

11. Китайский опыт цифровой трансформации экономики [Электронный ресурс] / Официальный сайт Российского совета по международным делам. – 23.12.2019. – Режим доступа: <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/columns/asian-kaleidoscope/kitayskiy-opyt-tsifrovoy-transformatsii-ekonomiki/?ysclid=lpf6sbb6sr283037173>. – Дата доступа: 20.10.2023.

12. Беларусь присоединилась к китайской инициативе в области цифровой экономики и зеленого развития [Электронный ресурс] / Официальный сайт Belta. – 18.10.2023. – Режим доступа: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-prisoedinilas-k-kitajskoj-initsiative-v-oblasti-tsifrovoy-ekonomiki-i-zelenogo-razvitiya-594631-2023/?ysclid=lpf76oeyle852258920>. – Дата доступа: 20.10.2023.

13. Экономика и социум [Электронный ресурс] // Институт управления и социально-экономического развития : электронное науч.-практ.периодич.издание. – 2019. – Режим доступа: https://rep.polessu.by/bitstream/123456789/17908/1/Volod%27ko_L.P._Analiz_razvitiia_tsifrovoi%20ekonomiki%20v%20Respublike%20Belarus%27.pdf?ysclid=lpf6d30rxm926524983. – Дата доступа: 10.10.2023.

Чжао Шангуи,
О. П. Недоспасова

Томский государственный университет
(г. Томск, Российская Федерация)

Chinese and Belarusian experience of the digitalization of the economy in the context of the Digital Silk Road

Abstract. *This paper presents an in-depth analysis of the digitalization processes in China and Belarus, set against the backdrop of the Digital Silk Road initiative. It highlights the distinct yet interrelated strategies, policies, and advancements both countries have made in digitalizing their economies. The study examines the role of government and private sectors, identifies challenges and opportunities, and underscores the impact of these digital transformation efforts on their respective economic landscapes. Through this comparative analysis, the paper aims to shed light on the broader implications of digitalization in an international context, particularly within the ambit of the Digital Silk Road.*

Keywords: *digital economy; Digital Silk Road; China; Belarus; digitalization strategies.*

Опыт цифровизации экономики Китая и Беларуси в контексте инициативы Цифрового Шелкового Пути

Аннотация. В статье описан анализ процессов последствий цифровизации в Китае и Беларуси в международном контексте на фоне инициативы «Цифровой Шелковый путь». Рассмотрены взаимосвязанные стратегии, политики и достижения обеих стран в области цифровизации своих экономик. Рассмотрена роль государства и частного сектора, выявлены вызовы и возможности влияния усилий по цифровой трансформации на их экономические сферы.

Ключевые слова: цифровая экономика; Цифровой Шелковый путь; Китай; Беларусь; стратегии цифровизации.

The advent of the Digital Silk Road, a pivotal initiative spearheaded by the Chinese government, marks a new era in digital cooperation among countries, including Belarus. This paper explores the unique and converging paths taken by China and Belarus in their journey towards digitalization. The focus lies in understanding how these two nations, driven by distinct historical and socio-economic contexts, have navigated the waters of the digital economy. Through this exploration, the paper provides insights into their strategies, the challenges faced, and the potential future trajectory of their digital economic landscapes. The comparative study underscores the broader impacts of digitalization within the realm of the Digital Silk Road, highlighting how it serves as a bridge between the ambitious digital aspirations of China and the evolving digital landscape of Belarus.

Definition. The digital economy refers to an economic system that relies on digital technologies and encompasses a wide range of economic activities conducted through digital networks and platforms. It includes not only online markets but also traditional industries that have been transformed by digital technology. In the modern world, the digital economy has become a fundamental aspect of global economic growth, influencing how trade is conducted, services are provided, and innovations are fostered. The rise of big data, artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT) has further emphasized its importance, as highlighted in “Defining, Conceptualising and Measuring the Digital Economy” by Rumana Bukht and Richard Heeks [1, p. 9].

China’s Digital Initiatives. Early Stages: China’s journey towards digitalization began in the late 20th century, with gradual reforms and openness to global markets [8, p. 1]. The government’s emphasis on technology as a driver of economic growth led to significant investments in digital infrastructure.

Recent Developments. More recently, China's focus has shifted towards advanced technologies like 5G, AI, and cloud computing, as outlined in "China's Digital Economy Development: Experience and Prospects" by Li Tao. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), particularly the Digital Silk Road, has become a cornerstone of China's international digital strategy, aiming to build digital infrastructure and promote technological collaboration across countries.

Publications. Reports such as "International cooperation in the digital economy helps jointly build high-quality development of the "Belt and Road" by Zhang Hui provide insights into the scope and impact of these initiatives.

Belarus's Digital Path. Beginning of Digitalization: Belarus started its digital transformation later than China. Initial efforts were focused on building basic digital infrastructure and promoting IT education.

Current Strategies: In recent years, Belarus has taken significant steps to advance its digital economy, focusing on IT sector development, e-governance, and digital services. The country's involvement in the Digital Silk Road signifies its commitment to leveraging digitalization for economic growth.

Notable Progress. The Hi-Tech Park in Belarus, as an example, has become a hub for IT companies and startups, contributing to the country's digital economy significantly [10, p. 1].

China's Digitalization Policies-top-level design. The Chinese government attaches great importance to the development and utilisation of information resources for economic and social development, continuously optimises the policy system, and builds digital infrastructure ahead of time to facilitate the rapid development of the digital economy. As the main engine of digital economy development, China promotes the in-depth integration of digital technology with the real economy, empowers the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries, and expands the new space for the development of the digital economy, so as to catch up in terms of scale. Innovation is the first driving force for the development of the digital economy, and the promotion of technological innovation and business model innovation are the two core supports for the development of the digital economy, and China collaboratively promotes innovation in both. China adheres to the combination of an active government and an effective market, optimises the business environment, supports platform enterprises to play an active role, and creates a market environment that encourages innovation, is fair and just, and is tolerant and prudent for the development of the digital economy, which has become a powerful guarantee for the rapid development of the digital economy. China focuses on the use

of two domestic and international markets and two types of resources to seek cooperation and development, steadily expanding international cooperation in the digital economy, and making the digital economy a new field and a new track for international cooperation.

Major initiatives such as “Made in China 2025”, the “Internet Plus” strategy and the Digital Silk Road aim to promote the rapid development of China’s digital economy and enhance global competitiveness. These initiatives not only emphasise the importance of digital transformation, but also highlight the integration of advanced technologies with traditional manufacturing to achieve high-quality economic development [2, p. 13]. Under the “Made in China 2025” initiative, China is committed to upgrading its manufacturing base and promoting digitisation, innovation and the deep integration of advanced technologies with traditional manufacturing. By upgrading the level of intelligence, networking and digitalisation of the manufacturing process, China’s manufacturing is transforming into high-end, intelligent and green. At the same time, the initiative also emphasises the importance of enterprise innovation capability and core technology research and development to promote China’s manufacturing industry to achieve competitiveness on a global scale.

The “Internet Plus” strategy, on the other hand, focuses on the integration of the Internet with traditional industries to promote digital transformation and high-quality development of the economy through innovation and transformation and upgrading. This strategy aims to combine Internet technology with traditional businesses in various industries to create new business models and economic growth points. Through digital means, it will improve the productivity and service level of traditional industries, while expanding new market space and business models.

The Digital Silk Road is part of the Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to expand China’s global digital influence. By building digital infrastructure and promoting technological cooperation in countries along the route, the Digital Silk Road aims to enhance connectivity and cooperation among the countries along the route and promote the common development of the digital economy. This not only helps to enhance China’s international influence, but also brings new opportunities for the development of the digital economy to countries along the route [9, p. 5].

In terms of regulatory framework, China has formulated a strong digital policy focusing on data protection and cybersecurity to ensure the safe and sustainable development of the digital economy. At the same time, China has also formulated digital trade regulations to create a safe and efficient environment for digital trade. The formulation and implementation of these regulations and policies have provided a strong guarantee for the healthy development of the digital economy.

The active participation of China's private sector has injected new vigor into the development of the digital economy. Major technology companies such as Alibaba, Tencent and Huawei play a crucial role in the digital economy [3, p. 6]. These companies are not only technology innovators, but also play an important role in shaping China's digital economy through their platforms and services. Their global expansion demonstrates China's digital prowess and contributes to the goals of the Digital Silk Road. The startup ecosystem also plays an important role in the development of China's digital economy. Especially in areas such as artificial intelligence and fintech, they are supported by significant venture capital and government incentives. These startups are at the forefront of digital technology innovation, contributing to China's goal of becoming a global leader in the digital economy. In the fintech sector, China is a global leader in mobile payments and is rapidly growing in other fintech areas. The popularity and application of mobile payment has driven the upgrading and expansion of financial services, and has had a significant impact on the global financial landscape. Meanwhile, China has established a dominant position in e-commerce. With platforms such as Alibaba and Jingdong, China's market share in the global e-commerce sector has been expanding, becoming one of the global e-commerce centres. In artificial intelligence, China's heavy investment in AI research and development aims to put the country at the forefront of global AI innovation. By increasing its investment in AI technology R&D, China is endeavouring to build an internationally competitive AI industry cluster. This will help drive China's high-quality economic development and social progress [4, p. 3].

Belarus's Digitalization Initiatives. Over the last decade, the Belarusian government has prioritized the digital transformation of its society and economy [5, p. 3]. This includes initiatives like the "Digital Belarus" national program, aimed at accelerating digital transformation across various sectors. The country's strategy focuses on creating optimal conditions for ICT companies and removing barriers to the integration of digital technologies in economic and social spheres. A key foundation of this digital transformation has been the development of necessary ICT infrastructure accessible to the population and organizations.

Belarus provides a favorable environment for digital growth. At the end of 2017, the president signed Order No. 8, "On the Development of the Digital Economy". This order changed the working model of HTP and made the preferential system and tax policy of science and technology parks more conducive to digitalization. economic development. In addition, the country has implemented some policies aimed at attracting information technology companies and promoting innovation. On April 7, 2022, Presidential Decree No. 136, "On Government Agencies on Issues of Digital Development and

Informatization” [6, p. 12], signed by the President, gave the Belarusian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology new powers in national digital development. The decree expands the financial support mechanism for the digital development process, simplifies the signing and implementation process of agreements in the field of digital development, and provides pragmatic support for the digital transformation of the state as well as public administration and all economic sectors. In response to digital issues and their accelerated implementation, a digital development center and an advanced research center in the field of digital development will be established. A number of smart city rating and evaluation projects are being implemented, and smart city construction plans are being formulated. The unified architecture of the national digital platform and the action plan to form an “everything is a service” digital country was launched to form a promising top-level digital ecosystem.

Notably, advancements in third- and fourth-generation networks have significantly increased internet accessibility in Belarus. By 2020, wireless broadband services were available to 95.1 subscribers per 100 inhabitants, and the proportion of households with internet access reached 82 % [5, p. 4]. The growth of the ICT sector in Belarus has been remarkable. The production volume of ICT sector organizations in 2020 surpassed the 2009 level by 135 times, and the sector’s share of the total value-added in the economy rose from 2.5 to 8.4 %. The export of ICT services increased by 105 times from 2009 to 2021, accounting for 31.4 % of the total export of services by 2021. The influx of residents into the High Technology Park (HTP) significantly influenced sales volume. Following the adoption of Decree No. 8, the export volume for the first time exceeded 1 billion USD in 2021, amounting to 3.25 billion USD and contributing over 32 % to Belarus’s total service exports [7, p. 1].

Currently, Belarus is keeping pace with global trends and the rapid growth of global ICT sector capacity. The country is developing almost all key directions of ICT services, including cloud services, virtualization, and custom development. Despite the challenges of further increasing ICT service exports, Belarus has significant potential to make the ICT sector and, specifically, the computer services segment, key drivers of its national economy.

The paper concludes that major initiatives like “Made in China 2025”, the “Internet Plus” strategy, and the Digital Silk Road will continue to drive the rapid development of China’s digital economy. By enhancing regulatory frameworks, leveraging the private sector’s role, supporting startups, and focusing on technological innovation, China aims to maintain its global competitiveness and influence in the digital space. Belarus, keeping pace with global trends, focuses on developing ICT services, including cloud

services and virtualization, to drive its national economy. The collaborative efforts in digitalization within the framework of the Digital Silk Road present both China and Belarus with significant opportunities for economic growth and technological advancement.

References

1. Rumana, Bukht. Defining, conceptualising and measuring the digital economy / Bukht Rumana, Richard Heeks // *Development Informatics working paper*. – 2017. – № 68.

2. Chen, Yongmin. Improving market performance in the digital economy / Yongmin Chen // *China Economic Review*. – 2020. – № 62.

3. The development fit index of digital currency electronic payment between China and the one belt one road countries Fangmin Li [et al.] // *Research in International Business and Finance*. – 2023. – № 64. – P. 101838.

4. Digital economy: 1. National statistical indicators of the development of digital economy in the Republic of Belarus. 2. Infographics “Clearly about the digital economy” [Electronical resource] / National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Official statistics / Multidomain statistics / Information and communication technologies. – 2022. – Mode of access: <https://www.belstat.gov.by/en/ofitsialnaya-statistika/macroecconomy-and-environment/information-and-communication-technologies-/digital-economy/>. – Date of access: 25.10.2023.

5. Nguyen, Oliver. Digital Economy and Its Components: A Brief Overview and Recommendations / Oliver Nguyen. – 2023. – P. 17–22.

6. Rong, Ke. Research agenda for the digital economy: an IBCDE framework / Ke Rong // *Journal of Digital Economy*. – 2022.

7. Research on the influence mechanism of the digital economy on regional sustainable development / Qihang Yang [et al.] // *Procedia Computer Science* 202. – 2022. – P. 178–183.

8. Longmei, Zhang. China’s digital economy: Opportunities and risks / Longmei Zhang, Sally Chen. – International Monetary Fund, 2019.

9. Analysis of the Spatial-temporal Evolution of the Digital Economy and Its Impact on the Employment Structure in China from 2001 to 2020 / Ting Zhu [et al.] // *Sustainability*. – 15.12.2023. – P. 9619.

10. Головенчик, г. Г. Цифровая экономика в Республике Беларусь: современные тенденции, вызовы и перспективы / г. Г. Головенчик // *Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Сер. Экономика*. – 30.03.2022. – P. 414–428.