

# Lecture Note

**Course Title: ICS 1102 Man and Global Society**

**Credits: 3(3-0-6)**

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**Week 2**

**Unit 2: Civilization and Westernization**

## Topic

1. The concept of civilization
2. The concept of westernization
3. Roles and impacts of westernization to the world society

## Objectives

After the completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Explain the concept of civilization.
2. Explain the concept of westernization.
3. Recall roles and impacts of westernization to the world society.
4. Generalize the idea of civilization after watching the related VDO.
5. Define “American Dreams”.

## 1. The concept of civilization

Human civilization is part of world history of human development. The documents stated that human was developed from the era of *Savagery*, *Barbarism*, to *Civilization* (Edward Mcnall Burns “*Western Civilizations*”, 1963). The world human society has developed both in physical, and social and cultural aspects. Long time ago when we call human as “*prehistoric human*”, the human during that era was not erected yet. It was until they learned through time how to erect themselves, stand and walk. Human has also developed their learning ability (using brain) by the changing environment, until their adaptation becomes called “*culture*”. Human develops their culture through their social gather and communication (*from only signs and pictures to oral to written communication*), settlement (*from roaming from place to place, to building living places with simple materials with temporary style to complicated one*), and ways to earn living (*from hunting to cultivation and ways to earn living as nowadays*). And it is today that human society can be classified into *rural* and *urban* living (Alice Magenis and John Conrad Appel, “*History of the World*”, 1963).

In the modern day, civilization is an outcome of strong culture and religion of the society. Strong cultural and religious growth play important role for a strong society, gives strong identity to one society which initiates other small societies to join or bigger population of same society who follow their ideology. Thus a large and strong and large society is established. So, cultural and religious growth of the society in one era is civilization.

The classical context, civilization primarily refers to the material and instrumental side of human cultures that are complex in terms of technology, science, and division of labor. Such civilizations are generally urbanized. This definition can be seen from the world’s ancient and lost civilization, for example the Roman Empire, Persian Empire.

In term of society and culture, in a classical context, people were called: “civilized” to set them apart from “Barbarian” people (The Barbarians- those who were perceived the “uncivilized”)., while in a modern-day context, “civilized peoples” have been contrasted with “primitive” peoples.

Civilization also refers to the society with developed writing language such as the Sumerian.

Nowadays, the word civilization has been used in a less strict way. So the meaning of civilization becomes the same thing as “CULTURE” that defines a particular human society that has a certain level of advancement-especially the founding of cities.

### The level of advancement of a civilization

The level of advancement of a civilization is often measured by its progress in agriculture, long-distance trade, occupational specialization, and urbanism. Moreover, to define a level of advancement of civilization for a society, some elements will be used such as a developed

transportation system, writing, standardized measurement, currency, legal, arts and architectural, mathematical, scientific and political systems.

### **Civilization and cultural identity**

“Civilization” can also refer to the culture of a complex society. It’s not only having a society. Although every society has specific set of ideas and customs, and a certain set of manufactures and arts that make it unique, civilizations tend to develop more complex cultures, including literature, professional art, architecture, organized religion, and complex customs associated with the elite. This relates to the social class concept where the upper class having a more complicated culture will influence the cultures of the lower classes. Moreover, the society with stronger cultural identity will spread to and merge with another weaker culture, in which the most population of the weaker culture accepting its ideology.

For example Chinese civilization and its influence on nearby civilizations such as Korea, Japan and Vietnam

### **Measurement of the strength of the civilization**

Measurement of the strength of the civilization is based on **quality of life**: behavior, art, ritual practices, faith, language, food habits, intelligence and economy, etc. And here, if the civilization is measured by the quality of life, it needs to look into the different parts of the world.

## **2. The concept of westernization**

The world nowadays has been influenced by the west in many areas such as education, politics (democracy and constitution), ways of thinking, ways of living, sciences and technology, business and trades, music, clothing, cars, and etc. We call this “Westernization”.

Westernization is often regarded as a part of the ongoing process of globalization.

## **3. Roles and impacts of westernization to the world society**

The process of westernization makes the world less unique. The western culture is introduced to many parts of the world. The western life concept is introduced such as the American Dream concept:

### **The four dreams of consumerism**

- **The “Dream of Abundance”**, offers prosperity of material goods to all Americans, making them proud to be the richest society on earth.
- **The “Dream of a Democracy of Goods”**, whereby everyone had access to the same products regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or class, thereby challenging the aristocratic

norms of the rest of the world whereby only the rich or well-connected are granted access to luxury.

- **The “Dream of Freedom of Choice”** expands variety of good that allowed people to fashion their own particular life style.
- **The “Dream of Novelty”**, ever-changing fashions, new models, and unexpected new products broadened the consumer experience in terms of purchasing skills and awareness of the market, and challenged the conservatism of traditional society and culture, and even politics

From the 4 dreams above, many parts of the world are shifting from the concept of pastoral and simple living to the concept of materialism and consumerism. The 4 dreams above also stimulate social mobilization as people have more choices. However, one issue is that in fact there still is inequality in this world society.

### **Learning Activities and Medias**

1. Group Presentation: Students are assigned in group to present “the world’s civilization”. (*Presentation in next class*)
2. Lecturer summarizes the concept of civilization.
3. Students are recommended to explore more on the four dreams of consumerism and have discussion next time.