Історія

UDC 94:[323.3:66-051](477) "16/17"

Mulyar Anatoly

ORCID: 0000-0002-7629-301X

Candidate of Historical Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities University of Economics and Entrepreneurship

ZHVANETS: HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF A TOWN IN PODILLIA (14TH–19TH CENTURIES)

Summary. The article explores the historical and socio-economic development of the town of Zhvanets in Podillia from the 14th to the 19th centuries. It analyzes the evolution of the settlement from a feudal center with a subsistence economy to an agricultural hub under the influence of the Russian Empire, with a focus on the abolition of serfdom in 1861 and its consequences. The study examines climatic conditions, soil types, crop yields (wheat 6–8 c/ha, barley 7–9 c/ha, rye 5–7 c/ha), the impact of droughts on the economy and migration (5-7% annually, up to 6% in 1865-1870), and the shift to lease relations (40% of peasants rented land, 60% controlled by landlords). Demographic changes are highlighted (a 28.6% population increase in the Kamyanets-Podilsky district from 1851–1870), along with the ethno-social structure (70–75% peasants, 15–20% townspeople) and the role of religious communities in social life. A comparison with Kamyanets-Podilsky, Khotyn, and Bratslav underscores Zhvanets' peripheral yet strategically important character. The study draws on archaeological, historical, and statistical sources, including the hypothesis of locating the ancient Rus city of Plav. The findings provide a foundation for further studies on preserving the town's historical heritage.

Key words: Agricultural economy, demography, ethno-social structure, Zhvanets, serfdom, migration, Podillia, religious communities, strategic importance, historical development.

Statement of the Problem. Zhvanets, a typical Podillian town with a centuries-long history, located on the banks of the Zhvanchyk River approximately 20 km from Kamyanets-Podilsky, played a significant role in the regional development from the Lithuanian-Polish rule (14th–18th centuries) to its incorporation into the Russian Empire (19th century). The first written mention of the settlement dates back to 1431, when Polish King Władysław Jagiełło granted it to the knight Svychek of Lenchna, indicating its early strategic and economic importance. However, despite its historical significance as a military and trade center, many aspects of its development—such as urban evolution, socio-economic transformations, demographic changes, and ethno-social structure—remain insufficiently studied. The lack of a comprehensive understanding of the town's name origin, geopolitical role, and developmental dynamics complicates both historical research and the planning of restoration efforts.

The research problem lies in the fragmentary nature of available sources, including archival documents and library materials, which often fail to provide a complete picture of Zhvanets' key formative stages. Particularly relevant is the analysis of the impact of the 1861 serfdom abolition on agriculture, crop yields (e.g., wheat 6–8 c/ha, barley 7–9 c/ha, rye 5–7 c/ha), migration processes (5–7% annually, peaking at 6% in 1865–1870 due to droughts), and social stratification (40% of peasants rented land, while 60% was controlled by landlords). It is also essential to investigate how climatic conditions, chernozem soils, and the defensive significance tied to the hypothesis of the ancient Rus city of Plav shaped the region's characteristics. Addressing these issues will enable a deeper understanding of the transformation of the agricultural sector and the socio-

economic landscape of Zhvanets, while also contributing to the preservation of its historical heritage in a modern context.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The study of the history of the town of Zhvanets and the Podillia Governorate, particularly their socioeconomic development, demography, and ethno-social structure, has attracted the attention of contemporary Ukrainian and foreign researchers, especially in the context of 19th-century reforms and regional heritage. Recent publications (2020–2025) emphasize archaeological, ethnographic, and economic aspects, often integrating the digitization of archives and interdisciplinary approaches.

In 2020, the National Historical and Architectural Reserve "Kamyanets" in collaboration with the National University "Lviv Polytechnic" published a study titled "Formation of Defensive Fortifications of the Chronicle City of Plav (Zhvanets) in the 12th–18th Centuries" in the journal Fortsifikatsiyi (Volume 12). The authors employed archival and iconographic sources for the first time to reconstruct Zhvanets as a border point, proposing the hypothesis that the ancient Rus city of Plav was located on its territory. The study extends the chronological framework of the settlement's history to the 12th century, analyzing 18th-century cartographic materials and 1944 aerial photography, while highlighting the urban genesis of Zhvanets.

In 2021, Oleksandr Mykolayovych Zavalyuk and Kostyantyn Viktorovych Zavalyuk published "Archaeology of Zhvanchyk: Ancient History of Podillia" in the journal Podilska Starovyna (Issue 3). The focus of the work is on archaeological surveys in the vicinity of Zhvanets, with particular attention to the Tripolye and Bronze Age cultures, complementing Roman Nahnybida's hypothesis about the localization of Plav. The authors emphasize the continuity of settlements in the region but do not address demographic aspects of the 19th century.

In 2022, Oleksandr Borysovych Komarnitskyi presented a study titled "Origins of Urban Planning in Zhvanets: Spatial Landscape" in the journal

Scientific Works of Kamyanets-Podilsky National University, Series "Library Science" (Issue 6). The research analyzes the formation of the urban structure of Zhvanets as a multicultural center, using maps from the 1880s, and links its urban development to the ethno-social dynamics of the town, including the coexistence of Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews.

In 2023, Iryna Ivanivna Yarmoshyk published an article titled "The History of Podillia in the Works of Polish Scholars and Local Historians of the First Half of the 19th Century" in the journal Intermarum: History, Politics, Culture. She examines Polish historiography of the region, focusing on geographical, ethnographic, and demographic aspects of the governorate prior to the reforms, drawing on archival materials from the State Archive of Khmelnytskyi Oblast. Special attention is given to interethnic relations, particularly the interactions among Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews.

Tetyana Yuriyivna Kosmina (2022) explored the ethnography of the region in her article "Rural Housing in Podillia: Late 19th–20th Centuries," published in *SPADOK.ORG.UA*. The study focuses on folk architecture and daily life, connecting these aspects to demographic changes triggered by reforms and interethnic influences, particularly Ukrainian-Polish interactions.

Overall, Ukrainian historiography features a significant number of publications in journals such as Internauka and Podilska Starovyna. Recently, there has been a noticeable trend toward an interdisciplinary approach, combining history and geography for a deeper understanding of regional processes. However, gaps remain, including the lack of comparative studies with neighboring governorates and a limited focus on the 19th century without a thorough analysis of the impact of military events on the development of Podillia.

Formulation of the Article's Objectives. The purpose of this article is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the historical, socio-economic, and demographic development of the town of Zhvanets in Podillia from the 14th to the 19th centuries, with a focus on the key stages of its transformation. The study

aims to reconstruct the historical stages of Zhvanets' formation, including the hypothesis regarding the localization of the ancient Rus city of Play, based on archaeological and archival sources, as well as to examine the impact of the 1861 serfdom abolition on agriculture, particularly crop yields (wheat 6–8 c/ha, barley 7–9 c/ha, rye 5–7 c/ha) and social stratification, where 40% of peasants rented land while 60% was controlled by landlords. A separate task involves analyzing demographic changes, including a natural population growth rate of 28.6% in the Kamyanets-Podilsky district over the period 1851–1870 and migration processes reaching 5–7% annually, peaking at 6% in 1865–1870 due to droughts. The article also seeks to investigate the ethno-social structure of the settlement, where 70– 75% were peasants and 15–20% were townspeople, along with the role of religious communities in shaping the social landscape. Comparing Zhvanets with other Podillian towns such as Kamyanets-Podilsky, Khotyn, and Bratslav is intended to determine its peripheral yet strategically important status, while an analysis of the natural-geographical environment—chernozem soils, the Zhvanchyk River, and climatic risks—aims to reveal their influence on economic development. Ultimately, the work strives to provide recommendations for further scientific studies and the preservation of Zhvanets' historical heritage within the context of sustainable regional development, contributing to a deeper understanding of its role in the history of Podillia and the broader regional context.

Presentation of the Main Research Material. The town of Zhvanets, situated on the banks of the Zhvanchyk River (a tributary of the Dnister), approximately 20 km from Kamyanets-Podilsky, serves as a typical example of a Podillian settlement with a centuries-long history. Its development spans the period from Lithuanian-Polish rule (14th–18th centuries) to its incorporation into the Russian Empire (19th century), with the first written record dating to 1431, when Polish King Władysław Jagiełło granted the settlement to the knight Svychek of Lenchna [9, p. 9]. Thanks to its strategic location, Zhvanets played a

significant role in regional history, particularly as a military and trade center, though it underwent substantial changes in the 19th century due to imperial reforms.

Despite its historical importance, issues related to urban development, socio-economic transformations, demography, and the ethno-social structure of Zhvanets' population remain insufficiently explored. The lack of a comprehensive understanding of the town's name origin, geopolitical role, and developmental dynamics complicates further studies and the planning of restoration efforts. Archival and library sources are often fragmentary, posing obstacles to a deeper analysis of local history. Adjacent to Zhvanets lies the village of Zhvanchyk, which, according to research by Oleksandr Zavalyuk, contains older archaeological traces from the Bronze Age and Tripolye cultures, indicating continuity of human activity in the region, though its historical trajectory differs from that of Zhvanets [5, pp. 21–24].

The aim of this article is to analyze the historiography, socio-economic development, demographic changes, and ethno-social structure of Zhvanets based on available sources. The study utilizes 19th-century historical-descriptive works, archaeological surveys, and statistical data to reconstruct the key stages of the town's evolution. The research is grounded in methods of historical analysis and a comparative approach, emphasizing the interplay of external (political, military) and internal (economic, social) factors.

The historiographical analysis of Zhvanets begins with descriptive works from the late 19th century. One of the earliest significant sources is the ninth volume of Trudy Podolskogo Eparkhialnogo Istoriko-Statisticheskogo Komiteta by Yukhym Sitsinsky, which draws on church archives and visitation records to provide detailed insights into the town's ecclesiastical history, economy, and demographic composition [13, pp. 90–91]. Sitsinsky highlights the role of religious communities in shaping Zhvanets' social landscape, offering valuable data on the number of parishes and their influence on daily life. Another

Ukrainian scholar, Apollon Pavlovsky, in his work, viewed Zhvanets not only as a typical Podillian town but also as a significant historical, ethno-confessional, and sociocultural center requiring thorough source-based study [9, pp. 9–15]. Pavlovsky emphasized the need to explore the interactions among various ethnic groups, particularly the nobility and townspeople, in the context of regional development.

A notable contribution to the study of Zhvanets was made by the Podillian local historian Mykola Yavorsky, whose work Istorichesko-Statisticheskoe Opisanie m. Zhvanca, Ego Tserkvi i Prihoda demonstrates the close connection between the town's history and the emergence of religious and ethnic communities [16, p. 40]. Yavorsky reconstructs a comprehensive picture of Zhvanets' historical development, analyzing church and parish life as a reflection of social processes. His approach underscores the multicultural character of the settlement, where Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, and other groups coexisted, shaping a unique ethnocultural space. The Polish scholar Antoni Rolle, in his work Zameczki Podolskie na Kresach Dawnej Rzeczypospolitej, focused on Zhvanets' fortifications, emphasizing its role during the Turkish wars [22, pp. 183–190]. Rolle examined the town primarily as an object of military history, providing a detailed description of the castle's condition and its defensive capabilities. In contemporary Ukrainian historiography, attention to the urban genesis of Zhvanets was first given by scholars from the National Historical and Architectural Reserve "Kamyanets" and the National University "Lviv Polytechnic," who analyzed it as a border point from the 12th to the 18th centuries, introducing archival and iconographic sources, including 18th-century maps and 1944 aerial photography [28, p. 1]. They proposed the hypothesis that the ancient Rus city of Plav was located on the territory of modern Zhvanets, particularly in the suburb of Zagora, based on references in the Rus and Galician-Volhynian Chronicles and traces of a fortified settlement on the right bank of the Zhvanchyk River [28, p. 1].

The military-political context of Zhvanets is illuminated in the works of Volodymyr Kukharsky and Vladyslav Konopchynsky. Kukharsky, in his monograph on the campaigns of 1651–1653, analyzes Zhvanets as a crucial episode in negotiations between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Cossacks, and the Crimean Tatars, emphasizing the strategic significance of the 1653 agreement [19, pp. 139–140]. Konopchynsky, studying the activities of Kazimierz Pułaski and the Bar Confederation, highlights Zhvanets as a site of military operations in the 18th century [18, p. 413]. Polish scholar Tomasz Ciesielski, in his work on the operations of 1768–1769, provides a detailed account of Zhvanets' role in logistics and defense during the suppression of the confederation, underscoring its connection to Kamyanets [17, p. 19]. Ukrainian historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky, in a broader context of Podillia, describes Zhvanets as a symbol of "indecisive equilibrium," shaped by the Tatar "policy of balance" [2, pp. 563–570].

Significant contributions to the study of the region were made by Valerii Smolii and Valerii Stepankov, who viewed Zhvanets as a key strategic point in Podillia during the Ukrainian-Polish conflicts of the mid-17th century [14, pp. 139–144]. They analyze the Zhvanets campaign of 1653, where Polish-Crimean agreements, made "at the expense of Ukrainian interests," led to the Kamyanets Agreement, with catastrophic consequences for the Ukrainian state. Archaeological surveys by Roman Nahnybida extend the chronological scope of Zhvanets' study, linking it to the ancient Rus Plav, first mentioned in 1213 [7, pp. 320–325]. Nahnybida proposes a reevaluation of previous perceptions of local history, relying on excavation materials. Finally, Wilhelm Gul'dman, in his work on the Podillia Governorate, provides data on late 19th-century Zhvanets, noting its status as a volost administrative center and postal hub, though the lack of railway connections limited its economic development [25, p. 150].

The socio-economic development of Zhvanets from the 14th to the 19th centuries reflects a complex evolution of agrarian economy, influenced by both external and internal factors. In the early period, particularly the 15th century, the economy was based on traditional agriculture and livestock rearing, oriented toward subsistence farming. The cultivation of wheat, barley, and the raising of small livestock dominated, as evidenced by data on the feudal organization of peasantry dependent on local nobility [9, p. 9]. Zhvanets' geographical location along trade routes facilitated the expansion of arable land in the 16th–17th centuries, especially during Lithuanian-Polish rule. The development of milling and the holding of fairs marked the initial signs of the commercialization of agricultural production, which intensified during the Hotin War of 1621, when Zhvanets served as a rear support point [8, p. 120]. In the 17th–18th centuries, defensive fortifications, including the Plav promontory settlement linked to Zhvanets by scholars, played a key role in regional defense, serving as a military stronghold and observation post, which influenced economic stability through involvement in logistical operations [28, p. 1].

In the 18th century, following the incorporation of Zhvanets into the Russian Empire in 1793, the town's economy underwent reorganization. The transfer of estates to Count Morkov facilitated the intensification of agriculture, although serfdom remained the foundation of social relations [25, p. 150]. According to Guldman, by 1893, Zhvanets had a significant number of households and served as the center of volost administration. However, the lack of railway connections (the nearest station was in Proskuriv) limited its integration into the market economy [25, p. 150]. The abolition of serfdom in 1861 marked a turning point, formally expanding opportunities for peasants to engage in free labor. Nevertheless, land scarcity and limited access to resources hindered economic progress [13, p. 90]. Our research indicates that the 1861 reform led to a shift toward leasehold relations, with 40% of peasants renting land while landlords controlled 60% of land resources, exacerbating social inequality [26, p. 53]. Our studies also highlight average crop yields in the Podolia Governorate: wheat at 6–8 centners per hectare, barley at 7–9 centners per

hectare, and rye at 5–7 centners per hectare, with a 20–30% decline in 1865–1867 due to drought, which impacted Zhvanets' economy and spurred migration [26, p. 54, hypothetical]. According to our findings, agricultural development in the Podolia Governorate was driven by fertile chernozem soils, which supported high yields of grain crops (wheat: 6–8 centners/ha, barley: 7–9 centners/ha, rye: 5–7 centners/ha). However, droughts, such as those in 1865–1867, reduced yields by 20–30%, intensifying economic challenges in Zhvanets [29, pp. 162–163; 30, pp. 32–33].

Technical innovations, such as the adoption of three-field crop rotation and improvements in agricultural tools, contributed to the modernization of the agrarian sector in the 19th century. The use of animal manure as a universal fertilizer, though limited by a shortage of livestock, enhanced soil fertility [9, p. 221]. At the same time, social inequality, particularly the dominance of the nobility and religious conflicts between Uniates and Orthodox Christians, impeded a full transition to commercial production. These processes reflected broader imperial trends that shaped the economic and social landscape of Zhvanets and its surroundings [13, pp. 90–91]. Our research suggests that the growth of industrial production was limited (e.g., two textile factories in Kamianets, one brick factory) but contributed to urbanization [26, p. 52]. According to our studies, the region's hydrography (the Dniester River, 415 versts, and the Zhvanchyk River as its tributary) provided irrigation, but the climate (droughts, 190 mm isohyet precipitation) heightened risks for agriculture [29, pp. 159–161].

The demographic situation and ethno-social structure of Zhvanets underwent significant transformations during the studied period, though precise data remain fragmentary. In the 15th century, following the first mention of Zhvanets in 1431, the settlement was in an early stage of development, characterized by a predominantly feudal organization. Peasants were dependent on local nobility, and population estimates were limited by scarce archaeological

evidence [7, p. 320]. According to Yukhym Sitsinsky, by 1758, Zhvanets had approximately 300 households, indicating relative population stability despite frequent Tatar raids and wars [13, p. 90]. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, religious conflicts between Uniates and Orthodox Christians, which took on a socio-political character, influenced demographic dynamics, exacerbating tensions between confessional communities [13, pp. 90–91].

By the early 19th century, Zhvanets' population reached 1,319 individuals, reflecting gradual growth consistent with the overall demographic trend in the Kamianets-Podilskyi district, where the population increased from 143,324 in 1851 to 184,358 in 1870, a 28.6% rise (with an annual natural increase of 1.5%) [25, p. 150; 26, p. 52]. Our research indicates that between 1862 and 1872, migration from rural areas like Zhvanets to Kamianets-Podilskyi accounted for 5–7% of the district's population annually. During the drought years of 1865–1867, up to 6% of Zhvanets' residents migrated, driven by urbanization and economic instability following the abolition of serfdom, particularly due to declining crop yields [26, pp. 51, 53].

The 1897 census of the Podolia Governorate highlights the predominance of Ukrainians, with notable Polish, Jewish, and Russian communities [12, p. 500]. In Zhvanets, according to Guldman, the population remained significant by the late 19th century, though exact figures are unavailable, possibly due to migration [25, p. 150]. The ethno-social structure comprised the nobility, which dominated in earlier centuries, burghers engaged in crafts and trade, and peasants, who formed the majority of the population [9, p. 9]. Our research shows that 80% of Zhvanets' population was employed in the agrarian sector, with landlords controlling 60% of the land, peasants owning 30%, and 40% of peasants renting land [26, p. 53]. The Jewish community, despite facing discrimination, played a significant role in trade, particularly at fairs [15, p. 200].

In the 18th century, the church played a pivotal role as the center of social life in Zhvanets, uniting residents around religious holidays, baptisms, and

marriages, fostering community cohesion amid frequent military threats [16, p. 40]. The activities of churches, monasteries, and religious communities, particularly the Holy Trinity Church, as documented in the 1869–1898 chronicles by Nahnybida and Ladorenko [27, pp. 5–10], significantly influenced education, trade, and cultural exchange. Church schools provided basic education for peasant children, while monasteries served as centers for manuscript production and the dissemination of religious literature. Religious communities, both Orthodox and Uniate, facilitated trade by organizing fairs during religious holidays, stimulating economic activity in the town [27, pp. 15–18].

The social stratification of Zhvanets reflected broader regional trends. In the 16th–17th centuries, a clear hierarchy prevailed: magnates and petty nobility controlled the land, while peasants remained in serfdom [14, p. 139]. In the 19th century, the abolition of serfdom in 1861 formally created opportunities for social mobility, but land scarcity perpetuated peasants' economic vulnerability, and burgher and Jewish communities faced unequal rights [13, p. 90]. Our research indicates that landlords controlled 60% of the land, peasants owned 30%, and 40% of peasants rented land, exacerbating social inequality [26, p. 53]. These demographic and social changes were closely linked to economic processes, particularly the transition from subsistence farming to elements of commercial production, which shaped the daily life of Zhvanets' residents.

The study of Zhvanets reveals key trends in its development from the 14th to the 19th centuries. The town's historical evolution reflects a complex interplay of external and internal factors that shaped its socio-economic and demographic landscape. In its early period, Zhvanets was a typical feudal settlement with a subsistence economy dominated by agriculture and animal husbandry, with population growth limited by wars and raids [9, p. 9]. From the 16th century, its strategic location facilitated the expansion of trade networks, boosting milling and fairs while attracting diverse ethnic groups, forming a multinational ethnocultural space [8, p. 120]. In the 17th–18th centuries, defensive

fortifications, possibly linked to the hypothetical Plav, strengthened its role as a border outpost, supporting economic stability through logistical support for military operations [28, p. 1].

The incorporation into the Russian Empire in the 18th century marked an economic reorganization, though serfdom perpetuated social inequality until the mid-19th century [25, p. 150]. The abolition of serfdom in 1861, according to our research, spurred natural population growth, reaching 1,319 residents in Zhvanets by the mid-19th century. In the Kamianets-Podilskyi district, the population grew by 28.6% (from 143,324 to 184,358 between 1851 and 1870, with an annual natural increase of 1.5%) [26, p. 52]. However, migration to Kamianets-Podilskyi, reaching 5–7% annually (and up to 6% during the 1865–1867 drought, which reduced crop yields by 20–30%), diminished the town's demographic potential [26, pp. 53–54]. Economic changes included a shift to leasehold relations (40% of peasants rented land, with landlords controlling 60% of land resources) and limited growth in industrial production (e.g., two textile factories and one brick factory in Kamianets) [26, pp. 52–53].

Average crop yields in the Podolia Governorate, based on our data, were: wheat at 6–8 centners/ha, barley at 7–9 centners/ha, and rye at 5–7 centners/ha, underscoring Zhvanets' agrarian foundation, with 80% of the population engaged in agriculture [26, p. 54]. Our research highlights that the chernozem soils of the Kamianets district (chernozems in the northern part, clayey soils in the southern part) supported high fertility, though droughts exacerbated economic challenges [29, pp. 162–163]. The ethno-social structure evolved from noble dominance to a growing peasant majority (70–75%), with significant representation of leaseholders (40%) and burghers (15–20%) [26, p. 53].

A comparison of Zhvanets with other Podolian towns and cities, such as Kamianets-Podilskyi and Khotyn, reveals both similarities and distinctions. Kamianets-Podilskyi, with a population of 10,000–12,000 in the 19th century [25, p. 150], surpassed Zhvanets (1,319 residents in the mid-19th century) in

economic and demographic significance due to its fortress and strategic trade routes. In contrast, Zhvanets remained a smaller settlement focused on agrarian activities and supporting border defense [28, p. 1]. Khotyn, known for its formidable fortress and role in the Khotyn Wars, shared a similar defensive status but had an economy more oriented toward trade with Moldova, unlike Zhvanets' agrarian and logistical focus [8, p. 120]. Bratslav, with a population of approximately 5,000–6,000 in the 19th century [25, p. 150], stood out for its developed trade infrastructure, while Zhvanets lagged due to the absence of railway connections.

Meanwhile, the ecological context, particularly the Zhvanchyk River as a natural barrier [5, pp. 21–24], provided Zhvanets with a defensive advantage similar to that of Okopy Holy Trinity, though with lower urban density. Our research indicates that the district's hydrography (the Dniester River, 415 versts, and the Zhvanchyk as its tributary) ensured irrigation, but the climate (droughts, 190 mm isohyet precipitation) heightened agricultural risks [29, pp. 159–161]. These differences underscore Zhvanets' peripheral yet strategically significant role within the regional hierarchy.

The study highlights the fragmentary nature of sources, which complicates a comprehensive reconstruction of Zhvanets' history, particularly in terms of its demographic profile. Nevertheless, archaeological data from Nahnybida and statistical records from Guldman expand the chronological framework and provide a basis for comparing Zhvanets with other Podolian settlements [7, pp. 320–325; 25, p. 150]. A new hypothesis regarding Play, proposed based on chronicle references and cartographic materials, opens prospects for exploring Zhvanets' urban development as a border center [28, p. 1].

The findings of this research can serve as a foundation for further studies aimed at analyzing migration processes, urbanization, and the preservation of Zhvanets' historical heritage in a modern context. This includes integrating

agricultural lands, nature reserves, and historical-cultural sites into a unified framework for sustainable development [28, p. 1].

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