

Evolution of China's Global Foreign Policy Discourse in the 21st Century

By

Nikolay V. Litvak and Natalia B. Pomozova

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Introduction

The first quarter of the 21st century has passed, and one can only assume with varying degrees of probability whether the entire current century will be the century of the People's Republic of China (PRC). But, at least, this very first quarter should obviously be recognized as a Chinese one. During the lifetime of just one generation, the people of this country showed such results of quantitative and qualitative development that the rest of the world, at first experiencing surprise, gradually turned to fears about the prospects for further growth of China's power in the economic, military, technological and other fields. Moreover, these fears, especially in the Western countries, are increasingly expressed in the context of a recognition of a "misunderstanding" of what is happening in China and what Beijing plans to do in the future, primarily in world politics. And it is despite the fact that the Chinese not only do not hide their plans, but also try to explain them to everyone as clearly as possible, including, of course, Western politicians. To this end, instead of the so-called "quiet diplomacy", the PRC is increasingly using foreign policy concepts that are being actively developed both on current issues and on the regional and the global ones. These documents represent a rethinking by the top Chinese leadership, with the participation of their scientific community, of the opportunities and needs for the further development of the country, the formalization of the results of such reflection and the justification of foreign policy in the appropriate discourse. The analysis of this discourse in combination with other objective data makes it possible to obtain, among other things, additional grounds for assessing the current situation and the prospects for its change.

Such a rapid and effective development of the PRC is due to a number of factors. First of all, the parity in weapons of mass destruction achieved in the confrontation between the USA and the USSR after the Second World War became absolutely new for the entire history of international relations. It still holds back a new global armed conflict and thus provides significant opportunities for peaceful development. However, the ongoing international competition and confrontation turned out to be shifted to the political, economic and, increasingly, to the information and digital sphere.

For such an informational war, more and more new means are being developed and new goals are set, the main of which is the achievement of cultural and political dominance, which allows them to control other states and peoples without their military occupation. In order to “pull” the PRC out of the “orbit” of the USSR, American politicians went first to the restoration of contacts (since the 1970s), and then the development of trade and economic ties (especially since the 1990s). The main current problem of Deng Xiaoping, who became the main political figure of the PRC after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, was the critical socio-economic situation in the country, which the West offered to solve economically, on the basis of its investments (however, in order to earn money as well). In 1981, Deng started a period of reforms - the gradual decentralization of economic management and the fight against corruption, the abolition of “people's communes” in agriculture and the introduction of elements of market relations in industry and special economic zones to attract foreign investment. The new leader of China, who studied in France himself, spoke out for the development of cultural relations with foreign countries, including allowing Chinese students to receive higher education abroad. This policy led to a real boom in production and exports, especially in the southern coastal provinces, which gradually affected the development of the economy and the growth of living standards in the country as a whole and allowed Beijing to “clean up the house”.

However despite the rapprochement with the United States, which played a key role in the “rise” of China, the West's expectations of the liberalization of the political system following economic reforms did not come true. The collapse of these hopes culminated in the events on Tiananmen Square in May 1989. In this main square of Beijing, a crowd, mostly students and youth, gathered with slogans of democratization, referring to the example of the USSR and Eastern European countries. At first, a peaceful protest turned into a violent armed clash, eventually crushed by the authorities, who restored order. The exact reasons and course of this tragic event are still completely unclear (for example, was it by chance that the demonstration took place on the eve of the most important state visit to the PRC of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev, who had the goal of normalizing bilateral relations). However, despite the harsh reaction of the

United States and other Western countries to the suppression of these protests, the Chinese leadership accelerated the strengthening of the policy of preventing either the Soviet “perestroika”, or, moreover, the “revolutions of 1989” in Eastern Europe, fixing the goal of building “socialism with Chinese characteristics”. Considering Marxism as a “mobile” theoretical basis for internal transformations and foreign policy, Mao Zedong laid the foundations for endowing it with Chinese characteristics. The second stage of sinicization of Marxism is associated with the name of Deng Xiaoping, who initiated the policy of “reform and openness” and designated the economic development of China as the main task. The ideology of socialism was transformed based on the primacy of economic efficiency, which was reflected in the theory of “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” Unlike the USSR, which abandoned the socialist ideology at the beginning of the 20th century, China in this sense took the path of evolution - “while maintaining the foundations of Marxist ontology, epistemology and methodology, the main direction in the development of Marxist teaching in China was its sociology, and especially anthropology”¹, although the social values of Marxist theory have not been revised. In order to level the contradictions between the socialist political system and the capitalist orientation of the economy, the concept of a “socialist market economy” was introduced, and the initial stage of building socialism in China was determined.

The evolution of socialism with Chinese characteristics continued with the coming to power of the third generation of Chinese leaders, led by Jiang Zemin, who put forward in 2000 the theory of “triple representation”, according to which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) should defend the interests of not only the masses of the people, but also the productive forces, and advanced Chinese culture. As a result of rapid socio-economic development by the beginning of the 2000s Chinese society has changed significantly, and the CCP had to respond to the demand of its broad strata, the capitalists and intellectuals, in order to maintain legitimacy. The new international relations became not only a source of observation of the experience of other states, but also an increasingly important factor in the

¹ Yangutov L.E., Chebunin A.V. Modern Philosophical and Socio-Political Thought of China // Questions of Philosophy. 2018. No. 8. P.184.

new domestic policy. Initially, Deng spoke about foreign policy, primarily considering the negative consequences of the practice of neo-colonialism for countries receiving Western capital. His subsequent generalized thoughts boiled down to the fact that China needs to “keep a low profile, try not to show up in anything, but at the same time do something real” and “resist foreign pressure ...”². But gradually the Chinese leadership managed to reflect, to realize the imbalance between its growing potential and the country's position in global politics. In contrast, in particular, to Japan, the rapid development of China in the military, technological, and economic fields since the early 2000s led to the intensification of his international activity, which until then had been restrained, being mainly regional in nature, which was also manifested in a radical change in discourse.

Since the early 2000s, as a result of large-scale socio-political reflection, the synthesis of Chinese traditional thought and Western scientific theories, including Sinicized Marxism, the process of scientization (scientific understanding) of this discourse began. Global foreign policy concepts (“peaceful rise”, “peaceful development”, “Chinese dream”, “Community of a common destiny for mankind”, the “One Belt, One Road” Initiative and others) were formulated, denoting China's ambitions to occupy a central place in the system of international relations. It is the discourse based on scientific understanding and natural reflexive processes that is considered by modern China as the main “weapon” for conquering and defending its dominant role in the world.

Thus, in the period from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, when the country was led by Deng Xiaoping, who declared economic reforms a development priority, China's discourse was restrained, during the third (1993-2003) and fourth (2003-2013) generations of Chinese leaders, it begins to sound more and more confident and tough, global foreign policy concepts appear, which, although being transformed in the process of social reflection, clearly serve as an indicator of China's ambitions.

² Jiang Zemin. 2002. Lun yu zhongguo tese shihuizhuyi. [Statements on socialism with Chinese characteristics]. URL:

<https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cgkhb/chn/xwdt/ywxw/t116288.htm>

With Xi Jinping coming to power in 2013, the discourse of China and the Chairman of the People's Republic of China personally takes on completely different forms - it becomes more rigid, peremptory, a number of global international concepts offered to the whole world are put forward, (the "One Belt, One Road" Initiative, "Community of the Common Destiny of Mankind" and others).

Foreign policy under Jiang Zemin was more focused on the development of foreign economic relations, attracting foreign capital, increasing exports and using advanced foreign technologies, etc. - it met, first of all, the interests of China's economic growth while maintaining its territorial integrity and protecting security. However, in 2002 already, in his report to the 16th Congress of the CCP, Jiang Zemin speaks of "the old world order, dishonest and irrational, which needs to be fundamentally changed" and contrasts it with the "new international economic and political order"³. The characteristics of such an order, according to Jiang Zemin, should be a common desire for all countries for mutual respect for political and cultural characteristics, the rejection of coercive methods, uniform economic development, and should not create a polarization of wealth⁴. At the same time, the foreign policy vector is directed first of all to neighboring developing countries, with which China demonstrates a desire to unite for mutually beneficial development.

The key concept of the third generation of Chinese leaders, focused primarily on domestic policy, was "scientific development", which Chairman Hu Jintao announced in 2003. It was put forward as a method of solving the problems caused by the spread of SARS in the 2002- 2003 crisis. Its theoretical development was based on the ideas of Marxism, which was repeatedly emphasized by the Chinese leadership, including Hu Jintao himself. Speaking in March 2004 at the Central Meeting on Population, Resources and Environment, Hu Jintao put this concept on a par with the theory of Deng Xiaoping and the concept of "three representations"⁵ and

³ Report of Jiang Zemin to the 16th CCP Congress. URL: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/3698_665962/t18872.shtml.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Hu Jintao's Speech at the Population, Resources and Environment Central Meeting. URL: http://www.gov.cn/lidhd/2004-04/04/content_11478.htm

revealed its semantic content, which was reduced to the priority of comprehensive development, however, with increased emphasis on social aspects.

If “scientific development” became the main domestic political concept associated with the name of Hu Jintao, then the foreign policy of the period 2002-2012, when he was in power, was characterized by the concept of “harmonious world”, which also experienced a significant influence of Marxism. The concept of “harmony”, closely related to Confucian theory and not alien to Marxism, was actively used by Hu Jintao both in the context of the domestic political agenda (“harmonious development of large, medium and small cities”, “harmonious culture”, “harmonious socialist society”, etc.) and in the field of international politics. Then, in 2022, the concept of China's “peaceful rise” appeared, which met with a wary reaction from the leaders of the system of international relations. It was this reaction that gave rise to the socio-political reflection of intellectuals in China, which contributed to its rapid transformation into “peaceful development” - a concept that still occupies an important place in the discourse of the PRC.

With the coming to power of Xi Jinping in 2013, China's foreign policy and the corresponding discourse began to be characterized by significant activity, new global international concepts of China are associated with his name, the most ambitious of which are the “Community of Common Destiny for Mankind”, the “One Belt, One Road” Initiative, as well as, a “New Form of Human Civilization”, which appeared in the end of 2021. After the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, the idea of Western democracy and the liberal values, offered to the world community as a universal one, turned out to be acceptable not for all countries. Attempts to implement it in a number of states became just as negative, as the attempts to export the socialist revolution and socialist orientation. The inability of the liberal idea to meet the actual challenges of the formation of a multipolar world in which China plays an independent role has significantly reduced its attractiveness and provoked the emergence of an ideological vacuum in the international environment. Today, the PRC has an alternative ideology, and the key means of promoting it - is the discourse.

Discourse in modern scientific literature on socio-political problems has gradually become one of the main subjects and objects of research. This is because communication between actors occurs mainly in the form of texts made up of statements that are taken into account as signs of the corresponding positions, interests, plans and meanings. In addition, the modern political and philosophical development of the concept of discourse (formulated first by linguists) makes it possible to construct hypotheses, which are then tested by observing the development of real situations, including, relatively unspoken, determined by what is said, the specific discourse of specific socio-political actors. This approach is based on the development of M. Foucault about discourse as a verbal exploration of reality, expressed in specific, historically conditioned and existing statements, the totality of which is an objective form, the framework of this development. In this context, works appeared, the authors of which consider what is happening as the application of a new Chinese discourse, and even in the interpretation of M. Foucault, namely in the sense of the discourse-power relationship, which was indeed mentioned in the official documents of the PRC. Though, in general, such an interpretation differs from Foucault's concept, in fact, it equates discourse with rhetoric, narrative and, therefore, an instrument of "soft power" or information warfare.

In fact, discourse goes far beyond understanding it as "power to fight for." It is a whole complex of not only spoken, but also not spoken aloud intentionally or even unconsciously. In situations where data (in particular, biographical data) that help explain the reflexive formation of the personality of key political actors are difficult to access, the discourse deconstruction methodology makes it possible to explore its hidden meanings, which the subject producing the discourse does not express. Such an approach significantly expands the prospects for forecasting the dynamics of the state's foreign policy.

Chinese official documents of the 21st century are characterized by the constant and frequent use of the terms "science" and "scientific". The leader of the fourth generation of Chinese leaders, Hu Jintao at the 16th Congress of the CCP in 2002 put forward and at the 17th (in 2007) consolidated in the official party and state documents the "Scientific view

of development", the meaning of which is the formation of a "systematic scientific theory", covering all aspects, including international ones. A scientific approach based on the reflection of recognized humanitarian theories (primarily European ones) formed the basis for the formation of China's modern foreign policy discourse.

Radical changes in the system of international relations that began at the end of the 20th century. and are still ongoing (movement towards a multipolar world order, the strengthening of the PRC and its promotion to the forefront in the system of international relations, the formation of global foreign policy concepts by Beijing, etc.) determine the relevance of studying the case of the dynamics of China's foreign policy discourse since the early 2000s till present time, which is based on its "scientization" and reflection of the key foreign policy actors. An analysis of these factors can clarify the understanding of the processes that are taking place in China's modern foreign policy and provide additional opportunities for predicting its future foreign policy strategy, making it possible to build a more effective dialogue with Beijing in a language it understands.

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Part 1

Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Factors in the Formation of Foreign Policy Discourse

1. Modern Approaches to the Analysis of the Formation of a Reflexive Foreign Policy Discourse

The abstract and metaphysical nature of the “international relations” concept predetermines the constant search and refinement of approaches to its definition and methods of studying the reality for which it is used.

Due to the fact that the actions of international relations actors, which mainly sovereign states are regarded as, are still planned and carried out by people, the study of this discourse becomes an important tool of foreign policy analysis in political sociology (in this paragraph, understood mainly linguistically, as a narrative - without taking into account the approach of M. Foucault, considered in paragraph 1.3).

Trying to find a compromise between E. Durkheim's theory, which connects the individual's behavior to the influence of the social environment, and M. Weber's theory, which assumes the existence of internal prerequisites for social behavior, T. Parsons developed a theory of social action, according to which a person in the course of their activity transforms their own consciousness and the world around themselves. This process, during which interaction with the external environment takes place and a certain function is realized, presupposes the existence of a goal, a means of achieving it and a focus on results, it is also influenced by such factors as the psychological state of the individual, motivation to achieve the goal, value-normative social system and patterns of behavior in it.

Regarding international relations, this means that states as social structures of interacting actors produce the foreign policy discourse. At the same time these actors, being based as individuals within society on emotional or affectively neutral instrumental reasons, also pursue a goal aimed at satisfying their needs. Interacting with other actors in the international arena, they proceed from both their own needs and interests and from the interests of the relevant social structures - states. In addition, T. Parsons

believes that there is a need for society to motivate its members, including an agreement with the normative social order, since, in his opinion, the main law of social processes is the tendency of their interaction, aimed at self-preservation¹. The modern foreign policy of the PRC is largely based on this principle, the narrative of which actively emphasizes the advantages of cooperation with China and the adoption of the system's norms of international relations proposed by it, which promises economic benefits and protection to other actors of such interaction, becoming the solution of the self-preservation problem. Thus, in a certain sense, elements of the theses of T. Parsons are confirmed: at a high stage of economic development of society (in this case, states), a self-regulating mechanism appears that works in such a way that the goal and personal interests of each individual (state) are a means for meeting the needs of all participants (states) of social action.

At the same time, while sharing M. Weber's position that Western countries are the most developed in terms of socio-economic and political systems, T. Parsons agrees with him that Western rational culture is unique, endowing it with the highest adaptive abilities. Democratic governance is described by scientists as a necessary component of a developed industrial society, since no other system is able to cope with the political problems settlement. But the convictions of T. Parsons about the exceptionalism of the United States, which, from the scientist's point of view, was at the top of social evolution, and also that the communist system was not able to compete with Western-style democracies, were doubted during the researcher's lifetime and now they seem to be completely vulnerable to criticism.

From the point of view of J. Habermas, the theory of action of T. Parsons is one of the four erroneous paradigms that explain social development (the other three are the dialectics of K. Marx, behavioral theory and systems theory). Habermas himself attempts to generalize and reconstruct these four approaches in his "theory of communicative action", within which he analyzes various types of action (strategic, normative, dramatic, teleological) and singles out communicative action as the main one,

¹ Parsons T. On social systems. M.: Academic project. 2002. P.307.

understanding it as an interaction of individuals through language aimed at achieving mutual understanding.

J. Habermas also pays considerable attention to the analysis of reflection, which is a common characteristic of any individual and is inherent in the very definition of social action by M. Weber: "Action" is what we call the action of a person (regardless of whether it is external or internal, whether it comes down to non-intervention or patient acceptance) if and whereas the acting individual or individuals associate a subjective meaning with it. "Social" is what we call an action, which, according to the meaning assumed by the actor or actors, correlates with the action of other people and is oriented towards it². Such a formulation gives reason to interpret it as a reflexive type of action, since it seems to be subjectively meaningful in accordance with values and goals and is focused on the social behavior of other people. Transferring this methodology to the macro level in relation to foreign policy discourse, it is possible to define the discourse of the state ruling elite as reflexive, acting in accordance with the goals and values of other states contained in their discourses, often difficult to predict, but having the ability to be interpreted through the language in which communication of ruling elites is carried out.

Additionally, the "theory of communicative action" comprehension depends on the categories of "system" and "life world". The "system" here refers to processes that ensure the strength of social interaction forms. The "system" is aimed at subordinating the symbols and meanings that appear in the process of daily communication between subjects, designated by J. Habermas, based on the terminology of E. Husserl, as "the life world".

The "system" is prone to subjugation and manipulation instead of coordinating goals by subjects. Due to the change in the structure of communication, J. Habermas suggests the possibility of a new communicative type of rationality existing in the public sphere - the space where the "system" and the "life world" interact. The modern foreign policy discourse of the PRC is aimed at "communicative rationality", the

² Weber M. Basic sociological concepts / M. Weber. Selected works. M.: Progress. 1990. P. 602.

motive of which is the desire to achieve mutual understanding with other states, to interpret and predict social processes, striving to achieve common meanings in the process of communication.

R. Bendix, one of the founders of historical neo-Weberianism³, understands the process of modernization as determined by historical conditions and as individual for each country and society. If modernization is regarded as a common goal for all countries, then historical and empirical practices endowed it with specific features.

Thus, in China, with Deng Xiaoping rising to power, a synthesis of the socialist and capitalist principles of the country's development was carried out, which was also reflected in its foreign policy discourse. R. Bendix does not agree with the idea that in the process of modernization all societies must necessarily go through the same stages of development, believing that the historical and cultural features of each state determine the specific features of its transformation. Thus, the phrase uttered by Xi Jinping in the spirit of traditional Chinese thought during his speech at MGIMO University that "only the one who wears the shoes knows whether they fit"⁴ was widely disseminated in the media and repeatedly quoted by other political figures in China. R. Bendix notes that throughout history in different regions of the world the economic, social, political, cultural processes have developed differently, and the task of sociology is, among other things, to study both similarities and differences⁵. The example of China's socio-economic development illustrates R. Bendix's thesis that major changes in the social structure of one country inevitably affect the process of modernization in other countries. To confirm his thesis, the scientist himself gives an example of the ideas of the French revolution of 1789 and the industrial development of England from the middle of the 18th century, which influenced political transformations in Europe; each European country, nevertheless, found itself in new historical

³ See: Bendix R. Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait. London: Methuen. 1966.

⁴ Xi Jinping. Follow the Trend of the Times and Promote Peace and Development in the World. 2013. URL: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1033246.shtml

⁵ See: Bendix R. Kings or people: Power and the mandate to rule. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1980.

circumstances. However, the methodology of R. Bendix is also applicable to the realities of the PRC: It is well known that the events that took place in the late 1980s in the USSR, which led to the collapse of the state, had a significant impact on the development of China and the choice in favor of an experimental model, the theoretical development of which was based on the reflection of the Soviet experience, traditional Chinese thought and Western theories, including K. Marx and M. Weber and so on.

S. Lipset based his research on the ideas of M. Weber that the decline of total ideologies due to a significant shift in societies that has occurred over time from “content-semantic rationality”, which provides for an orientation towards higher values, to “functional rationality”, leading to an emphasis on effective means achieving goals⁶, believes that in today's changing world, liberal ideas and the model of Western democracy, obviously, cannot be universal for all countries. Feeling the ideological vacuum in international relations, China began to put forward its global concepts, filled with a combination of content-semantic and functional rationality.

Analyzing democracy as the optimal, from his point of view, form of political structure, S. Lipset relies on the Weberian concept of legitimacy, which implies “the ability of the specified system to generate and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate and acceptable for a given society”⁷. However, such an understanding of legitimacy as a determining factor in the stability of power (along with the economic factor) is applicable to other forms of government, as well as to the foreign policy activities of countries. The stability of power, the possibility of spreading the country's influence in the international arena directly depend on the ability to maintain the belief of the international community that the proposed methods of management, conflict resolution and response to crisis situations are best suited to it, and that is why they are optimal.

Moreover, faith in legitimacy is evaluative in nature and, according to S. Lipset, it depends on how certain political groups or subjects (in the case of

⁶ Lipset S. Political man: social foundations of politics. SPb.: Mysl'. 2016. P. 552.

⁷ Ibid. P. 89.

foreign policy, subjects are understood as states) share the value system of a particular political system. The scholar gives the example of Germany, when important segments of its army did not accept the Weimar Republic, not because of its inefficiency, but only because its core values negated their own symbols and values. China is well aware of the importance of a clear formulation of its own values and, although so far, in the official discourse, it does not offer them to the world community as universal, "core socialist value views" are formulated in such a way that they do not come into obvious contradictions with other value systems, primarily turn, with liberal.

R. Collins' interpretation of the concept of capitalism described by M. Weber in the "History of Economics" is of methodological interest for comprehending the factors shaping the foreign policy of modern China. According to R. Collins, the concept of capitalism was developed by M. Weber more comprehensively than by its founder K. Marx, since the material world can be considered not only as economic, but also as geographical, and social conflict can be associated with military force, while religion represents interests associated with a particular social or political structure. For this reason, R. Collins proposes to consider M. Weber's theory not only in relation to the internal structure of the state, but also to geopolitics, on which, according to the scientist, the ability of political forces to dominate within the country largely depends. The legitimacy of power in a single state, not being a constant, is directly dependent on its place in the system of international coordinates. The level of legitimacy is comparable to its prestige and ability to use force against other states. In other words, the higher the prestige of the country is, the higher is the degree of its legitimacy and the more it is able to influence other subjects of international relations. R. Collins draws a parallel between relations among social groups that are constantly fighting for prestige, and states that are trying to win it both peacefully and through war. From the point of view of R. Collins, the modernization process is a continuous rivalry between the most developed powers in various fields with those wishing to receive this status, which cannot be due to economic reasons only. This thesis perfectly illustrates the multi-vector confrontation between China and the United States for superiority in areas that determine the status of a superpower. The fact that this

confrontation is not transferred to the military plane is explained from the standpoint of the theory of R. Collins by the fact that victorious wars increase the degree of legitimacy of the country, but defeats are accompanied by its loss. Thus, the factor of fear of losing the legitimacy of their state as a leading player in the international arena, as well as the legitimacy of the political system within the country, protects the leadership of the PRC and the United States from attempts to use a military type of power and switch to armed conflict.

The followers of M. Weber endow the concept of “sociocultural”, that is, associated with the spiritual aspects of economic activity (motivation, values, beliefs) with heuristic potential, since in the study of socio-economic processes it allows one to get away from economic determinism.

The rapid socio-economic changes in the world, occurring under the influence of the development of electronic information and communication, mainly the spread of the Internet, the introduction of new means of communication, have led to an increase in the dynamics of many social processes, including globalization, as well as reflection and self-reflection of actors in modern “runaway” (A. Giddens) world.

These processes have received an additional impulse by the development and implementation of artificial intelligence in everyday life. Global changes led to rethinking of classical sociological theories and to the search for new approaches. Considering the theories of historical materialism by K. Marx and structural functionalism by T. Parsons as the foundation for building an actual sociological paradigm, A. Giddens defines sociology as a science that analyzes social institutions from the angle of industrial transformations⁸. Trying to overcome the gap between the macro level of social development analysis presented in the works of E. Durkheim and the micro level (T. Parsons, J. Habermas), the sociologist formulates the thesis about the dual nature of society, the development and functioning of which is determined both by its own structure and by the actions of individuals. It seems that the “micro-macro” counteraction should be rethought from

⁸ Giddens A. *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory. An Analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1971.

the standpoint of how the “face-to-face” interaction is structurally built into the system of vast spatio-temporal institutional formations... And this, in turn, is more effective to study as a problem of the relationship between social and system integration”⁹.

An important place in the theory of A. Giddens is occupied by the concept of reflexivity, which has a significant impact on all the social processes and phenomena, including China's foreign policy discourse. Thanks to reflection, the social sciences influence the subject of their study. For example, the formulated sociological concept encourages foreign policy actors to self-reflect and, thus, changes their way of thinking.

P. Sztompka believes that E. Giddens understands reflexivity as “the knowledge and interpretation carried out by people of their own actions, the actions of other people or social situations in which they are involved, which significantly affects the decisions they make, the way they behave and the nature of society, where they live”¹⁰. The key actors shaping the modern foreign policy discourse are also subjected to self-reflection, which is influenced by their background - mainly, by living abroad and by their communication experience with foreign colleagues.

With the concept of reflection, A. Giddens connects the desire for a sense of “ontological security”, which implies that the individual has answers to questions of an existential nature at a level of practical consciousness. This feeling is based on the trust that a child has in an adult who is raising them (basic trust), and as a result of mutual influence an unconscious sociality is formed, generating emotional and cognitive orientations in relation to the world around them, other people and themselves¹¹.

M. Archer, who criticized A. Giddens' “structuration theory”, proposed the “theory of morphogenesis”, the main provision of which can be considered the specificity of sociocultural systems, expressed in the complex mutual

⁹ Giddens A. *Organization of society: an essay on the theory of structuration*. Moscow: Academic Project. 2003. P.22-23.

¹⁰ Sztompka P. *Sociology. Analysis of modern society*. M.: Logos, 2005. P.38.

¹¹ Giddens A. *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 1991. P.38-39.

structure and action influence and the ability to change the structure as a result of human activity¹². Although this approach somehow differs from the principles of the “structuration theory”, it can be considered very close to them - A. Giddens understands the behavior of an individual as an action “compatible with a focus on the structural components of social institutions or societies: the concepts of power and domination are associated with the concepts of action and structures”¹³. As a result of their actions, individuals “humanize” nature, thus changing it, and at the same time, as a result of self-reflection, they transform themselves.

Criticizing the theory of K. Marx for the absolutization of an individual's awareness of his class belonging, A. Giddens believes that people in the process of self-reflection are able to construct social relations based on a new knowledge and awareness of a new experience. At the center of sociology, he places “agent” as a synonym for “actor”, emphasizing the potential of agents' influence on the reality around them. Outlining the framework of the rules and resources of the system of social reproduction, E. Giddens speaks of the relationship between structure and social action: “By the duality of structure, I mean that the structural properties of social systems are a means and, at the same time, the result of an activity that constitutes systems ... Structure cannot be equated with limitation: it not only limits, but also gives opportunities. The task of social theory is to study the conditions that govern the interaction of these aspects”¹⁴. In other words, the agent and the society participate in mutual formation in the social space, while there is a continuous process of reflection of the agents, which, in turn, also affects the structures. T. Parsons defines a social system as an open one, formed by the processes of interaction between subjects, divided into various subsystems, in a permanent state of interchange, for the analysis of which four criteria can be applied: teams, roles, norms and values. A. Giddens shares the concepts of “social system” and “structure”

¹² See: Archer M.S. Culture and Agency. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1988.

¹³ See: Giddens A. Power, the dialectic of control and class structuration // Social class and the division of labour. Cambridge. 1982.

¹⁴ Giddens A. Central problems in social theory. California: University of California Press. 1979. P.16.

and believes that any society has such structural properties of social systems as signification (the process of formation of symbols, their use and interpretation), domination (control over resources) and legitimation (establishment of moral order through values and social norms).

Speaking about late modern society (E. Giddens criticizes the definition of "postmodernism" used by many sociologists in relation to modern social realities (for example, Z. Bauman, J. Baudrillard, J. Derrida, etc.), the scientist introduces the concept of "runaway world" and attaches particular importance in this context to globalization, which he sees as a predetermined process implemented in the very nature of modernity. "Globalization is reshaping our way of life, and quite profoundly. It is coming from the West, bears a strong imprint of the economic and political power of America and leads to extremely ambiguous consequences"¹⁵.

The sociologist's thesis "globalization is not just the domination of the West over the rest of the world..."¹⁶ seems to be at least debatable. If in the 2000s it was possible to talk about a certain superiority (economic, technological, etc.) of the Western countries, but now, using the terminology of A. Giddens, the process of reproduction of social structures in the world (structuration) has changed significantly. The agents themselves (states, and, accordingly, their discourse) have also changed as a result of reflection, affecting the change in structure, that is, in the process of relations with each other and the transformation of the rules on which they are based. The agents themselves (states, and, accordingly, their discourse) have also changed as a result of reflection, affecting the change of structure, that is, in the process of relations with each other and the transformation of the rules on which they are based. However, one can agree with the sociologist that institutions, including interstate institutions, are losing their effectiveness and are unable (or only partially able) to perform their functions.

R. Robertson does not agree with A. Giddens and puts forward the thesis about the formed globalist way of thinking, the consciousness of people,

¹⁵ Giddens A. Runaway world: how globalization is changing our lives. Moscow: Ves Mir Publishing House. 2004. P.19.

¹⁶ Ibid. P.20.

which gave rise to the theory of modernity. At the same time, globalization is a consequence of the interaction of the West with the rest of the world, which excludes the possibility of calling it a product of the West only and, moreover, it represents the end of the era of Western modernity, which is being replaced by many types of “global modernities”¹⁷. This approach is a characteristic of the modern foreign policy discourse of the PRC, it lies at the core of its key concept of the “Community of Common Destiny for Mankind”.

Criticizing market socialism, A. Giddens proposes to change the political theory so that, based on modern realities, it could meet the interests of states, which consist in the possibility, by uniting, to restore influence on the “runaway world”, and to help people adapt to rapid social transformation. Having studied the six theses proposed by A. Giddens in the book “Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics”¹⁸ and comparing them with the principles of the discourse of modern China, one can conclude that the theory of the British sociologist was comprehended in the PRC and some of its provisions have been integrated into Beijing's international discourse (e.g., the principle of trust as a result of productive politics; democracy involving dialogue; restoration of solidarity; prevention of violence).

¹⁷ See: Robertson R. Globalization. London: Sage, 1992; Featherstone M. Undoing culture: Globalization, postmodernism and identity. London: Sage. 1995.

¹⁸ See: Giddens A. Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. 276 p.

2. Foreign Policy Discourse of the PRC: Analysis Based on the Actualization of the Approaches of K. Marx and M. Weber

Despite the fact that in the previous paragraph, modern approaches to the socio-reflexive analysis of foreign policy discourse were considered, in the case of the PRC, one cannot do without referring to the previous concepts. First of all, this is Marxism - one of the main theories that influenced not only the socio-economic development of modern China, but also the formation of its foreign policy. Despite the ambiguous assessment, largely associated with the ideologization and dogmatization of this scientific trend, the Chinese leadership managed, without abandoning the provisions of Marxism, to adapt it to the changing realities, taking into account the peculiarities of historical and social conditions, endowing it with the so-called "Chinese specifics".

Under the influence of the "practical rationality" of traditional culture, the Chinese saw in the foreign theory of Marxism its ability to change Chinese society and began to master the approaches of Western rationality in the interests of developing modern scientific knowledge in China.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Marxism began to penetrate China, thanks to the educational work carried out by representatives of the intellectuals and youth who returned from Europe and Japan. Liang Qichao, a student of a prominent thinker of the late 19th - early 20th centuries Kang Yuwei, refers to the teachings of K. Marx in his work "Chinese socialism" and calls it "great ideology"¹. Translations of articles by K. Marx and F. Engels began to appear in 1911 after the Xinhai Revolution. One of the founders of the Communist Party of China, Li Dazhao, who studied political economy in Japan from 1914 to 1917, was also involved in the spread of Marxist ideas and had a significant influence on Mao Zedong, who worked as Li's assistant in the library of Peking University.

¹ Borokh L.N. Public Thought of China and Socialism (beginning of the 20th century). M.: Nauka, 1984. 296 p.

The theories of K. Marx were first systematically presented in the article "My Marxist Views", where the author highlighted three parts of Marxism: economic theory, the doctrine of the class struggle and the materialistic interpretation of history².

The ideological patronage of the USSR largely determined the consolidation of Marxism in China during the government of Mao Zedong as the main doctrine that influenced the development of socio-economic processes in China. However, Mao Zedong's desire to pursue an independent policy led to a rethinking of the ideas of Karl Marx - he made the first attempt to adapt them to the historical, cultural, and economic realities of China. Considering the theory of K. Marx not as a static guide to action, but as a tool for state building, Mao Zedong notes: "Marxism-Leninism by no means puts an end to the disclosure of truth, but, on the contrary, continuously opens up ways of knowing the truth in the process of practice"³. At the plenary session of the 6th CPC Central Committee held in October 1938, he stated that "giving the provisions of Marxism with Chinese characteristics, its Sinicization, that is, using it taking into account the realities of China, is a task facing the CPC and it requires an immediate solution"⁴. The classical education, which included the study of Confucian philosophy and traditional Chinese literature, as well as Western philosophers, allowed Mao Zedong to begin the process of developing Marxism, which was continued by subsequent leaders of the PRC. Thus, Marxism began to be considered by Mao Zedong as a means in the service of the national interest, which, in turn, is itself a function of political ideology.

In the 1970s Western literature has widely discussed several approaches to the analysis of China's foreign policy. According to one of them, the basis of foreign policy is the theory of Marxism-Leninism, and, accordingly, its

² Li Dazhao. Selected works: Per. with whale / [Comp. and ed. foreword N.G. Senin; Responsible ed. N.G. Senin, M.L. Titarenko] Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Institute of Philosophy, Institute of the Far East. M.: Nauka, 1989. 487 p.

³ Mao Zedong. Mao Zedong. Selected works. In 5 volumes. Beijing, 1953, p. 396.

⁴ Mao Zedong. Mao Zedong. Lun xin jieduan [About a new stage] / Zhongguo zhongyang danxiao chubanshe [Collection of documents of the CPC Central Committee]. Beijing, 1991. Vol. 11. P. 659.

main goal is the consolidation of resources and power to implement world revolution. Another approach, which is supported, in particular, by J. Simmons, sees China's foreign policy as a result of domestic political circumstances, which is influenced by the international situation, but to a greater extent depends on the domestic political struggle of China's ruling elite, the success of economic programs implementation and other circumstances⁵.

Young Mun Kim⁶ analyzes the international politics of the PRC in the 1970s. from the ideological influence point of view; it consists of three components - the class theory of K. Marx, V. Lenin's understanding of imperialism and the theory of contradictions of Mao Zedong. According to the author, these three elements of ideology are interconnected - the class struggle gives rise to imperialism, which, in turn, becomes the main contradiction of international relations. From the moment Mao Zedong came to power, ideology has had a significant impact on the domestic and foreign policy of the PRC, and at the same time is itself transformed under their influence. Thus, according to Young Mun Kim, the ideology, which is the basis of China's foreign policy, is not dogmatic - in contact with changes in the world (international conjuncture, balance of power in various fields), it makes the necessary adjustments to the theory, in particular, to dialectical materialism, that allow to interpret the changing reality and respond to it. Generally, in most studies on China the terms "Chinese state capitalism", "Sinicified Marxism", "socialism with Chinese characteristics" (the latter definitions are official in the PRC) have been used as "common places" for decades.

The formation of the People's Republic of China, the first decades of its survival (including the years after the events of 1989, under US sanctions), as well as the reforms of the "second generation of Chinese leaders", which completed the period of formation of the Chinese state of a new, socialist type, took place in the conditions of the Cold War between coalitions led

⁵ Simmons, J.P. *China's World*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1971.

⁶ Young, Mun Kim. *The Role of Ideology in Chinese Foreign Policy: The Theory and Practice of the Three Worlds* // *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*. Vol. 1, No. 1. pp. 178-210.

by the USA and the USSR. The traditional Western toolkit of sanctions, blockade, isolation, and often intervention, determined the decision of the Chinese leader about a “one-sided” foreign policy course towards comprehensive interaction with the USSR as a socialist country close in ideology, which provided the Chinese people with the necessary assistance. The change in American policy towards the PRC (in order to “tear” it from the USSR) in favor of first restoring contacts (since the 1970s), and then developing trade and economic ties (especially since the 1990s), allowed Beijing, in general, to “bring order to the house” and gradually reflect, realize the imbalance between their growing potential and their position in the world. The main current problem of Deng Xiaoping was the tough socio-economic situation, which the West proposed to solve economically, on the basis of its investments (in order to earn money on its own as well). Deng spoke about foreign policy, given the negative practice of neo-colonialism for countries receiving Western capital, and his subsequent generalized thoughts boiled down to the fact that China needs to “keep a low profile, trying not to show itself in anything, but at the same time do something real” and “resist foreign pressure...”⁷. The further growth of the country’s needs and opportunities, the novelty and scale of the tasks prompted the authorities to attract theorists to conceptualize foreign policy activity, to form an appropriate discourse, on a scientific basis.

The theory of class conflict, as an integral part of Marx's historical materialism, was repeatedly applied to the analysis of foreign policy, and individual countries or peoples acted as different classes in international relations⁸. According to the theory of K. Marx, international relations are viewed through the prism of economic dominance. At the same time, the scientist calls them “secondary and tertiary, generally derivative, transferred, non-primary production relations”⁹, in fact, no different from class relations within any single state. Just as the dominant class exploits

⁷ Jiang Zemin. 2002. Lun yu zhongguo tese shihui zhuyi.

[Statements on socialism with Chinese characteristics]. URL: http://bg.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgzt/zggcdslcqqgdbdh/200406/t20040613_2368896.htm.

⁸ Bottomore, T.B. *Classes in Modern Society* (London, 1960); Bertell Ollman, Marx's Use of Class // *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 73, № 6, May, 1968.

⁹ Marx K. Introduction (From the economic manuscripts of 1857-1858) // Marx K., Engels F. *Soch.*, vol. 12, p. 735.

the labor of the lower classes, while owning the tools of production, the most economically developed states oppress the less developed. The proletarian revolution, according to Marxist theory, must put an end to the bourgeoisie as the ruling class in the world. At the same time, the class struggle is seen as the driving force for the global political process, and "the world revolution is called upon to put an end not only to social, but also to national antagonisms, to turn all the humanity into a single community that knows neither class differences nor state borders"¹⁰.

Misunderstanding of the classical approach in relation to the "sinicization of Marxism" is connected, in our opinion, with a misunderstanding of the Marxist methodology. Albeit only about the French "Marxists" of the late 1870s, but Marx himself said: "I know only one thing, that I am not a Marxist"¹¹, meaning that he proposed "only" a method of research. However, replacing the use of the method with a dogmatic set of quotations that were created when it was applied to specific situations, just gives rise to "Marxism", including "Sinicified".

As for Chinese "specificity" in general, in many respects the matter lies in the substitution of the concept of "concrete", resulting from a misunderstanding of the dialectical principles of development, the dialectics of the abstract and the concrete. Any society and its actors are concrete, just as any triangle is concrete, the elements of which are calculated according to the same formulas. And, just as there is no specific triangle with the sum of angles 180, which does not prevent the use of proven formulas for measurements for practical purposes, there is no ideal, abstract society, person or state, which does not prevent the use of methods to study specific societies, people and states' economic, socio-political or psychological research. The same approach allowed K. Marx to a large extent to anticipate the answer to the question of the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country: his forecast is not abstract - "world revolution", but concrete: "If not in content, then in form, the struggle of

¹⁰ G.A. Drobot. Marxism in the theory of international relations: history, foreign and domestic schools. // Social and humanitarian knowledge. No. 6. 2014. P.61.

¹¹ Engels, F.1965. Letter to Konrad Schmidt, August 5, 1890 / K. Marx and F. Engels. Works. Ed. 2nd. T. 37. URL: <https://www.marxists.org/russkij/marx/cw/t37.pdf>

the proletariat against bourgeoisie is first a national struggle. The proletariat of every country, of course, must first put an end to its own bourgeoisie¹². That is, in order for the foreign policy model of the state to be attractive to other countries, it is first necessary to “put things in order at home”, ensuring stable socio-economic development.

The second stage of sinicization of Marxism is associated with Deng Xiaoping, who initiated the policy of “reform and openness” and designated the economic development of China as the main task. The ideology of socialism was transformed based on the primacy of economic efficiency, which was reflected in the theory of “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” Unlike the USSR, which abandoned the socialist ideology at the end of the 20th century, China in this sense took the path of evolution - in order to level the contradictions between the socialist political system and the capitalist orientation of the economy, the concept of “socialist market economy” was introduced” and the initial stage of building socialism in China was determined. Delivering a speech at the 12th CPC Congress in September 1982, Deng Xiaoping said: “We must combine the universally true propositions of Marxism with the concrete realities of China, forge our own path and build socialism with Chinese characteristics”¹³. The theory of Marxism, with its reliance on the primacy of the material component of being, fully corresponded to the vision of the country's development priorities of the second generation of Chinese leaders, and the contradictions with the absence of class stratification were smoothed out by ascertaining the initial stage on the path of socialism development. Such an approach to Marxism not as a dogma, but as a theoretical basis, which nevertheless needs constant verification by practice and adaptation in accordance with practical realities, does not at all contradict the theory of K. Marx.

The evolution of Marxism with Chinese characteristics continued with the coming to power of the third generation of Chinese leaders, led by Jiang

¹² Marx K., Engels F. 1965. Manifesto of the Communist Party / K. Marx and F. Engels. Works. Ed. 2nd. T. 37. URL:

<https://www.marxists.org/russkij/marx/cw/t37.pdf>

¹³ Deng Xiaoping's Opening Speech at the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. URL:

https://cpcchina.chinadaily.com.cn/2010-10/20/content_13918249.htm