

# *A Four-Dimensional Analysis of the Current Chinese Leadership's Discussion on the "New Form of Human Civilization"*

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**Abstract:** The concept of a "new form of human civilization" emerges as a distinct model developed by the Chinese people under the leadership of the Party, successfully navigating the path of Chinese modernization. It encapsulates the historical achievements of socialism with Chinese characteristics and carries profound significance. This paper constructs a four-dimensional analytical framework for understanding this concept, based on two horizontal dimensions—"history to present"—and two vertical dimensions—"world civilization to Chinese civilization." Through a cross-dimensional perspective, it explores four key aspects: the introduction and absorption of Marxist cultural thought, the inheritance and evolution of China's rich traditional culture, the theoretical foundation and practical exploration of "the second combination" in modern China, and the vision of a global community with a shared future. This analysis aims to deepen the comprehensive understanding of the new form of human civilization and its rich implications.

## 1. Foreword

In the 21st century, China's development model and cultural philosophy have garnered increasing global attention. As a fundamental theory guiding the cultural development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the current Chinese leadership's Cultural Thought firmly upholds Marxism as its ideological cornerstone, emphasizing cultural confidence and innovation to meet the evolving demands of the modern era. Within this theoretical framework, the notion of a "new form of human civilization" not only highlights the historical progress of socialism with Chinese characteristics but also embodies the collective efforts of the Chinese people, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, in shaping a unique modernization pathway. This concept not only reflects China's historical development trajectory but also offers a profound perspective on the global evolution of civilization<sup>[1]</sup>.

Current academic research on the "new form of human civilization" primarily explores its conceptual definition, intrinsic value, structural logic, and practical implementation. However, discussions regarding its developmental trajectory remain relatively fragmented. A more systematic examination from multiple perspectives will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of its foundational principles and broader implications. (See Figure 1)

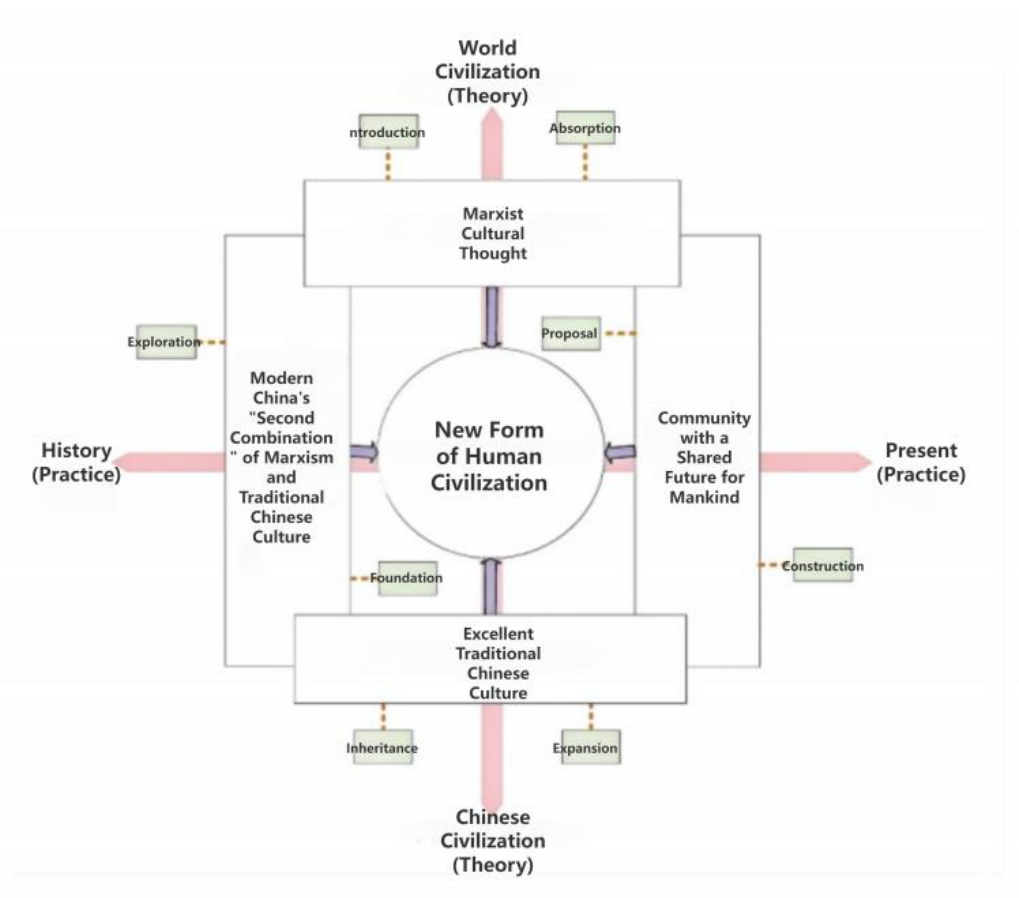


Figure 1 Analytic framework

## 2. New Form of Human Civilization

The concept of the "new form of human civilization" emerges against the backdrop of global transformations in political, economic, and historical contexts. It is introduced as a response to the challenges posed by globalization and the evolving dynamics of international development. Chinese modernization, deeply rooted in China's rich traditional culture, integrates the principles of scientific socialism while drawing upon the essence of diverse civilizations<sup>[2]</sup>. This modernization model offers an alternative to the Western-centric paradigm, showcasing a distinct approach to human progress.

Currently, the world faces pressing challenges in areas such as peace, development, security, and global governance. At this critical juncture, the concept of a new form of human civilization—nurtured by over 5,000 years of Chinese cultural heritage—presents a unique framework for advancing human progress<sup>[3]</sup>. It also provides developing nations with an alternative pathway to modernization, shaped by their own cultural and historical contexts<sup>[4]</sup>.

At its core, this new form of civilization prioritizes people over capital, mitigates polarization through common prosperity, transcends materialism by emphasizing holistic human development, and fosters global cooperation based on equality rather than hegemony. Under the guidance of national leadership, China's modernization model has moved beyond the traditional capital-driven modernization path, centering instead on a people-oriented approach<sup>[5]</sup>.

China's modernization goals consistently focus on enhancing living standards and improving social well-being across economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Policy formulation and implementation prioritize the public interest, ensuring progress in education, healthcare, housing, and elderly care. Additionally, social governance and legal frameworks actively encourage civic

participation, reinforcing the protection of individual rights and social justice. The targeted poverty alleviation initiatives have successfully lifted nearly 100 million rural citizens out of poverty, marking a significant achievement in global development efforts<sup>[6]</sup>.

Beyond material progress, the holistic development of individuals remains a key objective. This involves fostering both economic well-being and cultural enrichment, ensuring comprehensive personal growth. On the international stage, China continues to play a constructive role in promoting global peace, sustainable development, and a balanced international order. Through these efforts, the concept of a new form of human civilization extends its influence, providing insights into alternative modernization models that emphasize inclusivity, sustainability, and shared prosperity.

### **3. The Formation of the New Form of Human Civilization: Rooted in the Inheritance and Evolution of Traditional Chinese Culture**

As emphasized in historical discourse, the rich legacy of Chinese civilization has played a crucial role in shaping the country's distinctive path of modernization. From the perspective of "Chinese civilization—history—present," the theoretical foundation of the new form of human civilization is deeply rooted in the core values of traditional Chinese culture<sup>[7]</sup>. This legacy is continuously refined through creative transformation and innovative adaptation, ensuring its relevance in contemporary society.

Traditional Chinese culture serves as the spiritual foundation of the Chinese nation. It encompasses profound philosophical insights, ethical norms, and aesthetic principles, reflecting the historical aspirations and cultural identity of its people<sup>[8]</sup>. Over millennia, Chinese civilization has nurtured a system of philosophical thought and fundamental values that continue to shape societal governance and human development. These enduring principles provide the ideological basis for the new form of human civilization and its value framework.

One of the central tenets of traditional Chinese philosophy is its worldview. The concept of "Jun Zhe civilization" mentioned in *Shang Shu · Shun Dian* symbolizes the radiance of virtue, while *Zhouyi · Ben Gua* highlights the fundamental role of civilization in fostering humanity. These classical ideas underscore the depth and longevity of Chinese cultural heritage while aligning with the principles of global governance embedded in the new form of human civilization. In the context of globalization, this civilization model emphasizes mutual dependence and collective well-being, reflecting a modern interpretation of "harmony" (he)—a core principle in Chinese culture that supports the vision of a community with a shared future for humankind<sup>[9]</sup>.

The concept of harmony, deeply embedded in traditional Chinese culture, further enriches the theoretical framework of the new form of human civilization. In *The Book of Rites*, the doctrine of the Mean asserts: "Harmony is the guiding principle of heaven, and all things flourish under it." This philosophy advocates the harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature, between individuals and society, and within human relationships. As an integrated civilizational model, the new form of human civilization aspires to coordinated development across multiple dimensions, including material, political, spiritual, social, and ecological civilization. This holistic vision reflects a profound pursuit of social harmony and sustainable development.

Ethical concepts in traditional Chinese culture, such as "The people are the foundation of the state" and "The unity of man and nature," provide an essential value framework for the development of a new form of human civilization. The principle "The people are the foundation of the country" underscores the central role of the people in governance, emphasizing their well-being and active participation in societal development. This aligns with the "people-centered" value orientation of the new form of human civilization, highlighting the commitment to safeguarding public interests and social equity. Similarly, the ecological principle of "the unity of man and nature" advocates for

harmony between humans and the natural world. This concept resonates with the pursuit of ecological civilization, emphasizing the importance of sustainable development and environmental conservation within the broader framework of modern societal progress.

Traditional Chinese cultural values also emphasize practical engagement and innovation, as reflected in the maxims "innovation" and "unremitting self-improvement." These principles encapsulate the Chinese nation's enduring spirit of adaptability and perseverance, forming a philosophical and practical foundation for the advancement of a new form of human civilization. In the contemporary era, this civilizational model fosters innovation while preserving cultural heritage, driving progress in fields such as science, technology, economy, and culture.

The role of traditional Chinese values in shaping the new form of human civilization is both fundamental and transformative. These values serve not only as the cornerstone of cultural confidence but also as a catalyst for cultural innovation. The spiritual characteristics and developmental trajectory of Chinese civilization exist as an interwoven and mutually reinforcing organic system. Concepts such as "benevolence, prioritizing the people, integrity, justice, harmony, and the pursuit of universal harmony" have been refined over centuries of historical accumulation. In the modern era, these principles continue to evolve, gaining new interpretations and contemporary applications that enhance their relevance and vitality. As a result, they not only provide a cultural foundation for China's modernization but also offer philosophical guidance for the construction of a new form of human civilization.

The evolution of traditional Chinese culture is reflected in its creative transformation and innovative development. In the theoretical framework of the new form of human civilization, this evolution manifests through the modern interpretation and practical application of traditional values. This process not only ensures the inheritance of cultural heritage but also expands and adapts its meaning to align with modern society and globalization.

The modern transformation of Chinese traditional values revolves around integrating time-honored ethical principles with socialist core values to address contemporary societal needs. Traditional values represent widely recognized and deeply embedded moral principles that have guided Chinese civilization across different historical periods and societal contexts. Key elements of traditional Chinese thought—including Dao ("Tao"), human nature ("sex"), honesty, the ideal gentleman ("junzi"), and the sage ("shengren")—serve as the philosophical foundation for the new form of human civilization. Their modern adaptation focuses on values such as compassion and social responsibility, justice and fairness, mutual respect and ethical norms, wisdom and rationality, integrity and trust, as well as harmony and balance—all of which contribute to the development of a sustainable and just modern society.

From a conceptual perspective, the extension of traditional Chinese wisdom—such as the "Yin-Yang and Five Elements" theory and "self-cultivation"—finds new expressions in modern ecological philosophy and the refinement of personal development frameworks. On a fundamental level, the core spiritual principles of traditional Chinese culture—such as respect, perseverance, and social responsibility—continue to inspire resilience and innovation. These principles are vividly reflected in the new form of human civilization, particularly in its unwavering commitment to technological advancement and social progress.

#### **4. The Formation of the New Form of Human Civilization: Influence of Marxist Cultural Thought**

In his speech marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, it was emphasized that the success of socialism with Chinese characteristics is fundamentally attributed to Marxism. From the perspective of world civilization—history—present, the theoretical foundation

of the new form of human civilization is deeply influenced by Marxist cultural thought. This influence is reflected in the Sinicization of Marxism, a process through which Marxist theory has been adapted to align with China's historical, social, and cultural realities over time.

The introduction of Marxist cultural thought into China represents a historical evolution closely intertwined with the country's development trajectory. At the core of Marxist thought lies historical materialism and the theory of social class dynamics. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels assert that history is fundamentally shaped by class struggle, and that culture, as part of the superstructure, reflects the underlying social and economic structures.

At the dawn of the 20th century, China was undergoing profound social transformations and ideological shifts. Amidst the decline of the feudal order and the challenges posed by external pressures, Chinese intellectuals actively sought solutions to national rejuvenation. In this historical context, Marxism emerged as a compelling ideological framework, offering new analytical tools to diagnose and address the nation's challenges. Over time, Marxist cultural thought became an integral theoretical foundation in shaping the new form of human civilization.

The absorption and adaptation of Marxist cultural thought within China has been a dynamic and complex process, characterized by different expressions across various historical periods. From a contemporary standpoint, the conceptualization of the new form of human civilization is a direct result of the progressive integration of Marxist thought into China's socio-political landscape. This theoretical integration has not only established a strong ideological foundation but has also provided a practical roadmap for the development and realization of this new civilizational model.

Marxist cultural thought posits that culture is the objectification of human essential power, emerging as both the product and result of practical activities. This perspective reveals the intrinsic connection between culture, individuals, society, and the human spirit, underscoring culture's fundamental role in shaping human development. The new form of human civilization is built upon the principle of comprehensive progress, encompassing material, spiritual, social, political, and ecological dimensions. The essence of Marxist cultural thought aligns closely with the holistic developmental approach embedded in this new civilizational model.

Furthermore, Marxist thought highlights culture as a driving force of societal transformation, emphasizing its interaction with material productive forces. Within the new form of human civilization, cultural development is regarded as a key enabler of social progress and economic advancement. This concept is reflected in the current Chinese leadership's cultural thought, which reinforces the centrality of core values in cultural construction—a principle that resonates with Marxist ideals of human liberation and the pursuit of comprehensive individual development. Additionally, Marxist cultural theory advocates for cultural diversity, exchange, and mutual learning, an idea that aligns with the new form of human civilization's emphasis on inclusivity and cross-civilizational dialogue.

The Marxist critique of modern civilization's paradoxes provides an essential theoretical tool for analyzing and addressing contemporary societal challenges, offering a crucial ideological foundation for the development of the new form of human civilization.

Marx and Engels critically examined the "paradox of civilization" within capitalist societies, exposing the complex interrelationship between culture, economy, and politics. In capitalist systems, culture is frequently commodified, serving as a mechanism for capital accumulation and social stratification, ultimately leading to the alienation of both culture and human beings. As Marxist theory asserts, capitalist culture often masks class interests under the guise of universality, reinforcing systemic inequalities. This commercialization and alienation of culture is one of the defining contradictions of modern capitalist civilization.

From a humanistic perspective, Marxist cultural thought advocates for the free and comprehensive development of individuals, offering a fundamental resolution to the paradoxes of modern civilization.

Capitalist systems, by nature, tend to restrict human potential, limiting creativity and self-realization. In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx argued that the ultimate goal of social development is the unrestricted growth of human capabilities, a vision that necessitates the transcendence of capitalist constraints.

Looking toward the future, Marx and Engels envisioned a social and cultural landscape in which culture would serve as a shared wealth accessible to all, fostering the holistic development of individuals. As they famously stated: "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." This optimistic vision of cultural and social progress provides both direction and inspiration for the evolution of modern civilization.

From the perspective of Marxist cultural thought, the new form of human civilization transcends the inherent contradictions found in traditional Western civilizational paradigms. By promoting the coordinated development of five key dimensions—material, political, spiritual, social, and ecological civilization—this new model establishes a people-centered approach, overcoming the alienation and objectification often associated with materialist-driven societal structures.

At the core of the new form of human civilization lies the recognition of culture's essential role in fostering holistic human development. This framework champions cultural diversity and inclusivity, advocating for a harmonious and progressive society built upon mutual respect and shared values. Unlike the commercialization and commodification of culture often observed in capitalist systems, this new civilizational model envisions a future where culture becomes a shared resource, accessible to all.

Ultimately, the new form of human civilization paves the way for a modern developmental trajectory centered on the freedom and comprehensive advancement of humanity, leveraging cultural empowerment as a fundamental driver of social transformation.

## **5. The Formation of the New Form of Human Civilization: Rooted in the Exploration and Foundation of the "Second Combination" in Modern China**

The "second combination" refers to the historical process of integrating the fundamental principles of Marxism with China's specific socio-historical realities and rich traditional culture. This process embodies the localized adaptation and practical application of Marxist cultural thought in China, serving as both a theoretical foundation and a guiding framework for the new form of human civilization.

From the perspective of "world civilization—Chinese civilization—historical development," the conceptualization of this new form of civilization emerged through modern China's continuous efforts to advance the Sinicization of Marxism. This process is also reflected in cross-cultural exchanges and intellectual dialogues between China and the broader global community, facilitating mutual learning and shared innovation.

In modern China, amid external pressures from Western powers and internal challenges posed by feudal structures, progressive Chinese thinkers embarked on a quest to revitalize the nation, ultimately leading to the formation of the "first combination." During this period, China's societal and cultural standing declined significantly, prompting intellectuals to seek solutions. Shi Xian introduced the notion of "seeking truth from the West," which became the logical starting point for the first combination.

Advocates of the Westernization Movement, such as Zeng Guofan and Zuo Zongtang, pursued a strategy of "learning from foreigners to counter foreigners," aiming to resist external threats through the adoption of Western science and technology. Reformists like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao promoted the idea of constitutional monarchy, believing that political modernization could strengthen



the nation. Sun Yat-sen and other revolutionaries went further, calling for the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of a republican system, seeking national independence and democratic governance through Western political ideals. Meanwhile, figures such as Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, leaders of the New Culture Movement, advocated for breaking away from Confucian traditions and embracing Western democracy and scientific rationalism as a means of awakening public consciousness and advancing social progress. These intellectual debates and movements gradually paved the way for the integration of Marxism with China's socio-political realities.

The fusion of Marxist principles with traditional Chinese culture evolved through a progressive transformation, shifting from superficial adoption to deep theoretical integration. Initially, when Marxist thought was introduced to China, it was primarily applied as a theoretical framework to interpret China's socio-political conditions. However, it lacked substantive integration with Chinese cultural traditions. Over time, scholars and policymakers actively explored ways to synthesize Marxist ideology with China's historical and cultural heritage. This process was not merely formal but also substantive, shaping theoretical discourse and practical applications in China's governance model.

A notable example of this fusion is the strategic framework developed during the revolutionary era, which represents a successful integration of Marxist fundamentals with the realities of the Chinese revolutionary struggle. The ideological framework of early Chinese revolutionary leadership not only upheld the core tenets of Marxism but also drew upon elements of traditional Chinese philosophy, recognizing the value of historical wisdom in shaping modern governance. As The early revolutionary leadership famously stated, "From Confucius to Sun Yat-sen, we must summarize and inherit this precious heritage..."—a reflection of the ongoing synthesis between Marxist thought and Chinese cultural traditions.

In the early stages of integrating Marxist principles with traditional Chinese culture, this process was often unconscious, meaning that individuals did not fully recognize its long-term significance or necessity. Initially, this fusion emerged either from a commitment to Marxist ideology or from a deep respect for Chinese cultural traditions, but it lacked a systematic theoretical foundation. However, as scholars and policymakers deepened their understanding of Marxist theory and China's cultural heritage, they began to deliberately explore and refine this integration in a more structured and intentional manner.

The theory of the new form of human civilization represents the conscious practice of the "second combination" in modern China. This process has not only preserved the fundamental essence of Marxism but also incorporated the intellectual and philosophical depth of traditional Chinese culture. Through this integration, the Chinese people have been guided toward the coordinated development of five key civilizational dimensions, forging a distinct path of modernization characterized by Chinese cultural and historical continuity. This evolution has positioned Chinese civilization at the forefront of global civilizational progress, demonstrating its unique contributions to the advancement of human society.

## **6. The Integration of the New Form of Human Civilization into the Vision and Construction of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind**

There exists a strong internal connection between the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind and the theory of the new form of human civilization. Both emphasize global cooperation and shared development, advocate for a perspective that transcends traditional national interests, and are committed to addressing global challenges while promoting the collective progress of humanity. From the perspective of "world civilization—Chinese civilization—present", this intrinsic relationship not only provides a practical foundation for the theory of the new form of human

civilization but also offers theoretical support for the construction of a global community with a shared future. Through the continuous interaction between theoretical development and practical application, the new form of human civilization has been constantly enriched, contributing innovative ideas and solutions for global governance.

The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind emerges from an awareness of the common challenges facing humanity in an era of globalization—including climate change, poverty, public health crises, and geopolitical conflicts. Addressing these challenges requires cooperative strategies that transcend national self-interest in favor of global partnerships and collective action. Within this context, the new form of human civilization emphasizes the coordinated development of five interrelated dimensions—material, political, spiritual, social, and ecological civilization—on a global scale.

This concept of balanced and inclusive development calls for economic cooperation to achieve shared prosperity while simultaneously preserving and promoting cultural diversity. The goal is to foster a world in which civilizations coexist harmoniously, ensuring sustainable development and mutual respect among nations.

The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind represents both a profound reflection on and an active approach to global governance and international order. It underscores the interdependence and collective progress of nations, cultures, and societies, aligning closely with the core principles of the new form of human civilization. At its foundation, the new form of human civilization is built on the mutual respect and integration of diverse civilizations, as well as collaborative efforts to address global challenges. This embodies the spirit of international cooperation advocated by the community with a shared future for mankind.

Moreover, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind marks a departure from traditional Western theories of international relations. Instead of viewing international affairs as a zero-sum game, this vision promotes a win-win approach that fosters mutual benefit and shared prosperity. This perspective resonates with the global governance model envisioned by the new form of human civilization, which seeks to resolve global challenges through cooperation and contribute to the establishment of a more just and equitable international order. By providing a practical framework for engagement, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind ensures that the new form of human civilization is not merely a theoretical construct but a tangible principle that can be realized and validated in international relations.

At a theoretical level, the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind serves as a modern expression of Marx's vision of "the union of free individuals." This theoretical advancement offers valuable intellectual resources for the development of the new form of human civilization. In practice, initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative serve as concrete implementations of this concept. These efforts have not only facilitated economic development in participating countries but have also introduced new models and approaches for global governance. As a result, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind has gained widespread international recognition and support, further driving the evolution and realization of the theory of the new form of human civilization.

## 7. Conclusion

The proposal of a "new form of human civilization" represents a significant evolution beyond traditional modernization models. It highlights the diversity and inclusivity of civilizations and advocates for the coordinated development of material, political, spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions on a global scale. This theoretical framework offers a fresh perspective for understanding and addressing global challenges, while also presenting new approaches to fostering a more just and



equitable international order. In the realm of global governance and international cooperation, the theory of the new form of human civilization has increasingly gained recognition and validation through practical applications, attracting growing international attention.

Through a four-dimensional analysis of Recent leadership discourse in China on the "new form of human civilization," this paper seeks to unveil its theoretical foundations and practical implications, showcasing its timely relevance and profound significance. As globalization deepens and the international landscape continues to evolve, the theory of the new form of human civilization will likewise continue to develop, fostering greater dialogue and collaboration among civilizations. Ultimately, it aspires to make a meaningful contribution to sustainable global development and the shared prosperity of humanity.

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