To the Specialized Academic Council DF 58.082.075_ID 9957
at the West Ukrainian National University
of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

REVIEW

of the official opponent

PRYIATELCHUK Olena Anatoliivna,

Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor, Professor of the Department of International Business, Deputy Director for Scientific and Pedagogical Activities of Educational and Scientific Institute of International Relations,
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

on the dissertation 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 (PhD) in a field of study 29 "Internationla Relations" on specialty 292 "International Economic Relations"

Relevance of the topic of the thesis research

The relevance of the research is due to the growing importance of China's global initiatives in the modern system of international economic and geopolitical relations. The "One Belt One Road" initiative, launched in 2013, has become a large-scale strategic concept of the PRC aimed at forming new trade and economic ties, infrastructure integration, and stimulating sustainable and inclusive development in the participating countries. This project covers more than 140 countries and more than 60% of the world's population, which makes it unprecedented in scale and impact. In modern conditions, when the global economy is undergoing profound transformations under the influence of pandemics, geopolitical crises, and technological changes, the "One Belt One Road" initiative is taking on a new meaning as a tool not only for the geoeconomic advancement of the PRC, but also as a model of inclusive growth that is potentially capable of reducing inequality, promoting the development of

infrastructure, trade, employment, and human capital in recipient countries. At the same time, there is growing interest in assessing the real results of the initiative in the context of sustainable development, financial responsibility, environmental standards and fair access to benefits.

The relevance is also enhanced by the need to research the extent to which the "One Belt One Road" strategy meets the goals of inclusive growth defined by the UN, as well as the extent to which it promotes or hinders the economic self-sufficiency and political sovereignty of partner states. Given the active participation of Ukraine and other Eastern European countries in the dialogue with China, the study of this initiative is also of great importance for the formation of national strategies in the field of foreign economic policy. Therefore, the study of the strategic potential and challenges of the "One Belt One Road" initiative as a global platform for inclusive growth is timely and important both for the theoretical understanding of new forms of international cooperation and for the development of practical recommendations for engaging in the project on mutually beneficial terms.

Given the above, we can conclude that Wang Yongshun's qualification work, the purpose of which is to scientifically substantiate the theoretical and methodological foundations of one belt one road initiative as global inclusive growth strategy of PRC and the development its multi-faceted implementation model that amend the future economic development trajectory based on changes in the inclusive growth vector, was carried out on a relevant topic.

The dissertation submitted for defense is part of the scientific research of the Western Ukrainian National University, in particular: fundamental state budget funding research "Concept of recovery and green reconstruction of Ukraine" (state registration number 0124U000003); implementation of the international project (Erasmus+ Module Jean Monnet) "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 thesis research

The thesis research of Wang Yongshun is logically structured, contains clearly defined goals and objectives and methodologically sound approaches to their implementation. All conclusions and recommendations of the study on the impact of "One Belt One Road" initiative on PRC's inclusive growth are properly substantiated and have a practical focus.

The author used a diverse arsenal of general scientific and special methods, in particular theoretical generalization to analyze the macroeconomic context of "One Belt One Road" initiative, a historical method to classify the role of economic corridors within the theory of global economic relations, a dialectical method to assess the impact of the strategic consequences of "One Belt One Road" initiative in global governance, as well as methods of analogies, comparative analysis, induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis and data processing to assess the impact of "One Belt One Road" initiative on real GDP and infrastructure development. The monitoring method allowed the author to thoroughly investigate the geopolitical aspects of the initiative, and data visualization ensured the clarity and accessibility of the results. Such a broad methodological approach indicates a high thoroughness and scientific depth of the research.

The conclusions and recommendations on supporting SMEs through the inclusive mechanisms of "One Belt One Road" initiative are convincingly substantiated and have a significant practical focus. The author has developed predictive models that convincingly demonstrate the long-term impact of the "One Belt One Road" initiative on employment and social stability, through job creation in the logistics sector and the digital economy of participating countries. These models are supported by regression analysis, which ensures their reliability and practical value.

The main theoretical and applied provisions of Wang Yongshun's dissertation received favorable reviews at Ukrainian and international conferences and were published in Ukrainian and international scientific publications.

Thus, all the above allows us to draw a positive conclusion regarding the scientific level, the reliability of the presented material, the theoretical justifications and arguments put forward in defense of the provisions, the practical significance of the conclusions and recommendations arising from Wang Yongshun's dissertation.

Structure and volume of the thesis research

The thesis research 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, "Theoretical foundation and practical research on global inclusive growth," focuses on the research of: the theoretical foundations of the inclusive growth strategy within the framework of the "One Belt One Road" initiative (p. 12-29); the theoretical concept of the "One Belt One Road" initiative (p. 30-47); the concept of geopolitics of economic corridors within the framework of the theory of international economic relations (p. 48-66). The applicant thoroughly analyzed the theoretical foundations of inclusive growth, linking them with the global strategy of the PRC and revealed the geopolitical aspects of economic corridors as instruments of regional integration and cross-border cooperation. The study analyzed the integration theory of endogenous growth in combination with the mechanisms of inclusive growth of the "One Belt One Road" initiative (p. 12-29). In particular, the endogenous dynamics of human capital and its level of support for regional integration within the framework of the "One Belt One Road" initiative were analyzed. The paper analyzes the structure of the multidimensional index of inclusive growth (p. 29-45), proposes a new understanding of global development indicators and the use of this model to measure GDP growth, social opportunities and environmental quality. The analysis of theoretical models is distinguished by its depth and innovative approach, as the author integrates modern concepts of globalization, connectography and regional integration, which allows us to clearly position the "One Belt One Road" initiative in the context of global economic strategies. Comparison with other development initiatives, such as historical trade routes, emphasizes the uniqueness of the study and adds theoretical value.

The second chapter, "Implementation and mechanisms of the Belt and Road Initiative," analyzes China's inclusive development (p. 69-84); examines the state of inclusive development in the countries participating in "One Belt One Road" initiative (p. 85-106); and assesses the challenges and risks for the implementation of "One Belt

One Road" initiative (p. 107-121). The research of China's inclusive development (p. 66-75) demonstrates a reasoned empirical approach, highlighting the role of infrastructure investment and digital transformation in reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion. The research contributes to applied geopolitical dialogue by substantiating the model of inclusive growth with recent global upheavals (p. 75-79). Thus, by linking the theoretical model to real challenges such as COVID-19, the green economy and the "Digital Silk Road" initiative, the author has strengthened the empirical relevance of the study.

The study of the participating countries is quite valuable due to the detailed analysis of the regional specificities of the countries of Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe. The research is based on regression analysis, which showed an increase in human development indicators (HDI) by 8-12% in the participating countries for 2015-2023. The risk assessment is characterized by a comprehensive approach, in particular, an analysis of geopolitical and environmental challenges, which is argued by successful cases (green infrastructure in Kazakhstan and Ethiopia) and emphasizes the adaptability of "One Belt One Road" initiative to local conditions. A comparative analysis of the participation of European countries in "One Belt One Road" initiative is carried out from the point of view of qualitative and economic logic (p. 102-106). This comparative approach contributed to understanding the differentiated strategies of "One Belt One Road" initiative for developed and developing participants. The study examines Ukraine's participation in "One Belt One Road" initiative and characterizes its dual positioning in the context of EU standards and orientation towards Chinese investments, and analyzes its strategic function as a Eurasian transport hub (p. 104-106). The analysis provided a balanced view of Ukraine's participation in "One Belt One Road" initiative and reflected the dynamics of its geopolitical constraints.

The third chapter, "Strategic impact and future direction of the Belt and Road Initiative," highlights the strategic implications of "One Belt One Road" initiative for global governance (p. 124-138); outlines the future trajectory of "One Belt One Road" initiative (p. 139-155); proposes key vectors and a model for future inclusive development within "One Belt One Road" initiative (p. 156-172). The paper

successfully combines environmental standards with the development of digital infrastructure within "One Belt One Road" initiative (p. 141-146). The analysis highlights the dual strategy of technological breakthrough and innovation in green financing in participating countries. The Inclusive Growth Model (p. 152-154) is an important conclusion of the paper, offering realistic and adaptive mechanisms for countries with different institutional conditions. The author convincingly substantiated the practical implementation of the model through the implementation of the "Digital Silk Road" and green infrastructure.

The collection of scientific provisions, conclusions, and recommendations presented in the thesis research, along with their practical significance, allow for the conclusion about the completeness, coherence, and structured nature of Wang Yongshun's thesis research.

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

The results that have been substantiated in the thesis research, 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 qualification work lies in solving a scientific problem and developing proposals for the inclusive development of the PRC within the framework of the implementation of the "One Belt One Road" initiative.

The practical significance of the results of Wang Yongshun's dissertation is that the main theoretical provisions of the study of global inclusive growth in the conditions

of the future development trajectory of "One Belt One Road" initiative can be used in the practical activities of its participants and stakeholders and in further scientific developments.

The presented research results, brought to the level of practical developments and recommendations, are confirmed by the implementation certificate provided by Jiuquan Yuanda Agriculture Co., Ltd. in the company's development strategy and national international economic strategy deployment (Certificate JIU No. 17 from April 28, 2025). The main results of the research were used in teaching subjects and conducting scientific research by Jiuquan Vocational and Technical University (Certificate JIU No. 27 from 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 thesis research, 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 editions of Ukraine, 2 articles – in a foreign scientific periodical edition and 6 publications have been published in other publications of an approbatory nature based on conference materials. The quantity and volume of the edited papers grant the author the right to publicly defend the dissertation.

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

The content of the thesis research corresponds to the defined purpose and objectives of the research, reveals the topic of the thesis, indicates its integrity and completeness. The thesis research 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 dissertation 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 dissertation has adhered to the requirements and rules of academic integrity. The thesis research was successfully verified for text similarity using the Turnitin Similarity online service.

Discussion points and remarks on the dissertation

Evaluating Wang Yongshun's thesis research, which is carried out at a sufficiently high scientific level, some remarks can be made that may serve as a basis for discussion during the defense:

1. the thesis examines the concept of geopolitics of economic corridors within the framework of the theory of international economic relations and highlights the strategic implications of the "One Belt One Road" initiative for global governance (p. 66, 130). However, the author admits certain inaccuracies in the use of terminology, in particular, such terms as "institutional innovation" and "rule-making capacity" should be formulated with greater terminological accuracy;

2. in subchapter 2.1, an analysis of China's inclusive development is conducted (p. 80-82), the role of infrastructure investments and digital transformation in poverty reduction and increasing social inclusion is characterized. However, the environmental dimension is considered quite broadly and is not distributed by sectors (for example, energy, transport, mining), which creates limited sectoral disaggregation and limits the author in his own conclusions;

3. in subchapter 2.2 examines the state of inclusive development in the countries participating in the "One Belt One Road" initiative (p. 85-106), in particular, the regional peculiarity of the countries of Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe

is analyzed. However, the analysis of the Central Asia region is much broader than the analysis of the Africa or Southeast Asia region, which creates an analytical imbalance and weakens the comparative integrity of the results;

4. researching the strategic impact and direction of the development of "One Belt One Road" initiative, the author highlights the strategic implications of the initiative for global governance, focusing on institutional innovations (p. 127-130). However, further development of the hypothesis that the "One Belt One Road" initiative promotes inclusive governance through new institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) remains insufficiently substantiated. The thesis examines the functioning of these institutions only from the perspective of a soft coordination mechanism that helps standardize infrastructure norms and reduce information asymmetry.

The mentioned remarks and discussion points indicate some controversial aspects of the research. However, they generally reflect the relevance, complexity, and multifaceted nature of the chosen topic, its practical significance, and do not significantly affect the qualitative characteristics of the thesis research.

General conclusion and evaluation of the thesis research

Wang Yongshun's thesis research on the topic "One Belt One Road as Global Inclusive Growth Strategy of PRC" is a completed scientific study, the result of which is the formation of scientifically based proposals for the development of theory, methodology and practical implementation of inclusive development of the PRC within the framework of the implementation of the "One Belt One Road" Initiative.

In terms of content and professional orientation, the thesis research corresponds to the specialty 292 "International Economic Relations" in the field of study 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 thesis research 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, substantiation of scientific provisions and recommendations, and level of scientific novelty. The author, Wang Yongshun, deserves to be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the field of study 29 "International Relations" on the specialty 292 "International Economic Relations".

Official Opponent:
Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor,
Professor of the Department of International Business,
Deputy Director for Scientific and Pedagogical
Activities of Educational and Scientific Institute
of International Relations, Taras Shevchenko
National University of Kyiv

Olena PRYIATELCHUK