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CHINA AS A KEY PLAYER IN THE PRESENT-DAY POLITICAL PROCESS²

The main aim of the article is to scrutinize the importance of China's center of power within the framework of social and political changes of the contemporary world. The following methods of research were used: theoretical, historical, economic and statistical analyses, comparative, structure-functional and factorial methods. It is stated that China's economic and military build-up is a factor of social and political changes in the international arena. Among the factors affecting political and economic changes in the political system of the PRC as the article notes are the influence of traditionalism and soft power. The authors arrived at several conclusions. (1) Confucian values, inherent in China's management culture, involve ideological influence over the Chinese form of government, which is connected with the CPC dictatorship. (2) The article reveals the growing influence of China on global economic and political processes. (3) The present-day political process implies the Chinese political leadership (the political leadership of China).

Keywords: China, social and political changes, political processes, traditionalism, power center, reform in the PRC, soft power, modernization, foreign policy strategy³.

Political processes that reflect the political relation dynamics aimed at the qualitative implementation of the state interests spectrum are interconnected with legal, moral, power, country, leadership, and other public relations. The institutional (state, parties, political institutions, including leadership) and ideological (doctrines, ideologies, propaganda) subsystems of the political system are interrelated in the political sphere and affect the political activity. Nowadays the problem of political leadership accompanied by economic characteristics, including the rapid development of China, has become especially acute. China takes leading positions from the point of view of the following quantitative economic indices: export of goods, mining of iron, gold, and coal. Thanks to the economic growth of China, the world leader change problems are being updated. Strengthening of the PRC's power is connected with economic characteristics: the growth of gross domestic product (GDP), a quantitative increase in the export turnover of goods; and with globalization characteristics as well.

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² **Название статьи:** КИТАЙ КАК ЦЕНТР СИЛЫ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОМ ПРОЦЕССЕ

³ **Аннотация:** В статье рассматривается актуальность китайского центра силы в контексте социально-политических изменений современного мира. Утверждается, что экономическое и военное наращивание Китая является фактором социально-политических изменений на международной арене. Среди факторов, влияющих на политические и экономические изменения в политической системе КНР, отмечается влияние традиционализма и мягкой силы. Конфуцианские ценности, унаследованные в китайской управленческой культуре, предполагают идеологическое влияние на китайскую форму правления, которая связана с диктатурой КПК. Раскрывается растущее влияние Китая на глобальные экономические и политические процессы.

Ключевые слова: Китай, социально-политические изменения, политические процессы, традиционализм, центр силы, реформирование КНР, мягкая сила, модернизация.

The political process in its state of dynamics implies the political systems movement and their mobility, as well as the active influence of public associations, institutions, and social groups on the systems. In this context, the accumulation of new features and characteristics takes place. In the 21st-century trends, the political process dynamics is being observed. It is aimed at technological breakthrough (know-how) and the informatization of the society, as well as at state and municipal government bodies. Due to the implementation of this dynamics, the state faces the issue of the political process information security concept formation and the protection of all state resources from internal and external threats. The political process in the state of statics means sustainable development and interrelations within political systems and outside them, forming-up of political actors and their political roles. One of characteristics of the political process is the dynamic side of politics in the form of integral transformations based on the activity of the society that fulfills its interests and needs in these processes. In most definitions, dynamics reflects the complexity of political processes. In this case the “political process” concept in its narrow sense is defined as the functioning of the political system. In its broad sense it is interpreted as a political life as a whole.

According to the structure-functional approach, the political process is characterized as a system self-structuring mechanism, as a political socialization of citizens by participating in the decision-making process in the political life. The political process is considered as a holistic framework in the system theoretic approach. This approach evaluates the stability of its elements, due to the hierarchical arrangement of its components. The basic component or element of the kind is the state. The society, in its turn, delegates the authority to manage relationships. And the state possesses all the resources necessary to fulfill this authority.

It is obvious that the political process includes objects and subjects (state, political parties, civil society, etc.). Taking into account the importance of information to government bodies, the information component can be categorized as the subject of the political process.

The characteristic of the regional aspect allows us to note that the main actors of the regional political process are:

- the system of government bodies, municipal administrations, parties, other political organizations;
- actors engaged in information security process as a necessary condition for the functioning of government at any level;
- the population of regions and municipalities;
- the system of international relations.

Social and political processes are problematic issues in the PRC. These processes represent a significant sphere of a human society at the national and global levels. This sphere is both a source and a factor for political developments in modern China. As G. Mirzoyan states, “political reform will provide re-branding of China’s state power and will enable to resolve a number of structural matters in the country including corruption, as well as to close the gap between the poorer farming inland provinces and the wealthier coastal ones” [1].

Specific nature of social and political changes in the PRC in the new historic era can be regarded on the basis of the concept of a “Xiaokang” society or “harmonious society”, that is shown in the article by G. V. Kondratenko “Continuation of reforms in China: from a society of “average prosperity” to a harmonious society”

[2. P. 17–36]. Changes in China are connected with the economy which forms the basis of stabilization. As A. V. Bolyatko points out, “under certain conditions unresolved border and territorial issues between the countries of Asia entail risks of the outbreaks of new conflicts” [3. P. 26]. Social changes are important as well. A family factor plays an important role in the modernization process in the PRC. A woman (a daughter or a daughter-in-law) takes the primary responsibility for supporting elderly Chinamen. While fertility is constantly declining, gender fatigue is increasing, due to exploitation of women and absence of a developed pension system. It is clear that the elderly Chinamen are family-oriented and seek financial support from their families. Nowadays, China intensifies social support for those in need. As V.V. Mikheev notes, “While commending China’s reforms from the perspective of their impact on people’s life, we cannot fail to mention that China has not been liberated from a number of complex social problems inherited from pre-reform and pre-revolution times. Moreover, scenario-based reform had much negative impact” [4. P. 89–103].

It is obvious that China has private and individual sectors of the economy with the increasing importance of the controlling branch of power. Auditors, including representatives of the police, customs and public security, are appointed by the state; that leads to greater openness. On the other hand, heavy state control promotes social unrest. Increasing challenges of social and political instability would be as follows: the rise of unemployment in cities, the growth of social inequality, great rural-urban migration, the environmental disaster and population ageing. It should be noted that information on people who are born and dead is based on women’s and household members’ interviews. As A. Andreev pointed out: “The information gathered enables to make demographic calculations but the reliability of the results is far below those made in civil offices. Accordingly, international agencies calculations connected with China often seem less than fully reliable. There is nothing surprising in this fact. For years the UN Statistics Division has been showing life expectancy in the USSR to be 70 years while in fact it was less than 68” [5]. Such regular surveys correlate with population census data. The latest population census in the PRC was from 1 to 10 November 2019 and it is very significant for the regulation of agriculture. According to the resident Chinese, “In many ways, such policy is very effective, since it is in fulfilment of that policy over the past four years when Chinese Government abolished agricultural tax that had existed for over 2000 years, 148 million pupils of primary and secondary rural school were freed from tuition fees, more than 22 million of unemployed were able to get a new job” [6. P. 13–14].

China tends to have a harmonious world which focuses on cultural diversity, multipolar policy and preservation of the unity by means of subjection. The ideal for the “unity without harmonization” is given by O. Borokh and A. Lomanov: “In today’s world it means that China will oppose any attempts to impose values by force. The subtext is clear: when the USA uses “hard power” in order to disseminate its values, China highlights ideas of non-interference in anyone’s business and respect for diversity of ways for countries and cultures” [7. P. 41–60].

Generally, we can sum up major changes in internal policy and economy of China over the past years of the beginning of the 21st century:

1. New housing of heightened comfort has been constructed.
2. The Internet business has increased employment and consumption.

3. Officials have become responsible for inaction.
4. Entrepreneurial thinking has been encouraged to innovate.
5. In order to avoid American influence, measures for creating working coalition in collaboration with Taiwan have been taken.
6. The Sino-American relationships have been developing; however, China is vigilant in ensuring safety for domestic culture and people's minds from the American influence.

In recent decades China's policy has been growing quite stable in accordance with the political course being followed.

Regarding the competent authorities, the supreme body of the PRC is the National People's Congress (abbreviated NPC). The executive power in China belongs to the State Council. The CPC, all people's party, dominates. Political disagreements are addressed through the highest economic growth. As G. Mirzayan reports, "According to the official forecasts, the GDP growth rate should reach 7 per cent in the next years, but, according to some economists, in order to insure social stability the GDP growth rate should have been at least 10 per cent annually" [1]. However, homogenization through economic growth leads to political instability which is connected with governance. According to A. Maslov, the director of the Moscow Centre for Strategic Studies of China, "people will get more rights at the local level. Firstly, it is the level of greater elections in legislative, executive, judicial branches of power, the election of judges and so on. Secondly, it is the empowerment of local committees which can be seen virtually in every street, but their rights are limited by control and migration registration for local people. Thirdly, the Communist Party will preserve its influence. The theory of Three Represents will be continuously developed. It means that the party will have representatives of a broad spectrum of Chinese society, including the representatives of economy, trade, traditional intellectuals and party officials. It may also be assumed that there will be a reform of ministries and departments. For instance, many ministries, connected with commercial activity, like the Ministry of Commerce, develop into various associations. Thus, the number of organs, which are strictly regulated, decreases" [Ibid].

Changes in the Party and in power have been occurring in the PRC. As G. Mirzayan reports, "For many years several city governments of Chongqing and the general population have made great contributions to reform and have made clear progress. However, the present Town Committee and government should think over Wang Lijun's case and learn the right lessons from it, – Wen Jiabao, Chinese prime minister, explained the perspective of the party leadership. He also added that he did not like revolutionary red songs contests. Experts believe that other neo-maoists will be in disgrace soon. Therefore, the fifth generation of Chinese leaders which will come to power this autumn can commence change the face of the Middle Kingdom" [Ibid].

Perspectives of social and political changes have reintroduced on the agenda the issue of new global leaders. Currently, the United States of America is considered to be the world leader. Discussions of the "Chinese factor" and the problem of a "peaceful integration" of the PRC into the global political game leave no doubt that the 21st century will be largely determined by competition among the two worldwide giants, China and the USA.

China's economy strengthens its positions as a world leader. As Xin Li reports, "China's economic potential has increased fivefold whereas the urban resi-

dents' income has increased by 3.1 times" [8. P. 75–87]. In terms of the parity of the currency, China's GDP achieved the highest enrolment rate in the world, overtaking the USA in 2012. According to the International Monetary Fund, China is expected to be three times greater than the USA" [9].

China certainly tends to be a super-power but it has certain civilization features different from the West and the traditional East. E.A. Leksina shows the economic expansion of China: "In order to implement the project "global power" China develops and strengthens its economic capacity reinforcing it by military and strategic development. China's fast-rising becomes the characteristic feature of the global "nitty-gritty of politics" of the 21st century. According to the World Bank, China's economy constitutes more than 9.5 trillion US dollars, that is a half of the American one" [11]. Furthermore, E. A. Leksina notes: "In 2012 China was a leader in foreign trade turnover, it was ahead of the US by 50 billion dollars (import and export in China was 3.87 trillion, whereas in the USA it was 3.82 trillion dollars)" [Ibid].

Russian Sinologist S. Luzyanin indicated: "In terms of civilization development, the major goal of China is to restore historical validity, to get back the status of a regional leader and to achieve the global status..." [12. P. 54–60].

The foreign policy strategy of the PRC focuses on a peaceful development, but the People's Republic of China "borders on 14 countries such as Afghanistan, Mongolia, Nepal, DPRK, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Vietnam" [13]. According to S.G. Luzyanin, it is appropriate to comply with the following guidelines in order to modernize foreign policy (eight fundamental principles of Deng Xiaoping's conception):

- watch dispassionately;
- strengthen the positions;
- respond to changes with confidence;
- conceal the abilities;
- gain time;
- not to attract attention
- avoid taking the lead in international politics;
- do concrete actions" [14. P. 70].

A.A. Kosorukov suggests: "China is becoming one of the leaders of the developing world which is shifting the emphasis in its foreign policy strategy, relying more on global determinants, with the continuing and valuable role of state and intra-state determinants. The more national resources China has, the more unipolar impact it imposes on the USA, the more active foreign policy it should have. At the present stage, the PRC follows a policy of "peaceful development", which aims at building up a peaceful international environment and controlling an internal order. The essential feature of policy of China is the fight against international isolation by peaceful means, integration of neighbouring countries into joint economic projects, economic counteraction to anti-China alliances" [15].

According to A.A. Kosorukov: "There is a concept of "Easternization" in the area of promotion of Chinese "soft power" and getting a leading position in the APR, that concept implies the dominant role of "eastern knowledge". In contrast to "Westernization", the era of the eastern culture, known as "Easternization", is proclaimed. The state system in China plays a role of a main transporter of external impulses to society, using various approaches based on growing economic power.

China's national strength, while retaining its central role in ensuring foreign policy strategy, in the 2000s begins to lose a mobilizing ability and social cohesion, due to both a stable growth of overall national power of China and problems of public support of government initiatives" [15].

The problem of "soft power" is of current importance in China, as illustrated by A.V. Boyarkina in her thesis [16]. As she points out: "Political analysts believe that "soft power" primarily extends to political system, then to national spirit, international image of society <...> Many Chinese analysts suppose that Chinese "soft power" has more abilities than western countries have, and the reason for this lies in a rich oriental culture" [Ibid].

A.A. Kosorukov points out: "State dominance in the international as well as the domestic arena is typical for China. An important factor which brings together the Chinese society is the policy on the large Chinese community abroad. The better feedback from migrants will be built, the more cohesive society in China will be and the more mobilizing ability Chinese society will have. The example of the usage of mobilizing ability with regard to Chinese diaspora is the organization of mass protest actions in 2008 in Italy and Spain against their Government's desire to recognize the independence of Taiwan" [15].

From a geopolitical perspective, China, covering a land area, supports Eurasian cooperation with Europe, Russia, and India. China sees its future in cooperation with these countries. E. Grachikov states: "In the 21st century Chinese geopolitics extended beyond its national borders, its active economic activity had an impact on redistribution of spheres of influence of the world power centers (the USA, Europe) to its advantage, withdrawing them from the regions where they had been dominating" [17].

China, being a world export leader, attempts to influence the United States of America economically.

The official website "Ankvitori" publishes the following:

- new automobiles are purchased in China more actively than anywhere else in the world;
- China has the largest amount of foreign exchange reserves;
- China is the world's largest gold mining and gold importing country;
- China has overtaken the US annual output of engineers and specialists" [18].

Thus, when estimating China and the USA as the world leaders, we can see that the PRC is gaining extensive strength in the region and in the world and it is rapidly moving towards global leadership. Dominance abilities depend on both the history of Sino-American relations and comparative economic indicators.

The economic indicators of net profit are of great importance since they influence upon the economic development of the country. This results in the great significance of implementation of input-output economics and enables to identify GDP at purchasing power parities (PPP) and to identify the structure of GDP itself. PPP makes it possible to estimate the real economy regardless of the US dollar and evaluate the real standard of living. That knowledge of the GDP structure allows to identify the real economy amount, that is, the actual amount of production in different branches of industry: extracting and manufacturing.

Nominal GDP rating in bln dollars:

1. US Nominal GDP: \$19.391 trillion.
2. China Nominal GDP: \$12.013 trillion.

GDP based on PPP:

1. China GDP: \$23.159 trillion.
2. US GDP: \$19.391 trillion.

GDP also includes the value of things consumed by the population, such as food, clothes, housing, utilities, cars, medicines, and so on.

Certainly, these are the things of a primary importance, but the power of the country depends upon its army and science as well.

GDP per capita ranking:

1. China GDP: \$1.389.764.000.
3. US GDP: \$325.719.000.

GDP (PPP) per capita ranking in dollars:

10. US GDP: \$59.501.
78. China Nominal GDP: \$16.660.

As E. Frolov points out: “US manufacturing industry is 15%, agriculture and fishery is 1%, construction is 3%. In total, the real economy constitutes 19%. The rest is trade and various services: from manicure to financial services and transportation. In the case of China, its manufacturing industry is 40%, agriculture 10%, construction 7%. The real economy constitutes 57%. Thus, China’s real economy is three times greater than that of the US” [19].

The major political problem of China is the accession of Taiwan. The electronic source publishes: “China has consistently opposed any forms of official contacts between the USA and the Taiwan authorities. The situation is aggravated by the statement of the Chinese authorities that the problem of Taiwan cannot wait indefinitely and it is necessary to abandon military action” [Ibid]. Therefore, politics sometimes has a negative impact on the economy.

There are certain factors of Chinese leadership which provide social and political changes: its demographic and economic power. The problems of the PRC growth were highlighted at the scientific conference in China in 2007. First of all, these are governance problems. As it is shown in a Chinese electronic source: “According to Deng Xiaoping, in order to get socialist democracy, it is necessary to implement popular democracy, go up against the dictatorship of power, decentralize the state, increase the participation of citizens in political life” [20]. According to O.V. Litvinov, “China still has low population literacy, that means that it is difficult to implement the principle of a responsible choice since 70% of the population is represented by the semi-literate peasant class” [21. P. 128–130].

The PRC demonstrates its own democracy version, a “vertical democracy”, whereby interaction is being implemented top-down. D. Neisbit writes: “Vertical democracy in China fully integrates Chinese experience, Chinese history and Chinese vertical models of interaction. During this interaction long-term goals are being formulated and the process of mutual adaptation is taking place. Thus, through appropriate interaction of government and society, in the conditions of a centralized state, positive results are possible” [22. P. 45–46].

In order to save stability, politics should be based on national culture and Confucianism. A team of researchers of world politics stated: “Western views of Confucian democracy differ from the views of Chinese people. It is obvious, that today the central leadership enjoys the support of the majority of the Chinese population which believes that life is gradually improving” [23].

As E.O. Podolko highlights in her thesis, there are global problems in China, like “preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, fighting against the new threats to humanity (international terrorism, risks of the environmental disaster). The PRC plays a big role in the Asia and Pacific region, where more than a half of the world population live, where the majority of Powers with weapons of mass destruction is situated, which has the highest dynamics of development and which is nowadays one of the main centers of the world competition for markets and resources” [24]. An electronic source states: “China plays more constructive role in the Central Asian region, it is one of the organizers and active participants of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization” [25].

Bobo Lo’s article “China’s Permanent Reset” suggests: “Nowadays it is possible to speak about the shift of the global force to the East and China’s emergence as a super-power of the 21st century. Most of the time after the Cold War China has been focusing on the concept “one super-power, several super-powers”. Although Beijing often speaks about the “multipolar world order”, it has no confidence that this order is a matter for the future. The United States remain undeniable world leader, despite the problems in Iraq and Afghanistan and the influence of global financial crisis” [26].

Bobo Lo gives an overview of internal problems of China: “Strengthening of domestic political stability is the most important priority of a regional policy. It can shortly sound like “struggle against three evils”. That means the strengthening of the power of the Communist Party in Xinjiang, counteracting Uighur separatism and Islamic radicalism. Strengthening security in the region is considered in terms of domestic policy agenda. Its importance stems from awareness that internal stability of China will be strengthened in case of suspending the activity of Radical Islam and separatist movements. Guided by the idea of “enjoyable neighborhood”, Beijing ingratiates itself with Central Asian leaders both at the bilateral level and in multilateral forums, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization” [Ibid]. According to Ch. Grant, “China will be able to play more important role in international relations, pursue its goals, acting unilaterally, bilaterally or with small groups of allies” [27].

It must be underlined that Confucian values, mainly in social and political sphere, have not undergone any modification. Preservation of traditional ideas demonstrates the desire of the state to create a stable and harmonious society. Chita researcher V.A. Abramov points out: “Social harmony and personal wellbeing are achieved through the principles of Confucian public order” [28. P. 69]. Due to the respect of the authority, the state remains integral and powerful. China’s emergence as a global power implies not only economic, but also territorial expansion. China will continue to have a growing impact in the future. These are the political realities of today.

The present-day political process implies political leadership. China’s political leadership is associated with economic forecasts, with results of 95% of the world production of rare earth metals which are the feed stock in the production of electronics, TV-sets, mobile phones. Foreign exchange reserves of the PRC are growing, industrial and agricultural production is growing as well. China’s global influence is also supported by its demographic power (21% of the world’s population lives in China). China’s transformation into a superpower of the 21st century is accompanied by Sino-Russian energy cooperation, China’s emphasis on

domestic political problems, and the desire to become the world power by status including the use of military resources.

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CHINA AS A KEY PLAYER IN THE PRESENT-DAY POLITICAL PROCESS

Keywords: China; social and political changes; political processes; traditionalism; power center; reform in the PRC; soft power; modernization; foreign policy strategy.

The main aim of the article is to scrutinize the importance of China's center of power within the framework of social and political changes of the contemporary world. The article contains the analysis of the modern political process. Political processes that reflect the political relation dynamics aimed at the qualitative implementation of the state interests spectrum are interconnected with legal, moral, power, country, leadership, and other public relations. The institutional (state, parties, political institutions, including leadership) and ideological (doctrines, ideologies, propaganda) subsystems of the political system are interrelated in the political sphere and affect the political activity. The following methods of research were used: theoretical, historical, economic and statistical analyses, comparative, structure-functional and factorial methods. According to the structure-functional approach, the political process is characterized as a system self-structuring mechanism, as a political socialization of citizens by participating in decision-making process in the political life. The political process is considered as a holistic framework in the system theoretic approach. This approach evaluates the stability of its elements, due to the hierarchical arrangement of its components. The basic component or element of the kind is the state. The society, in its turn, delegates the authority to manage relationships. And the state possesses all the resources necessary to fulfill this authority. It is obvious that the political process includes objects and subjects (state, political parties, civil society, etc.). Taking into account the importance of information to government bodies, the information component can be categorized as the subject of the political process. The characteristic of the regional aspect allows the authors to note that the main actors of the regional political process are: the system of government bodies, municipal administrations, parties, other political organizations; actors engaged in information security process as a necessary condition for the functioning of government at any level; the population of regions and mu-

nicipalities; the system of international relations. It is stated that China's economic and military build-up is a factor of social and political changes in the international arena. Among the factors affecting political and economic changes in political system of the PRC as the article notes are the influence of traditionalism and soft power. The authors arrived at several conclusions. (1) Confucian values, inherent in China's management culture, involve ideological influence over Chinese form of government, which is connected with the CPC dictatorship. (2) The article reveals the growing influence of China on global economic and political processes. (3) The present-day political process implies the Chinese political leadership (the political leadership of China).