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CULTURAL PATTERNS OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS UNDER POLARIZATION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Abstract

This article investigates international relations under polarization against the background of political institutions' cultural patterns. The term 'pattern' has developed within the framework of classical and post-non-classical science and its significant interdisciplinarity. Along with other regularities, international relations have one like path dependence. China, India, and African countries are chosen as the research object cases, taking into account positive dynamics of their demographic situation and growing role in the international space. Temporality of mental rhythms in political institutions affecting international relations is illustrated on the basis of realism and constructivism paradigms and DUBY and BRAUDEL's theoretical background.

Cultural patterns case of China's political institutions includes an emphasis on 'guanxi' and 'mianzi'. These cultural phenomena have been affecting China's diplomacy and foreign policy. The article considers 'a wolf-warrior diplomacy' activity under polarization in international relations. 'Hindutva' along with elites' awareness of their colonial past, their desire to dominate the region, diversity, and constructivism are the main manifestations of the cultural patterns of India's political institutions. Formation of cultural patterns of political institutions in Africa is affected by such traditions as hospitality, solidarity, sense of community at all levels. The article argues that African countries, in the context of external actors' rivalry concerning influence and relations development, will prefer those whose political institutions have cultural patterns congruent to African political structures.

Keywords: cultural patterns, political institutions, polarization, international relations, guanxi, mianzi, Hindutva, values, synergetics, constructivism

Introduction

The study of cultural patterns of political institutions in the context of polarization in international relations is extremely relevant and complex, since it involves both analysis of relationship between cultural aspects of national political systems and foreign policy situation at the global level. Polarization of international relations often causes confrontation between different geopolitical countries and their blocs and can significantly affect political institutions. Under conditions of such disagreements, national political institutions (including state authorities, parties, movements and other socio-political structures) face a need to adapt themselves to new international realities. The current war in Ukraine is polarizing Western countries'

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bloc donating to Ukraine on one hand and Russia and its allies – on the other. However, in order to deal with similar situations of a global nature, which cause global confrontation between countries, we should dwell on the theory of this problem in more detail.

Firstly, what we know from the theoretical, scientific explanation of the essence of patterns is the following. The Great English-Ukrainian Dictionary interprets this term as a *model, example, way (of life), manner (behavior), peculiarity*, etc. (Horot, et al., 2011). There are many different interpretations of this term, but let's focus on the most appropriate option regarding our research. Thus, 'a pattern' is a stable way of thinking and behavior that retains its autonomy in cultural experience and participates in formation of a subject. In order to understand why we have chosen this term for the title of the article, we look up at the history of its formation. It begins with the American researcher Benedict, who explains this term in the cultural aspect. Although the author does not reach the categorical level, however, this term acquires specificity (Benedict, 1959). She endows term 'pattern' with cultural characteristics, uniqueness, which is the result of combining many elements into a single whole, and the author gives us a certain model of it (Benedict, 1947, p. 48). In fact, the researcher began a scientific discussion about the essence of understanding the pattern. Later it was continued by Kroeber (Kroeber, 1947).

The scientist considers patterns to be clearly defined phenomena that exist in space and time (Kroeber, 1947, p.152-159). However, classical science, based on a fragmentary approach to socio-political phenomena in the cultural context, was unable to characterize the essence of complex processes occurring in social, political systems, and therefore, there was a social demand for such a scientific paradigm that can answer these questions arising from complex international interaction. Nowadays, there is a growing understanding of the cultural factor in international relations. Thus, Pletsan considers cultural factors as a 'soft power' component in world politics (Pletsan, 2023).

In the late 1980s of the last century, synergetics arose as a response to this request. Its authors Prigogine, Stengers, Haken, and other scientists, described the patterns of complex nonlinear systems (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984).

And their theory was so multipurpose and had a powerful explanatory potential for such systems that it immediately began developing by many scientists in different fields of knowledge, including political science. These are Boiko-Boichuk, Ishchenko and other scholars among them (Boiko-Boichuk, 2006; Ishchenko, 2015). Herasina, Trebin, and Volianska also used a synergistic approach in their study (Herasina, et al., 2022).

As it was already noticed in our 2015 study, the synergistic projection of political-institutional interaction, which explains instability, represents growing dynamics of energy localization in a political system that is identified with a complex dissipative structure. In certain parts of this structure, localization occurs due to fluctuation from the environment or a specific part of the dissipative structure. Under this condition, the localization energy prevails over the dissipation energy, so the dissipative structure is being destroyed. The instability goes on until a dissipative factor-attractor appears that channels the excess entropy, and its energy outweighs the localization energy. Thus, out of instability, a structured order of political and institutional interaction is born (Ishchenko, 2015, p.99). And the article also emphasizes the stabilizing role of mentality of political institutions, which affects their functioning. All of the above is also true for international relations. Herasina writes in the same vein (Herasina, 2023).

Political and institutional interaction under polarization has been examined in Pohribna and Herasina's scientific work (Pohribna & Herasina, 2024). They have developed the concept of a 'geopolitical storm'. In turn, Kryvoshein refers to the universal model of political cleavages developed by Kisangani Emizet (Kryvoshein, 2009). Political cleavages are relatively stable patterns (standards) of political polarization, which are the basis of disagreements and conflicts in a civil society of the emerging environment. According to Kryvoshein, who had conducted a systematic study, an effect of ethnic solidarity can contribute to formation of clientelistic networks at national level; since structures of ethnic solidarity serve as an instrument by which individual ethnic groups fight for power, pushing other groups away from it (Kryvoshein, 2009, p.219). Polarization can also occur on other grounds, including religiosity, socioeconomic factors (level of education, social status and belonging to politico-institutionalized civil society organizations).

In other words, in political systems of the countries that have a consolidated character, a cyclical nature of the change of power is a subject to established cleavages (patterns), which, in turn, affect the polarization in international relations.

This is the dynamics of international relations polarization that we observe under the influence of the change of Presidents in the United States, the Republican and Democratic parties after the elections, depending on their results. However, despite the change of political power in the United States, for some

regions of the world, the foreign policy of this country retains the same course. An example is the American foreign policy towards the Middle East, which eventually became institutional in nature, despite the change of political leaders and political structures in the United States.

At the same time, it is obvious that each region has its own specificity of the polarization in international relations. Domestic authors Koch and Uzun explored spatial imagination in politics in the context of the strategic role of phantom borders and imaginary territories (Koch & Uzun, 2024). The researchers gave reasons for the idea that in modern political processes, 'images', 'representations' and 'mental structures' play an important role in mobilizing social groups and supporting geopolitical ambitions. Phantom borders serve not only as psychological anchors that preserve historical identity, but also as tools for political actors to change territory and promote cross-border cooperation. With a growth of virtual dimensions of political space, including information and mental spheres, imaginary boundaries now function as a framework for political action (Koch & Uzun, 2024, p. 5).

The approaches to the study of these boundaries show how they affect identity, acting as 'scars of history' that preserve past identities or serve as arenas for ideological and geopolitical competition. In other words, the 'scars of history' are cultural and political spaces that have lost institutionalization, but at the same time demonstrate actual identities that influence structuring of space. The 'scars of history' are also a kind of phantom borders format. These phantom boundaries act as a psychological shock absorber, allowing old regional and national identity to work until the new one acquires its social functionality (Koch & Uzun, 2024, p.7). Researchers Romaniuk draw attention to the analytical construct of identity (Romaniuk & Romaniuk, 2022).

So, by linking regional loyalty to the state, promoting nationalism, and strengthening sovereignty, these boundaries affect political landscape, from voter preferences to narratives in memorial politics. Such a multidimensional understanding of space, combining tangible and imaginary elements, emphasizes the complexity of modern political space, where virtual and symbolic dimensions intersect with physical boundaries, creating new layers of political reality (Koch & Uzun, 2024, p. 5).

Let us note that the cultural patterns of political institutions receive additional synergy, which activates their interaction and contributes to polarization in the world system. Author Tsyhvintsev explains the reason for their contemporary activation by digitalization (Tsyhvintsev, 2024).

Authors Blahodyr and Filatova analyze the role of culture in the international economy through the prism of various theories and models, which is an additional tool for explaining the structure of relations between actors in the international space (Blahodyr & Filatova, 2024).

Since, according to Tolstov, systems theory does not pay priority attention to value-ideological characteristics, including dependence of political and foreign policy decisions on ideas, cultural stereotypes, value preferences, and political elites representatives' ways of thinking and decision-making methods, it is necessary to involve other interdisciplinary methods used within the framework of political and sociological analysis (Tolstov, 2023).

Another important aspect of polarization in international relations, embedded in the concept of 'great powers', was shown by the author Korotkov (Korotkov, 2024). Even great powers are trying to export their culture to expand their flow. In our opinion, the very incongruity of cultures and the imperativeness of their adoption by great powers is one of the reasons for polarization in international relations.

Methodology

The study was carried out through the use of post-non-classical methodology. The systematic approach incorporating the most representative features of temporality of political institutions cultural patterns that affect polarization level in international relations was applied.

The study is characterized by significant interdisciplinarity, contextuality and flexibility in methodology. The synergistic theory as a modeling one was taken to explain the essence of political institutions functioning and the role of their cultural component. Synergetics is used to specify temporality of mutual influence of cultural patterns of political institutions and international relations. Duby's classification of mental rhythms was applied to characterize cultural patterns of political institutions in China, India and African countries.

Interdisciplinarity means the use of an array of cultural information that characterizes a framework of political institutions, based on political culture, folk traditions and customs. The article engaged a new political-institutional approach, which focuses on understanding political institutions as a system of formal and informal norms, with a significant role played by culture.

The case method in this article focuses on studying influence of such subjects of international relations that have chosen a congruent paradigm of political institutions cultural patterns and constructivism for international relations, which are currently being in an escalation phase.

Two theories and paradigms of international relations functioning, which are political realism and constructivism, were examined to reveal the essence and causes of polarization in international relations.

Dynamics of Cultural Patterns of Political Institutions

Studying dynamics of polarization in cross-border relations in the post-Soviet space revealed the pattern of influence of the previous structure of political institutions focused on the domestic and foreign policies of states. For example, territorial disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan that had arisen in the late 1980s were polarizing relations between these states for a long period attracting external players to their settlement, but they still remain tense. This foreign policy cleavage turned out to be stable on the basis of the cultural characteristics of these two countries and their geopolitical orientations. A similar dynamic process of interaction is characterized by the researchers as Path-dependence and historicity – that is dependence on the historical path of development (Leithner & Libby, 2017).

The above feature as a 'path dependence' effect can also manifest itself as a closed circle when certain decisions and actions become self-reinforcing. For example, if a country decides to initiate hostilities, or to intervene in an international conflict, it may lead to inevitable political and economic consequences, which in turn will require further military or diplomatic action. Despite potential alternatives, a country might be stuck on a certain trajectory. An obvious example of such a situation is the confrontation in the Middle East between Israel and Palestine. The religious factor in this conflict is one of the leading (Dziubenko, 2020). The first one has a reliable military-political strategic ally – the United States, which practically cannot leave Israel without help. Therefore, the conflict has still been going on, it is characterized by a certain cyclical nature with the strengthening and weakening polarization of the conflicting actions of the parties.

There is a question arising as to the nature of cultural patterns of political institutions and their variability. Classical science was unable to answer these important questions, because clear rationality and certainty of the result of an action of political institutions that have certain cultural patterns inherent in them does not take into account the value aspects of the research subject, its immersion in the object of research and rapidly changing conditions in which these institutions interact at the international level. Therefore, post-non-classical science, of which synergetics is an integral part, has arisen and has significant explanatory potential in relation to contemporary international relations under polarization.

In order to understand the general model of how the cultural pattern of political institutions functions, let us turn to the scientific thought of Georges Duby who was a pioneer of the post-non-classical science. First of all, it's worth to notice that the sociocultural aspect of political institutions from the standpoint of the new institutional approach is contained in their official (formal) norms, due to the ideology prevailing in society. Thus, by producing their axiological orientation of foreign policy, political institutions build international relations. Therefore, the conflict/agreement dichotomy should be manifested in the first option under the condition of an incongruent (polarized) axiological component in relations between the subjects. The relationship between Great Britain, which builds foreign relations based on political realism, and China, whose foreign policy is based on constructivism, can be used as an illustration here. The second option is a congruent axiological component, for example, during relations between two states based on political institutions, which are inherent in constructivism. Thus, using this principle, we can observe relationships between the member countries of BRICS. However, from the standpoint of the sociocultural component, the functioning of foreign policy institutions and international relations may change. We can apply the teachings of Duby to explain the variability of cultural patterns. How does Duby explain this phenomenon of variability? In his work 'History of French Society in the Middle Ages' the scientist explores how changes occur in the perception and values of different social groups in different historical eras (Duby, 1987).

In particular, in his research, Duby emphasizes how changes in social structure, economy and religious beliefs influence people's mentality, their perception of the world and their place in society. He considers the pace of these changes and correlates it with broader historical processes. Pace of mental change, according to Duby, varies depending on the specific historical context, but it is important that social transformations can lead to significant shifts in people's perception and behavior. Georges Duby, inspired by Fernand Braudel's theory, does add a fourth rhythm to time within his own conception of historical time.

Brodel distinguished three rhythms: 1. Geographical rhythm (or 'a long time' rhythm) – long-term changes, such as climatic and geographical conditions, which change little over the centuries. 2. Social

rhythm (or 'a middle time' rhythm) – more dynamic changes such as social structures, economic systems and political regimes. 3. Individual rhythm (or 'a short time' rhythm) – events occurring in the lives of individuals or within several years, such as wars, revolutions, crises (Braudel, 1967). Duby adds to these three the fourth rhythm of time – the mental rhythm. This category focuses on changes in people's perception and consciousness, how they perceive the world and their role in it, how their values and thinking change. This rhythm is associated with intellectual, religious and cultural transformations that occur in the longer term and can affect people's daily lives (Duby, 1987).

Thus, under the influence of axiological component of political institutions functioning, international relations polarization can lead to fleeting changes. They cause a corresponding adaptive strategy of relations between subjects. In the context of our problem, the option of relations in which parties have asymmetric resources and polarized relations can produce a change in the cultural pattern of institutions of a weaker opponent, if the latter does not realize the possibility of an alliance with another partner that has a similar unpolarized cultural pattern. Although the deep roots of this cultural pattern are going to remain unchanged and may create a bifurcation in international interaction, when the resource ratio of political institutions will change in favor of a weaker opponent.

A Remark on Polarization in International Relations

Polarization in international relations, as a consequence of political institutions cultural patterns influence on them, produces heated discussions among scientists who support dichotomous axiological paradigms of international relations. Thus, Ringmar believes that realists live in an anarchic, polarized world in which no one can be trusted, and least of all those whom we have never met before. While we don't necessarily have to, figuratively speaking, shoot first, a realist explains, we should always keep our weapons loaded and ready. However, as constructivists point out, this attitude creates a negative feedback loop, where suspicion feeds suspicion, and where we end up creating exactly the kind of war-ready international system that realists describe. But it shouldn't be like that, constructivists insist; international anarchy has no preordained meaning, anarchy can only lead our actions to such an interpretation. On the contrary, the outcome of the first encounter depends on how the interaction develops. ... Gratitude can beget more gratitude; trust begets more trust (Ringmar, 2020, p. 1).

Cultural Patterns Case of China's Political Institutions

Cultural patterns of China's political institutions, according to Ogden, have been formed throughout history, but they were peculiarly affected by the events of the country's 'century of humiliation' from the mid-19th century. Since then, violent actions typical for realism have been perceived extremely negatively in China (Ogden, 2017). In the same vein, the cultural patterns of political institutions of the 'guanxi' and 'mianzi' traditions influence the foreign policy strategy. In the social environment, the cultural phenomenon of 'guanxi' does not carry a negative connotation and means help, support, or service. Firstly, true 'guanxi' is possible only between Chinese people, and secondly, 'guanxi' cannot be bought. Thus, 'guanxi' is a model of relationships built on mutually beneficial cooperation, its main principle is 'You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours'.

Another element of Chinese business culture, which, together with 'guanxi', has entered into political institutions as a cultural pattern, is 'mianzi' which translates as 'a reputation', 'a social standing'. Many Chinese are concerned about protecting other people's 'mianzi', especially those with higher social status. Harming someone's 'mianzi' can make that person feel embarrassed or even angry and can damage their interpersonal 'guanxi'. Common strategies for saving others' 'mianzi' include avoiding public criticism. Guided by this principle, one necessary has to avoid direct denial of requests and instead is supposed to make formal efforts, even if the request cannot really be fulfilled. One should avoid public confrontation with the elders and superiors and instead behave as humbly as possible.

Of course, the peculiarities of the 'guanxi' culture affect China's diplomacy and foreign policy. So, the Chinese are particularly concerned about whether they have received the degree of respect that is appropriate to their position in the relationship. Relationship management in Western societies also focuses on mutually agreed-upon will and behavior, but follows a transactional logic. In contrast, the Chinese approach emphasizes developing and optimizing relationships through mutual respect and appreciation. So, despite the modern influence of Western values, 'guanxi' remains a vital informal cultural pattern embedded in political and other social institutions, and which supports the structure of Chinese society. Historically, Chinese rulers viewed interstate relations as an extension of interpersonal ties. The Chinese

empire sought to establish relations of subordination with others and maintain harmony within this system, with each party assuming the privileges and responsibilities associated with this position. In these relations, the Chinese Empire has sought to maintain its cultural and symbolic superiority, rather than specific material benefits.

The People's Republic of China's approach to its relations with other countries demonstrates its echoing in modern diplomatic practice. During the era of reform and opening up, China was positioning itself as a developing country and consistently took a modest stance in relations with the international community. Its commitment to pragmatic agreement with a rules-based international order illustrates its commitment to fostering positive relations within the Western world to achieve its development goals. Meanwhile, words implying deeply personal relationships continue to appear frequently in China's official diplomatic discourse. There have appeared seven different expressions of 'good relations' in China's diplomatic language, including 'good brothers', 'good relatives', 'good friends', 'good partners', 'good neighbors', 'good comrades', and 'good comrades-in-arms' (Ye, Xue, 2023). In fact, China has used various methods to institutionalize 'guanxi' as a behavioral protocol for other states when they are interacting with it. This includes measures to punish countries, as it was seen in the case of Australia and Canada for their alleged disrespect for China's status. These punitive actions are aimed at forcing these states to reaffirm China's status and restore stable relations. China's willingness to use coercive means in diplomatic disputes has increased due to its citizens' growing conviction in their country's great power status, leading them to call on their government to take a tougher stance on perceived disrespect. At the same time, concerns about security of the relationships are prompting China to make symbolic compromises and seek ways to de-escalate tense relations for both sides.

1. China's cultural emphasis on 'guanxi' and its competitive dynamics with the United States motivate its desire to maintain stable relationships with various countries (Baltodano, 2023). However, its great power status limits its flexibility and pragmatism in foreign policy in relations with Western countries compared to the past. Therefore, resolving bilateral conflicts and restoring reciprocity increasingly depends on the other side initiating a compromise. In recent years, Chinese President Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized the need to maintain 'a fighting spirit' while he was addressing soldiers or party officials. This has probably boosted the morale of Chinese officials and diplomats and contributed to a more assertive communication style. There is even a new term, 'a Wolf Warrior Diplomacy'» (Palanisami, 2020).

2. An example of such diplomacy is China's reaction to the origin of the coronavirus, which the President of the United States, Donald Trump, had called 'the Chinese virus', openly and without evidence, blaming China for the emergence of the pandemic. Then China immediately responded to the criticism in a harsh form.

Thus, China can be forced to respond to aggressive actions with an adequate security policy, but this country is unlikely to become the initiator of an international conflict, and this is inherent in its deep cultural pattern that does not change (Xue, 2023).

Cultural Patterns Case of India's Political Institutions

At the heart of India elite's understanding of the international system there is a deeply rooted critical distrust and suspicion concerning other major powers' intentions towards India. That attitude is based on the negative colonial experiences. Within its strategic culture, there is a vision of what the world should be like, driven by anti-imperialist sentiments, non-interference in the internal affairs of the state, and intentions toward multipolarity in thinking of its elites. The perception of benevolence, leadership in the third world countries, and avoidance of great power rivalry had dictated India's refusal to acquire military power, which in the country's further history transformed into an awareness of the need to increase military power. Similarly, until the 1990s, New Delhi's interpretation of the global economic system as threatening and coercive led to the country's minimal involvement in global economic relations, but this was then supplanted by perception of the benefits of such interaction after 1991. The idea of its dominance also influences India's desired position in South Asia, with India seeing itself as the natural hegemon of the region (Ogden, 2017).

New Delhi's multilateral interaction is as much defined by a shifting mix of the same perceptions of benefit or threat as the India-US relationship, so that the ongoing historical oscillations between divergence and convergence have been based on their mutual perceptions.

Although Indian elites remain wary of other states' intentions towards their country, they changed their opinion from completely idealistic (according to D. Nehru) to more realistic and pragmatic. Some key

interactions played a role in this change, first of all the 1962 war with China, which led India to realize the need to have a strong military capability and its commitment to real politics in the 1971 East Pakistan War. The attitude of the elite towards nuclear weapons had also gradually changed, which made it possible to achieve its creation in 1998 (Ogden, 2017).

The cultural pattern of political institutions in India is associated with such a phenomenon as 'Hindutva'. Suffice it to say that thanks to this pattern, society was united and the Prime Minister of India was elected to the Minister's position for the third time, starting from 2014. The peculiarity of Hindutva is that the term Hindutva itself can be translated as 'Hinduism', but Hinduism is not a theology, but rather an identity. The intellectual father of this movement, V. Savarkar, wrote its main text (conventionally called Hindutva) a hundred years ago (UISGDA, 2019). The fact is that by appealing to Hindutva, Narendra Modi managed to mobilize his supporters, who paid attention not to the country's economic successes, but to the growing significance of their own place in Indian history. Let investment not grow so fast (or perhaps even shrink), let millions of Hindus live in poverty, let cities streets remain as unkempt as before. That's not the point: Hinduism is not about what your eyes tell you; it's about what your heart tells you. It's not about what you see; it's about how you see yourself. It's about how you see your identity, your brand, your place in the world.

A hundred years ago, when Savarkar wrote Hindutva, there was no concept of a single faith or doctrine, let alone a common identity, and this identity for most Hindus was defined by one's family, village, caste. The term 'Hindu' itself is just a loanword (most likely from Persian) meaning 'people who live beyond the Indus River'. Until the 20th century, most Hindus never felt any need to describe themselves in a comprehensive way (Blank, 2019).

It was the colonial experience that created Hindutva. Savarkar and his comrades wondered why, for centuries, India had been dominated by a relatively small number of Mughal Muslims and British Christians. And here was the answer to that question. The point is that monotheism was simply better suited for governance. If so, what did that mean for a faith where there were a large number of deities? For decades since the founding of the Hindutva movement, much effort had been made to make Hinduism more similar to its competitors. In other words, there was a need to construct a single, shared identity to unite all those for whom India was, in Savarkar's words, 'their homeland as well as their Holy Land'.

This definition conveniently tied in Sikhs (a disproportionate number of whom served in the military), Buddhists (whose spiritual outlook helped give the movement credibility), and Jains (who were usually quite wealthy then and are well rich now). And Savarkar deliberately did not emphasize what this new community should believe in. After all, not all supporters of Hindutva were believers. The main idea was not to create a new faith, but to brand this new movement as a means of mobilizing people. 'Make India Great Again' was the slogan under which Modi won the last elections.

Studying India and China from the perspective of perceiving them as great powers, Ogden wrote 'How states think about, interact with and ultimately demarcate the system is also in continual flux. This emphasis points to the criticality of examining the core values essential to a state's security policy, and appreciating that foreign policy and international affairs rests upon state-specific understandings. Such values and identities alter over time – along with the practices / rules of the international' (Ogden, 2017).

In general, not violent actions but constructivism, as well as for China, are peculiar to international relations on the part of India, which is explained by the deep levels of cultural patterns formed by historical, social and cultural characteristics.

Cultural Patterns Case of African Countries' Political Institutions

Regarding relations under conditions of polarization, countries of the African continent take a special place in the international space. The problem of cultural patterns of political institutions in countries of this region directly follows from the peculiarities of their traditions. Special African hospitality attracts people to communication. Solidarity is also a characteristic feature of traditional African societies, even those with a hierarchical structure in which each person's place is determined by his or her social status. A sense of community is inherent to both families connected by blood ties and groups of people who live in the same area, belong to the same rural community, and have a single system of values (Ogden, 2017). Here is one trait of this culture. Among the Baule people of Côte d'Ivoire, guests are warmly welcomed, without any interest in the purpose of their visit. Hospitality is shown in a reserved manner, a newcomer being politely addressed with following: 'Welcome, you are at home here'. A guest is invited to sit down and served water in a coconut shell. When the guest has rested and recovered from the fatigue of the journey, the head

of the family invites him or her to the table. The meal – in the open air or on the veranda – begins with the guest being offered a dish of sweet potatoes and okra sauce (taken with the hands). Later, other dishes are served: chicken, walnut sauce, etc. (Foll, 2015). And although with the growth of city dwellers' number and urbanization, this tradition is getting less evident and individualism is coming to the fore, the deep layer of such culture has still remained untouched (Duby, 1987). In general, a long exchange of greetings is a characteristic of Sahelian customs. For example, for the Tukulor and Wolof, the act of greeting itself is the first and most important expression of politeness. From the very beginning, an atmosphere of ease and sincerity arises, and sincere friendship is established.

One of the African proverbs says that one should definitely greet even his or her enemy, because a good greeting is a sign of a person's self-respect (Brother Alois, 2009). In fact, hospitality is almost always a family thing in the broad sense. A guest must be greeted by every member of the family. Then, one's peers take care of him or her. As soon as it becomes known about the guest's arrival, people close to the person in age come to the house where he or she is staying. The words of greeting develop into a conversation, and the chain of friendship grows longer and longer (Foll, 2015).

Therefore, the tendency towards solidarity, grouping, and hospitality, combined with the living conditions in African countries, have ensured easy access for Western multinational companies to this region. At the same time, they do not particularly care about creating any social infrastructure, and are only attracted by cheap raw materials. However, globalization in its informational component has opened up new development opportunities to people all over the world, including the Africans. So the African Union, formed on the basis of the Organization of African Unity, celebrating its anniversary in 2013, adopted the declaration 'Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want'. The Declaration marked Africa's commitment to achieving the Pan-African vision of integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, led by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force on the international stage, and Agenda 2063 is a concrete manifestation of how the continent intends to achieve this vision over the 50-year period from 2013 to 2063. To achieve the development targets under this perspective, countries in the region need to review and adapt their development agenda through ongoing structural transformations; increased peace and reduced conflict; renewed economic growth and social progress; need for people-centered development, gender equality and youth empowerment; changing global contexts such as increasing globalization and the ICT revolution; strengthening African unity, making it a global power to be reckoned with and able to rally support around its own common agenda; new opportunities for development and investment in areas such as agribusiness, infrastructure development, health and education, and the added value of African goods (Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, 2013). Achieving such ambitious goals requires cohesion of African countries, and as we have already noticed, solidarity has firmly entered the cultural pattern of the political institutions of these countries.

However, the unity of the African continent has been undermined by the divergent actions of international actors – major countries. China currently has the greatest influence in Africa. By using 'a stadium diplomacy', that is, building stadiums and other cultural facilities for free for African countries, it arouses sympathy and favor among African political leaders, and with it contracts for the construction of other infrastructure projects (Tyshkevych, 2024). And besides, the mentality of the Chinese has much in common with that of the Africans. That is why cultural cooperation between them is successfully spreading. Suffice it to say that as of June 2019, 59 such educational institutions – branches of the Confucius Institutes – were operating in 44 African countries (Bielienko, 2020). But unlike the curtailment of their activities in the USA, there is an increase in their activity in Africa, and expert opinion on the reasons for such a spread of activity converges on the similarities of the cultures of the two civilizations (Báo Quốc Tế, 2024)

At the same time, Africa is suffering from internal conflicts, the cause of which is the aforementioned reliance on Path-dependence and historicity. The colonial policy of Western countries used a principle of 'divide and rule', which often artificially created preferences for one people within one country, which ensured its political and power functions. So, after liberation from colonialism, civil strife began in these countries causing many victims, as happened in Burundi and Rwanda. It was a genocide that killed hundreds of thousands of people of Tutsi and Hutu nationalities. (Isabirye & Mahmoudi, 2000).

At the same time, African countries, relying on previous experience of relations with the Soviet Union, which supported them for ideological reasons and in order to spread its geopolitical influence, have in recent years intensified relations with Russia, which offers them security services and at the same time tries to attract them to the BRICS. Moreover, Russia managed to find countries where the position of Western countries, especially France, is weakened, among them Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. As a result of Russian influence,

these countries withdrew from ECOWAS, although they had been part of this West African economic community for 50 years (Romashenko, 2025). During the summit in the Nigerien capital Niamey, an agreement was signed to create a confederation of the Sahel alliance, the region in West Africa where these three countries are located (Ckavron, 2024). Russia is obviously not interested in destabilizing Africa, as this is a new market and trusting relations with the leaders of the countries of this continent will potentially increase Russia's trade turnover in this region, which is what it seeks to achieve, trying to squeeze its African partners out of the influence of Western countries.

The United States is also competing on the African continent. However, it has much more resources, while carrying out its humanitarian missions. The United States has become more active in the struggle for spheres of influence, as it evidenced by the former President Biden's visit to Angola in December 2024. Following his visit to Luanda, he announced his willingness to allocate a billion dollars in aid for families forced to leave their homes due to drought. There was also announced about provision of a half-billion-dollar loan for the Lobito-Atlantic railway construction, the project designed to connect the coast of Angola with the DRC and Zambia. It is also worth mentioning the process that began in the second half of 2024 – investments in technological re-equipment of Africell the cellular communications (and Internet) provider. This company is owned by the US and operates in Angola, DRC, Gambia and Sierra Leone. It's an important process that maintains American presence (and possibly control) in the telecommunications industry of the entire region (Tyshkevych, 2024). However, the new US President Trump, has so far refrained from commenting on possible prospects for developing relations with African countries. Last year, France also intensified its activities on the African continent, expanding its cooperation to Ethiopia. An agreement was also reached to hold the France-Africa Forum in Kenya in 2026, which is likely to give a new impetus to the development of France's relations with African countries (Tyshkevych, 2024). That is, the rivalry of states for influence over African countries will be accompanied by the actions of the latter, which will make decisions about cooperation based on the congruence of their political institutions cultural patterns with external actors.

Conclusions

Therefore, cultural pattern of political institutions is characterized by constancy of rational and irrational elements of awareness of political systems environment. Transformation of this concept has taken place within the framework of classical and post-non-classical science. The latter is a modern methodological tool for explaining complex nonlinear systems, one of which is international relations. It is worth to highlight stable patterns of polarization in international relations on a cultural basis within countries and regions. They determine intentional direction of cleavages between incongruent political institutions along basic cultural patterns.

Dynamics of modern international events and relations force political institutions to adapt in a polarization vector with different absolute values. At the same time, the mentality formation of political and institutional structures of national and international subjects, as well as cultural patterns and materialized activities of these political and institutional structures, have, according to Georges Duby and Fernand Braudel, several temporal rhythms affecting change in patterns. There is the first long temporal rhythm among others, proposed by the scientists. It determines outlines activity of the social environment, its employment structure, determined by geography, climate, raw materials, etc. That is, this rhythm stimulates increase in the probability of a certain political and institutional design, a nature of the political system, and therefore influences the external environment – international relations, creating material and axiological basis of the political institutions patterns.

The second rhythm – an average time rhythm – is more flexible and is nonlinearly determined by the country's place in the international system (a center, a periphery, an intermediate position). This rhythm depends on the previous, long rhythm and produces a type of political regime that, under a constellation of domestic and international conditions, may change in the perspective, associated with the cyclical nature of the political process, for example, elections at various levels. The average time is enough for a significant polarization in international relations and, as a consequence, for transformation of the axiological component vector of the political and institutional design topology.

An individual rhythm (or 'a short-term' rhythm) can change dynamics of political institutions functioning, their cultural patterns under the influence of micro-bifurcations occurring in the international system, which, depending on their place in the dissipative structure of international relations, can reach an average level (under the conditions of a break in the ties of the central actor in this dissipative structure),

or be positively compensated by the available resources of political and institutional structures (if the actor of international relations is on the periphery of the dissipative structure of the international system and temporarily loses ties that can be restored).

The fourth one – a mental rhythm – is associated with a change in mentality, and therefore a fundamental change in the cultural patterns of political institutions, closely related to the other above-mentioned temporal rhythms. Its manifestation is characterized by a type of attractor that draws political institutions to certain conditions of their functioning. If a strange attractor operates for a long time, for example, as a result of a gradual and increasingly accelerated change in the demographic situation in the country, political design in the axiological dimension will lead to the formation of a new prevailing mentality. It, in turn, affects the formation of cultural patterns of other axiological models and can lead not only to polarization of international relations, but also to their macro-bifurcation with the subsequent formation of international system dissipative structure in a new quality.

At the international level, there are two polarized paradigms of relations – political realism and constructivism. They are determined by prevailing cultural patterns of political institutions. Political ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism, social democracy, and others focused on functioning of a democratic political system, play a significant role in their justification, as well as communist ideology with elements of Confucian dogma, socialist ideology, and various ideologies with a religious component, such as Hinduism, etc. The anarchy of these systems at the international level constellates balance of power. In turn, the incongruence of the cultural patterns of political institutions in international relations causes a clash of two paradigms of relations based on political realism and constructivism.

The example of China makes it clear that its ability to develop relations with mentally similar political and institutional systems is characterized by success and good prospects. It is evident in the example of African countries. China's non-conflict nature, due to the ideology of Confucianism, the cultural patterns of 'guanxi' and 'mianzi', and the country's rapid economic growth force it to counteract this development from Western countries according to the rules of realism.

A special place belongs to India, the largest democratic country in the world. It is this image that distinguishes India from the political system of the PRC and gives it the opportunity to freely develop relations with any country. Multi-vectorism, constructivism, and Hindutva as an integral ideology of the country are components of the cultural pattern of political institutions that produce stability in the conditions of polarization in international relations.

Cultural patterns of political institutions in African countries are oriented towards positive relations with external actors, regardless of ideological orientation. The only criterion for good relations between them is potential security as an axiological component of modern intentions of African countries, as well as their solidarity in providing development assistance.

All regions that have been studied are characterized by the use of political institutions cultural patterns as a tool of soft power, influencing international public opinion in the context of polarization in international relations. At the same time, China and India have achieved significant results in this component of political institutions cultural patterns and their transmission into the external environment of the international system.

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