

Политизация цивилизационного диалога: Россия и Китай в сравнительной перспективе трёхэтапной модели институционализации

The Politicisation of Civilizational Dialogue: A Comparative Study of Russia and China through a Three-Stage Institutionalization Model

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Якунин В.И.

Д-р полит. наук, заведующий кафедрой государственной политики факультета политологии, ФГБОУ ВО «Московский государственный университет имени М.В. Ломоносова», г. Москва
e-mail: gospolitika_msu@mail.ru

Yakunin V.I.

Doctor of Political Sciences, Head of the Public Policy Department, Faculty of Political Science, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow
e-mail: gospolitika_msu@mail.ru

Ван Бин

Магистрант кафедры государственной политики факультета политологии, ФГБОУ ВО «Московский государственный университет имени М.В. Ломоносова», г. Москва
e-mail: christen2001@mail.ru

Wang Bing

Master's Degree student, Public Policy Department, Faculty of Political Science, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow
e-mail: christen2001@mail.ru

Аннотация

Целевой установкой статьи является сравнительный анализ механизмов, посредством которых Российская Федерация и Китайская Народная Республика осуществляют институциональную трансформацию концепции «Диалог цивилизаций», получившей формальное международное признание в Резолюции Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН 56/6 (2001 г.) и предполагавшей независимость подлинного межкультурного взаимодействия от государственной власти. *Методологической основой* исследования выступает междисциплинарный подход, сочетающий дискурсивный институционализм В. Шмидт (для анализа первого этапа), теорию постепенных институциональных изменений Дж. Махони и К. Телен — механизмы наложения (layering) и конверсии (conversion) — для второго этапа, а также теорию конституционализации Р. Хиршля для третьего этапа. *Эмпирическая база* представлена контент-анализом ключевых русскоязычных стратегических документов 2000–2023 гг. (Концепции внешней политики 2000, 2008, 2013, 2016, 2023 гг.; Стратегия национальной безопасности 2015 г.; конституционные поправки 2020 г.; выступление на Валдайском форуме 2013 г.) с нормализованным подсчётом частотности цивилизационного семантического поля (корни цивилизац-, традиционн-, духовн-, идентичн-) и сопоставительным анализом институциональных решений китайской стороны (Пекинский форум 2004–2025 гг.,

Инициатива «Один пояс — один путь», Глобальная цивилизационная инициатива 2023 г., учредительная Министерская конференция по глобальному цивилизационному диалогу 2025 г.). В ходе исследования предлагается трёхэтапная модель институционализации, охватывающая дискурсивное извлечение, нормативную кодификацию и конституционное закрепление с изоляцией; вводятся понятия «производство норм» (norm production) — для случаев, когда государство выступает создателем норм, а не их получателем, — а также «условная конституционная изоляция» (conditional constitutional insulation), фиксирующая, что конституционная защита представляет собой не бинарное состояние, а спектр, эффективность которого зависит от устойчивости элитного консенсуса и согласованности конституционных положений с обычным законодательством. *Выводы:* применение модели к российскому случаю прослеживает целостную траекторию интроверсии-обороны, завершающуюся конституционными поправками 2020 г.; применение к китайскому случаю выявляет противоположную траекторию экстраверсии-проекции, охватывающую первый и второй этапы при отсутствии конституционного закрепления. Сопоставительный анализ показывает, что институциональная форма политизации определяется не цивилизационным содержанием как таковым, а структурой внешнего нормативного давления: прямые институциональные угрозы сопрягаются с интровертным конституционным путём, тогда как рассредоточенная дискурсивная конкуренция сопрягается с экстравертным многосторонним путём. Тем самым обосновывается *теоретическое предложение* об интроверсионно-экстраверсионном спектре как инструменте сравнительного анализа политизации цивилизационного диалога.

Ключевые слова: диалог цивилизаций, политизация, производство норм (norm production), трёхэтапная модель институционализации, Россия, Китай, конституционная изоляция, интроверсионно-экстраверсионный спектр.

Abstract

This article examines how Russia and China have appropriated the concept of "Dialogue of Civilisations." Originally a civil society framework that received formal international institutional expression through UN General Assembly Resolution 56/6 (2001), the concept rested on the premise that genuine inter-civilizational exchange must operate independently of state power. Over two decades, both states have systematically converted this concept into an instrument of state policy—yet they have followed structurally opposite institutional paths. The article proposes a three-stage institutionalization model consisting of discursive extraction, normative codification, and constitutional consolidation with insulation. It introduces the concept of "norm production" to describe cases where states act as originators rather than recipients of norms. Applied to Russia, the model traces a complete introversion-defense pathway culminating in the 2020 constitutional amendments. Applied to China, it traces an extroversion-projection pathway extending from the 2004 Beijing Forum to the inaugural Ministerial Conference on Global Civilization Dialogue held in Beijing in 2025. The comparative analysis yields three findings. Russia has completed all three stages; China remains at Stage Two, without constitutional embedding. What determines the institutional form of Politicisation is not civilizational content itself but the structure of external normative pressure: direct institutional threats drive introversion, while diffuse discursive competition drives extroversion. Constitutional insulation is not a binary state but a spectrum, whose effectiveness depends on the stability of elite consensus and on the degree of alignment between constitutional provisions and ordinary legislation.

Keywords: dialogue of civilisations, politicization, norm production, three-stage institutionalization model, Russia, China, conditional constitutional insulation, introversion–extroversion spectrum.

Glossary of Core Terms

Dialogue of Civilisations. The normative framework established by UN General Assembly Resolution 56/6 (2001). It rests on three premises: formal equality among participants, mutual recognition of each other's cultural traditions, and shared acknowledgment that diversity of political systems is an enduring feature of international life. This framework is structurally distinct from interstate negotiation.

Civilizational Dialogue. In this article, the term refers specifically to the politicized, instrumentalized derivative of the above concept—the strategic deployment of civilizational vocabulary and institutional forms by state actors for purposes of legitimation, insulation, or alliance-building.

Politicisation. The process by which a normative concept originally requiring independence from state power is co-opted by state actors, redirected to serve state interests, and embedded in formal institutional structures.

Norm Production. A process of norm creation initiated by the state and generated from within. The state acts as the originator of norms, not their recipient. This is distinct from norm diffusion (socialization from outside in) and norm localization (selective absorption of external norms).

Conditional Constitutional Insulation. An understanding of constitutional protection as a spectrum rather than a binary state. Its effectiveness depends on the stability of elite consensus and the degree of alignment between constitutional provisions and ordinary legislation. The constitutional text may remain formally intact while ordinary legislation progressively narrows its scope of application in practice.

Introversion–Extroversion Spectrum. The theoretical proposition advanced in this article: states facing direct institutional normative threats tend toward introversion-defense constitutional pathways; states facing diffuse discursive competition tend toward extroversion-projection multilateral pathways.

Semantic Anchor Extraction. The core operation of Stage One. Among multiple cultural resources that carry internal tensions or even contradict each other, the operation identifies their shared policy-relevant semantics and consolidates them into a single, coherent discursive unit. It bypasses substantive resolution of internal contradictions, relying on common ground rather than reconciliation to construct discourse.

Introduction

There is a paradox between the Politicisation of civilizational dialogue and the fate of the concept itself. It began as a civil society project in the early 2000s and was paralleled by a separate intergovernmental initiative that received formal international standing through UN General Assembly Resolution 56/6 (2001)¹. Its foundational premise was unambiguous: genuine inter-civilizational exchange must operate independently of state power. Only free from the dominance of state power could equality, mutual recognition, and acknowledgment of institutional diversity become possible. This premise was not an incidental ideal; it was a constitutive condition of the concept.

A historical clarification is necessary before proceeding. The concept of "Dialogue of Civilisations" did not emerge from a single institutional source; it developed along two structurally distinct pathways that appeared at approximately the same time but operated under different logics from the outset.

The first pathway was a civil society initiative. Beginning in the early 2000s, a group of individuals drawn from multiple countries and professional backgrounds—scholars, former politicians, civil activists, business figures, and cultural representatives—coalesced around the project of preventing a "clash of civilizations" in the context of what they diagnosed as an approaching world economic crisis and a broader crisis of the global system. The leading figures included Vladimir Yakunin (Russia), Jagdish Kapur (India), Fred Dallmayr (United States), and Walter Schwimmer

¹ Резолюция Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН 56/6 от 9 ноября 2001 г. «Глобальная повестка дня для диалога между цивилизациями». [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/56/6> (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

(Austria), who had previously served as the first Secretary General of the Council of Europe. This group established the World Public Forum "Dialogue of Civilisations," initially convened in the form of the Rhodes Forum, as an unofficial non-governmental organization. Its defining structural feature was independence from state authority: the initiative was conceived as a public, non-state endeavor, and its normative force rested precisely on that independence.

The second pathway was intergovernmental from the start. In 1998, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami proposed to the United Nations that the year 2001 be designated the "Year of Dialogue among Civilizations"—a proposal that received support from Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus and was subsequently endorsed by the UN General Assembly through Resolution 56/6 (2001). This initiative was later extended through the Turkey- and Spain-sponsored "Alliance of Civilizations," established in 2005 under UN auspices². Unlike the first pathway, this line of development operated through multilateral state channels and carried formal institutional standing from its inception.

The distinction is analytically consequential for this article. The Russian government participated in neither the development of the civil society concept nor its intergovernmental institutionalization, despite Russia's sustained advocacy for a multipolar world order throughout this period. The term "Dialogue of Civilisations" entered Russian political discourse with discernible frequency only around 2012—well after both pathways had been established. This temporal gap is itself diagnostic: it confirms that when the Russian state began to deploy civilizational dialogue vocabulary after 2013, the operation was one of extraction from pre-existing discursive resources, not participation in their creation. The three-stage model proposed below is designed to track precisely this kind of process.

In less than twenty years, that premise was hollowed out. The vocabulary, institutional forms, and normative prestige of civilizational dialogue were systematically co-opted by state actors. In 2020, Russia wrote "millennial history," "ancestral memory," and "traditional family values" into Article 67.1 of its constitution. In 2024, the UN General Assembly adopted China-sponsored Resolution A/RES/78/286³, designating June 10 as the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations. In 2025, Beijing hosted the inaugural Ministerial Conference on Global Civilization Dialogue, attended by representatives of approximately 140 countries. What these events share is this: the concept of civilizational dialogue is being remade in the hands of exactly the kind of power it was supposed to transcend.

The question follows. Both Russia and China are doing this—why are they doing it differently? One locks civilizational content into the constitution; the other pushes it onto multilateral platforms. One turns inward, the other outward. If civilizational dialogue has become a state instrument, then what determines what kind of instrument it gets made into?

Existing international relations theory can explain why the two countries "use" civilizational discourse, but not why they "use it differently." Realism cannot see institutional form variation. Liberal institutionalism assumes institutions are culturally neutral containers. Constructivism still treats states as norm recipients rather than norm originators.

This article addresses that gap. It proposes a three-stage institutionalization model as an analytical framework and uses Russia and China as comparative cases to trace how a normative concept gets progressively co-opted, codified, and consolidated by state power. Section One builds the theoretical framework and identifies the limitations of existing theory. Section Two conducts the comparative analysis. Section Three draws theoretical conclusions.

² United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). History of the Alliance. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://www.unaoc.org/who-we-are/history/> (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

³ Резолюция Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН 78/286 от 7 июня 2024 г. «Международный день диалога между цивилизациями». [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://www.gov.cn/yaowen/liebiao/202406/content_6956276.htm (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

Section One: Theoretical Framework

1.1 The Explanatory Gap in Mainstream IR Theory

Before presenting the three-stage model, the terrain of existing theory needs to be mapped. The three major traditions of mainstream IR theory each offer partial insight into the Politicisation of civilizational dialogue, but each leaves an explanatory gap. These gaps, taken together, establish the necessity of the three-stage model.

Realism can explain strategic motivation but cannot see institutional form. Morgenthau's power politics [16, p. 101] and Waltz's structural realism [22, pp. 73-74] both treat ideational resources, including civilizational narratives as instruments serving power maximization or security provision. From this vantage point, Russia's deployment of civilizational discourse after 2013 can be read as an identity-differentiation strategy during a period of relative power decline; China's Global Civilization Initiative can be read as a low-cost alliance-building operation. These readings are not wrong, but they break down before a more specific question: why the constitution? When Russia in 2020 wrote "millennial history," "ancestral memory," and "traditional family values" into Article 67.1 of the constitution, the signaling logic of realism cannot explain why the highest, most rigid institutional form was chosen over more flexible administrative documents that could achieve the same signaling function. Walt [21, p. 17] made this point long ago: the same structural pressures can produce different state behaviors; power configuration alone cannot predict institutional choice.

Liberal institutionalism focuses on how institutions reduce transaction costs and enhance the credibility of commitments; Keohane's framework [12, pp. 89-91] is widely used for this purpose. But this tradition carries a hidden assumption: that institutions are culturally neutral containers. Reus-Smit [18, p. 30] dismantled this assumption at the empirical level—the legitimacy of the modern European international order was never built on culturally neutral ground. Consider Russia's 2015 National Security Strategy: this document listed "erosion of traditional spiritual and moral values" alongside terrorism as threats to national security. Liberal institutionalism can explain why such a strategy exists, but not why civilizational content is embedded within it.

Constructivism goes furthest. Wendt's social theory [23, pp. 255-256] showed that threat perceptions are shaped by shared ideas. Finnemore and Sikkink's [9, pp. 895] norm life cycle model brought norm dynamics into the center of IR analysis. Acharya's [6, pp. 241,245] norm localization theory pushed further still: norm recipients are not passive absorbers but active re-constructors who selectively reinterpret external norms in light of local cultural traditions. This framework comes closest to the phenomenon this article addresses, yet it retains a structural limitation: it presupposes that norms flow from outside in, and the state, however actively it selects, always occupies the position of recipient. Russia's civilizational policy since 2000 represents a different case: the state as originator, generating indigenous norms from within and embedding them in constitutional provisions designed specifically to resist external normative pressure. This is norm production, not norm localization—and the constructivist toolkit was not built to track this process.

Soft power theory is frequently conflated with civilizational dialogue in academic literature and policy discourse. The conflation is understandable: both involve culture, values, and non-coercive influence. While state influence is often dichotomized in discussion as soft power versus hard power, the distinction does not hold in analytical terms. Soft power is a tool of directional influence; it shapes the preferences of target states to produce outcomes favorable to the agent. Normatively understood Dialogue of Civilisations follows an entirely different logic: it does not direct influence but creates conditions for equal, reciprocal introduction of civilizational values. Soft power theory cannot explain why Russia chose to write civilizational content into the constitution, nor why China deliberately constructed multilateral platforms. These questions about specific institutional choices fall outside the analytical boundary of soft power, and the three-stage model is designed for exactly this terrain.

1.2 Conceptual Clarification: Normative Dialogue versus Instrumentalized Discourse

Before the model is laid out, a conceptual question needs settling: what counts as “genuine” Dialogue of Civilisations? This needs to be clear so that the diagnosis of “Politicisation” in later sections does not hang in midair.

Genuine Dialogue of Civilisations, as articulated in UN Resolution 56/6 and theorized by Petito [17, pp. 56-58], requires three structural preconditions: formal and substantive equality among participants; mutual recognition of the legitimacy of each other’s traditions; shared acknowledgment that diversity of political systems is an enduring feature of international life, not a problem to be solved. These three conditions serve in this article as diagnostic criteria, not moral standards. They define what genuine Dialogue of Civilisations structurally requires, thereby making the structural gap between the normative idea and actual policy practice visible.

This distinction is not abstract. When Russia writes “traditional values” into its constitution while withdrawing from the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights, the first two preconditions—participant equality and mutual recognition—no longer hold. What is being institutionalized is not normatively understood Dialogue of Civilisations but civilizational discourse serving state purposes: politicized civilizational dialogue. China’s case is equally instructive for analysis: promoting civilizational diversity abroad while maintaining strict controls on religious and cultural expression domestically creates a gap between normative claims and actual practice that itself demands explanation.

A terminological convention follows. Throughout this article, “civilizational dialogue” refers to the politicized, instrumentalized form. Wherever the normative concept is meant, the article uses “Dialogue of Civilisations” or adds qualifiers such as “genuine” or “normatively understood.” This distinction is not original to the present article: Petito himself has acknowledged that the line between the normative concept and its strategic deployment has become increasingly difficult to hold in practice.

1.3 The Three-Stage Institutionalization Model

The three-stage model addresses a specific explanatory gap: how a normative concept originally initiated by civil society gets co-opted by state actors, codified into legally binding instruments, and ultimately embedded in the constitution. This transformation operates across three levels—discursive, legislative, constitutional—each requiring its own analytical tools.

The model integrates three theoretical frameworks, assigning each to the stage where it has the strongest explanatory power. Stage One uses Schmidt’s [19, p. 1] discursive institutionalism, particularly the distinction between “coordinative discourse” and “communicative discourse”: the former refers to the process by which policy elites form internal consensus before going public; the latter refers to the subsequent process of legitimizing that consensus before broader audiences. Stage Two uses Mahoney and Thelen’s theory of gradual institutional change [15, pp. 15-16], focusing on two mechanisms: “layering” and “conversion.” Layering adds new provisions on top of existing institutional frameworks without restructuring their underlying architecture; conversion redirects existing institutional structures toward new purposes without formal modification. Stage Three draws on Hirschl’s theory of constitutionalization [11, pp. 11, 46]: when political elites anticipate that core policy commitments cannot be protected through ordinary political channels and cannot withstand future political reversal, they choose constitutionalization. This article applies that logic specifically to civilizational content.

A note on framework compatibility: Schmidt’s framework focuses on discursive dynamics within a single institutional context; Mahoney and Thelen’s framework is better suited for cross-domain comparative analysis. The model assigns each to the stage where its explanatory power is strongest and does not require both to operate simultaneously across all stages.

Norm production is the anchoring concept of the entire model. Norm diffusion [9, p. 895] and norm localization [6, p. 241] share a directional assumption: norms originate externally and propagate inward; the state, however active, occupies the position of recipient. Norm production reverses this direction entirely: the state generates norms from within, consolidates them through institutional

embedding, and uses them to resist rather than receive external normative influence. Its characteristic product is a norm that is constitutionally protected and shielded from external normative revision. Mechanistically, the driving force of norm diffusion and localization is socialization by external actors; the driving force of norm production is the capacity of elites to form consensus and the capacity of bureaucracies to codify norms—an endogenous process. The three-stage model is designed to track it.

Stage One: Discursive Extraction. Stage One involves extracting symbols, narratives, and value discourse from socio-historical and cultural resources and distilling them into semantically usable policy units. The core operation is semantic anchor extraction: identifying shared policy-relevant semantics among multiple cultural resources that carry internal tensions or even contradict each other, consolidating these commonalities into a coherent discursive unit without resolving the substantive conflicts among the sources. The Russian case illustrates the point: Orthodoxy (a religious identity), Eurasianism (a geopolitical construct), and “Russkiy Mir” (a set of trans-territorial ethno-cultural attributes) carry obvious ontological tensions. Stage One elites need not dissolve these tensions; they identify three shared semantic anchors across the three resources—rejection of Western modernity, emphasis on historical continuity, assertion of a trans-territorial civilizational identity—and construct a coordinative discourse from them. Stage One is complete when a sufficiently stable coordinative discourse forms among policy elites—stable enough to be codified into binding institutional rules.

Stage Two: Normative Codification. Elite consensus acquires institutional bindingness through bureaucratic codification. Coordinative discourse is confirmed as policy direction in high-level coordinating bodies, transmitted to relevant ministries, and ultimately rendered in the form of stable legal or policy texts. The two most characteristic mechanisms of this stage are layering and conversion. Layering adds new civilizational provisions to existing institutional frameworks—national security strategies, legal codices, foreign policy frameworks—without restructuring their underlying architecture. Conversion reinterprets the purpose of existing institutions, redirecting them toward civilizational objectives while leaving their formal structure unchanged. Both mechanisms reduce institutional resistance by embedding civilizational content within familiar frameworks rather than building new ones. Two conditions must be simultaneously met for Stage Two to proceed: sufficient ambiguity within existing institutional arrangements to accommodate new civilizational provisions without triggering constitutional-level disputes; and sufficient coordination capacity within elite networks to ensure codification occurs simultaneously across multiple institutional domains.

Stage Three: Institutional Consolidation and Insulation. Stage Three is marked by constitutionalization. Following Hirschl [11, p. 11] and Ginsburg [10, pp. 7-9], constitutionalization here is not treated as routine legislative action but as a strategic institutional choice: political elites choose this pathway when they anticipate that core policy commitments cannot be adequately protected through channels subject to ordinary political competition or international normative supervision. Constitutional embedding produces two analytically distinguishable forms of protection. The first is the procedural threshold: modifying constitutionally embedded content is costly in time, resources, and political capital. Constitutional amendment procedures are deliberately made difficult precisely to insulate fundamental commitments from the vicissitudes of everyday politics. The second is normative transformation: the source of legitimacy for embedded content shifts from political consensus to the authority of fundamental law. Any objection now bears the discursive cost of being labeled “unconstitutional” rather than merely “a different political view.” These two forms of protection together constitute the insulation threshold.

Once the insulation threshold is crossed, constitutionalized civilizational content does not go dormant. It continuously reproduces itself through three feedback channels: the education system writes constitutionalized civilizational content into curricula; official media turns constitutional vocabulary into the standard framing of everyday reporting; bureaucratic administration treats civilizational attributes as the baseline for policy legitimacy. These three channels jointly produce a self-reinforcing cycle in which the institutional framework continuously reproduces the social conditions that sustain its own legitimacy.

1.4 Explanatory Boundaries and Conditional Constitutional Insulation

The three-stage model is a procedural framework, not a predictive tool. It describes pathways that have empirically occurred; whether progression between stages happens depends on two variables: the perceived intensity of external normative pressure, and the stability of elite consensus. The model applies primarily to unilateral institutionalization by sovereign states. Multilateral frameworks cannot in principle reach the insulation threshold, because constitutional insulation requires the authority of a single sovereign state.

One empirical case prompted a correction to Stage Three. Georgia's 2017 constitutional amendments embedded the national goals of EU and NATO accession in the preamble, but the 2024 "Foreign Influence Law" (closely modeled on Russia's 2012 "Foreign Agents" legislation) has in substance hollowed out this provision, even though the constitutional text itself remains formally intact. This case will be analyzed more concretely in Section 3.3; the point to note here is the general problem it reveals: constitutional insulation is not binary. This gives rise to the concept of "conditional constitutional insulation": insulation exists on a spectrum, and its effectiveness depends on whether elite consensus behind the constitutional provision is sustained and whether alignment between the constitutional text and ordinary legislation is maintained. Constitutional provisions can remain formally unchanged while ordinary legislation progressively narrows their scope of application. This process is termed "soft erosion" in the present article.

Section Two: Comparative Analysis

2.1 Russia: Introversion-Defense Constitutionalization

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 was not merely a geopolitical rupture; it was a deep legitimacy crisis. The collapse of the Marxist-Leninist ideological framework left the Russian state in a severe legitimacy deficit, and the catastrophic economic contraction made that deficit impossible to relieve. Between 1990 and 1999, Russian GDP fell by approximately 40%, real per capita income dropped by about 50%, and the poverty rate rose from roughly 2% in the late Soviet period to nearly 40% by 1998 [20, pp. 1-2; 5, p.153]. "Democratic reform" and "market economy" thus became directly associated in Russian public consciousness with poverty and inequality, and the credibility of liberal discourse was nearly exhausted domestically.

NATO's eastward expansion in 1999 and the Kosovo War—the bombing of Yugoslavia without UN Security Council authorization triggered a cognitive shift among Russia's foreign policy elites: "integration with the West" in substance meant accepting normative subordination. Russia's civilizational resource pool comprised three intertwined strands: the reviving Orthodox tradition (the number of registered Orthodox Church associations grew from 3, 451 in 1990 to 8,653 by 1 January 1998 [13, p. 6], reflecting a rapid institutional expansion; by the time of the most recent population census, approximately 70% of Russia's population identified as Orthodox Christian, indicating that Orthodoxy had become not merely a reviving religious institution but a dominant marker of cultural identity), the Eurasianist intellectual tradition (евразийство) [1, pp. 34-35], and the "Russkiy Mir" concept, which was institutionalized through the establishment of the Russkiy Mir Foundation by presidential decree in 2007 [2, pp. 5, 8]⁴. Ontological tensions among these three resources are obvious: Orthodoxy is a religious identity, Eurasianism is a geopolitical construct, and Russkiy Mir is a set of trans-territorial ethno-cultural attributes. But these tensions do not impede discursive extraction—if anything, they provide the structural conditions for semantic anchor extraction: the stronger the tensions, the greater the aggregative function of whatever common ground can be extracted.

Word-frequency content analysis [14, pp. 18-19, 49] of five editions of the Foreign Policy Concept (Концепция внешней политики; 2000, 2008, 2013, 2016, 2023)⁵, the 2013 Valdai Forum

⁴ Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 21.06.2007 № 796 «О создании фонда "Русский мир"» // Собрание законодательства РФ, 25.06.2007, № 26, ст. 3166.

⁵ Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации 2000 г. (утратила силу). [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://www.businesspravo.ru/Docum/DocumShow_DocumID_16974.html; Концепция внешней политики

speech, and the 2015 National Security Strategy provides macro-level quantitative evidence for Stage One. The normalized frequency of the civilizational semantic field rose from 0.77 per thousand words in the 2000 Foreign Policy Concept to 1.92 in 2008, 2.32 in 2013, then accelerated to 3.05 in 2016 and 3.55 in 2023. The 2013 Valdai speech registered the highest single-document density at 7.50 per thousand words—a figure reflecting the speech’s function as an explicit civilizational agenda-setting event rather than the gradual drift visible in the Foreign Policy Concept time series. The shift in semantic function was equally discontinuous: before the 2015 National Security Strategy, operational usage was a minority across all documents (0% in the 2000 Foreign Policy Concept, 18% in 2013) and carried no enforcement implications; after 2016, operational usage dominated (48% in 2016, 74% in 2023). These numbers indicate directional trends, not precise measurements.

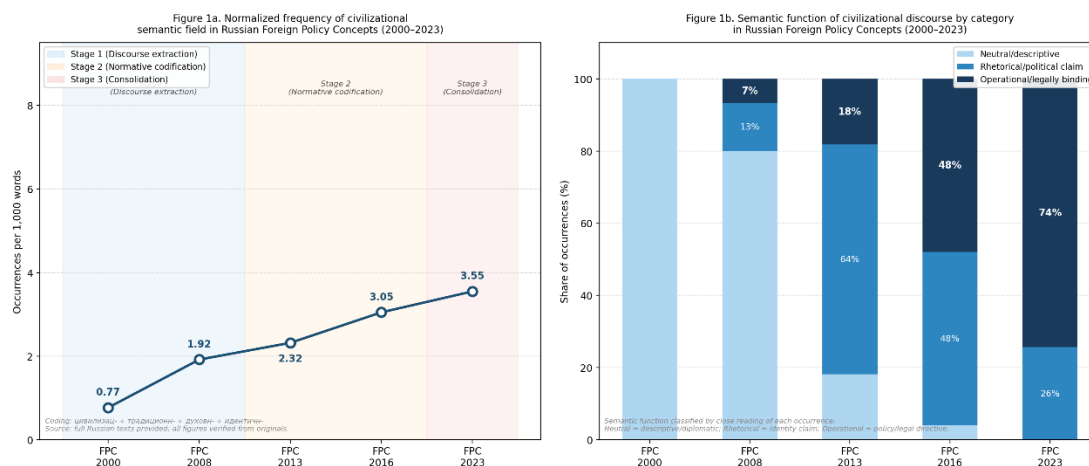


Figure 1: Normalized frequency of civilizational semantic field in Russian Foreign Policy Concepts (2000–2023) with semantic function classification

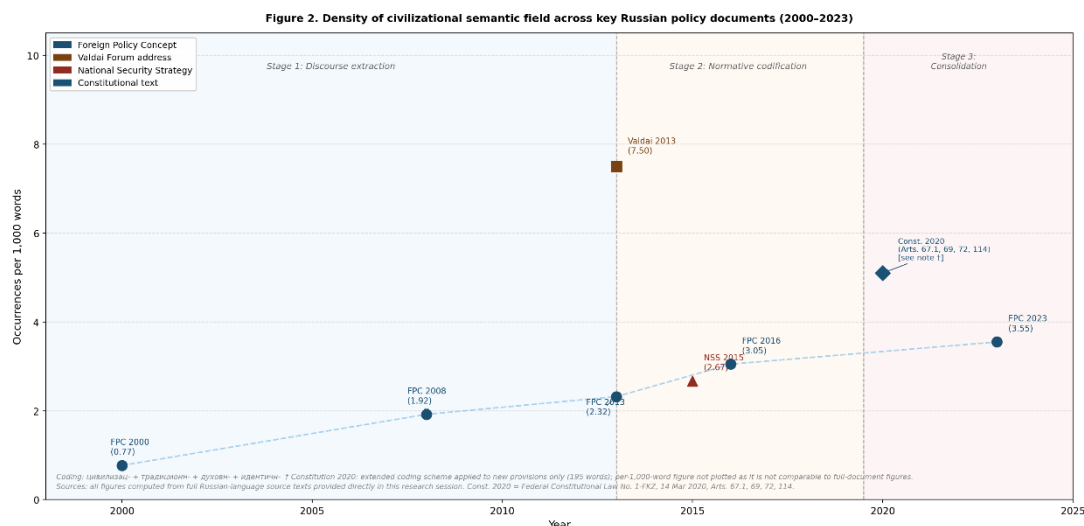


Figure 2: Density of civilizational semantic field across key Russian policy documents (2000–2023)

Российской Федерации 2008 (утратила силу) [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/acts/news/785>; Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации 2013 г. (утратила силу). [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/70218094/>; Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 30.11.2016 г. № 640 «Об утверждении Концепции внешней политики Российской Федерации» // СЗ РФ, 05.12.2016, № 49, ст. 6886 (утратил силу); Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 31.03.2023 г. № 229 «Об утверждении Концепции внешней политики Российской Федерации» // СЗ РФ, 03.04.2023, № 14, ст. 2406.

Table 1. Civilizational Semantic Field: Word-Frequency Content Analysis of Key Russian Policy Documents (2000–2023)

Coding scheme: *unilateral* = *традиционные* + *идентичность*; *Constitution 2020* *orthodox* = *русские* + *православие* + *каноничность*; *orthodox* = *каноничность* + *православие* + *каноничность*. All word counts and hit counts computed from full Russian-language source texts provided directly in this research session. No imputed or estimated figures.

Document	Year	Word count	Total hits	Per 1,000 words	unilateral	orthodox	orthodox	orthodox	Dominant semantic function	Stage	Source / verification
Foreign Policy Concept	2000	5,200	4	0.77	0	2	1	1	Pre-discursive baseline: civilizational vocabulary not yet activated; traditional/spiritual/identity terms used as ambient descriptors	Pre-Stage 1	Full text provided (doc 7)
Foreign Policy Concept	2008	7,800	15	1.92	11	1	2	1	Emerging rhetoric: civilizational diversity vs. Western unipolarity	Stage 1 (early)	Full text provided (doc 11)
Putin Valdai Address	2013	3,200	24	7.5	3	6	9	6	Concentrated extraction: Russia as unique civilization; West in crisis	Stage 1 (culmination)	Full speech provided (doc 12)
Foreign Policy Concept	2013	9,500	22	2.32	13	3	3	3	Transitional: diversity language increases; no separate Russian civ.	Stage 1→2 (boundary)	Full text provided (doc 8)
National Security Strategy	2015	9,000	24	2.67	0	9	12	3	Securitized: erosion of traditional values = national security threat	Stage 2	Full text provided (doc 9)
Foreign Policy Concept	2016	8,200	25	3.05	13	5	5	2	Operational: "Russian civilization" as explicit policy category	Stage 2 (peak)	Full text provided (doc 13)
Constitution RF Arts. 67.1, 69, 72(a, L), 114(A)	2020	195*	13	66.67†	0	2	1	1	Constitutionalized: traditional values & cultural identity as state duty	Stage 3	Full text: Arts 67.1(doc16), 69(doc17), 72(doc18), 114(doc19) — new provisions only
Foreign Policy Concept	2023	11,000	39	3.55	22	5	8	4	Reinforced: feedback loop active; "state civilization" as foundation	Stage 3 (reinforced)	Full text provided (doc 10)

* Constitution 2020: word count reflects new/amended provisions only (Arts. 67.1 §2–4, 69 §2–3, 72 §4.1, §4.1 §4, 114 §4 amended) — not full article text.

Per-1,000-word figure (66.67) reflects density within these targeted provisions; not directly comparable to full-document figures for other rows.

† Constitution 2020 extended coding: *unilateral* (1) = *традиционные* (2) + *духовные* (1) + *идентичность* (1) + *каноничность* (1) + *каноничность* (2) + *каноничность* (2) + *каноничность* (1) + *каноничность* (1) = 13 hits / 195 words.

Extended scheme used because *unilateral* not in current Russian constitutional language; functional/cultural content is expressed through value/identity/cultural vocabulary.

Data sources: FPC 2000 (Kremlin, 28 Jun 2000); FPC 2008 (Kremlin, 15 Jul 2008); Putin Valdai Address (Kremlin, 19 Sep 2013); FPC 2013 (Kremlin, 18 Feb 2013); NSS 2015 (Kremlin, 31 Dec 2015); FPC 2016 (Kremlin, 30 Nov 2016); Constitution RF 2020 amendments (Federal Constitutional Law No. 1-FZ, 14 Mar 2020); FPC 2023 (Kremlin, 31 Mar 2023).

All texts analyzed in original Russian. Coding performed by single coder; no inter-rater reliability coefficient calculated (see Appendix A.1).

Row shading: Pre-Stage 1 / Stage 1–2 boundary Stage 2: Discursive extraction Stage 2: Normative codification Stage 3: Constitutional consolidation

Table 1: Word-frequency content analysis of key Russian policy documents (2000–2023)

The pivotal event was Putin’s speech at the tenth anniversary meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club on September 19, 2013⁶. This was the first time civilizational identity was systematically elevated from rhetorical background to policy foreground at the highest political level. The speech integrated four semantic anchors—Orthodox tradition, traditional family values, historical continuity, and a diagnosis of Western modernity’s moral crisis—into the policy statement that “Russia is a distinct civilization.” A rhetorically noteworthy operation in the speech: Putin used the universalist vocabulary of UN Resolution 56/6 to package this particularist claim, presenting Russia’s civilizational autonomy as a specific instance of the internationally recognized norm of “civilizational diversity.” Western criticism of Russia’s civilizational policy was thereby made to appear as a violation of international norms, rather than a defense of them.

An analytically crucial point: the Russian state did not create this concept. The World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilisations” was founded in 2002 by Yakunin, Kapur, and Papanicolaou as an international civil society project independent of any government [3]. What Russia institutionalized after 2013 was not the normative concept but its associated political vocabulary. This vocabulary was selectively extracted and repurposed as a state policy instrument. Discursive extraction is “extraction,” not “creation.”

The onset of Stage Two was directly driven by the 2013–2014 Ukraine crisis. Ukraine occupies a unique position in Russia’s civilizational narrative. When the Euromaidan (Євромайдан) movement displaced a government aligned with Russia’s civilizational framework, Russian elites interpreted the event as a clear signal: civilizational identity, if left without institutional protection, will collapse in the face of externally supported political mobilization. Elite consensus formed around the proposition that civilizational commitments must be embedded in legally binding instruments.

Stage Two advanced through three institutional milestones. The 2013 legislation: the Federal Law Prohibiting Propaganda of Non-Traditional Sexual Relationships to Minors (Federal Law No. 135-FZ, 2013)⁷ established “traditional values” for the first time as a legally enforceable category—a layering mechanism, with new provisions added on top of existing law without restructuring the underlying framework. The 2015 National Security Strategy (Стратегия

⁶ Путин В.В. Заседание международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай», 19 сентября 2013 г. // Президент России. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19243> (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

⁷ Федеральный закон от 29.06.2013 № 135-ФЗ «О внесении изменений в статью 5 Федерального закона "О защите детей от информации, причиняющей вред их здоровью и развитию" и отдельные законодательные акты Российской Федерации» // СЗ РФ, 01.07.2013, № 26, ст. 3208.

национальной безопасности)⁸: this document listed “erosion of traditional spiritual and moral values” alongside terrorism as a national security threat—a securitizing speech act in the sense of Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde [7, p. 5], pushing civilizational content from the cultural into the security domain, where exceptional state measures are more easily justified. The 2016 Foreign Policy Concept: this edition was the first among the five Foreign Policy Concepts to include “Russian civilization” as an operational policy category—a conversion mechanism, redirecting the great-power diplomacy framework toward civilizational objectives without altering its formal institutional structure. The temporal sequence is analytically significant: the 2015 National Security Strategy securitized civilizational content before the 2016 Foreign Policy Concept incorporated it into the foreign policy domain, substantially reducing the institutional resistance to adoption of the latter.

However extensive Stage Two institutionalization may have been, it remained formally reversible through ordinary political and legal procedures. The National Security Strategy and Foreign Policy Concept are administrative documents amendable by presidential decree; legislation remained under the oversight of the European Court of Human Rights. It was precisely this residual vulnerability that drove Stage Three.

The 2020 constitutional amendments crossed the insulation threshold on three levels. Article 67.1 wrote the three key semantic anchors from Stage One— “millennial history,” “ancestral memory,” “traditional family values”—directly into the constitutional text, converting what had been discursive claims into constitutional obligations binding on all citizens and state organs⁹. Article 72 elevated “protection of traditional family values” to a competence jointly exercised by federal and regional governments. Article 79 is the technical core of the insulation mechanism: it stipulated that when international treaties conflict with the Russian constitution, the constitution prevails—a provision directly targeting the kind of channel through which European Court of Human Rights rulings had previously been used to challenge Russian domestic legislation.

Two methodological points require emphasis. The insulation chain was already operational before the 2020 amendments: the Federal Constitutional Law No. 7-FKZ of December 2015 authorized the Russian Constitutional Court to declare European Court of Human Rights rulings “unenforceable,” and the Constitutional Court first exercised this power in 2016¹⁰ (in the Anchugov and Gladkov case). Russia’s withdrawal from the Council of Europe in March 2022 was the diplomatic extension of an insulation already accomplished, not its starting point. The causal sequence is clear: geopolitical sovereignty concerns drove legal insulation; the Politicisation of civilizational dialogue provided the legitimating narrative.

The post-amendment period confirms the operation of feedback loops. The 2023 Foreign Policy Concept defined Russia as a “state-civilization” (государство-цивилизация), and civilizational identity shifted from defensive rhetoric to a generative source of foreign policy objectives. The Russian Ministry of Science and Higher Education made “Fundamentals of Russian Statehood” (Основы российской государственности) a required course for first-year university students beginning in the fall 2023 semester¹¹. The course was developed following presidential instructions and drew heavily on the civilizational discourse reinforced by the 2020 constitutional amendments.

⁸ Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 31.12.2015 № 683 «О Стратегии национальной безопасности Российской Федерации» // СЗ РФ, 04.01.2016, № 1 (часть II), ст. 212 (утратил силу).

⁹ Конституция Российской Федерации, принята всенародным голосованием 12.12.1993 года (с учётом поправок, внесённых Законами РФ поправках к Конституции РФ от 30.12.2008 N 6-ФКЗ, от 30.12.2008 N 7-ФКЗ, от 05.02.2014 N 2-ФКЗ, от 21.07.2014 N 11-ФКЗ, от 14.03.2020 №1-ФКЗ, от 04.10.2022 N 5-ФКЗ, от 04.10.2022 N 6-ФКЗ, от 04.10.2022 N 7-ФКЗ, от 04.10.2022 N 8-ФКЗ) // Официальный интернет-портал правовой информации (www.pravo.gov.ru), 06.10.2022, N 0001202210060013.

¹⁰ Федеральный конституционный закон от 14.12.2015 № 7-ФКЗ «О внесении изменений в Федеральный конституционный закон “О Конституционном Суде Российской Федерации”» // СЗ РФ, 21.12.2015, № 51 (часть I), ст. 7229.

¹¹ Министерство науки и высшего образования Российской Федерации. Основы российской государственности: учебная программа. Сентябрь 2023 г. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://www.msun.ru/en/news/id-8776>. (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

Constitutional provisions thereby entered the classroom, completing the feedback loop from institution to social consensus to institutional legitimation.

2.2 China: Extroversion-Projection Multilateral Institutionalization

China's institutionalization pathway diverged from Russia's from the very start. The divergence is rooted in the different structures of external pressure the two countries face. Russia faces direct institutional threats: the European Court of Human Rights exercises jurisdiction that directly challenges specific Russian domestic legislation; NATO's security framework constitutes a direct strategic challenge. Both mechanisms operate through institutional channels capable of imposing direct costs. Russia's institutional response is therefore insulation: placing civilizational content where international normative mechanisms cannot reach it. The external normative pressure China faces is structurally different: it is more diffuse, manifesting as discursive competition over governance models and development paradigms rather than direct jurisdictional challenges to domestic law. No international tribunal reviews Chinese domestic legislation against a unified human rights standard comparable to the one the European Court of Human Rights has applied to Russia. Diffuse discursive competition calls not for insulation but for counter-competition: building a coalition broad enough to endorse an alternative normative framework, thereby reshaping the terrain on which the discursive contest takes place. Institutional form follows threat structure.

The Beijing Forum, co-founded in 2004 by Peking University and the Beijing Municipal Government under the general theme "Harmony of Civilizations and Prosperity for All" (Beijing Forum 2004–2025)¹², provides a longitudinal record of China's Stage One discursive extraction. In the same year that Russia created the Valdai Discussion Club, China established the Beijing Forum—but the two platforms are structurally opposite in function: Valdai built domestic elite consensus about Russian civilizational identity; the Beijing Forum projected discourse outward toward international scholars and policymakers. The two platforms exhibited functional divergence from the moment of their founding—which is itself diagnostic. Their respective institutionalization logics unfold from this point.

The forum's early phase (2004–2008) was characterized by academic neutrality: participants were mainly scholars, government involvement was limited, and elites were identifying civilizational elements usable for policy purposes without yet forming a systematic direction. From 2009, the agenda displayed a clear policy orientation: "Dialogue of Civilisations and Global Governance" directly linked civilizational diversity to China's pursuit of discursive authority in international institutions. By 2015, "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" dominated keynote addresses, and the distance between the forum and the official discourse system was rapidly narrowing. After 2018, the forum completed its transformation from academic exchange platform to a carrier of state civilizational discourse. By November 2024, at the 21st Beijing Forum, panel agendas had explicitly integrated the vocabulary of the Global Civilization Initiative, and the forum issued the Beijing Forum Consensus 2024—indicating that the academic platform had completed its transformation into a vehicle for transmitting established state civilizational discourse (Beijing Forum 2024).

In March 2023, Xi Jinping proposed the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) in his keynote address at the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-level Meeting (Xi Jinping 2023)¹³. This marked the qualitative shift from Stage One to Stage Two: civilizational dialogue rose from an academic-diplomatic topic to a top-level foreign policy proposition, standing alongside the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative as the three pillars of China's foreign policy framework. The GCI's four core propositions—respect for civilizational diversity, promotion

¹² Пекинский форум 2025: краткий обзор. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://www.bjf.pku.edu.cn/>; Консенсус Пекинского форума 2024 г., 21-й Пекинский форум, ноябрь 2024 г. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://www.bjf.pku.edu.cn/forum_china/about_consensus.php (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

¹³ 习近平. 携手同行现代化之路: 主要报告在中国共产党与世界政党高层对话会上的讲话, 15 марта 2023 г. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://jgdw.mofcom.gov.cn/zyjs/art/2023/art_dffe9ddca7d24e8ca6e1a683675e770a.html. (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

of common values of humanity, emphasis on civilizational inheritance and innovation, and strengthening of international cultural exchange and cooperation—adopt a universalist framing, with the endorsement threshold deliberately set as low as possible: any country can express support for these principles without making specific cultural commitments, abandoning existing policies, or accepting any particular definition of civilization. This design maximizes coalition breadth while positioning China as the organizational center.

The critical institutional leap occurred in June 2024. Resolution A/RES/78/286, proposed by China and adopted by the 78th UN General Assembly¹⁴, designated June 10 each year as the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations. Civilizational dialogue thereby crossed from bilateral and regional endorsement into formal UN normative codification—the most authoritative form of multilateral normative encoding available to a sovereign state acting through international institutions.

The most important institutional development since the launch of the GCI is the inaugural Ministerial Conference on Global Civilization Dialogue, held in Beijing in July 2025. The conference attracted over 600 representatives from approximately 140 countries and regions and produced three analytically noteworthy institutional outputs: the Beijing Declaration, a multilateral document jointly signed by representatives of over 140 countries, formally affirming civilizational diversity and dialogue as foundations of international relations¹⁵; a 110-item Action Plan covering cultural exchange programs, scholarship schemes, media cooperation mechanisms, and platform construction; and, as permanent institutional vehicles, the Global Civilization Research Institute and the Civilization Exchange and Mutual Learning Fund.

The establishment of the Global Civilization Research Institute invites comparison with the DOC Research Institute in Berlin¹⁶, founded as part of the original civil society-led Dialogue of Civilisations framework. The structural contrast is instructive: the Berlin institute operates independently of state authority as an extension of the non-governmental tradition from which the concept originated; the Beijing-based institute is embedded within a state-organized multilateral architecture, funded and directed through intergovernmental channels. This difference exemplifies at the institutional level the very process of politicisation that this article traces at the conceptual level.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) provide additional institutional scaffolding. The BRI's official “five cooperation priorities” framework explicitly includes “people-to-people bonds”¹⁷, encompassing cultural exchange, academic cooperation, and media collaboration, thereby providing civilizational dialogue with material institutional support linked to economic integration and connectivity rather than formal ideological alignment (Vision and Actions 2015). SCO joint statements have repeatedly emphasized “cultural and civilizational diversity” and opposed ideological or bloc-based universalism¹⁸, thereby furnishing China's universalist framework with multilateral endorsement (SCO Summit Declarations, especially 2015–2025). Because this mechanism simultaneously incorporates Russia, civilizational diversity discourse constitutes a shared platform between the two countries even though their institutionalization pathways themselves diverge.

¹⁴ См. сноску 3.

¹⁵ Пекинская декларация Министерской конференции по глобальному цивилизационному диалогу, 11 июля 2025 г. // Министерство иностранных дел Китайской Народной Республики. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ziliao_674904/1179_674909/202507/t20250711_11669536.shtml (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

¹⁶ Dialogue of Civilisations Research Institute (DOC RI). About DOC RI. Берлин: DOC Research Institute. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://doc-research.org/about/> (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

¹⁷ National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, 28 марта 2015 г. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: http://english.scio.gov.cn/beltandroad/2015-03/28/content_76329478.htm (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

¹⁸ Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit Declarations (2001–2025) // TASS Russian News Agency. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://tass.com/politics/1339129> (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

China's normative codification is outward-facing: the obligations it creates regulate the relationship between China and other countries rather than embedding civilizational content in the domestic constitutional or legal order. This outward orientation produces a structural vulnerability that the Russian pathway avoids by design: China's civilizational dialogue infrastructure depends on the sustained political goodwill of partner states. The Confucius Institute network, which has expanded to over 150 countries and regions since 2004, sharply exposes this vulnerability: the wave of closures in Western countries between 2019 and 2022 substantively dismantled China's societal-level civilizational dialogue infrastructure in those regions¹⁹, demonstrating that host-country political goodwill can be withdrawn²⁰.

China's institutional adjustment is underway: the organizational center of gravity is shifting toward BRI-embedded cultural mechanisms and multilateral platforms, channels that produce obligations harder to retract. The 110-item Action Plan from the 2025 ministerial conference is institutionally more durable than bilateral Confucius Institute agreements. But this adjustment has not yet reached the insulation threshold that Russia crossed with its constitutional amendments. China's framework remains formally more flexible—policies can be reversed by administrative decision—but structurally less durable for the same reason. This reflects a trade-off: between outward multilateral projection and inward constitutional embedding, China has chosen flexibility over irreversibility.

2.3 Structural Comparison along Four Dimensions

Building on the analysis above, the two pathways can be compared along four dimensions.

Institutionalization depth and reversibility. Russia has completed all three stages of the model, reaching a qualitatively irreversible threshold: modifying constitutionalized civilizational commitments requires a constitutional amendment procedure that generates considerable institutional friction and political cost, insulating the content from ordinary political contestation. China has reached Stage Two normative codification on the external dimension—the GCI doctrine, the UN resolution, the Beijing Declaration of the ministerial conference—but has not undergone constitutional insulation. China's civilizational policy remains formally reversible by administrative decision, which makes it more flexible but structurally less durable.

Vulnerability structure. Russia's constitutional insulation reduces the risk of external normative revision but generates path dependence: civilizational content reproduced through compulsory education cultivates social constituencies that resist future narrative adjustments. China faces a vulnerability running in the opposite direction: the retractability of host-country cooperation, as the Confucius Institute closures have demonstrated. China's current institutional adjustment toward BRI-embedded mechanisms reduces this vulnerability but does not eliminate it.

Frame–resonance: breadth versus depth of support. The frame–resonance proposition holds that, at comparable levels of institutionalization depth, universalist frames generate broader but shallower international support than particularist frames. The pattern displayed at the 2025 ministerial conference is consistent with this proposition: approximately 140 countries offered nominal endorsement, but most expressed support only for the general principle of civilizational diversity without committing to China's specific policy positions. Russia's particularist framework attracts a smaller coalition, but among states that share or sympathize with its civilizational premises, it produces deeper identity alignment and thereby more durable strategic coordination.

Feedback loop direction. Both countries exhibit feedback loops, but the directions are structurally opposite. Russia's loop runs inward: constitutional provisions re-enter domestic discourse

¹⁹ VOA Chinese. NGO Voices Against Chinese Communist Party-Sponsored Language Programs in American K-12 Schools, 29 августа 2023 г. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://www.voachinese.com/a/ngo-voices-against-chinese-communist-party-sponsored-language-programs-in-american-k-12-schools-20230829/7245893.html> (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

²⁰ Sputnik. 美国高校关闭大部分孔子学院 [США закрыли большинство Институтов Конфуция в вузах]. 22 июня 2022 г. [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <https://sputniknews.cn/20220622/1042063012.html> (дата обращения: 10.04.2026).

through education and media, reinforcing the social consensus that sustains the institutional framework. China's loop runs outward: international endorsement from UN resolutions, ministerial conferences, and GCI signatories is cited domestically as evidence of the framework's global resonance, in turn strengthening the domestic political standing of the GCI as a foreign policy proposition. Russia's loop reinforces insulation; China's loop reinforces projection.

Section Three: Theoretical Conclusions

3.1 Validation of the Three-Stage Model

The Russian case provides independently verifiable evidence at each stage transition. In Stage One, word-frequency data show the 2013 Valdai speech reaching a density of 7.50 per thousand words, markedly higher than the 2.32 of the 2013 Foreign Policy Concept. This gap reflects the speech's function as an explicit civilizational agenda-setting event rather than the gradual drift visible in the Foreign Policy Concept time series. This qualitative discursive leap is consistent with the model's expectation: Stage One produces a stable coordinative discourse, not an evolving discursive trajectory. In Stage Two, the semantic genealogy from 2013 legislation through the 2015 National Security Strategy to the 2016 Foreign Policy Concept is traceable; layering and conversion mechanisms can be identified at the level of specific legal provisions; and the temporal sequence—securitization preceding foreign policy codification—matches the model's expectation that each stage builds on the institutional credibility established by its predecessor. In Stage Three, the insulation chain—Federal Constitutional Law No. 7-FKZ (2015), the 2016 Constitutional Court ruling²¹, Article 79 of the 2020 Constitution, withdrawal from the Council of Europe in 2022—is independently verifiable at every link, and demonstrates that insulation was achieved through judicial channels before the constitutional amendment. This temporal sequence confirms that the 2022 withdrawal from the Council of Europe was the diplomatic extension of an insulation already completed, not the act that initiated it.

The Chinese case pushes the model in a different direction: the same analytical framework can track a structurally opposite pathway—outward multilateral institutionalization—that has completed Stage One, entered Stage Two, but has not crossed the constitutional insulation threshold of Stage Three. This shows that the model is not a description of a single Russian trajectory but an analytical framework capable of distinguishing different institutional forms of civilizational dialogue Politicisation.

The model's core contribution is deconstructive: it opens the black box of “cultural influence” that mainstream IR theory treats as a background variable, and disaggregates it into independently verifiable operations—semantic anchor extraction, coordinative discourse formation, legislative layering and conversion, constitutional consolidation—each subject to scrutiny against the documentary record.

3.2 The Introversion–Extroversion Spectrum

The comparative analysis supports this article's core theoretical proposition: civilizational content provides the raw material; geopolitical threat perception determines institutional form. Russia and China both seek to challenge Western normative universalism, and both can draw on comparable civilizational resources: deep historical traditions, distinctive political philosophies, claims to non-Western legitimacy. They arrive at structurally opposite institutional solutions not because their civilizational narratives differ, but because the structures of external normative pressure they face differ. As Section Two established: Russia faces direct institutional threats—European Court of Human Rights jurisdiction and NATO's security framework—requiring insulation at the

²¹ Постановление Конституционного суда РФ от 19.04.2016 N 12-П «По делу о разрешении вопроса о возможности исполнения в соответствии с Конституцией Российской Федерации постановления Европейского Суда по правам человека от 4 июля 2013 года по делу "Анчугов и Гладков против России" в связи с запросом Министерства юстиции Российской Федерации» // Российская газета, 05.05.2016, № 95.

constitutional level. China faces diffuse discursive competition without direct jurisdictional challenge, and so tends toward outward projection through universalist alliance-building.

This yields a two-dimensional typology: framing strategy (particularist vs. universalist) × institutional focus (introversion-defense vs. extroversion-projection), anchoring a spectrum rather than a binary division. Russia represents the geopolitical-insulation type: particularist civilizational content combined with introversion-defense constitutionalization. China represents the universalist-projection type: universalist civilizational framing combined with extroversion-projection multilateral institutionalization. These two types do not exhaust all possibilities, and a state's position on the spectrum is not fixed: Armenia's civilizational reorientation after the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War illustrates the spectrum's dynamism. When Russia's security guarantee proved no longer sufficient, the collapse of security dependence triggered a reassessment of civilizational affiliation, initiating a new round of Stage One discursive extraction oriented toward European rather than Orthodox civilizational anchors [8].

Four conditions shape the effectiveness of each pathway and the probability of movement along the spectrum. The nature of external normative pressure: direct institutional threats favor introversion; diffuse discursive competition favors extroversion. The stability of elite consensus: introversion requires sustained deep consensus to maintain constitutional insulation; extroversion requires sustained organizational capacity to manage broad multilateral coalitions. The availability of indigenous cultural resources: particularist frameworks require culturally specific resources with genuine historical depth; universalist frameworks require resources translatable into broadly normative principles. The degree of alignment between constitutional provisions and ordinary legislation, the variable captured by the concept of conditional constitutional insulation, determines whether Stage Three insulation is maintained in practice, or whether it undergoes soft erosion while the constitutional text remains formally intact.

3.3 Theoretical Contributions and Scope of Application

This article makes one specific contribution to each of three fields: norm dynamics research, comparative constitutional studies, and the study of civilizational dialogue Politicisation.

The three-stage institutionalization model fills a micro-process gap that macro-level IR theory cannot reach. Realism can explain why Russia needs civilizational discourse as a legitimation resource during a period of relative power decline, and why China benefits from projecting civilizational diversity externally. Neither can explain how rhetoric turns into constitutional provisions—how Putin's 2013 Valdai speech becomes Article 67.1 of the 2020 Russian constitution, or how Xi Jinping's 2023 Global Civilization Initiative becomes a ministerial conference declaration endorsed by approximately 140 countries in 2025. The model's stage-by-stage, decomposable tracking of this transformation is its main analytical contribution.

The concept of norm production pushes normative politics research in a direction that existing frameworks cannot reach. Norm diffusion [9, p. 895] and norm localization [6, p. 241] both presuppose the state as recipient, processing normative flows originating externally. Norm production shifts the analytical focus to the state as producer: creating norms endogenously through elite consensus and bureaucratic codification capacity, rather than absorbing them through socialization by external actors. The frame–resonance proposition extends Acharya's localization theory [6, p. 245] to the producer end, arguing that the framing choice made in Stage One (particularist vs. universalist) shapes the downstream localization costs for potential endorsers. This connection suggests that norm production and norm localization are complementary phases of the same institutional process, not competing research programs.

The concept of conditional constitutional insulation addresses a different strand of literature. The prevailing view of constitutional protection in comparative constitutional studies [11, p. 11; 10, p. 7] treats constitutionalization as a binary state—either accomplished or not. The Georgian case empirically demonstrates that constitutional text can remain formally intact while ordinary legislation progressively narrows its scope of application in practice—the soft erosion phenomenon introduced in Section 1.4. Constitutional insulation is therefore a variable whose value depends on elite

consensus stability, external normative pressure intensity, and alignment between constitutional provisions and ordinary legislation.

These contributions are subject to several scope conditions. The model applies primarily to unilateral institutionalization by sovereign states and has limited explanatory power for collective institutionalization within multilateral frameworks. The analysis of Russia rests on comprehensive process tracing corroborated by multiple documentary sources; the analysis of China is more exploratory, reflecting both the asymmetry of the research design and the temporal proximity of China's main institutional developments: the 2025 ministerial conference occurred only weeks before this article's analytical cutoff date. The frame–resonance proposition is a hypothesis awaiting systematic testing, not an established finding. Extending the model to additional cases—India's civilizational identity politics under BJP governance, Turkey's neo-Ottoman civilizational discourse, Iran's Islamic civilizational framework—would require independent empirical research of comparable depth.

Conclusion

Russia and China both deploy the vocabulary of “civilizational dialogue” and both claim this concept embodies a commitment to equality, reciprocity, and genuine inter-civilizational exchange. The analysis in this article shows that the institutional practices of both states structurally close off the conditions that genuine Dialogue of Civilisations requires.

Russia's constitutional insulation performs civilizational openness: writing the language of inter-civilizational respect into fundamental law. What it actually institutionalizes is civilizational closure—it places civilizational commitments beyond the external oversight mechanisms that might hold those commitments accountable to their own premises. China's universalist projection performs civilizational diversity: building the widest possible coalition around the principle that no single civilization should dominate others. What it actually constructs is an institutional architecture in which one state alone defines the framework, sets the agenda, and operates as the coalition center.

This tension is structural, not incidental. The normative appeal of the civilizational dialogue concept is precisely what makes it available for strategic co-optation: the concept is rhetorically inclusive to the point of being nearly impossible to oppose openly, because opposing it looks like endorsing civilizational hierarchy or cultural imperialism. The gap between normative ideal and institutional reality is what the three-stage model tries to make analytically visible and empirically traceable. By decomposing the transformation process into independently verifiable operations, the model reveals what is actually being institutionalized—not dialogue, but insulation and alliance-building—and through which specific mechanisms this transformation proceeds.

The introversion–extroversion spectrum provides comparative analysis with a more precise vocabulary for characterizing how different states respond to differently structured external normative pressures by politicizing civilizational dialogue into structurally distinct institutional forms.

The World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilisations” was founded in 2002 as a civil society initiative, built on a premise its founders regarded as structurally necessary: genuine inter-civilizational exchange cannot be arranged by the very kind of state power it is supposed to transcend; only independent civil society can provide this condition [3]. From that founding premise to the constitutionalized and multilateralized institutional forms analyzed in this article, the institutional distance between the two is the measure of how far Politicisation can reach. Now that “civilizational dialogue” has been written into constitutional provisions and encoded in multilateral action plans, a question remains—one that no analysis of institutional mechanisms can answer: can this concept still carry its original meaning, or has the act of co-optation itself turned it into a product of the very power it was meant to transcend?

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