

Prof. Dr. Anatoliy Kruglashov,
Head, Department of Political Science and Public Administration
Chernivtsi Yuriy Fedkovych National University, Ukraine

Review of the doctoral dissertation

by PhD student Lilia Hrytsai, entitled “Green Economy as a Strategy to Achieve Sustainable Development”, prepared under the academic supervision of Dr. hab. Katarzyna Marzęda-Młynarska, prof. UMCS in the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism UMCS, Lublin 2024, pp. 368 (typescript).

Formal basis for preparing the review: Resolution No. 1/17s/2024 of the Scientific Council of the Institute of International Relations of UMCS of June 14, 2024.

General description

The reviewed doctoral dissertation consists of four chapters, an introduction, conclusion and list of reference. Each chapter of the dissertation begins with a short explanatory introduction and contains a summary with a clear made conclusion. The structure of the dissertation presented by the author is entirely logical and comprehensive. It corresponds to the declared purpose of the Thesis. In the *Introduction* of the dissertation, the Author formulates the main research goal of her Thesis as: „[...] to research how the international concept of sustainable development in implemented at the local level” (p. 10. This goal is complemented and further explained by the author “the dissertation purposes to adopt worldwide famous concept of sustainable development (primarily aiming to tackle global problems at the city level to mitigate the local challenges” (p.10). So far, the

research has aimed at both theoretical and practical research goals. To specify her research purpose, the Author put forward two research questions, namely: „What mechanisms, instruments and concepts are used to implement the international concept of sustainable development at the local level? Can the sustainable development model adapted in Vancouver be replicable in other cities?” (p.11).

Also, the Thesis has a clearly formulated hypothesis “If a city has a high level of socio-economic development and a liberal regime, the usefulness of the green economy concept as a mechanism for implementing sustainable urban development is increasing” (p.11). So, the principal goal and ideas of the research are defined in a well-done and accessible mode.

The Introduction proposes some methodological approaches of the research, a balanced combination and argument in favor of applicability of quantitative and qualitative research methods, a comparative analysis, data analysis, comparative analysis and sociological methods. It also presents the research justification, conducted by the Author personally in Vancouver, Canada. The key theories and concepts used in the dissertation are well explained and duly commented in the Introduction. The set of research methods implied in the text paves a way towards successful application of the research objective and goals. The Doctoral Student has elaborated the Introduction, which meets demanding expectation to that very important part of the Thesis. I could mention that the theoretical part here might be added only with some more explanation of what methodology the Author is attached to and laid at the foundation of her research.

Detailed assessment

The first chapter of the dissertation is entitled *The essence of the Concept of Sustainable Urban development* regards the origin and historical evolution of the sustainable development idea and concept. It traces back a genesis of the concept, outlines main stages of its transformation to the updated version of them. The Author analyses the key element of the concept, e.g. economical, social and environmental, considers different approaches to the definition of the sustainable development, their meaning, fulness and adequacy. This chapter poses the theoretical ground of the dissertation subject discovery. The Author of the dissertation differentiates *weak* and *strong sustainability*, characterizing peculiarities of them. She dives into a depth of the ideas concerning the sustainable development. They are considered beginning from some classical economists like Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Karl Marx and other, and goes up the rise of the sustainable development and its further most recent

advancement. The valuable part of the chapter is characteristic of the impact on the idea and concept of the sustainable made by the International organizations, the UN, OESD and others. Also the Author considers principal international strategic documents, aimed at promoting sustainable development globally and regionally, the key records and failure on that way.

The dissertation made a very cohesive attempt to link up the concept of sustainable development as a global goal and urban sustainable development as its local dimension and target. Here the Author successfully classified their goals, indicators, as well as success and failures of being implemented. She generalizes the current stages of globalization and urbanization through the sustainable development prism and make some careful theoretical and practical conclusions relevant to the theme of the chapter.

The Author's considerations are supported and illustrated here as well in the rest of the chapters with very topical and informative Tables and valuable data, which help systematically introduce to the reader the content of her text. Thus, the first chapter is a proper and solid conceptual foundation for the further consideration of the research topic.

The second chapter of the dissertation is entitled *Green Economy as a Strategy for the implementation of Sustainable Urban Development*. This part of the text concerns theoretical foundations of Green economy, different conceptual approaches to the definition of that concept (p.106). Here the Author characterizes the most politically influential positions towards the issues of Green economy from leading International organizations and explains how they perceive the principals of the Green economy. She consecutively compares the essence of *brown*, *green* and *blue* economy concepts as well as their practical meaning and applicability. Special attention has been paid to the EU's stance and policy regarding Green economy. This part of the dissertation analyzes some success stories reached, and failures of the EU and member states faces with a circular economy, Green deal etc.

The Author rightly pays due attention toward criticism and critics of the Green deal. She mentioned for instance mass-protest took place in some EU Member states, as well in Poland. It's a pity that that important issue is rather slightly touched upon on in the text, then thoroughly analyzed (p,126). Another valuable part of the chapter is the consideration of Green economy measurement and indicators. That fragment of the research is exemplary objective and well-balanced. It has a plenty of factual materials, their accurate systematization and outline. Practically important is a piece of the text devoted to Central Statistical Office in Poland activity about Green economy indicating. Here one might see a good convocation of the general theoretical framework of the Author's approach and a case study

Careful examination. Logical continuation on the authors' contemplation is her comparison of Green economy indicators. She presents them in a text format and in a table 23, which supports and accumulates her ideas and personal vision (p.146).

Truly innovative character has the part of the dissertation devoted to the synergies between the Green Urban Economy and Sustainable Urban Development. It has marked with a good quality research and make me sure that the Author are fond of her subject and topic. She tries her best while looking forwards for the solutions of both environmental, economic and social problems of mankind. It seems that she is implying glocalization concept as a key to their revolution (while surprisingly she did not deliberate about that closely related to her researcher's definition and concept). Descent quality has also the deliberation of the Green urbanism principles and different types of the Green urbanism. It's a pity, that so reach in content chapter is finalized with a too brief conclusion (167). They might and must be enlarged and deepened. The latter reservation addresses the rest of chapters as well.

In the third chapter of the dissertation "*Models of sustainable Urban Development*" the author makes provable generalization of all existing models of Sustainable urban development. After making the conceptualized she step by step analyzes them. The Author begins with the most pioneering model of the *Garden City*, pointing at the aims of the model and arguably disclosing practical cases of its implication. She does not neglect positive sides of the model, not underestimates some shortages and negative sides of the model. The next model, *Ecocity Model* is more advanced in comparison with the previous one. The Author also shows some principal obstacles and limitations of that model adaptation to the real urban life. She rightly concludes" [...] the biggest obstacles of ecocity development is the high expense of the technology integration required, which many communities cannot afford or are unwilling to bear" (p. 180). Following with the accurate consideration of the *Compact City Model* the dissertation proposes plausible characteristic of this concept and her vision on its practical realization' pros and cons. The logical turn to the *15-th minutes City* reveals the most important features of this case, filled with excellent theoretical background and trustworthy samples regarding the model practical importance. The *Carbon-neutral (Zero-Carbon City)* is also regarded by the Author, where she proposes a good set of cities' samples, where that model is the ground for the urban policy. She supports those examples with a clearly selected data and facts. It seems that this model has the irresistible appeal for the Author personally too. Special case is the *Masdar City Model*, its attraction and shadows. They have been also portrayed in the text with academic cleverness. The author discloses some contradictions left behind the faced value of the latter case. Appreciable is her attempt

at proposing some objective discoveries on the *Smart City* model, which is attributed with growing popularity and dissemination in literature, public discourse and many cases of its implementation. Once again, in this part of the text positive and negative sides of the model, their chances and challenges are represented in a well-done academic manner. Careful data selection, collection and their methodologically correct interpretation are visible as well in two Sweden models under scrutiny of the researcher in the next part of the chapter. The author does not limit her research with 'just' collecting and characterizing all those models. She paces them into a dynamic of the relevant arguments, disputes and critics. She makes their accurately compared, which worth the attention of scholars dealing both with sustainable development issues by and large, and urban studies too. Again, after all the careful and bright work, conclusion to the chapter is too brief and relatively modest.

The fourth and last chapter of the Dissertation deals with the topic of Green Economy as true foundation for contemporaneous Sustainable development. This chapter is the soundest one from the empirical point of view in the whole dissertation, which is the added value for the dissertation. The Author chooses a case of Canadian City of Vancouver, making expanded justification for her case study's option. She explains in detail a specificity of the city as an exemplary famous for its inclination towards newest technologies of the urban management, realization of the Green city concept and some other advanced models of sustainable urbanism. She makes an introductory excursion into Canadian federal system, British Columbia provincial's peculiarities (maybe too detailed) and the most important characteristics of the federal and provincial levels. After having it done, she moves to Vancouver itself.

This chapter shows the author unquestionable devotion to discover aspects of her research subject in depth and width, as far as she studied a lot on relevant materials and facts, besides of different academic literature. She also made four experts' interviews, which, together with her field trip to the city of Vancouver highly enriched the Author understanding and knowledge of the city management, economy and social system functioning.

Important thoughts and observations might be found in the Author deliberation on *Vancouverism* phenomenon. Her SWOT analysis of the City's sustainable development model impresses as a serious contribution into studying the given city urban development, their strength and weakness, possible perspectives and threats (pp. 282 – 284). Further the dissertation proposes the author reasonable attempt to compare a real case of the chosen city with all principal model of Urban Sustainable development, she researched in the previous third chapter. This comparison is topical and performed with a good standard of academic

accuracy. Sure, the Vancouver ambition to be the Greenest City is considered by the Author. She points out at changes in City's latest Strategies of Sustainable Urban development. In the end the researcher tries to think about the value and applicability of Vancouver SUD model and experience in other cities of the world. She correctly states that replicability of Vancouver Sustainable development model is replicable in other cities, while no "copy paste" approach might be helpful anywhere, but the Author supports "[...] the idea of bringing the good practices of the city of Vancouver to other cities..." (p. 325).

Conclusion of the dissertation presents generalization of the most important outcomes of the research and proves that the research goals are reached, and hypothesis has been successfully verified.

Characteristics of the source base and literature on the subject

The dissertation has impressively grounded on the variety of the primary and secondary sources, including statistics, sociological data, laws, regulations and so on. It comprehends a wide variety of literature, relevant to the subject of the research, e.g. monographs, research articles, analytical papers, reports, and other materials in several languages. The Author studies in general about 560 resource positions, that is untypical as for PhD dissertation. It's a pity, that addressing to the Ukraine and Russia-Ukraine war the Author however did not deep into the Ukrainian literature on sustainable development¹, urban sustainable development² and other related to the topic academic papers, while there are plenty of them available.

Conclusion

¹ Stukalo, N. V., Lytvyn, M. V., Petrushenko, Y. M., & Kolinets, L. B. (2021). The concept of sustainable development of Ukraine in the context of global threats; Zelinska, H., Andrusiv, U., Daliak, N., Dovgal, O., & Lagodiienko, V. (2021). Sustainable development: Trends in Ukraine and the world. *Journal of Environmental Management & Tourism*, 12(5), 1179-1187.; Kotykova, O., & Albeshchenko, O. (2017). An indication of the sustainable development of Ukraine in global dimensions. *Baltic journal of economic studies*, 3(5), 196-202; Semenenko, I., Halhash, R., & Sieriebriak, K. (2019). Sustainable development of regions in Ukraine: before and after the beginning of the conflict. *Equilibrium. Quarterly Journal of Economics and Economic Policy*, 14(2), 317-339. And many other.

² Blinova, M., & Rodyk, Y. (2024, July). Analysis of the implementation of the Sustainable Urban Development Goal in Ukraine. In *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* (Vol. 1376, No. 1, p. 012040). IOP Publishing.; Dril, N., Galkin, A., & Bibik, N. (2016). Applying city marketing as a tool to support sustainable development in small cities: case study in Ukraine. *Transportation Research Procedia*, 16, 46-53.; Vnukova, N. V., Zhelnovach, G. M., & Kozlovskiy, O. V. (2020, August). "Green" principles of sustainable development of road and transport infrastructure of the cities of Ukraine. In *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering* (Vol. 907, No. 1, p. 012068). IOP Publishing.; Burdelna, H., & Bozhenko, A. (2020). Population safety and sustainable development of urban and suburban territories of Ukraine under climate change. *SECURITY MANAGEMENT OF THE XXI CENTURY: NATIONAL AND GEOPOLITICAL ASPECTS. ISSUE 2*, 126. Etc.

To conclude, it might be stated that the dissertation of Lilia Hrytsai is original and innovative research, which is an important contribution to the study of international relations sustainable development and urban studies. It has a multidisciplinary character and transcend the limits of just one field of science. The Author has demonstrated her very ability and strong academic potential, professional skills to make research on the actual topic, which is important not only on the level of local governance, but also concerns the activity of the leading International organizations.

The PhD dissertation is written in a reach academic language and adequate style. It is full of carefully elaborated Tables, many of them are composed by the Author herself. The theoretical value of the text harmoniously corresponds with practical outcomes of the research.

The reviewed dissertation is prepared carefully and correctly, it has very high standards of academic apparatus of the text, including footnotes, bibliography, numerous tables and charts.

I am sure, the reviewed dissertation is a relevant and timely study, where the Author combined her developed theoretical knowledge and individual empirical studies. I believe that text after a successful defense will be edited and published as a monograph too.

The peer-reviewed dissertation meets the statutory requirements for obtaining a doctoral degree and may be approved for the public defense.

17 September, 2024