has shed some light on why civilization arose in one place and did not in another contiguous area (Toynbee 1939). He argued that given the same or similar set of challenges in a society, such as recurring drought or flooding or threat of invasion by foreigners, if the dominant elite – the king and his courtiers, wealthy merchants, and heads of clergy – make a proactive response to the challenges and innovate solutions, they would push the society into a higher orbit. In another similar society, if the dominant elite respond more or less passively or ineffectually to the challenges, the society would remain stuck in its groove. In our times, the elites have multiplied manifold because of democracy, market economy, universal education and a free civil society. For civilization's rise towards greatness, it is important to elaborate upon how to elicit proactive, beneficent and innovative responses to social challenges by this much widened and much more variegated elite base.

We urgently need to think of designing a great civilization. Market competition, when it is powered largely by greed for money, as seems to be frequently the case in several First World and Third World countries, and a democratic system, when it manifests largely greed for power, as seems frequently to be the case in several countries round the globe, tend to degenerate into widespread corruption, fraud, and violence. The beast in man comes to the fore, sophisticated though it may be in attire and communication. Ethics often go for a toss. Morality is like art, said Oscar Wilde, and means drawing a line someplace. When greed prevails, that line gets blurred.

Can we design a civilization that uses the creativity and enterprise of the market system and the freedom of choice of a democratic system to nourish the best in humankind rather than the worst in it? There are examples of communities, NGOs, government bodies, institutions, countries, etc. that display a reasonably high level of creativity and innovation, humaneness, and excellence orientation. These role models have important lessons for designing societies. Our quest should be for practical ways of moving towards civilizational greatness.

In the modern context, to me a civilization nears greatness not because it has become a super economic or political power, but above all, if it is becoming more and more a humane, creative, and performance excellence-seeking society. What good is great power status and high affluence if – in the process – public morality goes for a toss and society sinks into a cesspool of violence, crime and corruption?

'Humane civilization' evokes in me the imagery of a people that are, by and large, just, honest, and tolerant. They care for the weak and the needy. They are polite, civic-minded, law-abiding, generous, and caring even to foreigners. A humane civilization nurtures and upholds the best virtues of humankind.

By a creative civilization I mean a civilization which finds acceptable, indeed promotes, offbeat, innovative and constructive means for meeting human needs and challenges. It encourages creativity in the arts, sciences, professions, enterprises, livelihoods, governance, and even ideologies.

By a performance excellence oriented civilization I mean one that has a norm of performing tasks well beyond the call of duty. This norm impels people to engage in continuous learning, resourcefulness and improvement, and great satisfaction at doing a job really well.

The widespread pursuit of creativity and innovation, as well as of performance excellence and altruism can unleash a powerful virtuous cycle. Widespread creativity and innovation provide a stream of new products, services, technologies, professions and so forth. Widespread altruism tilts these towards benign uses. Widespread performance excellence orientation ensures high quality implementation. High quality implementation results in widespread commitment to the properties of the system that yield a rising quality of life, which then reinforces even more widespread benevolence, creativity, and excellence. Civilization becomes a rising spiral.

Throughout the world – but especially in what has come to be called the Third World of relatively poor populous countries such as India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Brazil, Mexico, China etc. – there are huge challenges to be met. These include alleviating mass poverty, controlling pollution, and eliminating sex-based

discrimination. These also entail improving the quality of education, housing, healthcare, improving infrastructure, and – this is infrequently mentioned – improving the ethics, character, competencies, creativity and performance excellence orientation of the people.

Paradigm of Civilizational Greatness

As I mentioned earlier, I believe movement towards civilizational greatness becomes faster when creativity and innovation, humaneness, and excellence orientation become widespread in a society and reinforce each other. The logic may hold true also at the level of individuals, communities, civil society institutions, enterprises, and the government. Let us take a closer look at each of these energizers of civilizational greatness. Let me begin with humaneness.

Humaneness

First of all, I want to distinguish humaneness from humanism. Humanism is a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the centrality of human beings rather than of some divine being, and generally prefers critical thinking and evidence over acceptance of dogma or superstition. Radical humanism of thinkers like M.N. Roy, Bertrand Russell and Erich Fromm rejects the very idea of God (see, e.g., Durkin 2014). It emphasizes human freedom, human progress and kindness. It emphasizes science rather than divine revelation for understanding the world. While I endorse the emphasis on science for understanding and modifying reality, as well as on freedom of choice, human growth, development, and kindness, in my concept of humaneness, I accept human spirituality equally as a potential basis of elevated brotherhood and sisterhood.

In the context of civilizational greatness, I can think of four kinds of humaneness. The first kind is visionary: for example, commitment to a democratic, egalitarian social democracy, or to a classless society, or a humane market economy, or to a welfare state, or to global peace, or to sustainable development, or to eradication of poverty, gender equality, to equality of the people belonging to all the faiths, or to a spiritual society, etc. as exemplified by visionaries like Susan B. Anthony, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Karl Marx, Swami Vivekananda, etc.

The second kind is issue-based social activism, such as rehabilitation of beggars, helping the homeless to get identity cards, protecting self-employed poor women against oppression by the police and the vested interests, empowering the rural poor to obtain decent livelihoods, enriching school curriculum in poorly taught classrooms of government schools, digital literacy for illiterate villagers, etc. Many social enterprises and activist NGOs exemplify such issue-based social activism.

The third kind is emotive in nature – empathy and compassion for the suffering, regardless of class, caste, or community; love of motherland; and love for all humans and indeed for all life. Mother Teresa and many other saints and seers exemplify this kind of humaneness.

The fourth kind is conscientiousness – people having a strong civic sense; a strong commitment to fulfil one’s family, organizational, social and other commitments, as exemplified by parents committed to do their best for their progeny. Other examples of conscientiousness include people working in organizations who are loyal to their organizations, as many Japanese are reputed to be; and people who contribute their mite to the well-being of their less fortunate fellow human beings.

Needless to say, humaneness can also be exhibited by various combinations of the four types.

Performance Excellence

I can conceive of two kinds of excellence that are especially relevant to civilizational greatness. The first is performance excellence in terms of quantifiable dimensions but with quality requirements. This kind of excellence has been promoted by psychologists like David McClelland (McClelland 1961). McClelland in turn drew his inspiration from the Protestant Ethic idea of Max Weber (McKinnon 2010). This kind of excellence is particularly relevant for assessing productivity, quality of life indicators, crime rates, GDP growth rate, the greater equality of income and wealth, and the like.

The second kind of excellence can be called transformative excellence. This is the excellence of big positive change, often from a low base in performance indicators. It includes big, transformational change not only in quantifiable and quality indicators, but also in intangibles like human skills, knowledge, and consciousness, and level of human development, one’s own and that of others. It can relate to how much more one knows compared to the past.

In terms of Abraham Maslow’s notion of self-actualization, transformative excellence can relate to how much stronger than in the past is the attempt to grow, develop, and actualize one’s own and others’ potential (Maslow 1954). In terms of the Freudian concept of sublimation, it can relate to how much more one’s bestial instincts are transformed into socially beneficial or admirable activities, like, how far the itch to slash is sublimated into surgery; or how far physical aggression is transformed into sport; or sexual promiscuity into holy vows of marriage (Freud 2002). In terms of the Indian Vedantic spiritual conception (Ranganathananda 1968), it can relate to how much more spiritual one becomes and how much more exalted human

consciousness becomes. Self-actualization is not stopping at being; it is as the Greek philosopher Heraclitus believed, constant becoming.

Creativity

In the context of civilizational greatness, I propose six different forms of creativity (Khandwalla 2004):

1. Essence creativity or the creativity of ideas, viewpoints, perspectives etc., that may trigger innovations of new products, processes, services, technologies, professions, programs, philosophies, sciences, art or literary genres, faiths, etc.
2. Elaborative creativity, or the creativity that takes an idea, creative or not, and elaborates it into a distinctive, novel or unique product, process, service, technology, profession, program, philosophy, science, art, faith etc. through value adding additions, subtractions, linkages etc.
3. Expressive creativity, that is, creativity observed in offbeat communication, design, pattern, decoration, presentation etc.
4. Entrepreneurial creativity, or the creativity involved in launching or operating offbeat or pioneering ventures. These ventures may be commercial or not-for-profit, public or private sector, and social or cooperative sector.
5. Existential creativity is the creativity involved in turning into a unique or uniquely talented person or collectivity.
6. Empowerment creativity is the creativity involved in offbeat or innovative ways of empowering others, especially the weak and the disadvantaged, so that the empowered entity pursues more vigorously growth, development, creativity, self-actualization, etc.

There are two impact levels of each of these forms of creativity that need to be noted. One impact level is the breakthrough creativity that has a major, long lasting impact, sometimes even at a global level. The other is incremental in its impact, a relatively modest modification that initially, at least, may have a local impact. Both impact levels are important for civilizational greatness. Breakthrough level is obviously important because it pushes back frontiers of knowledge or restructures an existing pattern so profoundly that it opens up major new avenues of growth, development and innovation. This is the most celebrated level of creativity, and may procure for the creator a major award such as the Nobel Prize.

The incremental impact level of creativity is not to be sniffed at. Many small innovations often turn, over time, into major transformations. Consider the chair as an example. The need for support while sitting triggered the idea of the chair. But over time it transformed itself from a log to rest one's back against or dangle feet

from, to a structure with back support and elevation that began to resemble the chair as we know it. Over time, we got more comfortable chairs, the wheel chair, the swivel chair, the climbing chair – and with much comfort and attractiveness added to the chair through color, polish, lightness, portability, ornamentation, etc. Incremental creativity is popular level creativity to which millions can contribute. They can do this by making a familiar thing more effective or intriguing, by adding to it, modifying it, enlarging or miniaturizing it, conjoining it with something else, by finding a new use for it, a new process for making it, etc. Addition, modification, and transformation through the unsigned incremental innovations of millions down the ages have given our civilization rich depth and texture. Stimulating millions of incremental innovations can be as beneficent in evolving a great civilization as coming up with major or breakthrough innovations.

I want to alert the reader that for civilizational greatness we need to promote benign creativity and restrain malevolent creativity. Benign creativity has positive outcomes that are humane. Malevolent creativity of clever frauds, crimes, destruction, terrorism, warfare, tyranny etc. hampers civilizational greatness. There is inherent goodness in human beings. But unfortunately, we also have savagery in our genes. Goodness needs to be nurtured and evil resisted for civilizational greatness.

Civilizational Greatness: Entry Points and Virtuous Cycles

There can be several entry points for moving towards civilizational greatness. Managed effectively, they can result in powerful virtuous cycles that can move a society tangibly towards civilizational greatness. A virtuous cycle is one in which a beneficial entry point leads to other beneficial changes that feedback upon the original entry point.

Rapid Growth as Entry Point

For instance, rapid economic growth is one entry point. The example that comes to mind is that of South Korea (Breen 2004; Tudor 2014). South and North Korea fought a bloody and destructive war during 1950-1953, and over a million died. In 1963, Park Chung-hee, a general, seized power in South Korea and relentlessly pursued an exports-led growth strategy, with emphasis on technologically sophisticated industries like electronics. He also stressed hard work to rebuild South Korea. The result was a 10% per annum economic growth rate that lasted from 1962 to 1994. During this period the South Korean economy expanded some 15 times, and currently South Korea is a prosperous nation with a per capita income per year of about \$40,000 in purchasing power parity, about the level of Britain. This has been hailed as the Miracle on the Han River (see, e.g., An 2016; Tudor

2013). Along with rapid economic growth came state altruism: heavy investment in healthcare, which is universal, and education. Currently, 80% of those who finish high school go on to study in colleges, and South Korean youngsters are world leaders in math and engineering aptitudes. Starting from 1987, South Korea has become democratic. What is more, it has become strongly innovation-oriented, spending nearly 5% of its GDP on R&D. It has topped in Bloomberg's Innovation Index. Thus, following the decision to go for rapid growth, South Korea has taken pretty big steps towards greater humaneness, creativity (see, e.g., Hong 2016), and performance excellence that have reinforced each other.

Innovation as Entry Point

Second entry point is innovation. The example I want to give is that of 19th Century Britain. Industrial Revolution took place in Britain during 1760 to 1840 on the back of the development of steam engine and the Spinning Jenny. These two innovations transformed transportation and textiles production. In the 19th Century, these were followed by a host of other innovations (see, e.g., Berg 2005).

In the first quarter of the 19th Century came the first incandescent light by passing a current from a battery through a strip of platinum, the world's first locomotive-hauled railway journey made by a steam locomotive, invention of the percussion ignition, the foundation of modern firearms, and the electromagnet. The second quarter was blessed by the mechanical harvest reaping machine, electromagnetic induction used in all modern electric gadgets, the incandescent light bulb, the first commercially successful electric telegraph, the pedal cycle, the first superphosphate fertilizer, the launching of the first steam-powered passenger liner, the facsimile or fax machine, and the chemical telegraph. The third quarter saw the first steam-driven soil ploughing machine, an early version of the injection, Mushet steel, the first commercial steel alloy, and photoconductivity in the element selenium, which led to the production of solar panels. In the fourth quarter arrived the first light switch, a method for classifying fingerprints that proved useful in forensic science, and the world's first wireless station.

Given this avalanche of innovations, no wonder Britain produced a galaxy of industrialists and entrepreneurs in the 19th Century. These included Edmund Cartwright, the idealist Robert Owen, an inspirer of the concept of corporate social responsibility, George Stephenson, Joseph Locke, Isambard Brunel, and Sir Henry Bessemer. Inventions started many new industries, and growing industries wanted inventions, so the partnership between inventors and entrepreneurs remained strong, turning Britain into the most industrialized country of the world in the 19th Century.

The result was rising incomes (Lambert 2012). In the 19th Century, British per capita income grew three times. Higher incomes meant higher aspirations for fulfilling jobs and occupations, resulting in the creation of new occupations. Britain was a deeply flawed democracy at the start of the 19th Century, since neither women nor the working class had the vote. But industry gave birth to the industrial working class (proletariat), and increasingly the workers were able to pressure the parliament to improve working and living conditions. By the end of the 19th Century, Britain was a much more humane society.

There was also an abundance of literary and artistic creativity: the 19th Century produced a galaxy of writers. These include Max Beerbohm, Thomas Carlyle, Winston Churchill, Peter Cunningham, William Gladstone, Thomas Macaulay, G.E. Moore, and Bertrand Russell. This period was also prolific in producing novelists, including the Bronte sisters, Lewis Carroll, Arthur Conan Doyle, Joseph Conrad, Marie Corelli, Charles Dickens, H. Rider Haggard, W.H. Hudson, Rudyard Kipling, W. Somerset Maugham, and H. G. Wells. Over 175 British painters and over 110 architects of note emerged in this period. Thus, technological innovations led to industrial development, which led to rising incomes through performance excellence, to rising aspirations of the working class, and a more caring state. In the case of 19th Century Britain too, technological innovations triggered a whole lot of beneficial changes that reinforced each other.

Nationalism as Entry Point

Third entry point is nationalism, and the example that comes to mind is that of Israel. Palestine, out of which Israel was carved out by the U.N., was a British protectorate (Bregman 2002). The yearning of Jews for a homeland after their horrible persecution in Nazi Germany led to a long struggle against British occupation, and eventually, in 1948 the state of Israel was formed. The Histadrut, part union, part cooperative, played a major role in catalyzing the industrial development of Israel through cooperatives and companies. Israel became a social democracy, with many welfare measures for its citizens. It was an endangered nation because it had hostile Arab neighbors who were intent on its destruction. Nationalism and insecurity made Israel invest heavily in R&D and military technologies. There were also heavy inflows of funds from wealthy Jews in the U.S. (which has a highly influential Jewish population), and flow of reparations from Germany. The result of all these factors was a benign state (for Jews, not for Palestinians), high orders of creativity and innovation that saw a nation of barely 8 million garner around ten Nobel prizes, and a hard working population known for its performance excellence that was intent on building a strong economy and an invincible state. The only dark spot has been the

egregious treatment of Palestinians and the Israeli colonization of Palestinian land.

Welfare State as Entry Point

Fourth point of entry is the welfare state. The welfare state is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, a reasonably egalitarian distribution of wealth and income, and the state taking responsibility for meeting the basic needs of the people, such as for health, education, housing, infrastructure, employment, minimum income, etc. The welfare state is a humane state. But it has far reaching repercussions. The basic psychological security it provides to people triggers in many the need for self-actualization that Abraham Maslow talked about, and this in turn leads to widespread creativity and performance excellence.

In Norway, for instance, the welfare state evolved over a period of several decades, based on a broad social and political consensus on its desirability (Sørvoll 2015). It began with the establishment of the State's Housing Bank to finance mass construction of affordable housing, and the introduction of a universal child allowance scheme in 1946. The compulsory sickness insurance scheme was introduced in 1953. In 1966, the parliament introduced a comprehensive national insurance scheme incorporating various public pensions. It encompassed pensions for invalids, the aged, orphans and widows; unemployment benefits, health insurance and insurance for occupational injuries. Combined with a policy of rapid industrial development, these resulted in Norway having a higher per capita income than the United States. Norway has frequently topped the world on Human Development Index and Legatum Prosperity Index. Norway has topped OECD countries on Better Life Index, Index of Public Integrity, and Democracy Index. With a population of just over 5 million, it had won 13 Nobel prizes by the year 2014, suggesting a high order of creativity and performance excellence. In the case of Norway too, the investment in the welfare state led to many beneficial changes that reinforced each other and resulted in a significant movement towards civilizational greatness.

Removing Blockages as Entry Point

Fifth entry point is removal or diminution of a major social, political or economic block that holds up the entire society. Kemal Ataturk dismantled the feudal Ottoman Empire. He modernized education, and turned Turkey into a secular state. He shut down religious courts and replaced the Sharia law by a civil code (Ferguson 2011). His abolition of traditionalism and feudalism unchained Turkey and led to its emergence as a modern state with a growing economy and many changes that were innovations for Turkey (though, of course, backsliding could happen, see Ger 2017). Beginning in 1979, China under Deng Xiaoping liberalized the over-regulated Chinese economy,

and this opened the floodgates of Chinese entrepreneurship. For instance, between 1980 and 1995, over 22 million manufacturing units were established in rural China, so that by 1995, 70% of rural GDP was not from agriculture but from industry (Xu 1999). This liberalization led to a large increase in the growth rate of the economy, virtually eliminated unemployment and under-employment in the rural areas (some 130 million were employed in these enterprises), a sharp reduction in poverty, and an improvement in quality of life indicators such as longevity and literacy. Indian liberalization of the economy in 1991 from excessive controls and regulations also led to an upsurge in growth rate and industrial development. By 2015, exports of goods and services had increased over ten times in dollar terms and the growth rate of the economy rose from around 5% to around 7%. This led to a sharp reduction in deep poverty and improvement in quality of life indicators.

Investment in Human Capital as Entry Point

Another entry point is investment in human capital, meaning in education and skilling of people. Research has shown that investment in human capital yields three times as much growth as investment in physical capital such as plant and machinery (Statistics Canada 2008). Literacy has been found to have many beneficial consequences, such as economic growth, better health, greater cultural diversity and tolerance for it, greater capacity to reflect critically on issues, increase in self-esteem, empowerment, and greater political participation (UNESCO 2005, see especially Chapter 5). An interesting research finding from Vietnam is that the higher the educational attainment of an entrepreneur, the more innovative the entrepreneur tends to be (see Vixathep, Matsunaga and Luong 2016). Thus, a concentrated effort by the state and civil society to improve literacy, educational levels, quality of education, and vocational skills can have far-reaching positive impact on increasing incomes and the quality of personal and social life, nudging a society towards civilizational greatness. The results can be even better, especially in Third World countries, if there is heavy investment in improving the health of the people, for healthier people are also more productive people and possibly kinder people (Martin, Grant and D'Agostino 2012).

Technology as Entry Point

Another point of entry is digitization of the government and civil society (see Dilmegani, Korkmaz and Lundquist 2014). Digitization of the government enables the citizens to access government information – almost instantly – about the services the government provides and its schemes, rules, regulations, dues to the government in the form of duties and taxes, etc. Similarly, it enables the government to access inter-departmental information as well as information about

organizations and individuals in the private sector, public sector, and civil society almost instantly. When appropriately organized, digitization can drastically improve administrative efficiency, lower costs of administration, meet the needs of citizens and organizations more fully, drastically lower the chances of fraud and corruption, and increase government accountability. It can unleash a whole lot of innovations in the government sector, the private sector, and the civil society (see Fleming 2015). There is evidence that digitization has facilitated the growth of the so-called creative industries in the European Union (see Acker et al. 2015). Creative industries are the ones in which creative content has to be produced. These include publishing, film and television, music, and gaming.

Over 130 countries have developed various online services. As an example, Britain's gov.uk online site serves as a one-stop information hub for all government departments. As another example, citizens of Estonia can use electronic identification cards to vote, pay taxes, and access over 160 services online, from unemployment benefits to property registration. An indirect benefit of digitization of the government is that it forces the government to streamline its functions, processes and services, and thus improves the quality of governance. Greater government effectiveness leads to lower transactions costs for citizens and organizations, and makes the economy more competitive and the society more egalitarian by creating a more level playing field. It also empowers citizens and organizations, since their knowledge of their entitlements, rules, regulations, etc. is at their fingertips, and they can use it to pressure the government for a fair deal. The benefits can be potentially very large for village populations in countries like India, for many living in them are unaware of government schemes that raise living standards.

Wider Relevance of Entry Points

I may have given the impression that these entry points and virtuous cycles are relevant only for the efflorescence of societies. With appropriate modifications to suit the context, they could also be relevant to large collectivities like government bodies, associations, business groups and large enterprises, NGOs, and other institutions. Surely, rapid growth, innovations, strong loyalty to the entity, greater benefits for the stakeholders of the entity, elimination of a stumbling block like conservatism, extensive skilling, and digitization can trigger beneficial cycles that can culminate in excellence in any large collectivity.

The point is that movement towards civilizational greatness is not as difficult as it may seem. There are many entry points and virtuous cycles. If the entry points are supplemented appropriately by governmental and social actions, and managed appropriately, they can

yield super results. Let me give, in some detail, the example of Sweden in which various entry points and virtuous cycles are discernible.

Sweden: Civilizational Greatness Though Not Superpower

Sweden is not a great economic or political power. It has, however, used many entry points towards civilizational greatness. Here they are:

1. Sweden is an affluent country of 10 million with a per capita income in PPP terms of \$47,000 in 2015, only about 10% less than that of the U.S. Sweden is a democracy and a market economy with sizeable public and private sectors. It has traveled far from the 19th Century when it was a relatively poor country with an autocratic monarch, and had been slow to industrialize compared to Britain, Germany, etc.
2. For much of the past hundred years, Sweden has been ruled by the Swedish Social Democratic Party. The Party has promoted a liberal and egalitarian democratic socialism. It supports the provision of an all-encompassing social welfare system for the citizens, paid for from a progressive taxation regime. It supports an economy involving a partnership between capital and labor, with government oversight to resolve disputes between the two. The ruling party forms policy in consultation with the employers' federations as well as the union federations. Such society-wide cooperation has been an important entry point for Sweden to move towards civilizational greatness.
3. Sweden has evolved a distinctive system for maintaining industrial peace and harmony. Agreements between employers and trade unions are generally worked out by negotiation. A labor court – made up of three impartial members and five representing employers, workers, and salaried employees – has jurisdiction over the application, interpretation, and enforcement of collective agreements. Industrial peace has generally prevailed since the end of the 1930s. Swedish law requires employee representation on the boards of directors of companies.
4. Early in the last century, the Swedish Government evolved a cradle-to-grave compassionate welfare state. It has become a model for many other nations. It provides financial security to all citizens. Monetary support is provided for children up to 16 and support is also available for older students. Benefits are provided to parents to be able to be home from work to take care of their children for up to 480 days per child. Special benefits are provided to care for sick and disabled children. Housing allowance is provided to those who cannot afford

housing. There are benefits if one is ill or disabled and cannot work; for the unemployed for up to 60 weeks; for those who have retired; and for those who are indigent. Sweden's entire population has equal access to public health care. The health care system is funded publicly and run by the county councils. Longevity in Sweden is over 80.

5. As a consequence of Sweden's welfare state and its funding through progressive taxation, Sweden is one of the world's most egalitarian societies. It has the third lowest Gini coefficient, a measure of income inequality in a society. By way of comparison, the U.S. has the world's 57th highest Gini coefficient. The Swedish welfare state is an important entry point for Sweden's emerging excellence.
6. Education is mandatory for all children between the ages of 7 and 16. From the age of one, children can be admitted to pre-school. Pre-schools provide an environment that stimulates children's development and learning and enables parents to combine parenthood with work or studies. This pedagogy is continued in compulsory schools. The vast majority of schools in Sweden are municipally run. University education has been free of charge for Swedish, EU/EEA, and Swiss citizens. Interestingly, women are more educated than men: 26% of women vs. 19% of men have post-secondary school education of three years or more. Roughly, 10% of students enrolled in Swedish universities have international backgrounds and this figure rises to 20% for those studying for research degrees. Swedish universities attract a high proportion of adult-learners, and over 60% of students are women. Nearly 20,000 students are enrolled for a Ph.D. degree in any given year. Sweden has at least three world class universities. These attributes endow Sweden with a varied research culture that draws upon expertise from all over the world. This is an additional entry point for Swedish excellence.
7. Sweden has been a top performer on quality of life indicators. On the index of Life Satisfaction, Sweden was 4th in the world, while the U.S. was 16th. The index measured material well-being, life expectancy at birth, the quality of family life, political freedoms, job security, fineness of climate, safety, quality of community life, lack of corruption, and gender equality. The U.N. has rated Sweden as the most gender-equal nation in the world.
8. Criminality is low in Sweden, and is on the wane. The Swedish Crime Survey shows that crime has decreased since 2005. Despite the growth of population, the number of convictions has remained between 110,000 and 130,000 in recent decades — a

decrease since the 1970s, when they numbered around 300,000.

9. Sweden has been an altruistic nation. It gives 1% of its GDP in foreign aid, over \$4 billion annually. This exceeds the U.N.'s target of giving 0.7% of GDP in foreign aid. The money goes to 20-odd needy nations. Nearly a fifth goes to promoting democracy, human rights, equality, sustainable development and environmental protection. The country has consistently supported the United Nations and has been one of the largest providers of personnel for peacekeeping operations. Around \$2.5 billion private sector foreign aid also flows out to needy countries. On a per capita basis, Swedish foreign aid may be about four times higher than that of the U.S.
10. Sweden has one of the best governance systems in the world. World Bank based research on governance systems of over 150 countries indicates that on the criterion of 'Government Effectiveness', Sweden was rated one of the highest, as also on 'Rule of Law' and 'Control of Corruption'. Its ratings on these criteria have been far above those for India. Along with Britain and many other countries, Sweden has opted for large scale 'agencification' of the government. This is a form of decentralization involving professional, instead of bureaucratic management of government entities. This has added to the effectiveness of government functioning. For instance, the number of government decisions has been cut by a factor of 4 since the 1960s by delegating decision-making authority to the agency level. On Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, Sweden consistently ranks as one of the least corrupt. Administrative excellence is another entry point for Swedish excellence.
11. Sweden strongly favors creativity and innovation. It scores high on 'climate for innovation'. In the Innovation Union Scoreboard for 2011, Sweden was ranked as the leading EU nation out of 27 countries. In the INSEAD Global Innovation Index for 2011, Sweden ranked second. A contributing factor to Sweden's strong innovation position is that, relative to GDP, industry invests a great deal in R&D. Sweden boasts such major inventions as the pacemaker, the three-point seat belt, the GPS, the tetra-pak, the telephone handset, the flat screen monitor, ultrasound for medical diagnosis, the safety match, dynamite, and the zipper. Besides, Swedish writers, scientists, economists, statesmen, medical researchers etc. have won some 30 Nobel Prizes despite the small size of Sweden's population. Americans have won eight times more Nobel Prizes, but their population is over 30 times larger.

12. The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2011-12 puts Sweden into third place. This Index measures the institutions, policies, and factors that set the stage for sustainable economic prosperity.
13. Literature and the arts are flourishing in Sweden. Swedish fiction is widely translated. Between 2006 and 2010, more than 3300 titles were translated into some 50 other languages. Swedish people read a lot. Each year, about 65 million books are borrowed from public libraries, over 6 per capita. About 40 percent are children's books. The Swedish Arts Council nurtures interactions between the state, the regions, municipalities and representatives of cultural life in Sweden. It does this through libraries, museums and performing arts centres. The aim is to safeguard and develop Swedish national cultural policy, and to promote cultural diversity. The country is renowned for its design and urban planning. The attempt is to design vibrant and aesthetic neighborhoods, complete with schools, workplaces, community buildings, parks, health clinics, and shops. Sweden is famous for the design in wood, glass and other media. The interplay of handicraft traditions and social democratic ideals has led to world-renowned work in industrial design, ergonomics, child safety, and products for the disabled. Artists are not completely dependent on commercial sales and wealthy patrons. Their creations are encouraged by public funding. The security provided by the welfare state frees them to take aesthetic risks without the fear of destitution. One result is an artistic community known for avant-garde innovation. A parliamentary act stipulates that 1 percent of the expenditure on new public buildings must be devoted to works of art.
14. A serious negative for Sweden is marital instability. The divorce rate is, with the Americans, the highest in the world. But children's upbringing has changed far for the better. Swedish parenting traditions have been developing away from traditional gender roles and authoritarian parenting styles since the end of World War II. Before World War II, parenting in Sweden was based on a strict and traditional model. Women stayed at home and took care of the kids. Men worked, made the decisions for the household and disciplined the children with physical force. After World War II, Swedish society went through a series of increasingly significant changes. In 1958, physical punishment in school was outlawed. In 1979, it was made illegal in the home, too. Through the mechanism of paid paternity leave, Swedish fathers are now heavily involved in child care. Reportedly, 85 percent of Swedish fathers take paternity leave.

Many Swedish men now identify with home life as much as with their work.

15. A people's values indicate what kind of persons they want to be and what kind of life they want to lead. Most Swedes are members of a Lutheran church, the Church of Sweden. It is a Protestant offshoot, and preaches liberalism, altruism and a strong work ethic. It has had a tradition of educational achievement, social welfare, and missionary activities. Swedes are known for their pro-social inclinations and desire to be good persons. According to a survey, the top ten Swedish values are honesty, responsibility, justice, humor (some may question this), happiness, togetherness, meaningfulness, involvement, teamwork, and adaptability (Shipley 2010). Most of these values are compatible with being a good citizen, family member, employee, employer, and professional.
16. Despite Sweden's small population, a large number of Swedes have attained international renown, and that too in a wide variety of fields. This suggests that striving for excellence is a potent motivator in Sweden. These eminent Swedes include the likes of the chemist Svante Arrhenius, Torsten Wiesel, a Nobel Laureate in medicine, several Nobel Laureates in literature, Dag Hammarskjöld, the U.N.'s former Secretary General, Gunnar Myrdal and Bertil Ohlin, Nobel Laureates in economics, Ingmar Bergman, the famous film director, Ingrid Bergman, the famous actress, Carl Milles, the famous sculptor, Jenny Lind, the celebrated soprano singer, and Astrid Lindgren, who was awarded the so-called Alternative Nobel Prize. Sweden has also produced a galaxy of tennis stars, such as Bjorn Borg, Stefan Edberg, and Mats Wilander, winners of multiple Grand Slams.
17. Sweden has a robust civil society. Sweden ranks among the best countries in the world in the Freedom of the Press index. The media are able to access information through one of the most robust freedom of information statutes. An informant can choose to remain anonymous to avoid reprisals, and employers are legally prohibited from investigating the source of information. Social movements, such as for sustainable development, have been strong.

What makes Sweden such a remarkable civilization? Through its welfare state, Sweden provides a platform for the widespread rise of what Abraham Maslow called higher order needs or self-actualization needs (see Maslow 1954, cited earlier). These include the need to excel in one's calling and be creative, and the urge to be humane. As a social system that promotes autonomous human development, good citizenship, and tolerance, the Swedes have developed a distinctive

identity while remaining pluralistic. This identity is anchored in cooperation even between traditionally antagonistic groups like workers and employers. Such cooperation facilitates widespread innovations and changes. Sweden also is a relatively big investor in R&D, and this provides it with new products and services that facilitate a rising living standard and surpluses that can be spent for humane purposes. The result is the emergence of a virtuous cycle of growing humaneness, creativity and innovativeness, and the pursuit of excellence by people in their chosen vocations feeding back into greater goodness, creativity and excellence.

Figure 1: Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution: Key Elements

1. The directive principles ensure that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by promoting a social order in which social, economic and political justice infuses all institutions of life. The State shall provide free legal aid to ensure that equal opportunities for securing justice is ensured to all, and is not denied by reason of economic or other disabilities. The State shall endeavour to secure a uniform civil code for all citizens.
2. The State shall work towards reducing economic inequality as well as inequalities in status and opportunities, not only among individuals, but also among groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.
3. The State shall aim for securing the right to an adequate means of livelihood for all citizens, both men and women as well as equal pay for equal work for both men and women. The State shall endeavour to provide the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, within the limits of economic capacity, as well as provide for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. The State should also ensure living wage and proper working conditions for workers, with full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural activities.
4. The State should work to prevent concentration of wealth and means of production in a few hands, and try to ensure that ownership and control of the material resources is distributed to best serve the common good.
5. Child abuse and exploitation of workers should be prevented. Children should be allowed to develop in a healthy manner and should be protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment. The State should provide free and compulsory education to all children till they attain the age of 14 years.
6. The State shall also work for the organization of village panchayats (democratic village self-government bodies) and enable them to function as units of self-government. The State shall promote cottage industries in rural areas.
7. The State should work for the economic and educational upliftment of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other weaker sections of society.
8. The directive principles commit the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.
9. The State should protect and improve the environment and safeguard the forests and wild life of the country.
10. The State shall strive for the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, just and honourable relations between nations, respect for international law and treaty obligations, as well as settlement of international disputes by arbitration.

Sweden is not an economic or political superpower; but it stands tall as a role model civilization. The world's nations differ widely, and each must forge its own distinctive path to civilizational greatness. But Sweden is a notable inspiration.

Concluding Comments

Some may think that the model of civilizational greatness outlined in this paper is utopian and unattainable. Perhaps. However, I see civilizational greatness as a direction of desirable change rather than a destination that can be reached in full measure or known accurately. Great ideas have inspired many to travel on sublime paths even if very few reached the destination. Constitutions of democratic states do make grand statements about the quality and purpose of governance, though few, if any, nations fully live up to these. But these statements do outline what the state should aspire to do.

Figure 1 outlines in brief the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution. These are not legally enforceable, but they embody a lofty vision of a democratic, secular, and humane India. That vision has by no means been fully actualized, but several major steps taken by the Indian state have been inspired by this vision. In the same way, my hope is that the vision of civilizational greatness outlined here may trigger a movement towards civilizational greatness – in India and other aspirant nations. The patterns of governance, enterprise management, galvanization of communities, educational institutions, and NGOs – cited in the examples in this paper – if pursued with sincerity, competence and with whatever modifications that are contextually necessary, may accelerate a nation's movement towards civilizational greatness. It is my hope that contributors to a journal like MGDG will join and further the discourse on how markets can be channeled to pro-development ends, putting nations on paths to civilizational greatness.

The vision embodied in the Directive Principles has been pursued tangibly through government planned socioeconomic development that has increased incomes, increased literacy, and improved health over the decades. It has promoted the Constitutional rights to information and education, reservation of jobs in the government for historically disadvantaged communities. This vision attempts to eliminate gender inequality, enables laws to ban child exploitation, partial employment guarantee for the poor, empowerment of local self-government, the doctrine of Panch Sheel, active contribution to the U.N.'s peace keeping efforts, and more.

Let me conclude with a poem by Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore that has abided with me since the time I had to recite it in a school assembly. It still captures for me some of the essence of a great civilization:

*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,
Let my country awake.*

References

- Acker, Olaf, Florian Grone, Laura Kropiunigg and Thierry Lefort (2015), "The Digital Future of Creative Europe: The impact of digitization and the Internet on the creative industries in Europe", Strategy&, PwC, [available at <https://goo.gl/uytC8P>].
- An, Jiyeon (2016), "Daniel Tudor, Korea: The Impossible Country (2013)", *Markets, Globalization & Development Review*, 1 (2), Article 6. <https://doi.org/10.23860/MGDR-2016-01-02-06>
- Berg, Maxine (2005), *The age of manufactures, 1700-1820: Industry, innovation and work in Britain*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge.
- Breen, Michael (2004), *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies*. London: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Bregman, Ahron (2002), *A History of Israel*. Hampshire. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Childe, Gordon (1936), *Man Makes Himself*. London: Watts.
- Dilmegani, Cem, Bengi Korkmaz and Martin Lundquist (2014), "Public-sector digitization: The trillion-dollar challenge", McKinsey & Company, [available at <https://goo.gl/eMzvpl>].
- Durkin, Kieran (2014), *The radical humanism of Erich Fromm*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ferguson, Niall (2011), *Civilization: The West and the Rest*. London: Allen Lane.
- Fleming, Martin (2015), "Digitalization Changes Everything: Improving Economic Measurement in an Era of Radical Innovation and Transformation", *Monthly Labor Review*, 138, 1.
- Freud, Sigmund (2002), *Civilization and its Discontents*. London: Penguin.
- Ger, Guliz (2017), "The Paramountcy of Context: Introduction to Special Issue on Popular Culture and Markets in Turkey", *Markets, Globalization & Development Review*, 2 (2), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.23860/MGDR-2017-02-02-01>
- Hong, Soonkwan (2016), "Euny Hong, The Birth of Korean Cool (2014)", *Markets, Globalization & Development Review*, 1 (2), Article 7. <https://doi.org/10.23860/MGDR-2016-01-02-07>
- Khandwalla, Pradip (2004), *Lifelong Creativity: An Unending Quest*. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill.
- Lambert, Tim (2012), "A History of Britain in the 19th Century", [available at <http://www.localhistories.org/19thcentengland.html>].

- Martin, Greg, Alexandra Grant and Mark D'Agostino (2012), "Global health funding and economic development", *Global Health*, 8 (8).
- Maslow, Abraham (1954), *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper.
- McClelland, David (1961), *The Achieving Society*. Princeton: Van Nostrand.
- McKinnon, Andrew M. (2010), "Elective affinities of the Protestant Ethic: Weber and the chemistry of capitalism," *Sociological Theory*, 28 (1), 108-126. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2009.01367.x>
- Ranganathananda, Swami (1968), *The Message of the Upanishads*. Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
- Shipley, Neil (2008), "Top ten list of Swedish values", Watching the Swedes (blog), February 8, [available at <https://goo.gl/8Yrpw5>].
- Sørvoll, Jardar (2015), "The Norwegian welfare state 2005-2015: public attitudes, political debates, and future challenges", [available at <https://goo.gl/cuceHk>].
- Statistics Canada (2008), "The contribution of literacy to economic growth and individuals' earnings", [available at <https://goo.gl/EyRkHw>].
- Toynbee, Arnold (1939), *A Study of History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tudor, Daniel (2012), *Korea: The impossible country*. Clarendon, Vermont: Tuttle Publishing.
- UNESCO (2005), *Literacy for All*, Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006, Paris: UNESCO.
- Vixathep, Souksavanh, Nobuaki Matsunaga and Khoi Van Luong (2016), "Human capital, innovation, and productivity in Vietnam's SMEs – a survey of manufacturing firms in Hanoi City", Paper presented at 15th International Convention of the East Asian Economic Association, November, Universitas Padjajaran, Bandung, Indonesia.
- Xu, Haiqing (1999), "Environmental policy and rural industrial development in China", *Human Ecology Review*, 62 (2), 72-83.