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### 'But in Asia we too are Europeans'

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## **‘But in Asia we, too, are Europeans’:<sup>1</sup>**

### **Russia’s multifaceted engagement with the standard of civilisation**

#### **Abstract**

The standard of civilisation served Western states to hierarchically organize international politics and reproduce Western pre-eminence. Russia, depending on the historical period, has been interpreted as either an ardent follower or a major challenger to Western projects but it has been markedly absent from debates regarding the standard. This article proposes to engage Russia in the standard of civilisation discussion with reference to the standard’s two most considered expositions: the colonial-era ‘original’ and what the literature interprets as the standard’s contemporary revival. In order to do so, I trace Russia’s nineteenth century colonial practices and analyse Russia’s selected policies towards post-Soviet states in the post-Cold War period. On the basis of these explorations, I argue that Russia’s application of the standard of civilisation goes beyond the mere reproduction of hierarchical arrangements between an imagined centre and peripheries. The practices of the standard of civilisation have been employed to improve Russia’s desired, and imagined, status in international politics – that of a great power equal to the West. From that it follows that the concept of the standard of civilisation should be recognised as ordering relations not only of the strong and the weak but also of those in position of power in international politics.

#### **Introduction**

The idea of the standard of civilisation refers to a fundamental aspect of international politics – inequality. Discussing the standard of civilisation is therefore one way of studying the nature of relations between the ‘centre’ and ‘peripheries’, a dichotomy facilitated and reproduced by the employment of the standard in international politics. Contemporary scholarship engages with the standard of civilisation with special reference to two historical epochs: the period of thriving colonial empires<sup>2</sup> and what is interpreted as contemporary revival of practices resembling the standard, often termed the ‘new standard of civilisation’.<sup>3</sup>

The West has always been the primary reference point in these debates. Russia has occupied a marginal place, either subsumed under Europe, as Europe’s exponent in Asia, or regarded as unable to fulfil the Western criteria of internal governance and therefore incapable of acting as a standard-setter. Even the most recent explorations of non-Western states engagement with the standard of civilisation overlook Russia. The discussion about the

standard of civilisation is, however, incomplete without sufficient attention paid to Russia and practices it employed towards the conquered lands. Russia makes for an especially interesting case due to its troublesome and wavering relationship with Europe. The Western-centric orientation of the debate unfolding to date forecloses questions as to how the standard of civilisation structures relations not solely between the strong and the weak but also between those in positions of power in international politics. Engagement with Russia offers, on the one hand, insights into the role and workings of the standard of civilisation. On the other hand, it allows discussing the place of Western ideas in Russia's politics and considering the extent to which Russia is an absorber and emulator of Western concepts or a state challenging and modifying them.

Aiming to contribute to the existing debate on the standard of civilisation, the article explores two periods in which Russian policies were, if only implicitly, informed by the idea of the standard of civilisation: the tsarist Russia's conquest unfolding in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the Russian Federation's post-1991 engagement with the post-Soviet space. Historical analogies are necessarily inaccurate and controversial but my objective here is not to engage in reasoning by analogy. I reflect on processes which, rather than recurring, may be continually at work. There are countless elements differentiating the tsarist period from the Russian present but contemplating these two epochs in conjuncture allows taking a broader view of tensions and paradoxes characterizing Russia's relations with the West and Russia's engagement with its most immediate neighbours. An additional justification for treating these two time periods in conjunction is provided by the contemporary Russian discourse, which makes frequent reference to the epochs of Catherine II and Alexander II.<sup>4</sup>

The article unfolds in four steps. First, I discuss the conspicuous absence of Russia from the debate on the standard of civilisation. Two subsequent parts analyse and assess standard-informed policies towards Russia's neighbours in nineteenth and twenty-first centuries. The final part proposes that the standard of civilisation should be considered not solely as an instrument of regional hierarchy building but also as essential in structuring relations between Russia and great powers.

### **The evolving idea of the standard of civilisation**

Considerable scholarship has been dedicated to the studying of the intimate relationship between the colonial expansion of European states and the idea of the standard of civilisation. Literature suggested that the standard of civilisation originated in Europe in the nineteenth

century and was used to legitimise the domination of powerful states. Predicated on Western states considering themselves to be the representatives of a genuine – meaning ‘better’ – civilisation, it allowed for and ‘normalized’ the hierarchisation of international politics, perpetuating the division between the ‘centre’ and ‘peripheries’. The idea of the standard of civilisation justified the expansion of Western social, political, legal and cultural norms and practices beyond Europe.<sup>5</sup> The widely-held belief in the concept of civilisation and in the inequality of races led to the establishing of an hierarchy in which the non-European world remained subordinated to the centre. This paved the way for the ‘elaborate debates as to the principles, criteria, and “standards of civilization” by which non-European states might be accepted as sovereign members of the “society of states” or the “family of nations”’.<sup>6</sup> Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the standard of civilisation was attached to a changing list of requirements the ‘non-civilised’ polities were expected to fulfil. Though it achieved the status of a legal doctrine, parts of it remained implicit, unspoken. There was never a complete agreement regarding the set of norms the standard comprised. Powerful states tended to pick and choose the criteria defining a ‘civilized’ state.<sup>7</sup>

Initially and in the most direct sense, the standard of civilisation was a prescription on how to treat foreign nationals. It gradually became part of international customary law. With time, however, the idea broadened to encompass issues beyond the basic rights of European nationals. It served to bar certain states from participating in interstate relations, to impose unequal treaties, specific policies, institutions and values on non-Western states.<sup>8</sup> As a result certain political entities were not granted formal equal standing in international affairs.<sup>9</sup>

The standard of civilisation came to encompass tacit and explicit rules that enabled a distinction to be made between those states that belonged to a particular, allegedly more advanced grouping, and those that did not. The idea, thus, was premised on and perpetuated the division between the advanced, privileged rule makers and those who followed—willingly or through coercion. One of its core functions was to maintain centre-periphery distinction through practices officially aimed at nursing those in the peripheries to become ‘like us’. Edward Keene interpreted the standard as a justification for the creation of two distinct orders, each ruled by starkly contrasting laws. The European order was premised on the principle of participants’ equality, while the second – inferior and subordinate – was deliberately sustained in colonial peripheries by the leading European states.<sup>10</sup> Antony Anghie noted that it was precisely the inscription of the standard of civilisation into international law that allowed this unequal relation between the two orders to be maintained.<sup>11</sup>

Literature on the standard of civilisation focused on relations between those in power and their subordinates, paying surprisingly little attention to the influence of the standard on relations *among* the powerful states. The analysis of Japan's policy towards China in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, undertaken by Shogo Suzuki, and Taesuh Cha's take on the US and Europe are two notable exceptions. Suzuki argues that Japanese elites considered the successful conquest and subordination of China as necessary to achieve the status of a 'civilised' state. Japan made a considerable and conscious effort to reinvent the Japanese state into a 'civilised' one modelled on the West by means of engaging in imperialist politics towards China.<sup>12</sup> Taesuh Cha used the concept of the standard of civilization to account for the formation of American exceptionalism, in particular to explain how the US establishment of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century came to believe in America's superiority over Europe.<sup>13</sup>

The standard of civilisation seemingly faded away following the creation of the United Nations, an organisation meant to embody the principle of sovereign equality between states. As a result of the decolonisation process, the political map of the world became populated with dozens of states formally recognised as equal. But, in the aftermath of the Cold War and throughout the era of Western pre-eminence, thinking in terms of the standard of civilisation enjoyed a revival. The idea became re-interpreted as a way for the West to reorganize relations with non-European and less developed states. Requirements as far-reaching and comprehensive as the political and economic organisation of the state came to be constructed as the *new* or *revived* standard of civilisation.<sup>14</sup>

The literature argues that, similarly to its nineteenth century predecessor, the new standard of civilisation is aimed at the re-creation and reproduction of hierarchical arrangements between states. It is said to be exposed in the economic sphere, mainly in trade and financial regulations.<sup>15</sup> The global market is claimed to serve as the 'civilizer of peoples and societies' both in their domestic and external relations.<sup>16</sup> Market relations are considered key to the establishment and implementation of the 'global standards of market civilization'.<sup>17</sup> Beyond economy, the new standard is said to be means of creating liberal modernity.<sup>18</sup> Disguised under developmental and humanitarian language, the new standard of civilisation agenda encompasses democracy and human rights promotion, and liberal interventionism.<sup>19</sup> Brett Bowden interprets the new standard of civilisation as a major tool in shaping international politics, one geared towards achieving a globalized cosmopolitan world order.<sup>20</sup>

This debate groups a broad range of phenomena and processes under the banner of the new standard of civilisation. There is no scope in this article to engage with normative

contradictions permeating the idea of the new standard of civilisation. Important for our present purpose is that, despite the diversity of issues assembled under the notion of the new standard, the common foundation is the reproduction of hierarchical arrangements so aptly exposed by the idea.<sup>21</sup>

*(ii) Russia's absence in the debates about the standard*

Russia occupies a marginal place in the standard of civilisation debate, regardless of whether it concerns the 19<sup>th</sup> century or the contemporary version. Neither the classical approach, represented by the early English School, nor the critical one, visible in the writings of Edward Keene and Antony Anghie, paid attention to Russia's practices in what it regarded as its peripheries. When engaging with the standard, the classical English School, not overly preoccupied with the area east of the Rhine, assumed that the type of state Russia copied from Europe in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and the overall westernisation of the country, enabled it to join European international society and to play a part in its expansion towards Asia.<sup>22</sup> Russia was interpreted as an outpost of European international society in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Indeed, Bull and Watson's renowned volume *The Expansion of International Society*, discusses the role of the competing powers of Russia and Britain in Asia in conjunction:

On the whole, *the British and the Russians* do not seem to have treated Asian states with any more impatience and violence than that experienced by smaller European countries in time of conflict with more powerful neighbours. For example, the reason, or excuse, given for the partition of Poland was much the same as that given for the annexation of the Punjab and of Kokand – the 'need' to control anarchic conditions in an adjacent state.<sup>23</sup>

Hedley Bull reiterated this view: 'Like the maritime expansion of the Western European states, the expansion of Russia by land proceeded by the subjugation of indigenous communities and immigration and settlement by metropolitan peoples'.<sup>24</sup>

This standpoint, however, needed to be problematised with the employment of a more nuanced historical perspective and the acceptance of the fact that there existed multiple narratives on Russia's relationship with the West. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia was seen as joining the ranks of European great powers, particularly with the triumph of Alexander I over Napoleonic France.<sup>25</sup> In the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, the tsarist empire began to fall behind its European counterparts and doubts were raised regarding its 'place' in European

politics. Russia's rulers felt vulnerable in their relations with the West, and the defeat in the Crimean War exacerbated the feeling of inferiority.<sup>26</sup> Neumann ascribed Russia's difficulties in remaining an equal partner for European states to its inability to meet the nineteenth century standards of internal governance. Such inability made it difficult for Russia to be recognised as a great power.<sup>27</sup>

Similar set of narratives resurfaced in the aftermath of the Soviet Union break-up. Scholars initially interpreted the fall of the USSR as the end to the 'dissociation of [Russia] from the West'.<sup>28</sup> Russia was interpreted in terms of striving to 'adapt' to global Western-led institutions,<sup>29</sup> in the 'quest' for international society<sup>30</sup> or undergoing a 'slow and uneven process of adjustment towards the acceptance of common rules'.<sup>31</sup> The main question for scholars in the post-Cold War period has been to what extent Russia can be integrated into the West, suggesting thereby Russia's adaptive and passive role.<sup>32</sup>

These analyses did not account for contemporary Russia's growing dissociation from liberal models epitomised and promoted by democratic states. The disenchantment with the West, captured aptly by Dmitri Trenin,<sup>33</sup> resulted in the incremental change of Moscow's foreign policy and led to the questioning of Western values. Along with increasing assertiveness and outright rejection of Western norms, Russia started to be perceived as lagging behind the West. Just as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Russia failed to meet the Western criteria of internal governance. As a result, Russia, even if recognised as a colonizer, has not been considered a standard-setter and remains disregarded in the renewed debate about the standard of civilisation. An enquiry into practices aimed at hierarchisation of international politics exercised by non-Western states tends to be animated exclusively by geopolitical considerations. The literature presents Russia's engagement with its peripheries as driven by the goal of expanding its territory (in the tsarist period) or its 'sphere of interest' (with regard to contemporary Russia) and arranged with the use of crude force. Other possible forms of exercising power, for instance through the establishment of social order or the promotion of certain norms, tend to be overlooked.<sup>34</sup>

Russia's production and reproduction of hierarchical arrangements vis-à-vis weaker neighbours bears much resemblance to its Western counterparts. The emulation argument is widespread in literature analysing colonial practices, as illustrated by the following quotation: 'sometimes Imperial ruling elites and subject peoples will be actively borrowing ideas from each other, as the Russians did repeatedly from the British in particular'.<sup>35</sup> However, the

immigration of ideas is never a straightforward process. As it was aptly pointed out by Bourdieu:

‘it rarely happens without these ideas incurring some damage in the process, this is because such immigration separates cultural productions from the system of theoretical reference points in relation to which they are defined, from their field of production’<sup>36</sup>.

It should therefore not come as a surprise that Russia’s understanding and the practices of the standard of civilisation are not an exact replica of the Western model. But the West remained the major reference point for the Russian elites in the course of the last three centuries. As a result, Western ideas and comparisons with the West shaped the content of Russia’s policies to a large extent. It is useful to reiterate Isaiah Berlin’s persuasive argument that: ‘Russia borrowed ideas from the West and then took them very seriously, and in taking them very seriously altered them’.<sup>37</sup> In the case of the standard of civilisation Russia copied specific Western practice but used them for a different overarching purpose.

### **Russia and the nineteenth-century standard of civilisation**

There is no simple way of classifying Russia and its policy towards the conquered territories in the East. As with any other colonial venture in the nineteenth century, the tsarist empire’s policy was driven by a variety of motivations, aims, collective and individual ambitions. Russia’s approach was similar to that of other colonisers in that it was subject to change and often proved inconsistent.<sup>38</sup> What links different facets of Russia’s colonial enterprise is the willingness to reaffirm its position as an imperial centre and to reinforce the hierarchisation of its relations with political entities considered subordinate.

In order to embark on a discussion of the relationship between Russia and the standard of civilisation, it is necessary to provide a short background of how Russia was viewed and how it perceived itself as an empire. One specific characteristic of this debate, regardless of the particular historical period, is its thorough reliance on comparison. In 1865 James Long, humanist and educator, advocated that: ‘Englishmen ought to study Russian progress in Asia; not in the *mere military aspect*, but in its effect in opening out roads for trade in the desert, bringing European light and civilisation, suppressing slavery and Mussulmen intolerance’.<sup>39</sup> Twenty years later, as though attentive to this initial call, a more prominent figure in British state affairs – Lord Curzon – embarked on a journey the aim of which he described in the following words:



to compare [Russia's] genius for assimilation with that of other conquering races. Is the apparent security of her sway the artificial product of a tight military grip, or is it the natural outcome of peaceful organic fusion? How do her methods and their results compare with those of England in India?<sup>40</sup>

However, Lord Curzon's opinion upon completion of the journey was highly unfavourable for Russia. While Curzon admitted that Russia had begun to recognise her 'duties towards those with whose rule she is charged',<sup>41</sup> he rejected the idea that Russia could be the promoter of civilisation in Central Asia.<sup>42</sup>

'The conquest of Central Asia is a conquest of Orientals by Orientals, of cognate character by cognate character. [...] This is no nineteenth-century crusade of manners or morals; but barbarian Asia, after a sojourn in civilised Europe, returns upon its former footsteps to reclaim its own kith and kin'<sup>43</sup>

To what extent Russia and its colonial practices could be considered as pertaining to or representing those of the West has always been linked to the fundamental question – is Russia part of European 'civilisation'? Russia's civilizational relationship with the West has been mired in contradictions. A uniform position is difficult to find either among Western or Russian scholars. What Schimmelpenninck van der Oye termed confusion among Russians about their continental identity,<sup>44</sup> many Russian authors present in civilizational terms.<sup>45</sup> Another layer of perplexity was added by the fact that Russians considered themselves to be European but many would simultaneously subscribe to the view that Russia is in competition with Europe and the West. Russia has been depicted as part of Europe, but one which emerged outside the framework of the social, political and cultural life of the West.<sup>46</sup>

Encounters with the East during the imperial expansion and developments in Russian Oriental studies contributed significantly to changes in Russia's view of itself as unquestionably European. Scholars started recognising that Russia's more frequent encounters with Asia contributed to its identity building. St. Petersburg orientalist imagined Russia as a political and cultural space with 'no boundary between the East and the West'.<sup>47</sup> The ideology of Pan-Slavism which presented Russia as a distinct civilisation was inspired by Russia's growing engagement with Asian peoples and polities. Pan-Slavism not only underscored cultural differences between Russia and Europe, but went as far as denouncing the West for having been weakened by democratisation. The movement emphasised the need to restore integrity between territory, the Russian people and orthodoxy.<sup>48</sup> The pan-Eurasian current, postulating that Russia's Eurasianist identity should be a mixture of national and pan-

Eurasian elements, was heavily influenced by Russia's Asian colonial enterprise.<sup>49</sup> Ultimately, political and cultural engagement with the East was to become means of national self-assertion against Western domination.

*(i) The tsarist conquest of Asia and the standard of civilisation*

Based on a feeling of superiority, the separation of *us*, the civilised from *them*, the barbarous or primitive, is a precondition for hierarchisation and the employment of the standard of civilisation. These preconditions were put in place in the Petrine epoch (extending from 1697 to 1725), when the Russian elite started to perceive Asia as backward and inefficient. This development has usually been considered by comparing Russia to Europe, for instance: 'The educated classes of Petrine Russia shared fully the general European ideology in regard to Asia of superiority and even imperial domination'.<sup>50</sup> It has been said that Russia adopted a 'Eurocentric feeling of superiority towards Asia' from the West.<sup>51</sup> The consequence was that practices of 'nomadic life' and terms such as the Orient acquired negative connotations. It became common also in public discourse to juxtapose images of the 'dynamic West' to the 'stagnant East'.<sup>52</sup>

Claims to geographic and ethnographic knowledge allowed Russian colonial empire to embark on the enterprise of creating categories and hierarchies. The explorers of the East, often from the military ranks, such as Nikolai Przhevalsky, were supplying the elementary cognitive 'material' on the basis of which native peoples were rated and, subsequently, seen to require 'civilizational' improvements. Not only the military men but also scholars took part in the "discovery" of the East. They were motivated by the assumption that knowledge enabled successful administration. Vasilii Grigorev, a well-known Russian orientalist, regarded science as serving 'the greater good of the nation'. For him Orientalism had a function greater than just allowing us to get to know and administer the "natives", it offered insight into Russia's own identity.<sup>53</sup>

Russia was constructing its 'other' on the basis of several dividing lines. The most prevalent us-them distinction was created on the basis of religion and the place of birth. While *inorodets* and *inoverets* (of different kin and of different faith) were relatively neutral terms, Russian officials charged with implementing state policies in the East used a variety of derogative notions to refer to the native populations. These depictions pointed to their supposed unreliability, ungovernability and the lack of respect for peace. The last feature was described by the term *nemirnye liudi*.<sup>54</sup>

The relationship to land was among the most important dividing markers. The distinction between *siadiachiye* and *kochevye* (settled and nomadic), further specified according to the type of subsistence activity, e.g. pasturing or agriculture, played an especially prominent role.<sup>55</sup> Further divisions were created along dietary habits and sexual behaviour or, more broadly, ‘lifestyle’, which could supersede religion as a significant ‘line of cleavage’.<sup>56</sup>

From the point of view of the legal codification of the standard of civilisation it was significant that the categories of *inorodets* and *inoverets* entered the legal doctrine. The Legislative Commission of 1767 confirmed the distinction sedentary-nomadic by the fact that it admitted only sedentary Muslims and animists into its ranks, excluding nomadic peoples and thereby reducing them to the status of second-class citizens. The commission, in 1798, discussed a statute for non-sedentary Russian subjects, which it termed *inorodtsy*. Its objective was to eventually turn nomads into ‘proper’ citizens.<sup>57</sup> These processes provided the backdrop against which further hierarchisation, this time with implications for international politics, could be taking place.

Having *created* the other it was appropriate to adopt the *right* attitude towards those deemed less civilised. The Russian elite began to think of itself as the bearer of European values in Asia in the eighteenth century, but it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the idea of Russia’s civilising mission in the East crystallised. According to Vasilii Grigorev, in 1840, Russia’s aim in Asia was to: ‘set their lives in order and enlighten them’.<sup>58</sup> This goal was accompanied by appropriate narrative, stipulating that Russia was playing an important role in the ‘awakening’ of the Central Asian peoples: ‘Local people were in a deep sleep and in this dream unconsciously led their lives as prescribed by their ancestors and religions (...) without external influence, Central Asia would never have awoken (...) and now the roads are safe, a merchant can lead its caravan peacefully and can rest assured that he will not be robbed’.<sup>59</sup> The idealised vision of Russia’s civilising mission is best reflected in the writing about the first general-governor of Turkestan (*Turkestanskii krai*), Konstantin von Kaufman. He is said to have secured good land for Russian settlers without taking it away from the locals; promoted geographic and ethnographic research of the conquered territories in agreement with his conviction that one needs to get to know the land to administer it well. He is remembered as the one who opened the first public library, established the first newspaper and started a number of educational institutions. He is praised for having respected local customs and tolerated the use of local justice systems.<sup>60</sup>

Comparisons played an important role also in the process of elaborating the elements of the civilising mission. Mikhail Pogodin, a Russian orientalist, saw Russia's civilising mission in Asia as identical to those undertaken by Britain, France and other European states and stressed that the goal was to bring enlightenment. Government should not be motivated by economic gains but by the interests of the natives. To Riasanovsky, Pogodin's ideas of *mission civilisatrice* were typical of his European counterparts<sup>61</sup> but advocacy for the interests of those subjugated to be taken into account was not that common in Britain or France. Grigorev's opinion regarding the civilising mission evolved as a result of his two decades of scholarly and practical engagement with colonial administration. Having, in 1862, resigned from the post of Orenburg's governor due to his disenchantment with the tsarist administration's indifference to scholarly advice, Grigoriev advocated against copying the Western civilising mission and its inherent lack of respect for the 'savages'. He called for a uniquely Russian way of approaching the subjugated lands, which he saw as premised on the study of local culture and tradition as well as giving voice to Asians. This, however, did not preclude him from favouring a deeply paternalistic approach to indigenous peoples who – as he claimed – understood only 'the language of power'.<sup>62</sup>

In the 1870s Mikhail Veniukov went even further in his interpretation of what he saw as Russia's goal in Asia. To him the 'civilising mission' meant first and foremost respecting religious differences and acting in the interest of the well-being of those peoples.<sup>63</sup> The call to respect religions other than Christianity has been voiced since Catherine the Great. Religious tolerance has been, however, at times tactically motivated, for instance when lessons drawn from the conquest of the Caucasus were to improve tactics for the subordination of the Muslim peoples of Central Asia. The enlightened current promoting tolerance coexisted with the need to spread Christianity, an important aspect of the civilising mission. Faith was commonly understood as intertwined with economic status and social practices. The promotion of Christianity, therefore, was inseparable from and needed to go hand in hand with improvements to local customs, family relationships, diet and cleanliness.<sup>64</sup> This aspect of Russian policy in the East was interpreted as behaviour modelled on the West: 'In imitation of the Western model, there was an attempt to Christianise the animists and Muslims, using force if necessary'.<sup>65</sup> The abolition of slavery and the slave trade was another important part of the civilising mission. Russia eliminated these practices in Turkestan, which by 1867 formed part of the Russian Empire, and in the khanates of Bukhara and Khiva (entities politically subordinated to Russia since 1873 but formally independent until 1920).<sup>66</sup>

Against this backdrop Russia's practices of the standard of civilisation were mediated by the principle of *sliyaniye* (Russification), aiming to make colonies part of the Russian state.<sup>67</sup> These policies included the appropriation of land, the introduction of administrative structures and the settlement of colonisers. As a result, Central Asia was perceived as an issue of domestic rather than international politics. The ultimate goal was to bring the peripheries closer to the centre, to align and adjust the *other* and to make *them* in *our* own image, and even more so, to make them us.<sup>68</sup> Fulfilling the standard of civilisation was, in case of the conquered political entities, to become fully integrated into the empire and, in the case of individuals, to become Russian, subjects of tsarist rule – a privilege, a step higher on the ladder of civilizational development, and a requirement. The means of transition from a 'stateless' and 'underdeveloped' political form into a state structure was only by means of incorporation into the empire.

Russia's policies were caught between empire- and nation-building, with simultaneous Russification and support for ethno-nationalism.<sup>69</sup> In order to acquire subjectivity, the conquered lands and peoples needed to become part of the Russian state. The process of passage to citizenship was intended to turn 'rebellious natives into loyal citizens'.<sup>70</sup> The principle of *sliyaniye*, however, stood in some contradiction to the creation of the "barbarous other". This brought challenges at the implementation stage. For instance Alexander II judicial reform was deliberately not introduced in the Caucasus and Central Asia due to "the savagery and backwardness" of these regions.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to contradictions brought forth by the principle of *sliyaniye*, not on rare occasions did the requirements of a civilising mission exceed the capabilities of Russian state administration. This led to a paradox. The Russian colonial enterprise was implemented not only by Russians but also by individuals from states Russia subjugated in the West, such as Poland. For a number of them participation in the colonizing mission was a form of punishment for engagement in liberation activities in their own homelands. Others used it as a form of career advancement. Jan Witkiewicz was one of the exiles from the colonized western part of the Russian empire. Assigned to the military service as the lowest rank border guard, he was quickly promoted and ultimately became the tsar's first emissary to Afghanistan.<sup>72</sup> Bronisław Grąbczewski, educated to join higher ranks of Russia's military, worked in the administration of the newly conquered areas in Central Asia. His extensive travels provided the empire with geographic and ethnographic details concerning Russian-Chinese borderlands

and made Grąbczewski one of the most respected members of the Russian Geographical Society.<sup>73</sup>

The civilising mission was a complex undertaking. Even though not all its parts have been the result of thorough planning, the outcome was an approach comprising military-political moves intertwined with scholarly and artistic ventures. Art was employed to support and promote the civilising mission. The target audience in this case was not the East, the mere subject of Russia's expansion, but the West, where Russia needed to position itself appropriately. It needed to be recognised as a forbearer of European civilisation. One such artistic *mission civilisatrice* show was organised in London. Russia displayed a number of Vasily Vereshchagin's paintings depicting Central Asia. The exhibition's catalogue stated:

The Central Asian population's barbarism is so glaring, its economic and social condition so degraded, that the sooner European civilization penetrates into the land, whether from one side or the other, the better.<sup>74</sup>

#### (ii) *Multiple functions of the standard*

The tsarist-era standard of civilisation served several objectives, some of which were analogous to those of the Western states, particularly the objective of creating and reproducing hierarchy between the centre and subordinated states. However, unlike its European counterparts, Russia applied the practices of the standard not only with the goal of reordering polities it subjugated, but also aiming to regain its great power status in Europe.

In its most direct application, the standard was supposed to help organize the conquered territories and it was a useful device to legitimise conquest. The paternalistic approach of *mission civilisatrice* was accompanied by the security argument underlining the need to promote legal order and secure frontiers. The following quotation serves as an example:

The Kiptchaks, Bashkirs, Calmucks and Kirgiz, all in their turn were conquered by the steadily *progressive power* of the Russian nation which had not only liberated Russia herself, but also freed Europe from the *terrors of the incursions of the barbaric hordes*. The history of our eastward movement is generally marked by the same characteristics. Proximity with savage tribes who recognized no international or other laws, except only the law of might, has compelled us to erect along our frontier a line of forts (...) Thus it has happened that the advance of Russia in the east has been a hopeless search after a secure

frontier, and such a position she will never find until her territories are coterminous with those of a *nation which respects treaties*, which is *sufficiently civilised* not to live on plunder and pillage.<sup>75</sup>

At the same time, however, the goal was to secure Russia's status in Europe, as an equal among other European states. It was to legitimise Russia as a 'civilised' state and secure its status of a great power. To be a great power, Russia needed to prove it acts like one. Hence its legitimization tactics were comparison-based. For instance, Alexander Gorchakov, Minister of Foreign Affairs to Tsar Alexander II, argued that it had been common for powerful and 'more civilised' states to dominate those less endowed with these qualities:

Like the United States in America, France in Africa, Holland in her colonies, and England in East India (...) it always happens that the more civilised State is forced, in the interests of the security of its frontier and its commercial relations, to exercise a certain ascendancy over most undesirable neighbours.<sup>76</sup>

This function of the standard of civilisation reveals the protracted inferiority complex Russia developed with regard to the West. In Asia, however, Russia could consider itself to be Europe's equal. Domination over large swaths of Asia was a way to gain Europe's recognition.<sup>77</sup> Russia employed practices used by the Western states to secure their position vis-à-vis non-Western world with different purpose in mind. Not only did it reproduce its pre-eminence over conquered and subjugated territories, but it also aimed at reordering the top of international politics, making itself into an equal among leading European states and claiming recognition as a great power. Russia's employment of the standard of civilisation practices turned out to be a far cry from their origins. The East became the source of the very much needed self-confidence: 'if Russia looked to the West from a position of relative weakness, it could still face the East with confidence and strength'.<sup>78</sup> In Asia Russia's self-depiction could be one of order, civilisation and universality.<sup>79</sup> For some, especially those representing the military, gaining Europe's recognition could be achieved simply by means of conquest for the sake of conquest. But the elite more broadly seemed to have reached a consensus – the civilising mission was an important part of Russia's relation to both – Asia and Europe.

### **Contemporary Russia and the new standard of civilisation**

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the Russian Federation faced a double challenge in its international relations. First, it had to forge anew its ties with the West. Secondly, it had to specify the attitude towards and devise policies with regard to its neighbourhood, the former

Soviet republics. Initially, Russia decided to seek close integration with the West and discounted ties with the newly emerged states, perceiving them as an obstacle in its dealings with Europe. This was a short-lived policy and towards the mid-1990s Russia, becoming gradually disappointed with the West, recovered the interest in the post-Soviet space.<sup>80</sup>

As in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Russia became trapped between self-identification as part of the West and portraying itself as a distinct polity. It took Moscow another decade, filled with twists and turns in relations with the U.S. and the EU, to redefine the basic contours of its foreign policy. Reinvigorated by its own material resurgence, Russia sought to play a more significant role on the international stage and by the mid-2000s rejected the idea of ‘joining’ or ‘following’ the West. Offers of joining started to be read as disrespectful, denying Russia the position of an architect of the global system and relegating it to the secondary function of a follower or executor of Europe’s wishes on the international scene. Moscow aimed at limiting what it saw as Western imposition and attempts at undermining or navigating Russia’s sovereign decisions. Seeing itself as a ‘norm-enforcer’, Russia aspired to position itself as the defender of the post-WWII international order, based on the principles of sovereignty, UN primacy and respect for international law.<sup>81</sup> This process was accompanied by the development of a specific political system in Russia, one which diverged more and more starkly from the Western ideal of liberal democracy and good governance.<sup>82</sup>

Seemingly, these developments meant Russia’s rejection of Western approaches to international politics, including practices recognised by the literature as the new standard of civilisation. Such a conclusion, however, overlooks differences with regard to norms Russia cherishes and policies it has been implementing in the global and regional realms. In the mid-2000s, despite the growing alienation from the West, Russia began pursuing policies towards the post-Soviet space which closely resembled practices of the new standard of civilisation. Moreover, Russia emulated selected Western practices in ways which altered their original purpose and made them increasingly identifiable with the 19<sup>th</sup>-century version of the standard of civilisation.

*(i) The new standard of civilisation in the post-Soviet space*

While for the West it has been the notion of state ‘failure’, ‘underdevelopment’ or ‘fragility’ which paved the way for the new standard of civilisation, Russia undermined its new neighbours’ sovereignty in more explicit ways. The process of discursive subordination of the newly independent states to the Russian ‘centre’ started long before the more



sophisticated approaches that Moscow developed in the 2000s and set the stage for the re-hierarchisation of the post-Soviet area. Shortly after the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia, determined to legitimise internationally its zone of special interests in the post-Soviet region, embarked upon securing what it saw as its unalienable rights in the region. In 1992 Evgenii Ambartsumov, the Supreme Soviet chair, declared that as the legal successor to the USSR, Russia had the right to a sphere of its vital interests and it ‘must seek the world community’s understanding and recognition of its interests in this space’.<sup>83</sup> The newly independent states were considered of lesser international standing than the successor to the Soviet Union. The concept of the ‘near abroad’ manifested and symbolised Russia’s challenging the right of the post-Soviet states to sovereignty.<sup>84</sup> This derogative language situated the newly independent states in a clearly inferior position, which facilitated the future application of the practices interpreted as the new standard of civilisation.

The ‘near abroad’ rhetoric has been changing. The claim to a privileged position and respect for special interests merged with the modelled on the West discourse of good neighbourly relations. The 2008 statement by the then Russian president Dmitry Medvedev is an accurate exposition of this trend:

‘... there are regions in which Russia has privileged interests. These regions are home to countries with which we share special historical relations and are bound together as friends and good neighbours, we will pay particular attention to our work in these regions and build friendly ties with these countries ...’.<sup>85</sup>

Despite this new rhetoric’s aspiration for political correctness, references to civilisation continue to figure prominently in speech acts, torn between the urge to manifest strength and the need to show benign motives. For instance, Russia’s political leadership denoted to the Eurasian Union as ‘the most civilised’ way of arranging regional relations.<sup>86</sup> Similarly to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century employment of the language of civilisation, Russia has been making use of civilizational vocabulary in order to justify and legitimise its regional policies.

The key Russian programmatic documents, the 2013 Foreign Policy Concept and the 2015 National Security Strategy demonstrate a contradictory approach towards post-Soviet states: . On the one hand, the foreign policy document stresses historical ties, common cultural and civilizational heritage, implying equality among the post-Soviet states. On the other hand, the concept’s rhetoric explicitly justifies Russia’s special rights and responsibilities in the region by referring to the fact that ethnic Russians continue to live in post-Soviet states.<sup>87</sup> Russia declares its respect for the choices made by particular states but

expects these states to fulfil their ‘obligations’ towards the perceived post-Soviet community, by way of supporting the integration process.<sup>88</sup> The 2015 National Security Strategy discourse of openness and friendliness is interwoven with clear statement of Russia’s own goals and the need to establish a model solution for post-Soviet states. Points 43 and 44 respectively declare: ‘Russia forges friendly relations with each of the CIS Member States on the basis of equality, mutual benefit, respect for and consideration of each other's interests (...)’ and ‘Russia sees as a priority the task of establishing the Eurasian Economic Union aiming not only to make the best use of mutually beneficial economic ties in the CIS space but also to become a model of association open to other states, a model that would determine the future of the Commonwealth states.’<sup>89</sup>

Following the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, the language of special historical ties with post-Soviet states was regularly invoked in order to justify Russia’s policy towards Ukraine. Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, paying lip service to post-Soviet state’s right to make their own choices in foreign policy, supplemented the historical-civilizational narrative of unity with references to strong economic ties. He stressed that Ukraine had been deeply embedded in the economics of the Commonwealth of Independent States and, along with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, was part of the biggest economic complex in the world, built for ‘decades if not centuries’.<sup>90</sup>

While Russia reactivated its policy towards the post-Soviet region capitalising on its material resurgence of the early-2000s, the emulation of the new standard of civilisation practices has been particularly visible in the economic sphere since the mid-2000s. The promotion of market economy and trade was to be aided by integration initiatives and development assistance. Even though Russia has not itself embraced the full spectrum of neo-liberal economic recipes and finalised its WTO accession only in 2012, it engaged in the setting of economic standards for the post-Soviet space.

The Eurasian Development Bank, established by Russia and Kazakhstan in 2006, has been the precursor of the approach modelled on the global standard of market civilisation. Its mission is ‘to facilitate the development of market economies, sustainable economic growth and the expansion of mutual trade and other economic ties in its member states’.<sup>91</sup> The institution uses neoliberal language reiterating the classical features of the Washington consensus. The Bank’s goals include the creation of market economies and institutional framework needed for such economies to thrive.<sup>92</sup> It declares its aim to ‘help promote

economic growth in the Bank's member states, encourage sustainable long-term development, mutual trade, joint ventures and transboundary holdings'.<sup>93</sup>

The Eurasian Bank turned out to be just a hallmark of things to come. In 2009, Russia initiated the most comprehensive attempt at reorganisation of the post-Soviet regional order by means of economic integration. Moscow started by putting forward the idea of the Customs Union which could link Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. The new organisation gained shape in 2010 with the introduction of a single tariff and a common custom code, both typical for integration patterns of the EU.<sup>94</sup> In 2012, the Customs Union evolved into the Common Economic Space. Two years later, in 2014, three member states signed a treaty establishing, as of January 2015, the Eurasian Economic Union. The 2015 saw Armenia and Kyrgyzstan joining the Union.

Russia claims the Eurasian Economic Union to be the most concerted integration and economic cooperation project. Despite the fact that many analysts point to the EEU's anti-EU character,<sup>95</sup> it is important to notice that the project is explicitly modelled on the European Union and its version of market economy. Requirements related to the market economy constitute a large part of this most recent push for integration in the post-Soviet sphere. The overarching stated goal is the creation of a single market among the participating states and the introduction of the four freedoms of movement, encompassing: goods, services, capital and labour. Integration within the EEU involves such areas as: macroeconomic policy, the operation and access to services provided by selected natural monopolies, competition policy, government subsidies for industry and agriculture, public procurement at local level, and the rules of intellectual property protection.<sup>96</sup>

Not only the objectives but also the EEU's institutional arrangements resemble the architecture of the EU. Integration is administered by a supra-national body, the College of the Eurasian Economic Commission, corresponding to the European Commission. College members are selected by member states to oversee 23 departments, responsible for particular economic sectors and issues. The College is supervised by the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission. Both are subordinate to the High Eurasian Economic Council, which operates at the level of prime ministers or presidents.<sup>97</sup>

While the European states in their international arrangements make effort to minimise differences in political and economic power, in the case of Russian-led integration the goal has been different. For Moscow, post-Soviet integration in the form of the EEU is to secure Russia's leadership and reinforce the existing hierarchical arrangements.<sup>98</sup> Integration is also

expected to foreclose the post-Soviet space from the European Union's influence. Russia emulated certain Western practices, changing their purpose in the process. In the post-Soviet space, integration became a tool for reproducing hierarchy rather than means for safeguarding equality, which makes its practices analogous to those of the new standard of civilisation.

Liberal interventionism – a term expressing criticism of humanitarian intervention and development aid – has also been incorporated under the new standard of civilisation idea. While Russia vehemently opposes Western liberal interventions, it does employ humanitarian and development aid as tools in its policies towards post-Soviet states. The donor role, similarly to the role of the centre of integration initiatives, is to Russia a matter of status. It establishes a state's position on the international arena.<sup>99</sup> Back in 2004, Russia still figured on the OECD list of aid recipients.<sup>100</sup> Russia's renunciation of the aid recipient role is part and parcel of Russia's strategy for achieving and maintaining self-esteem as well as making other actors recognize and acknowledge it. Rather than the improvement of specific conditions in the receiving state, the goal of Russia's development co-operation is to 'look seriously' in the international arena and to be perceived as a 'civilized' donor.<sup>101</sup>

In 2007, Russia adopted a policy strategy on development assistance – *The Concept of Russia's participation in development co-operation*.<sup>102</sup> Since then it has been building up its aid implementation agency – *Rossotrudnichestvo* – establishing and developing its branches in former Soviet republics. Russia's determination to be acknowledged as aid provider is best illustrated with Dmitri Medvedev emphasising the need for Russia's aid to be recognised as such: 'These states which obtain funds from us, should know better, where does the assistance come from'.<sup>103</sup>

The aspiration to play a donor role did not stand in the way of more crude practices. Russia constructed the need to defend the rights and welfare of Russian citizens and used it to legitimise intervention. Humanitarian arguments and the need to defend Russian compatriots were used to justify the use of military force in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014. On the one hand, Russia attempted to follow the Western practice of humanitarian intervention, on the other hand, it returned to the classical understanding of the standard of civilisation, in terms of defence of one's nationals in the 'peripheries'. Since the mid-2000s, Moscow granted Russian passports to the citizens of two Georgian break-away provinces, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This policy allowed Russia for invoking the obligation to defend 'its' citizens and use it to justify the use of military force in response to Georgia's attempt to bring back control over South Ossetia in 2008.<sup>104</sup> Russia's annexation of Crimea and the 'silent

intervention' in Ukraine in 2014 did not rely on the argument of defending Russia's nationals but were mired in the rhetoric of the need to protect ethnic Russians. Failing to produce any substantial evidence, Moscow continually argued that extreme nationalism of the post-Maidan Ukrainian government posed a threat to Russian minority.<sup>105</sup> These legitimization practices, employed in Georgia and Ukraine, are dangerously close to imperial practices of enforcing the standard of civilisation. Intervention to 'save' Russian nationals or ethnic Russians served as a relatively persuasive justification for a course of action that would otherwise risk contradicting Russia's own concern with territorial integrity and the supposedly cherished respect for sovereignty.<sup>106</sup>

*(ii) Dual functions of the new standard*

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century Russia amply drew upon Western practices interpreted as the new standard of civilisation in developing its policies in the post-Soviet space. Simultaneously, it gave new meaning and new purpose to practices such as economic integration, turning them into instruments of hierarchy building. Despite the fact that Moscow has been vocal in condemning the West for applying neo-colonial practices in the developing world, in particular the principle of aid conditionality applied by the EU, its own practices of the new standard of civilisation perpetuated inequality between Russia and independent states in the post-Soviet area.

Russia's goals, however, have been broader than the reproduction of hierarchy within the borders of the former Soviet Union. Russia's policies have been those of a status seeker, willing to enhance its clout globally. The application of analogous to Western practices was to help achieve this goal and satisfy the continuous Russia's yearning for recognition as the West's equal. At the turn of the century, Russia has once again attempted to compensate for its internal deficiencies with the emulation of specific practices towards its neighbourhood. As in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Russia chose to validate what it saw as its great power credentials establishing and enhancing its relative primacy as an imagined centre among post-Soviet peripheries. The road to a greater standing in the global realm required, so has been the logic of Russian political leadership, a re-establishing of a dominant regional position in the post-Soviet space.

The Eurasian Economic Union in particular has been seen by Russia as an entity enhancing Moscow's status of an equal vis-à-vis the West.<sup>107</sup> Though Russia has fiercely contested Western criteria of good governance and has strongly opposed 'extreme, Western-

style liberalism',<sup>108</sup> it has nevertheless implemented a version of regional integration explicitly modelled on the European Union. Moscow presented the Eurasian Economic Union as the exemplification of modern economic integration that is based on 'universal integration standards'.<sup>109</sup> As such, the Eurasian Economic Union is, among other goals, oriented at the demonstration that Russia is capable of implementing the same practices as the West. Moreover, Moscow made it clear that it expected the European Union to recognise Russia's equal status by opening an official dialogue with the Eurasian Economic Union. By entering into such a dialogue, the EU would recognise Russia's integration project as an equal structure. Russia's ultimate goal has been to gain acceptance of its concept of a 'Wider Europe'. According to this vision widely shared by the Russian elite, Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union should function as two equal components of a pan-European order.<sup>110</sup> According to the Russian elite, economic cooperation should be the initial component of the 'Wider Europe'. To that end Russia proposed to establish a free trade zone between the EEU and EU.<sup>111</sup> The concept of Wider Europe goes beyond the economic realm. It should lead to stronger political and security ties. The need for such cooperation is justified with reference to the interests of all Europeans: 'We continue to believe that the best way to ensure the interests of the peoples living in Europe is to form a common economic and humanitarian space from the Atlantic to the Pacific, so that the newly formed Eurasian Economic Union could be an integrating link between Europe and Asia Pacific'.<sup>112</sup> Cooperation between EEU and EU, forged not solely on the West's terms, would be the ultimate confirmation of Russia's equal standing with respect to Western Europe.

## **Conclusions**

Recent literature advocated taking closer look at current imperial civilising missions and how they help empires define their own role in the world.<sup>113</sup> This article engaged with one aspect of imperial politics - the standard of civilisation. I proposed broadening the debate about the standard beyond the well-described divisions between the West and colonies, or between the West and the South. Russia, with its history of colonial conquest, contemporary pretences to regional predominance and a complex relationship with the West, cuts across these traditional research paths. Russia's lagging behind in terms of internal governance has long been used as an argument for denying Moscow a place in European politics. Russia attempted to compensate for these deficiencies with intensified activity in its 'peripheries'. I argued that one way for Russia to deal with its lack of the 'European security of self'<sup>114</sup> had been to employ the standard of civilisation in its 'peripheries'. The standard of civilisation has

been used to position Russia as the representative of European civilisation towards the 'primitive' East and, more importantly, to make Russia equal among equals in Europe. As a result the standard of civilisation plays a twofold role for Russia. On the one hand, it is a way for a hierarchical structuring of regional politics and the re-arrangement of the 'peripheries' according to Russia's wishes. On the other hand, it is used to secure the imagined status of a power equal to the West.

The practices of the standard of civilisation have been essential in Russia's relations with other great powers. They have served as means of upgrading Russia's perceived status and as a way to legitimise the right of belonging to the 'club'. Unable to fulfil criteria of belonging to the Western family of states based on domestic arrangements, such as strong state institutions or democratic governance, Russia reached out for means of external validation of its great power credentials. The reordering of its peripheries, accompanied with the language of a civilising mission, has been an important component of the upgrading of its status on the international scene.

This discussion confirms the importance of Western ideas for Russia. The West continues to be the main reference point for Russian policies and an important aspect of Russia's construction of its own identity. Russia's engagement with Western ideas is far from straightforward. It does not stop at imitation. Emulating the standard of civilisation, Russia significantly modified it, adjusting it to specific circumstances. Bewildered by admiration, fear and contempt for Western structures and values, Russia copied but also modified selected elements of the standard of civilisation, adjusting it to its own needs. Making use of certain Western ideas does not mean Russia has subscribed to their normative underpinnings.

The case of Russia leads us to a broader conclusion regarding the standard of civilisation. Both for Gerritt Gong who introduced this concept in the IR literature, and for his critics, the standard of civilisation served to explain the hierarchical structure of international politics and the creation and durability of barriers between the centre and the peripheries. What emerges as a result of this analysis is a more complex picture of the standard's functions. The articulation of certain requirements continues to set the benchmark for inclusion and exclusion. For the West, the standard of civilisation has been a way of legitimising its pre-eminence and maintaining its advantage as a centre of international politics. But, the idea of the standard of civilisation, apart from facilitating the arrangement of international politics along the 'centre-periphery' lines, has been influencing relations between states in the

position of power. Rather than creating distinctions, the standard of civilisation has been used to show a state's equal position and regarded as an entry ticket to the club of powerful states.

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<sup>1</sup> Fyodor M. Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary. Vol. 2: 1877-1881* (Northwestern University Press 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard Of "Civilization" In International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Edward Keene, 'The Standard of 'Civilisation', the Expansion Thesis and the 19th-century International Social Space', *Millennium-Journal of International Studies*, 42(3), 2014, pp. 651-673; Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire: China and Japan's encounter with European international society* (Abingdon: Routledge 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Brett Bowden, 'In the Name of Progress and Peace: The 'Standard of Civilization' And the Universalizing Project', *Alternatives*, 29(1), January-February 2004, pp. 43-68; Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Brett Bowden and Leonard Seabrooke, 'Global Standards of Market Civilization', in Martin Hall and Patrick T. Jackson (eds.), *Civilizational Identity: The Production and Reproduction of 'Civilisations' in International Relations* (New York, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Jack Donnelly, 'Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?', *International Affairs*, 74(1), January-February 1998, pp. 1-23; Gerrit W. Gong, 'Standards of Civilization Today', in Mehdi Mozaffari (ed.), *Globalization and Civilizations* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002); Brett Bowden, 'To Rethink Standards of Civilisation, Start with the End', *Millennium-Journal of International Studies*, 42(3), 2014, pp. 614-631.

<sup>4</sup> Jan Zielonka, 'Empires and the Modern International System', *Geopolitics*, 17, 2015, p. 516.

<sup>5</sup> Bowden, 'In the Name of Progress and Peace'; Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*; Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire*; Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire*.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Hurrell, 'Narratives of emergence: Rising powers and the end of the Third World?', *Revista de Economia Política*, 33(2), 2013, p. 203.

<sup>7</sup> Gong, *The Standard Of "Civilization"*, p. 240.

<sup>8</sup> Gong, *The Standard Of "Civilization"*, pp. 21, 64. The discrimination of Japan and China in international relations was premised on the claim that they did not represent 'civilisation'. China was held to be a barbarous country and therefore excluded from international society, Xiaoming Zhang, 'China in the Conception of International Society: The English School's Engagements with China', *Review of International Studies*, 37(2), April 2011, p. 772.

<sup>9</sup> Gong, *The Standard Of "Civilization"*, pp. 4, 57.

<sup>10</sup> Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, pp. 6-11.

<sup>11</sup> Anghie maintains that the colonies and the way they related to European metropolises have influenced international law – previously deemed to stem exclusively from Europe, Antony Anghie, 'Finding the Peripheries: Sovereignty and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century International Law', *Harvard International Law Journal* 40, 1999; Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire*.

<sup>13</sup> Taesuh Cha, 'The formation of American exceptional identities: A three-tier model of the "standard of civilization" in US foreign policy', *European Journal of International Relations* 21(4), 2015, pp. 743–767.

<sup>14</sup> David P. Fidler, 'The Return of the Standard of Civilization', *Chicago Journal of International Law*, 2(1), 2001, p. 142.

<sup>15</sup> Gong, 'Standards of Civilization Today'.

<sup>16</sup> Brett Bowden, 'Civilization, Standards and Markets', in Bowden and Seabrooke (eds.), *Global Standards*, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Bowden and Seabrooke, 'Civilizing Markets', p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Bowden, 'To Rethink Standards of Civilisation...', p. 629.

<sup>19</sup> Fidler, 'The Return of the Standard of Civilization'.

<sup>20</sup> Bowden, 'To Rethink Standards of Civilisation...', p. 615

<sup>21</sup> See for instance: Bowden, 'To Rethink Standards of Civilisation...'; Ann. E. Towns, *Women and States: Norms and Hierarchies in International Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Jack Donnelly, 'Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?', *International Affairs* 74(1), 1998, pp. 1-23.

<sup>22</sup> Adam Watson, 'Russia and the European States System', in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), p. 61. Already in 1984, the *Foreign Affairs* review of Bull and Watson's *The Expansion of international society* assessed it as 'Western in outlook', with no



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profound discussion of the 'Third' or 'Communist' worlds. *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1984/85, review by John C. Campbell.

<sup>23</sup> David Gillard, 'British and Russian Relations with Asian Governments in the Nineteenth Century', in Bull and Watson (eds.), *The Expansion*, p. 90, emphasis added. This affirmative stance with regard to Russia's role in international society has not prevented Bull from assessing that Russia in Europe 'has always been perceived as semi-Asiatic in character' Bull, 'The Revolt against the West', in Bull and Watson (eds.), *The Expansion*, p. 218.

<sup>24</sup> Bull, 'The Revolt against the West'.

<sup>25</sup> Dominic Lieven, *Russia Against Napoleon* (London: Penguin Books 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Dominic Lieven, 'Dilemmas of Empire 1850-1918. Power, Territory, Identity', *Journal of Contemporary History* 34(2), 1999, p. 170; David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration*, Kindle ed. (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 233.

<sup>27</sup> The differences in Russia's governance, mainly its inability to meet Europe-wide standards, is claimed to have undermined Russia's credentials to great-power-hood and Russia's character as a European and civilised state, Iver B. Neumann, 'Russia as a Great Power, 1815-2007', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 11(2), 2008, pp. 37-38.

<sup>28</sup> Watson, 'Russia and the European States System', p. 61.

<sup>29</sup> Barry Buzan, *From international to world society? English School theory and the social structure of globalisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 238.

<sup>30</sup> Pami Aalto, 'Russia's Quest for International Society and the Prospects for Regional-Level International Societies', *International Relations* 21(4), 2007, pp. 459-478.

<sup>31</sup> Derek Averre, 'Russian Foreign Policy and the Global Political Environment', *Problems of Post-Communism* 55(5), 2008, pp. 28-39.

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Browning, 'Reassessing Putin's Project. Reflections on IR Theory and the West', *Problems of Post-Communism* 55(5), 2008, pp. 3-13; Buzan, *From International to World Society?*; John Mueller, 'Force, Legitimacy, Success, and Iraq', *Review of International Studies* 31(S1), 2005, pp. 109-125.

<sup>33</sup> Dmitri Trenin, 'Russia leaves the West', *Foreign Affairs*, 85(4), 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Michael McFaul, 'Moscow's Choice', *Foreign Affairs*, 93(6), 2014 November/December.

<sup>35</sup> Alexander Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand 1868-1910: A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>36</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Chamboredon and Jean-Claude Passeron, *The Craft of Sociology: Epistemological Preliminaries*, Trans Richard Nice, ed. Beate Kraus, (New York: Walter de Gruyter 1991), p. 163.

<sup>37</sup> Isaiah Berlin, transcribed BBC Radio 3 recording of 14 December 1973 (transmission 24 July 1974). Similar statements have been voiced with regard to the Russian system of governance and forms of social life, which were perceived in great part as having been copied from Europe and altered in the process, Valentina A. Voropayeva, ed., *Khrestomatiya po istorii Kyrgyzstana (s drevneyshikh vremen do XX v.)* (Bishkek: Ilim, 1997), p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> See for instance Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken Books, 2004 [1958]); John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire. The Global Expansion of Britain* (London: Allen Lane, 2012) for a discussion of the driving forces behind British colonialism. Morrison discusses Britain's shifting colonial policies in detail, see: Morrison, *Russian Rule*.

<sup>39</sup> James Long, *Russia, Central Asia, and British India. By a British Subject* (Truebner and Co, 1865).

<sup>40</sup> George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia and the Anglo-Russian Question* (London: Longmans, Green, and co, 1889).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 401. This opinion was shared more widely in Europe. Prussian Crown Princess Victoria is reported to have expressed a similar opinion in a letter to her mother, Queen Victoria, stating that Russians could play no part in Europe's civilising mission since they were little better than those they were supposed to be civilising, Lieven, 'Dilemmas of Empire', p. 169.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 392.

<sup>44</sup> Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism*, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> Viktor F. Shapovalov, *Istoki i smysl rossiyskoi tsivilizatsii* (Moskva: Fair-Press, 2003); Boris S. Yerasov, *Tsivilizatsii i kul'tury. Rossiya i vostok: tsivilizatsionnyye otnosheniya* (Moskva: Institut Vostokovedeniya RAN, 1994).

<sup>46</sup> In Russia, this debate has been especially salient between the "Westernisers" and "Slavophiles". Contrary to the Westernisers (*zapadniki*) who believed that Russia was pursuing the same direction as other European states but was backward, the Slavophiles claimed that Russia must follow its own path, Voropayeva, *Khrestomatiya*, pp. 7-11.

- <sup>47</sup> Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, p. 5.
- <sup>48</sup> Marlene Laruelle, 'The Orient in Russian Thought at the Turn of the Century. Scholarly Debates on Eurasianism', in Dmitry Shlapentokh (ed.), *Russia between East and West* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007), p. 22.
- <sup>49</sup> Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, pp. 44-45.
- <sup>50</sup> Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, 'Asia through Russian Eyes', in Wayne S. Vucinich (ed.), *Russia and Asia. Essays on the Influence of Russia on the Asian Peoples*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1972), p. 29.
- <sup>51</sup> Andreas Kappeler and Alfred Clayton, *The Russian Empire. A Multiethnic History* (Harlow: Longman London, 2001), p. 168.
- <sup>52</sup> Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, p. 47. This part of the article is not meant to dismiss differences in how Asia was viewed in Russia. There was no one way of imagining the *Orient*. Moreover, there was little uniformity between the mind of the ruling elite and scholarly Russian views of Asia, which were mainly influenced by the German academy, Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism*, p. 8. The Orient for some signified the Ottoman Empire, for others it meant Turkestan, India; others looked towards China and Japan.
- <sup>53</sup> Nathaniel Knight, 'Grigor'ev in Orenburg, 1851-1862. Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire', *Slavic Review*, 59(1), pp. 74
- <sup>54</sup> Michael Khodarkovsky, 'Ignoble Savages and Unfaithful Subjects' in Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (eds.), *Russia's Orient. Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2001 [1997]), pp. 10-15.
- <sup>55</sup> Yuri Slezkine, 'Naturalists Versus Nations. Eighteenth-Century Russian Scholars Confront Ethnic Diversity' in Brower and Lazzerini (eds.), *Russia's Orient*, p. 32.
- <sup>56</sup> Kappeler and Clayton, *The Russian Empire*.
- <sup>57</sup> This did not, though, occur until 1822 and the 'statute concerning the administration of *inorodtsy*' was created, which classified them according to their *level of civilisation*. Ibid., p. 169.
- <sup>58</sup> Quotation after Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, pp. 26-30.
- <sup>59</sup> A. Khoroshchin, 'Zametki po dorogam Srednei Azii', *Voyennyi sbornik*, No. 1, 1870, pp. 49-50.
- <sup>60</sup> *Kaufmanskii sbornik, izdannyy v pamiat' 25 liet, istekshikh so dnia smerti pokoritelia i ustroitelia Turkestanskago kraia general-ad"iutanta K.P. fon-Kaufmana I-go*, Moskva 1910; J. Rohozinski, *Bawelna, samowary i sartowie. Muzułmańskie okrainy carskiej Rosji 1795-1916*, Warszawa: 2014, pp. 391-392.
- <sup>61</sup> Riasanovsky, 'Asia through Russian Eyes', pp. 13-15.
- <sup>62</sup> Knight, 'Grigor'ev in Orenburg...'. For a broader elaboration, see: Rohozinski, *Bawelna, samowary i sartowie...*
- <sup>63</sup> Laruelle, 'The Orient', pp. 23-24.
- <sup>64</sup> Khodarkovsky, 'Ignoble Savages', p. 21; Slezkine, 'Naturalists Versus Nations'.
- <sup>65</sup> Kappeler and Clayton, *The Russian Empire*, p. 168.
- <sup>66</sup> T. Kenensariyev, *Ekonomicheskaya politika tsarskogo pravitelstva v Kyrgyzstane vo 2-i polovine XIX - Nachala XX vv.* (Bishkek: 2009), p. 186.
- <sup>67</sup> Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, p. 3.
- <sup>68</sup> Kenensariyev, *Ekonomicheskaya politika*, p. 186. For instance, attempts were made at the codification of *adat* (the unwritten nomadic law) in order to include the newly conquered territories into the system of governance, Olga Brusina, 'Russian Experience of Reforming Nomadic Courts According to Adat in Turkestan, 1850-1900', *Journal of Legal Pluralism & Unofficial Law* 52, 2006, p. 32.
- <sup>69</sup> Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient*, 23-26.
- <sup>70</sup> Dov Yaroshevsky, 'Empire and Citizenship' in Brower and Lazzerini (eds.), *Russia's Orient*, p. 61.
- <sup>71</sup> Aleksandr Morrison, „My ne anglichane...”. K voprosu ob iskluchitelnosti rossiiskogo imperializma”, *Vostok Svyshhe*, XXXVIII(3), 2015.
- <sup>72</sup> Władysław Jewsiewicki, *Batyr. O Janie Witkiewiczzu 1808-1839* (Warszawa: PIW 1983).
- <sup>73</sup> Bronisław Grąbczewski, *Podróże generała Grąbczewskiego* (Warszawa 1924).
- <sup>74</sup> Quoted after Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism*, p. 87.
- <sup>75</sup> Mikhail A. Terentyef, *Russia and England in Central Asia* (Calcutta: Foreign Department Press, 1875), pp. 14-16, emphasis added.
- <sup>76</sup> Quoted after Martin Evans, *Securing the Indian Frontier in Central Asia: Confrontation and Negotiation, 1865-1895* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 147.
- <sup>77</sup> Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism*, p. 4.
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 234.
- <sup>79</sup> Khodarkovsky, 'Ignoble Savages', p. 10; Yaroshevsky, 'Empire and Citizenship', p. 67.
- <sup>80</sup> Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's foreign policy: change and continuity in national identity*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, MD, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013).
- <sup>81</sup> Richard Sakwa, 'A 'New Cold War' or Twenty Years' Crisis? Russia and International Politics', *International Affairs* 84, no. 2 (2008): 241-67.

- <sup>82</sup> Aalto, 'Russia's Quest', p. 463; Browning, 'Reassessing Putin's Project', p. 7; S. Neil MacFarlane, 'Russian Perspectives on Order and Justice', in Rosemary Foot, John Lewis Gaddis, and Andrew Hurrell (eds.) *Order and Justice in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 199-201.
- <sup>83</sup> *Izvestiya*, 7 August 1992.
- <sup>84</sup> Stephen Page, 'The Creation of a Sphere of Influence: Russia and Central Asia', *International Journal* 49(4), (1994), p. 789.
- <sup>85</sup> Dmitri Medvedev, 'Interwju Rossijskim Telekanalam «Pierwyj», «Rossija», NTW', 31 August 2008.
- <sup>86</sup> Dmitri Medvedev, 'Interview for Georgian television Rustavi-2', 6 August 2013 (via *Johnson's Russia List* 2013-#143, 7 August 2013).
- <sup>87</sup> Russian Federation, *Kontsepsiya Vneshnei Politiki Rossijskoi Federatsii* (Moskva 2013), point 45.
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, point 50.
- <sup>89</sup> Russian Federation, President Rossii, *Ukaz Prezidenta Rossijskoi Federatsii ot 31 dekabriya 2015 g. N 683 "O strategii natsionalnoi bezopasnosti Rossijskoi Federatsii"* (Moskva 2015), points 43, 44.
- <sup>90</sup> Vladimir Putin, *Vystupleniye na vstreche glav gosudarstv Tamozhennogo Soyuza s Prezidentom Ukrainy i predstavitelami Yevropejskogo Soyuza*, 26 August 2014.
- <sup>91</sup> The Eurasian Development bank's webpage, [http://www.eabr.org/e/press\\_center/press-releases/index.php?id\\_4=30125](http://www.eabr.org/e/press_center/press-releases/index.php?id_4=30125) (20 September 2015).
- <sup>92</sup> *Eurasian Development Bank Annual Report*, 2012, p. 35.
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- <sup>94</sup> Iwona Wiśniewska, *Eurasian integration. Russia's attempt at the economic unification of the Post-Soviet area*, OSW Studies 44 (Warsaw: Centre for Eastern Studies 2013), p. 12-14.
- <sup>95</sup> David Cadier, 'Policies Towards the Post-Soviet Space: The Eurasian Economic Union as an Attempt to Develop Russia's Structural Power?' in David Cadier and Margot Light (eds.) *Russia's Foreign Policy. Ideas, Domestic Politics and External Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 156-174.
- <sup>96</sup> Wiśniewska, *Eurasian integration*, pp. 16-18.
- <sup>97</sup> Nicu Popescu, *Eurasian Union: the real, the imaginary and the likely*, Chaillot Paper 132 (Paris: EUISS 2014), p. 9.
- <sup>98</sup> Popescu, *Eurasian Union*; Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).
- <sup>99</sup> Interview by the author, 18 October 2013, high-ranking state official of the Russian Federation, Moscow. See also Dmitri A. Birichevskii and Ivan A. Safranchuk, 'Osnovnyye kharakteristiki rossijskoi politiki v oblasti SMR', *Vestnik Mezhdunarodnykh Organizatsii* 2, 2013, pp. 86-90.
- <sup>100</sup> For a discussion on Russian public perceptions being an aid recipient and an aid donor, see Anna Brezhneva and Daria Ukhova, *Russia as a humanitarian aid donor*, Oxfam Discussion Paper (Oxfam 2013), <<http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/dp-russia-humanitarian-donor-150713-en.pdf>> (25 October 2014), p. 20.
- <sup>101</sup> Birichevskii and Safranchuk, 'Osnovnyye kharakteristiki', p. 86.
- <sup>102</sup> Russian Federation, *Kontsepsiya uchastiya Rossijskoi Federatsii v sodeistvii mezhdunarodnomu razvitiyu*. (Moskva 2007)
- <sup>103</sup> Konstantin Kosachev, 'Rossotrudnichestvo: istoki, realii, perspektivy', *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'*, 9, 2013, pp. 21-29.
- <sup>104</sup> Roy Allison, 'The Russian case for military intervention in Georgia: international law, norms and political calculation', *European Security*, 18(2), pp. 173-200.
- <sup>105</sup> Roy Allison, 'Russian 'Deniable' intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules', *International Affairs*, 90(6), 2014, pp. 1262-1263; see also Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine...*
- <sup>106</sup> Vladimir Putin, 'Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club', Moscow, 20 September 2013.
- <sup>107</sup> Evgenii Vinokurov, 'From Lisbon to Hanoi: the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union in Greater Eurasia', in Kadri Liik (ed.) *Russia's "pivot" to Eurasia* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations 2014).
- <sup>108</sup> Vladimir Putin, 'Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club', Moscow, 20 September 2013, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19243> (20 May 2014).
- <sup>109</sup> Russian Federation, *Kontsepsiya Vneshnei Politiki Rossijskoi Federatsii*.
- <sup>110</sup> Marek Menkiszak, *Greater Europe. Putin's vision of European (dis)integration*, OSW Studies 46 (Warszawa: OSW 2013).
- <sup>111</sup> *Russia plans to promote an idea of establishing a free trade zone between the European Union and the Eurasian Customs Union*, Sputnik News, 24 November 2014, <http://sputniknews.com/europe/20141122/1015027511.html> (20 May 2015).
- <sup>112</sup> Sergei Lavrov, 'Russia's Foreign Policy: Historical Background', *Russia in Global Politics*, 15(1), January-March, 2016.

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<sup>113</sup> Zielonka, 'Empires and the Modern International System...', p. 515

<sup>114</sup> Iver B. Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations* (Burns & Oates, 1996), p. 208.