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## Abstract

**Xu Jidan.** *Philosophical Foundations of the Belt and Road Initiative.* –  
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The dissertation is dedicated to the analysis the philosophical foundations of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The Belt and Road Initiative is China's national strategy in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and China's top-level grand strategy in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2013, China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative. This initiative is intended to strengthen the Asia-Europe connectivity and interoperability, and the degree of openness to other regions such as Africa and Latin America. In May 2017, on the "Belt and Road Forum for international Cooperation", Xi Jinping emphasized that the road will be "the road to peace and prosperity road, open road, road to innovation, and the road to civilization". The Belt and Road Initiative has actually become a further step going to the world for China, and an opportunity for the world to recognize China. The success of the Belt and Road Initiative construction depends on both lasting efforts in China and depends on the cooperation of countries along the Belt and Road.

The Belt and Road Initiative is a massive infrastructure project proposed by the Chinese government in 2013, and from a philosophical perspective, the BRI can be interpreted in several ways, depending on the philosophical framework applied. Here are a few possible interpretations. This dissertation focuses on these aspects:

1. Pragmatism and Utilitarianism: From a pragmatist or utilitarian perspective, the BRI can be seen as a means to promote economic development, connectivity, and cooperation between participating countries. It aims to enhance trade, investment, and infrastructure development, potentially leading to increased prosperity and well-being for the involved nations.

2. Globalization and Cosmopolitanism: Some philosophers might view the BRI as an expression of globalization and cosmopolitan ideals. It seeks to foster interconnectedness among diverse cultures, promote mutual understanding, and encourage dialogue between different civilizations. This interpretation emphasizes the BRI's potential to foster cultural exchange and the development of a more integrated and harmonious global community.

3. Political Realism and Geopolitics: A political realist perspective would focus on the strategic and geopolitical implications of the BRI. It could be seen as a manifestation of China's desire to expand its influence and secure its geopolitical interests by establishing economic and political ties with participating countries. This interpretation would emphasize power dynamics, competition, and the pursuit of national interests.

4. Postcolonialism and Neocolonialism: Some scholars critical of the BRI have argued that it perpetuates neocolonial dynamics by enabling China to exert economic dominance over participating countries. This perspective highlights power imbalances, unequal partnerships, and the potential exploitation of weaker nations in the pursuit of Chinese economic and political interests. It raises questions about economic dependency, sovereignty, and the impact on local cultures and economies.

5. Environmental Ethics and Sustainability: The BRI also has implications for environmental philosophy. Critics argue that the massive infrastructure projects associated with the initiative could lead to environmental degradation, resource exploitation, and increased carbon emissions. An environmental ethicist might examine the sustainability aspects of the BRI and explore whether it aligns with principles of ecological responsibility and long-term environmental well-being.

These interpretations illustrate that the philosophical meaning of the Belt and Road Initiative can vary depending on the philosophical lens applied and the specific values and concerns emphasized by different scholars. It is important to consider multiple perspectives and engage in critical analysis when examining the

philosophical implications of such complex initiatives. Analyzing the philosophical basis of the Belt and Road Initiative helps people around the world better understand the background and purpose of this Initiative, and provides scientific methodological guidance for the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative and the solution of global problems.

There will be four chapters in this thesis.

1. The first chapter is about research background and literature review. The initial chapter of this work delves into the research background, providing a comprehensive overview of the context and setting in which the study takes place. It also incorporates a thorough literature review, examining relevant scholarly works and existing knowledge on the subject matter.

2. The second chapter is about Marxism with Chinese characteristics as a theoretical basement of the Belt and Road Initiative. The second chapter aims to reveal in a systematic way the philosophical basement of the Belt and Road Initiative (the BRI). It is well-known that the philosophical foundations of the BRI are based on Chinese Marxism. However, it still remains unclear and unrevealed in a systematic way what elements of the Chinese Marxism system are used in the BRI. Therefore, the main objectives of the second chapter are:

- a) to reveal the way of European Marxism reception in Chinese philosophy;
- b) to show how Chinese philosophy transformed and improved European Marxism; and
- c) to study how contemporary Western philosophy interprets Chinese Marxism in the context of the BRI implementation.

3. The third chapter is about understanding the identity and cultural diversity: comparative analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative and Western philosophical foundations. In the third chapter, the philosophical, social and axiological issues of the concept of “shared future” are described and analyzed how it is understood in Chinese Marxism as well as Socialism with Chinese characteristics and Western

philosophy and social thought. This analysis is conducted in the focus of the identity and cultural diversity issues. The third chapter results in finding the possible ways to harmonize Chinese and Western ways of understanding the problems of identity and cultural diversity in the context of the BRI implementation.

4. The last chapter is about the philosophical issues of the Belt and Road Initiative implementations in Europe. It analyses the East-European philosophical foundations of the Belt and Road Initiative and compares with that of China and West-Europe. Moreover, it reveals the philosophical and cultural differences between China and Ukraine during the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative and it provides some suggestions on promoting people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Ukraine under the Belt and Road Initiative.

**Keywords:** the Belt and Road Initiative, Marxism with Chinese characteristics, Xi Jinping Thoughts, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, cultural identity and diversity, community with a shared future for mankind.

### Анотація

Сюй Цзідан. Філософські основи ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях». – Кваліфікаційна наукова праця на правах рукопису.

Дисертація на здобуття наукового ступеня доктора філософії за спеціальністю 033 «Філософія» (03 – Гуманітарні науки). Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка. – Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка, Київ, 2024.

Дисертація присвячена аналізу філософських засад ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях» (BRI). Ініціатива «Один пояс, один шлях» є національною стратегією Китаю на початку XXI століття та головною великою стратегією Китаю на початку XXI століття. У 2013 році Китай запропонував ініціативу «Один пояс, один шлях». Ця ініціатива має на меті зміцнити зв'язок між Азією

та Європою та взаємодію, а також ступінь відкритості для інших регіонів, таких як Африка та Латинська Америка. У травні 2017 року на «Форумі міжнародного співробітництва «Один пояс, один шлях» Сі Цзіньпін підкреслив, що цей шлях буде «шляхом до миру та процвітання, відкритим шляхом, шляхом до інновацій і шляхом до цивілізації». Ініціатива «Один пояс, один шлях» фактично стала для Китаю наступним кроком у світ і можливістю для світу визнати Китай. Успіх будівництва Ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях» залежить як від тривалих зусиль Китаю, так і від співпраці країн уздовж «Поясу, одного шляху».

Ініціатива «Один пояс, один шлях» – це масштабний інфраструктурний проект, запропонований китайським урядом у 2013 році, і з філософської точки зору BRI можна інтерпретувати різними способами, залежно від застосованої філософської основи. Ось кілька можливих інтерпретацій. Ця дисертація зосереджена на таких аспектах:

1. Прагматизм і утилітаризм. З точки зору прагматизму чи утилітаризму BRI можна розглядати як засіб сприяння економічному розвитку, зв'язку та співпраці між країнами-учасницями. Він спрямований на посилення торгівлі, інвестицій та розвитку інфраструктури, що потенційно призведе до підвищення процвітання та добробуту залучених країн.

2. Глобалізація та космополітизм. Деякі філософи можуть розглядати BRI як вираження глобалізації та космополітичних ідеалів. Він прагне сприяти взаємозв'язку між різними культурами, сприяти взаєморозумінню та заохочувати діалог між різними цивілізаціями. Це тлумачення підкреслює потенціал BRI сприяти культурному обміну та розвитку більш інтегрованої та гармонійної глобальної спільноти.

3. Політичний реалізм і геополітика. Політична реалістична перспектива зосередиться на стратегічних і геополітичних наслідках BRI. Це можна розглядати як прояв бажання Китаю розширити свій вплив і забезпечити свої

геополітичні інтереси шляхом встановлення економічних і політичних зв'язків з країнами-учасницями. Таке тлумачення підкреслить динаміку влади, конкуренцію та досягнення національних інтересів.

4. Постколоніалізм і неоколоніалізм. Деякі вчені, які критикують BRI, стверджують, що він увічнює неоколоніальну динаміку, дозволяючи Китаю здійснювати економічне домінування над країнами-учасницями. Ця перспектива підкреслює дисбаланс сил, нерівне партнерство та потенційну експлуатацію слабших націй у переслідуванні китайських економічних і політичних інтересів. Це піднімає питання про економічну залежність, суверенітет і вплив на місцеву культуру та економіку.

5. Етика навколишнього середовища та сталий розвиток: BRI також має значення для екологічної філософії. Критики стверджують, що масштабні інфраструктурні проекти, пов'язані з ініціативою, можуть призвести до погіршення навколишнього середовища, експлуатації ресурсів і збільшення викидів вуглецю. Фахівець із екологічної етики може вивчити аспекти сталого розвитку BRI та з'ясувати, чи відповідає він принципам екологічної відповідальності та довгострокового екологічного благополуччя.

Ці тлумачення ілюструють, що філософське значення ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях» може змінюватися залежно від застосованої філософської точки зору та конкретних цінностей і проблем, на яких наголошують різні вчені. Досліджуючи філософські наслідки таких складних ініціатив, важливо враховувати різні точки зору та брати участь у критичному аналізі. Аналіз філософської основи Ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях» допомагає людям у всьому світі краще зрозуміти передумови та мету цієї ініціативи, а також забезпечує наукове методологічне керівництво для побудови ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях» і вирішення глобальних проблем.

У дисертаційній роботі чотири розділи.

1. У першому розділі йдеться про передумови дослідження та огляд

літератури. У першому розділі цієї роботи розглядається підґрунтя дослідження, надаючи вичерпний огляд контексту та середовища, в якому відбувається дослідження. Він також включає в себе ретельний огляд літератури, вивчення відповідних наукових праць і існуючих знань з цього питання.

2. У другому розділі йдеться про марксизм із китайською специфікою як теоретичну основу ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях». Другий розділ має на меті систематично розкрити філософську основу ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях» (BRI). Загальновідомо, що філософські основи BRI базуються на китайському марксизмі. Однак досі залишається незрозумілим і систематично не розкритим, які елементи системи китайського марксизму використовуються в BRI. Отже, основними завданнями другого розділу є:

- а) розкрити шлях рецепції європейського марксизму в китайській філософії;
- б) показати, як китайська філософія трансформувала та вдосконалила європейський марксизм;
- в) дослідити, як сучасна західна філософія інтерпретує китайський марксизм у контексті реалізації BRI.

3. Третій розділ про розуміння ідентичності та культурного розмаїття: порівняльний аналіз ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях» і західних філософських основ. У третьому розділі описуються філософські, соціальні та аксіологічні питання концепції «спільного майбутнього» та аналізується, як її розуміють китайський марксизм, а також соціалізм із китайською специфікою та західна філософія та соціальна думка. Цей аналіз проводиться у фокусі питань ідентичності та культурного розмаїття. Результатом третього розділу є пошук можливих шляхів гармонізації китайського та західного способів розуміння проблем ідентичності та культурного розмаїття в контексті впровадження BRI.

4. Останній розділ присвячений філософським питанням реалізації ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях» у Європі. Він аналізує східноєвропейські філософські основи ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях» і порівнює її з Китаєм і Західною Європою. Крім того, він розкриває філософські та культурні відмінності між Китаєм та Україною під час будівництва ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях» і містить деякі пропозиції щодо сприяння міжлюдським та культурним обмінам між Китаєм та Україною в рамках ініціативи «Один пояс, один шлях».

**Ключові слова:** ініціатива «Один пояс, один шлях», марксизм з китайською специфікою, думки Сі Цзіньпіна, теорія Ден Сяопіна, теоретична система соціалізму з китайською специфікою, культурна ідентичність і різноманітність, спільнота зі спільним майбутнім для людства.

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2. Xu, Jidan (2021). The Research on Philosophical Foundations of the One Belt and One Road Initiative: Theoretical Background. *Future Human Image*, 15, 131-142. doi.org/10.29202/fhi/15/12
3. Xu, Jidan (2022). Chinese Philosophical Resources for Dealing with the Clash of Civilizations. *Bulletin of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. Philosophy*, 6, 44-46. doi.org/10.17721/2523-4064.2022/6-8/13
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2. Xu, Jidan (2021). A Brief Outline of the Philosophical Foundations of the Belt and Road Initiative. “*The Days of Science of the Faculty of Philosophy – 2021*”, *International Scientific Conference (2021 ; Kyiv)* (pp. 409-411).

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## INTRODUCTION

**Theme relevance.** The present era necessitates profound thought and philosophical contemplation to serve as a guiding force. In the process of social development and progress, the principles of Marxism play an indispensable role. By studying the guiding ideology of Marxism, we can unveil the essence of phenomena and comprehend the laws governing their development. Within the realm of contemporary Chinese Marxism, the Belt and Road Initiative and the concept of a community with a shared future for humankind hold significant importance. They are characterized by their inherent connotation of offering appropriate solutions to conflicts and contradictions in the era of globalization.

In the development of civilizations, differences are inevitable. As a key component of the community with a shared future for humankind, exchanges and mutual learning between civilizations provide guidance for resolving such differences. The theory and practical value of mutual learning between civilizations align with the contemporary global need for diversified development and cater to China's specific national circumstances. They represent China's approach to promoting worldwide diversity and addressing conflicts in the process of globalization.

Civilizational exchanges and mutual learning are both contemporary and innovative, encompassing concrete strategies for constructing a community with a shared future for humankind and encapsulating Chinese wisdom. From a practical standpoint, these principles furnish a theoretical foundation for facilitating exchanges and dialogue among civilizations, promoting equitable consultations, and achieving a new equilibrium for peaceful development, mutual benefit, and win-win outcomes.

The Belt and Road Initiative, as well as the concept of the community of shared future of humankind, is rooted in Marxist theory and influenced by Chinese

traditional culture. To gain a deeper understanding of the theory's essence and effectively guide its implementation, it is valuable to explore its historical origins.

The notion of community has a long history, pre-dating Marx. Philosophers preceding Marx, such as those in ancient Greece, envisioned various forms of community: from the simple polis community to political communities formed through contracts, and even the "ethical community" described by Hegel. Marx drew inspiration from the works of these predecessors, which greatly influenced his own thoughts on community.

Marx divided the historical development of humanity into three stages: the stage of a "natural community" maintained by blood relations, the stage of a "virtual community", and ultimately, the stage of a "real community". From the perspective of productive forces and relations of production, Marx analyzed the inevitable demise of capitalism and the subsequent triumph of communism. However, even after a century has passed since Marx's era, the conditions necessary for the realization of a "true community" are still unmet.

In response to today's global development challenges, the Communist Party of China has inherited and evolved Marx's ideas on community. They propose the construction of a "five-in-one" pattern of a community with a shared future for mankind. This pattern entails pursuing economic openness and win-win cooperation, promoting political equality and mutual understanding, establishing a just and shared security environment, advocating for harmony, diversity, and inclusiveness in civilization, and striving for sustainable development in ecological matters. Through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the development of Peripheral Diplomacy, China aims to gradually implement and extend the community with a shared future for mankind to the entire world.

By actively promoting the establishment of the "Belt and Road" economic belt and engaging in neighboring diplomacy, China seeks to materialize the community

with a shared future for mankind, fostering practical cooperation and extending its reach globally.

The community of shared future of humankind is not only a Chinese Characterization of Marx's community thought, but also a transition path to Marx's "real community". It inherits the essence of Marxism, considers the future society from the perspective of all humankind, breaks the one-way governance of capitalism, and establishes a new real equality and new order. This dissertation attempts to establish a new form of universal communication, which can create conditions for the free development of human beings and for the emancipation of human beings towards a "real community".

#### **Research connection with scientific programs, plans, and themes.**

This dissertation was carried out within the framework of the research program of the Taras Shevchenko Faculty of Philosophy of the National University of Kyiv – 22BF041-01. Focus on the philosophical foundations of the Belt and Road Initiative coincides with the main tasks of the faculty project, namely the study of the attributes of the reception of Western Marxism in Chinese philosophy and socio-political thought; reception of Chineseized Marxism in modern Western philosophy and socio-political thought; reception of Chineseized Marxism in philosophy and socio-political thought.

#### **The goal and objectives of the research.**

1. To reveal the way of European Marxism reception in Chinese philosophy.
2. To show how Chinese philosophy transformed and improved European Marxism.
3. To study how contemporary Western philosophy interprets Chinese Marxism in the context of the BRI implementation.
4. To describe and analyze the philosophical, social and axiological issues of the concept of "shared future".

5. To present in a systematic way the main philosophical issues of identity and cultural diversity from the Western philosophy and social sciences standpoint.

6. To systematically describe the philosophical, social and cultural aspects of the concept of the shared future in Chinese Marxism, Socialism with Chinese characteristics and the BRI.

7. To carry out a detailed comparison between contemporary Western philosophical and social thought and Chinese Marxism on the identity and cultural diversity issues.

8. To analyze the BRI reception in contemporary East-European philosophy.

9. To analyze the philosophical and cultural differences between China and Ukraine during the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative.

**The Object of the research** are contemporary Chinese philosophy, China's Belt and Road Initiative as international, social, economic, political and cultural phenomenon.

**The Subject of the research** are Marxism and Marxism with Chinese characteristics as the philosophical foundation of the Belt and Road Initiative.

**Research methods.** This study involves various methods and approaches to understand and interpret the development of philosophical ideas connected with BRI and contemporary Chinese philosophy.

- **Textual Analysis:** This method involves the careful examination and interpretation of philosophical texts and primary sources. The main idea is to read and analyze arguments, concepts, and the context in which international, social, economic, political and cultural ideas were written. Textual analysis aims to understand the philosopher's intentions, the historical circumstances, and the philosophical implications of their work.

- **Contextualization:** This method helps to understand the historical and cultural context in which philosophers lived is crucial for interpreting their ideas. This method involves examining the social, political, and intellectual conditions that

shaped philosophical thought during a particular period. Contextualization helps to clarify why certain ideas emerged, how they were received, and their broader significance.

- **Comparative Analysis:** Comparative analysis involves examining and comparing philosophical ideas across different periods, cultures, and traditions. It helps to detail comparison between contemporary Western philosophical and social thought and Chinese Marxism. By identifying similarities and differences, scholars can trace the influence of earlier philosophers on later ones, identify recurring themes, and explore how ideas have evolved over time.

- **Intellectual Biography:** This method focuses on studying the lives of philosophers to gain insights into their philosophical development and the motivations behind their ideas. Intellectual biographies explore the personal, social, and intellectual influences that shaped a philosopher's thinking and their interactions with other philosophers and intellectuals of their time. This helps to understand how life and socio-cultural conditions contributed to the formation and development of the philosophy of Marxism, which in turn allows us to understand a certain specificity.

- **Historical-Philosophical Reconstruction Method:** This method combines historical and philosophical approaches to reconstruct and analyze philosophical ideas or systems in their historical context. It involves examining historical sources, texts, and intellectual developments while also engaging in philosophical analysis and interpretation.

In addition to these methods, general scientific methods are used, such as analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, and others. All these methods together constitute the methodological apparatus of the study.

**The originality of the results.** This study conducts a comprehensive analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative by employing the lens of Marxist philosophy and the theoretical framework of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Previous investigations in this area have been relatively limited in scope and lacked a systematic approach. Additionally, there has been a dearth of research focusing on the philosophical underpinnings of the Belt and Road Initiative in Eastern Europe. Consequently, this research represents a pioneering effort in comparing Chinese and Western philosophies, while also highlighting the diverse nature of the relationship between China and the West. The Belt and Road Initiative is examined through the lens of divergences, revealing notable instances of innovation.

The research originality could be described by the following statements:

1. The way of European Marxism reception in Chinese philosophy has been revealed;
2. It was shown how Chinese philosophy transformed and improved European Marxism;
3. It was described and analyzed the philosophical, social and axiological issues of the concept of “shared future”;
4. It was presented in a systematic way the main philosophical issues of identity and cultural diversity from the Western philosophy and social sciences standpoint;
5. It was systematically described the philosophical, social and cultural aspects of the concept of the shared future in Chinese Marxism, Socialism with Chinese characteristics and the BRI;
6. It was carried out a detailed comparison between contemporary Western philosophical and social thought and Chinese Marxism on the identity and cultural diversity issues;
7. It was analyzed the BRI reception in contemporary East-European philosophy;

8. It was analyzed the philosophical and cultural differences between China and Ukraine during the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative.

**The practical significance of the results can be concludes as follows.**

First, it is conducive to enriching and developing the Marxist theory of human history. As the fundamental guiding ideology guiding the development of China, Marxism is a powerful weapon for us to understand and transform the world. The Belt and Road Initiative is proposed on the basis of inheriting the previous scientific theories of world history, social community and human liberation, and on the basis of respecting the laws of nature, the laws of social development, and the role of the people in historical development. It is an original and creative Chinese solution to the new problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is the product of the profound integration of Marxist theory with national conditions and world conditions, and is the latest theoretical achievement of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The promotion and development of this concept in the world is the dazzling light of Marxist theory in the new world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which highlights the inheritance and development of Marxist theory of human history.

Second, it will help to dispel the misunderstanding of the international community on the concept of a community with a shared future for humankind. There are still some countries in the international community that remain indifferent and skeptical about the Belt and Road Initiative. In particular, some Western countries, which have long been influenced by the Cold War mentality and the values of “dual opposition”, are full of doubts about it. In the face of the current complex international society, in order to correctly and accurately respond to these doubts, we must reveal the historical inevitability proposed by this concept. To study the Belt and Road Initiative of historical materialism, to demonstrate its transcendence over the traditional Western values of “dual opposition”, to reveal its rich scientific connotations and value truths, to prove that this concept must be in line with the fundamental interests people of the world, will inevitably become the “key” to solve

the problems of world development, and it has far-reaching significance in promoting the harmonious and healthy development of human society in the new era.

Third, it is conducive to providing a new civilization model for the whole world. At present, although the overall international situation tends to be stable, there are still frequent conflicts in some areas. Although we cannot deny the rationality of the so-called “Clash of Civilizations Theory” proposed by the *Samuel P. Huntington* (1927–2008) (Huntington, 1996), the concept of building a community with a shared future for humankind provides us with a new way of thinking and a new vision to solve this so-called clash of civilizations. In-depth interpretation, understanding and analysis of the theoretical basis, value connotation and scientific significance of the concept of building a community with a shared future for humankind will help countries in the world to fully understand the powerful charm of this scientific theory. The concept of a community with a shared future for humankind will definitely guide the development of all countries in the world and provide a brand-new civilization model for the world.

**Approbation of the dissertation results.** The major themes and results of the dissertation were presented and discussed at various meetings at the Faculty of Philosophy of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. The results were also presented at such conferences as The Days of Science of the Faculty of Philosophy – 2021; The Days of Science of the Faculty of Philosophy 2022.

**Publications.** The results of the research are presented in 5 scientific articles. Three articles were published in the journals of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv: *Politology Bulletin*, *Bulletin of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. Philosopher*, *SOPHIA. Human and Religious Studies Bulletin*. Two articles were published in journals that are included in the international citation indexing databases: *Future Human Image*, *Ukrainian Policymaker*. Abstracts of two presentations at international conferences with the results of this study have been published.

**Structure and Value of the dissertation.** The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, conclusions to each chapter, and references at the end of the dissertation. In total, the dissertation is 175 pages with 163 pages being the main text. There are 132 references cited.

## CHAPTER 1. Research background and literature review

### 1.1. Literature review of the Belt and Road Initiative Philosophical issues

(1) *International scholars generally start their research from the history of the “Silk Road”.*

The impression of the “Silk Road” in the West in history has largely influenced the study of the Belt and Road Initiative by foreign scholars today. For example: Bill Porter’s book *The Silk Road* (Porter, 2016), Japanese scholar *Matsuura Akira*’s book *Maritime Silk Road and Asian Seas Exchange (from the end of the 15th century to the beginning of the 20th century)*” and so on, and all take the history of the Belt and Road as the main of the research object. The research in the last three years has shown certain changes, reducing the proportion of history, and taking the current situation of the Belt and Road Initiative as the main point of discussion. This marks the rise of China’s international influence. China is not only a big country in history, but also a modern big country. For example: British historian Peter Frankopan’s book *The Silk Road: A New World History research* (Frankopan, 2015) is more contemporary in the study of the “Silk Road”, and the historical and practical issues that may appear on the Belt and Road have been fully excavated, such as religion, types of trade, terrorism, relations between major powers, history problems etc.

*John and Doris Naisbitt* are a married couple who are known for their work in the field of futurology and trend analysis. *John Naisbitt* is a co-author of *Innovation in China* (2012), *Doris Naisbitt* is a co-author *China’s Megatrends* (2010), but they are both worked on *Creating Megatrends China’s New Silk Road* (2017). John Naisbitt gained international recognition with his best-selling book *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives*, published in 1982 (Naisbitt, 1982). The book explored various social, economic, and technological trends that were shaping

the world at the time. It became a major success and was followed by several other books in the “Megatrends” series.

In summary, international scholars’ research on the “Community of a Shared Future for Mankind” and the Belt and Road Initiative shows two obvious characteristics. One is based on historical analysis, which to a certain extent reflects the existence of the propaganda of the Belt and Road Initiative is inadequate. Many international scholars still learn about China and China’s policies from history books. On the other hand, due to different positions, foreign scholars have misunderstood Chinese policies to a certain extent in their research content. It enlightens policymakers and researchers of China’s Belt and Road Initiative to pay more attention to the cultural differences between different countries, and better interpret the two correctly.

*(2) The Chinese academic circles have formed a craze for the study of the Belt and Road Initiative, which has a considerable degree of relevance to the political atmosphere in recent years, and has achieved a wealth of research results.*

There are some research on the cultural aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative. Scholars’ research on the issues involved in Belt and Road Initiative is mostly related to specific industries, such as linguistics, trade, cultural industries, and international student education. Most of them elaborated on the help and benefits of promoting culture to specific industries, for example: *Can Culture Lead to Exports: Empirical Data from the Belt and Road Initiative* by Xie Mengjun (Mengjun, 2017), *Language Planning in the Belt and Road Initiative* by Bing He (He, 2020). These studies explain the relationship between culture and other industries and the importance of culture more clearly. Xie Mengjun clearly describes the main goals of the initiative: “The aim of the initiative is to strengthen the people-to-people exchanges among Asian, European and African countries and promote the economy and trade

cooperation between the countries along the routes and regional economic growth” (Mengjun, 2017: 7).

*(3) There are some research on the economic aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative.*

Scholars’ research on the economic aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative is generally concentrated on two aspects. On the one hand, the research on the direction and methods of economic cooperation between China and other countries. Shen Xianjie and Xiao Jincheng’s article *New Situation of International Regional Economic Cooperation and my country’s Belt and Road Initiative Cooperation Strategy* (Xianjie & Jincheng, 2014), Kong Qingfeng and Dong Hongwei’s article *Research on the Measurement of the Level of Trade Facilitation and Trade Potential of One Belt and One Road Countries* (Qingfeng & Hongwei. 2015), Kuang Zengjie and Gao Jun’s article *Research on the Trade Potential between China and Central and Eastern European Countries under the “One Belt and One Road” Initiative* (2019) (Kuang Zengjie & Gao Jun, 2019: 122). On the other hand, it is the correction of incorrect views on the Belt and Road Initiative. For example, Jin Ling’s article *The “New Silk Road” Initiative: China’s Marshall Plan?* (2015) (Ling, 2015), Gan Junxian’s *China’ New Silk Road: Where Does it Lead?* (2016) (Junxian, 2016), Liu Li-juan’s *The Belt and Road Initiative Working Towards a Global Vision* (2016) (Li-juan, 2016). Early research on the Belt and Road Initiative economy tends to crack the world’s suspicion of China. This part of the research has made a certain contribution to China’s diplomacy and international relations. The articles studying the combination of Belt and Road Initiative and industries then slowly increasing, which is related to the fact that the Belt and Road Initiative is gradually being recognized by the world and more and more Chinese companies are participating in the Belt and Road Initiative.

*(4) Other scholars pointed out possible problems in the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative.*

Researcher Zhou (Zhou, 2016) pointed out that the One Belt One Road initiative will inevitably lead to political games between China and the countries along the route, conflict with the policies of the countries along the route, and will also generate a large number of immigration and population issues, which will cause certain uncertainty in China's border security. Yu Jinping and Gu Wei (Yu & Gu, 2016) personally said that a large number of three forces and instability in the countries along the Belt and Road Initiative, coupled with the trade protection policies of various countries, and the game between major powers have restricted the participation of countries along the route in the Belt and Road Initiative to a certain extent. "The 'One Belt and One Road' Initiative is given by China to its surrounding countries. The fulfillment of this great initiative is inseparable from all the countries involved. These countries are very different in their politics, economy, culture and religion, and have formed very complicated geopolitical relations among them. This initiative carries with it great potential, which is accompanied by great difficulties and risks. The economic effects of this initiative is ultimately determined by the ways this initiative is implemented. An objective evaluation of the initiative's economic benefits and risks is the premise of the making and implementing of related policies. Based on a win-win principle, China should further clarify important policies, countries, and ways to implement this initiative. This will help the steady execution of the initiative" (Yu & Gu, 2016: 65-70). The decision of the Belt and Road Initiative may be difficult to ensure that the investment in infrastructure along the route achieves very objective benefits.

## **1.2. Literature about the Marx's Community Theory and Marxist Theory of World History**

Some scholars have demonstrated that the Belt and Road Initiative has innovated and re-constructed Marx's community theory from the three dimensions of ideological inheritance, theoretical leapfrogging and paradigm reconstruction. Some scholars traced the roots of Marx's community theory, pointed out the characteristics of triple historical materialism inherent in Marx's theory of community, and furthermore pointed out that the Belt and Road Initiative that takes the community of human ecological destiny as its important content, the global cyberspace community of destiny as the technological basis, and win-win cooperation as the principle of global governance is a contemporary innovation of Marx's "community" thinking. Some scholars, after discussing the characteristics of each special form of Marx's theory of community, pointed out that the Belt and Road has a high degree of conformity with the "real community" theory of Marx in terms of "realization path and value purpose", and it is a contemporary practice of Marx's "true community" thoughts and also an inevitable stage for the world to move towards a "true community".

Some scholars have studied the relationship between the two associations of Marxism and the Belt and Road Initiative. The two associations refer to the association of the proletariat and free association of producer. In addition, researches Y. S. Kang and Y. N. Chen in the article *'Community with a shared future for mankind': The practice of Marx's 'True Community' thought in contemporary China* (Kang & Chen, 2017) believe that the idea of the Belt and Road Initiative is based on Marx's idea of "Free Association of Producers". As they are series of concrete practices and contemporary proofs of the latter. Li pointed out: Marxist internationalism is a united thought, and the Belt and Road Initiative is an internationalist thought.

Other scholars have studied the relationship between Marx's genus philosophy and the Belt and Road Initiative. Scholar Gao Qinghai has pioneered research in this field (Xing-ping, 2010). "Genus" is a group life, which is a view of connection. Yu Chongsheng, Yu Yang, and Zhang Shuguang believe that genus is the third form of human development, that is, the stage of free individuality. Genus philosophy should be the complementation of the four dimensions of individual, community (nation), humanity and nature. Professor He Lai of Jilin University believes that Marx's theory of the genus nature of human beings is the theoretical foundation of the Belt and Road Initiative, because "In order to deepen the studies on the philosophy of practice, it is essential to explore the political significance of Marx's philosophy of practice. Marx's philosophy of practice is rooted in the problem of modernity and the separation between 'individual subjectivity' and 'societal community' in the modern context is the basic background of Marx's practical philosophy. It is the basic interest of Marx's philosophy of practice to find a way to end this separation via critique of civil society. Therefore, Marx's philosophy of practice has a clear significance, which manifests in the following aspects: one is "liberation politics", and the other, "the regulatory mode of the socio-political institution" (Lai & Lin, 2008: 267). Professor Zhang Shuguang of Beijing Normal University believes that starting from Marx's "genus philosophy", the Belt and Road Initiative reveals the interrelationship between the individual and the community, human beings and nature, and it highlights the overall interests of humankind.

Together with Cui Hui authors write in the article *Historicity and the modern situation of human existence: A reinterpretation of the views of Karl Marx* (2007): "To understand the nature of this problem and find the corresponding solution, we need to reinterpret the thought of Karl Marx regarding the contradictions of human existence and its historical dimension" (Zhang & Hui, 2007: 70). Following Marx's line of thinking, they review "...his critical sequence, creative transformation, and development of duality of thought on man and the world in Western history, focusing

on the following four issues: how Marx, on the basis of man's sensuous objective activities, observes the duality of man and the world as well as the relationship between man's internal and external activities; how Marx discloses the true connotation and real significance of man's historical existence, history, and historicity; how Marx reveals the inherent contradictions of modern capitalist society and the destiny of modern man based on historic thought concerning man's existence..." (Zhang & Hui, 2007: 70).

There are also some research on the relationship between Marxist theory of human liberation and the Belt and Road Initiative. Human liberation refers to material abundance, equality and freedom of human beings, labor has become a spontaneous need of people. This is the ultimate goal of Marxism. The process of achieving human liberation will be difficult and long, but at least the theory of human liberation provides a scientific answer to the direction of human development. Zhang Xue-guang and Qin Hai-li in article *From "Human Liberation" to "Community of Common Destiny for All Mankind": An Evolution of Marxist View on Human Destiny* (Zhang & Qin, 2015) pointed out the theory of human emancipation embodies Marx's historical materialism, and the Belt and Road Initiative is a solution developed by China when the theme of the times changes. "Trying to shoulder the heavy responsibility of changing the destiny of mankind is an important mission of Marxism and the Communists. Based on the standpoint of historical materialism and his own understanding of the development of modernity, Marx proposed the concept of 'human liberation' and promoted the concept of 'human liberation' based on the theory of class struggle. The internationalist movement has dominated the process of world socialism for more than a century. Under the guidance of this process, China's national independence and political rise are an important contribution to the destiny of humankind. However, with the peace and development of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the theme of the new era, China made a timely judgment of the new era, adjusted its strategic thinking and strategic layout, walked out of the new path of socialism with

Chinese characteristics, and made its own new contribution to improving the destiny of mankind. Under the conditions of the new era , the concept of ‘community of common destiny for all mankind’ can not only provide important theoretical support for the great journey of China’s peaceful rise, but also make new developments for the Marxist concept of a shared future for mankind” (Zhang & Qin, 2015: 21).

Liu Tongfang of Renmin University in *The Original Contribution of Building a Community of Shared Future for Mankind to Historical Materialism* (2018) China, from the perspective of historical materialism, pointed out the Chinese wisdom to build the Belt and Road for mankind has brought unprecedented theoretical effects to the development of historical materialism and created a new way to interpret historical materialism. “Building a community of shared future for mankind is a great conception marked by strategic loftiness and realistic urgency as well as a part of socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics in Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. It fully demonstrates the pursuit of ideals and the intellectual spirit of contemporary Chinese Communists. The conception of building a community of shared future for mankind is a Chinese solution to global governance problems that demonstrates Chinese wisdom and the Chinese approach; it represents an original contribution to the development of historical materialism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century...” (Liu, 2018: 4). From the point of view of modern philosophy, all philosophical currents of the past have ceased to be intermediate stages, a cluster approach is applied to them, each philosophical idea and system of the past is able to give new ideas upon critical examination. “In the theoretical vision of historical materialism, the community of shared future for mankind is a global form of the development of human society, a process and prospect of boosting, with concerted efforts based on the basic orientation towards and values of mutual benefits and win-win situations, the development of globalization. Its standpoint is the philosophical position of ‘human society’, and it promotes the true ‘universal communication’ of man to create human interests formed at a higher level of ‘commonality’, enhancing

the balanced development of the global productive forces on the basis of a change in the global governance system and laying solid material and spiritual foundations for the realization of prospects of a better world for human society. The Chinese wisdom of building a community of human destiny has had an unprecedented theoretical effect on the development of historical materialism and created a new path for its interpretation, bestowing on it a new way of thinking; at the same time, through the constructive interpretation of a community of shared future for mankind, historical materialism has attained its own theoretical goals and value pursuits and will necessarily become a constructive world view in the era of globalization” (Liu, 2018: 4).

Some scholars analyze the philosophical basis of the Belt and Road Initiative based on the Marxist world history view believing that the Belt and Road Initiative is a product of the Sinicization of Marxism, recognize, analyze and understand Marx’s world history theory from different aspects, and study the relationship between Marx’s world history theory and the community of human destiny. The content covers the generation conditions and development process, the theoretical connotation and content logic, the significance to the times and practical requirements of the theory.

The Belt and Road Initiative is the inheritance and development of Marx’s theory of world history. Tian and Zhang (Tian & Zhang, 2017) pointed out: World history has five aspects: production relations, communication methods, basic history, civilization exchanges, and ecological environment. He believes that the Belt and Road Initiative is a general path for overall development that transcends levels, countries, and nations. The continuous growth of productivity and the continuous expansion of exchanges prove the epochal nature of the theory of human history. The community of shared future for humankind is a solution to the emergence of unhealthy global competition and anti-globalization trends.

The theory of world history investigates and analyzes the evolutionary laws of human history and the history of nation-state changes, which has important guiding significance for the formulation of contemporary my country's foreign policy and the construction of international relations. The idea of the Belt and Road Initiative originated from the practice and transcendence of Marx's theory of world history.

Fei Wang from Research Center of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics Dalian University of Technology Dalian had demonstrated that the Belt and Road Initiative for humankind is the inevitable trend of the development of world history and the inevitable trend of social development. At the same time, the Belt and Road Initiative inherited Marx's theory of world history, enriched and developed this theory, and achieved a leap in the new era.

In his article, Fei Wang speaks very interestingly about the role of the philosophy of Marxism: "Marx attaches great importance to the investigation of the social role of communication and points out that the essence of capitalist communication (mutual exchange) is 'mutual plunder' and 'slavery'. In foreign exchanges, it is manifested in the exploitation of the people of backward countries by developed capitalist countries. And it was followed by the protection of trade in each other's interactions; the third was the war waged by various countries for the protection of trade; finally, in the international exchanges, the rule of the colonial people in particularly developed capitalist countries was not only plundered but also achieved enslavement" (Wang, 2018: 1555). The researcher is convinced that from a philosophical point of view, various principles and ideas are highly compatible: "The idea of 'cooperation and win-win' proposed by the 'The Belt and Road' initiative and the principle of 'Closer, sincere, favorable, inclusive, sharing business building sharing' are the development of opposing the idea of 'violent interaction'; 'Interaction, Mutual Learning, and Mutual Recognition' is The overcoming of 'communicating alienation'; the goal of 'human destiny community' is to fulfill the prelude of human 'liberation'. The 'The Belt and Road' initiative is a practical

innovation of Marx's communication theory. The concept of 'human destiny community' is the theoretical development of Marx's communication theory. They all embody the theoretical qualities of Marxism that advance with the times" (Wang, 2018: 1555). Researcher believes that the idea the Belt and Road Initiative uses the analytical methods of Marx's theory of world history and implements the values contained in this theory into the practice of international communication in the contemporary world, thus exploring the coexistence of different civilizations and different development models. The author believes that the Belt and Road Initiative has realized the transition from civilized bullying to civilized exchanges, from exposing capital hegemony to realizing sovereignty respect, and bringing the value of world history into practice in contemporary world communication.

Overall, the idea of the Belt and Road Initiative is inextricably linked with Marx's theory of world history. Combining the two for research conforms to the fundamental requirements of the development of the times. The exploration of Marx's theory of world history is becoming more and more comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth. In addition, so many academic papers can help us to solve the global problems we face in today's era. Nowadays, more and more scholars explore global issues from the perspective of Marx's theory of world history, realizing that the solution of global issues must not only follow the guidance of correct theories, but also put them into practice. Therefore, we should attach importance to the study and exploration of the theory of world history. Only in this way can we have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the main ideas of this theory, actively promote the spread and development of the theory of world history in contemporary China. As the researcher points out: "his (Marx - *author*) important expositions on social and historical significance of communication and critiques of capitalist exchanges are still of profound enlightenment significance so far, providing a philosophical basis and theoretic cornerstone for the Chinese

government's proposal of the 'The Belt and Road' Initiative and the concept of 'human destiny community' in the new era" (Wang, 2018: 1555)

### **1.3. Literature about the relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative and the community with a shared future for humankind**

Scholars have made connections between the Belt and Road initiative and the theory of a community with a shared future for humankind. They utilize the concept of a community with a shared future for humankind as a theoretical framework for the Belt and Road initiative, conducting interdisciplinary research that integrates background knowledge from relevant disciplines.

*(1) Research on the social and historical conditions of a community with a shared future for humankind.*

A prominent phenomenon in the current historical development of the world is that economic globalization and information globalization have led to a sharp increase in risks to the international society. The idea of building a community with a shared future for humankind is a reflection of human self-worth under the urgency of a global risk society. Zhou pointed out that human society is a huge and closely related community, and a small conflict can produce a huge butterfly effect. The problems and contradictions of a country, a region or a nation may be the starting point of a dilemma in many countries, affecting the whole body, local problems and contradictions may affect the whole world, which affects the whole body. Local problems and contradictions may affect the entire world. In this situation, we urgently need a holistic concept that can deal with the overall risk. The idea of a community with a shared future for humankind, under the premise of the overall transformation of the international order, is expected to become an important opportunity for the construction of a new international order in the new era.

Zhang Jilong pointed out that the idea of a community with a shared future for humankind is a solution proposed by China in response to various current globalization crises. The idea is rich in the spiritual essence of China's excellent traditional culture. The author also pointed out that the establishment of harmonious but different and eclectic cultural exchanges has become the current "new normal". This shift from "Thaksin" to "confidence" is a good expression of China's cultural superiority as a socialist country: "The concept of a community with a shared future for mankind plays an important role in building cultural self-confidence, and there is a certain dialectical interaction between the two. On the one hand, the community of shared future for mankind is not only an attempt to resolve local and global conflicts, but also the application and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture at the global level, and the expansion and deepening of the essence of cultural self-confidence. On the other hand, cultural self-confidence focuses on changing the cognition of cultural unipolarism, breaking through the concept of Western civilization conflict and power thinking, getting rid of the morality of previous hegemony, realizing cultural diversity and autonomy, highlighting the superiority of Chinese culture, and establishing mutual respect and equality. The new normal of cultural development of exchanges provides localized practical experience for the construction of a community of shared future for mankind, and at the same time demonstrates the common value of mankind" (Zhang, 2017: 10).

Xue pointed out that the international influence of western developed countries such as Britain and the United States is gradually weakening in the context of economic globalization and information globalization (Xue, 2017). The status of developing countries and other emerging economies is gradually increasing. Zou and Wang pointed out that in the context of the increasingly close ties between countries in the world, my country, as an "alien" in the eyes of the Western world, has been on the stage and has been continuously developed and improved. It has formed its own cultural characteristics, maintained its cultural identity, and improved cultural

confidence: “Cultural self-confidence has become the psychological basis for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the spiritual strength for modern China to come to the center of the world stage and lead the construction of a community with a common future for mankind. The prerequisite for cultural self-confidence is cultural self-awareness. The three levels of Chinese excellent traditional culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture accumulate the deepest spiritual quest of the Chinese nation, represent the unique spiritual identity of the Chinese nation, and constitute the main objects of cultural knowledge” (Zou & Wang, 2017: 30). Zou and Wang argue about the possibility of a new world order with special characteristics: “The ‘Community of the Common Destiny of Mankind’ contributes to the new development of the world historical process, removing the old world order, and provides an opportunity for deeper intercultural communication. In this cultural exchange, China, as the ‘other’ of the Western world, has formed its own cultural psychology, clarified its cultural identity, and built a strong cultural self-confidence through the enrichment and expansion of the connotation of ‘modernity’. The psychological construction of cultural self-confidence includes understanding differences in communication, understanding oneself in communication, establishing the correct system of assessments in communication, on this basis we can truly identify ourselves with our own culture, which is also the basis of cultural self-confidence” (Zou & Wang, 2017: 30).

(2) *Research on the theoretical basis of the thought of the community of shared future for humankind.*

At present, many experts have put forward different views on the theoretical basis of the idea of a community with a shared future for humankind. Regarding the historical origin of the formation of the idea of a community with a shared future for mankind, most domestic scholars hold a three-point view, which is derived from the excellent traditional Chinese culture, Marx and Engels' social community theory, and diplomatic theories since the founding of New China, in addition to journalism, ethnology, and sociology. However, most of the above research results are conducted from the perspective of a single subject, with their own subject background, and lack of interdisciplinary, comprehensive thinking and perspective for analysis and research.

A considerable number of scholars believe that the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind is based on the excellent classic Chinese culture. One of them is represented by Feng, director of the History Institute of Shandong Academy of Social Sciences, who pointed out that the Confucian "idea of a world of great harmony" runs through the idea of a community with a shared future for humankind. It has the value concept of "the world is the public", and contains the governance concept of "fairness and justice" and the cultural concept of "harmony without difference". In his book *China and Multilateralism. From Estrangement to Competition* (2020), Yuan Feng explores the key features of such a phenomenon as multilateralism: "It introduces the debates and discussions that take place among Chinese intellectuals in the study of international relations as an important part of non-western international relation theories, generating reflections on the convergences and divergences between China's political ideas and Europe-centric perspectives. With a focus specifically on China's main bilateral and multilateral relations in its principal regions of interest - East Asia and Central Asia - the book also examines China's relationship with the United States, Russia, and the European

Union, and the One Belt One Road initiative drawing on a mixture of primary and secondary Chinese language sources, extensive interviews with Chinese officials, academics, and think tanks” (Feng, 2020).

Professor Shiren Liu of Tsinghua University believes that contemporary Chinese excellent culture and China’s peaceful diplomacy are deeply compatible with the idea of a community with a shared future for humankind. In addition, draw the conclusion that the idea of a community with a shared future for humankind is a cultural expression with contemporary “Chinese experience”. Some scholars pointed out that the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind is based on the common value of all humankind: “The concept of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind is proposed by Chairman Xi Jinping under the background of complicated and changeable in-ternational environment, rapidly development of Chinese economy, and great change in world political and economic situation. This concept is the new development of Marxism philosophy in the 21st century, demonstrating the basic spirit and essence of Marxism philosophy” (Liu, 2019: 1). The article *The Philosophic Interpretation of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind from the Perspective of the Marxist Philosophy* (2019) explains the spirit of Marxism in the concept of community of shared future of mankind, the method of analyzing problems, the diplomatic concept of China in its peaceful rise in the concept of community of shared future of mankind from the per-spective of Marxist philosophy, and the value of Chinese.

Finally, the concept of a community with a shared future for humankind inherited the idea of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. Chen, director of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), believes that the five principles of “seeking common ground while reserving differences” and peaceful coexistence advocated by the new China are the theoretical foundation of the concept of a community with a shared future for humankind at the diplomatic level.

Generally speaking, Chinese research on the community of shared future for humankind presents the following problems:

One is that the research involves a wide range of disciplines, but it lacks the method of interdisciplinary comprehensive analysis for discussion and research.

Secondly, the quantity of research is large, and the quality needs to be improved. It is mainly reflected in the fact that although there are many research results, a large part of it stays at the level of interpretation of the policy, which is superficial, does not penetrate into the essence of the problem, lacks meso and micro paradigm analysis and factual reasoning, and the research is lacking in maneuverability. In addition, the systematic integration of research results is also insufficient, and it is still in a relatively dispersed state.

Third, there are many theoretical explanatory articles, but the research on practical countermeasures is still weak. The subject of a community with a shared future for humankind is not only a question of thinking and a theoretical level, but also an important practical issue. The solution of practical problems helps us deepen our understanding of theoretical problems and promotes the development of theory. Therefore, for this huge and complex system engineering, the academic community should concentrate its efforts on constructive countermeasure research, integrate the current academic research results, and introduce more valuable countermeasures and suggestions.

#### **1.4. Literature about Xi Jinping Thought and the Belt and Road Initiative**

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a large-scale infrastructure and development project launched by the Chinese government in 2013. It aims to enhance connectivity and cooperation among countries along the ancient Silk Road routes and beyond. Both historical and philosophical analyses of the BRI provide distinct perspectives on this ambitious initiative. Historical analysis of the BRI

focuses on understanding the historical context and precedents of the project. Scholars and researchers examine the historical trade routes, cultural exchanges, and economic interactions that once existed along the Silk Road and other ancient trading networks. This analysis seeks to draw parallels and identify the potential benefits and challenges of reviving and expanding these historical connections in the modern context. Key points of historical analysis might include examination of the ancient Silk Road trade routes and their impact on economies, cultural exchange, and geopolitical dynamics; identification of historical successes and failures of similar large-scale connectivity projects in the past; evaluation of how historical interactions and exchanges between civilizations can inform the planning and implementation of the BRI; understanding the cultural and social implications of past connectivity initiatives and how they might resonate in the present BRI context.

On the other hand, we have philosophical Analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative; it delves into the underlying principles, motivations, and ideological considerations driving the initiative. This analysis seeks to understand the philosophical framework and worldview of the Chinese government regarding global cooperation, development, and connectivity. Key points of philosophical analysis might include exploration of the principles of cooperation and mutual benefit that underpin the BRI's philosophy; analysis of how the BRI aligns with China's broader foreign policy goals and its vision for global governance and economic development; evaluation of the philosophical implications of the BRI's emphasis on infrastructure development and connectivity as means of promoting stability and prosperity; consideration of the ethical dimensions and potential critiques of the BRI, including concerns related to debt-trap diplomacy and geopolitical influence.

In summary, historical analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative focuses on the examination of past trade and connectivity networks, while philosophical analysis delves into the underlying principles and motivations guiding the initiative. Both perspectives provide valuable insights into understanding the BRI's context,

implications, and potential outcomes. Some scholars analyze the philosophical basis of the Belt and Road Initiative based on Xi Jinping's philosophical thinking.

In addition to Xi Jinping's diplomatic thoughts, Chinese scholars have specifically studied Xi Jinping's philosophical thoughts, believing that Xi Jinping attaches great importance to philosophical research and fully embodies the views and methods of dialectical materialism and historical materialism, including that the masses of people are the creators of history, the dialectical relationship between internal and external causes, the relationship between theory and practice, the view of connection and development, the contradictory view, etc. Some scholars sorted out the basic principles of Marxism used in the literature research of Xi Jinping's series of speeches. Some scholars also conduct philosophical analysis on certain aspects of Xi Jinping's thoughts.

Some researches expounded Xi Jinping's related concepts of the Belt and Road Initiative from a holistic perspective. Holism in philosophy is a concept that emphasizes the whole as being more than just the sum of its parts. It posits that the entire system or entity should be considered and analyzed as a whole, rather than breaking it down into individual components for examination. The holistic approach is common in various philosophical fields and is often contrasted with reductionism, which seeks to understand complex phenomena by analyzing them in terms of their simpler, fundamental elements. For example, Guo and Liu believed that Xi Jinping's thoughts inherited Marxist philosophical thinking and clearly pointed out that the Belt and Road Initiative is the foundation of social development and world development, and it is also a necessary stage for the development of civilization. It can be said that the Belt and Road Initiative is an inheritance and development of Marxist philosophy. In the article *Representations of the Chinese Communist Party's political ideologies in President Xi Jinping's discourse* (2017) Jiayu Wang writes: "the CCP's political ideologies are framed as values that are at once stable and keep on changing, being adapted and Sinicized. They are also represented as moral values

with a authoritative nature that guides both the state and the society. The representations subliminally utilize the political culture of statecraft, rationalization or ‘zhengming’ and the Marxist and Chinese cultural dialectics of ‘change’. Through these discursive and cultural strategies or mechanisms, the CCP’s status as China’s ruling party is substantially legitimized. Through the analysis, it is that this study will shed light on adapting CDA’s approaches to Chinese political discourse analysis regarding China’s particular culture and politics” (Wang, 2017: 430). It was clearly pointed out that the idea of the Belt and Road Initiative is able to integrate the mission of human development with human freedom in all respects, which is closely related to Marx’s idea of the union of free men. In the process of research, some scholars, from the perspective of historical materialism, made an in-depth summary of the contribution made by the Belt and Road Initiative in the development process, such as Liu clearly pointed out that the Belt and Road Initiative created and interpreted a new path of historical materialism; Ma pointed out that a broad road for mankind to reach the kingdom of freedom is to adhere to the concept the Belt and Road Initiative (Xu, 2021).

In concise delineation, an inquiry into Xi Jinping’s conceptual framework concerning the Belt and Road Initiative reveals a conspicuous incorporation of substantial philosophical ideation. This intricate subject has elicited a considerable volume of scholarly exegesis, characterized by diverse and multifaceted analytical approaches. While a plethora of articles offer comprehensive overviews, discernibly fewer pieces delve into the nuanced dialectical amalgamation intrinsic to this conceptual construct.

## **1.5. Research methodology**

For the research on the concept of the Belt and Road Initiative, we have adopted targeted approaches to grasp the theoretical connotation more clearly. The research methods used in the thesis mainly include:

- **Philosophical Textual Analysis:** This methodology entails a meticulous scrutiny and interpretation of philosophical texts and primary sources. The central objective lies in comprehending and dissecting arguments, concepts, and the backdrop against which international, social, economic, political, and cultural notions were formulated. The pursuit of textual analysis is to fathom the philosopher's underlying intentions, the historical milieu, and the philosophical ramifications intrinsic to their oeuvre.

- **Contextualization:** A pivotal approach to unraveling the import of philosophers' ideas is through contextualization within the historical and cultural milieu they inhabited. This technique entails an exploration of the societal, political, and intellectual circumstances that sculpted philosophical ideation during specific epochs. Contextualization serves to elucidate the genesis of specific ideas, their reception, and their broader implications.

- **Comparative Philosophical Analysis:** The avenue of comparative analysis entails a meticulous examination and juxtaposition of philosophical tenets across divergent epochs, cultures, and traditions. This method is instrumental in discerning the parallels between contemporary Western philosophical and societal thought and the realm of Chinese Marxism. The identification of commonalities and disparities enables scholars to trace the legacy of earlier philosophers on subsequent generations, recognize recurring motifs, and trace the evolutionary trajectory of ideas over time.

- **Intellectual Biography:** This methodology pivots on delving into the lives of philosophers to glean insights into their philosophical evolution and the impetus underlying their ideas. Intellectual biographies delve into the personal, societal, and intellectual influences that shaped a philosopher's cogitation, as well as their

interactions with fellow thinkers and intellectuals of their era. This approach elucidates how personal experiences and socio-cultural contexts contributed to the crystallization and maturation of Marxist philosophy, thereby facilitating an understanding of its distinct contours.

- **Historical-Philosophical Reconstruction Method:** This integrative approach melds historical and philosophical paradigms to reconstruct and dissect philosophical notions or systems within their historical backdrop. It encompasses an examination of historical sources, texts, and intellectual advancements, coupled with philosophical analysis and interpretation.

In tandem with these methodologies, overarching scientific methods such as analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction are employed. This collective array of methodologies comprises the methodological toolkit underpinning this study.

There are some methods that are not so often used in the study, but which are worth writing about separately:

#### *1. Literature research method*

The Belt and Road Initiative is not a rootless tree or water without a source. On the contrary, the concept is the contemporary inheritance and innovation of Marxist scientific theory. Therefore, when studying the idea of the Belt and Road Initiative, we paid attention to absorbing ideological nutrition from classic Marxist works, bursting out thought sparks, and using classic literature as a blueprint to consolidate the theoretical foundation of the the Belt and Road Initiative and enhance the academic rationality, scientificity and rigor of the article.

#### *2. The method of unifying theory and practice*

The foundation of the Belt and Road Initiative is the actual practice of humankind. We cannot just talk about theoretical construction and neglect to return it to practice. In the research process of the thesis, starting from the field of theory and practice, it objectively analyzes the complex situation of the current international environment, rationally analyzes the challenges faced in the progress of the Belt and

Road Initiative, and provides a theoretical overview of them, providing a reasonable basis for the Belt and Road Initiative. Under the guidance of the theory of the One Belt One Road, analyze its construction route and provide assistance for the development of human society.

### *3. The method of unifying logic and history*

If you leave history and talk about logic, the paper will become a metaphysical thinking deduction; if you leave logic and talk about history, the paper will only become an unorganized pile of content. Only by the correct method of unifying logic and history can the dynamic process of the Belt and Road Initiative be produced. Therefore, in the research process, we must not only fully investigate the historical background and development context of the Belt and Road Initiative, find its historical characteristics, and clarify the underlying logic of the concept of the Belt and Road Initiative, so as to achieve an overall understanding of this concept.

Scientific methodology is of paramount importance for scientific research due to its role in ensuring the rigor, reliability, and validity of the research process and its outcomes. Here are some key reasons why scientific methodology is crucial:

1. **Systematic Approach:** Scientific methodology provides a structured and systematic approach to conducting research. It outlines the steps, procedures, and guidelines that researchers should follow to ensure consistency and objectivity in their investigations.

2. **Precision and Clarity:** By defining clear research questions, hypotheses, and objectives, scientific methodology helps researchers focus their efforts and avoid ambiguity. This precision enhances the clarity of the research process and the interpretation of results.

3. **Objectivity:** A sound scientific methodology emphasizes objectivity and minimizes the influence of personal bias or subjective judgment. It promotes the use of standardized procedures and measurements, reducing the likelihood of skewed or distorted findings.

4. **Reproducibility:** A robust scientific methodology ensures that research studies can be replicated by other researchers. Reproducibility is a cornerstone of the scientific method, allowing for the validation and verification of results by independent parties.

5. **Quality Control:** Rigorous methodology acts as a quality control mechanism by setting standards for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This helps identify errors, inconsistencies, or flaws in the research process, leading to more reliable conclusions.

6. **Credibility:** A well-designed and executed scientific methodology lends credibility to research findings. It enhances the trustworthiness of the results and increases the likelihood of acceptance by the scientific community and the broader society.

7. **Ethical Considerations:** Scientific methodology often includes ethical guidelines and considerations for research involving human subjects, animals, or sensitive topics. Adhering to ethical standards ensures the well-being of participants and maintains the integrity of the research.

8. **Innovation and Progress:** By encouraging systematic exploration and experimentation, scientific methodology fosters innovation and drives the advancement of knowledge. It provides a structured framework for generating new hypotheses, testing theories, and pushing the boundaries of understanding.

9. **Problem Solving:** The systematic nature of scientific methodology aids in addressing complex problems by breaking them down into manageable steps. It enables researchers to identify patterns, correlations, and causal relationships that contribute to problem-solving and decision-making.

10. **Continuous Improvement:** Scientific methodology is iterative, allowing researchers to refine their approaches based on feedback and new insights. This continuous improvement contributes to the accumulation of knowledge over time.

In essence, scientific methodology serves as a cornerstone of scientific research, guiding researchers in their pursuit of truth, discovery, and the advancement of human understanding. It provides a structured framework that upholds the principles of objectivity, reliability, and accountability, which are essential for the credibility and impact of scientific endeavors.

## **Conclusion to Chapter One**

To sum up, the current research on Xi Jinping's concept of the Belt and Road Initiative has been comprehensively analyzed by domestic scholars from multiple perspectives such as background theory. Some scholars have also proposed corresponding philosophical features from the perspectives of historical materialism and materialist dialectics and accumulated a lot of academic achievements, which has certain help and reference significance for the writing of this article. However, the research on the dialectical unity of Xi Jinping's concept of the Belt and Road Initiative has relatively little content and is a general analysis.

According to the review of domestic and foreign literature above, it is not difficult to see that both the research on Marx's theory of world history and the research on the Belt and Road Initiative have achieved fruitful results. These achievements of the current research have laid a good foundation for the development of this research, and also provided a wealth of literature for this research.

However, the current domestic and foreign research still has obvious shortcomings, and many aspects need to be deepened. In summary, the main problems are as follows: First, the current research on the Belt and Road Initiative is still immature and still in basic research. The stage is mostly narrative research, that is, most scholars only make introductory analysis on the Belt and Road Initiative, but lack theoretical depth. The analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative from the perspective of Marxist philosophy is even rarer. Second, the research perspective is relatively single. At present, the research field of the Belt and Road Initiative is relatively narrow and lacks multi-angle analysis and argumentation. Third, the research content is relatively fragmented and lacks systematic research. At present, most of the research on the initiative of the Belt and Road at home and abroad are journal articles, and there are few academic monographs. From this perspective, it can also reflect that the current research in this area is not systematic and the research

is not in-depth. The lack of research at home and abroad is the starting point of this research. Based on the above research status, the main content of this research is determined.

## **CHAPTER 2. Marxism with Chinese characteristics as a theoretical basement of the belt and road initiative**

### **2.1. The characteristics of the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy**

As a theory that has effectively steered China's sociopolitical evolution for over a century, it is imperative to discern its salient attributes. Foremost among these traits is its practicality, a quality aligned with both the historical development demands and the inherent tenets of Marxist philosophy. Philosophical transformation herein finds itself intricately entwined with the advancement of productivity, and the amalgamation of these two dynamics constitutes another noteworthy hallmark. Distinctive theoretical accomplishments across disparate historical epochs, as embodied by various representative figures, are replete with their own distinctive features. These characteristics are encapsulated within the overarching idiosyncrasies of the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy, thereby elucidating the synthesis of shared elements and individual nuances. Naturally, the ultimate objective remains the construction of a novel philosophical paradigm capable of guiding China's progressive trajectory.

#### *(1) Rich practicality*

The practicality of the Sinicization of Marxism is embodied in the solution of major practical problems through research and a theoretical summary of the most vivid practical experience. Marxism emerges from practice, develops in practice, and is constantly supplemented, revised and perfected by new practices. In order to guide practice, Marxism must be integrated into real life, give full play to the role of theory in guiding practice and respond to the issues of the times, so that theoretical achievements can be transformed into principles and policies for state governance, and into real-life concrete practice.

In his article *“Marxism and Its Sinicized Theory as the Guidance of the Chinese Model: The ‘Two Economic Miracles’ of the New China”* (2018) Enfu Cheng describes in great detail the characteristics of Marxism and its transformation. “Marxism has a broad content, and only through multi-level differentiation based on its theoretical connotations, temporal span, and spatial scope can we truly understand its diverse yet holistic character First, and taking Marxism in a broad theoretical sense, at least six levels can be distinguished within its content (1) the role of the subject of its creation was played by Marx and Engels, whose legacy was then continuously enriched by their successors, (2) Marxism forms an academic system dealing with the general law of the development of nature, society, and the human mind, (3) the social function of Marxism is to develop a system of ideas that posit the socialist revolution, socialist construction, and the transition to communist society as the tasks of the working class and its party, (4) Marxism develops a system of ideas and principles dealing with the improvement of people’s living standards and with the full and free development of the human being, (5) it develops a cultural and ideational system of beliefs and basic values, and (6) it develops an international system of peaceful development and of the shared community of humankind” (Cheng, 2018: 297). This practical feature has both theoretical origins and objective causes. Theoretical origin means that both Marxist philosophy and traditional Chinese philosophy attach importance to practice, and the objective cause is China’s practical needs.

In terms of theoretical origins, Marxist philosophy is itself a philosophy of practice, because “for the practical materialists, the communists, the whole problem is to revolutionize the existing world, to actually oppose and change the status quo of things” (Marx & Engels, 1975). That is, the principle of Marxist philosophy is applied into the practice of proletarian revolution to guide the labor movement. Although traditional Chinese philosophy focuses on introspection, it does not simply stop at abstract speculation, but still attaches great importance to practical rationality,

which is reflected in individual practice and social practice. In individual practice, this characteristic is reflected in Confucian moral practice, Daoist freedom and Buddhist liberation practice. In addition, these individual practices, especially Confucian moral practices, are extended to the thinking beyond the individual to the origin of all things in the universe to achieve the integration of moral order and cosmic order. Ultimately, these practices became a trace of “the Heaven”, which is finally regarded as the origin of all things. (Angle, 2014) “Heaven and human are one” has become an inevitable requirement, so to apply it back to social practice, it is required that the development of society conforms to “heaven”, to the original law of the universe’s operation, and to the harmonious development of human beings and all things. “In the last two decades of his life Mou was engaged in several projects. As broader scholarly interest in the “New Confucianism” of thinkers like Mou and Tang Junyi began to emerge, Mou played a role in the explication and defense of his own thought. He deepened and systematized his long interest in Buddhism, eventually published a major treatise offering his own analysis and appropriation of the history of Chinese Buddhism” (Angle, 2014: 10).

Between 1900 and 1930, Marxist philosophy found its way into China through translations from German, Russian, and Japanese sources. It’s worth noting that Ma Junwu, the Chinese translator of Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*, played a pivotal role in introducing Marxism to China. According to Ma, both evolutionism and Marxism held the keys to understanding the dynamics of social development (Jin, 2019). From the perspective of historical conditions, when Marxist philosophy was introduced into China, China was in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, and the actual situation was far from that of Europe. The nature, object, motivation and members of the revolutionary practice at that time were different from those of the European labor movement. In this social situation, coupled with imperialist aggression, revolution is the most urgent task. Only by combining Marxism with the reality of Chinese society as soon as possible can we find the correct revolutionary

path amid domestic and foreign difficulties. This requires that theory be integrated with practice, and the revolutionary struggle should be carried out in a realistic manner, without making mistakes of subjectivism. The consequences of breaking away from practice are very serious, Mao Zedong once summed up: “In the past, our party was ruled by subjectivism for a long time... These subjectivists called themselves the ‘international line’ and put on the coat of Marxism, they were fake Marxism” (Womack, 1994). Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping both emphasized the importance of linking theory with practice in various historical periods, and “learning Marxism-Leninism must be refined and effective”, and the spirit must be investigated and researched, contact the masses, and then formulate correct lines, principles, and policies” (Ming, 1995). This requires us to focus on the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics, adhere to theoretical innovation, and adapt to changing social conditions and the requirements of the new era. As Xiao Ping describes in article *On the Characteristics and Laws of the Sinicization of Marxism* (2022): “...the Sinicization of Marxism refers to the combination of Marxist theory with the reality and culture of our country, so as to make Marxist theory have Chinese characteristics and adapt it to the needs of our country” (Ping, 2022: 459)

The imitation and continuous breakthrough of the Soviet-Russian model runs through the process of the Sinicization of Marxism. Due to historical, geographical and practical reasons, the progress and setbacks of China’s revolution and construction are inextricably linked with the Soviet-Russian model. The Marxism that the Chinese people first came into contact with was “Russified” Marxism. Marxism studied for a long time was actually only the empirical theory of the Russian Revolution.

The breakthrough of the Soviet-Russian Marxist model enabled China to achieve the great victory of the new democratic revolution and the socialist revolution. During the period of the democratic revolution, the young Communist Party of China had to take the Russian-style revolutionary road under the guidance

of the Comintern due to the lack of theoretical preparation and relevant experience in applying Marxism to solve the problems of the Chinese revolution. Due to the increasing tendency to dogmatize Marxism-Leninism, the resolutions of the Comintern, and the experience of the Russian revolution, ready-made formulas are used to solve practical problems of the Chinese revolution, the difference between democratic revolution and socialism is confused. The phenomenon of copying the Soviet-Russian model is becoming more and more serious and prominent resulting in three successive occurrences of “Left-leaning” errors, which almost completely ruined the Chinese Communist Party and the revolutionary cause under its leadership. Under the circumstances of the extremely severe revolutionary situation, some people in the party who held different attitudes towards the Soviet-Russian model began to learn to choose China’s revolutionary path and had a fundamental disagreement with Chen Duxiu’s left-leaning and Wang Ming’s right-leaning erroneous thoughts.

Mao Zedong pointed out that the study of the process of the Sinicization of Marxism must be combined with the actual situation of our country. Through the examination of positive and negative practical experience and the convening of the Zunyi Conference, Mao Zedong’s correct proposition was gradually recognized by the majority of comrades in the party, thus creating favorable conditions for breaking through the Soviet-Russian model. From the Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to the period of the rectification movement in Yan’an, the party, through profound reflection and conscientious summary of history, cleared up its dogmatic mistakes, completely broke through the Soviet-Russian model in theory and practice, and opened up the road of armed seizure of power with Chinese characteristics.

China departed from the Soviet-Russian model and achieved significant advancements in its socialist construction. During the early years of the People’s Republic of China, the Communist Party encountered challenges as it lacked the

required experience, theoretical groundwork, and economic resources for the demanding and intricate task of socialist development. Moreover, China faced comprehensive encirclement and economic blockade by Western countries, led by the United States, during this period.

The Party was in a very difficult situation and can only follow the construction model of the former Soviet Union, thus establishing a centralized and unified planned economic system based on the Soviet socialism, formulating a high-speed development economic construction policy, choosing heavy industry as the development focus and regarding the heavy industry and extensive development as the main means of growth. The determination of this system, policy and strategy promoted the rapid development of social productive forces under the specific historical conditions at that time. However, with the improvement of the level of social productivity and the deepening of the complexity of the social and economic structure, the drawbacks of this construction model have become prominent, and it has become increasingly unsuitable and even hinders the development of productivity and social progress. Under such circumstances, Mao Zedong carried out a series of reforms and active explorations, trying to find a road for socialist construction suitable for China's actual situation. After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the second generation of the central leadership with Deng Xiaoping as the core resumed the ideological line of seeking truth from facts, formulated the basic line of "One Central Task and Two Basic Points" in the primary stage, and established a socialist market economy system, opened up a road of socialist construction with Chinese characteristics, and achieved another breakthrough in the Soviet-Russian model.

Frederic E. Wakeman in his book *History and Will: Philosophical Perspectives of Mao Tse-tung's Thought* (1973) describes a dramatic story: "Mao Tse-tung's singular prominence within the Chinese Communist Party was not quickly won. His share of leadership was secured during the famous Tsun-yi conference of January

1935; but it was not until 1942, after seven years of ideological compromise and political maneuvering, that he and his thought dominated the party alone.<sup>1</sup> However, the image which his hagiographers project has been far more dramatic: a prescient revolutionary whose unwavering vision of the sole path to victory carried him to a stunning triumph over far lesser rivals. Lenin may be extolled for his ability to compromise and to adjust personal beliefs as the situation demanded. Mao is praised for his unswerving commitment to an individual and constant perception of the dynamics of modern Chinese history” (Wakeman, 1973: 3).

In 1950, Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin took steps to protect the national interests of China and the Soviet Union by signing the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance. This treaty served to enhance the geopolitical relationship between the two nations on political, military, and economic fronts (Lüthi, 2008: 31-32). At the 12<sup>th</sup> National Congress, Hu Yaobang’s report underscored the importance of the Chinese diplomatic concept known as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. In his report, Hu articulated the view that “China will never be dependent on any big country or group of countries, nor will it yield to the pressure of any big country... The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence apply to our relations with all countries, including socialist countries” (Huang et al., 2020).

### *(2) Combining philosophical change with productivity change*

The combination of productivity change and philosophical change is an extension based on the practical characteristic, in order to achieve the goal of transforming the world. The process of the Sinicization of Marxism is actually a process with the theme of “liberating and developing the productive forces” and continuously promoting the progress of Chinese society and history. The development of productive forces is the basis for the existence and development of the entire human society. To measure the correctness of an idea or theory, in the final analysis, it depends on whether it can guide the liberation and development of social

productive forces, and whether it can promote social progress and economic development. The Sinicization of Marxism is fundamentally the use of Marxism to find methods and paths to liberate and develop productive forces under Chinese conditions.

In modern times, facing the situation of internal and external troubles, traditional Chinese philosophy itself has also undergone changes, and in the field of social practice, it has also proposed “Chinese style and Western use”. At the same time, under the influence of Western philosophy, there are also calls for complete Westernization. Compared with traditional philosophy, the Chinese-style westernization and the overall westernization are great changes, but they cannot be successful because they are not combined with the changes in productivity.

The reason why the results of the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy can guide the success of Chinese practice lies in the realization from the very beginning that the problems China has faced since modern times are not simply problems of ideas and morality, but problems of productive forces that do not meet the requirements of modernization. At the same time, the reality of China’s semi-colonial and semi-feudal society makes it impossible for China to make improvements to realize the transformation of the productive forces. In this case, the formation of an alliance of workers and peasants to carry out a revolution to gain power, and then to carry out a complete transformation of the productive forces has become the only way out (Petras, 2006). The explorations during this period marked the initial steps towards the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy, giving rise to the philosophical ideas of Mao Zedong. Following the triumph of the revolution, the drive to modernize productive forces propelled the reform of philosophy. The outcomes of this reform played a crucial role in advancing the second phase of the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy, ultimately giving rise to the theoretical framework of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

In the whole process, the situation in which the two kinds of changes promote each other is common, which fully reflects the Marxist philosophy's emphasis on the productive force which is decisive for social development and reflects the Chinese Communist Party's scientific analysis and correct solution to the main social contradiction. The changes in these two aspects have also become the prerequisites for the comprehensive development of human freedom. The changes in philosophy have gradually liberated people's minds—freedom has become possible, and the changes in productive forces have greatly promoted people's ability to transform the world—comprehensive become possible.

The combination of philosophical change and productivity change actually follows the principle of combining self-transformation and world-transformation. Marx emphasized that people are educated first (reforming themselves), and only then can they change the environment (reforming the world). Mao Zedong also talked about the importance of people's self-transformation in practice in "On Practice" (Knight, 1980). In traditional Chinese philosophy, "cultivating oneself, regulating the family, governing the country, and pacifying the world" also represents a similar logic, and "cultivating oneself" (reforming oneself) is the foundation of "regulating the family, governing the country, and pacifying the world" (transforming the world). The philosophical transformation represents a breakthrough in people's thinking and wisdom, signifying an enhancement in their capacity to change themselves. Conversely, the transformation of productivity signifies a breakthrough in the ability to reshape the world.

After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Chinese Communists, represented by Deng Xiaoping, implemented reform and opening up in an all-round way and made the socialist modernization construction with the theme of liberating and developing productive forces go into a new period of development. It is emphasized that China is still in the primary stage of socialism and the liberation and development of productive forces

should be regarded as the fundamental task, and whether it is conducive to the liberation and development of productive forces should be regarded as the fundamental criterion for judging success and failure. Historian Mobo Gao is reserved about Marxist ideology, arguing that it was overshadowed by revolutionary ideas: “Deng Xiaoping and many like him [in the Chinese Communist Party] were not really Marxists, but basically revolutionary nationalists who wanted to see China standing on equal terms with the great global powers” (Gao, 2008).

The third generation of leadership, led by Jiang Zemin and focusing on the fundamental issue of unlocking and advancing social productive forces, continued to build upon, enhance, and expand upon Deng Xiaoping’s ideas for advancing these forces in light of evolving practical experiences. They articulated a sharp insight that the Communist Party of China should consistently align itself with the developmental needs of China’s progressive social productive forces (Kau, 2016).

Since the 16<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Hu Jintao has further pointed out in the report of the 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Reform and opening up is a new great revolution led by the Party under the conditions of the new era. The purpose is to liberate and develop social productive forces, to realize the modernization of the country and to make the Chinese people rich. “Hu Jintao is more concerned with the content than the form of the ideology. He took over the theory of the “Three Represents” and gave it a new interpretation. He replaced Jiang’s slogans from the Cultural Revolution with modern terminologies, and deemphasized the role of the person in ideology and anchored the ‘Three Represents’ in Maoist principles. Most significantly, Hu replaced Jiang as the sole legitimate interpreter of the ideology of the Party as General Secretary of the Party and thus institutionalized the ideology” (Bo, 2004: 38-39). Hu Jintao’s series of important thoughts on the development of productive forces are the inheritance and development of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of “Three Represents” on the development of productive forces,

and they are a solemn declaration of China's continuous liberation and development of productive forces in the new era and new stage (Hu, 2007).

### *(3) Unity of commonality and individuality*

The successes in the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy share several common elements, including the pursuit of a deeper understanding of the authentic essence of Marxist philosophy, the integration of Marxist philosophy with the prevailing social conditions, and the assimilation and adaptation of traditional Chinese philosophy. At the same time, different stages, different classic writers, and different achievements also have their own personalities. It is precisely because of the rich and colorful elaboration that the achievements of the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy can constantly adapt to the needs of the actual and the times, and keep pace with the times. For example, at the beginning of the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy, classic writers such as Mao Zedong, Li Da, Ai Siqi and so on have studied the characteristics of each. Mao Zedong focused on the nationalization and actualization of Marxist philosophy, closely integrating Marxist philosophy with Chinese traditional culture and traditional philosophy, and at the same time guiding China's revolution, attaching importance to the integration of theory with practice, and attaching importance to success at the practical level. He is both a philosopher and a revolutionary.

Li Da focuses on integration and systemization, and in his large-scale and systematic book *Sociology Outline* he puts forward the incisive conclusion that Marxist philosophy is the unity of a scientific view of history and a scientific view of nature. He pays attention to the study and mastery of philosophical principles, and has been engaged in theoretical research for a long time, but he has relatively little participation in social practice (Li, 1980).

Ai Siqi was a Chinese philosopher and author born in Tengchong, Yunnan. He later moved to Hong Kong, where he pursued studies in English and French at a

Protestant school. During his time in Hong Kong, he was exposed to the ideas of Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People and Marxism. Ai Siqi delved deeply into Marxism, extensively reading works such as the Communist Manifesto. This extensive reading of Marxist philosophy greatly influenced his most significant works, which include *Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism* and *Philosophy for the Masses*. In addition to his contributions as a philosopher and author, Ai Siqi was actively involved in Chinese politics. He served as a delegate to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> National People's Congress, demonstrating his engagement with and influence on the political landscape of his time. Ai Siqi, just like the style shown in his book, focuses on popularization and pays attention to the promotion of Marxist philosophy (Mo, 1997). Ai Siqi played a prominent role in promoting and advocating for Marxist philosophy and Mao Zedong's philosophical ideology. He was often referred to as "The Party's Loyal Soldier on the Theoretical Front" due to his unwavering dedication to advancing the principles and ideas of the Communist Party, especially in the realm of philosophy. Of course, these classic writers have reached the same goal in different ways, and they have all made their own contributions to the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy, especially the birth of Mao Zedong's philosophical thought.

Judging from the two major achievements of the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy, Mao Zedong's philosophical thought and the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics also reflect the unity of commonality and individuality. From the perspective of commonality, Mao Zedong's philosophical thought and the theoretical system with Chinese characteristics are the results of the combination of Marxist philosophy and Chinese reality, and the essence of Chinese traditional culture and traditional philosophy. Moreover, Mao Zedong's philosophical thought played a guiding role not only in the new democratic revolution and socialist exploration stage, but also in the period of reform and opening up, so it is the philosophical basis of the theoretical system of socialism with

Chinese characteristics. “Specifically, Mao Zedong’s practical epistemology is the opening of the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, its contradiction analysis method is the ‘scalpel’ of the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and its view of mass history is the ‘foundation stone’ of the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics” (Shi, 2007). In terms of personality, Mao Zedong’s philosophical thought is mainly combined with the practice and exploration in the early stage of China’s revolution and construction, and there are many special philosophical works, in which some basic principles and important viewpoints of the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy are defined. The theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is different. This dedication to promoting Marxist philosophy and Mao Zedong’s philosophical thought was primarily rooted in the practical experiences and experiments of socialist construction in China. It was most evident in his alignment with the Party’s guiding principles, policies, and ideological direction. After theoretical summary and improvement, it is summarized as “Deng Xiaoping Theory”, the important thought of “Three Represents”, the Scientific Outlook on Development, and Xi Jinping’s scientific world outlook and methodology for governing the country with different emphases on the construction of each historical period. This is also determined by the main tasks of the Party in different historical periods, as well as changes in the characteristics of the times and the world situation.

*(4) The main differences between Chinese Marxism and western Marxism*

Chinese Marxism and Western Marxism have several key differences, reflecting variations in their historical development, ideological emphases, and application. From the perspective of history, Western Marxism is people-oriented, while Chinese Marxism regards productivity as the main causes of social and historical problems. Eastern Marxism emphasizes starting from people and bringing problems down to people. On the other hand, Chinese Marxism believes that the different driving forces of history are production relations, productive forces contradictions, class contradictions, etc., and that the basic driving force of historical development is alienation and the sublation of alienation.

Western Marxism emphasizes the need for a comprehensive and holistic revolution, and denies the revolution that violently seizes power. It pays more attention to the revolution that is similar to daily life, has class consciousness and popular culture.

Western Marxism is different from Lenin's material starting point that objective reality does not depend on human beings. It emphasizes the unity of subject and object and the starting point is implemented in practice. Different from Lenin, it defines the reflection of the subjective to the objective as the essence of knowledge. Western Marxism believes that the unity of subject and objective can more reasonably understand the specific activities of social history, that is, practical activities. Chinese Marxism regarded objectivity as the source of knowledge, and practice as the standard for testing knowledge and the process of knowledge formation, while Western Marxism puts practice first, and believes that historical outlook and knowledge are a unified whole. Western Marxism believes knowledge is a part of practice. Chinese Marxism believed that the embodiment of objective dialectics is the dialectics of cognitive concepts, while Western Marxism is opposed to the natural dialectics of the independent existence of ontology, and believes that dialectics is the theory of subjectivity or the unity of subject and object. Western

Marxism believes that the essence of dialectics is the overall category, not the core and essence of dialectics that Chinese Marxism believes is the unity of opposites.

## **2.2. The dialectical relationship between Marxism and the “Belt and Road” Initiative**

The Marxist “world history” theory is not only a major judgment on the general trend of human history transforming from national regional history to global and world history, but also constitutes the theoretical basis for the construction of the “Belt and Road”. President Xi Jinping’s Belt and Road Initiative was born in the era background and historical field of “the transition from history to world history”. The Belt and Road Initiative provides a new realm, new thinking and new plan for China’s development. It is an important development of Marxism to keep pace with the times under modern conditions, and it has the theoretical character of continuous innovation.

First, it is necessary to take into account the historical context and evolution. Chinese Marxism developed in the specific historical context of China’s revolutionary struggle and the subsequent establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. It has been adapted to address the unique challenges and conditions of China’s socialist construction. Western Marxism emerged in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and was primarily concerned with theoretical and philosophical aspects of Marxism. It often focused on cultural and social critique rather than direct revolutionary practice. Secondly, it is necessary to emphasize the role of the party as a cementing foundation. The Communist Party of China (CPC) plays a central role in Chinese Marxism, and Marxism is the guiding ideology of the CPC. Chinese Marxism places a strong emphasis on the leadership of the party in guiding socialist development. Western Marxism, especially in its Frankfurt School and critical theory traditions, tends to be more critical of the role of political parties and often questions

the traditional concept of the vanguard party. Thirdly, it should be taken into account cultural and philosophical influences. Chinese Marxism has been influenced by traditional Chinese philosophy and Confucianism to some extent, resulting in a distinct blend of Marxist and Chinese elements. Western Marxism has been more influenced by Western philosophy, including existentialism and critical theory, which has led to a different philosophical orientation. Fourthly, the theoretical basis of Marxist teaching has led to practical consequences, and it is worth clarifying economic models. Chinese Marxism has undergone various stages of economic experimentation, from central planning to market socialism, with a pragmatic approach to economic development. Western Marxism has been more focused on critiquing capitalism but has not typically offered detailed economic models or blueprints for a socialist society. Fifth, all these comparisons highlight not only the different origins, development, but also the future of the model. Chinese Marxism has been closely associated with the idea of “socialism with Chinese characteristics” and often emphasizes China’s unique path to socialism. Western Marxism has a broader global perspective and has influenced Marxist thought and social movements worldwide.

*(1) Marxism as the theoretical source of the Belt and Road Initiative*

The Marxist “world history” theory profoundly reveals the objective inevitability of the transformation of human society from a relatively closed local and regional history to world history in which other nations and countries are more open to the world and form more and more close contacts. “Individuals as their activities expand into world-historical activities, are more and more dominated by alien forces, by ever-expanding forces which, in the final analysis, appear as the world market... The degree of emancipation of each individual corresponds to the degree to which history is completely transformed into world history” (Marx & Engels, 1975). The classic thesis of “transition from history to world history” is not

only a major judgment on the general trend of human history being increasingly transformed from national regional history to global and world history, but also constitutes the theoretical basis for the “Belt and Road” Initiative. President Xi Jinping’s “Belt and Road” initiative was born in the era background and historical field of “the transition from history to world history”.

Communication is the basic concept and category of Marxist historical materialism. According to the Marxist historical materialism, the two basic forms of human social practice are production and communication. Production is the foundation of human survival and social and economic development. In production, there is communication between human and nature, and between human and human. Production and communication are always intertwined with each other in an inseparable way: “The primitive seclusion of nations is more and more completely abolished by the increasingly perfect mode of production, communication, and the division of labor among the nations that has developed spontaneously. The scope of mutual influence activities expands more and more in this development process, and history becomes the history of the whole world to a greater and greater extent” (Marx & Engels, 1975). The specific connotation of Marxism for communication refers to the interaction between human and nature, human and human, human and self through a certain medium for the purpose of changing and transforming the world and their own living environment. When the space of communication expands to the global scope, world communication will be formed. The trend of “transition from history to world history” will definitely make the economic ties and exchanges between countries and nations in the world become closer and closer, and will inevitably lead to political, economic, and cultural ties closer between countries, so that the exchanges between countries have reference and complementarity. “China and the AIIB can play a positive part acting as anchor Investors, long-term financiers, lead-structures and deal makers across Asia and beyond, thus lowering the perceived country risk exposure of Northern Hemisphere institutional investors who wish to

have a skin in the infra game and, simultaneously, help less developed countries stand on their own two feet” (Firzli, 2015: 10).

Marxism provides a scientific world outlook and methodology for the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative. The Marxist view of the universal connection of things in the world reveals the objective inevitability of the connection between things. With the “transition from history to world history”, especially with the acceleration of the process of globalization, the exchanges between countries, regions and ethnic groups are becoming more and more frequent, the ties are getting closer and the cooperation is getting more extensive. In *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), Marx wrote: “The scale of the division of labor, due to the application of machinery and steam, has made large-scale industries separated from their national bases completely dependent on the world market, international exchange and international division of labor” (Marx & Engels, 1975). In the work, Marx for the first time directly formulates the relationship between productive forces and production relations; gives a materialist explanation of economic categories as a theoretical expression, an abstraction of the social relations of production. Marx creates the prerequisites for the future theory of surplus value. With the establishment of the international division of labor system, the ties between countries have become closer. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels pointed out: “The local and national self-sufficiency and seclusion of the past have been replaced by the mutual exchanges and interdependence of various nationalities in various aspects” (Marx & Engels, 1975). Marx and Engels pointed out that economic globalization covers the more frequent exchanges between countries, and includes the increasing dependence between countries. With the increasing number of economic exchanges, it also promotes the exchange and development of world culture. Because the development of commodity trade is bound to be accompanied by cultural exchanges and the spread of civilization. Marx believed that the nations of the world could learn from each other and learn from their own advanced civilizations in their contacts and exchanges.

Marx and Engels pointed out in *The Communist Manifesto*: The establishment of the world market will gradually increase the cultural exchanges and cultural dependence between countries and nations, and regional and local literature will become world literature. “The bass aria of Handel’s *Messiah* confounds the natural world and all its laws to affirm the divine power that will make the corruptible incorruptible and the mortal immortal. For Marx the transformation of humankind does not wait upon a seraphic clarion; it will be accomplished when the industrial proletariat overthrows the capitalist classes in revolutionary struggle. That in itself is a mystery which has not been demonstrated historically; but that greater mystery conceals another, which required the specific revisions of Lenin” (Lansbury, 1986: 1).

The Marxist world history theory proves the inevitability of globalization. Marxist historiography, also known as historical materialist historiography, is a significant school of thought within the field of history. It is characterized by several core principles, including the central importance of social class, the role of social relations of production in societies marked by class divisions and conflict, and the influence of economic factors in shaping historical events (referred to as historical materialism). Marxist historians particularly emphasize the development of class-based societies, especially in the context of modern capitalism. However, the evolution of Marxist historiography has taken distinct paths in various regional and political contexts. It has exhibited unique trajectories in the Western world, the Soviet Union, India, as well as within pan-Africanist and African-American traditions. In each of these settings, Marxist historiography has adapted to the specific regional and political conditions, resulting in diverse interpretations and applications. Marxist historiography has contributed significantly to the understanding of the working class and has played a pivotal role in shaping the methodology of history from below.

Under the current international conditions, globalization is further deepening both horizontally and vertically, and every country actively or passively participates

in globalization. The old international order was a Western-centered international order, but now is the era of economic globalization and world multi-polarization, and what should be followed is the equality between subjects. Globalization in the old days meant colonization and aggression by Western countries. The theme of globalization in the new era is peace and development. Today's China is no longer forced to open its doors to join the international trend in modern times, but strive to conform to the trend of the times, actively seize opportunities, and adhered faithfully to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

The Five Principles outlined in the Sino-Indian Agreement (1954) are:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty: Both nations agree to recognize and uphold the territorial boundaries and sovereignty of each other.
2. Mutual non-aggression: Both parties commit not to engage in any acts of aggression or hostile actions against each other.
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs: Both countries agree not to meddle in the internal affairs or domestic policies of the other.
4. Equality and cooperation for mutual benefit: Both nations pledge to interact as equals and cooperate for the mutual benefit and development of both parties.
5. Peaceful co-existence: Both countries commit to coexisting peacefully, resolving any disputes or conflicts through peaceful means rather than through armed conflict.

These principles closely align with the Westphalian norms of state sovereignty, emphasizing the importance of recognizing each nation's territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, and peaceful resolution of disputes.

It can be seen that the construction of the "Belt and Road" conforms to the trend of the times and respects the sovereignty of the countries along the route. It is China's strategy of opening up in all aspects.

*(2) Mao Zedong's development of Marxism philosophy and its relationship with the "Belt and Road" Initiative*

First, the "Belt and Road" initiative inherits Mao Zedong's idea of peaceful coexistence in the three worlds theory. Mao Zedong pointed out when talking with Burmese Prime Minister Wu Nu that China needs a long-term peaceful environment, and China will not just talk about the principle of peaceful coexistence. Big countries harm the interests of small countries, exploit and oppress small countries economically and politically, and impose their own will and policies on small countries. China believes that peaceful coexistence is an equal relationship of mutual assistance, mutual benefit, harmony and friendship between countries. Therefore, on this basis, the peaceful coexistence that China has shown to the world is first of all non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and insists that its own problems should be handled by its own country. The second is to actively negotiate with the other party on some issues that can be resolved through communication. The third is to hope that countries will have no gaps in exchanges and cooperation, and communicate with each other in the face of doubt or dissatisfaction, so as to take timely measures to maintain a relationship of friendship and mutual trust.

The concept of countries coexisting and prospering together has gained prominence, particularly with the introduction of the principle of peaceful coexistence. This principle found its roots during a time of burgeoning liberation movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America when newly emerging nations sought to establish equitable state relations. Over time, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence have evolved into fundamental norms governing state-to-state interactions, widely embraced by the international community.

These Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence have played a pivotal role in fostering deeper mutual understanding and trust among developing nations.

Furthermore, they have contributed to steering the global political and economic order towards greater fairness and reasonableness in its development.

However, there are still many injustices in today's international relations, and problems such as global challenges, international disputes, and regional conflicts emerge one after another. We are now in a community with a shared future where you have me and I have you. Therefore, when the "Belt and Road" initiative was proposed, it emphasized the historical ties between China and the countries along the "Belt and Road" from ancient times to the present, and emphasized that the Chinese nation has been peace-loving since ancient times.

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out during the 31<sup>st</sup> collective study of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee that the "Belt and Road" initiative has a profound historical background, which is full of historical memories of the countries along the route and calls for the Chinese nation and other nations to build a deeper friendship. "President Xi is also leading at global level in steering the process of transition to an environment friendly development" (Ramay, 2020).

Throughout its long history, China has maintained a tradition of engaging with foreign countries through friendly and goodwill-based communication, rather than hostile intentions. This approach reflects China's desire to convey its positive intentions to the world.

In the contemporary context, with ongoing regional conflicts, significant ethnic minority concerns, and the rise of terrorism, China's "Belt and Road" Initiative carries forward the legacy of Mao Zedong's commitment to the principle of peaceful coexistence. This initiative underscores China's commitment to fostering cooperation, mutual understanding, and peaceful relations with other nations, even in the face of complex geopolitical challenges and global uncertainties.

The initiative is a bridge of peace between China and countries along the "Belt and Road", connecting the economies and cultures of various countries, and demonstrating the responsibility of China as a great power. The Belt and Road

Initiative has also provided a new platform for countries along the route to enhance dialogue and mutual trust and peacefully resolve disputes through consultation, making important contributions to the establishment of lasting and secure regional peace and even world peace. “As a form of capitalism, financial capitalism is such an economic system that financial capital dominates the political, economic, and social lives of a society and that wealth is created mainly through financial system instead of goods production processes hi such an economic system, financial intermediaries have come to dominate economic activities and accordingly have been able to exert great influence on both political and social development” (Li & Zhou, 2015: 176).

Secondly, the Belt and Road Initiative inherits Mao Zedong’s thought of seeking common ground while reserving differences. When Mao Zedong talked about international issues, he pointed out that the focus of the current world struggle was that imperialist countries use the name of anti-communism to compete for territories in Asia and Africa. There were two types of contradictions at this time, one was the contradiction between imperialist countries, and the other was the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed nations. Mao Zedong believed that the contradictions between imperialists can be left unchecked, which is beneficial to socialist countries, but if the struggle between imperialists involves the core interests of socialist countries, then we should actively support the anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples of all countries. Mao Zedong used the principle of the relationship between the universality and the particularity of contradictions, thinking about the current problems in the concrete reality of China, and put forward the point of view of seeking common ground while reserving differences. He pointed out that in the face of contradictions, if the situation is generally acceptable; we should prioritize and seek common ground while reserving differences.

Mao Zedong’s proposition of seeking common ground while reserving differences is also reflected in learning from all countries in the world. He believes

that China should maintain a modest and cautious attitude at all times, and selectively learn advanced and beneficial things from other countries.

The era background of Mao Zedong's Three Worlds Theory is that there were serious contradictions between capitalist countries and socialist countries, which threaten national sovereignty and national independence. "Based on changes in the international situation, Mao Zedong creatively proposed the Three Worlds Theory in February 1974. The Three Worlds Theory has effectively guided China's diplomacy and greatly enriched the world's diplomatic theories. Entering a new era, a new round of diplomacy Challenges come one after another, and the Three Worlds Theory has always been the reference for China's diplomatic practice. In September 2013, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed the 'Belt and Road' cooperation initiative based on the development of domestic and international situations. The 'Belt and Road' Initiative and Mao Zedong's Three Worlds Although the backgrounds of the times when the theories were produced are very different, they all focus on the common interests of China and the world" (Huang & Chen, 2020: 22). While at a time when peace and development are the themes of the times, the world is now no longer divided into two camps. China and the rest of the world have shifted from cooperation against hegemonism and power politics to cooperation based on economy, security and ecology. "The 'Belt and Road' initiative inherits Mao Zedong's Three World Theory's ideas of peaceful coexistence, unity and cooperation, and seeking common ground while reserving differences, and adapts to the development of the times. It has made greater contributions to the development of today's world in terms of theoretical and practical innovation, demonstrating the confidence and responsibility of a major country" (Huang & Chen, 2020: 22).

The Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China also reflects the principle of seeking common ground while reserving differences and it promotes on the basis of safeguarding the core interests of countries such as sovereignty, security, and development, strengthening strategic dialogue, advancing regional cooperation,

properly handling and controlling differences, enhancing understanding and expanding consensus. The Belt and Road Initiative is based on the new type of international relations, and from an all-round and multi-level perspective, transforms conflict points into cooperation points. In dealing with the civilizations of different countries and nations, the Belt and Road Initiative respects the differences in national conditions, histories, and cultures of different countries, and insists on seeking common ground while reserving differences and learning from others' strengths. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, different civilizations have joined hands to write a magnificent chapter of common development.

Last but not the least, the Belt and Road Initiative is a theoretical innovation of Mao Zedong's Three Words Theory: from the international united front to a community with a shared future for humankind. "The world's great expectations further increase the audience for what the Chinese sometimes describe as the country's 'second opening', after the 1979 model which led to China's rapid growth over three decades. For example, there is much discussion of the success beyond all expectations of the China-founded Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Intense debate is being carried out about the Silk Roads in countries that have reason to worry about some of their implications" (Bondaz et al., 2015: 2).

On the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong pointed out that one of the main experiences of the Chinese revolution was to unite the Soviet camp, the proletariat and the broad masses of the people to form an international united front. At that time, the CCP leaders already had a deep understanding of the world political situation, and they began to consider new foreign policies. Foreign relations needed new development, and the first was to develop relations with neighboring countries in Asia. In the face of emerging Asian countries, China began to rethink and search for principles that could be widely accepted by countries with different ideologies and different social systems, and put forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Mao Zedong summed up his observations

of world politics in terms of the “middle zone”, which means he believed a policy of peaceful coexistence could be used by China to engage with countries in the “middle zone”. As long as the consensus of both countries is “peace”, then they can develop a friendship. Facing the changes in the strategic situation of the United States and the Soviet Union, China began to implement an international anti-hegemonic united front policy in the mid-1970s, to unite all countries and forces that advocate peace and oppose hegemonism to form an international united front against war and expansion. “Chinese leaders understand that China’s current growth model combined with the acceleration of globalization have deeply connected China to the international community. China’s success in accomplishing national revitalization depends on close and continuing interaction with global and regional powers, markets, and institutions” (Medeiros, 2009: 20).

Mao Zedong’s Three Worlds Theory was established in the face of historical changes such as the complex relationship between powerful countries, the rise of national liberation movements, and ideological struggles. Mao Zedong’s theory of three worlds is the complex between the great powers relations, the rise of national liberation movements, ideological struggles, etc. The Three Worlds Theory allows China to conform to history, overcome the strategic lack of communication with the outside world, and build a new national identity in an increasingly complex world pattern. When Mao Zedong’s Three Worlds Theory was put forward, supporting the national liberation movement and vigorously developing relations with the Third World countries were the prominent tasks of China’s diplomacy at that time. After the reform and opening up, peace and development have become the main pursuits of most countries and people in the world. China has always been a part of the world, and China’s ties with the world have become closer with the great changes taking place in the outside world.

In the current global landscape, as China takes on an increasingly central role on the world stage, it has brought forth numerous opportunities, as well as a range of

global challenges. These challenges span diverse areas, including environmental issues, financial stability, energy security, cyber security, and refugee crises, all of which have the potential to impact the well-being and development of humanity at large.

Addressing these challenges involves integrating China into international standards, actively participating in the process of globalization, and demonstrating responsible leadership as a major global player. In this context, the “Belt and Road” initiative represents China’s comprehensive plan to engage with the world. By promoting infrastructure development, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange across participating countries, this initiative not only enhances China’s international connectivity but also seeks to contribute to global stability and prosperity.

China’s approach through the “Belt and Road” initiative underscores its commitment to international cooperation, addressing shared challenges, and working toward a more interconnected and harmonious world. It aims to foster win-win partnerships and promote sustainable development on a global scale.

Marx believed that world history is the result of the connection of various nations and countries into a whole through exchanges, driven by the development of huge productive forces. In such a connection, countries are affected by each other and are highly integrated with a mutual stake. The concept of a community with a shared future for humankind, elevated to a new level, holds profound ethical significance and has garnered widespread recognition and support from countries around the world. A community with a shared future for humankind calls for cooperation to replace confrontation, breaking the zero-sum thinking with extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, emphasizing that people and countries share the same breath and common destiny. It advocates joint prevention of globalization risks, which will help overcome the current anti-globalization trend. At the same time, it advocates harmony and win-win, inclusiveness and mutual learning between countries, and advocates that countries should build a “partnership

of dialogue without confrontation and partnership without alliance”, respect each other and manage differences (Hui, 2019). At the same time, in order to take a green, low-carbon, clean and environmentally friendly sustainable development path, countries along the Belt and Road Initiative jointly signed an ecological protection and environmental cooperation agreement, making green the background color of the development of the Belt and Road Initiative. “President Xi keeps the eco-civilization at the core of all decisions for steering the China to achieve eco-civilization with Chinese characteristics. President Xi said, green is gold and integral part of eco-civilization. Eco-civilization is key to build a beautiful China and achieve the China Dream” (Ramay, 2020: 10).

Organically combining the long-term interests of the country with the fundamental interests of humankind and tying the destiny of the world together is a steady and powerful call from the reality of the community with a shared future for humankind. The “Belt and Road” Initiative focuses on the current complex globalization situation. Its proposal conforms to the requirements of the development of the times, focus on the future of human development, and calls on all countries to unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development, demonstrating the responsibility of a major country.

*(3) The theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the philosophical foundation for the Belt and Road Initiative.*

Deng Xiaoping’s theory of opening to the outside world is the theoretical source of the Belt and Road Initiative. The Belt and Road Initiative is the inevitable result of China’s opening to the outside world. The historical process of the Sinicization of Marxism cannot be separated from the profound historical background of economic globalization. It accompanies Western capitalism’s colonial domination and economic plunder of eastern countries. At the same time, it is also a difficult process to realize the independence of the Chinese nation and to continuously integrate into

the development track of the world. Opening to the outside world is an urgent need to speed up China's socialist modernization construction.

Deng Xiaoping clearly pointed out: "China's development cannot be separated from the world." "It is impossible for any country to develop... without strengthening international exchanges and without introducing advanced experience, advanced science and technology and funds from developed countries" (Yahuda, 1993). Embracing economic globalization through opening up and ongoing integration represents a pivotal decision in the Sinicization of Marxism. It also serves as a fundamental strategy for China's pursuit of modernization and the realization of its national rejuvenation. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the deepening of its integration into the global economic system, China has put forward the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, which has become an important strategic measure with milestone significance in the process of reform and opening up. From the perspective of the historical development process of reform and opening up, the "Belt and Road" has promoted the depth and breadth of China's integration into globalization from multiple dimensions (Petranek, 2019).

The Belt and Road Initiative indicates China's full integration into the new international economic order. That is, from actively adapting to rules to participating in rule-making. China's opening to the outside world has gone through a process of understanding, applying and adapting to international trade rules. "In other words, BRI is an expression of China's new grand strategy, where Beijing aims to use connectivity projects to socialize Asia and Europe into its own preferred view of global order, where China is the world's top nonnative power" (Callahan, 2016: 2).

Especially since joining the WTO, China has continuously adjusted its own economic system and management system to meet the requirements of the global trade system. The brand-new concepts and rules advocated by the Belt and Road Initiative will help to establish a fair, just and reasonable new system of global governance, and fully demonstrate China's responsibilities in establishing a new

international economic order. The Belt and Road Initiative is the latest practice of China's historical process of opening up to the outside world. The Belt and Road Initiative is an inevitable result and a new stage in the historical process of opening up to the outside world. This approach does not constitute a geopolitical alliance with expansionary intentions that seeks to challenge the existing international order. Only by expounding the origin and motivation of the Belt and Road Initiative from this perspective, can we deeply grasp the significance of the Belt and Road Initiative for China to continue to open up to the outside world, deeply integrate into economic globalization, and fully participate in global governance.

Deng Xiaoping insisted on combining the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete reality of China, and pointed out that all countries in the world “can only formulate their own development strategies and methods that are suitable for them according to their own actual conditions, and formulate policies suitable for their own specific realities” (Zuo, 2021). From a theoretical standpoint, adhering to Chinese characteristics involves emphasizing the uniqueness, specificity, and individuality of concrete phenomena while respecting and applying universal truths, principles, and commonalities. In social practice, it means recognizing and abiding by the universal values, shared concepts, and global norms that apply to all nations while placing greater emphasis on embracing multiculturalism and considering the distinct national circumstances, social characteristics, and development trajectories of each country.

Respecting the autonomy, difference and diversity of the development paths of various countries and regions, and safeguarding the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country, is the practical application of adhering to the theoretical approach of “Chinese characteristics”. First, equality and mutual respect among all countries is the starting point for realizing win-win interests. The Belt and Road Initiative embraces the differences in economic development, political systems and cultural forms of each subject. Second, the purpose of the Belt and Road

Initiative is to resolve conflicts of interest and conflicts between countries through negotiation and cooperation, to advocate diversity and heterogeneity in win-win cooperation, and to share resources and seek common ground while reserving differences, and ultimately to develop together in exchanges and competition.

As Xi Jinping pointed out at the “Belt and Road” Initiative International Cooperation Summit Forum in May 2017: “We must build a new type of international relations with win-win cooperation as the core, and forge a partnership of dialogue without confrontation or alliance. Countries should respect sovereignty, dignity, and territorial integrity of each other, respect development path and social system of other countries, and respect core interests and major concerns” (Blanchard & Flint, 2017). In the Belt and Road Initiative, people’s values and social systems are derived from different forms of real life, and there is no universal and absolute unified concept and development path, so we should take some attempts to abandon the Universalist values dominated by Western capitalist logic in the name of democracy, freedom and human rights.

The Sinicization of Marxism is a great achievement of combining the basic principles of Marxism with the historical and cultural traditions of the Chinese nation. The philosophical concepts, humanistic care and values in the excellent traditional Chinese culture not only provide the theoretical methods for understanding and transforming the world for the Sinicization of Marxism, but also add oriental wisdom and cultural nutrients for the construction of socialism. Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in order to promote the Sinicization of Marxism and realize the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, we must continue to inherit and carry forward the traditional Chinese culture. Xi Jinping has emphasized many times that Chinese excellent traditional culture is a powerful spiritual force for promoting reform and opening up and socialist modernization, “Chinese excellent traditional culture is the outstanding advantage of the Chinese nation, and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation requires the development and prosperity of Chinese culture as

a condition. It is necessary to inherit and carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture according to the conditions of the new era” (Xi, 2016). Sinicization of Marxism requires not only sticking to the basic standpoint and methods of Marxism, but also rooting in Chinese traditional culture. By adopting this approach, China can develop a Marxism with Chinese characteristics and a unique Chinese style. This, in turn, will facilitate the ongoing modernization and internationalization of China’s rich traditional culture.

The Belt and Road Initiative reflects the profound Chinese traditional cultural heritage. The Belt and Road Initiative embodies the feeling of “one world under one roof” in Chinese tradition. Since ancient times, Chinese civilization has advocated the unity of human and nature, the unity of the world, the harmony of yin and yang among all living beings, the integration and symbiosis, and the coexistence of an organic whole. The ideal society advocated by Confucianism is “the way of the Dao, the world is for the public”. Kang Youwei, a modern thinker, specifically described it as “everyone is close to each other, everyone is equal, and the world is for the public” (Tay, 2010). In contemporary society, it is reflected that the development of each country must eventually cross the boundaries of nation-states, and create and integrate into a community of shared future in the region and even the community of shared future for the entire human race. In the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative China adheres to the concept of “If you make a plan, you must make a plan for the sake of the world”, and promotes the Silk Road spirit of peaceful cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning, mutual benefit and win-win. While pursuing its own interests, it will take into account the reasonable concerns of other countries, and while pursuing its own development, it will promote the overall prosperity of all countries in the world.

As William A. Callahan says in his article *China’s Belt and Road Initiative and the New Eurasian Order* (2016): “In other words, we need to think beyond the material measures of hard power-military might and economic ties-to consider how

China sees its rejuvenation in terms of soft power: Beijing is on a moral mission to improve the world through its ideas, aspirations, and norms. Xi thus stressed that China seeks to socialize regional countries by developing shared beliefs and norms that will build the ‘community of shared destiny’. These shared beliefs are familiar to students of Chinese foreign policy: mutual respect, mutual trust, reciprocity, equality, and win-win cooperation. But they also include traditional Chinese ideas of a hierarchical Sinocentric regional system: peripheral diplomacy assumes a ‘center’, which shows how Beijing sees China at the center of the new regional order, while neighboring countries are at the margins...” (Callahan, 2016: 2).

Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is an Important Philosophical Basis for the Belt and Road Initiative. From the perspective of the interaction between practice and theory, the creation, development, application and testing of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era undoubtedly exist in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. In the sense of whether the theory is true or not in practice, the reason why a series of great practices of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era can promote new historical changes and achieve new historical achievements lies in the fact that Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era has a macro-level top-level Scientificity in planning, scientificity in value guidance, and rationality in action guidelines. At the globalization level of economic construction, the new pattern of the Belt and Road Initiative advocated and established by China is the scientific top-level planning for the path of globalization, the correct value guidance for the harmonious coexistence of globalized human beings, and the effective action guide for the path of globalization. This approach has presented the world with a novel path towards socialist modernization and a fresh perspective on globalization. It has also demonstrated the compelling force of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, shining with a scientific brilliance.

Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics takes into account both Chinese characteristics and the world situation. His thoughts not only faces China's reality, is based on China's situation, and is concerned with China's interests, but also faces the world situation and cares about the trend of the world. The Chineseness of Xi Jinping Thought means that it is based on China's position in terms of values and emphasizes major issues of the new era of socialism construction with Chinese characteristics and transforms Chinese culture creatively to serve the building of socialist modernization in order to realize the Chinese dream of seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation. The universality of Xi Jinping Thought is mainly reflected in the following aspects: basing on the world development trend, absorbing the world's advanced cultural achievements, promoting a new pattern of globalized exchanges that conform to the common interests of the world's people, and caring about the destiny of humankind. Xi Jinping Thought further enriches and develops Marx's theory of world history. For example, in response to the anti-globalization wave led by the United States first and Brexit, China in the new era put forward a proposal to build a community with a shared future for mankind in concept, and launched the Belt and Road Initiative in practice, thus enabling China to begin the step into the center of the world stage, carry the banner of globalization, and push globalization into a new historical process. Xi Jinping Thought starts from the strategic thinking of globalization, and proposes the Belt and Road Initiative with the core concept of consultation, joint construction and sharing. This is a great practice to realize the concept of a community with a shared future for humankind. It is also a solemn mission to fulfill the promise of welcoming all countries in the world to take the "fast train" or "free ride" of China's development, and can be regarded as a worldwide public good. Through the supply of such public goods, on the one hand, Chinese stories, Chinese experience, Chinese wisdom, and Chinese solutions have begun to move to the center of the world stage; on the other hand, the new thoughts' sentiment for the people will benefit the people

of China as well as the people of the world, and it is a modern manifestation of the traditional Chinese sentiment of “doing great things and helping the world”.

Xi Jinping Thought shows the unity of authority and governance. While emphasizing democratic governance, the new thinking also attaches great importance to the authority of leadership and emphasizes the party’s leadership in all aspects and the core status of General Secretary Xi Jinping. In this regard, Xi Jinping Thought organically unifies the authority of political management and the governance of social management. In terms of political management, Xi Jinping attaches great importance to the authority of leadership. Authority should not be confused with domination. The former entails guiding the course of social development in a way that serves the fundamental interests of the majority of the population, whereas the latter involves directing social development to benefit the self-interest of those in power. From the perspective of theoretical origins, the importance attached to authority in the new ideas is the inheritance of the Marxist theory of authority. For example, Engels once clearly opposed the idea of abolishing authority before the advent of communism, and accused the Paris Commune of making too little use of authority. Governance is a new concept of modern social management (Marx & Engels, 1975). Xi Jinping Thought attaches great importance to democratic governance, and clearly proposes to strengthen the modernization of national governance capabilities and governance systems. On the one hand, the authority of leadership and the governance of democracy are not two conflicting management methods. In the new thinking, the two are organically integrated. Entering the new era, the new thinking highly promotes democratic governance, and from the domestic governance of comprehensively deepening reform to the global governance based on the Belt and Road Initiative, which greatly enhances the cohesion of the people at home and opens the prelude to the new globalization process making China stronger and stronger. “The BRI is a unique megaproject in global economic history, which is in line with President Xi’s ‘Thoughts’ on China as

a global power and globalisation in the twenty-first century, and which contributes to his mission of national rejuvenation. At its core, the initiative incorporates elements of Chinese and Western philosophy”, (Karpathiotaki et al., 2021: 2021).

Xi Jinping Thought has deepened the understanding of the laws of development of human society and opened up a new realm of modernization of human society. Realizing national governance, social development and the improvement of people’s living standards has been the goal that all countries in the world have been striving for since modern times. Marx scientifically criticized the modernization path of Western European society based on the capitalist mode of production, and proposed another modernization path based on the socialist mode of production in theory. After Marx’s death, the socialist countries, represented by the Soviet Union and China, put the socialist modernization road proposed by Marx into practice through their socialist modernization practices, and realized what Marx called the idea of leapfrog theory, that is, through their own revolutions, establishing a socialist system and then absorb the positive achievements of capitalism to build and develop socialism. Since Marx put forward the idea of replacing capitalism with socialism and put it into practice, countries in the world have at least two choices in the process of realizing modernization. While the disintegration of the Soviet Union prompted discussions suggesting that the path of socialist modernization was on the decline and that capitalist modernization was becoming the predominant model, China’s reform and opening up, particularly the significant achievements in socialist modernization since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, have reemphasized the advantages of the socialist modernization path. This has once again drawn the world’s attention to the road of socialist modernization, capturing the interest of countries across the globe.

Xi Jinping Thoughts actively promote the Belt and Road Initiative, which can be regarded as an innovative development of Marx’s theory of world history. The world history in Marx’s texts contains two types: one is the history of world

capitalization that he criticized, and the other is the history of the communist movement that he predicted to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie. In the face of the three major problems of “development deficit, peace deficit, and governance deficit” in today’s globalization dominated by Western capital logic, the Belt and Road Initiative provides a modernization road plan with socialist characteristics, thus successfully realizing the inheritance and development of Marx’s world history theory under the conditions of the new era. The new thinking advocates a new paradigm for the exchanges of world civilizations, that is, exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations based on the diversity of civilizations. Marx believed that globalization would force the civilizations of all nationalities to break through their own geographical limitations and to achieve agitated exchanges with other civilizations and the result would be that “many national and local literatures form a world literature” (Marx & Engels, 1975). Marx indeed touched upon the inevitable trend that globalization would lead to the global dissemination and exposure of national cultures. However, he did not delve into the specific mechanisms or methods through which these cultures would interact, adapt, and shape the evolving global landscape. The intricate processes and dynamics of how civilizations engage with each other in the context of globalization have been explored and analyzed by scholars and thinkers in various fields over time.: globalized and publicized. Correspondingly, on the one hand, Xi Jinping Thought inherits the idea of globalization and publicization of civilization, emphasizes the introduction of foreign civilizations and the going out of local civilizations, and makes the voice of Chinese civilization on the international stage; on the other hand, the new thinking proposes a new paradigm of inter-civilization exchanges, featuring exchange of civilizations, mutual learning among civilizations, and co-existence of civilizations, thus transcending the old paradigm of inter-civilizational intercourse of civilizational estrangement, civilizational conflict, and civilizational superiority.

### **2.3. The features of Marxism with Chinese characteristic reception in Western philosophy**

The nationalization of Marxist philosophy since the 20th century has also attracted the attention of many Western scholars. Since the mid-20th century, some Western scholars have conducted continuous research on the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy, especially Mao Zedong's philosophical thought, and expressed two very different views on Chinese Marxist philosophy. "In contrast with Western philosophy, the BRI is not a project 'based on models', which means it does not have a clearly defined framework, clearly measurable goals or defined action steps or a timetable, but will gradually evolve and adapt to the dynamics of the international environment. The BRI generates strategic flexibility, seeks relative advantage for China and preaches avoidance of direct conflict. According to Chinese philosophy, a Chinese general does not set goals or make plans; he tries to detect and exploit the internal dynamics of the environment' and adapts his decisions to the natural course of things, to make the conditions work in his favour" (Karpathiotaki, 2021: 46).

One perspective regarding Chinese Marxist philosophy is the "heretic" theory, which suggests that Chinese Marxist philosophy is a deviation or variant of traditional Marxist thought. Scholars like Schram, Meisner, Wakeman, and others, particularly in the American academic context, have advocated this viewpoint. These Western scholars believe that European and Soviet Marxist philosophy, the "orthodox" Marxist philosophy, is a mechanistic, economist dogma that does not recognize any role for the superstructure. They believe the Chinese Marxist philosophy, represented by Mao Zedong's philosophical thought, is more influenced by Chinese traditional culture and social reality, which attaches great importance to the important role of the superstructure. Therefore, compared with economic determinism and "orthodox" Marxism, Chinese Marxist philosophy is an unorthodox, utopian, idealistic, voluntaristic "heretic" or variant.

Stuart Reynolds Schram (1924–2012) was an accomplished American scholar with expertise in modern Chinese politics. In addition to his work in this field, he was also a physicist and political scientist. His contributions have had a significant impact on the study of Chinese politics and its dynamics. Schram believes that throughout the development of Mao Zedong Thought, the overall influence of traditional Chinese thought has become increasingly prominent and the most typical way of expressing its “Chinese national style” lies in emphasizing the role of moral values, the importance of education, and the subjective initiative of human beings (Womack, 1994). He pointed out: “The characteristic of Mao-style Marxism is that he pays more attention to the human will than the objective factors.” Mao Zedong speaking of the high proportion of vagabonds in his troops, said that the only remedy was to strengthen political education to change the quality of these people. This perception that after a certain education, the rural homeless can become the vanguard of the proletariat is extremely voluntarism, which eventually led to the notion that the subjective can create the objective (Boorman, 1968).

Here are some of his notable books: *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-Tung* (1969), this seminal work is considered one of Schram’s most influential writings. It delves into the political ideology and thought of Mao Zedong, providing valuable insights into Mao’s leadership and the development of Chinese Communist Party ideology. Another research is *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung* (1989) he offers a comprehensive examination of Mao’s ideological contributions, tracing the evolution of his thought and its impact on Chinese politics and society. He dives deep into the intricacies of Mao’s interpretation of Marxist theory, examining how he adapted and applied it to the specific conditions of China (Schram, 1989). Stuart Reynolds Schram’s rigorous scholarship and insightful analyses have left an indelible mark on the field of Chinese politics and Chinese intellectual history. His works continue to be valuable resources for scholars and students interested in understanding the complexities of modern China.

Maurice Jerome Meisner (1931–2012) was a prominent American scholar known for his significant contributions to the study of Chinese history and politics. Throughout his distinguished career, Meisner authored several influential books that have had a lasting impact on the field of China studies. Here are some of his notable books: *Li Ta-Chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism* (1967), this is Meisner's first major work explored the life and intellectual contributions of Li Ta-Chao, a key figure in the early development of Chinese Marxism. This book shed light on the origins of Marxist thought in China and Li's role in shaping it. In *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic* (1986): One of Meisner's most celebrated works, this comprehensive history of the People's Republic of China provides a detailed account of China's political, social, and economic development under Mao Zedong's leadership and beyond. *The Deng Xiaoping Era: An Inquiry into the Fate of Chinese Socialism, 1978-1994* (1996), in this book, Meisner examined the era of Deng Xiaoping, a period marked by significant economic reforms and political changes in China. Meisner's analysis explores the complexities and challenges faced by Chinese socialism during this transformative period. And one more book – *Mao Zedong: A Political and Intellectual Portrait* (2007), this biographical study offers a comprehensive examination of Mao Zedong's life and the evolution of his political thought. Meisner's work provides valuable insights into Mao's leadership and his impact on Chinese history. Maurice Jerome Meisner's meticulous research and insightful analyses have made him a respected figure in the field of China studies. His books continue to serve as important resources for scholars, students, and anyone interested in gaining a deeper understanding of modern Chinese history and politics. He believed that Mao Zedong paid attention to sticking to the materialist standpoint of Marxism, but also emphasized the special role of human will under certain historical conditions. This "voluntarism" dilutes the determinism of Maoism, the Chinese variant of Marxism that has come to be known, because Mao Zedong not only emphasized the role of human subjectivity, but was even skeptical of the role

of historical “objective laws”. He said: “Maoism is characterized by voluntarism. It believes that people armed with correct thinking and consciousness can overcome material obstacles and transform society according to their own ideals and aspirations” (Womack, 1984). In conclusion, in the eyes of these Western scholars, there is a gap between Chinese Marxist philosophy and European and Soviet Marxist philosophy. Schram even used the term “isolation” to describe Mao Zedong’s Sinicized Marxism and its philosophy (Schram, 1969).

The other is the theory of “replication” of Chinese Marxist philosophy, which holds that Chinese Marxist philosophy is nothing but a “copy” of European and Soviet Marxist philosophy. This view was actually put forward as the opposite in the process of arguing with the aforementioned “heretic” argument. Western scholars who hold this view include German scholar Wittfogel, American scholars Pever and Wald, and more recently Australian scholar Knight. However, what Wittfogel, Pever and Wald are talking about is the whole of Maoist thought.

Karl August Wittfogel (1896–1988) was a German-American scholar known for his pioneering work in the fields of sociology, political science, and historical analysis, particularly in the context of China. Wittfogel’s research and writings have had a significant impact on the study of Asian societies, governance, and the relationships between water control and political power. Wittfogel was influenced by Marxist ideology in his early career and was associated with the Communist Party of Germany. He contributed to Marxist debates on the nature of state power and class struggle. Wittfogel is perhaps best known for his groundbreaking concept of “hydraulic societies”. He argued that the control of water resources, such as large-scale irrigation systems and dams, played a pivotal role in shaping political power structures in certain societies. His most famous work, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (1957), delves into this concept and its application to Asian societies, particularly ancient China and the Middle East. For example, Wittfogel asserted that Mao Zedong Thought had no original contribution,

it was merely a replica of Leninist thought, Stalin's position, and the position of the Third International (Wittfogel, 1960).

Unlike these people, Knight mainly made his arguments from the perspective of Mao Zedong's philosophical thought, so his views were the most representative. Nicholas Knight served as a Professor of Asian Studies at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, from 1981 to 2008. He earned his Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree from the University of Queensland in 1974. Later, he pursued further academic achievements, completing a Master of Science in Chinese Politics in 1977 and a Doctor of Philosophy in 1983, both from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London.

Professor Knight's academic contributions have spanned a wide range of topics. He is known for his extensive research on Chinese ideology, with a particular focus on the intellectual legacy of Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese Revolution. Additionally, he has explored the perceptions and debates surrounding globalization in contemporary China.

Beyond his work in Asian Studies, Professor Knight has also made valuable contributions to the field of postgraduate education and supervision, addressing important issues in academia.

Throughout his career, Nicholas Knight has made a significant impact on the study of Chinese politics, ideology, and globalization, while also addressing practical matters related to education and supervision.

In order to refute the "heretic" theory of Chinese Marxist philosophy, Knight systematically examines the media and ways of Mao Zedong's acceptance of Marxist philosophy, especially Li Da's translation activities, which had a direct impact on the formation and development of Mao Zedong's philosophical thought. Knight pointed out that Li Da received and introduced to China some views from Marx, Engels, Plekhanov, and Lenin, and especially from Soviet philosophers and theorists in the early 1930s, such as "while the economic base still dominates in general, but there is

a dialectical relationship between the economic base and the superstructure, in which the superstructure is capable of reacting to the economic base and thus having a certain influence on the general course and direction of historical change” (Knight, 2018). There is a clear pattern contained in the numerous Marxist works translated by Li Da. None of these works, without exception, equate Marxist social theory with a mechanism that claims the economic sphere is completely unaffected by various superstructures. They all assert that the economic base is the most important factor in history and social change, but they also recognize the interconnected and interactive nature of society, a premise of historical materialism; politics, law, culture, consciousness, art, literature, and philosophy are all seen as capable of acting in historical change, just as they are capable of reacting to economic underpinnings” (Knight, 2018). In Knight’s view, the so-called “gap” imagined by commentators between Chinese Marxist philosophy and European and Soviet Marxist philosophy does not actually exist, because if the orthodox Soviet philosophy prevailing in the 1930s is used as a criterion, Li Da’s interpretation of Marxist philosophy is very orthodox, and through the intermediary of Li Da’s dissemination and research on Marxist philosophy, Chinese Marxist philosophy represented by Mao Zedong’s philosophical thought is completely consistent with orthodox Marxist philosophy. Knight believes that Chinese Marxist philosophy is not purely Chinese, and Mao Zedong’s originality as a philosopher is “limited”. Mao Zedong’s philosophical views are not “new”, and the genealogy goes back to the leading theorists of European and Soviet Marxism, so they are nothing more than copies or repetitions of existing views of European and Soviet Marxist philosophy (Knight, 2018).

## **Conclusion to Chapter Two**

1. Following the introduction of Marxism into China, continuous development and adaptation to the Chinese context led to the formation of Marxism with Chinese

characteristics. The Chinese Marxism mainly has the following characteristics. First, Chinese Marxism emerged from the great practice of building a socialist society in China, and has been continuously improved and developed in practice. Second, in the process of Sinicizing Marxism, the theme is liberation and development of productive forces and the purpose is to seek liberation and development. Indeed, Sinicized Marxism not only retains the core principles of Marxism but also harmoniously incorporates the essential elements of traditional Chinese cultural thought and philosophy.

2. The Belt and Road takes Marxism as its philosophical foundation. Among them, Marx's world history theory is not only a major judgment on the general trend of human beings transformation from national regional history to global and world history, but also constitutes the ideological and theoretical basis for the construction of the Belt and Road. The Belt and Road Initiative inherits Mao Zedong's ideas of peaceful coexistence and seeking common ground while reserving differences. Secondly, the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is also an important philosophical basis for the Belt and Road. Among them, Deng Xiaoping's theory of opening up is the source of thought for the Belt and Road theory. Besides, the philosophical concepts, humanistic concerns and cultural values in Chinese history and culture are also the philosophical foundation of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Ultimately, Xi Jinping's innovative advancement of Marxism serves as the fundamental philosophical underpinning for the Belt and Road Initiative. Xi Jinping Thought embodies the unity of Chinese nature and world nature, which means it is based on the Chinese reality and the trend of world development. Xi Jinping Thought also embodies the unity of the authority and governance of the government, making social development in line with the fundamental interests of the vast majority of the people, and the global governance of the Belt and Road Initiative has greatly enhanced the cohesion of the people at home and opened up a new era of

globalization, making China step into the journey of becoming stronger. Xi Jinping Thought inherits the idea of globalization and publicization of civilization, emphasizes the introduction of foreign civilizations and the going out of local civilizations, and makes the voice of Chinese civilization on the international stage; on the other hand, the new thinking proposes a new paradigm of inter-civilization exchanges, featuring exchange of civilizations, mutual learning among civilizations, and co-existence of civilizations, thus transcending the old paradigm of inter-civilizational intercourse of civilizational estrangement, civilizational conflict, and civilizational superiority.

3. Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Western scholars have engaged in ongoing research on the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy, particularly Mao Zedong's philosophical contributions. Their assessments have resulted in two distinct and divergent perspectives on Chinese Marxist philosophy. One is the "heretic" theory of Chinese Marxist philosophy, that is, the theory that Chinese Marxist philosophy is a "heresy" or variant of Marxist philosophy. Another is the "heretic" theory of Chinese Marxist philosophy, that is, the theory that Chinese Marxist philosophy is a "heresy" or variant of Marxist philosophy. We still need to make great efforts to make Western countries better understand Chinese philosophy.

## **CHAPTER 3. The Concept of Shared Future: Understanding the Identity and Cultural Diversity**

### **3.1. The main concepts of identity and cultural diversity in contemporary Western philosophy**

(1) The idea of human community originated from the early natural philosophy and moral philosophy more than 2,500 years ago, that is, the proposition of explaining where human beings came from and where human beings will go. This concept has profound cultural and historical roots in the history of China and the West. The theoretical system of constructing a world city-state provided by the ancient Greek Stoics can be regarded as the prototype of the thought of the human community, so it can be called the representative of the thought of the classical human community. “A city, in the conventional sense of a human cohabitation with geographical boundaries, a legal code and so on, is an artificial construct. A city in the most correct sense is not constrained in these ways: in fact the world itself is the ultimate city, being a habitation common to humans and gods, united by their shared rationality” (Sedley, 1998).

Corresponding to the ancient Chinese view of the world is the cosmopolitanism proposed by the late ancient Greek cynicism and Stoics. In the Hellenistic era of expanding territories and increasing cultural exchanges, the Greeks had broken through the boundaries of city-states and lived in a larger community, which reminded them of the universality and commonality of human beings. Thus, these two schools originated in the Mediterranean derived the ideal of human community from the idea of common human rationality and universal order of the universe. Diogenes, the founder of the cynic school, who advocated that all wise men form a world city, which is a single community of equal people, first proposed this idea. According to the natural law, the Stoic philosophers believed that the universe itself

has a natural law, and everything in the universe obeys the natural law. All natural universes are nature, a complete unity of perfect reason, divine wisdom, eternal things. Everything in the world has a common logos, logos is the embodiment of rationality, all things have a common rationality, and also have a common rationality for human beings. From the point of view of the common rationality of humankind and the universal order of the universe, the Stoics believed that the real state or ideal society has no national boundaries, and the state should be a union of rational people, an ideal empire. Therefore, he advocated that the original city-states should form a unified Cosmopolis. All people in the city-state are equal “citizens of the Cosmopolis”, all people are brothers to each other, and they are all people of wisdom and virtue. Although the city-state has a unified law, it does not need the rule of law. People live according to reason, live on an equal footing, help each other, be full of friendship and fraternity.

The school represents the ideal world state described by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato in his *Republic*, where city-states and religious institutions are purged, women and children are collectively owned, and a community of virtuous and free men is formed: “You seem to have thought we would not notice your casual remark about women and children, namely, that it is clear to all that friends will have things in common” (Plato, *Resp.* 449c). Since then, many Stoics have inherited and developed Plato’s thought of the world state. The ancient Roman statesman Cicero combined the concept of natural law expanded and enriched by the Stoics into a world-wide legal and political concept. He pointed out in *On the Republic, On the Law*: “True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrongdoing by its prohibitions. And it does not lay its commands or prohibitions upon good men in vain, though neither have any effect on the wicked. It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to attempt to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by senate

or people, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it” (Cicero, 1928: 211).

This advance that extends from morality to law, because such laws are not laws in city-states that apply only to specific groups of people, but laws apply human beings that apply to all human beings in world-states. It can be seen that the Stoic school, which was born on the ruins of the city-state and formed in the conquest of Greece by Macedonia and Rome, inherited the ideological tradition of ancient Greek rationalism, also integrated into Roman law, and profoundly influenced the innovative development of the theory in the western world.

Stoic’s elaboration of the ideas of “cosmopolitanism” and “world citizenship” embodies the social and political ideals of cosmopolitanism, and conceives an anarchic utopia ruled by reason. Although this “world city-state” was not possible at that time, the Stoic thinkers believed that human reason played a decisive role in the process of realizing human beings’ pursuit of a better life. The idea of making human beings into one has enlightenment to the realization of global integration and world harmony for human beings today, and has positive reference significance for the construction of a common value system for human beings.

(2) The basic spirit of western modern value culture and western traditional value culture is in the same line. Spiritual factors such as happiness, individualism, liberalism, egalitarianism, republicanism, rule of law (the spirit of law), scientism, and rationalism in ancient Greek culture constitute the keynote of modern Western value culture. Historically, the modern value culture of the West emerged in the struggle against medieval Christian ideology and against the domination of the church and the feudal class, and more of it absorbed the value culture of ancient Greece and Rome. The modern Western value culture is not a simple inheritance of Western traditions, but is formed through transformation and innovation. The driving force of this transformation and innovation is the market economy. The rise of the market economy has made Westerners see the great charm that the market economy

can bring about rich material wealth, and people believe that with wealth, they can live a happy life. Western modern thinkers have explored how to build a “good society” (ideal society) that enables the normal operation and rapid development of the market economy. After hundreds of years of development, they have constructed a complete system of Western modern Value system (capitalist value system). Western modern thinkers have provided Western society with the basic values that the ideal model of a “good society” should have, such as freedom, equality, democracy, rule of law, justice, etc., which have become the consensus of human values. Today, when humankind is moving towards a community with a shared future and the world is integrated, how to learn from the rational factors of Western modern values and their experience and lessons to overcome their limitations and alienation is a major issue facing the current construction of a common value system for humankind.

What the humanists in the Renaissance hoped to build was a society full of emancipation of individuality and full of sensibility. The early British Enlightenment thinker Francis Bacon described the blueprint of the ideal society of Israel with the establishment of “Solomon’s Palace” in his travel novel *New Atlantis* (1626), and expressed the dominant role of science in society. “Bensalem, unlike Plato’s Atlantis, has perfected the science that protects her from external harm and nature’s corruptibility, indeed from any divine revenge intended by the likes of Zeus. But the two stories are alike in the omission” (Bacon, 2016). Machiavelli, an Italian political thinker, believed that human nature is evil. “Anyone who wants to build a state and make laws must assume that all men are evil, and will always act according to this evil nature whenever they have the opportunity” (Zhou, 1987). Thomas Hobbes, an early British Enlightenment thinker and natural law theorist, advocated the establishment of an ideal state by agreement. He believed that people made agreements with each other to voluntarily obey one person or a group, believing that he could protect himself against all others. To entrust all the power and strength of

all to a single person or to a collective of many who can, by the opinion of the majority, transform the will of all into one will (Hobbes, 1996). He advocated a monarchy that gave power to one person. John Locke, the founder of modern Western liberalism, believes that the natural state of man is a perfect state of freedom, equality and independence, and everyone agrees to form a community (political society) by entering into a contract to break away from the disjointed state of nature. The consent and agreement of the members form the state, and each member of the state is subject to the decisions of the majority. He said: “For when any number of Men have, by the consent of every individual, made a *Community*, they have thereby made that *Community* one Body, with a Power to Act as one Body, which is only by the will and determination of the *majority*. For that which acts any Community, being only the consent of the individuals of it, and it being necessary to that which is one body to move one way; it is necessary the Body should move that way whither the greater force carries it, which is the *consent of the majority*: or else it is impossible it should act or continue one Body, *one Community*, which the consent of every individual that united into it, agreed that it should; and so every one is bound by that consent to be concluded by the *majority*. And therefore we see that in Assemblies impowered to act by positive Laws where no number is set by that positive Law which impowers them, the *act of the Majority* passes for the act of the whole, and of course determines, as having by the Law of Nature and Reason, the power of the whole”(Locke, 1988: 332). Locke advocated the ideal country of freedom, equality, democracy and the rule of law with representative democracy, the supremacy of the law, and equality before the law as the main features. Montesquieu, a well-known enlightenment thinker and the main representative of classical natural law, regarded the constitutional monarchy established in England as a model of an ideal society. The main representative of French republicanism, Rousseau, advocated that by restoring and guaranteeing people’s lost freedom and equal rights in an unequal

society, he proposed an ideal society to eliminate the feudal autocracy and establish a republic based on the social contract where the people enjoy sovereignty.

Examining these initiatives, the liberal social program, rooted in the social contract and championed by Enlightenment thinkers like Locke, has emerged as the quintessential blueprint for an ideal “good society” widely embraced in Western societies. This paradigm aligns with the requirements of the burgeoning Western market economy, yet it also lays bare several issues, including wealth disparity, commodification of social interactions, and external encroachment. The insights and cautions offered by the liberal social model serve as valuable points of reference and contemplation in our pursuit of constructing a global value-based community.

(3) Compared with modern times, the contemporary human community thought has made great progress, which is reflected in its value position and institutional practice. However, there are differences in the academia on the division between modern and contemporary thinking about the human community. Some scholars advocate that the concept from discussion to practice should be used as a dividing line, that is to say, the establishment of the United Nations in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the starting point for human beings to build a “world government” into the practical level and the action stage. Some scholars advocate the advent of the era of globalization as the criterion for classification, that is, since the 1960s, contemporary community thought begins to develop with the increasing number of global problems. Especially since the 1990s, globalization and global governance have expanded and deepened, which is marked by the emergence of a new concept of international order with globalism as the axis (Wei and Wang, 2018). The author believes that after the end of World War II, the emergence of decolonization and the rise of the wave of nationalism, the confrontation between the East and the West and the independence of the third world countries have caused a fundamental change in the world structure, and the discussion of the human community also pays more attention to reality. Therefore, this article takes the post-World War II period as the

time boundary for delineating the thinking of contemporary human community (Cai, 2014).

The development of the concept of the human community by modern Western thinkers is accompanied by the development of globalization and the discussion of globalism, and many scholars have begun to demonstrate the possibility of a world state from subtle points. The American political philosopher Rawls draws on Kant's description of the world of permanent peace to establish a relationship between people's society and rational pluralism. "...society, liberal peoples are both reasonable and rational, and their rational conduct, as organized and expressed in their elections and votes, and the laws and policies of their government, is similarly constrained by their sense of..." (Rawls, 1999: 25).

In Rawls's view, if people from different cultures treat each other equally according to the principle of reciprocity, peace will come true. In his research on justice, Rawls realized that morality is an important factor that cannot be ignored through the analysis and comparison of people within a country, because morality often represents the national spirit and value concept of a country. It emphasizes the differences between different countries, regions and groups. Sexuality, but also respect and tolerance for difference, and strive to set a broad framework of a coalition of free nations and within that framework to set norms for people in non-liberal societies. Thomas Pogge also advocates these promotion and research methods of justice in Rawls' *Law of Peoples* (1999).

Habermas, a German political philosopher, believes that in a globalized world, Kant's view of national sovereignty as the basis of world peace faces challenges because of the inherent contradiction between nation-state sovereignty and economic globalization. Habermas reasoned that the nation-state would become a kind of transcended historical form, the world will enter a post-national society, therefore, it is necessary to establish and expand transnational organizations with strong political capacity and use all means other than military means to exert influence on the interior

of sovereign states (Ai, Si Lin, 2004). Rawls designs a blueprint for peace from the level of the people, and Habermas designs a blueprint for peace from the level of the system. “Habermas conceives the “Kantian project” to be one of securing global peace and upholding basic human rights through strengthening and expanding supranational and transnational institutions. In substance, he is offering a kind of Kantian world federalism as the way forward for the global community of states” (Delahunty & Yoo, 2010: 440). Both adhere to Kant’s concept of permanent peace, but their paths are different.

Global justice is a high-level ethical value orientation for resolving contradictions and conflicts between countries and regional groups in the process of globalization. The core idea of global justice is to treat every citizen of the world fairly, regardless of nationality and race to disregard factors such as race and nationality in the distribution of basic rights, opportunities, resources and wealth, and to treat all people equally. Equally, respecting and caring for everyone on the earth is the common emotional expectation of human beings. Thomas Pogge, German philosopher, specialising in Kant and global justice, believes that “global justice” is one of the most important goals to be pursued by the development of human society.

Pogge believes that all of us are responsible for inequality and poverty in the world, and the different moral values of people in different countries, regions and groups are the root causes of global poverty, so global justice should be discussed on an individual basis, and “individual” is the most basic social factor that constitutes a global society.

Pogge believes that for different societies, the standards of “justice” are diversified, so at the global level, there must be a standard of justice with universal value that transcends various values and cultural orientations. In terms of global justice and the orientation to the new global order, we need a unified and harmonious common value orientation that can be widely accepted by global citizens. Pogge established a globally accepted standard of morality and value orientation. Pogge has

put forward many systems and ideas that benefit the world's poor, such as the idea of Global Resource Dividend (GRD), and established a non-governmental organization global health promotion plan with colleagues to promote the participation of governments and foundations in health impact funds to improve the unequal distribution of resources and medical care at the institutional level and reduce avoidable poverty, disease and death (Pogge, 2002; 1994).

These specific political plans have transcended the indistinguishable dilemma between politics and philosophy in the Kant period, and have an impact on today's international justice and international jurisprudence. After the end of the Cold War, the process of globalization has become increasingly intensified, and globalist geoeconomics emphasizes that globalization blurs national boundaries, that is, "geographic disappearance". British political scientist Herder pointed out that the inter-connectivity and dependence between societies brought about by globalization, today's nations in the world have formed an overlapping community of fate. "Democracy and globalization pull in different directions, or so it seems. Democracy pulls towards the self-organization of activity in delimited territories, and globalization pulls towards the creation of new dense forms of transborder interaction, raising the question of how these can be brought under democratic control and rendered accountable. If all our key political ideas and mechanisms have been developed with reference to particular communities and spaces, how can they be reinvented to embrace a global age?" (David, 2010). He discusses the tension and potential conflict between democracy and globalization. It highlights that democracy tends to focus on self-organization within specific territories, while globalization emphasizes creating intensified interactions across borders. He raises concerns about how to ensure democratic control and accountability in the face of these global interactions, given that traditional political ideas and mechanisms were designed for specific communities and spaces. It questions the adaptation of political concepts to effectively address the challenges and opportunities presented by globalization and

the need for reimagining these concepts to suit a globalized era.

When reflecting on the relationship between nationalism and globalization, cosmopolitans put forward the concept of a global community. The global community is not only the theoretical premise for cosmopolitanism to confirm normative principles such as global justice, but also its ideal goal. The construction of a global community includes three Aspects: Global justice is the foundation of morality, cosmopolitan democracy is the institutional guarantee, and cultivating world citizens is its cultural condition. The concept of cosmopolitan global community is consistent with the concept of a community with a shared future for humankind in terms of criticizing hegemonism and promoting world justice; however. There are essential differences between the two in their understanding of the role of nation-states, the subject of world justice, and the universality and commonality of values. We must avoid the inherent flaws of cosmopolitanism and learn from its positive factors to build a community with a shared future for humankind. The great practice provides theoretical reference (Cong, 2019). In addition, Australian scholar Singer and Japanese scholar Akira Irie demonstrated the possibility of the formation of a world community from the perspectives of non-traditional security and global history, respectively. At the same time, the practice of the concept of human community by international organizations is also remarkable which the United Nations represents. The United Nations upholds the purpose of “maintaining international peace and security”, promotes the development of world arms control and disarmament, and actively guides the international community to cooperate in dealing with environmental, resource, climate, population and other issues and plays a unique role in contemporary global governance. However, even the most influential international organization, the United Nations, is currently unable to realize the “co-governance” of all countries in the world. It is the “co-governance of great powers” controlled by individual countries, and its function of truly realizing the “community of mankind” is relatively limited.

The concept of democratic equality and its integration of principles of fair distribution with the need for equal respect and access to social conditions for freedom is very interesting. It emphasizes that democratic equality ensures that all law-abiding citizens have effective access to the resources they need for their freedom. The text also touches upon the role of citizens in a democratic state, where claims are based on equality rather than inferiority, and the fundamental aim is to secure everyone's freedom. Additionally, it highlights how democratic equality navigates the balance between collective provisions and personal responsibility. "In seeking the construction of a community of equals, democratic equality integrates principles of distribution with the expressive demands of equal respect. Democratic equality guarantees all law-abiding citizens effective access to the social conditions of their freedom at all times. It justifies the distributions required to secure this guarantee by appealing to the obligations of citizens in a democratic state. In such a state, citizens make claims on one another in virtue of their equality, not their inferiority, to others. Because the fundamental aim of citizens in constructing a state is to secure everyone's freedom, democratic equality's principles of distribution neither presume to tell people how to use their opportunities nor attempt to judge how responsible people are for choices that lead to unfortunate outcomes. Instead, it avoids bankruptcy at the hands of the imprudent by limiting the range of goods provided collectively and expecting individuals to take personal responsibility for the other goods in their possession" (Anderson, 1999: 289).

Democracy is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses a spectrum of ideologies, practices, and systems of governance. It represents a form of government where power is vested in the people, either directly or through elected representatives. However, its interpretation, implementation, and impact are nuanced and varied, making it a subject of continuous study and debate.

### **3.2. The identity and cultural diversity issues in the BRI philosophical foundations**

The Western community thought has undergone a process of “degradation” at the social theoretical level, and at the practical level, it is faced with many dilemmas such as value choices, balancing the relationship between freedom and security, and certainty, therefore, the “degradation” has become an indisputable fact. However, at the new stage of development, especially since the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the community of shared future has increasingly become an important part of Xi Jinping’s thought of Chinese characteristics in the new era. Based on the continuous inheritance of the Marxist community thought, it has realized the continuous transcendence of the Western community thought, which is particularly evident in the three-dimensional dimension of Xi Jinping’s thought of a community of shared destiny.

#### *(1) The dimension of emphasizing the “destiny”*

In the context of the evolution of Western community thought, traditional societies were based on factors such as kinship, geography, and educational affiliations. These communities exerted control and restrictions on individuals, embodying a form of dominion over them. Whether it’s Plato’s Utopia or Aristotle’s city-state, these communities essentially portrayed a deterministic nature. However, in modern times, propelled by ongoing technological advancements and a growing division of labor, a new form of community based on professions and shared interests has emerged. This concept is akin to what Ferdinand Tönnies referred to as “society” and aligns with Émile Durkheim’s emphasis on organic solidarity – a type of community founded on contractual agreements and interdependence.

Now what we are emphasizing is the community of destiny, which closely links “destiny” and “community”, which means that the establishment and maintenance of

the community is based on a common destiny. “Destiny” is the basic situation of human existence, development, and perfection. It is related to the fundamental issue of human life and death and the ultimate meaning of development and perfection. Whether in China or in the Western context, the ontological value of “destiny” is highlighted. Destiny refers to the change and time-space transformation of a specific object or reality. The community of human destiny unifies the irresistible inevitability and human factors that can be transformed, which is different from the fatalistic view of destiny and the “absurd” life destiny of the existentialists, and realizes the dialectical unity of objective inevitability and subjective initiative.

First, the community of destiny highlights the spatial attributes of the era of globalization. In Hegel’s view, “fate is a holistic, environmental force acting on people” (Hegel, 1961).

In today’s world, the effect of this holistic and environmental force on people is the trend of economic globalization, political multi-polarization, and cultural diversification. People are increasingly moving from relatively small and isolated areas to interconnected and inseparable communities. As General Secretary Xi Jinping said: “In this world, the degree of interconnection and interdependence among countries is unprecedentedly deepened. Human beings live in the same global village, living in the same time and space where history and reality meet” (Xi, 2014).

Secondly, the community of destiny implies the benefit attribute of the risk society. It emphasizes the community of destiny, rather than the blood community or clan community in the general sense; because human beings have the same fundamental interests in their survival and development, especially in the current risk society, especially under the current conditions of increasing risk society. Natural crises and social crises are intertwined, and “the turbulence of all social conditions, permanent instability and change” is not only the most prominent feature of the capitalist era, but also the most prominent feature of today’s society. Building a community with a shared future is an inevitable choice in the context of competition.

If countries only pursue their own interests and development, or even harm the interests of other countries, the result will inevitably be the damage to the interests of the entire human race.

Finally, the community of destiny demonstrates the value attributes of multiple civilizations. Destiny is often referred to as the tendency and inevitability of the development and change of human individuals or groups, and is often associated with “future”. As far as human civilization is concerned, the community of destiny represents the gradual change of human communication from regional communication to global communication. This will fundamentally abandon the survival of the fittest among civilizations, and re-establish the relationship of mutual respect, mutual learning and harmonious coexistence. “Common destiny” is not only the aspect of material survival, but also the continuation and development of human civilization. “Human history is a magnificent picture scroll of mutual exchange, reference and integration between different civilizations” (Xi, 2016).

Therefore, under the inspiration of the destiny and future of humankind, we must promote the creative development of the common civilization of humankind.

### *(2) the dimension of emphasizing the others*

In *Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx divided the development of human community into three stages, namely “natural community”, “false community” and “true community”. In the first stage, in the pre-capitalist period, the community took the form of a “natural community”, and for the needs of life continuation and self-security, human beings depended on primitive groups to survive; in the second stage, in the capitalist period, people are forced to be squeezed and exploited due to the needs of life; in the third stage, when human society enters communist society, “true community” can be realized, because in communist society everyone can be fully developed freely and comprehensively. An important dimension in Marxist philosophy is to emphasize the role of other members of the society, to reflect on and

understand oneself from the perspective of other people, and to emphasize that it is in the social relationship constructed by individuals and others that their essence is obtained.

On the one hand, the community with a shared future embodies this dimension from the “interactive relationship” of human beings. “Interactive relationship” refers to the universality of communication in the context of globalization, and advocates “a model of social cooperation that both realizes common planning and supports each individual’s different planning” (Gould, 2009).

The concept of a community with a shared future has evolved from the fundamental traits of the Chinese nation, embodying a focus on relationships and harmony. This has given rise to a national ethos of fostering unity among all nations. It goes beyond the constraints of race, culture, nation, and ideology, emphasizing a collaborative approach where all parties can thrive, rejecting the outdated zero-sum mindset of “I win, you lose”, and striving for a scenario where everyone can succeed together. “The connotation of the Chinese national spirit has been continuously enriched in the long historical evolution. Ancient farming civilization shaped the initial cultural genes and traditional forms of the Chinese national spirit. Since modern times, the collision of Chinese and Western cultures has promoted the Chinese national spirit to achieve two modern transformations: First, the Western the development of democracy and scientific spirit under the influence of industrial civilization; the second is the growth of the spirit of contract and rule of law under the conditions of socialist market economy. These two major historical transitions are related to the rise and fall of socialism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the changes in the international environment it caused. The shocks are closely related: the first change was when the “shot of the October Revolution” in Russia enlightened China’s outstanding sons and daughters; the second change was when the socialist edifice of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe collapsed, and the Chinese Communists faced the harsh reality and made difficult choices. The spirit of democracy, science,

contract and rule of law constitute the four deep foundations of contemporary Chinese spirit” (Liu & Sun, 2017). “When pursuing the interests of one’s own country, take into account the reasonable concerns of other countries, and in the pursuit of self-development, promote the common development of all countries, and constantly expand the intersection of common interests” (Xi, 2016). At the same time, the “interactive relationship” rejects the control and domination of one person over another person or a group of people over another group of people. Any unilateral will to power and desire for control is contrary to this dimension. In the process of advocating the construction of a community with a shared future, China will unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development. “No matter what step China takes, China will never seek hegemony, expansion, or sphere of influence. History has and will continue to prove this” (Xi, 2016).

On the other hand, the community with a shared future embodies this dimension from the “interdependent relationship” between people, people and society, and people and nature. The “interdependence relationship” emphasizes the interdependence and mutual purpose between the subjects. Only in the interweaving of the self and others can the identity of the self-personality be truly established and the self-development be realized. Capitalist civil society and the theory of state relations on which it is based are essentially a kind of “instrumental communication”, that is, others should be used as tools and means to realize their own desires and interests. It makes “the world of man decomposed into the world of atomically antagonistic individuals” and is “the spirit of the struggle of all against all”, which is already the case in the relationship between man and nature. The community of destiny brings individuals and others, human beings and nature back into the same community, “There is only one earth in the universe, and human beings have only one home” (Xi, 2016). Especially human beings are in an era of endless challenges and increasing risks, and it is more necessary to rely on each other and win-win cooperation between countries, between themselves and others. At the same time,

“mountains, seas, forests, fields and lakes are a life community” “Man and nature are a community of life”, and the relationship between man and nature runs through the “interdependence relationship”, which is another application of Xi Jinping’s thought of a community of shared destiny.

*(3) The dimension of emphasizing the practice*

To a certain extent, researchers of Western community thought have made assumptions and plans for the practice of community, such as Plato’s ideal state, Aristotle’s city-state, Tunis’ emerging cooperatives, the community practice of the Chicago School, and communitarians’ diverse communities. However, these assumptions and propositions are either too idealistic or can only remain within a single community or field, and cannot rise to the deployment and arrangement of national strategies and decision-making. In the end, they only stay at the theoretical level, and are difficult to implement into practice. General Secretary Xi Jinping at the Moscow Institute of International Relations first proposed the community with a shared future in March 2013. During this period, China progressively introduced various concepts, including the community of the Chinese nation, the harmony between humanity and nature, and the community of shared future in cyberspace. Ultimately, at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, it was decided to prioritize the establishment of a community of shared future for humanity as a fundamental strategy for socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Over time, this vision has been refined and supplemented through theoretical advancements and strategic planning to guide practical implementation effectively.

On the one hand, the practice of the community of destiny is deeply rooted in the Marxist view of practice. Practice is the basic category of Marxism, and the Marxist view of practice is the basic way for human beings to grasp the world, the relationship between human beings and the world, and human thinking. Marx defined practice as “human perceptual activities”, and proposed that “philosophers

only explain the world in different ways, but the problem is to transform the world”, and emphasized that “all social life is practical in nature” (Marx and Engels, 1975). “Mysterious things that enter into mysticism can be reasonably resolved in human practice and the interpretation of this practice”. The idea of a community of shared destiny and its construction has drawn a clear line from all mysticism and mystical theories since it was first proposed. In people’s real life, it is not only necessary to deal with domestic development problems, but also to solve common problems faced by humankind and achieve common development.

To address conflicts and disagreements arising from interactions between individuals and nations, and to tackle global challenges, Xi Jinping advocated for the advancement of a community with a shared future for humanity. Emphasizing harmonious coexistence, he expressed the notion that “landscapes, forests, fields, and lakes constitute a community of life”, and highlighted the interconnectedness of “man and nature as a community of life”.

In effectively managing and governing the increasingly vital “fifth space of human life”, cyberspace security, Xi Jinping advocated for a community of shared future in global cyberspace. Additionally, when dealing with domestic ethnic affairs and promoting ethnic unity and development, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed the concept of the Chinese national community.

These propositions form a series of community-oriented ideas, representing an evolution and enrichment of the Marxist concept of practice. They provide a comprehensive framework to navigate various spheres of human interaction and governance, underscoring the importance of cooperation, unity, and shared prosperity in a rapidly changing world.

On the other hand, the practice of a community with a shared future is strategic, hierarchical and open. Xi Jinping’s Thought of a Community of Shared Future, from the beginning as a political concept of socialist diplomacy with Chinese

characteristics to a vivid practice in many fields of social development, has obvious strategic and hierarchical nature. In the pursuit of building a community with a shared future for humankind, Xi Jinping highlighted specific regional and locational perspectives. Within China, emphasis was placed on nurturing a strong sense of community and awareness among the Chinese nation. This involved solidifying an ideological foundation for the Chinese national community and fostering a collective consciousness regarding the community of the Chinese nation.

On an international scale, Xi Jinping advocated for the establishment of shared future communities with specific countries. Notable mentions include promoting a China-Pakistan community with a shared future, a China-Vietnam community with a shared future, and a China-Myanmar community with a shared future. These endeavors underscored the importance of fostering cooperative relationships and mutual prosperity between nations to collectively address global challenges and promote peace and development.

From the perspective of specific functions and fields, Xi Jinping proposed to “strive to build a community with a shared future for nuclear safety” from the nuclear security issues faced by all humankind. In the strategy of energy production and consumption revolution, it proposes to “build a community of interests and a shared future for energy cooperation”. In the process of governance and construction of cyberspace, a “community of shared destiny in cyberspace” was proposed, all of which show that Xi Jinping’s idea of a community of shared future has been deeply embedded in the practice of specific fields. At the same time, it needs to be emphasized that the practice of Xi Jinping’s community of shared destiny is also open, and Xi Jinping’s idea of a community of shared destiny is a process of continuous generation and improvement, which determines that the practice of Xi Jinping’s community of shared destiny is also an open form. The continuous deepening of the country’s reform and opening-up process and the continuous development of the world economy and society. With the deepening of China’s

reform and opening-up process and the continuous development of the world economy and society, more and more communities will be created, and more and more communities will play an important role in practice.

### **3.3 The ways of harmonization Western-Chinese concepts of identity and cultural diversity in the context of the BRI implementation**

In practice, the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind will inevitably encounter cultural collisions such as cultural colonization, cultural hegemony, and the theory of civilization superiority. To get rid of the cultural predicament, we must focus on the macroscopic view, analyze it thoroughly, and start to consolidate the cultural governance strategy for the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind from the microscopic level.

*(1) Strengthen top-level design and form an orderly and efficient communication mechanism*

The top-level cultural exchange design plays an important role in the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind. Breaking down institutional barriers is the primary task of building a community with a shared future for humankind. Due to the huge differences between countries and nations in terms of economic development, social systems, ideology, and religious beliefs, the process of building a community with a shared future for humankind has been seriously affected. At present, to build a community with a shared future for humankind, we must build a new political and economic order based on the principle of “joint consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits”.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan adopted by the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19<sup>th</sup> CPC Central Committee proposes to establish an “institutionalized and open international cultural exchange and cooperation mechanism”. The formation of an orderly and

efficient exchange mechanism requires, on the one hand, the national cultural authority to formulate macro-policies based on the characteristics of the new era and the needs of cross-cultural exchanges, and to plan a cultural exchange mechanism. Items and content involving normalization and fixation should be fixed in an effective form thereby promoting the orderly progress of international cultural exchanges. On the other hand, in the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind, people are both the subject of the construction and the object to be satisfied. Therefore, the cultivation of professional talents is the intellectual factor to build a community with a shared future for humankind. This requires that we should not only focus on the cultivation of professional talents in international project management, but also pay attention to the cultivation of talents with small languages.

During cultural interactions involving unofficial civil organizations, social groups, and individuals, it is possible to employ adaptable and varied exchange mechanisms to provide greater freedom and rights to unofficial organizations. While upholding the principles of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the four fundamental principles, the methods and content of communication can be presented in diverse formats that are easily accessible and well-received by the audience.

While building an international cultural cooperation and exchange mechanism, it is also necessary to establish a long-term mechanism for resolving conflicts at all levels of human beings. From a historical perspective, this conflict involves conflicts between individuals, between groups, and between states and nations. To resolve conflicts between individuals, the traditional approach is to adopt flexible methods such as morality, tradition, and customs. After World War II, with regard to conflicts between countries, people generally believe that avoiding direct conflict or war is a better method and take the approach of communication and negotiation. The United Nations is such an important organization for regulating international disputes. However, in the international community, due to the existence of “hegemonism” and

“power politics”, the role of the United Nations has not been brought into full play.

*(2) Relying on the Belt and Road Initiative, expanding the scope of cultural identity radiation*

Chinese and Western cultures are both heterogeneous and similar. In cultural exchanges between China and the Western world, it is crucial to uphold the principle of diverse coexistence and inclusivity. The focal point should be the Belt and Road Initiative, aiming to integrate countries and regions along the route into a unified community with a shared future for humankind. This integration should extend its influence to a broader scope, encompassing a wider range of regions. The Belt and Road Initiative is named after the ancient “Silk Road”, and it is a new pattern of China’s opening to the outside world under the conditions of the new era. It crosses the boundary between the East and the West, is a historic symbol of cultural exchange and foreign trade, and a model of the successful practice of the idea of a community with a shared future for humankind.

Economic development and cultural dissemination are two typical features of the Belt and Road Initiative. The “Belt and Road” construction has improved my country’s economic strength and technological innovation capabilities, and consolidated the foundation of cultural “soft” power; taking into account the national conditions of countries along the route as a whole, adhere to market orientation and win-win cooperation; optimize the allocation of domestic and international resources, and realize the “dual circulation” of domestic and foreign markets (Lai and Yu, 2019). As a result, China’s economy has unleashed huge development potential, driving the development of surrounding areas, and the “bonus” of development has stimulated the power of cultural identity. On the one hand, Chinese culture has a long history and has a strong ability to tolerate and absorb foreign cultures. The construction of the Belt and Road Initiative is a feat of Chinese civilization taking the initiative to move towards an international perspective. It allows the people of the world to know

more about Chinese culture, understand China's national spirit, demonstrate China's image as a responsible major country, and eliminate the misunderstanding that "a strong country must hegemony". On the other hand, "to enhance the soft power of national culture, we must strive to spread contemporary Chinese values" (Xi, 2014) Through the radiation effect of countries along the Belt and Road Initiative, China's development concept, China's system and China's values can be better understood by the people of the world. According to Marx, "philosophers only explain the world in different ways, and the problem is to change the world". Karl Marx penned these words in a set of notes intended for a future collaboration with Friedrich Engels. Although titled *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx's focus extended beyond Ludwig Feuerbach to express a broader discontent with prevailing intellectual trends among the Young Hegelians of their time. The crux of Marx's notes, particularly the second, third, and eighth theses, presented a profoundly pragmatic view of social existence, highlighting the pivotal role of thought and philosophy in informing and transforming human activity. These theses, embodying this transformative perspective, are what underscore the powerful impact of the concluding quote. Therefore, after understanding China's development philosophy and model, it is more important for countries along the Belt and Road Initiative to explore their own development paths, take the "express train" of China's development, improve their ability to participate in international affairs, and enhance their people's ability to participate in international affairs.

Following to the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and promoting the high-quality development of joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative has become an important task for high-level opening to the outside world and opening up a new situation of win-win cooperation. With the enrichment and deepening of the "Belt and Road" cooperation, more countries will be driven to join the ranks of sharing development achievements. In the process of this deep integration, each country is committed to promoting its own national

culture, absorbing foreign excellent culture, improving cultural quality, and promoting the common value recognition of humankind. It is necessary to use the successful experience of the Belt and Road Initiative to lead the construction of a cooperative development model of a community with a shared future for humankind.

*(3) Facing the focus of cultural differences, accurately implementing cultural exchange strategies.*

Facing cultural differences, under the cultural tolerance of seeking common ground while reserving differences, more consideration should be given to subjective factors such as audience psychology, cultural level and cognitive ability in different countries and regions to build a community with a shared future for humankind. With the establishment of a professional evaluation and information feedback mechanism, cultural strategies should be accurately implemented to improve the effectiveness and pertinence of the initiative to build a community with a shared future for humankind. Building a community with a shared future for humankind is a governance plan that involves the fundamental interests of people all over the world. Different levels of economic development, religious beliefs, and values affect the formation of cultural consensus. Under such circumstances, the selection of categories, detailed classification, and precise policy implementation are effective ways of foreign cultural exchanges. When interacting with multiple countries, we can learn from the method of social stratification to refine the communication principles and policies. Social stratification is a phenomenon of stratification or difference caused by the possession of social resources as a standard, and then due to the different possession of resources (Meng, 2020).

From the economic dimension, countries can be roughly divided into backward countries, developing countries and developed countries. Marx's perspective asserts that the economic foundation of a society, referred to as the economic base, shapes and influences its superstructure, which includes elements like culture, politics, and

ideology. Culture, within this framework, is a product of the underlying economic structure and responds to its dynamics. Marx argued that varying levels of economic development lead to differences in cultural progression, humanistic attributes, and the values and needs of individuals within that society. In essence, the economic base sets the stage for the cultural and social phenomena that manifest within a given society. These differences affect the content, methods and strategies of foreign cultural exchanges. Through comparative analysis, we should focus on improving the efficiency of communication, and adopt different methods, such as “one country, one policy” or even “one country, multiple policies”, etc., to achieve the purpose of efficient communication. Joel Mokyr believes that culture is the sum of beliefs, preferences and values shared by members of society through the transmission. “Culture means various things to different people, and to begin, we need to clarify the concept and our use of it. Given the rather astonishing popularity of the concept of culture in the social sciences and the humanities and the mind-boggling number of definitions employed, it is useful for an economist to start off by defining precisely what is included in and excluded from ‘culture’ and how it differs from ‘institutions,’ before we examine its role in the origins of modern economic growth.<sup>6</sup> The definition I use here ... is: Culture is a set of beliefs, values, and preferences, capable of affecting behavior, that are socially (not genetically) transmitted and that are shared by some subset of society” (Mokyr, 2017). Due to different spaces and different traditions, cultures also develop in a variety of ways. The following only takes religion as the cultural entry point and sees through cultural differences. Countries in the world can be divided into Christian countries, Islamic countries, Buddhist countries and other religious countries according to religious standards. Religion varies from country to country, resulting in different factors such as beliefs and culture affecting politics. In international cultural exchanges, one should be familiar with the national psychology, customs, value demands, ways of thinking, and historical origins of different countries, establish a professional analysis data

platform, accurately grasp the characteristics of each ethnic group, seek common ground while reserving differences. In alignment with the core interests of people across nations and the objective of constructing a community with a shared future for humanity, it is imperative to develop well-defined and comprehensive strategies for cultural exchanges. These strategies should revolve around forging a unanimous ideological agreement on the establishment of a global community. Furthermore, it is essential to translate this shared ideological understanding into tangible and affirmative actions through practical implementation. This approach ensures that the vision of a shared future for humanity is not just a theoretical concept but a reality achieved through collaborative efforts and meaningful initiatives. To sum up, the premise of accurate cultural exchange is a careful analysis of cultural differences and cultural subjects. Flexible and diverse methods should be adopted, and we should realize the greatest consensus on building a community with a shared future for humankind and global governance issues.

*(4) Expand cultural exchange channels and build a multi-level and all-round exchange platform*

In today's globalized world, international cultural exchanges and foreign exchanges are becoming more and more frequent, and the world is becoming a "global village". In the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind, cultural exchanges are the main means. Among them, "text interpretation" and "personal experience" are two important ways. It can also be said that one is propaganda and the other is practice. At present, in the practice of building a community with a shared future for humankind, it mainly relies on official organizations such as the government and news media, as well as some social organizations and civil organizations. However, the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind faces a huge audience, and it is necessary to mobilize all organizations and individuals at home and abroad who are actively

committed to building a community with a shared future for humankind. For example, relying on the overseas united front and various cultural exchange groups to expand cultural exchanges, cultural trade and cultural communication channels. In addition, we should consolidate consensus in a wide range of communication channels and build a discourse system for foreign communication.

Digital technology and network platforms are important means of dissemination of new media. Short videos have become a new cultural form of fragmentation dissemination because they are short, popular, interesting and convenient. “Short Video making app is a new social media trend amongst youngsters as it overtook the popular social media apps like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. In India, Jio (Mukesh Ambani owned Indian Telecommunications Company) played an essential role in making the digital world more accessible by bringing cheaper data plans. India has about 450 million smartphone users, and 376 million people use social media in any form, as per statistics. Initially, the popularity of the internet led to an increase in social media platforms. Still, now these social media platforms are the reason behind expanding the internet user base in the country” (Jaiswal & Kumar, 2020: 1073). When the continuous dissemination of official mainstream media culture is hindered, “flexible dissemination” based on short videos can better penetrate the audience and be easily accepted by the audience. Hence, while striving to construct a shared global community, it is vital to effectively employ a communication approach that integrates mainstream media and micro-culture. This entails streamlining cultural content, taking into account the audience’s psychology, emotions, and perspectives. Utilizing advanced network and information technologies is key to establishing a diverse output platform, projecting data platform, and a public information platform. Additionally, the development of investment service institutions is crucial, aiming to deliver comprehensive investment services to international enterprises throughout the entire process.

## **Conclusion to Chapter Three**

Building a community with a shared future for humankind is a Chinese solution proposed by Xi Jinping to solve the world's problems. This initiative has created cultural frictions and collisions with the long-standing Western "centrism" in the international community, resulting in a series of cultural dilemmas in the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind. The barriers to international cultural exchanges brought about by the theory of cultural superiority and the conflict of civilizations, as well as the dilemma of the low level of participation of various cultural subjects in the international community.

The impediments to international cultural exchanges are deeply rooted in notions of cultural superiority and clashes of civilizations. The theory of cultural superiority perpetuates a hierarchical view of cultures, where some are seen as more advanced or superior to others. This mindset hampers meaningful cultural exchanges by creating a sense of dominance and subordination, inhibiting genuine dialogue and mutual understanding. Moreover, the conflict of civilizations exacerbates tensions between cultures, reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices that further impede the potential for fruitful interactions.

Another significant challenge lies in the limited engagement and participation of diverse cultural stakeholders within the international community. This includes individuals, communities, and nations who may lack adequate representation or voice on the global stage. Inadequate representation hinders the diversity of perspectives and voices essential for a rich and inclusive cultural exchange.

Overcoming these barriers necessitates a paradigm shift towards fostering a more egalitarian and inclusive approach to cultural engagement. Acknowledging the equal worth and importance of all cultures is fundamental. Efforts should be made to debunk the myth of cultural superiority and challenge preconceived notions that hinder true intercultural understanding. Encouraging active participation and

representation of various cultural subjects is equally crucial, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and considered in international dialogues and exchanges.

To solve this cultural dilemma, the following strategies should be implemented: strengthen top-level design and form an orderly and efficient communication mechanism; rely on the “Belt and Road” to expand the scope of cultural identity radiation; face the focus of cultural differences and implement cultural strategies accurately; expand cultural communication channels and build multiple all-round communication platform, etc. These strategies have important theoretical value and practical significance for the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind, the settlement of world disputes, and the promotion of peace and development.

## **CHAPTER 4. The philosophical issues of the BRI implementation in Europe**

### **4.1. The BRI reception in contemporary East-European philosophy**

The connection between traditional Eastern European philosophy and its contemporary counterpart is deeply intertwined. Despite the significant influence of Western European philosophy in shaping present-day Eastern European philosophical discourse, it cannot overshadow the distinct perspectives of contemporary Eastern philosophers. While there has been a notable shift from the philosophy of the Soviet era, it is important to emphasize that the two eras are not entirely isolated or contradictory. Instead, there exists a continuum in the evolution of philosophical thought. The evolution of Eastern European philosophy showcases a transformation and divergence from its historical underpinnings, yet it maintains a thread of continuity that acknowledges the region's philosophical heritage.

In their co-authored article, Huseinov and Lektorsky summarized the changes in Eastern European philosophical life in the following areas:

(1) Philosophy has received more attention. This is reflected not only in the dramatic increase in the number of philosophical writings and philosophical journals, but also in the number of philosophy departments in higher education institutions.

(2) The topics of philosophical research are more abundant and diverse. Any object may become a field of philosophical research; especially political philosophy, religious philosophy, and applied ethics have received special attention.

(3) There are diversified philosophical positions and viewpoints. In contemporary philosophy, various schools of thought have their advocates and defenders, but also their critics, and Marxist philosophy as a school still has its place and has not been treated harshly.

(4) Philosophy of religion, which was restricted and criticized due to ideological

reasons in the Soviet period, has re-entered the field of study. The works of religious philosophers such as Nikolai Berdyaev, Simon Frank and others were republished in large numbers in a short period of time, and caused widespread social attention.

The research on the general theory and methodology of Marxism is an important direction of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Eastern European Marxist academic research. *Buzgalin* et al. specifically discuss the revival of Marxist philosophy and methodology from the aspects of Marxist philosophical heritage, the limits and potential of Marxist social philosophy, people in an alienated world, the dialectics of eliminating alienation, and from philosophical abstraction to social culture. This paper expounds the revival of Marxist political economy from the perspectives of the understanding of modern economic problems, the dialectical analysis of the boundaries of late capitalism with productive forces and production relations, the general law of capitalist accumulation and its changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the political economy of revolution. They discuss the revival of the study of *Das Kapital* from the application of the method of studying *Das Kapital* in the system of late capitalist production relations and the discussion of *Das Kapital*. They critically reflect on the legacy of Marx, revealing the achievements of Marxism in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, but also point out the characteristics of contemporary market comprehension, currency virtualisation, and capital-dominated labor extending throughout human life and social conditions, believes in liberating man not only from exploitation but from all forms of social alienation (Buzgalin & Kolganov, 2020).

Researches distinguish between the so-called real Marxism of Marx and Engels and the Marxism after Marx and Engels, and believes that Marxism and its historical position in human theory and popular consciousness should be critically analyzed. There is an idea that Marx created a complete political, economic and philosophical historical category of social development based on the limited experience of early capitalism. The methodology of the real Marxism can be used to study the contemporary changed social reality. The unity of real Marxism and later Marxism

is its creative adaptability to the era of social change, and the revolutionary and critical attitude towards reality contained in the Marxist tradition has greater vitality.

Researches' theories and viewpoints provide strong theoretical support for Eastern Europe's participation in the Belt and Road construction. Marxism believes that identity and struggle are the two basic attributes of contradiction. Among them, the identity of contradiction refers to the nature and tendency of the two sides of the contradiction to be interdependent and interconnected and coexistence in a unity. Therefore, the contradictory parties can make use of the development of the other party to develop themselves, and can learn from the other party's advantages that are beneficial to themselves to develop. In today's world full of contradictions, conflicts and undercurrents of anti-globalization ideology, why has the Belt and Road Initiative won such a wide response and achieved results beyond expectations? The reason is that development is consistent with the common and essential interests of all nations. Therefore, the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative is not a solo performance of the Chinese nation, but a chorus of countries along the route. China's opening drive is not a solo act. Rather, it is an invitation open to all. It is a pursuit not to establish China's own sphere of influence, but to support cooperative development of all countries. It is meant to build not China's own backyard, but a garden shared by all countries (Marx, 2018). Materialist dialectics advocates that connections are universal, that nothing can exist in isolation, and are all in a certain relationship with other things; the whole world is a unified whole that is connected, and every thing is a component or link in the universal connection of the world, through which it shows the universality of the connection. Today's world is an open world. Under the trend of economic globalization, the interconnections between various countries and ethnic groups are becoming more and more closely. This requires us to establish a global vision, conform to the world trend, and grasp the interconnectedness of various aspects in the process of world development, seize the opportunity and strive to develop yourself. The Belt and Road Initiative undoubtedly

provides us with a good platform to combine the development of our country with the development of countries along the route, especially Eastern European countries. “With the One Belt One Road (OBOR), arguably Beijing’s major diplomatic outreach in decades, a process towards greater Sino- European connectivity has been put in place. The implementation of the OBOR in Europe has focused so far on financing infrastructure projects, in particular railways in Southeast Europe and ports in the Mediterranean Sea. This has been complemented by growing monetary linkages between the People’s Bank of China and European central banks through the establishment of currency swap agreements and yuan bank clearing - so-called ‘offshore renminbi hubs’ - with the aim of lowering transaction costs of Chinese investment and bolstering the use of the Chinese currency” (Casarini, 2015: 1).

#### **4.2. The interpretation of the BRI cultural issues in West-European philosophy**

Western philosophy places great emphasis on binary opposition, highlighting the dichotomy between subject and object, as well as the perpetual struggle of contradictions. This approach has significantly influenced the development of Western civilization, characterized by a strong emphasis on science, the conquest of nature, individualism, and social pluralism. Over time, it has evolved into a method of civilization transmission often associated with military conquest. The foundational ideas of Western philosophy have shaped the worldview and societal structures in Western societies, promoting an analytical and dualistic approach that has been influential in various domains, including science, governance, and cultural values.

The self-identity of culture strengthens the difference of civilization, and the difference means the possibility of conflict. Regrettably, Huntington, the father of the *Clash of Civilizations*, intensified and highlighted the clash of civilizations, but

did not pay much attention to the harmonious symbiosis of civilizations (Huntington, 2020). Huntington believes that different nations generate different civilizations based on factors such as history, language, culture, tradition, and religion, among which religion is the “hard core” that determines the characteristics of civilization, and artificially “codes” civilizations in most parts of the world.

*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996) is a book by Samuel P. Huntington that presents a theory suggesting that the primary source of global conflict in the post-Cold War world will be cultural and civilizational differences rather than ideological or economic disputes. Huntington argues that in the post-Cold War world, the central actors and conflicts will be civilizational. He identifies major civilizations such as Western, Confucian, Islamic, Japanese, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and possibly African, each with its distinct cultural and religious traditions. Researcher predicts a clash of civilizations, suggesting that future conflicts will primarily arise from differences in culture, religion, history, and traditions among these major civilizations. These clashes will be the driving force of global politics. He asserts that people’s cultural and religious identities will be a more potent force in shaping their understanding of the world and their behavior than political or economic ideologies; posits that the most significant division in the world will be between Western and non-Western civilizations. While the West may come together due to shared values and interests, the non-Western world will likely rally around their own distinct cultural identities.

Huntington highlights the potential for a significant clash between the Islamic world and the West, given the historical and cultural differences and the rise of Islamic identity and assertiveness; identifies areas where these civilizational fault lines are most likely to result in conflict, including the “bloody borders” of civilizations such as the Western-Islamic interface. He suggests that the balance of power among civilizations will shape global events. Major Powers within each civilization will attempt to align with each other to protect their interests and values.

Huntington suggests that the West should be cautious about imposing its values and system on other civilizations. Instead, he advocates for a more pragmatic and respectful approach towards other cultures and civilizations. It is important to note that Huntington's ideas have been widely debated and criticized for oversimplification, potential cultural biases, and for underestimating the role of economics, politics, and globalization in shaping global conflicts. Nonetheless, his work sparked extensive academic and policy discussions about the nature of international relations in the post-Cold War world.

Theory seems to be very close to historical reality. Human beings have been competing, mediating, and fighting for survival from ancient times to the present. However, upon careful consideration, there are some aspects of neglecting the other and overgeneralizing. Among them, there is no lack of power logic under the “flag” of the superiority theory of Western civilization, and he confuses politics and culture.

The fallacy of the theory of clash of civilizations is either to regard “interest identity” as “cultural identity”, or to equate difference with conflict, or to preconceive a “civilization paradigm”. The Sino-US trade friction has once again made the Huntington “Clash of Civilizations” a hot topic in global discussions, and has also raised questions from all walks of life. American scholar *Katzenstein*, said, “I don't think there is a ‘clash of civilizations and contests’ between China and the United States. On the contrary, I think the United States has misunderstood China. To be more specific, it is the United States’ misunderstanding of China’s development strategy” Greek President Pavlopoulos also believes that the “clash of civilizations” theory is a huge mistake” (Katzenstein, 2013).

In a sense, the “Clash of Civilizations Theory” is a political discourse trap set up by Western scholars and elites. The subtext of the “cultural code” is that Western civilization is superior to other civilizations. Huntington once pointed out that “the West, especially the United States, which has always been full of mission, believes that people in non-Western countries should identify with the values of democracy,

free market, government with limited power, human rights, individualism and the rule of law in the West and incorporate these values into their system.” The same is true. The Western civilization-centrism represented by the United States looks down on other civilizations and shows extreme arrogance and rudeness to other civilizations. The theory of clash of civilizations has become a “flag” for the elimination of other heterogeneous civilizations.

Behind the premeditated theories such as the “Clash of Civilizations”, “China Threat”, “China Collapse”, and “China Failure”, is Western politicians’ superiority to their own civilization. Since the reform and opening up, China’s development has made historic achievements by leaps and bounds. In just a few decades, China has developed from a relatively backward country to the second largest economy in the world. In this regard, some Western countries are still arrogantly clinging to the “end of ideology”, the Cold War mentality, the zero-sum game, and the jungle law, and they are prejudiced and wary of China’s development, wrongly assuming that with the improvement of overall comprehensive strength, China is bound to challenge and threaten the interests of other partners in the foreseeable future.

The most basic causes of conflict and war are not cultural, but political and economic. There is no conflict between many different cultures because of differences in civilization (culture). The “clash of civilizations” theory cannot correctly describe the current world situation, let alone the prospects for the development of human society, and “the coexistence of civilizations” should be the way out for human society and the goal that human society must strive for. In order to understand this question, let us first understand what kind of era we are in. In my opinion, maybe we are in a new Axial Age.

The German philosopher Jaspers once put forward the concept of “Axial Age” (Kirkbright, 2004). He believes that around 500 B.C., great thinkers appeared almost simultaneously in ancient Greece, Israel, India, and China, and they all put forward unique views on issues of human concern. Ancient Greece had Socrates and Plato,

China had Lao Tzu and Confucius, India had Sakyamuni, and Israel had Jewish prophets, forming different cultural traditions. “It has become widely accepted that something was special about the period in world history in which there occurred, almost simultaneously it is believed, the preaching of the major Hebrew prophets around the time of the Exile, the first development of science and philosophy in Greece from Thales to Aristotle, the growth of philosophy, and especially political philosophy, in China from Confucius (d. 479 BCE) to the Legalists in the third century BCE, and the exposition of religious philosophy in India in the Upanishads (a little earlier, c. 800 to c. 600 BCE). Karl Jaspers suggested that this ‘axial period,’ as he called it, amounted to ‘a new departure’” (Black, 2008: 23).

After more than 2,000 years of development, these cultural traditions have become the main spiritual wealth of human culture, and the different cultures in these regions originally developed independently and did not affect each other. Humanity has always survived by all that was thought and created from the Axial Age, and every new leap looks back at this period. That has been the case since. Awakening and recollection or revival of the potential of the Axial Period always provide spiritual motivation. For example, the Renaissance in Europe was to turn attention to ancient Greece, the source of its culture, to rekindle the flame of European civilization, and to have an impact on the world. Tremendous influence. Chinese Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties put an emphasis on Confucius and Mencius in the pre-Qin period after being impacted by Indian Buddhist culture, and brought Chinese native philosophy to a new level. In a sense, the development of multiple cultures in the world today is likely to be a new leap from the Axial Age more than 2,000 years ago. Then, can we say that the culture of today’s human society is entering or is about to enter a new Axial Age?

From all the indications, that might be the case. First of all, since the Second World War, due to the gradual disintegration of the colonial system, the original colonial countries and oppressed nations have had a very urgent task, which is to

confirm their independent identities in all aspects, and the unique culture (language, Religion, values, etc.), is an important pillar. We know that after World War II, Malaysia insisted on using Malay as the national language in order to emphasize the unity of the nation. After the founding of the state of Israel, it was decided to restore the Hebrew language, which has long been used only for religious ceremonies, as a common language. In order to emphasize the characteristics of their own cultures, leaders and scholars of some eastern countries put forward group-centered “Asian values”, to distinguish it from individual (individual)-centered so-called “world values” of the West, and so on. Even Huntington recognized that non-Western civilizations in general are reaffirming their cultural values (Huntington, 2000).

Secondly, in the Axis Age around 500 BC, when the above-mentioned Axis countries entered the Iron Age, production developed greatly, and a group of important thinkers were born. Now that we have entered the information age, human society will have another great leap forward. We can see that due to economic globalization, the integration of science and technology, and the development of information networks, the world is linked together, and the development of cultures of various countries and nationalities will not be like the “Axial Age” in the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The cultures developed independently, but now they develop in contradiction, conflict, mutual influence and absorption. Each culture has limitations in its understanding of its own culture. If you look at it from another cultural system, that is, from the “other”, you may have a more comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of this culture. French scholar Julien Francois said in the article “Why We Westerners Can’t Avoid China in the Study of Philosophy”: “We choose to set out, that is, choose to leave, in order to create a space for long-term thinking. In all exotic distances, such detours are methodical. People traveled through China in this way to better read Greece; despite the cognitive gap, we have a certain innate familiarity with Greece due to heredity, so understanding it is also in order to develop it, we have to cut off this familiarity and form an external point of view” (Jullien &

Fijalkowski, 2019). This kind of cross-cultural research, which focuses on “mutual subjectivity” and “mutual reference”, and attaches importance to the reflection of one’s own culture from the “other”, has gradually become popular among Chinese and foreign scholars. Understanding one’s own culture from another culture is precisely to inherit and develop one’s own traditional culture. Under such circumstances, how to preserve the characteristics of culture and inherit the lifeblood of culture is undoubtedly an issue that must be seriously considered. Indeed, the contemporary development of human society reflects a reality where the global economy and technology are deeply integrated and interconnected. In contrast, culture cannot exist in isolation, and it is both impractical and undesirable for any culture to remain untouched by foreign influences. Globalization has facilitated a rich exchange of ideas, values, traditions, and customs among diverse cultures. However, preserving and cherishing the intrinsic essence of one’s own culture is crucial in this dynamic and interconnected world.

By embracing and celebrating the core principles and values of one’s culture, individuals and societies can better absorb and assimilate foreign influences. This integration should be a process that enriches, rather than erodes, the uniqueness and identity of a culture. It’s through understanding and appreciating one’s cultural roots that a society can engage with foreign cultures more meaningfully and in a way that complements its own identity.

In this intricate interplay, cultures can evolve and grow, drawing from various global influences while staying grounded in their origins. The key is to strike a delicate balance that allows for the organic blending of elements from different cultures while preserving the authenticity and intrinsic spirit of each culture. It’s a two-way process where cultures learn from one another, creating a richer tapestry of shared experiences and understanding, contributing to a more harmonious and interconnected global society.

As Mr. Fei Xiaotong said: “In the process of maintaining contact and active

exchanges with the Western world, we will turn our good things into global good things. First, localization, and then globalization” (Barbalet, 2021). That is to say, when absorbing foreign cultures, we must maintain the foundation of our own culture. Therefore, the development of human society and culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be both national and global. Third, in view of the current reality of human social and cultural existence, a new pattern of cultural pluralism development under the observation of global consciousness has been formed or is being formed. We can see that maybe the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be dominated by four major cultural systems, namely European and American culture, East Asian culture, South Asian culture, Middle East and North African culture (Islamic culture), these four cultures not only have a long history and culture traditions, and each culture affects more than a billion people. Absolutely, acknowledging the influence of a diverse range of cultures on the future of human society is essential. Latin American culture and African culture, among many others, hold immense value and potential impact on the global stage. Each culture brings unique perspectives, traditions, histories, and contributions that enrich the global cultural landscape.

While currently, certain cultures may have more pronounced influence due to historical, economic, or geopolitical factors, it’s important to recognize that the dynamics of influence are continually evolving. With globalization, increased connectivity, and a growing awareness of diverse cultures, the significance and influence of various cultures are likely to shift and expand over time.

By fostering mutual respect, understanding, and open dialogue among different cultures, we can work towards a future where all cultures are recognized and valued for their unique contributions. Embracing cultural diversity and ensuring equitable representation of diverse cultures in various spheres will pave the way for a more inclusive and harmonious global society, where every culture’s influence and significance are duly acknowledged and celebrated.

If human society wants to get out of the current situation of chaotic disputes, we

need especially to criticize cultural hegemonism and cultural tribalism. Culturally, we must not only face this new axis era, but also must constantly promote the relationship between countries and nations with different cultural traditions so that each culture can consciously participate in solving the common problems of current human society. Undoubtedly, the above-mentioned four cultures have a particularly important responsibility for today's human society.

To resolve conflicts, we need to find resources for the coexistence of civilizations from the cultures of different nationalities. Confucianism and Taoism in Chinese culture can provide meaningful resources for resolving “conflict of civilizations” and realizing “coexistence of civilizations”. To contribute to the “coexistence of civilizations” in today's human society, Chinese people have an understanding of their own culture, that is, to have an “awareness” of their own culture. The so-called “cultural awareness” refers to the fact that people with a certain cultural tradition can seriously think and reflect on their own cultural origin, formation process, characteristics, and development trends. It should be said that the Chinese nation is on the eve of national rejuvenation, so Chinese people have a conscious understanding of Chinese culture, give an appropriate orientation to traditional Chinese culture, and earnestly explore the true spirit of their ancient culture in order to contribute the excellent culture to human society; seriously reflect on the shortcomings of their own culture, so that they can better absorb the cultural essence of other countries and nations, and give Chinese culture a modern interpretation under the general trend of modern social development. In this way, China truly walk in the forefront of world cultural development and create a beautiful new world together with other cultures. Confucianism and Taoism are mainly two in traditional Chinese culture, and they complement each other. Of course, the introduction of Buddhism from India had an important impact on Chinese society and culture. There are still some Confucian and Taoist theories which can provide meaningful resources for the “coexistence of civilizations.”

The Confucian “benevolence” provides a positive resource for “the coexistence of civilizations”. In “Guodian Bamboo Slips, Nature Prescribes Itself”, it says: “Tao begins with emotion” (Xiaogan, 2003). The “Dao” here refers to the “Human Dao”, that is, the principle of human-human relationship, or the principle of social relationship. It is different from the “Tao of Heaven”, which refers to the law of operation of nature or the law of operation of the universe. The relationship between people is established from feelings, which is the basic starting point of Confucius’ “benevolence”. People themselves possess the spirit of “benevolence”, and loving one’s relatives is the most fundamental. However, the spirit of “benevolence” does not stop there; loving one’s relatives is just love, loving one’s own father, and then expanding to love others, this is called “benevolence”. The filial piety to parents should be enlarged to the common people who love the world. “Benevolence” is to be expanded from “close relatives” to “humane people”, that is, to “put oneself in another’s place”. It is not easy to “put oneself in another’s place”, and “if you want to stand firm, you must also let others stand firm. A benevolent person is a person who takes it as his duty to “give charity to the public” and is a kind person, but the premise is that he must have strength first. If he does not stand firm, how can he help others up.” If we want to spread “benevolence” to the whole society, this is what Confucius said: “Restraining oneself and doing everything according to the requirements of ritual is benevolence. Once this is done, everything in the world will be reconciled to benevolence.” Since ancient times, “self-restraint” and “doing everything according to the requirements of ritual is benevolence” have been interpreted as two independent aspects, but I think “doing everything according to the requirements of ritual” on the basis of “restraining oneself” can be called “benevolence”. Fei Xiaotong also explained this: “Self-restraint can restore rites, and restoring rites is a necessary condition for entering society and becoming a social person. Self-promotion and self-restraint may be the main point of the differences between Eastern and Western cultures” (Barbalet, 2021). “Benevolence” is the inner

morality of people, and “li” is the external etiquette system that regulates people’s behavior, and regulates the relationship between people to make them live in harmony. For people to abide by the etiquette system, they must be conscious and out of the inner heart of “loving others”, in order to meet the requirements of “benevolence”. Therefore, Confucius believed that if there is a conscious requirement to pursue “benevolence”, and this “heart of benevolence” is realized in the daily society according to certain norms, the society would be harmonious and peaceful. This set of thoughts of Confucius and Confucianism cannot be said to be meaningless to the “governors” of some countries, and to the ruling groups of those developed countries in the world today. If Confucius’s “benevolence” theory is used to deal with the relationship between different civilizations, then there will be no conflict or even war between different civilizations, thus realizing “the coexistence of civilizations”. Although Confucius’ theory of “benevolence” cannot solve all the problems of “cultural coexistence” existing in today’s human society, it is a moral requirement of “self-discipline” based on “benevolence” and a criterion for promoting the relationship between cultures, so that different cultures can live in harmony, which undoubtedly still has certain practical significance. It is not easy to make harmonious coexistence between different cultures, and the “harmony in diversity” advocated by Confucius can provide a very meaningful resource. Confucius believed that a virtuous and learned gentleman who takes “harmony as the most precious” and practices “the principle of loyalty and benevolence” should achieve harmony among differences; those who are not moral and unlearned often force others to accept his propositions cannot live in harmony. If “harmony in diversity” is used as the principle for dealing with the relationship between different cultures, it should have a very positive meaning for solving the disputes between different countries and nations today. Now people of insight in Western countries realize that different civilizations should be able to coexist. Different nations and countries should reach a certain “consensus” in dialogue (negotiation) and discussion

through cultural exchanges and dialogues, which is a process from “different” to mutual “identification” in a certain sense. This kind of mutual “identification” is not about one party destroying the other, nor is one “assimilating” the other, but to find a meeting point in two different cultures, and on this basis to promote the development of both cultures, this is the role of “harmony”. Among them, the German thinker Habermas proposed the concepts of “justice” and “solidarity”; I think it is meaningful to use them as principles for dealing with the relationship between different national cultures (Pierce, 2018). Habermas’s “principle of justice” can be understood as guaranteeing the right of each national culture to be independent and develop according to its own national will; the “principle of solidarity” can be understood as through continuous dialogue and exchanges, a virtuous circle of interaction can always be formed between different national cultures. The philosopher Gadamer, hailing from Germany, advocated for broadening the scope of “understanding” to encompass a “universal dialogue”. In doing so, the dynamic between subject and object (the subjective and the objective) could evolve from an imbalanced state to one of equality. Furthermore, genuine progress and successful completion of a dialogue can only occur when both parties engage on a level playing field, highlighting the importance of equality in meaningful discourse (Gadamer, 2006). It can be said that the subject-object equality consciousness and cultural dialogue theory held by Gadamer are exactly the important concepts that our era needs. This concept has important implications for our correct and in-depth understanding of Chinese and foreign cultures and ethnic relations. However, these two theories must be based on the recognition of the principle of “harmony in diversity”, so that nations and countries with different cultural traditions can obtain equal rights and obligations. The Confucian principle of “harmony in diversity” should become a basic principle in dealing with different cultures. As Russell said, the exchange between different civilizations has been proved many times in the past to be a milestone in the development of human

civilization (Russell, 2013). What is needed in today's human society is the development of different cultural characteristics in the process of mutual absorption and integration of different cultures, in order to achieve the "Coexistence of Cultures" on a new basis. Bertrand Russell, a prominent British philosopher, logician, and social critic, delved into the complexities of Chinese society and culture in his book *The Problem of China*, first published in 1922. In this work, Russell attempted to understand and interpret the rapid changes occurring in China during that era. The book was a result of his visit to China in 1920, where he sought to grasp the intricate socio-political and philosophical landscape of the country.

In *The Problem of China*, Russell discusses a wide array of topics, including Chinese philosophy, education, governance, social structure, and the impact of modernization and industrialization. He contrasts traditional Chinese philosophy, particularly the teachings of Confucius and Laozi, with Western thought, shedding light on their diverging perspectives.

Russell was critical of certain aspects of Chinese society, especially the prevalent authoritarianism and lack of individual liberties. He also expressed concerns about the influence of communism, which was gaining traction in China at the time. However, he also admired certain elements of Chinese culture, such as the emphasis on family values and the deep-rooted philosophical traditions.

One of the key aims of *The Problem of China* was to bridge the understanding and communication gap between the Western world and China. Russell believed that fostering understanding between different cultures was crucial for global peace and progress. Despite the book receiving both praise and criticism, it remains a significant piece of literature that reflects the socio-political and philosophical inquiries of its time, showcasing Russell's attempts to grapple with the complexities of a rapidly changing China.

The Taoism Doctrine of Taoism can provide meaningful resources for preventing the "conflict of civilizations". If Confucius is a "benevolent man", then

Laozi is a “wise man”. In Tao Te Ching, “Tao” is the basic concept, and “Natural Inaction” (complying with the laws of nature, not doing things that violate the laws of nature) is the basic characteristic of “Tao”. The reason why there are all kinds of disputes in human society today is undoubtedly caused by the greedy pursuit of power and money. Those powerful countries expand their power, plunder the resources of weak countries, and implement power politics for their own interests, which is the source of chaos and disorder in the world. Imperial hegemony is at the root of the “clash of civilizations”. Lao Tzu said: The ancient sage once said that they should not interfere too much with the common people (Wuwei), do not disturb the normal life of the common people (Hao Jing), do not do things that go against the will of the common people (Wu Xing), and do not exploit the common people greedily (Wu Yu) and then common people will educate himself (self-transformation), get on the right track (self-righteousness), become rich by himself (self-rich), and live a simple life by himself. If a modern interpretation is given to this passage, it can not only bring peace within a country, but is undoubtedly of great significance to the elimination of conflicts between different civilizations. Why is the human society in today’s world in a very chaotic and unstable state? This is entirely caused by people themselves, especially by the leaders of the “new empires” who have violated the “law of heaven”, lost “people’s hearts”, and pursued the principle of “It is the way of heaven to take from what has in excess in order to make good what is deficient.” For the sake of social peace and tranquility, Lao Tzu strongly opposed war. Chapter 31 of the Tao Te Ching says: “Now arms, however beautiful, are instruments of evil omen, hateful, it may be said, to all creatures. Therefore they who have the Tao do not like to employ them.” War always kills people, destroys production, and destroys social order. Lao Tzu also said: “He who would assist a lord of men in harmony with the Tao will not assert his mastery in the kingdom by force of arms. Such a course is sure to meet with its proper return.

Wherever a host is stationed, briars and thorns spring up. In the sequence of great armies there are sure to be bad years. Historically, those who start wars can succeed for a while, but they always lose in the end. Countries around the world should draw wisdom from the Tao Te Ching and realize that power politics and hegemonism have no future in view of the long-term world historical development. Lao Tzu's thought is very valuable for dispelling the "clash of civilizations" theory and the new "imperial theory". Of course, Lao Tzu's thought more than two thousand years ago cannot completely solve the problems of today's human society (including contradictions and conflicts among various ethnic groups), but the light of his wisdom should give us important enlightenment. What we should do is how to explore and develop the essence of his thought and give it a modern interpretation, so that it is beneficial to people to get some valuable enlightenment.

Diverse nations and regions, each shaped by distinct religious beliefs, values, and thought processes, can potentially experience conflicts and, at the extreme, escalate to wars. Yet, the inevitability and resolution of these conflicts, and the possibility of preventing them from escalating into war due to cultural disparities, prompt us to seek resources for inter-civilizational coexistence within the various cultures of nations. As mentioned above, Confucianism and Taoism in Chinese culture can provide meaningful resources for resolving the "conflict of civilizations" and realizing the "coexistence of civilizations". I believe that there are also valuable resources in the cultures of all ethnic groups and countries that can resolve the "conflict of civilizations" and realize the "coexistence of civilizations". Whether to use the "Clash of Civilizations Theory" to deal with the problems between various nations and countries, or to use the "Civilization Coexistence Theory" to guide human society towards peaceful coexistence, this is an issue that must be seriously considered at present. Opposing the theory of "clash of civilizations" and advocating the theory of "coexistence of civilizations" is undoubtedly the well-being of human society.

### **4.3. The features of the BRI implementation in Ukraine**

#### *(1) Philosophical and Cultural differences between China and Ukraine during the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative*

An important factor affecting people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Ukraine in the progress of the Belt and Road Initiative construction is the difference in cultural traditions between the two sides. First, China has its own ancient civilization, arming itself with Confucianism, and believing in loyalty, benevolence, righteousness and propriety; Central and Eastern Europe is a branch of Western civilization, which has its own religious beliefs in a way of thinking different from Chinese culture. The Chinese people accept the baptism of the historical evolution of Chinese civilization, and the people of Ukraine accept the influence of each stage of their own culture. The differences between the two cultural traditions, on the one hand, make it difficult for the two civilizations to meet and integrate.

Religious identity is an important constituent element of national identity, and it is of great significance to the construction of a stable national identity. Religious identity is a significant and intricate element of national identity, influencing the cultural, social, and political fabric of a nation. It often plays a pivotal role in shaping the collective consciousness, values, and customs of a society. Here are key aspects highlighting the connection between religious and national identity. Religion frequently forms the bedrock of a nation's culture. Religious beliefs, rituals, and traditions are deeply ingrained in the heritage and history of a people, influencing their way of life, art, music, and literature. These cultural manifestations are vital in defining the unique identity of a nation. According to moral and ethical framework – religious teachings often provide a moral and ethical compass for individuals within a society. The principles and values derived from a religion can influence laws,

governance, and societal norms, shaping the behavioral guidelines of the nation. Religion can act as a unifying force, bringing people together with shared beliefs and values. It fosters a sense of community, encouraging cooperation, mutual support, and a shared sense of purpose, ultimately contributing to a cohesive national identity. Religious groups can hold substantial political sway, impacting policy decisions, governance, and the legal system. Nations where a particular religion is deeply ingrained may have laws and policies influenced by the tenets of that faith, further intertwining religious and national identity. The history of a nation often includes the history of its dominant religion or religions. Religious events, figures, and narratives contribute to the nation's historical identity and influence its perception of self in the context of the world. Religious differences sometimes become focal points for national identity assertion, either to distinguish a nation from others or to unite the populace against perceived external threats. This can unfortunately lead to inter-religious conflicts that affect national stability and identity. An individual's religious identity is often intertwined with their national identity. People may identify strongly with their religious community within the larger national framework, which can influence their beliefs, affiliations, and social interactions. Understanding the interplay between religious and national identity is crucial in promoting tolerance, respect, and harmony within diverse societies. It involves appreciating the multifaceted roles that religion plays in shaping a nation's identity and leveraging this understanding to foster a cohesive and inclusive national fabric.

The current religious environment in Ukraine is complex, and the confrontation in the religious environment has deep historical roots and is closely related to the country's ethnic factors and regionalization. The problem of religious identity in Ukraine is mainly manifested in three aspects: First, the competition between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, the two largest denominations in Ukraine, has resulted in the diversity of religious identity; Secondly, the internal division of the Orthodox Church, and the complex relationship between the Ukrainian Orthodox

Church and the Russian Orthodox Church has caused confusion in the religious identity of the Orthodox believers; Thirdly, the establishment of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine is difficult, and it is urgent to be recognized by other churches, as well as being coerced by politics, there are internal divisions and irreconcilable contradictions, which makes its development path complicated and unites the believers. Religious life holds a very important weight for the Ukrainian people. Ukrainians more often refer to themselves as a “person of faith” than a “man”. Orthodox and Catholicism are the most influential religions in Ukraine. They not only represent different religious cultures followed and respected by believers, but also reflect the complex religious historical development in Ukraine. The competition and confrontation between the two have been accompanied by the choice of the Ukrainian people on the path of national development since the ancient times. The original purpose of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was to establish a mixed Catholic-Orthodox Church, so that the Orthodox inhabitants of the Ukrainian lands would more identify with Catholic Poland-Lithuania and get rid of the religious authority of the Patriarch of Moscow (Kubicek, 2008).

When Ukraine entered the contemporary era with the process of history, the opposition and competition between Catholicism and Orthodoxy continued, and developed into a more complex and obscure form, that is, infiltrating and influencing people’s value choices, which by extension affects people’s judgment of the country’s development model, development path, and development allies, in turn, affects people’s national identity.

Second, the history of Ukraine is unique, influenced by both EU culture and Russian culture, which makes the cultural belonging of Ukraine complicated. This complex process of cultural migration has caused the cultural concept of Ukraine to be very different from that of China, which in turn affects the process of cultural exchanges. The significant cultural differences between the large geographic regions of Ukraine make it difficult to form a unified cultural identity, and it is difficult to

harmonize cultural values between regions and even between ethnic groups. The various regions of Ukraine were unified after the outbreak of the Second World War. The historical features of the regions are very different, resulting in extremely complex ethnic and cultural components in various regions of Ukraine, and lack of real cultural identity” (Charap & Colton, 2018).

The different geographical spaces and cultural and ethnic groups are affected by different historical, social, economic, political, and ethno-religious characteristics, which often result in very different cultural identity views among various large geographical regions of Ukraine. Taking the Galic region of western Ukraine as an example, the residents here are hard-working, calculating, dependent and valuing family, and have a strong sense of national identity, which gradually formed Galic’s social and cultural characteristics. Attitudes towards Russian culture and Western culture, and the choice of the path of civilization have also become one of the cultural differences between different regions, thus forming a heterogeneous cultural identity space. The inseparable and homologous culture with Russia has resulted in a weak sense of cultural existence and identity in Ukraine. On the one hand, the characteristics of the geographical environment have created conflicting ideologies in Ukrainian religious culture, such as Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodox religions, and on the other hand, they have also objectively shaped the openness, inclusiveness, and other differences in Ukrainian culture and make it possible for the dialogue and interaction between cultures. The language issue became the trigger for the national identity crisis of Ukraine. Language is an important symbol of cultural identity. The development of Ukrainian, the balance between Ukrainian and Russian, the status of Russian, etc. are not only purely linguistic or social issues, but are often politicized and even used as the political themes and bargaining chips of previous presidential campaigns to win over voters, which has further contributed to the identity contradiction between the Russians and Ukrainians in Ukraine, and between the east and the west. Language is one of the most important characteristics of a

nation, and it is also one of the identity symbols and symbols of a nation and a country. “Language and writing are an important factor that constitutes cultural memory, an important carrier for forming cultural memory, and in a certain sense dominates people’s cognition. At the same time, language and writing are the manifestation of a country’s right to speak, affecting people’s perception of culture, ethnic and national identity.” (Lee, 2008) The population distribution of different languages forms a natural linguistic and cultural divide between eastern, southeastern and western Ukraine. There has always been a strong view in Ukrainian society that only linguistic coherence and unity can be achieved , Ukraine can become a truly modern state and an independent state, and to achieve this goal, it must be based on the establishment of Ukrainian national identity. In addition, because Ukraine has been under the influence of Western culture in history, modern Ukraine after independence also vigorously pursues the strategy of European integration and takes the route of Westernization and is influenced by Western ideology and multiculturalism, the cultural identity of the Ukrainian nationals has become diverse and uncertain. National languages, historical narratives, cultural symbols, etc. are not only factors directly related to the formation of historical and cultural identity, but also a concrete manifestation of historical and cultural identity. For post-independence Ukraine, de-Sovietization, de-Russianization, and European integration are a historical process with educational, cultural, and political attributes, reflecting the complex ecology of national identity construction.

Third, China and Ukraine have inconsistent understandings of humanities. China believes that humanities are a simple cultural concept and mutual respect; while Ukraine believes that humanities are individual-centered cultural behaviors. The result of this ideological gap is that it is difficult to open up the diplomatic situation by means of people-to-people exchanges. However, the humanistic spirit of harmony but difference, commonwealth of the world, and integration of civilizations

rather than confrontation in China's humanistic concepts can make Ukraine see the prospect of cultural exchanges.

In terms of influencing the social and historical process, the ideological effects of Chinese and Western humanistic spirits are also very different. The Confucian humanistic spirit places the value and dignity of the individual in the framework of the interests of the "group", pays attention to the cultivation of people's ethical subject will, and emphasizes the individual's responsibility for the survival and development of the "group". Therefore, in a long historical period, the humanistic spirit of Confucianism has provided a steady stream of ideological power for the cohesion and shaping of the Chinese national spirit. Influenced by it, countless people with lofty ideals have left a lot of precious spiritual heritage in order to revitalize the country and save the nation from peril, regardless of personal fame and fortune. However, because its "group-centric" contains the ideological background of "people's dependence relationship", the Confucian humanistic spirit must make people's desires and behaviors be limited the feudal hierarchical dependence order and general ethics, thus restraining the human autonomy and independence. In the West, in response to the church's theocracy and hierarchical dependence system, humanism places the pursuit of human values on the publicity of individuality and the venting of human desires, and advocates the development of individuality and emancipation of the mind, thus brewing the Renaissance, the ideological enlightenment of the early modern period. The movement pushed the West to take the lead in saying goodbye to traditional society and entering the process of modernization. But on the other hand, the "independence of man based on the dependence of things" manifested by humanism has the "reification" or "alienation" of man in modern Western society as Marx pointed out, which inevitably contains naked indulgence and money worship and has injected irrational spiritual factors into the development of Western modern civilization (Marx & Engels, 1975).

*(2) Suggestions on promoting people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Ukraine under the Belt and Road Initiative*

The success of China's reform and opening up, its long-standing cultural heritage, and its advantages in equality and peace diplomacy are the internal reasons for attracting Ukraine to join the Belt and Road Initiative construction and attracting Ukraine to carry out cultural exchanges with China. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, to further consolidate people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Ukraine, and to further enhance political mutual trust, we should start from two aspects: building a new type of cooperation mechanism and consolidating the foundation of people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two sides. The people-to-people and cultural exchange and cooperation mechanism between China and Ukraine is based on the original cooperation framework, the original cooperation declaration or the unanimously adopted programmatic document, and develops an innovative cooperation method. However, due to the national conditions, differences in Chinese and Western civilizations, differences in political systems, and differences in the degree of economic development, both sides are currently in a transitional stage. To this end, a new type of cooperation mechanism should be actively built on the basis of the Belt and Road Initiative and respecting the common interests of both parties.

*A) Strengthen the operation of existing cooperation mechanisms*

At present, the cooperation mechanism between China and Ukraine is not yet perfect, and consultations on specific matters are carried out by relying on the loose and unsystematic operating mechanism that has been established. In order to strengthen people-to-people and cultural exchanges and cooperation between the two sides, the operation of the existing cooperation mechanism should be strengthened, and joint efforts should be made for a new scientific cooperation mechanism in the future. This involves convening high-ranking state leaders to steer public opinion

and chart the strategic course of national diplomacy. They sign declarations or strategic documents aligning with mutual interests, providing a framework for people-to-people interactions. Additionally, various non-governmental exchanges like think tank dialogues, multi-industry expos covering investments and tourism, cultural events such as art exhibitions and film festivals, establish an unofficial basis for enhancing cultural collaboration. Furthermore, dialogue and collaboration at the ministerial and sister-city levels play a crucial role. To enhance existing cooperation mechanisms, emphasis should be on strategic planning, institutional setup, governmental policy, and financial support. Leveraging the market's role in resource allocation and engaging diverse private entities are key to encouraging active participation in cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

### *B) Innovative people-to-people and cultural exchange mechanisms*

From the perspective of the long-term development of the Belt and Road Initiative, the cultural exchange mechanism between China and Ukraine should be designed in a practical and lasting way. First, the improvement of the tourism cooperation mechanism should be perfected. We should make full use of the opportunity of the annual tourism cooperation conference to discuss specific plans for tourism cooperation; take advantage of visas, direct flights, tourism preferential policies and other convenient conditions to integrate respective tourism resources and provide continuous impetus for the tourism cooperation between the two sides.

The second is the cooperation mechanism for talent introduction and outflow. Whether it is in-depth cooperation in that field, talent exchange cannot be avoided. To this end, an exploratory talent exchange mechanism should be carried out in multiple fields, and special funds should be set up to give support. For example, consider cultivating a comprehensive understanding of China among government officials of Ukraine to reduce unnecessary obstacles to people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two sides, and train entrepreneurs from both sides to promote economic and trade cooperation.

The third is the cultural exchange and cooperation mechanism. We should take advantage of the holding of the Cultural Year, the establishment of the Confucius Institute, the dedication of Chinese volunteers to spread Chinese culture in Ukraine; provide more opportunities for exchange students, give the green light for exchanges between universities of the two sides, and support and provide copyright protection for translations of each other's classics works. The innovation of people-to-people and cultural exchange mechanisms needs to pay attention to two aspects. On the one hand, it is to ensure the integrity of people-to-people and cultural exchanges, to dynamically monitor the unbalanced situation caused by the interference and obstruction of external factors in people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two sides, and to further expand the scale of bilateral people-to-people and

cultural exchanges, the richness of content and the intensity of exchanges. On the other hand, it is to give full play to the initiative of the local government. The local government has a strong will and great potential to promote the construction of a people-to-people and cultural exchange platform between the two sides.

*C) Consolidate the foundation of people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Ukraine*

We should encourage the active participation of diverse subjects and consolidate the non-governmental foundation for people-to-people and cultural exchanges. People-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Ukraine are not only limited to discussions and promotion at the government level, but also need to give full play to the interaction of diverse social subjects to promote people-to-people exchanges at all levels and in all fields. Governments should set up special funds to support the independent exchanges of non-governmental entities; formulate loose and convenient systems and policies to guide the content and methods of communication of non-governmental entities. Utilizing the Belt and Road Initiative as a catalyst, major corporations in both China and Ukraine should capitalize on this opportunity to propagate their respective national cultures through corporate initiatives. Academic institutions and research organizations should collaborate in hosting interdisciplinary seminars, rich in content and distinct in themes, providing recommendations for advancing the Belt and Road Initiative. Non-governmental organizations can narrate the stories of China and Ukraine during tourism endeavors, influencing citizens of both nations through personal experiences, thus fostering cultural exchanges at a grassroots level. Moreover, social groups can organize themed humanities activities such as film festivals, art exhibitions, and book translations, aiming to illuminate the underlying essence of each other's civilizations.

**Conclusion to Chapter Four**

Although Eastern European philosophy was influenced by Western European philosophy, Eastern European philosophers still affirmed the positive factors of Marxist philosophy, providing strong theoretical support for Eastern European countries to actively participate in the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Western philosophy emphasizes binary opposition and conflicting struggles, but the theory of clash of civilizations cannot be an excuse for some countries to refuse to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative. We are in a new era where various civilizations influence each other, and each culture has its own limitations. The economy can be globalized, but the culture cannot be singled out. We must promote dialogue between different cultures to better solve the problems in the development of human society. The theory of benevolence and Taoism in Chinese philosophy provide a theoretical basis for the coexistence of civilizations. The theory of benevolence emphasizes obeying the rules, bringing benefits to others while developing oneself, and finding common ground in the process of cultural exchanges. Taoism emphasizes conforming to things and the law of natural development, the problem cannot be solved by force, and power politics and hegemonism have no future.

Ukraine and China have formed different philosophies and cultures in the course of their historical development. An important factor affecting people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Ukraine is the difference in cultural traditions between the two sides. Under such situation, we should take some measures to promote the development of the Belt and Road Initiative in Ukraine.

The Belt and Road Initiative, an ambitious global infrastructure and economic development project initiated by China, raises several philosophical issues, particularly concerning its implementation in Europe. Here are some key considerations. The implementation of BRI projects in Europe sparks debates about sovereignty and influence. Critics raise concerns about potential undue influence exerted by China on European nations, potentially challenging their sovereignty in

decision-making and economic matters. BRI promotes cultural exchange and understanding between countries with diverse cultures and histories. Philosophically, this raises questions about the impact of such interactions on the preservation of cultural identities and values, and whether a balance can be achieved that fosters understanding without diluting unique cultural traits. The BRI's infrastructural projects often have environmental implications. Philosophical debates center on how to balance economic development with environmental sustainability, raising questions about responsible development and the ethical responsibilities of nations involved. BRI aims to enhance global trade and economic connectivity. Philosophical scrutiny centers on whether the initiative can ensure fair trade practices, prevent exploitation, and uplift underprivileged regions, promoting economic justice on a global scale. Concerns about human rights violations in some countries involved in the BRI prompt philosophical reflections on the ethical implications of engaging with nations with differing standards of human rights. The discussion extends to whether economic development should be prioritized over human rights. Philosophical debates delve into power dynamics and potential global hegemony. Some fear the BRI may consolidate China's influence, questioning the implications for a multipolar world and the balance of power. The financing mechanisms of BRI projects have raised ethical concerns about debt sustainability, transparency, and financial responsibility. Philosophical discussions delve into the ethics of burdening nations with potentially unsustainable debt and the responsibility of lenders and borrowers. Philosophically, the BRI also prompts reflection on the tension between long-term benefits and immediate gains. Evaluations are made on whether short-term economic benefits may compromise sustainable and equitable development in the long run. At its core, the BRI advocates for global cooperation and economic peace. Philosophical discussions focus on the potential of such initiatives in fostering peaceful relations between nations, reducing conflict, and promoting mutual prosperity.

The implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative in Europe presents a complex interplay of economic, cultural, environmental, and ethical considerations, highlighting the need for a robust philosophical discourse to navigate these intricate issues for a more equitable and sustainable future.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

1. This dissertation systematically analyses the philosophical foundations of the Belt and Road Initiative. There are four chapters in this thesis. The first chapter is about research background and literature review. The second chapter is about Marxism with Chinese characteristics as a theoretical basement of the Belt and Road Initiative. The second chapter reveals in a systematic way the philosophical basement of the Belt and Road Initiative (the BRI). It reveals the way of European Marxism reception in Chinese philosophy, how Chinese philosophy transformed and improved European Marxism, how contemporary Western philosophy interprets Chinese Marxism in the context of the BRI implementation. The third chapter is about understanding the identity and cultural diversity: comparative analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative and Western philosophical foundations. In the third chapter, the philosophical, social and axiological issues of the concept of “shared future” are described and analyzed in the way how it is understood in Chinese Marxism as well as Socialism with Chinese characteristics and Western philosophy and social thought. This analysis is conducted in the focus of the identity and cultural diversity issues. The third chapter results in finding the possible ways to harmonize Chinese and Western ways of understanding the problems of identity and cultural diversity in the context of the BRI implementation. In addition, the last chapter is about the philosophical issues of the Belt and Road Initiative implementations in Europe. It analyses the East-European philosophical foundations of the Belt and Road Initiative and compares with that of China and West-Europe. Moreover, it reveals the philosophical and cultural differences between China and Ukraine during the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative and it provides some suggestions on promoting people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Ukraine under the Belt and Road Initiative.

The key conclusions can be summarized as follows:

(1) After Marxism was introduced into China, after continuous development, Marxism with Chinese characteristics was formed. The Chinese Marxism mainly has the following characteristics. First, Chinese Marxism emerged from the great practice of building a socialist society in China, and has been continuously improved and developed in practice. Second, in the process of Sinicizing Marxism, the theme is liberation and development of productive forces and the purpose is to seek liberation and development. Finally, Sinicized Marxism not only preserves the essence of Marxism, but also integrates the essence of traditional Chinese cultural thought and philosophy.

(2) The Belt and Road takes Marxism as its philosophical foundation. Among these, Marx's theory of world history, Mao Zedong's principles of peaceful coexistence and finding common ground while respecting differences, the theoretical framework of socialism with Chinese characteristics, Deng Xiaoping's ideology of openness, philosophical concepts, humanistic considerations, and cultural values in Chinese history and culture, as well as Xi Jinping's innovative advancements in Marxism, collectively form the crucial philosophical foundation for the Belt and Road Initiative.

(3) Since the mid-20th century, some Western scholars have conducted continuous research on the Sinicization of Marxist philosophy, especially Mao Zedong's philosophical thought, and expressed two very different views on Chinese Marxist philosophy. One is the "heretic" theory of Chinese Marxist philosophy, that is, the theory that Chinese Marxist philosophy is a "heresy" or variant of Marxist philosophy. Another is the "heretic" theory of Chinese Marxist philosophy, that is, the theory that Chinese Marxist philosophy is a "heresy" or variant of Marxist philosophy. We still need to make great efforts to make Western countries better understand Chinese philosophy.

(4) Building a community with a shared future for humankind is a Chinese solution proposed by Xi Jinping to solve the world's problems. This initiative has

created cultural frictions and collisions with the long-standing Western “centrism” in the international community, resulting in a series of cultural dilemmas in the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind. The barriers to international cultural exchanges brought about by the theory of cultural superiority and the conflict of civilizations, as well as the dilemma of the low level of participation of various cultural subjects in the international community. To solve this cultural dilemma, the following strategies should be implemented: strengthen top-level design and form an orderly and efficient communication mechanism; rely on the “Belt and Road” to expand the scope of cultural identity radiation; face the focus of cultural differences and implement cultural strategies accurately; expand cultural communication channels and build multiple all-round communication platform, etc. These strategies have important theoretical value and practical significance for the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind, the settlement of world disputes, and the promotion of peace and development.

(5) Although Eastern European philosophy was influenced by Western European philosophy, Eastern European philosophers still affirmed the positive factors of Marxist philosophy, providing strong theoretical support for Eastern European countries to actively participate in the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative. While Eastern European philosophy undoubtedly felt the influence of Western European philosophical currents, it is noteworthy that Eastern European philosophers maintained an affirmative stance towards the positive aspects of Marxist philosophy. This affirmation has played a crucial role in providing substantial theoretical backing for Eastern European countries, encouraging their active engagement and participation in the construction and implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. The philosophical discourse from this region has not only acknowledged the value in Western philosophies but also recognized the importance of Marxist ideology in shaping socio-economic and political landscapes, aligning with the core principles of the Belt and Road Initiative.

(6) Western philosophy emphasizes binary opposition and conflicting struggles, but the theory of clash of civilizations cannot be an excuse for some countries to refuse to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative. We are in a new era where various civilizations influence each other, and each culture has its own limitations. The economy can be globalized, but the culture cannot be singled out. We must promote dialogue between different cultures to better solve the problems in the development of human society. The theory of benevolence and Taoism in Chinese philosophy provide a theoretical basis for the coexistence of civilizations. The theory of benevolence emphasizes obeying the rules, bringing benefits to others while developing oneself, and finding common ground in the process of cultural exchanges. Taoism emphasizes conforming to things and the law of natural development, the problem cannot be solved by force, and power politics and hegemonism have no future.

(7) Ukraine and China have formed different philosophies and cultures in the course of their historical development. An important factor-affecting people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Ukraine is the difference in cultural traditions between the two sides. Under such situation, we should take some measures to promote the development of the Belt and Road Initiative in Ukraine. Ukraine and China have indeed evolved distinct philosophies and cultures over their historical trajectories. The divergence in cultural traditions emerges as a significant factor influencing people-to-people and cultural exchanges between the two nations. In this context, implementing measures to foster the development of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Ukraine becomes imperative. Firstly, establishing cultural exchange programs that facilitate mutual understanding is crucial. Organizing events showcasing both Chinese and Ukrainian traditions, arts, and heritage can bridge the cultural gap and enhance appreciation for each other's roots. Secondly, educational initiatives should be promoted, encouraging academic exchanges and collaborations between universities and research institutions in both nations. Encouraging the study

of each other's languages, histories, and philosophies can facilitate a deeper understanding of cultural contexts. Thirdly, supporting joint research projects that explore common historical and philosophical themes can be beneficial. By identifying shared historical experiences and philosophical underpinnings, a stronger foundation for collaboration and cultural exchange can be established.

Moreover, fostering a climate of tolerance and openness is essential. Encouraging an environment where diverse cultural perspectives are respected and celebrated can aid in creating a sense of unity amidst cultural differences. Additionally, leveraging digital platforms and social media for cross-cultural dialogue is vital. Utilizing technology to promote cultural exchange can transcend geographical boundaries and facilitate meaningful interactions. Lastly, government and non-governmental bodies should collaborate to fund and support initiatives that enhance cultural understanding and cooperation. Investing in cultural exchange programs and activities will significantly contribute to the successful implementation of the BRI in Ukraine. In essence, acknowledging the cultural disparities and actively promoting understanding and collaboration through various channels will significantly aid in furthering the objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative in Ukraine.

3. In the information age, the world has not only formed a world network with nation-states as the main body in reality, but also formed a virtual world with each individual as the main body in the Internet. The world is increasingly condensed into an inseparable organic whole, and the development of each country and region is closely related to the development of other countries and regions in the world. Under the irreversible process of globalization, the economic exchanges between countries in the world have become increasingly close. The either-or competitive development model under the outdated zero-sum game development concept is no longer suitable for the current world pattern. Not only has it failed to promote the further prosperity and development of the world, but it has become a threat to world peace and stability

and hindered the common prosperity of people all over the world. The establishment of an international order dominated by cooperation and the achievement of common interests is imminent. The BRI and the concept of a community with a shared future for humankind is an important guideline for the international situation in the new era and China's international positioning on the basis of the inheritance and development of Marx's "true community" thought. It is the unity of instrumental rationality and value rationality, which is based on the overall interests of humankind and aims at common prosperity and permanent peace of all countries in the world. People's nature, inclusiveness, and practicality are the core of the concept of the Belt and Road Initiative. From the perspective of historical materialism, world history is the historical condition for the formation of the Belt and Road Initiative, economic globalization is the material prerequisite for the Belt and Road Initiative, and international exchanges are the realistic basis for the development of the concept of the Belt and Road Initiative. Development is the value pursuit contained in the Belt and Road Initiative. We must uphold the concept of a community with a shared future for humankind, actively build a community with a shared future for neighboring countries, a community with a shared future for developing countries, a new type of international relations centered on win-win cooperation, and a global governance structure featuring extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. In this way, the orderly and free flow of economic factors around the world, the efficient allocation of world resources, and the deep integration of the world market will be promoted, and an open, inclusive, balanced, and universally beneficial world economic cooperation system will be created. We should use economic globalization to promote the development of the world, promote the deepening of the world as a whole, and realize the construction of a community with a shared future for humankind. The road is long and difficult, but the future is bright.

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