

DOI 10.35775/PSI.2026.126.2.038

УДК 32.327

ЛИНЬ ХАО

магистрант, МГУ имени М.В. Ломоносова,

Россия, г. Москва

E-mail: kiin_lee@foxmail.com

СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ НАРРАТИВОВ И ПРАКТИК «ЦИВИЛИЗАЦИЯ-ГОСУДАРСТВО» КИТАЙСКОЙ НАРОДНОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ И РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ

В данной статье проводится сравнительный анализ нарративов «цивилизация-государство» и их политических практик в Китайской Народной Республике и Российской Федерации. На фоне оспариваемой легитимности универсалистских моделей международного порядка оба государства все чаще используют цивилизационный язык для описания суверенитета, идентичности и своей роли в глобальной политике. Цель исследования – выявить основные нарративные компоненты концепции «цивилизация-государство» в Китае и России и оценить, как эти нарративы воплощаются в институциональной и внешнеполитической практике.

Исследование основано на качественном сравнительном анализе, сочетающем анализ дискурса и интерпретационный анализ политики. Эмпирический материал включает официальные стратегические документы, политические концепции, речи лидеров и институциональные тексты, которые формулируют цивилизационную идентичность и государственность, дополненные рецензируемой научной литературой для контекстуализации. Анализ проводится по трем направлениям: нарративные основы (историческая преемственность, культурная самобытность, цивилизационная миссия), институциональное закрепление (отношения между государством и обществом, механизмы легитимации, модели управления) и внешняя проекция (внешнеполитические нарративы и практики).

Результаты показывают, что китайский нарратив «цивилизация-государство» более последовательно институционализирован и ориентирован на развитие, подчеркивая цивилизационную преемственность, модернизацию под партийно-государственным руководством и универсализирующие притязания на компетентность управления. Российский нарратив более явно ориентирован на геополитику и суверенитет, акцентируя внимание на исторической миссии, культурно-политической самобытности и сопротивлении внешнему нормативному давлению. В статье делается вывод о том, что эти различия формируют различные модели международного поведения и оказывают влияние на эволюционирующую плюрализацию мирового порядка.

Ключевые слова: цивилизация-государство, Китай, Россия, нарратив, дискурсивный анализ, международный порядок, суверенитет, политическая легитимность.

Introduction. The contemporary international system is increasingly characterized by the erosion of universalist political and normative frameworks that dominated the post-Cold War period. Liberal internationalism, with its emphasis on normative convergence and institutional homogenization, faces growing contestation from non-Western states that articulate alternative understandings of sovereignty, identity, and political order. Within this context, civilizational narratives have re-emerged as influential discursive resources through which states reinterpret their domestic legitimacy and international roles.

Among these alternatives, the concept of the «civilization-state» has gained particular prominence. Unlike the classical nation-state model, which is grounded in territorial sovereignty and civic nationalism, the civilization-state frames political authority as the institutional embodiment of a historically continuous and culturally distinctive civilization. This framework allows states to legitimize political power, governance models, and foreign policy behavior through references to civilizational uniqueness and historical mission rather than universal norms.

The People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation represent two of the most significant contemporary cases in which civilization-state narratives have become increasingly visible in official discourse and policy justification. Both states employ civilizational language to challenge Western normative dominance, defend political sovereignty, and assert alternative visions of international order. At the same time, their historical trajectories, political institutions, and strategic cultures differ substantially, raising the question of how similar conceptual labels produce divergent political practices.

Existing academic literature often examines Chinese and Russian civilizational discourses separately, focusing either on China's developmental and cultural continuity narratives or on Russia's civilizational identity and geopolitical positioning. Comparative analyses that systematically examine both narratives within a shared analytical framework remain limited. As a result, the relationship between civilization-state discourse and concrete political practice in these two cases is insufficiently theorized.

This article seeks to address this gap by conducting a comparative analysis of the «civilization-state» narratives and practices of China and Russia. The central research objective is to identify the core narrative elements of the civilization-state concept in each case and to assess how these narratives are translated into institutional arrangements and foreign policy behavior. By focusing on both discourse and practice, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how civilizational frameworks function as instruments of political legitimacy and international positioning in a pluralizing global order.

Materials and methods of research. This study employs a qualitative comparative research design focused on the analysis of political narratives and their translation into state practices. The research is aimed at examining how the concept of the «civilization-state» is articulated and operationalized in the political discourse and policy frameworks of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation.

The research materials include official state and party documents, strategic concepts, policy statements, and public speeches by political leaders that address issues of civilizational identity, historical continuity, statehood, and international positioning. These materials are treated as authoritative texts reflecting institutionalized interpretations promoted by political elites.

The analytical approach combines elements of discourse analysis and interpretive policy analysis. Discourse analysis is used to identify key narrative structures, conceptual categories, and recurring symbolic references related to civilization, sovereignty, and political legitimacy. Interpretive policy analysis allows for examining how these narratives are reflected in institutional arrangements and foreign policy orientations.

The comparative dimension of the study is based on the identification of both shared and divergent narrative elements and their corresponding political practices. This approach makes it possible to move beyond descriptive juxtaposition and to focus on analytically meaningful similarities and differences between the two cases.

Results and discussion. Conceptual Markers of the «Civilization-State». The concept of the «civilization-state» is increasingly employed in contemporary political discourse as an alternative to the classical nation-state model. Unlike the nation-state, which is primarily grounded in territorial sovereignty and civic nationalism, the civilization-state frames political authority as the institutional expression of a historically continuous, culturally distinctive, and value-laden civilization [10]. In this framework, the state is not merely a political-administrative structure but a guardian and embodiment of a broader civilizational whole.

A central conceptual marker of the civilization-state is historical continuity. Political legitimacy is derived not from social contracts or procedural norms, but from claims of uninterrupted civilizational development that precede modern statehood. This continuity allows political authority to be presented as historically rooted and culturally authentic rather than contingent or constructed [9]. Both China and Russia actively employ this marker to situate contemporary state institutions within long civilizational trajectories.

A second key marker is cultural and civilizational distinctiveness. Civilization-state narratives emphasize the uniqueness of cultural traditions, moral values, and social organization, which are portrayed as incompatible with universalist political models. This distinctiveness is used to justify alternative paths of political development and governance, as well as resistance to external normative pressures [1]. Within this logic, pluralism of civilizations replaces normative universalism as the organizing principle of international order.

The third marker is the notion of a civilizational mission. The civilization-state is often portrayed as having a responsibility to preserve, develop, and transmit civilizational values both domestically and internationally. This mission-oriented framing transforms foreign policy into an extension of civilizational responsibility rather than interest-based calculation alone [8]. As a result, international behavior is legitimized through references to historical destiny, moral responsibility, and cultural leadership.

Finally, civilization-state narratives are closely linked to alternative conceptions of sovereignty and legitimacy. Sovereignty is framed not only as legal independence but as civilizational self-determination, while political legitimacy is derived from the state's capacity to protect civilizational identity and ensure historical continuity [5]. This understanding allows political authority to be justified independently of liberal-democratic standards and universal normative benchmarks.

Taken together, these conceptual markers form a coherent ideational framework that redefines the relationship between state, society, and international order. While these markers appear in both Chinese and Russian discourse, their articulation and institutionalization differ significantly, which becomes evident in the subsequent analysis of each case.

The People's Republic of China: Civilization-State Narrative and Practice. In the case of the People's Republic of China, the civilization-state narrative is grounded in the idea of uninterrupted civilizational continuity combined with state-led modernization. Official discourse presents China as an ancient and coherent civilization whose political unity and cultural identity long predate the modern international system, allowing the contemporary state to be framed as the legitimate institutional embodiment of this historical continuity [7].

This narrative is closely integrated into the party-state framework, where political legitimacy is derived primarily from governance capacity, social stability, and developmental performance rather than from procedural representation. Civilizational identity is not opposed to modernization but is presented as its foundation, reinforcing the notion of a distinct «Chinese path» of political and economic development [4].

In foreign policy, the civilization-state narrative supports China's rejection of universal political models and underpins its advocacy of civilizational diversity in international relations. By framing sovereignty as civilizational self-determination, China legitimizes alternative governance models and promotes a pluralistic vision of international order that accommodates different historical and cultural trajectories [6].

Russia as a Civilization-Centered Political Project. In the Russian case, the civilization-centered narrative is articulated through the idea of a distinct historical and cultural space that defines Russia's political identity and international role. Official discourse presents Russia not merely as a nation-state, but as a civilizational entity shaped by a unique historical experience, cultural tradition, and geopolitical position [3].

Unlike the Chinese model, the Russian civilization-centered project is less institutionalized and more explicitly linked to questions of sovereignty and geopolitical autonomy. Political legitimacy is constructed through references to historical continuity, cultural distinctiveness, and the role of the state as a protector of civilizational identity in a plural and contested international environment [2].

In foreign policy practice, this narrative supports Russia's rejection of normative universalism and its emphasis on civilizational pluralism in world politics. Civilization-centered discourse is used to justify an independent foreign policy course and to frame

international engagement as a defense of sovereign development paths rather than participation in a universal political model.

Discussion. The comparative analysis of Chinese and Russian civilization-state narratives reveals both shared ideational foundations and significant differences in their articulation and political function. In both cases, civilizational discourse serves as an alternative source of political legitimacy that challenges the universalist assumptions of the liberal international order. By emphasizing historical continuity, cultural distinctiveness, and civilizational sovereignty, China and Russia construct frameworks that justify autonomous paths of political development and international behavior.

At the same time, the nature of these frameworks differs substantially. China's civilization-based model is more systematically institutionalized and closely integrated into governance practices. The civilization-state narrative in China functions as a stabilizing and developmental framework that links political authority to performance, modernization, and long-term strategic planning. Civilizational identity is thus embedded within state institutions and policy discourse, reinforcing regime legitimacy through administrative effectiveness and developmental success.

Russia's civilization-centered project, by contrast, is more discursive and situational in character. While it draws on similar themes of historical mission and cultural distinctiveness, it is less consistently translated into institutional arrangements. Instead, civilizational discourse in the Russian case performs a primarily defensive and geopolitical function, reinforcing claims of sovereignty and autonomy in response to external normative and political pressure. As a result, legitimacy is constructed more through symbolic and geopolitical narratives than through governance performance.

These differences have important implications for international relations. China's civilization-state narrative supports a long-term strategy of normative diversification within the international system, promoting civilizational pluralism while avoiding direct ideological confrontation. Russia's approach, in contrast, tends to frame civilizational identity in oppositional terms, positioning it as a counterweight to Western universalism and as a tool of strategic resistance.

Overall, the findings suggest that while both China and Russia employ civilization-state narratives to challenge dominant global norms, they do so through distinct models shaped by different historical experiences, institutional capacities, and strategic priorities. Civilization-state discourse thus should not be treated as a uniform phenomenon, but rather as a flexible ideational resource that can perform different political functions depending on domestic and international

Conclusions. This article has examined the «civilization-state» narratives and practices of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation through a comparative analytical framework. The analysis demonstrates that, while both states employ civilizational discourse to challenge universalist political models and to legitimize autonomous development paths, their approaches differ significantly in structure and function.

China's civilization-based model is more consistently institutionalized and closely linked to governance performance and long-term modernization goals. Russia's

civilization-centered project is less embedded in formal institutions and operates primarily as a discursive and geopolitical instrument aimed at affirming sovereignty and strategic autonomy. These differences reflect distinct historical experiences, institutional capacities, and strategic priorities.

Overall, the findings suggest that the civilization-state should be understood not as a single model, but as a flexible ideational framework that performs different political functions in contemporary international relations. The growing prominence of such narratives points to an increasingly pluralistic global order in which competing conceptions of statehood and legitimacy coexist.

REFERENCES:

1. **Callahan W.A.** China: The Pessoptimist Nation. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
2. **Hall I.** The International Thought of Martin Wight. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
3. **Katzenstein P.J.** (ed.). Civilizations in World Politics: Plural and Pluralist Perspectives. London: Routledge, 2010.
4. **Laruelle M.** Russian Nationalism: Imaginaries, Doctrines, and Political Battlefields. London: Routledge, 2018.
5. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. China's Global Civilization Initiative (Official statement, 2023).
6. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. Moscow, 2023.
7. **Tsygankov A.P.** Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.
8. **Xi Jinping.** The Governance of China. Vol. IV. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2022.
9. **Yan Xuetong.** Leadership and the Rise of Great Powers. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019.
10. **Zhao Tingyang.** The Tianxia System: An Introduction to the Philosophy of a World Institution. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021.

LIN HAO

Master's students, M.V. Lomonosov Moscow
State University, Moscow, Russia

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE «CIVILIZATION-STATE» NARRATIVES AND PRACTICES OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

This article provides a comparative analysis of «civilization-state» narratives and their political practices in the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation. Against the background of the contested legitimacy of universalist models of international order, both states increasingly employ civilizational language to frame sovereignty, identity, and their role in global politics. The purpose of the study is to identify core narrative components of the «civilization-state» concept in China and Russia and to assess how these narratives translate into institutional and foreign policy practices.

The research is based on qualitative comparative analysis combining discourse analysis and interpretive policy analysis. The empirical material includes official strategic documents, policy concepts, leaders' speeches, and institutional texts that articulate civilizational identity and statehood, supplemented by peer-reviewed academic literature for contextualization. The analysis is organized around three dimensions: narrative foundations (historical continuity, cultural distinctiveness, civilizational mission), institutional embedding (state-society relations, legitimacy mechanisms, governance models), and external projection (foreign policy narratives and practices).

The results show that China's «civilization-state» narrative is more consistently institutionalized and development-oriented, emphasizing civilizational continuity, modernization under party-state leadership, and a universalizing claim of governance competence. Russia's narrative is more explicitly geopolitical and sovereignty-centered, focusing on historical mission, cultural-political distinctiveness, and resistance to external normative pressure. The article concludes that these differences shape distinct patterns of international behavior and have implications for the evolving pluralization of world order.

Key words: civilization-state, China, Russia, narrative, discourse analysis, international order, sovereignty, political legitimacy.