

REVIEW

of the reviewer **Lishchynskyy Ihor Orestovych**,
Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor, Professor of the Department of
International Economics of the West Ukrainian National University,

on the qualification thesis of **Wang YONGSHUN** on the topic:
“One Belt One Road as Global Inclusive Growth Strategy of PRC”, submitted for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in specialty 292 “International Economic Relations”

Relevance of the topic of the qualification thesis

In light of profound changes in the global order, the topic of the qualification thesis dedicated to the “One Belt One Road” Initiative as a mechanism for ensuring global inclusive development is highly relevant from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The exacerbation of disparities in welfare levels, both between states and within their borders, has posed a threat to global stability. International supply chains, previously considered efficient and sustainable, have demonstrated their vulnerability in response to pandemics, geopolitical tensions, and climate challenges.

In this context, China’s dynamic and stable economic development emerges as an alternative to traditional West-centric models. The Chinese experience in modernization, infrastructure development, and interstate cooperation provides new benchmarks for countries seeking effective pathways to integration into the global economy. This approach underscores the need to reassess global development strategies through the lens of inclusivity, sustainability, and long-term effectiveness.

Particular attention must be paid to the issue of regional disparities: countries of the Global South often remain excluded from the main flows of value creation. The lack of adequate infrastructure, underdeveloped transport and logistics systems, and limited digitalization hinder these states’ integration into international trade. As a result, the fragility of global supply chains has been particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus, Wang Yongshun's qualification thesis, focused on the theoretical generalization and practical analysis of the "One Belt One Road" Initiative, holds significant scientific and applied value in the context of contemporary global challenges.

The submitted dissertation is part of the research conducted at West Ukrainian National University, specifically: the fundamental state-funded research project "Concept of Recovery and Green Reconstruction of Ukraine" (state registration number 0124U000003); and the implementation of the international project (Jean Monnet Module, Erasmus+) on the topic "European Inclusive Circular Economy: Post-War and Post-Pandemic Module for Ukraine (registration number 101085640).

Degree of justification of the scientific provisions, conclusions, and recommendations formulated in the qualification thesis

The qualification thesis is characterized by a logical structure, clear formulation of objectives and tasks, and sound methodological justification of the approaches to achieving them. The conclusions and practical recommendations derived from the empirical study of the "One Belt One Road" Initiative are well-substantiated and possess significant applied value.

The author employs a wide range of general scientific and specialized research methods, including theoretical, historical, and empirical approaches, which collectively ensure a high level of fulfillment of the set objectives. The multidisciplinary methodology enabled the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches for an in-depth analysis of the "One Belt One Road" Initiative as a tool for inclusive global development.

Specifically, the study utilizes thematic content analysis of official Chinese policy documents, such as government speeches, white papers, bilateral agreements, reports from the NDRC, the Ministry of Commerce of the PRC, and the official BRI portal, to identify the initiative's key objectives and rationale. Additionally, a comparative analysis of "One Belt One Road" Initiative implementation case studies in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa was conducted,

allowing for the identification of regional peculiarities, barriers, and outcomes of cooperation.

Furthermore, the author applies regression analysis to examine the relationship between participation in trade with China and the level of human development in Global South countries, thereby strengthening the empirical evidence base of the study. The research also includes an analysis of economic indicators, such as foreign direct investment, infrastructure investments, and trade volumes, based on data from the World Bank, UNCTAD, and the AIIB.

The scientific results have been recognized through presentations at prestigious academic conferences in Ukraine and abroad, as well as publications in Ukrainian and international academic journals, attesting to the relevance and quality of the research. Thus, the submitted dissertation fully meets the requirements for academic qualification and merits a positive evaluation.

Structure and volume of the qualification thesis

The qualification thesis is written in business English, contains annotations in Ukrainian and English, an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a list of sources used and appendices.

The first chapter of the dissertation explores the theoretical and methodological foundations of inclusive growth within the context of contemporary transformations in the global landscape. This chapter establishes the theoretical framework for understanding the “One Belt One Road” Initiative as a global strategy for inclusive growth, rooted in both historical logic and modern development theories. The discussion begins by examining the conceptual alignment between the “One Belt One Road” Initiative and inclusive growth, emphasizing that the Initiative inherits a historical trajectory centered on the pursuit of shared prosperity. By linking this foundation to human capital theory, the chapter highlights the “One Belt One Road” Initiative’s role in promoting education, skill development, and capacity building in partner countries, thereby enhancing long-term development potential.

The chapter further elaborates on how the “One Belt One Road” Initiative seeks to balance economic efficiency with social justice, aiming to construct a

multidimensional model of inclusive development. This model integrates economic, social, and environmental dimensions, ensuring that growth outcomes are not solely measured by GDP but are also equitable and sustainable. In this context, the “One Belt One Road” Initiative is positioned as a proactive response to growing global disparities in income, infrastructure, and opportunities. Through investments in connectivity, people-to-people exchanges, and knowledge-sharing platforms, the Initiative aims to mitigate structural inequalities that hinder social integration in many regions.

The second chapter examines the practical aspects of implementing the “One Belt One Road” Initiative and the mechanisms that guide its operations. The analysis begins with China’s own model of inclusive development, which forms the domestic foundation of the Initiative. Poverty reduction is a cornerstone, reflecting a consistent national priority within China’s broader growth agenda. Moreover, the integration of environmental sustainability into this growth framework illustrates a growing awareness of the need to balance economic progress with environmental responsibility. The discussion also reflects China’s transition to what is often termed the “new normal” – a period characterized by slower but more sustainable and balanced economic growth. This shift necessitates a rethinking of development strategies to ensure that economic gains are not achieved at the expense of social justice or environmental degradation.

Beyond China, the chapter explores how various “One Belt One Road” Initiative participating countries engage with the Initiative and adapt it to their specific contexts. In Central Asia, for instance, energy trade and transport infrastructure development form the basis of regional cooperation, fostering connectivity between resource-rich regions and international markets. Southeast Asia’s experience focuses on efforts to deepen regional economic integration and streamline trade processes, aimed at reducing logistical barriers and facilitating smoother cross-border exchanges.

The third chapter of the dissertation investigates the strategic role of the “One Belt One Road” Initiative in reshaping global governance amid an evolving international landscape. It explores how the “One Belt One Road” Initiative fosters competition in institutional standards and expands governance networks, particularly in countries of the Global South, promoting diverse governance approaches that move

beyond traditional Western models. This suggests a shift toward more flexible structures better aligned with the priorities of developing economies.

Looking ahead, the chapter outlines key directions for the “One Belt One Road” Initiative’s development. Strengthening multilateral cooperation and enhancing governance coherence are highlighted as critical for improving coordination among participating countries. The commitment to green development, including the establishment of environmental standards to address ecological challenges associated with infrastructure projects, is emphasized. Managing fiscal sustainability, particularly through innovative debt management, is another pressing challenge. The chapter also underscores the importance of promoting localization efforts and equitable benefit distribution to ensure inclusive advantages. “The Digital Silk Road” is highlighted as a vital pathway for advancing technology and data governance, contributing to digital transformation across the “One Belt One Road” Initiative network. Collectively, these efforts aim to foster sustainable and inclusive growth, which is crucial for the Initiative’s long-term success.

The totality of the scientific propositions, conclusions, and recommendations presented in the dissertation, along with their practical significance, allows for the conclusion that Wang Yongshun’s dissertation is complete, coherent, and well-structured.

Assessment of the scientific novelty of the provisions and results obtained in the qualification thesis

The results that have been substantiated in the qualification thesis, which have theoretical and practical significance, and define the scientific novelty of the dissertation, are as follows:

- for the first time developed the model of inclusive development of the PRC within the framework of the implementation of the “One Belt One Road” Initiative, which is based on the strategic correction of the future trajectory of economic development in accordance with the change in the vectors of inclusive growth, with an emphasis on multilateral governance, green

development, debt sustainability, development of the digital economy, social inclusion and coordination with the global sustainable development goals;

- improved the empirical benchmark of the concept of economic development through an in-depth study of the trajectory of the PRC's domestic inclusive development, with an emphasis on poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability and evolution in the conditions of the "new normal", which allowed to strengthen the understanding of inclusive growth in conditions of uncertainty;
- improved the structured roadmap for the future development trajectory of the "One Belt One Road" Initiative by strengthening the focus on "green" development, multilateral governance and digital transformation, which allowed to outline the mechanism for benefit distribution and the strategic toolkit of state policy in the context of sustainable and inclusive global development;
- improved the methodology for analyzing inclusive growth by conducting interregional assessments of the countries participating in the "One Belt One Road" Initiative using econometric regression and case studies, which helped to identify the heterogeneity of development problems and develop a practical understanding of regional adaptation mechanisms and the framework for their cooperation;
- further developed the ideological and structural connotations of the "One Belt One Road" Initiative by deepening the theoretical foundations within the framework of globalization and regional integration, which allowed to narrow the theoretical categorization of the initiative in the global economic discourse;
- further developed the comprehensive risk assessment system by categorizing key threats, including resource imbalances, financial instability, geopolitical backlash and pressures on resilience, which made it possible to substantiate the importance of the strategy of inclusive growth within the framework of the "One Belt One Road" Initiative;

- further developed the geopolitical foundations of “economic corridors”, by analyzing them as institutionalized channels of transnational communication and strategic cooperation, which made it possible to rethink these corridors not only as logistical routes, but also as tools of global economic governance and regional integration.

Significance of the research results for science and practice

The theoretical significance of the dissertation lies in its proposed provisions, which contribute to the development of effective mechanisms for enhancing the success of projects implemented within the framework of the “One Belt One Road” Initiative. Additionally, these provisions facilitate the improvement of benefit-sharing systems and coordination among institutions in the PRC and partner countries.

The practical value of Wang Yongshun’s dissertation results lies in their potential application to establish more transparent, balanced, and mutually beneficial cooperation among governments, researchers, and international institutions in the context of advancing the global “One Belt One Road” Initiative.

The research findings, developed into practical outcomes and recommendations, are utilized in scientific research, educational processes, and the institutional environment of research institutions, and are supported by certificates of implementation issued by Jiuquan Yuanda Agriculture Co., Ltd. (Certificate JIU No. 17, dated April 28, 2025) and the Jiuquan Vocational and Technical University. These (Certificate JIU No. 27, dated April 27, 2025).

Completeness of the presentation of scientific provisions, conclusions, and recommendations formulated in the dissertation in published papers relevant to the dissertation topic

The main provisions of the qualification thesis, which have scientific novelty, are substantively and convincingly revealed in the published papers. Based on the main results of the dissertation, 11 scientific papers have been published, including 3 articles – in scientific professional journals of Ukraine; 2 articles – in foreign scientific periodical journals; and 6 publications have been published in other journals of an

approbatory nature based on conference materials. The quantity and volume of the published papers grant the author the right to publicly defend the dissertation.

Assessment of the structure of the qualification thesis, language and style of presentation of the material

The content of the qualification thesis corresponds to the defined purpose and objectives of the research, reveals the topic of the thesis, indicates its integrity and completeness. The qualification thesis is written in English in compliance with all the requirements for its scientific style.

Absence (presence) of violations of academic integrity

The scientific results of the qualification thesis were obtained personally by the author. In the co-authored scientific papers, only those ideas and provisions that were personally acquired by the author were used in the dissertation. No violations of academic integrity have been detected in Wang Yongshun's dissertation. The dissertation includes references to relevant sources of information, provides accurate information about the methods used and the results of the research conducted, and complies with copyright and related rights legislation. This allows for the conclusion that the author of the qualification thesis has adhered to the requirements and rules of academic integrity. The thesis was successfully verified for text similarity using the Turnitin Similarity online service.

Discussion points and remarks on the dissertation

Wang Yongshun's qualification thesis is carried out at a sufficiently high scientific level, however, there are some comments that are debatable:

1) exploring the theory of the strategy of inclusive growth, focused on the "One Belt One Road" Initiative, the author pays attention to the construction of a multidimensional inclusive development model (MGI). In the construction of the multidimensional model of inclusive development, a number of indices are used (pp. 19-22), but there is no explanation of how the weight coefficients w_1-w_4 were

empirically or expertly determined. As a result, this creates the impression of a theoretical construction without verification on real data;

2) the thesis analyzes China's inclusive development, in particular, its multidimensional profiling and environmental sustainability are mentioned. However, the thesis does not sufficiently explore environmental and economic trade-offs. In particular, there is no quantitative analysis of the trade-off between rapid infrastructure development and environmental costs (pp. 77-80). Without such an assessment, the statement about the "green "One Belt One Road" Initiative" is more normative than empirical;

3) the second chapter assesses the inclusive development of the countries participating in the "One Belt One Road" Initiative. The author analyzed the correlation between trade volume and the Human Development Index (pp. 85-91), but this analysis does not take into account the possible two-way causality. The growth of the Human Development Index can affect trade in the same way that trade affects the Human Development Index. The lack of an explanation for this phenomenon limits the weight of the conclusions;

4) the third chapter suggests ways for the future development of the "One Belt One Road" Initiative, in particular, it reviews multilateral cooperation within the framework of the Initiative and outlines the responsibility of governments for actions within the framework of the Initiative. However, when predicting the future trajectory of the "One Belt One Road" Initiative (pp. 150-154), a development scenario without the Initiative is not presented, which complicates the assessment of the real effect of this Initiative. Without such an approach, it is difficult to prove that changes in global governance or regional development are directly related to the "One Belt One Road" Initiative.

Despite these discussion points, the dissertation leaves the impression of a thorough and significant research. Its topic remains highly relevant, multifaceted, and exceptionally important for international economics, and the noted critiques do not diminish the overall scientific quality of the qualification work.

General conclusion and evaluation of the qualification thesis

Wang Yongshun's dissertation on the topic "One Belt One Road as Global Inclusive Growth Strategy of PRC" is a complete result of scientific research, presenting the concept of "One Belt One Road" as a multi-vector transformation platform capable of reconfiguring the economic dynamics of the state in the context of the transition to an inclusive growth model.

In terms of content and professional orientation, the qualification thesis corresponds to the specialty 292 "International Economic Relations" in the field of knowledge 29 "International Relations", and in terms of quality and level of theoretical and practical developments, it meets the requirements for a PhD thesis.

In general, the Wang Yongshun's qualification thesis on the topic "One Belt One Road as Global Inclusive Growth Strategy of PRC" meets the requirements of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated January 12, 2022, No. 44 "On the Approval of the Procedure for Awarding the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy and the Cancellation of the Decision of a One-time Specialized Academic Council of a Higher Education Institution, Research Institution on Awarding the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy" in terms of content, level of scientific novelty, substantiation of scientific provisions and recommendations. The author, Wang Yongshun, deserves to be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the specialty 292 "International Economic Relations".

Reviewer:

**Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor,
Professor of the Department of
International Economics of the West
Ukrainian National University**

Ihor LISHCHYNSKYI

