



FACULDADE DE LETRAS
UNIVERSIDADE DE
COIMBRA

Chen Wang

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR SINO-
PORTUGUESE TOURISM IN THE CONTEXT OF
THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

Dissertação de Mestrado em Turismo, Território e Patrimónios, orientada pelo Professor
Doutor Carlos Manuel Batista Cardoso Ferreira, apresentada ao Departamento de
Geografia e Turismo da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra

Junho de 2023

FACULDADE DE LETRAS

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR SINO- PORTUGUESE TOURISM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

Ficha Técnica

Tipo de trabalho	Dissertação
Título	Opportunities and challenges for Sino-Portuguese tourism in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative
Autor	Chen Wang
Orientador	Professor Carlos Manuel Batista Cardoso Ferreira
Júri	Presidente: Doutor Paulo Manuel de Carvalho Tomás Vogais: 1. Doutor Carlos Manuel Batista Cardoso Ferreira 2. Doutor João Luís Jesus Fernandes
Identificação do Curso	2º Ciclo em Turismo, Território e Patrimónios
Área científica	Turismo e Lazer
Data da defesa	21-7-2023
Classificação	19 valores

RESUMO

A *Belt and Road Initiative* é uma iniciativa de cooperação internacional proposta pela China, na qual Portugal é um participante. No contexto da diversificação económica internacional e da globalização, o desenvolvimento do turismo num determinado país é inevitavelmente afetado pelo desempenho da economia e da cooperação globais. A *Belt and Road Initiative* oferece oportunidades de mercado significativas para o desenvolvimento do turismo, mas também enfrenta desafios em termos de segurança, finanças, epidemia de COVID-19 e desenvolvimento sustentável. O objetivo deste estudo é explorar a forma como a indústria do turismo portuguesa pode tirar partido desta oportunidade de mercado e como pode enfrentar os desafios.

O método Delphi foi utilizado neste estudo. A lista de peritos foi desenvolvida utilizando o modelo da hélice quádrupla, que inclui quatro grupos principais: decisores políticos, empresários, académicos e sociedade. Para complementar, um inquérito por questionário a estudantes chineses em Portugal revelou preferências comportamentais dos turistas chineses em Portugal.

Os resultados mostram que os peritos têm, de um modo geral, uma visão positiva da *Belt and Road Initiative*. Existe uma elevada correlação entre a *Belt and Road Initiative* e o turismo. A China e outros países asiáticos estão entre os mercados mais importantes para o turismo português e Macau deve ser aproveitado ao máximo como plataforma de intercâmbio económico, comercial, de serviços e humanitária entre a China continental e os países de língua portuguesa. Os peritos consideram que a cooperação em termos de políticas turísticas é a estratégia mais eficaz para desenvolver o potencial do mercado; que o clima, as paisagens naturais e os locais históricos são os três recursos turísticos mais suscetíveis de atrair turistas chineses; e que Portugal deve posicionar-se como um destino de preço médio ou mais barato. A publicidade direta do turismo português no mercado chinês deve ser enfatizada e reforçada para promover a imagem nacional global de Portugal; a qualidade da informação turística tem um impacto na vontade de visitar e na imagem de Portugal como destino turístico. Os resultados do estudo ajudarão Portugal a expandir o seu turismo na China em termos de marca de destino, estratégias de preços, intercâmbio político e cultural e desenvolvimento sustentável.

Palavras-chave: Belt and Road Initiative; fluxos turísticos internacionais; mercado emissor chinês, Portugal, marketing de destinos

ABSTRACT

The Belt and Road Initiative is an international cooperation initiative proposed by China, in which Portugal is an active participant. In the context of international economic diversification and globalisation, the development of a domestic international tourism industry for a given country is inevitably affected by the performance of the global economy and Cooperation. The Belt and Road Initiative offers a great market opportunity for the development of tourism but also presents challenges in terms of security, finance, the COVID-19 epidemic and sustainable development. The aim of this study is to explore how the Portuguese tourism industry can take advantage of this market opportunity and how it could respond to the challenges.

This study employs the Delphi method. The list of experts was developed using the Quadruple helix model, which consists of four primary groups: policymakers, business, academics, and society. As a supplement, a questionnaire of Chinese students in Portugal has shown the behavioural preferences of Chinese tourists in Portugal.

The result shows experts have a generally positive view of the initiative. There is a high correlation between the Belt and Road initiative and tourism, with China and other Asian countries being one of the most important markets for Portuguese tourism. Macao as a platform for economic and commercial, service, and humanitarian contacts between mainland China and Portuguese-speaking countries should be fully utilised. Experts agree that cooperation in tourist policy is the most effective strategy to develop market potential. Climate, natural landscapes and historical sites were the three tourism resources most likely to attract Chinese tourists. Portugal should position itself as a medium-priced or cheaper tourist destination. Direct advertising of Portuguese tourism in the Chinese market should be emphasised and strengthened to promote Portugal's overall national image. The quality of information has an impact on the willingness to visit and the image of Portuguese destinations. The research findings help Portugal expand its tourism sector in China in terms of destination branding, price tactics, policy and culture exchange and sustainable development.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative; International Tourism Flows; Chinese outbound market; Portugal; destination marketing

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Prof. Carlos Ferreira, who inspired my topic and helped me selflessly with both structure and details. He gives my paper a careful reading and makes detailed comments. Without his keen insights and constant encouragement, this paper would not have been finished.

In addition, I would like to thank everyone who took my questionnaire for their patience in answering my questions and giving me valuable advice. The community of Chinese students in Portugal has been a great help to me.

I am also extremely grateful to Prof. Ana Caldeira; she has kindly provided me with assistance and courage, she is a generous and unselfish elder. I would like to thank Chen Yang, my best partner in Portugal; she has given me the best during the past three years. I would also like to thank Xu Lizheng for providing me with a lot of helpful information.

For me, life in Portugal has been peaceful but not easy, especially after experiencing the epidemic. My family's unconditional support and love have given me the strength to face the challenges. Special thanks to my mother, Ms. Hou Xiaoning, for her selfless love and understanding.

Finally, I am really grateful to all those who devote much time to reading this thesis and giving me advice. Thank you.

Index

1. Introduction.....	10
1.1 The Belt and Road Initiative: content and objectives	11
1.2 Tourism Market Potential of Portugal and EU in the Context of the Belt and Road initiative.....	13
1.3 Study purpose and significance.....	19
1.3.1 Purpose of the study	19
1.3.2 Practical implication	20
2. Literature review	22
2.1 Development and implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative	23
2.1.1 Presentation and objectives of the initiative	23
2.1.2 Implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative.....	26
2.1.3 International Strategy alignment.....	28
2.1.4. Portugal and the Belt and Road Initiative	30
2.2 The Belt and Road Initiative in Geo-political Perspective.....	34
2.2.1 Belt and Road Initiative and Traditional Geopolitical Theory	35
2.2.2 The Debate on Belt and Road Initiative.....	36
2.2.3 Is Belt and Road Initiative a sustainable plan?	39
2.3 The Belt and Road Initiative and tourism	41
2.3.1 Tourism and the Ancient Silk Road.....	41
2.3.2 The Belt and Road Initiative and international Tourism Development.....	45
2.3.3 China-EU tourism cooperation	50
2.4 The current and future role of the Chinese tourism in the world's emerging market.....	53
3. Methodology	58
3.1 Variables and Study Hypotheses.....	59
3.1.1 Concepts.....	59
3.1.2 Theory and Hypotheses.....	61
3.2 Delphi method	64
3.2.1 Expert Panel and questions set.....	64

3.2.2 Data Collection and procedure.....	66
3.3 Quadruple helix model.....	67
3.4 Questionnaire for Chinese scholars/students in Portugal.....	68
3.4.1 Questionnaire design.....	68
3.4.2 Data Collection and Procedure	69
4. Case study presentation.....	71
4.1 Chinese tourists in Portugal: data and behavioural	72
4.2 COVID-19 and the restart tourism in China	78
5. Analysis and Discussion	85
5.1 Delphi method results analysis.....	86
5.1.1 First round result analysis	86
5.1.2 Second round result analysis.....	96
5.2 Analysis of questionnaire results.....	100
5.3 Discussion of the results.....	105
6. Conclusion	115
6.1 Destination Brand and tourism policy cooperation.....	116
6.2 Tourism experience and pricing strategy	118
6.3 Cultural exchange and staff training	119
6.4 Sustainable development.....	120
6.5 Research limitation.....	121
References	123
APPENDIXES	129
Appendix 1: The first round of the Delphi Method questionnaire.....	130
Appendix 2: The Second round of the Delphi Method questionnaire.....	133
Appendix 3: A survey questionnaire for Chinese international student in Portugal	135
Appendix 4: Expert Panel of Delphi method	137

INDEX OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Arrivals of Chinese Tourists at All Types of Accommodation to Portugal	15
Figure 2: Outbound tourism expenditure over time of China.....	16
Figure 3: Chinese outbound tourist departure (Thousand).....	54
Figure 4: GDP (current trillion USD) of China.....	54
Figure 5: The compound model of the study, Delphi and questionnaire method.....	59
Figure 6: Delphi method Frame	65
Figure 7: Quadruple helix model.....	67
Figure 8: Conceptual Mode.....	69
Figure 9: Arrivals of Tourists at All Types of Accommodation Establishments in 2018 to Portugal	73
Figure 10: Overnight stays of Chinese Tourists at In All Types of Accommodation Establishments in 2018 to Portugal	74
Figure 11: Overnight stays of Tourists to Portugal rank in country in 2018	74
Figure 12: Tourist arrivals in Portugal, 2020-2021	75
Figure 13: Portugal International tourist arrivals (million)	76
Figure 14: International Tourist Arrivals, World and Regions.....	79
Figure 15: What are the main factors weighing on the recovery of international tourism?.....	84
Figure 16: Is BRI outdated?	87
Figure 17: Expert opinion on BRI in general	89
Figure 18: Average score of each tourism items	90
Figure 19: Is direct investment in portuguese tourism a good way for China?	92
Figure 20: Experts' opinions on the China-EU Tourism event.....	94
Figure 21: Which regions are important for the Portuguese market.....	94
Figure 22: The most attractive tourist assets/resources in Portugal.....	98
Figure 23: the best ways to increase the awareness of the Portuguese national tourism brand in China	98
Figure 24: Summary of Hypothesis Test Results	102
Figure 25: Arrivals in Portugal by region.....	111

INDEX OF TABLES

Table 1: Major Subjects of the Belt and Road Initiative	23
Table 2: Belt and Road International Summit	25
Table 3: BRI implementation in items	26
Table 4: Strategic alignment between China and selected countries	28
Table 5: The Chinese government's presentation of the ancient Silk Road	43
Table 6: Visa Policies for Belt and Road Countries and Regions for Chinese citizens	46
Table 7: Xi's speech on the Belt and Road Initiative about tourism	46
Table 8 Methodology and Hypotheses	63
Table 9: International tourist arrivals of Portugal 2019-2021	76
Table 10: Number of followers of selected national tourism agencies on Sina Weibo	78
Table 11: Portugal and China on entry Policy, August 2022	81
Table 12: Restrictions for Travellers coming from China in January 2023	81
Table 13: First round of questionnaire collection by category	86
Table 14: Importance ranking answers.....	87
Table 15: Second round of questionnaire collection by category	96
Table 16: Demographic Profiles and Characteristics of the Respondents	100
Table 17: Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Measurement Model	101
Table 18: Discriminant Validity	102
Table 19: Summary of Hypothesis Test Results	103
Table 20: Results of Indirect effects.....	104

INDEX OF GRAPHICS

Graphic 1: Map of the Belt and Road economic corridors and cities	12
Graphic 2: The Ancient silk and spice routes	12
Graphic 3: Logo of the Belt and Road Forum for international cooperation.....	25
Graphic 4: Belt and Road Forum for international cooperation 2017, Beijing.....	25
Graphic 5: The world busiest ports by cargo tonnage Ningbo-Zhoushan port, China.....	27
Graphic 6: China and Portugal Sign Memorandum of Understanding within BRI, 2018	30
Graphic 7: Forum of Macau	32
Graphic 8: The second Sino-Portuguese Cultural Festival 2019	32

Graphic 9: Presentation on Tourism Products from the Portuguese-speaking Countries 2022	33
Graphic 10: The Nestorian Stele, created in 781, describes the introduction of Nestorian Christianity to China Tang dynasty	42
Graphic 11: Logo of EU-China Tourism year	51
Graphic 12: Chinese tourist @milkitty in Lisbon 2020.....	72
Graphic 13: Journeys to Portugal Revisited Website.....	112
Graphic 14: Visit Portugal promotional material in China	116
Graphic 15: Portugal Tourism Office on Weibo about the University of Coimbra	116

1. Introduction

Chapter overview: This chapter presents the study's context and purpose. It gives a brief overview of the Belt and Road Initiative's background and objectives, discusses the potential for tourism cooperation, and finishes by explaining the aims and significance of this paper, which is the first to examine the relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative (hereafter also BRI) and tourism development between China and Portugal; second, to review BRI research and practise on tourism; and third, to use Portugal as an example, to explore effective measures on how to use the BRI to promote tourism development.

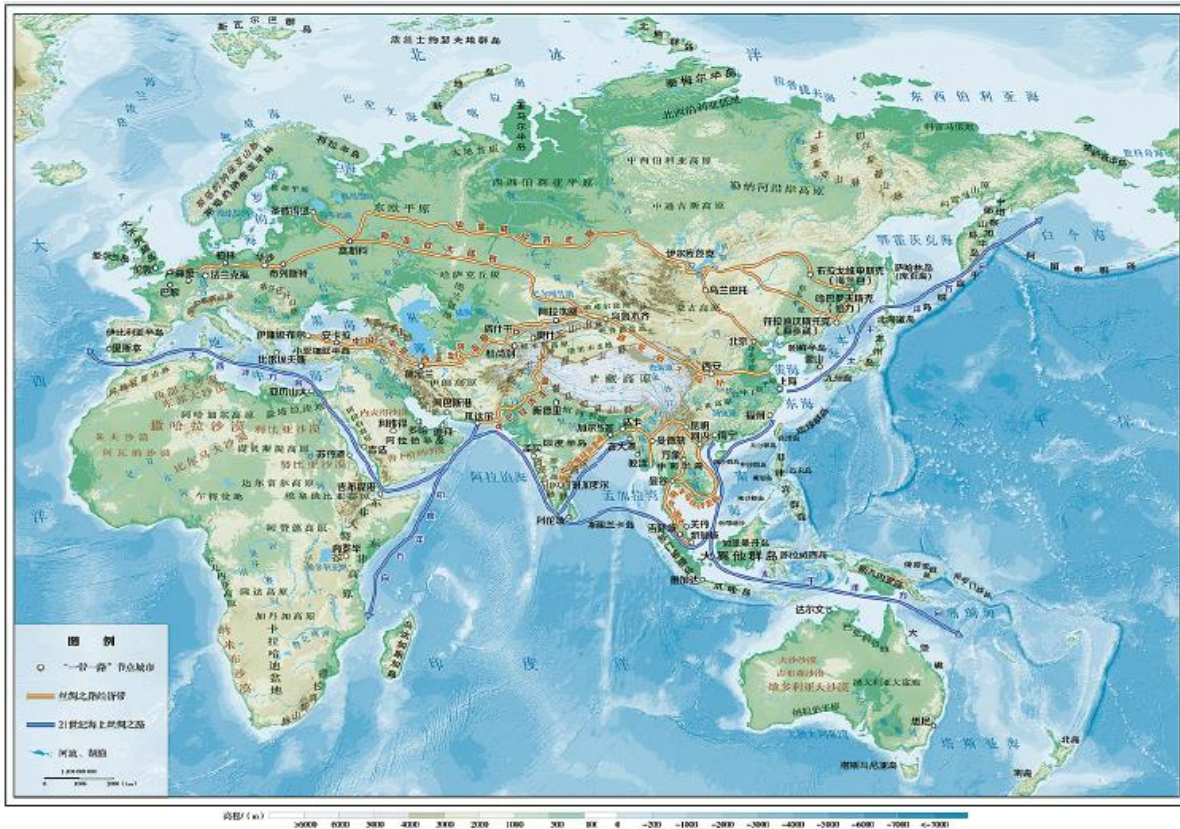
1.1 The Belt and Road Initiative: content and objectives

The Belt and Road Initiative, full name *The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road*, abbreviated as *Belt and Road Initiative* or *B&R*, *BRI*, is a cross-regional cooperation initiative proposed by China that draws on the historical symbols of the ancient Silk Road. In September and October 2013, during his visits to Kazakhstan and Southeast Asia, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed to build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road, the BRI was first formally proposed at that time.

According to the document named *Vision and Actions for Promoting the Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road*, jointly issued by China's National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce in 2015, the goal of the BRI is to interconnect the Asian, European and African continents and nearby seas, establish and strengthen partnerships for interconnection among countries along the route, build an all-round, multi-level and connectivity network to achieve diversified, autonomous, balanced and sustainable development. In Xi's speech at *the Leaders Roundtable of The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation* in May 2017, he mentioned that 'the initiative aims to promote infrastructure development and greater connectivity, synergize the development policies and strategies of individual countries, deepen practical cooperation, encourage coordinated and interconnected development, and bring about common prosperity' (Xi, 2017). To achieve these goals, the Chinese government has proposed a five-pronged approach:

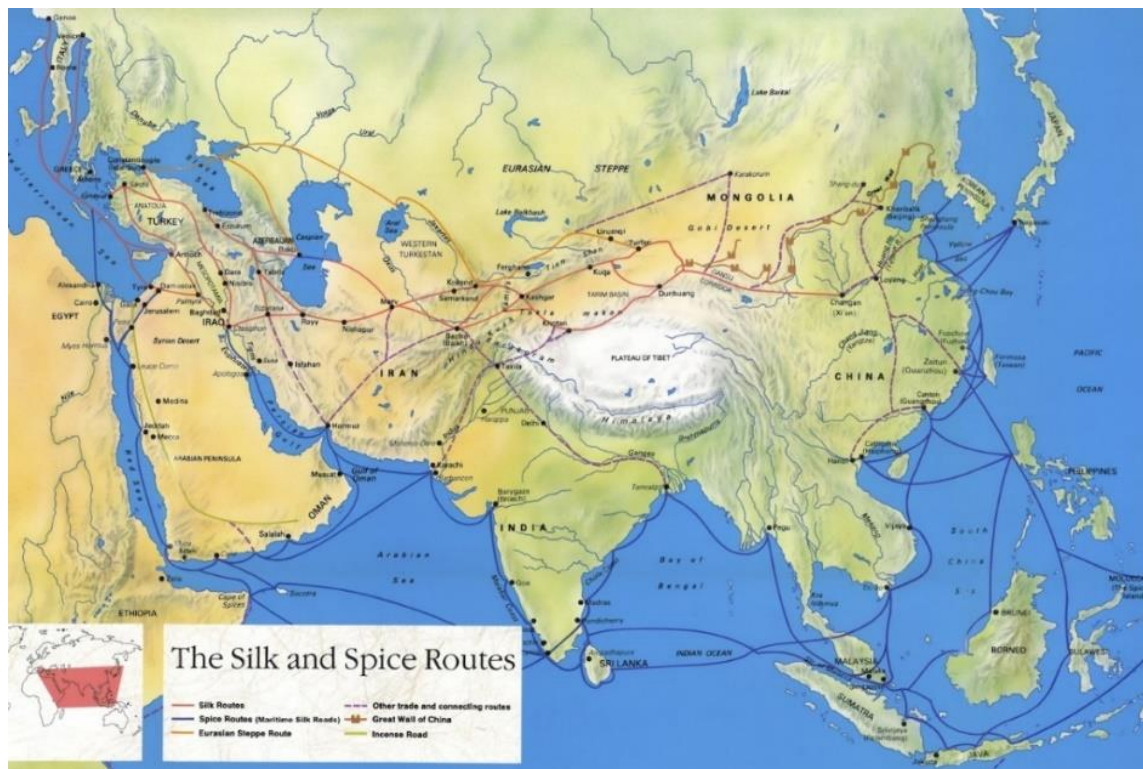
- Policy coordination
- Infrastructure connectivity
- Unimpeded trade
- Financial integration
- Strengthen people-to-people ties

As a historical source of symbols for BRI, the Silk Road could be traced back to the year 1877, the word Silk Road, 'Seidenstraßenthe' in the German language, was first used by German geographer Richthofen to describe the 'Western traffic route between China and Central Asia and India, using silk trade as a medium from 114BC to 127AD'. And after that, the concept of the Silk Road was gradually expanded to include the ancient Chinese land trade routes through Central, South and West Asia, as well as Europe and North Africa.



Graphic 1: Map of the Belt and Road economic corridors and cities

Source: National Bureau of Surveying and Mapping of China



Graphic 2: The Ancient silk and spice routes

Source: UNWSCO Silk Roads Programme

From a realistic perspective, BRI is an initiative for international economic cooperation aimed at better connectivity in policy, infrastructure, trade and financial services and closer ties between the peoples of various countries (Liu, 2018). It is also considered to be a macroeconomic and political strategy of China (Ploberger, 2017). Following the reform and opening up policy of China in the 1980s, and especially after its accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001, with rapid economic development over the years and changes in the international background, China has become highly interconnected with the world economy and there is a new need for China and the rest of the world to further integrate China into the world economic system, this can be considered as the modern economic background. With the introduction of the notion of the 21st century World Maritime Silk Road, the number of countries associated with the Silk Road concept has expanded. In fact, the scope of the Belt and Road goes far beyond the scope of the ancient one. Until 19 April 2022, China has signed more than 200 cooperation documents with 149 countries and 32 international organizations to co-build the BRI.

1.2 Tourism Market Potential of Portugal and EU in the Context of the Belt and Road initiative

Tourism is a major source of income for Portugal and in 2020, Portugal was named "Best European Destination" for the fourth year in a row at the World Travel Awards, with Lisbon winning "Best European Destination", Porto "Best European Holiday City" and the Algarve "Best Beach Destination" for the seventh time. Lisbon was voted "Best European Tourist Destination", Porto "Best European Holiday City" and the Algarve "Best Beach Destination" for the seventh time. Portugal offers a wealth of tourism resources including medieval castles, unique and charming villages, sunny beaches, world-class surfing, rich traditional cuisine and much more. Meanwhile, China is the largest consumer of tourism and, despite being down 58% on the previous year, it still spent 105.7USD billion in tourism spending in 2021, while in the same year, Europe accounts for 51% of international tourism receipts¹, the highest in the world (UNWTO, 2021). Tourism is highly dependent on other sectors, while at the same time contributing to other sectors development.

Portugal's promotion in the Chinese tourism market was late compared to other EU countries like France and Italy, and it was after the European debt crisis that the Portuguese tourism sector started to set its sights on the Chinese market. Financial problems have made

Portugal's tourism sector pay more attention to emerging market countries like China. In order to introduce Portuguese hotels and tourism enterprises to Chinese operators and agents, Turismo de Portugal participated in the major business and tourism fairs in 2010, including Beijing International Tourism Expo and China International Travel Mart. Additionally, the organisation launched a simplified Chinese version of the nation's official tourism website visitportugal.com to coincide with Expo 2010 Shanghai China (World Travel Online, 2010). Also this year, during the official visit of the former president of the People's Republic of China, a bilateral tourism cooperation agreement was signed. This was followed by the implementation of code-sharing flights between Air China and TAP Portugal, which connect Shanghai and Guangzhou to Lisbon and Oporto (Xinhua, 2010). In order to bring more Chinese tourists and business partners to Portugal later at 2012, nine Portuguese firms, led by Pestana Group and Ingolf, participated in the Beijing Tourism Expo (BITE) 2012 (Peneda, 2012). Launched in October 2012, the Gold Visas programme attracted over a thousand Chinese nationals and brought Portugal 464 million euros in investment in the first half of that year (World Travel Online, 2014). Because applicants for the programme must spend at least 7 days in Portugal during the first year, many people seize the opportunity to travel throughout Portugal.

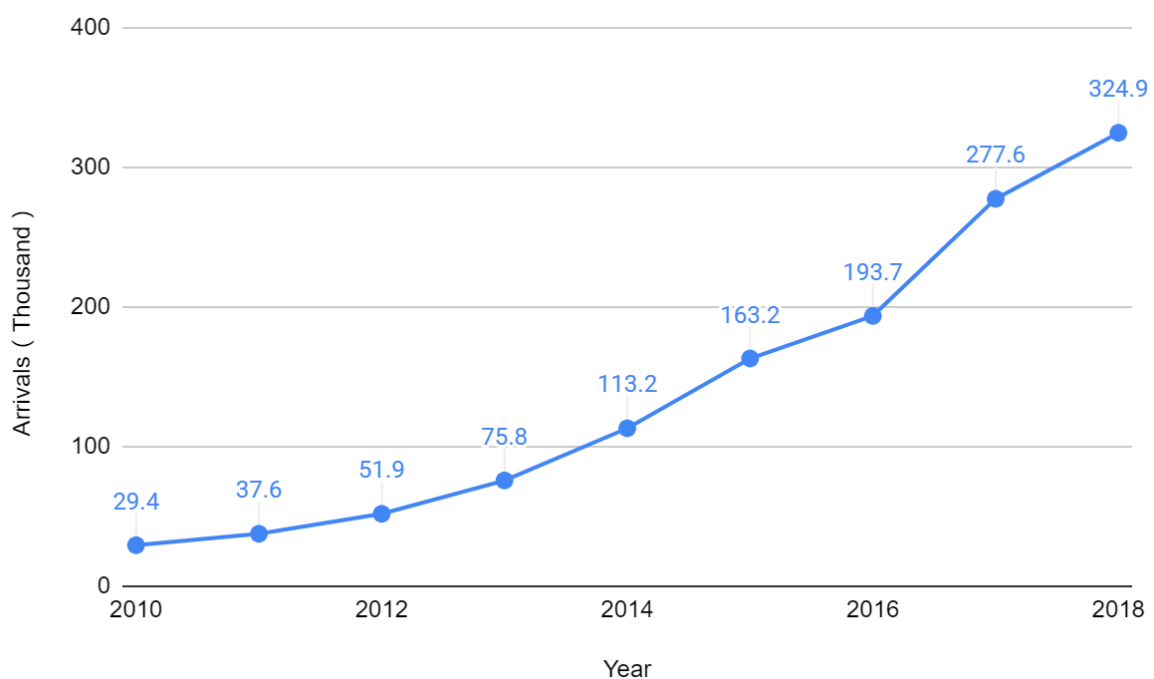
2014 marked the beginning of a new chapter as it saw previously unheard-of intensified actions and reciprocal visits. By designating TravelLink Marketing as its official representative in China in February, Turismo de Portugal formally established itself in the country (TravelLink Daily, 2014). The Sino-Portuguese Symposium on Tourism was held in Lisbon in June, and a group from the Chinese National Tourism Administration (CNTA) attended. While there, they exchanged views with officials from important Portuguese tourism agencies (China Daily, 2014). Six Portuguese visa application facilities went into operation after planning and preparation. All of the new visa centre locations are in the most developed region of China, where international travel is constantly booming. By 2023, there are now seven cities that offer Portuguese visa services: Beijing, Chongqing, Jinan, Kunming, Shenyang, Wuhan, and Xi'an. The ability for visitors to submit their applications online and pick up their passports from the closest centre would undoubtedly increase the number of tourists visiting Portugal.

A new era of direct flights between China and Portugal began in July 2017 when China Capital Airlines introduced service from Beijing to Lisbon. Through the introduction of the Beijing-Xi'an-Lisbon route in 2019, the airline established an "Air Silk Road" connecting China and Portugal. Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, the flight was put on hold in March 2020, and operations resumed on June 6, 2022.

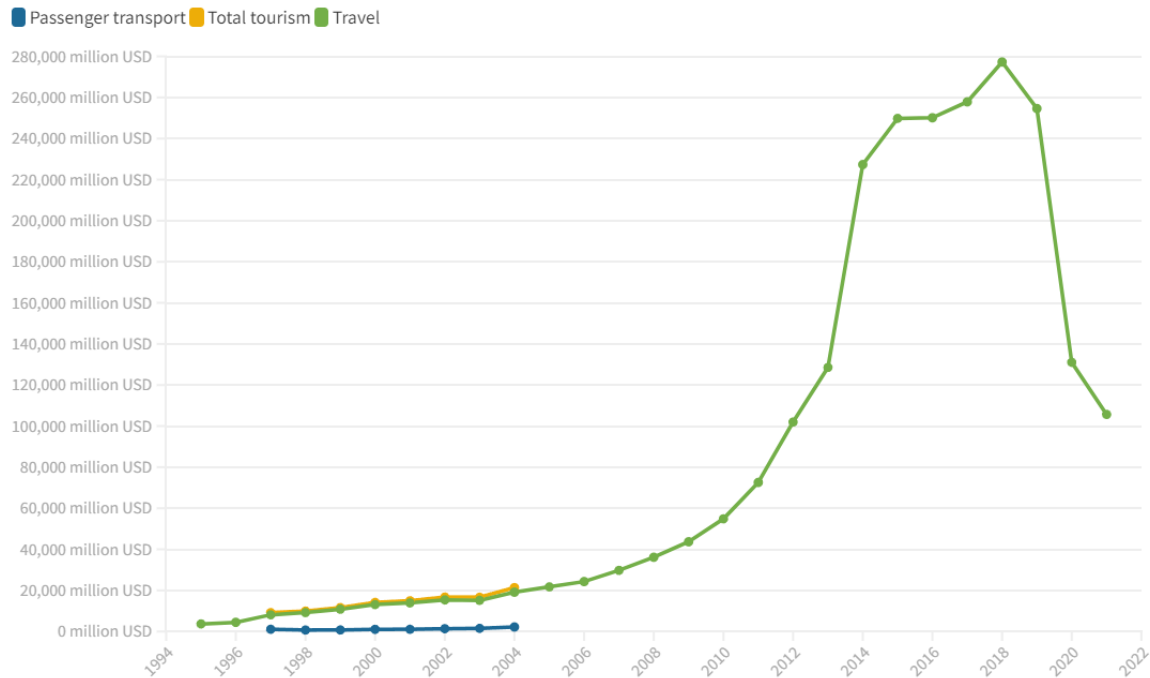
The introduction of the Belt and Road Initiative provides a new interesting perspective on

tourism international cooperation. From a general perspective, the tourism industry is an important means of achieving "people-to-people" relations. The Vision and Actions mentioned above describes tourism cooperation in the context of the Belt and Road in the way of expand the scale of tourism, organize mutual tourism promotion weeks, publicity months and other activities, jointly create international high-quality tourism routes and tourism products with the feature of Silk Road. Promote cooperation in tourism for cruise ships along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Actively carry out sports exchange activities and support countries along the route to bid for major international sports events.

Figure 1: Arrivals of Chinese Tourists at All Types of Accommodation to Portugal



Source: UNWTO Global and regional tourism performance Tourism flows
<https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/global-and-regional-tourism-performanc>

Figure 2: Outbound tourism expenditure over time of China

Source: UNWTO 145 Key Tourism Statistics, 22 December 2022

China's outbound tourism will benefit from the modernisation process with a huge population and the modernisation process with the common prosperity of all the people. In his several speeches, Xi has also referred to the growth of the tourism industry in the context of BRI: China's development is an opportunity for the world. These favourable factors will further promote the expansion of China's outbound tourism market and the upgrading of the quality of the industrial structure. It is expected that in the next five years, China's...total outbound tourism will reach 700 million, and this will provide countries around the world with a broader market, more sufficient capital, richer products and more valuable opportunities for cooperation (Xi, 2017). The Chinese government provides 10,000 government scholarships to relevant countries every year, and local governments have also set up special scholarships on the Silk Road to encourage international cultural and educational exchanges. Various Silk Road cultural years, tourism years, art festivals, film and television bridges, seminars, think tank dialogues and other humanities cooperation projects are in full bloom, and people are frequently exchanged (Xi, 2015).

With its many world heritage sites and unique natural landscapes, Europe is the world's most attractive region for tourists with 712 million international arrivals in 2018 and more than 50% of the market share of worldwide tourism. While China is the world's most populous country and one of the largest sources of international tourists, the number of Chinese travellers to Europe is enormous and growing rapidly. The BRI offers significant opportunities for tourism cooperation between China and Europe. According to a report by the European Tourism Committee entitled *Chinese Tourist Flock to Europe* in 2019, the increase confirms the success of the EU-China Tourism Year. Eduardo Santander, the Executive Director of the European Tourism Committee, states that 'The EU-China Tourism Year 2018 initiative was very successful'. The data shows there was a 5.1% year-on-year increase in Chinese arrivals in EU destinations during 2018. Although the COVID-19 outbreak broke this trend, no doubt that Europe still has a huge attraction for Chinese tourists after the outbreak is over.

Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors in Portugal, with 432 thousand people employed in tourism according to the 2019 statistics (UNWTO,2019). Portugal's tourism industry has made great progress over the last 50 years, particularly in terms of growth in tourism demand and internationalization. The growth has benefited from: investments in air and maritime infrastructure, the organization of international events from increased promotional efforts, the inclusion of assets on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the boom in tourism in rural areas, the structuring of tourist products like golf, nautical tourism, gastronomy and wine, nature tourism, and other categories, the revival of health and wellness as tourist products,; and, medium and long-term tourism planning (Moreira, 2022).

Portugal and China have a long history of communication, the history of Macau is a mini-history of Chinese-Portuguese diplomatic history, and the Chinese government set up some cooperation platforms for Portuguese-speaking countries in Macau even before promoting the Belt and Road Initiative, such as the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-Speaking Countries, original name in Portuguese '*Fórum para a Cooperação Económica e Comercial entre a China e os Países de Língua Portuguesa (Fórum de Macau)*', established in Macau in 2003, whose purpose is to actively engage with Portugal strategically. As one European country which have the most communication with China, Portugal has a rich historical and cultural heritage and natural resources and should make use of the relevant cooperation platforms in Europe and Macau to give full play to its advantages in the Belt and Road cooperation and actively develop the Chinese tourist market.

Regard to the development of the Portuguese and European tourism sector in China,

another issue of concern is the huge impact of the Covid-19 epidemic, which has changed the way people travel and, in particular, the travel preferences of Chinese tourists. beyond 2020, the European tourism market faces five specific problems when it comes to Chinese tourists. Firstly, flights to Europe from China are still too expensive, both for Chinese airlines and for airlines from other countries. Travel data company ForwardKeys states that flights from China to Europe are still 80% more expensive than before 2020 (Soler, 2023). Secondly, the number of flights between China and Europe has not yet returned to pre-epidemic levels and flights are more vulnerable to China's outbreak prevention and control policies. China's decision to ditch its zero-Covid policy has triggered a surge in flight bookings (ForwardKeys, 2023). Thirdly, the visa approval process is too complicated and time-consuming. The waiting time for visas has also been significantly longer than before the outbreak. 61% of respondents said they would choose a full-service product that includes visas, flights, accommodation and guides. There are still plenty of opportunities for travel agents and tour operators to attract the Chinese outbound market with the right products (Parulis-Cook & Kadeerbieke, 2023). Fourthly, the cost of travel to Europe has become higher. It is more expensive to travel to Europe than to Southeast Asia, not to mention airfares and local prices, which are much higher than those in Southeast Asia for the same services and products. As geopolitical conflicts escalate, the cost of travel becomes even higher. Fifthly, many European tourism workers who received Chinese tourists lost their jobs during the epidemic, leading to a shortage of relevant professionals and resulting in a post-epidemic tourism service that is far less capable than before the epidemic.

Several of the issues mentioned above present doubt for the continued growth of Chinese tourists in Europe, those issues, either as stand-alone challenge in the tourism sector or involving complex social, cultural and international relations dimensions. BRI may offer a path to address these issues, particularly in terms of policy (visas and flights) and human resources. A detailed analysis of those questions can be found in topic 4.2.

As a summarise this section, it is important to note that a clear historical context emerges, with Portugal beginning to significantly expand its market share in China since 2010, actively integrating itself into the BRI and signing an official document on cooperation with the Chinese government in 2018. Following that, the global outbreak of COVID-19 by 2020 presents new difficulties for tourism cooperation. It is urgent to find solutions to the new issues that have surfaced in the tourism industry between China and Europe.

1.3 Study purpose and significance

1.3.1 Purpose of the study

This paper has three main research objectives:

Firstly, to discuss the relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative and tourism. The Silk Road, or BRI, has always been associated with tourism. Whether as a symbol of intercultural exchange or as a modern framework for international relations, its relationship with tourism is worthy of explication. How does China's official document define the aims of the Belt and Road Initiative and how to achieve them? What role does tourism play in it?

Secondly, to review BRI research and practice on tourism. It is necessary to review the research that has focus on the Belt and Road Initiative and tourism. Since its proposed, there are a number of relevant academic studies focusing on this topic, and they come from all regions of the world, these studies show a diversity of perspectives and conclusions. This article will also take a look at the models and status of tourism cooperation between China and other countries in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, mainly in Europe, where the EU and China have made many useful attempts to promote tourism cooperation. Of course, Portugal is the focus of this part, being one of the first countries in Europe to sign a cooperation document with China on the Belt and Road Initiative, and there was a lot of cooperation between the two governments before the COVID-19 pandemic, a review of China and Portugal tourism cooperation is necessary. This thesis aimed to answer questions like what tourism cooperation agreements have been concluded between China and the EU or Portugal? And what tourism cooperation platforms or international organizations could use by the related countries. As Chinese investment in Europe has grown significantly, some multinational companies are worthy to note.

Thirdly, through the example of Portugal, to explore concrete measures on how to use the BRI to develop tourism potential. This paper focuses on how European countries, represented by Portugal, can participation and access BRI to leverage the relative strengths of their tourism industries. Through the Delphi method, interviews are conducted with scholars, experts, policy makers and industry players to clarify the trends and issues in Sino-Portuguese tourism cooperation. The group of international students is a special consumer group of tourists, representative of those who has a common experience of living and travelling in China and Portugal, and are mostly under 30 years old. The questionnaire survey of Chinese scholars and international students living in Portugal was used to analyse the key behaviours of Chinese

tourists, such as the reputation of different tourism resources in Portugal, consumption habits and choice of tourist destinations. Questions on attitudes and awareness of the Belt and Road Initiative have been included in both main research approaches.

1.3.2 Practical implication

Firstly, I expect that the results of this study will provide concrete idea for the promotion of Portuguese tourism resources in China, including recommendations for policy cooperation and for the development of Portuguese tourism brands in the Chinese market, which include many details such as pricing strategies, the preferences of Chinese tourists for tourism resources and direct air links between the two countries. This thesis aimed to find a way to know how Chinese tourists' awareness of Portuguese tourism brands. Portuguese tourism resources and brands were not fully recognized by Chinese consumers, because of Chinese internet information policy and language barriers, exposed more direct and localized tourism promotions is needed.

Secondly, as a complement to the country studies, it will enrich the Belt and Road studies, which are not very much studied on the Belt and Road Initiative and tourism in Portugal. The global development of the Belt and Road Initiative can also be reflected in this case.

Finally, it is hoped that this paper will provide a perspective on the creation of a sustainable tourism strategy in international cooperation, particularly by making use of China and Portugal, which have a special relationship and being far apart. As the westernmost and easternmost points of the Asian and European continents, one facing the Atlantic and the other the Pacific, but both countries have a long history of interaction. China, as the largest source of tourists, and Portugal, with its rich tourism resources, they are excellent examples, and it is worth exploring how a sustainable tourism development policy can be established between the two countries. Excavate potential for the Portuguese tourism under the context of BRI. What drives international tourism development in the Belt and Road Initiative? The answer is rapid development of the Chinese economy. Policy makers in every country need to dynamically adapt their international tourism development strategies to reduce the impact of adverse shocks caused by economic fluctuations in other countries. (Chen et al., 2021) In December 2018, China and Portugal signed Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Portugal on the Further Strengthening of their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in Lisbon. It mentioned the willingness of both sides to strengthen tourism professional training cooperation and to promote direct flights between the two countries. In the face of the changing

international situation and the huge hit of COVID-19, the Portuguese tourism policymakers could and should make its own response to the BRI. It is interesting to see how international tourism cooperation can be made to have a greater potential for economic growth and reduce the uncertainty of external challenges.

2. Literature review

Chapter Overview: The Belt and Road Initiative review literature is provided in this chapter. There are three key divisions within it: the introduction and implementation of the BRI are discussed in the first section, the relationship between the BRI and tourism is discussed in the second section, and the BRI is observed from a geopolitical perspective in the third section, different views on the BRI and the risks involved in its implementation are discussed. This chapter also discusses the expanding Chinese market's potential impact on the global tourism industry.

2.1 Development and implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative

2.1.1 Presentation and objectives of the initiative

The background to the Belt and Road initiative is the challenge of the globalization. China must restructure and upgrade its economy from an export-oriented and factor-intensive to a more balanced, innovative and sustainable path (Liu & Dunford, 2016). The Belt and Road Initiative is constantly enriched and developed. When it was first proposed in 2013, it was still a vague concept with no systematic description of how it would be built, the framework for cooperation, the focus of cooperation, or the mechanisms for cooperation. A methodical explanation has been established as the collaboration has advanced. In a document released in 2019 by the Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the Belt and Road Initiative, *The Belt and Road Initiative Progress, Contributions and Prospects*, a systematic summary outlook on the development and implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative is presented.

Table 1: Major Subjects of the Belt and Road Initiative

Subjects	Objectives
Policy Coordination	Communicated and coordinated with relevant countries and international organisations, forming a broad consensus on international cooperation to build the "Belt and Road".
Infrastructure Connectivity	To build an all-round, multi-level, and composite infrastructure framework centred on railways, roads, shipping, aviation, pipelines, and integrated space information networks. Reduced the transaction costs of products, capital, information, and technologies flowing between regions, and effectively promoted the orderly flow and optimal allocation of resources among different regions.
Unimpeded Trade	The efforts invested in the initiative to liberalized and facilitated trade and investment in the participating countries and regions, lower the costs of trade and business, and released growth potential, to engage in broader and deeper economic globalization.

Financial
Integration

Financial integration is an important pillar of the BRI. Exploring investment and financing models, international multilateral financial institutions and commercial banks to played an innovative role in expanding the channels of diversified financing, providing stable, transparent and quality financial support for the Belt and Road Initiative.

People-to-people
Bond

People-to-people ties are the cultural foundation for building the Belt and Road. the BRI countries have carried out diplomatic activities and cultural exchanges of various forms in wide fields, enhancing mutual understanding and recognition and laying a solid cultural foundation for furthering the initiative

There are five main aspects of the BRI. First, policy communication should be strengthened at the institutional level. "One of the serious consequences of the idea of "counter-globalisation" is that it has become more difficult to coordinate the macro policies of countries around the world, and macro shocks caused by policy uncertainty are frequent. The One Belt and One Road initiative has led to in-depth exchanges between countries in terms of economic development and adherence to the idea of win-win development through sharing, seeking common ground while reserving differences, strengthening macro policy coordination and communication in terms of economic planning and economic trade exchanges, reducing policy conflicts and avoiding policy uncertainty in the macro economy.

Second, road connectivity should be strengthened at the infrastructure level. Previous strategies such as FTA cooperation have neglected the fact that an important physical basis for the development of regional integration is the interconnection of infrastructure development

Third, at the economic level, trade connectivity should be strengthened. Smooth trade is the goal of the Belt and Road Initiative, and development is the first priority. The Belt and Road covers nearly 3 billion people worldwide, with huge market demand and potential.

Fourth, cooperation in finance to provide a stable source of funding for sustainable development worldwide. To realize the goal of strong economic integration under BRI framework, the progress of bilateral currency cooperation has been showed to be a valid instrument (Zhang etc, 2017).

Fifthly, to strengthen people-to-people exchanges. The BRI advocates that countries should strengthen people-to-people ties and seek a win-win development path with the idea of

openness, cooperation and mutual development, so as to build consensus on development, strengthen cultural and tourism cooperation to reduce misunderstandings and bias.



Graphic 3: Logo of the Belt and Road Forum for international cooperation



Graphic 4: Belt and Road Forum for international cooperation 2017, Beijing

Table 2: Belt and Road International Summit

Time	Attendance	Number of Participants	Achievements
May 2017	29 Heads of State and Government	1,600	279 projects in 5 major categories
April 2019	38 Heads of State and Government	6,000	283 results in 6 categories

To promote these plans, China has held two high level international forums, the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, and has reached a number of strategic agreements based on several of these components. The 2017 summits main objective was to develop a mechanism for common welfare of the member states and its main theme was fostering people-to-people ties. (Chawla & Iqbal, 2020).

2.1.2 Implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative

According to the Chinese official BRI website (Belt and Road Portal, 2022) up to July 2022, China has signed over 200 cooperation documents with 149 countries and 32 international organizations for the construction of the BRI. Since 2013, the BRI has grown so much in geographic and conceptual scope. Meanwhile, the projects covered by this grand strategy have increased in number but also in terms of sectoral and geographic complexity, from the Arctic to the deep oceans, from Latin America to outer space.

Table 3: BRI implementation in items

Items	Implementation
Policy coordination	149 countries, 32 international organisations, over 200 cooperation documents signed
Facilities connectivity	For 27 consecutive months, China-Europe Class trains have operated more than 1,000 trains, reaching nearly 200 cities in 24 European countries (in July 2022, China-Europe Class trains openly operated with 1,517 trains, carrying 149,000 TEUs of cargo, setting a new record high) Railways: China Laos, China Thailand, Hungary Serbia, etc. Ports: Gwadar Port, Piraeus Port, Khalifa Port construction, etc. Aviation: Air transport agreements with 126 countries and regions.
Unimpeded trade	By the end of June 2022, China's trade in goods with countries along the BRI had accumulated about US\$12 trillion, and its non-financial direct investment in countries along the route exceeded US\$140 billion The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP) and the China-Cambodia FTA officially entered into force, and a total of 32 co-

establishing countries and regions have signed mutual recognition agreements for accredited operators (AEO), and the level of trade and investment liberalisation and facilitation has continued to rise

China International Import Expo: 172 countries, regions and international organisations participated, with over 3,600 countries exhibiting and a turnover of over US\$50 billion.

Financial
integration

By the end of July 2022, China had established bilateral local currency swap arrangements with more than 20 Belt and Road countries and RMB (Chinese Yuan) clearing arrangements in more than 10 Belt and Road countries.

People-to-
people bonds

Art festivals, film festivals, music festivals, cultural heritage exhibitions and book fairs with each other, and cooperate in the creation, translation and broadcasting of books, films and TV programmes. Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions set up scholarships for the construction BRI related scholarships.



Graphic 5: The world busiest ports by cargo tonnage Ningbo-Zhoushan port, China

2.1.3 International Strategy alignment

In addition to China's one-sided input to the initiative, a number of countries have developed strategies to seek strategic alignment with China.

Table 4: Strategic alignment between China and selected countries

Country or organization	Development project	Main content
United Nations	Silk Road Initiative	A total of 230 projects were planned from 2008 to 2014 to improve the infrastructure along the ancient trade routes and open a number of economic corridors. The ultimate goal was to bring a renaissance to the ancient routes, providing new development opportunities for Central Asian and East European countries, and enabling the inland areas to benefit from globalization.
Mongolia	“Steppe Road” Program	Unveiled in November 2014, Mongolia’s “Steppe Road” Program relies on its strategically important location on the Eurasian continent to reinvigorate its economy by improving transport and trade. With an estimated investment of US\$50 billion, projects envisioned under the “Steppe Road” Program include a 997-kilometer-long expressway linking China and Russia, 1,100 kilometres of power transmission lines, and expansion of existing railways as well as gas and oil pipelines.
Philippines	Build Build Build	The Philippine government will build infrastructure over a six-year period from 2017 to 2022, covering various areas such as roads, bridges, airports, railways, ports and flood control facilities.
Kazakhstan	Bright road	In 2014, Kazakhstan established the "Bright Road" programme to promote infrastructure development in Kazakhstan to ensure sustainable economic development and social stability. The infrastructure projects are mainly in the areas of transport, industry, energy, social and culture.

Pakistan	Pakistan's Vision 2025	Pakistan considers stable and sustainable economic growth the basis for its development. China–Pakistan Economic Corridor. The initial aim is to strengthen exchanges and cooperation between China and Pakistan in the fields of transport, energy and marine, to enhance connectivity between the two countries and to promote their common development.
Greece	International Logistics Transit Hub	China and Greece should seek greater strategic integration between the joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative and Greece's strategy of building itself into an important international logistics transit hub. We need to turn the Piraeus Port into a key container transit hub in the Mediterranean region, fully give play to its role as a sea-rail transportation hub and improve the capacity of China-Europe Land-Sea Express Line. jointly advance the China-European Union (EU) relations.
Poland	"Strategy for Responsible Development"	The main objective of the Strategy is to create conditions for increasing incomes of the Polish citizens along with increasing cohesion in the social, economic, environmental and territorial dimension. There is cooperation with China in the economic field, local cooperation, culture, science and education, and tourism.
Malaysia	Government Transformation Programme	The programme, launched on 28 January 2010, aims to make the country a developed and high-income country by 2020. It aims to enhance trade and investment and facilitation, expand cooperation in new areas such as the digital economy and green economy, and build a model park for innovative economic and trade development.

Policy cooperation is based on common requirements. The first requirement is the complementary advantages of regional industrial and trade structures. The second is the complementary structure of investment and capacity cooperation. China has a strong international competitive advantage in industries such as high-speed rail, nuclear power, aerospace, steel and automobiles. Most of the countries along the Belt and Road have a weak

industrial and technological base, and have a great demand for steel and infrastructure. By investing in countries along the Belt and Road to speed up the export of superior production capacity, China can, on the one hand, optimise the allocation of resources to solve the problem of overcapacity, expand the international market and improve corporate income, and, on the other hand, promote the continuous technological progress of Chinese enterprises. Regional connectivity infrastructure is a fundamental condition for countries and regions participating in the Belt and Road Initiative to achieve open development and win-win cooperation, and therefore infrastructure development is a priority area of the Belt and Road Initiative.

In addition, the infrastructure construction process has greatly stimulated the engineering contracting market in countries along the route. Countries along the BRI are widely spread across the Asia-Pacific region, Central Asia, Africa and Europe, many of related countries are in urgent need of solutions to the severe shortage of transport, electricity, information and other infrastructure problems. Many of the countries along the Belt and Road are experiencing slow economic growth due to poor infrastructure and slow development. By participating in the Belt and Road, China can accelerate the process of infrastructure development and accelerate the rate of economic growth as well as industrialisation and urbanisation in the countries along the route.

2.1.4. Portugal and the Belt and Road Initiative



Graphic 6: China and Portugal Sign Memorandum of Understanding within BRI, 2018

In December 2018, Portugal and China signed a *Memorandum of Understanding to build the Belt and Road together*, the first Western European country to sign the agreement. In addition, 17 agreements were signed in various fields of cooperation, including trade, investment, energy, finance, marine, science and technology, education and culture. The two countries issued a joint statement on the same day, stating that Portugal welcomes and is happy to participate in the Belt and Road and that both countries will take the initiative to engage in political dialogue, improve exchanges between two sides. In April 2019, President de Sousa attended the Second Belt and Road Forum on International Cooperation in Beijing and paid a state visit to China.

China and Portugal have close economic and trade relations, with bilateral trade between China and Portugal amounting to 8.811 billion USD in 2021, up 26.71% year-on-year. Of this amount, China's exports to Portugal were 5.35 billion USD, up 28.1% year-on-year, while imports from Portugal were 3.45 billion USD, up 24.6% year-on-year. From January to April 2022, bilateral trade between China and Portugal was 2.852 billion USD, up 4% year-on-year. China's exports to Portugal mainly include: electrical and mechanical equipment, machinery and appliances, toys, furniture, steel products, etc. The main imported commodities are: machinery and appliances, electrical and mechanical equipment, and cork. By the end of December 2021, the cumulative amount of China's actual investment in Portugal exceeded €8 billion. Portugal has invested a total of 308 projects in China.

Cultural exchanges between the two countries are also frequently. Confucius Institutes have been opened at the University of Minho, the University of Lisbon, the University of Aveiro, the University of Coimbra and the University of Porto. China and Portugal have signed the Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology between the Governments, and have so far held nine sessions of the Sino-Portuguese Joint Commission on Science and Technology Cooperation. The two countries signed the Protocol on Cooperation in Research and Innovation in the Field of Marine Science and the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Marine Science in 2014 and 2016 respectively, and in November 2017, the two countries formally established the 'Blue Partnership', to jointly develop, protect the marine resources. Besides, seven pairs of friendly cities have been established between China and Portugal: Wuxi-Cascais (1993.09), Zhuhai-Castelo Branco (1994.09), Shanghai-Porto (1995.04), Tongling-Leiria (2000.09), Beijing-Lisbon (2007.10), Shenzhen - Porto (2016.10), Shenyang - Braga (2020.10).

Macau plays a very important and special role in the cooperation between China and Portugal. The multi-cultural identity of Macau, shaped by the arrival of the Portuguese in the

mid-16th century, is the ideal of a bridge between East and West (Mendes, 2014). With over 500 years history of mutual communications, the successful return of Macau to China in 1999 has built up a relationship of trust between China and Portugal. Macau has been playing a role in the Belt and Road Initiative as a centre of exchange between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries. One of the most important examples is the China- Portuguese Speaking Countries Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum (Fórum de Macau), which was established in October 2003. Initiated by the Central Government of China, organised by the Ministry of Commerce of China and hosted by the Macao Special Administrative Region Government, with the participation of nine Portuguese-speaking countries including Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe and Timor-Leste, and with the theme of economic and trade promotion and development, this intergovernmental multilateral economic and trade cooperation mechanism aims to strengthen economic and trade exchanges between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. A forum with these specificities could only exist in the Macau, a unique enclave and the meeting point of Lusophone cultures within China, with a hybrid legal framework in foreign relations (Mendes, 2014).



Graphic 7: Forum of Macau

Graphic 8: The second Sino-Portuguese Cultural Festival 2019

Macau is the only place in China where Portuguese is one of the official languages, the legal system has a Portuguese basis, a significant percentage of the mass media function in English and there is a supply of Lusophone culture, from the arts and shows to gastronomy (MENDES, 2013). For Portugal, Portuguese language could be a strategically soft power, the variable geometry of the position of Portugal in the world can also be based in hubs and in areas of cooperation which, on the basis of cultural ties, open channels of contact in other strategic areas. For China, Macao can be a channel of contact with the various Portuguese-speaking countries. For the Chinese authorities, as the former administrator of Macau, Portugal is valuable as a connection to the West (MENDES, 2013 and 2014).

To play the role of Macao as an economic and trade platform linking China and Portuguese-speaking countries, and to promote the joint development of Mainland China, Portuguese-speaking countries and Macao. The five Ministerial Conferences of the Sino-Portuguese Forum were successfully held in Macau in October 2003, September 2006, November 2010, November 2013 and October 2016. The Ministers of the participating countries have signed five action programmes on Economic and Trade Cooperation. The meeting set out the content and objectives of cooperation in the areas of government, trade, investment and business, production capacity, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and livestock, infrastructure development, energy, natural resources, education and human resources, finance, development cooperation, tourism, transport and communications, culture, broadcasting, film and sports, health, maritime and inter-provincial cooperation, etc. In April 2022, a special ministerial meeting was held in Beijing and Macau in an online and offline format. A special ministerial meeting was held in Beijing and Macau in April 2022 and a joint declaration was signed by the ministers of the participating countries. Since the establishment of the Forum, the participating countries have fully implemented the Action Plan and made contribution to further enhance the economic, trade and investment cooperation between the participating countries.\



Graphic 9: Presentation on Tourism Products from the Portuguese-speaking Countries 2022

Tourism is considered one of the most important activities of the Portuguese economy. It contributes to the creation of jobs and brings returns on the investment (Agostinho, 2012). Tourism could be the focus of cooperation between China and Portugal in the context of the BRI.

The presentation on Tourism Products from the Portuguese-speaking Countries (*Sessão de Apresentação dos Produtos Turísticos dos Países de Língua Portuguesa*), co-organised by the above-mentioned Macau Forum and the Macau government tourism office, aims to promote practical exchanges and cooperation between Mainland China, Macau and Portuguese-speaking countries in the field of tourism, and to contribute to the development of Macau as a world tourism and leisure city. The Joint Declaration adopted at the Special Ministerial Meeting of the China-Portugal Forum in April 2022 states that the participants "agree to act together to strengthen cultural communication and tourism promotion". The Forum's participants are located on four continents, separated by mountains and seas, and the nine Portuguese-speaking countries are rich in tourism resources. Through this event, we hope to further discover the natural and human beauty of the Portuguese-speaking countries, explore new opportunities for cooperation in the field of tourism between Mainland China, Macau and the Portuguese-speaking countries, and contribute to the recovery and development of tourism and the economy as a whole.

2.2 The Belt and Road Initiative in Geo-political Perspective

Several studies have looked at the relationship between geopolitics and tourism. Geopolitical risks are harmful to the travel and tourism sectors' investment, then policy makers in the tourism industry are advised to have a scheme in mind to promote social globalization, along with economic globalization (Gozgor et al., 2021). In this case, is BRI both a good economic globalization plan and a social globalization? The geopolitical arguments and discussions surrounding the BRI have continued since it was first introduced. The four important focal points to consider are, in that order: the initiative's relationship to conventional geopolitical theories; whether the initiative has clear geopolitical motivations and objectives; the initiative's geopolitical risks; and whether the initiative is able to address the newly encountered risks.

2.2.1 Belt and Road Initiative and Traditional Geopolitical Theory

The geo-political theory regards geography as a fundamental factor that influences and determines the political behaviours of states. The reason this study discusses geopolitical theory is that much of the debate about the Belt and Road Initiative has arisen because of its geopolitical feature. Just like an international relations study about Indo-pacific said that the Maritime Silk Road Initiative is seen to be ‘at the vanguard of Chinese grand strategy’ in the Indian Ocean, with Pakistan as the central link between the maritime and overland silk roads (Chellaney, 2015) (Timothy & Dennis, 2019), this kind of argument represents the geopolitical complexity of the BRI.

Geopolitics cohered between 1890 and 1920 around the works of four thinkers; the naval strategist from the United States, Alfred Mahan (1840-1914) on sea-power; the German geographer, Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904), on Lebensraum; Halford Mackinder (1861-1947) on land-power; and Rudolf Kjellén (1864-1922), a Swedish political scientist, on regional blocs. All four were passionately interested in the territorial struggles between states (Kearns, 2009).

Also, here are three representative ideas of geo-politic, Alfred Thayer Mahan's ‘Sea power theory’ (Mahan, 1911), John Mackinder's ‘World-Island and heartland theory’ (Mackinder, 1962) and Nicholas John Spykman's ‘Heartland-rimland theory’ (Spykman, 1944), which explain from different perspectives how to control world dominance by controlling the core areas of the world. The "Sea power theory" views the sea as the centre of gravity on the world stage and the lifeblood of the world's economy and security. A nation's maritime power will affect its trade and market privileges in overseas colonial territories, and it encompasses both trade and military implications (Sumida, 1999). Mackinder's ‘World-Island and heartland theory’ sees the centre of gravity of Eurasia as the hub and "heartland" of world politics, arguing that "whoever rules Eastern Europe controls the 'heartland'; whoever rules the 'heartland' controls the world island; whoever rules the world island controls the world (Sloan,1999). Spikeman's ‘heartland-rimland theory’ sees the Eurasian fringe as the key to the struggle for hegemony. Spikeman changed Mackinder's statement to ‘whoever controls the fringe will rule Eurasia, and whoever rules Eurasia will control the fate of the world’.

Geography dictates that China it is neither a mere ‘land power’ nor a mere ‘sea power’. BRI does reflect some of China's geopolitical thinking. The Belt and Road covers a wide area included Central Asia, South East Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, South America, etc., among the partners of the Belt and Road Initiative are many of the "sensitive areas" mentioned above. The Chinese government avoided publishing an ‘official map of the Belt and Road’. In

an article on the official Belt and Road website¹ in 2018, it was written: the BRI is an important platform for international cooperation and an important international public good...and there is no limit to the scope of countries, the practice of producing lists and maps of countries along the BRI is not recommended.

2.2.2 The Debate on Belt and Road Initiative

The debate over whether the Belt and Road Initiative is merely an economic development plan has been ongoing from the beginning. A more representative comment that the BRI as a kind of Chinese geo-political strategy was given by former White House strategic advisor in December 2017. He argued that the boldness of China's 'One Belt, One Road' is composed of three geopolitical components that make up an entire strategy. Combines Mackinder's theory that whoever controls the Central Asian hinterland controls the world island; and whoever controls the world island controls the world. This is how Mackinder created his theory. The "Silk Road" expansion was to link these important countries of Central Asia together and to really unify into one market using a mercantilist market model, that is, "all the way" (Bannon, 2017). As BRI is a strategic plan to connect the major ports (Teng, 2018).

Besides, some countries see the BRI as a strategic competition; they have come up with their own projects for the BRI. such as the United States of America's *Build Back a Better World (B3W) initiative* proposed by the Biden administration in 2021 and India's revival of regional cooperation systems such as the *Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Economic and Technical Cooperation (BIMSTEC)*. These strategies are seen as a response to China's Belt and Road Initiative and to China's growing international influence. Take the B3W initiative as an example; it is an intended economic initiative led by the USA and preannounced in the context of the Group of Seven (G7) in June 2021. This USA initiative, designed to provide an alternative to China's BRI for the infrastructure development of low- and middle-income countries, seeks to address the \$40 trillion worth of infrastructure needed by developing countries by 2035.

Chinese officials have repeatedly emphasized on diplomatic occasions that the BRI is more of a geo-economic strategy than a geopolitical strategy. In 2015, the Chinese National Development and reform Commission issued a regulation on the translation of the Belt and Road, using as much as possible 'initiative' and not to use 'strategy' 'project' 'program' 'agenda' and other words. They stressed that the BRI is open to all, without exclusion or targeting of any

¹ Belt and Road portal: www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn

party and claim that the Cold War thinking is outdated (Xi, 2017). In April 2022, Xi mentioned in his speech *Join hands to meet challenges, cooperate to create the future*, that China will insist the goals of high standards, sustainability, benefiting people's lives and actively promote the high-quality construction.

In the official Chinese discourse, it is denied that the Belt and Road is a geopolitical tool for China but an international public good and pragmatic cooperation platform; it is denied that it is a Chinese foreign aid program but a policy communication and strategic docking; it is also denied that it is a substitute for cooperation between China and existing countries but as a complement; and it is denied that it serves as a trigger for a clash of civilizations but as a bridge for cross-regional cooperation across cultural and religious beliefs. Unlike the three geopolitical doctrines mentioned above, it is also true that the Belt and Road Initiative itself does not contain specific elements of explicit security cooperation or political confrontation. The Belt and Road Initiative adheres to the principles of common commerce, sharing and building. As Chinese authorities have repeatedly, China will adhere to the principles of friendship for generations and be good neighbours, support each other and be good friends, increase pragmatic cooperation and be good partners, and expand regional cooperation and create brilliance together.

The debate over the substance of the Belt and Road Initiative has also involved a discussion of traditional international relations theory. International relations scholar John Mearsheimer, who is known to be gloomy about China's ability to rise peacefully and whose views are often discussed in Chinese academia and on the Internet, argues that when it comes to trade and security competition between countries, historically, "countries at war with each other also often do not break off economic relations because they find such trade profitable to each other" (Mearsheimer, 2017). The debate over the substance of the Belt and Road Initiative has also involved a discussion of traditional international relations theory. International relations scholar John Mearsheimer, who is known to be gloomy about China's ability to rise peacefully and whose views are often discussed in Chinese academia and on the Internet, argues that when it comes to trade and security competition between countries, historically, "countries at war with each other also often do not break off economic relations because they find such trade profitable to each other" (Mearsheimer, 2017). This is evidence of his theory of 'offensive realism' by questioning whether the economic cooperation advocated by the Belt and Road can avoid the logic of security competition between states. While he acknowledges that increasing trade and commerce can avoid conflict to some extent, intense inter-state security competition cannot be completely avoided through trade (Mearsheimer, 2014).

On the other hand, in his Chinese preface to Mearsheimer's book *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, the Chinese scholar Wang Yigui refutes this realist theory by arguing that the essence of the question of China's peaceful rise is whether the Western world can accept it. Wang argues that "realism originates from the internal circulation of the Western world, and this theory and understanding would stop at the international reality of the advent of a pluralistic world" and that China's rise would return the world to a normal state of diversity that could transcend many Western theories, especially realist theories. Wang's view is very representative. He argues that the Belt and Road Initiative is not only not a geopolitical strategy for China, but on the contrary, it emphasizes strategic docking and interconnection, with the aim of eliminating the divisions brought about by traditional geopolitical theories, eliminating the suffering caused by colonialism of divide and rule, and achieving the 'connection of people's hearts and minds' (Wang, 2014).

Scholars also argue that even though the Belt and Road initiative itself is not a Chinese geopolitical strategy, international security issues must be considered in the process of its implementation (Wang, 2018). This argument is not without basis; for example, China's construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road will inevitably involve specific issues such as China's energy security and maritime trade security. The implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative covers several countries and regions and faces the challenge of frequent geopolitical events and international emergencies. For example, the trade war between the United States and China in 2018, the COVID-19 global pandemic that has broken out since 2020, and a more intense geopolitical conflict in 2022 all challenge the smooth and sustainable implementation of BRI. Although the long-term impact of these events still needs to be assessed, there is no doubt that they will certainly have a significant impact on the development and globalisation of the Belt and Road Initiative. The Belt and Road Initiative faces a relatively complex geopolitical controversy. A number of studies have explored how the Chinese tourism industry can maintain sustainable and stable development in an uncertain context of geopolitical controversy and economic development. China's policymakers should pay enough attention to the establishment of geopolitical tension tracking and observation mechanisms so as to minimise the external impact that may affect the decision-making of potential tourists (Akadiri, Eluwole, et al., 2020; Akadiri, Lasisi, et al., 2020).

Comparing the BRI often with the Marshall Plan after the end of World War II is certainly another shortcut to its understanding. It may be too early to suggest that the BRI could bring similar outcomes as the Marshall Plan, especially in competing for the global leadership in the 21st century (Shen & Chan, 2018), and it is also more and more described by many Chinese

observers as a highly important “strategy” and not just an economic initiative (Michael, 2015). First, the Belt and Road is an international cooperation initiative without a Cold War context or ideological overtones. Second, in terms of time, the Belt and Road has a longer-term cooperation lifecycle (Curran, 2016); in terms of path, the Marshall Plan focuses on aid and rebuild after the great war. In essence, China's proposal of ‘consultation, consultation and shared’ as the golden principles of BRI, is not a ‘zero-sum game’. Xi's speech in 2018 states that the Belt and Road Initiative is neither a post-World War II Marshall Plan nor a Chinese conspiracy, but an open and inclusive regional cooperation initiative (Xi, 2018). There is no doubt that compare to the Marshall Plan the Belt and Road Initiative has a greater openness and is not limited to Europe. In addition to the large number of participating countries, involving many regions in East and Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Africa, South America and Europe, the BRI did bring many international organizations into this framework, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Association of African Nations, the European Union, etc. Just like Christian Ploberger write in his paper, on which the initiative focuses, we must recognise the differences in the existing political and economic cooperation efforts of BRI (Ploberger, 2017), China has a different focus in its cooperation in different regions; for example, he believes that the BRI could be considered an extension of China's economic cooperation with Southeast Asia, and for Central Asia, the BRI is a new impetus for deeper cooperation.

A very convincing argument is that the BRI is not either an economic or political project, but one that transforms politics at multiple scales and has the potential to be transformative and will simultaneously create possibilities for global cooperation and conflict (Flint, C., & Zhu, C. 2019). Researchers who emphasize the positive impact of the Belt and Road claim that, China must keep striving to match its words with its deeds in global arenas, so as to win more trust and support from the international community in jointly implementing the initiative (Zhang, 2018).

2.2.3 Is Belt and Road Initiative a sustainable plan?

Another important topic is whether the BRI is out-of-date, aside from the dispute about the BRI's goals and the success of its execution. Has its value diminished in context of COVID-19 and the significant changes to the global scene, is BRI a sustainable plan? As reviewed, the Belt and Road Initiative faces the following three main challenges and risks.

First, the Belt and Road faces security challenges, including military conflicts, terrorism,

energy security and other security dangers, also with geopolitical conflicts undermining the basis for cooperation.

Many regions along the Belt and Road are not only subject to traditional security risks such as geopolitical conflicts, territorial disputes, and internal political instability of individual countries, but also non-traditional security risks such as terrorist threats, economic security, public health security, and transnational crime.

Take public health safety, for example, the pandemic's negative economic effects on many developing countries have also reduced interest in the BRI. Many prominent BRI partner countries, such as Sri Lanka, now face debt distress arising. In addition to the external risks mentioned above, there are also uncertainties in China's own policies. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic, however, has been a major complication for the BRI. Since January 2020, China has closed its borders to the world, cutting off most in-person exchanges and crippling businesses' ability to evaluate, negotiate and conclude new deals.

Secondly, the challenge posed by the sloppy operation of the economy. During the implementation of some projects, problems did arise in terms of environmental protection, employment and insufficient cultural communication.

Although the One Belt, One Road initiative is being promoted mainly through international cooperation at the "high political level", with a focus on cooperation with local governments, the implementation of the One Belt, One Road projects ultimately depends on the operation of the projects. The implementation of Belt and Road projects has also revealed that a few projects have been blindly promoted without taking into account environmental protection, labour and cultural differences in the countries where the projects are located, and that coordination with local environmental protection organisations and labour associations has been neglected. For example, in a cooperation with Indonesia in 2017, Chinese companies hired more Chinese labourers, which led to protests from local trade unions. In addition, the current phase of the Belt and Road Initiative is still mainly focused on funding, technology, projects, engineering and commodities, etc. In the future, in addition to continuing to maintain it, it should also extend more to public goods in terms of standards, rules, institutions and ideas.

Third, the BRI may faces being over-politicized. Sometimes, the Belt and Road Initiative is treated as an exclusively geopolitical and internationally competitive strategy while completely ignoring its economic cooperation component. In some cases, it has given heated debates between different political factions. Both the Chinese government and Chinese firms should further bridge BRI and international rules. Moving forward, BRI must be open, green, and clean with a high-standard, people-centred, and sustainable approach (Zhang, 2019).

This section won't be further examined because it's not the main topic of this essay. The Belt and Road Initiative, with its primary focus on economic cooperation, goes beyond the traditional sense of geopolitical strategy and sets out ambitious and aggressive development goals. Whether or not the initiative is an obvious geopolitical strategy, it is at least certain that it owns huge potential impact and influence on global geopolitics. Using the Belt and Road Initiative to expand the Chinese market is undoubtedly something that should be explored by those involved in the tourism industry.

2.3 The Belt and Road Initiative and tourism

In the context of international economic diversification, industrial integration, and globalization, the development of tourism industry for a given country is inevitably affected by the performance of foreign economies (Chen, 2021). A study among 155 countries from 2000 to 2017 shows that BRI significantly increases the number of inbound tourists 17.2% and inbound tourism revenue 8.0% (Li et al., 2020). Specific elements of BRI tourism cooperation include, but are not limited to: i) tourism policy making, where countries negotiate and develop plans and policies to promote intra-regional cooperation; ii) infrastructure co-construction; iii) exchange of passenger flows to create joint development of tourism products; iv) increasing sports competitions, folk culture and other related large-scale events to promote cultural identity; v) the establishment of investment platforms (Weiling & Yongguang, 2016). The tourism development of the BRI builds on the ancient Silk Road and presents a new era of development content and initiatives.

2.3.1 Tourism and the Ancient Silk Road

As a road of integration, exchange and dialogue between the East and West, the Silk Road witnessed the development and convergence of political culture, social economy and religious thought in Eurasia and Africa from the 2nd century BC to the 16th century AD, and made an important contribution to the progress of human civilisation and the development of world history. In recent years, Silk Road tourism, as a collection of tourism activities and projects with cross-border and transcontinental ecological environment, natural resources, history, culture and humanistic activities as the main attraction, has gradually become a focus of attention and importance for governments, academics and the tourism industry along the route.

Graphic 10: The Nestorian Stele, created in 781, describes the introduction of Nestorian Christianity to China Tang dynasty

The UNWTO Silk Road Program was launched at the UNWTO Plenary in Indonesia in 1993, in collaboration with UNESCO and 25 countries (now extended to 33) in three areas: marketing and promotion, capacity building and destination management, and travel facilitation. Under the auspices of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Silk Road member countries are actively engaged in all aspects of marketing and cooperation, working to create a common international brand, logo and image of the Silk Road. UNWTO has undertaken a range of joint promotional activities (UNWTO, 2018), such as: increasing Silk Road tourism² online promotion through destination websites, search engines and optimisation of organisational channels; increasing cooperation between Silk Road member countries; working closely with neighbouring countries to maintain commitments to improve cross-regional air cooperation on visa policies; promoting Silk Road tourism trade and product development more closely; taking a collaborative approach in major tourism fairs to promote Silk Road tourism marketing; develop Silk Road brand stories; work with educational institutions to promote Silk Road knowledge enrichment and expansion; develop thematic products to promote Silk Road tourism (food, heritage, culture, etc.).



According to the World Bank and the World Tourism Organization, as of 2013, countries along the Silk Road had 18,404 nature reserves, 62 World Natural Heritage Sites and 382 World Cultural Heritage Sites, with nature reserves accounting for 74.7% of global tourism resources, natural heritage tourism resources accounting for 32.1% of global tourism resources and cultural heritage tourism resources accounting for 50.9% of global tourism resources. At present, the region along the Silk Road has become a major concentration area of the world's tourism resources and an important growth pole for international tourism economic development. The

² <https://www.unwto.org/silk-road>

eastern and western ends of the Silk Road connect the world's two major tourism destinations and source markets, with huge potential for future tourism market development.

The introduction of the BRI in 2013 marked a new stage in the development of tourism resources and international tourism cooperation along the Silk Road. The Belt and Road Initiative extending the concept of the Silk Road into four themes: Peace and cooperation, Openness and inclusiveness, Mutual learning and Mutual benefit. (Xi, 2017).

Table 5: The Chinese government's presentation of the ancient Silk Road

Item	Contents
Peace and cooperation	Generations of 'Silk roaders' have built bonds of cooperation and bridges of peace between East and West.
Openness and inclusiveness	Different civilisations, religions and ethnic groups, seeking common ground while preserving differences, are open and tolerant, writing a magnificent poem of mutual respect and working together to paint a beautiful picture of common development.
Mutual learning	Along the Silk Road, Buddhism, Islam and Arabian astronomy, calendar and medicine were introduced to China, and the four great inventions of China and sericulture were introduced to the world. More importantly, the exchange of goods and knowledge brought about innovations in ideas.
Mutual benefit	The ancient Silk Road witnessed the prosperity of the land, where 'messengers met on the roads and merchants travelled incessantly', and of the sea, where 'ships crossed the sea in untold numbers'. The Silk Road was a source of great regional development and prosperity.

The main contents and reviews of plans are as follows.

- UNESCO Silk Road tourism project (1993)

The concept of a Silk Road tourism project was first raised at UNWTO's General Assembly in Indonesia in 1993. This plan has four main aspects: Marketing and promotion, capacity

building and destination management, tourism route development, silk road tourism research (Sotiriadis, M., & Shen, S.2017). During the 1990s, the Central Asian region and China were the main beneficiaries of this project, the project has played a key role in the recovery of Central Asia from the economic damage caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s (Winter, 2021). The develop of the Silk Road concept allows complex pasts to be comprehended and pulled together into a coherent imaginary, and the Silk Road has become one of the most compelling geo-cultural forms of the modern era (Winter, 2016).

- UNWTO-Western Silk Road Initiative (2016)

The project was developed by the UNWTO with the Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) of the European Commission (EC), which is an extension of the United Nations Silk Road Tourism project. The project focuses on the current situation of the Silk Road heritage in Europe, with the aim of better understanding Silk Road cultural and proposing a tourism development plan.

A report called *Understanding of European Tourism Research on the Potential of the Western Silk Road Highlights* suggests that the creation of a Western Silk Road brand would be valued by tourism stakeholders and would become a solid tool for strengthening the economic potential of the Silk Road along its Western region (COSME of EU, 2017).

- 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (2019)

The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is a "maritime version" of the Silk Road that focuses mostly on the historic sea routes that connected East and West for trade. By the UNWTO report in 2019, this proposed infrastructural projects will have a significant impact in terms of the geography of travel and tourism, the scale of the industry and its tourism product offering. The plan focuses on port and regional upgrades in coastal cities, resorts, rail and port transport infrastructure.

These plans and China's presentation of the ancient Silk Road redeveloped from the ancient Belt and Road. As an example, China proposes a plan called 'Ice Silk Road' as part of BRI, to cooperation with Russia and Nordic countries. The Silk Road is a post-Cold War tourist and cultural phenomenon that was started by the UNWTO in an increasingly interconnected world, in addition to being rich in tourism resources. Although the Silk Road has been around for a long time, large-scale tourism development began in the early 1990s, when the end of the Cold War and the easing of international relations made travel along the Silk Road possible, before which travelling to China, or Central Asia, was not as easy for most people. Some scholars have pointed out that the imaginary of the Silk Road and the promotion of the

commercialization of tourism was one of the key sources of the post-Cold War economies of Central Asia, and that it protected, to some extent, the politically influenced Central Asian countries from the stronger economic blows, the positive consequences of tourism growth as local governments can improve public places' atmosphere and the value of cultural and natural resources through tourism development (Iftikhar et al, 2022). From the perspective of economic development, there is a tacit connection between the Silk Road program of the 1990s and the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China in the 21st century.

2.3.2 The Belt and Road Initiative and international Tourism Development

The vision of the Belt and Road Initiative is to 'jointly build an open, inclusive, balanced and inclusive regional economic cooperation structure and basically form a network of high-standard free trade zones. Tourism cooperation will promote sustainable tourism development in the countries along the route, improve the happiness of local communities, stimulate investment, preserve the cultural and natural heritage along the route and provide tourists with an unforgettable Silk Road tourism experience (Jie et al, 2017), also make sure that the development of tourism goals is sustainable and that head investments in the industry are diversified. In the future, the BRI will realise the convergence of tourism industry standards and industrial policies of countries along the route, integrate air, rail, road and waterway transport, and realise the interconnection and seamless connection of tourism transport along the Belt and Road.

The development of tourism along the BRI is first and foremost reflected in the vision of the initiators. The book *The Belt and Road Initiative* published in 2018 contains forty-two speeches by Xi Jinping from September 2013 to July 2018 on promoting the "Belt and Road" construction. According to the book, the initiative aims to promote infrastructure development and greater connectivity, synergize the development policies and strategies of individual countries, deepen practical cooperation, encourage coordinated and interconnected development, and bring about common prosperity. Some parts of the Chinese President's speech on tourism development are herein collated.

For expanding cooperation in tourism, China has held joint year of tourism with many other BRI countries, initiating cooperation mechanisms such as the Silk Road Tourism Promotion Union, Maritime Silk Road Tourism Promotion Alliance, and Tea Road International Tourism Alliance. China has signed mutual visa exemption agreements for different types of

passports with 57 countries, and concluded 19 agreements or arrangements to streamline visa application procedures with 15 countries.

Table 6: Visa Policies for Belt and Road Countries and Regions for Chinese citizens

Mutual visa waivers for ordinary passports (11)	Unilateral visa-free access for Chinese citizens (7)	Unilateral visa-on-arrival for Chinese citizens (33)
UAE, Barbados, Fiji, Grenada, Seychelles, Tonga, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus, Ecuador, Qatar	Indonesia, South Korea (Jeju Island), Tunisia, Morocco, Samoa, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica	Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Maldives, Bangladesh, Brunei, Nepal, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Lebanon, Madagascar, Turkmenistan, Bahrain, Vanuatu, Azerbaijan, Iran, Jordan, Armenia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Togo, Cape Verde, Gabon, Guyana, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Uganda, Mauritania, Suriname

Source: Shanghai General Border Control Station until August 2021

In 2018 outbound Chinese tourists numbered 150 million, and inbound foreign tourists numbered 30.54 million. Russia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Mongolia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore were the main sources of tourists for China.

Table 7: Xi's speech on the Belt and Road Initiative about tourism

Release Date	Speech in which city	Contents about the tourism
September 13, 2013	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	We will strengthen humanistic exchanges and people-to-people contacts, and lay a solid public and social foundation for the development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. We should cooperate extensively in the fields of culture, education, film and television, health, sports and tourism.
May 21,	Shanghai,	China proposes..., deepening exchanges and cooperation in the

2014	China	fields of counter-terrorism, economic and trade, tourism, environmental protection and humanities.
June 5, 2014	Beijing, China	China and Afghanistan have decided to designate 2014 and 2015 as the Sino-Arab Friendship Year, and to organize a series of friendly exchange activities within this framework. We are also willing to expand the scale of cultural exchange activities such as art festivals with the Arab side, encourage more young students to study or exchange in each other's countries, and strengthen cooperation in the fields of tourism, aviation, press and publishing.
November 4, 2014	Beijing, China	We should insist on promoting economic cooperation and humanistic exchanges together, and promote humanistic exchanges in education, tourism, academia and arts between China and countries along the route, so as to raise them to a new level.
November 8, 2014	Beijing, China	China supports dialogue among civilisations and religions, encourages cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts between countries, supports joint applications for world cultural heritage by countries along the Silk Road, and encourages more local provinces and municipalities in Asian countries to establish cooperative relations. Asia is rich in tourism resources and more and more people are travelling abroad, so it is important to develop specialised tourism along the Silk Road, so that tourism cooperation and connectivity can be mutually reinforcing. In the next five years, China will provide 20,000 training places for neighbouring countries in the field of connectivity to help them train their own teams of experts. China is also willing to send more students, experts and scholars to neighbouring countries for study and exchange.
March 28, 2015	Boao, China	China's economic development has entered a new normal and will continue to provide more opportunities for markets, growth, investment and cooperation for all countries in the world, including Asian countries. In the next five years, China's imports will exceed US\$10 trillion, its outbound investment will exceed US\$500 billion

		and the number of outbound tourists will exceed 500 million.
December 4, 2015	Johannesburg, South Africa	Organize annual visits to China by 200 African scholars and 500 African youths; train 1,000 African journalists each year; support the opening of more direct flights between China and Africa and promote China-Africa tourism cooperation.
January 18, 2016		The country's role in the world economy and global governance is rapidly increasing, with China being the world's second largest economy, the largest exporter of goods, the second largest importer of goods, the second largest foreign direct investor, the largest foreign exchange reserve holder and the largest tourist market, making it a major factor in shaping the world's political and economic landscape
June 22, 2016	Uzbekistan	Promote the development of offshore RMB business in countries along the route, innovate financial products; strengthen cooperation in the field of humanities, further develop cooperation in education, science and technology, culture, sports, tourism, health, archaeology and other fields, and establish a platform for exchange of big data,
November 19, 2016	Lima, Peru	The future of China's economic development is bright. China's development is an opportunity for the world. In the next five years, China's total imports are expected to reach US\$8 trillion, foreign investment to reach US\$600 billion, outbound investment to reach US\$750 billion and outbound tourism to reach 700 million.
January 17, 2017	Davos, Switzerland	In the next five years, China's outbound tourism is expected to reach 700 million trips. This will provide countries around the world with a wider market, more capital, more products and more valuable opportunities for cooperation.
January 18, 2017	Geneva, Switzerland	China's outbound investment will reach US\$750 billion, and outbound tourism will reach 700 million. This will bring more

opportunities for the development of all countries in the world.

May 14,
2017

Beijing, China

The Chinese government provides 10,000 government scholarships to relevant countries each year, and local governments have also set up special Silk Road scholarships to encourage international cultural and educational exchanges. The Chinese government also encourages international cultural and educational exchanges. We are making good use of our historical and cultural heritage to jointly develop tourism products and heritage conservation with Silk Road characteristics.

May 14,
2017

Beijing, China

We are willing to explore multi-level and broad-ranging humanities cooperation, strengthen exchanges and cooperation in education, science and technology, culture, health, tourism and sports, etc., build more cooperation platforms and open up more cooperation channels.

There are some scientific papers on the topic of tourism and the BRI, these countries including but not limited to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal, Ukraine, Iceland, African countries and Pacific Island countries.

Central Asian countries are an important part of the traditional Belt and Road tourism region. In the year of 2014 'the Bright Road', a national strategy has been proposed by Kazakhstan to connect to the BRI. This plan involves investment in tourism infrastructure and tourism manpower development, insurance etc (Ming, 2018). Kyrgyzstan has also stepped up its efforts to develop and promote the Chinese tourism market. In 2014, in cooperation with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and China, the Chang'an-Tianshan road network (a 5,000 km stretch of the Silk Road network from Central China to the Zhetysu region of Central Asia), was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

As neighbour countries of China, Laos and Vietnam have always maintained closer ties with China, and as a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, China has significant investments in the region. South East Asian countries have rare tropical tourism resources for Chinese and have a distance advantage in attracting Chinese tourists. It is considered practicable for both side by setting up branches of travel agencies for increase visitors (Jing, 2016).

The BRI is a huge opportunity for African tourism. Security issues are the biggest barrier to Chinese tourists visiting Africa. Some countries have set up national tourism police and some scholars believe that strengthening cooperation between Chinese and African countries' tourism police can effectively reduce the concerns of Chinese tourists (Hongmei & Jinbo, 2019). 'Ice Silk Road' is a platform for the development of tourism cooperation between China and Russia and Nordic countries, in 2017, Chinese tourists overtook Japan to become the country's largest visitor importing country, there is still great potential for tourism cooperation between the two sides (Xiaofang, 2020).

Initially the Belt and Road initiative identified 65 countries, but it was later generalised to all countries in the world willing to participate in the construction of the Belt and Road, including South America. "The 65 countries of the BRI do not include Western Europe, and the World Tourism Organisation's Silk Road project includes only 33 countries, some countries like Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Greece, Italy, Spain are not included in the Silk Road project. The key concepts of UNESCO are that the Silk Road has both length and width, and from a tourism point of view, it would be appropriate for the Belt and Road tourism belt to include the countries along the Silk Road heritage corridor. But is the destination brand marketed as BRI or 'Silk Road'? The Silk Road is a long-established and deeply rooted tourism brand, while the Belt and Road is more of a strategic diplomatic brand, and the two do not exactly fit together in terms of destination planning, itinerary design and brand marketing. Besides, who should be the main promoter of the Belt and Road tourism cooperation? As the initiator of the Belt and Road Initiative, the world's number one source of tourists and the world's number two tourist destination, China should take on more responsibilities and obligations.

2.3.3 China-EU tourism cooperation

China has also made use of the China-Italy, China-France, China-Britain and China-South Africa humanities exchange to expand cooperation, and has set up Chinese tourism offices in Budapest, Hungary and Astana, Kazakhstan guided the completion of the construction of China Tourism Experience Centers in Paris and Sydney, and held China-Central and Eastern Europe, China-ASEAN, China-Russia and China-Tourism cooperation meetings

A representative achievement of tourism cooperation between the EU and China in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative is the 2018 EU-China Tourism Festival. In 2016, the Chinese Prime Minister and the President of the European Commission agreed that the 2018

China-Europe Tourism Year (ECTY) is a unique opportunity to attract more Chinese tourists off the beaten track, stimulate European investment in China and further promote China-Europe visa facilitation (negotiations launched in May 2017) and air connectivity (horizontal agreement signed in December 2017). The tourism Year is implemented jointly by the European Commission and the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Culture and Tourism. More than 270 actions and events were initiated and/or funded by the EU (European Travel Commission, 2018). The main elements of this activity include the following:

- Promote lesser-known destinations
- improve travel and tourism experiences.
- provide opportunities to increase economic cooperation.
- create an incentive to make quick progress on EU-China visa facilitation and air connectivity.



Graphic 11: Logo of EU-China Tourism year

Joint efforts during the EU-China tourism year contributed to increase Chinese arrivals by 7.9% for September-December 2018 as compared to the previous year. The top three fastest growing destinations were Croatia (+59%), Sweden (+40.9%) and Malta (36.3%). For January to April 2019, bookings from China to the EU grew by 16.9% compared to last year, much higher than the growth in bookings from China to global destinations (9.3%) (ForwardKeys, 2019).

As part of the event, the “Ready for China” on the website of ECTY designed to mobilize

EU tourism actors, companies, museums, destination marketing organisations, train them to learning how to attract and welcome Chinese tourists. "Ready for China has organised 55 webinars, published 28 reports and held 10 educational conferences. The convenience of visas, direct flights and the friendliness of destinations to tourists are three of the main factors that Chinese people consider when travelling abroad. With the promotion of tourism year, Chinese tourists are being treated more conveniently. Eight European countries have facilitated the entry of Chinese tourists, more than 600 flights are operated between China and Europe every week, and several new routes have been opened to Europe, significantly reducing flight times. The cooperation between Chinese and European tourism companies has also become more in-depth, with Ctrip, Chinese biggest online travel agency, joining hands with dozens of European destinations in strategic cooperation, launching a European tour platform and launching more than 5,000 products, which has helped to boost more Chinese people to visit Europe.

Eduardo Santander, Executive Director European Travel Commission said: 'The 2018 EU-China Tourism Year initiative has been extremely successful. And we continue to see the benefits in 2019. The growth in Chinese travellers has been solid, and the near future, judging by current bookings, will see the EU continuing to increase its share of this valuable market, not just to traditional destinations, but lesser-known and emerging ones as well'.

The areas of tourism cooperation between China and the EU include the construction of cooperation platforms and mechanisms, the construction of industry standards and industrial policies, the guarantee of financial investment, the construction of facilitated tourism channels, and the construction of tourism promotion and marketing mechanisms. The BRI plan states: "Strengthen tourism cooperation, expand the scale of tourism, hold mutual tourism promotion weeks, publicity months, and other activities; jointly create international boutique tourism routes and tourism products with Silk Road characteristics; and improve the level of visa facilitation for tourists from countries along the route." (Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the Belt and Road Initiative, 2019)

2.4 The current and future role of the Chinese tourism in the world's emerging market

As the tourism industry grows in many countries, the causal relationship between economic growth and tourism receipts is becoming important for policymakers. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2017), the industry has had an impressive impact on the world economy. Similar to how the Silk Road region of Central Asia opened its travel industry in the 1990s, large regions that were previously off-limits to tourists have become accessible since the mid-1980s, expanding the geography of tourism on a genuinely global scale. The Cold War was still a reality in the mid-1980s, and a few wealthy nations, primarily in Western Europe and North America, dominated the demand for international travel. At that time, the vast majority of individuals didn't have the resources or the chance to go far from home; today, demand is considerably more dispersed. For instance, the expanding middle class in China is anticipated to surpass all other countries' travel expenditures (Boniface et al., 2020). For nations with better-developed tourist infrastructure, like Portugal, this structural change in global tourism flows presents significant market opportunities.

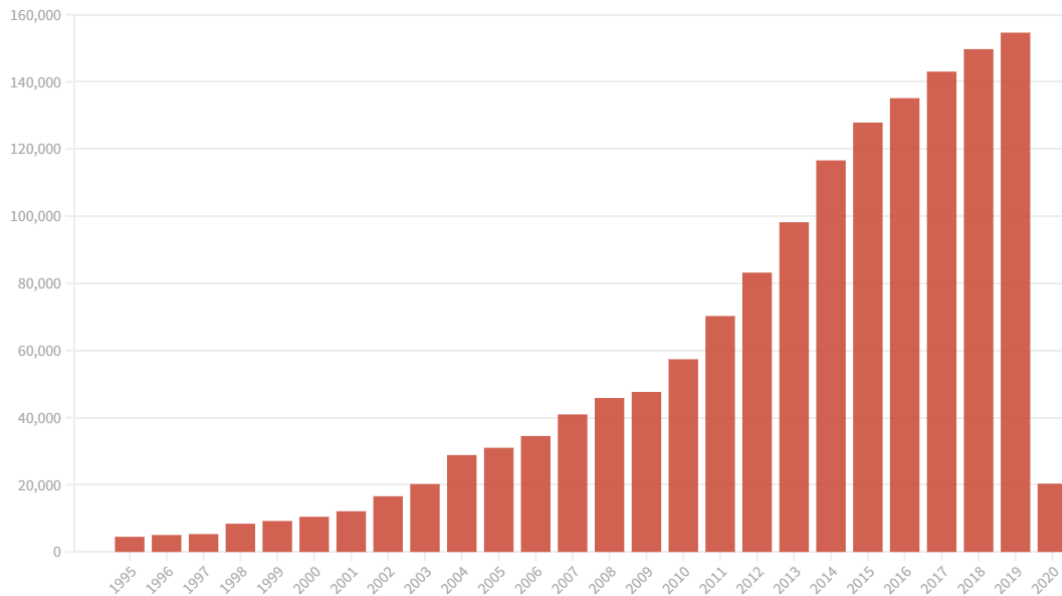
Boniface claims that tourist flows are a type of spatial interaction between two regions, with the destination location having an excess of a resource or good and the generating area having a shortage, or demand for that good (Boniface et al., 2020). There are two deciding elements, the push-and-pull model has been widely adopted as a popular framework to examine Chinese outbound tourists' travel motivations (Hsu & Lam, 2003; Zhang & Lam, 1999).

- Push factors are mainly concerned with the stage of economic development in the generating area and will include such factors as levels of affluence, mobility and holiday entitlement. Moreover, an advanced stage of economic development will not only give the population the means to engage in tourism but the pressures of city life will provide the urge to get away from work. Climate will also provide a strong impetus to travel.

- Pull factors include accessibility, and the attractions and amenities of the destination area. The relative cost of the visit is also important, as is the effectiveness of marketing and promotion by the destination.

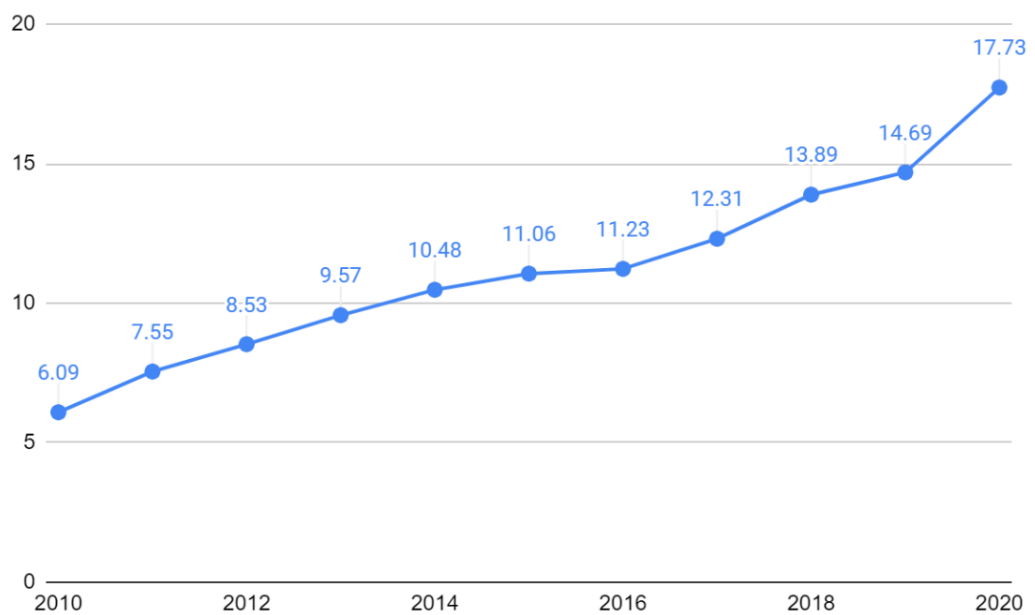
Chinese outbound tourists Volume statistics

Figure 3: Chinese outbound tourist departure (Thousand)



Source: UNWTO 145 Key Tourism Statistics, 22 December 2022

Figure 4: GDP (current trillion USD) of China



Source: World Bank

Volume statistics give the number of tourists visiting a destination in a given period of time. According to UNWTO, Chinese tourists maintained a high growth rate during the decade 2010-2019, with 154.6 million departures in 2019 before the COVID-19 outbreak, providing a

strong impetus to international tourism growth as an emerging market. Looking back from a more distant perspective, the number of Mainland Chinese outbound tourists was 3.74 million in 1993, increasing to more than 10 million in 2000, and by 2002, this number had grown to 16.6 million. Chinese outbound tourism is remarkable and will continue to grow far into the future as more countries are added to its Preferred Destination Status list and as the standard of living continues to increase among more segments of Mainland China's society (Guo et al., 2007). The growth of Chinese outbound tourism is positively correlated with the rapid growth of the Chinese economy and, as the table shows, this is 'push factor' motioned above. Several other countries that have maintained high economic growth have also maintained rapid growth in the number of outbound tourists, such as India from 12.99 million in 2010 to 26.92 in 2019. Indonesia from 6.24 million in 2010 to 11.69 million in 2019.

The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in 20.334 million outbound travellers for the year 2020, a decrease of 86.9% year-on-year. According to the Annual Report on China's Outbound Tourism Development 2021, published by the China Tourism Research Institute in November 2021, Chinese outbound tourism is generally stagnant from 2020 to 2021. In 2021, the number of outbound tourists will be approximately 25.62 million, a 17% recovery from the previous year.

In the recent future, relaxation of epidemic control and changes in destination institutions will be the two hidden push factors. According to the report mentioned above, under the influence of the epidemic Asia continues to top the list of intercontinental destinations with a share of 95.45%, followed by Europe, the Americas, Oceania and Africa in that order. Overall, the more proximate destinations were less affected by the impact of the epidemic. The year-on-year decline in visitors to Asia, Europe, Oceania, the Americas and Africa ranged between 70% and 95%. Asia saw the smallest decrease and Oceania the largest.

Also, tourist flows are not simply movements of people but they also have an important economic significance for the tourism system. Bilateral commerce, foreign direct investment, and economic-related factors all significantly influence Chinese visitor visits. This shows that for China as a global manufacturing hub, human, goods, and financial movements are often complementary (Jiang & Wu, 2020).

Characteristics of Chinese outbound tourists

The ways in which countries are adapting to and meeting the needs of outbound Chinese tourists in pivotal areas such as language, food, interpretation and activity development is of global interest (Pearce et al., 2015). Studies have focused on the characteristics of Chinese

outbound traveller; some studies have pointed out that the different cultural backgrounds of China and the West influence the behavioural habits of tourists. Research about the way how Chinese and American tourists' reviews on restaurants can be a good example, China is a country that has a larger power distance, features collectivism, and is less indulgent. The pro-harmony Confucian social norm has a strong influence on the Chinese people. These characteristics strengthen one another such that they found a unique balance in being tolerantly nice and seriously orderly. U.S. is much different from China. U.S. tourists' recreational consumption philosophy makes restaurant and other tourism venues a life and fun seeking place for them (Jia, 2020). Western view of travel as an escape from everyday living (Pearce, 2011), this concern appears less often in the report about Chinese motivational influences (Lu, 2011). Chinese outbound tourists often prefer convenient, friendly, modern, safe, and unique (e.g. culturally diverse) destinations. Among these, safety appears to be a critical factor in selecting destinations to visit (Kim, Guo, & Agrusa, 2005). These tourists could be categorized as middle class in China and their main motivation remains sightseeing, followed by leisure, holiday and business. 'Doing homework', means doing more pre-plans is a seemingly indispensable matter for them to make decisions (Planning & Xiang, 2018). Modern Chinese tourists are notable for their unique cultural and experience position because they frequently understand English or another language, they are technologically advanced, and they are frequently younger than their Japanese counterparts. (Wu and Pearce 2013; Beijing Today 2010). Chinese tourists prefer to follow rather than take risks, most studies on Chinese tourists' motivations for travelling abroad have focused on well-known and well-liked locations like Thailand, Australia, Hong Kong, Macau, and the United States. (Jin & Wang, 2016). On A means-end chain study on the Chinese outbound market, Six chains of Chinese tourists' behavioural purposes have been summarised as 'natural scenery-hedonic/pleasure', 'natural scenery-happiness', 'local customs-the exciting life', 'local food-self-realization', 'natural scenery-the beauty of the world' and 'shopping – hedonic/pleasure' (S. Jiang et al., 2019).

In summary, outbound tourism for emerging market countries still has a lot of potential, and this potential is being unlocked by factors like economic growth, closer external economic ties, and made easier to access due to better transportation and infrastructure, which is a typical development path for these nations. The Belt and Road Initiative can help China advance these driving forces faster by fostering closer economic relations with other countries, growing its own economy, transferring workers abroad directly, and further opening up the Chinese market. An understanding of the various profiles of unique travel segments of the Chinese market will not only lessen the host country's apprehension, but also lead to the host's appreciation of, and

focus on(Cai et al., 2008). Chinese tourists who travel overseas will be better satisfied with their experiences and more likely to do so in the future as more information about Chinese tourists and behavioural traits becomes available.

3. Methodology

Chapter Overview: This study employs the Delphi method to examine the opinions of experts on the BRI, their overall assessment, and the prospective development of the Belt and Road Initiative. Also, an attempt was made to examine the experts' views on the potential of Portuguese tourism in the Chinese market and the priorities for cooperation between the two sides. The list of experts was developed using the Quadruple helix approach: government, business, academic and society. As a supplement, a questionnaire of Chinese students in Portugal has shown the behavioural preferences of Chinese tourists. This chapter is divided into four sections: the first section describes the variables and study hypotheses; the second section describes the Delphi method of questionnaire design and recall; the third section describes briefly the Quadruple helix model that inspired this study; the fourth section describes the design and recall process for the student questionnaire.

3.1 Variables and Study Hypotheses

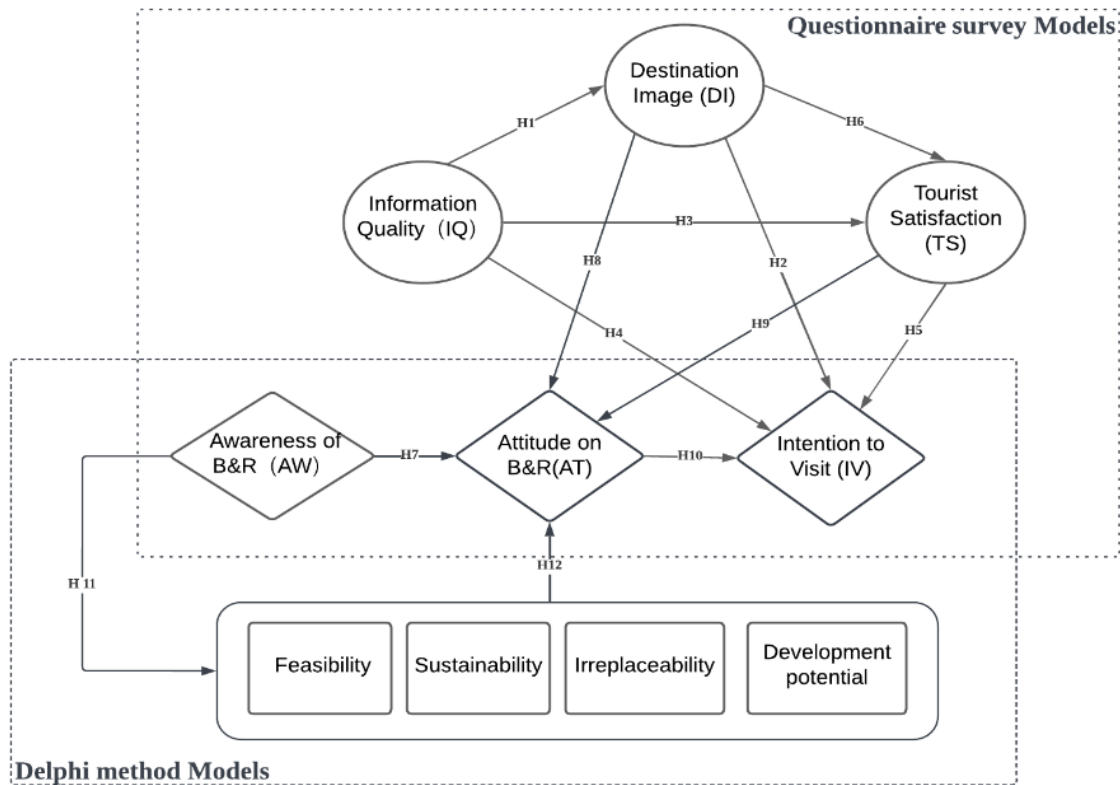


Figure 5: The compound model of the study, Delphi and questionnaire method

This study was conducted by developing two separate models of association, the Delphi method model and the questionnaire model. Based on all the following research methods, the research framework of this paper was synthesised. Also, the relevance of each method to the hypothesis is made into the following table

3.1.1 Concepts

The aim of this research paper is to explore the potential of tourism in Portugal and China in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, and whether and how it relates to tourism between the two countries. Some basic and common concepts of tourism research should be considered. At the same time, perception and awareness of the BRI are two very important special variables in this paper.

Information Quality (IQ)

With the popularity of smartphones, more than half (53%) the Chinese and US tourists book their trips through digital means by using mobile applications (Gentlemen in China, 2016). Across various industries, social media has recently been used as an important consumer communication tool that influences various aspects of consumer behaviour including information acquisition, attitudes, purchase, post-purchase communication, and product/service evaluation (Kim et al., 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Not only in tourism industry, consumers now regard social media as a much more trustworthy source of information regarding products and services than corporate-sponsored marketing communication channels, which have traditionally served as the means of promoting goods and services (Foux, 2006). Increasingly of independent travellers search for information and book their trips online or through mobile applications (eMarketer, 2015). Providing customers with high-quality information is a key determinant for the success of tourism nowadays, a number of studies on information quality and destination image have found that tourists who have favourable destination image are more likely to intend to visit or recommend to others (Lee, 2009).

Destination Image (DI)

The image of a place is also an important asset (Ryan & Gu, 2008). Ryan and Gu (2008) emphasize that the image itself is the beginning point of tourist's expectation, which is eventually a determinant of tourist behaviours. The importance of the tourist destination's image affects the individual's subjective perception and consequent behaviour and destination choice (Chon 1990, 1992; Echtner and Ritchie 1991; Stabler 1988; Telisman-Kosuta 1989). This importance has led to a growing of research on it. Value-added, relevancy, completeness, interestingness, and web page design are tourism IQ factors, which affect tourists' destination image formation (Kim etc, 2017).

Tourist Satisfaction (TS)

Satisfaction is one of the most researched topics in the field of tourism research (Kozak et al., 2003). This has been approached from different perspectives and theories. One of the most quoted is the disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1980) which states that tourists have previous expectations which they compare with the perceived outcome of the service (Pizam and Milman, 1993 among others). Satisfaction was also described as customers' overall judgment and evaluation and their emotional or cognitive response to their consumption experience (Hunt, 1977; Loureiro et al., 2013). Satisfaction with a tourism service, too, should be viewed in the context of life satisfaction (Bowen & Clarke, 2002). In this study considers satisfaction as an overall evaluation involving both a cognitive and an emotional response to service encounters

after an individual receives a treatment and travel experience after the tourist travelled in Portugal.

Intention to Visit (IV)

Customers' behavioural intentions are considered the most important factors predicting actual behaviours (Ajzen, 1985). Oliver (1999) proposed four types of loyalty: cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty and action loyalty. In practice, action loyalty is difficult to use to track tourist's future intended behaviours; behavioural intentions are considered to be a form of conative loyalty in the attitudinal stage and the most important factor predicting actual behaviour (Chen & Chen, 2010; Yang & Peterson, 2004). This study thus employed an attitudinal approach by using the term intention to visit represents a tourist's willingness to visit a destination, which includes the willingness to make repeat visits.

Experience/knowledge

This item was mainly used as a statistical survey to obtain the general perception of Chinese students in Portugal about studying and travelling by asking them how often they travel, whether coming to Portugal is their first choice, and whether they have visited Portugal as a tourist before.

Awareness of BRI

This variable lies in measuring the extent to which people are aware of BRI

Attitude on BRI

This variable is used to measure the extent to which people agree with the policy.

3.1.2 Theory and Hypotheses

The relationship of the individual variables are three main sections and the following hypotheses were formulated based on the models.

First, the AIDA model, which stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. This model is a proven framework for converting strangers into customers, this process well reveals the whole process of visitors obtaining destination information, generating a specific image of the destination and finally making the intention to visit. It has applied widely in marketing activities either based on traditional methods or online. In 1898, E. St. Elmo Lewis proposed a theory of communication, this theory is developed based on a study of the life insurance industry that describes the four cognitive phases experienced by an individual upon receipt of a new idea or a new product purchased (Michaelson & Stacks, 2011). According to Barry and Howard, as

cited in Heath and Fieldwick (2007), the AIDA model contains a four-step formula to get attention, attract interest, create desire, and then take action.

H1 The quality of tourism information can influence the Portugal destinations image.

H2 The image of tourism destination shows a positive correlation with the intention to visit.

Second, extensive studies have revealed that destination image on the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and behavioural intention. These models include cognitive-affective model, tourist satisfaction theory. Considerable empirical research in the tourism and hospitality context has confirmed the cognitive-affective-behaviour (quality/value-satisfaction-behavioural intentions) causal sequence (Chen, 2008; Choi, Cho, Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2004). While the information success model illustrates the relationship between information quality and user satisfaction and intention to use, in this study, 'user satisfaction' in this model can be considered as tourists satisfaction for examination, and the impact of information quality on visitor satisfaction can be considered. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are made here:

H3 The quality of information significantly affects Tourist satisfaction.

H4 The quality of information significantly affects tourists' willingness to visit.

H5 Tourist satisfaction significantly affects willingness to visit

H6 Tourism destination image affects tourist satisfaction.

Third, the affect, behaviour, and cognition (ABC) model of attitudes. Baron proposed the ABC model of attitudes in the year of 1989, stating that attitude includes three components, namely, affect, behaviour and cognition, and that the formation of attitude is the result of the interaction of these three elements. This model is often used to examine public attitudes toward policies, some of the existing studies include: public attitudes towards climate change, attitudes of the Macau public toward public policies, and attitudes in business decisions. It is used here to measure respondents' approval of the BRI. Several variables related to this are awareness of the BRI (AW), tourism destination image (DI) and satisfaction (TS): TS consists of two components, tourism behaviour and affect; DI and awareness stand for the part of cognition. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H7 Awareness toward BRI are significantly influenced attitudes toward BRI.

H8 Attitudes toward the BRI significantly influences destination image.

Finally, examining the relationship between the level of awareness and agreement of the BRI and the image of Portuguese tourism destinations and the willingness to visit can directly explain the impact of the BRI on the tourism sector. These two hypotheses are predicated on

the premise that for Chinese students in Portugal, who have already had travel experiences in Portugal, whether these experiences and experiences have led to a more positive attitude towards the Belt and Road Initiative. Here proposes the following hypothesis:

H9 Tourist Satisfaction is positively correlated with Attitude on BRI.

H10 The evaluation of BRI is positively correlated with the intention to visit.

The next two hypotheses is about examines the relationship between the awareness, perceived feasibility, and overall evaluation of the Belt and Road Initiative in relation to the interviewees. Some relevant questions will be set in the questionnaire.

H11 Awareness of BRI and the feasibility of the initiative were positively correlated.

H12 The higher the perceived feasibility of BRI, the better the evaluation of it.

The relationship between the hypotheses and research methods in this paper can be shown in Table 8, and an introduction to the Delphi method is given in section 3.2 immediately below.

Table 8 Methodology and Hypotheses

Methodology	Hypothesis	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	H6	H7	H8	H9	H10	H11	H12
Literature Review						✓	✓					✓	✓
Delphi method (first round)	Q1	✓										✓	✓
	Q2											✓	✓
	Q3							✓				✓	✓
	Q4										✓	✓	✓
	Q5										✓		
	Q6							✓					
	Q7		✓										
	Q8										✓		
	Q9		✓										
	Q10										✓		
	Q11										✓		
Delphi method (second round)	Q1	✓										✓	✓
	Q2		✓								✓		
	Q3							✓					
	Q4		✓										
	Q5					✓							
	Q6	✓				✓							
Questionnaire for Chinese Students in Portugal	IQ	✓		✓	✓								
	DI	✓	✓				✓	✓					
	TS			✓		✓	✓						
	IV		✓		✓	✓					✓		
	Experience/ Knowledge					✓	✓			✓			
	Awareness of BRI							✓				✓	
	Attitude on BRI							✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

3.2 Delphi method

The present study uses the Delphi method which is described by Kaynak and Macaulay as a unique method of eliciting and refining group judgments based on the rationale (Kaynak & Macaulay, 1984). The Delphi technique is used to generate rather than test hypotheses, map out a field, and test relationships within it. Key features of the Delphi technique are identifying the panel members, anonymity, structured data collection questionnaires, feedback to panel members allowing them to reflect and reconsider their responses, and statistical aggregation of responses. Two features of the Delphi method were adapted to this study, first Delphi method enables the integration of experience and knowledge from multiple experts to derive more accurate and reliable decisions. Experts from different backgrounds can reduce the risk of obtaining incorrect conclusions. In addition, as a cross-national study, the Delphi method can be extremely efficient, views from different parts of the world can be communicated and exchanged, which significantly improves the efficiency.

3.2.1 Expert Panel and questions set

Professional expertise was the primary consideration in the assembly of the Delphi panel. The panel of experts is selected for their knowledge of this subject. In the selection of experts, based on the Quadruple helix model, the background of experts comes from the BRI and tourism policymakers, Staff of the Chinese and Portuguese Embassies, travel agencies offering travel products to Chinese tourists in China and Portugal, scholars (Professors and PhD students), Portuguese Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Macau Forum for Portuguese Language Economic Development, civic groups and media journalists, Chinese and Portuguese tourism practitioners.

In terms of the design of the questionnaire, the first round is divided into two main parts, the first part examines the overall knowledge and views of the interviewees on the initiative itself, and the second part by examining the space for tourism cooperation between China and Portugal in the context of the BRI. Tourism cooperation can be examined in four dimensions: Feasibility, Sustainability, Irreplaceability and Development potential. In public policy research, these are the most frequently examined factors, for example, a comparative study of public transport policies for sustainability in China, Germany and the USA (Michael et al, 2019), a study about energy transition towards economic and environmental sustainability: feasible paths and policy implications (Simone et al, 2009). On the topic of BRI, these four dimensions

are also the dimensions that many researchers have used to examine this public policy. In addition to the studies mentioned in Chapter 2 on the geopolitical impact of the BRI and its feasibility and irreplaceability, a number of studies have focused on the vulnerability of the initiative and the natural environment (Tao et al, 2019), the initiative and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Lewis et al, 2021), and sustainable development (Renwick et al, 2018). The examination of the details of tourism cooperation is a direct reflection of the respondent's attitude towards the Belt and Road Initiative. Thus, it reflects the impact and significance of the BRI on tourism in practice. This section also captures the impact on tourism details, such as the impact on the airline industry, accommodation, and tourism product development.

The study is interactive, having two or more rounds: first, a divergence round, to identify the breadth of perspectives and approaches to a particular area of study, and then one or more (depending upon how much consensus has been reached) convergence rounds to identify and integrate those perspectives and issues that are considered most important.

In the first part of the questionnaire called overview and awareness, experts were asked to answer questions about their awareness, knowledge and approval of the BRI. The level of agreement with the BRI was examined.

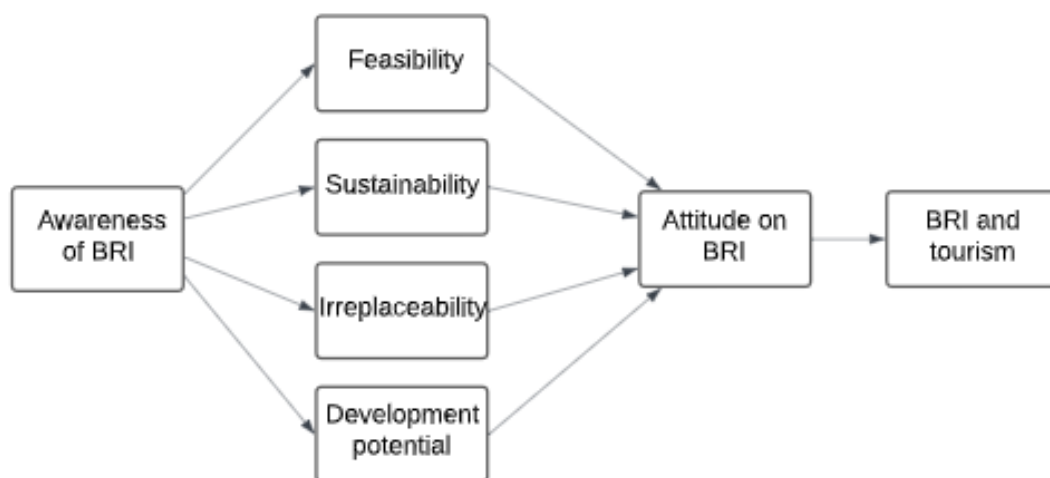


Figure 6: Delphi method Frame

The second part of the first round focused on questions about the relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative and tourism according to the experts. These questions included the relevance of the Belt and Road to tourism, what matters most in the tourism sector and how the initiative could help to relaunch the tourism sector, while the questions also included an examination by the experts of the presence of the Chinese and Portuguese tourism markets and the historical relationship.

Based on the analysis of the first round, the second questionnaire focused on the following questions:

- 1) It was generally agreed that the BRI and tourism present a high correlation, and that Portugal and China have a special historical relationship, how can the Belt and Road Initiative be retaken/upgraded in ways that can more effectively develop tourism between China and Portugal?
- 2) Air connectivity, marketing, tourism demand and direct investment were identified as the four most important elements, which needed to be ranked twice and asked for the best measures and advice for each project
- 3) In terms of price and style, how should Portugal be positioned as a tourist destination?
- 4) In the first questionnaire, the question of advertising and promotion was mentioned several times by the respondents. Direct investment is not recognized by most people, so what is the best way to promote?
- 5) It is generally agreed that the Asian is very important, so what are the most attractive Portuguese tourism resources for Chinese tourists?

3.2.2 Data Collection and procedure

A total of 45 questionnaires were dropped in the first round and 30 were returned; a detailed analysis of which is presented in Chapter 5 below. Based on the returns from the first round and the analysis of the data collected, a second round of questionnaires was elaborated, and sent to the panel of experts who had participated in the first round at the end of July 2022. A total of 24 fully replied questionnaires were returned.

3.3 Quadruple helix model

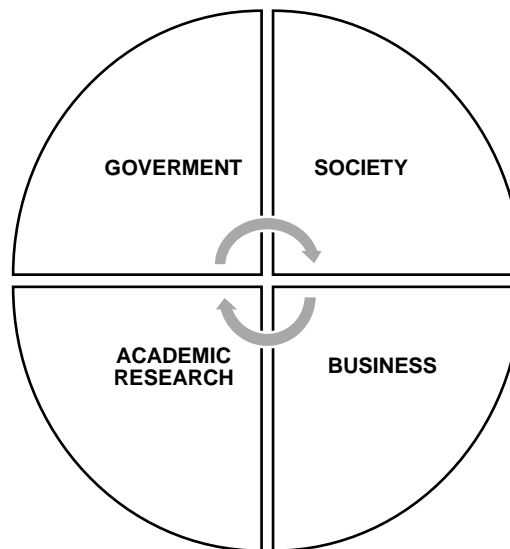


Figure 7: Quadruple helix model

The quadruple helix structure was used as the theoretical basis for the selection of the respondents. Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff proposed the model of a Triple Helix (TH) of university–industry–government relations for explaining structural developments in knowledge-based economies. The triple helix model has advantages in explaining the complex effects of interactions and interactions among universities, firms and governments as well as the dynamics of innovation, and sheds insights on innovation practices. Since its proposed, the theoretical research has been increasingly deepened and expanded. The Quadruple helix model (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009) is an extension of N-Tuple Helices based on the triple helix structure, it blends in the perspective of a media-based and culture-based public, the fourth variable, society, was added to government, college research, and business. an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary framework of analysis for sustainable development and social ecology that exactly ties together knowledge, innovation and the environment (Elias, 2010). The ‘Quadruple Helix’ emphasizes the importance of also integrating the perspective of the media-based and culture-based public.

In this case, the quadruple helix structure covers well the various aspects related to the Belt and Road Initiative. The government, or the policy maker, covers not only the Chinese government, which proposed the BRI, but also the Chinese - Portuguese government's cooperation practices. The commercial side includes mainly the travel agencies and the press that offer Portuguese tourism products. The social dimension includes civil associations, and individual operators related to tourism. Academic research includes professors and experts who

have studied the subject in depth. A list of all experts can be found in Appendix 4, expert Panel of Delphi method.

3.4 Questionnaire for Chinese scholars/students in Portugal

Questionnaires could collect a large amount of data, including demographic information, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of the respondents. The questionnaire method also has the advantage of anonymity, which allows for more realistic information to be obtained. As a complement to the Delphi method, a questionnaire was designed aimed Chinese students and academics living in Portugal, to gain their experience as travellers and knowledge of the Belt and Road Initiative. International students are a special type of traveller, they live in the destination countries for a longer period of time, they could have more information, also more able to experience and compare the different ways of travel and lifestyle. A distinctive feature of student travellers is that they are the younger members of the travel market. The desire for experience seems to be the main driving force for student travel (Richards & Wilson, 2008). Many Students travel to seek more experience and they travel to long for relaxation, adventure, language and culture, also, students always thirst for more adventure and relaxation which improved the potential tourism market (Abdullateef & Biodun, 2014).

According to a statistic in the year of 2019, nearly 1,300 Chinese students were enrolled in Portuguese universities in the 2018/2019 academic year, an almost fourfold increase compared to the 2011/2012 academic year. Chinese students reportedly study language, law, business and public administration courses in Portugal, while nearly 6,600 Chinese students have attended Portuguese higher education institutions from 2011 to 2019. Half of them (about 3,820) studied in Lisbon, followed by Aveiro (710), Braga (523), Coimbra (446) and Porto (434). This study hopes to obtain information about Chinese travellers in Portugal by collecting as many Chinese students as possible in different parts of the country.

3.4.1 Questionnaire design

This questionnaire is divided into two parts, the first part contains demographic data, which focuses on the age and gender of the respondents, as well as the time spent in Portugal and the city in which they live. The second part consists of questions designed according to each of these items. Summarizing the above elements and hypotheses, the figure of conceptual model shows a more visual information.

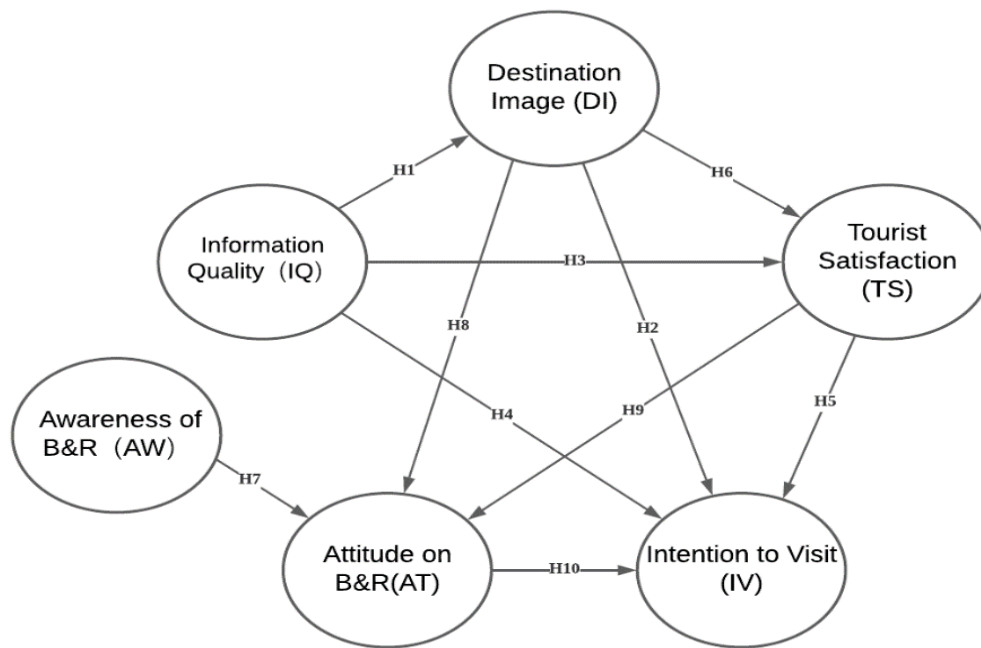


Figure 8: Conceptual Mode

3.4.2 Data Collection and Procedure

The data collection was carried out between July and August 2022, and all questionnaires were collected via the internet, using the Tencent questionnaire website www.wj.qq.com. All questions were translated in Chinese.

I sent out requests for completion and questionnaire placement in several mainstream student WeChat groups on the platform. These groups include:

- the AEACP-Lisbon group;
- the Chinese students' group of University of Coimbra;
- the Porto Chinese students' group;
- the Aveiro group of Chinese students and scholars;
- the Braga group of Chinese students.

I sent the edited Chinese version of the questionnaire link to the group members for collection, which was viewed 407 times with a 50% return rate: 205 questionnaires were collected.

In the process of returning the questionnaire, it was found by the data backend of the website (IP address) that excluding the 82% of respondents currently obtained in the question who lived in Portugal at the time of completing the questionnaire, the rest were mainly located

in China: Beijing 7%, Guangdong province 3%, Hebei province 3%, Jiangsu province 2% and Shandong province 2%. All of these provinces are located in the eastern coastal region, the most economically developed region of China.

4. Case study presentation

Chapter Overview: This section outlines the rise in Chinese visitors to Portugal as well as their typical behaviour. The Portuguese tourism industry still has a significant market opportunity. The second section focuses on how COVID-19 has affected tourism as a potential route to recovery. The outside world should pay attention to the unique characteristics of the Chinese tourism market due to: differences reopening time, path and policies; enormous population scale; ways of getting tourism information; and changes in tourism demand.

4.1 Chinese tourists in Portugal: data and behavioural



Graphic 12: Chinese tourist @milkitty in Lisbon 2020.

Her travelogue about Portugal³ has been read by over 270,000 times

Before the Chinese government's decision to open the country to the outside world, there was hardly any international tourism in China, outbound travel was limited to government officials and diplomats. Tourism was not thought of as an industry but considered as a part of foreign affairs, as the government's main objectives in international tourism were political rather than economic. It was essentially a public relations exchange with representatives of a friendly countries. With the introduction of reform and the open-door policy since 1978, tourism in China had caught on and entered the international tourist market. Tourism has been a booming industry in China, and has come to play an extremely significant role in economic and regional development, and in international relations as well (Breda, 2006). China's tourism development has had different missions at different times, and these different while missions have determined the direction of China's tourism development strategies and laws, regulations and investment policies.

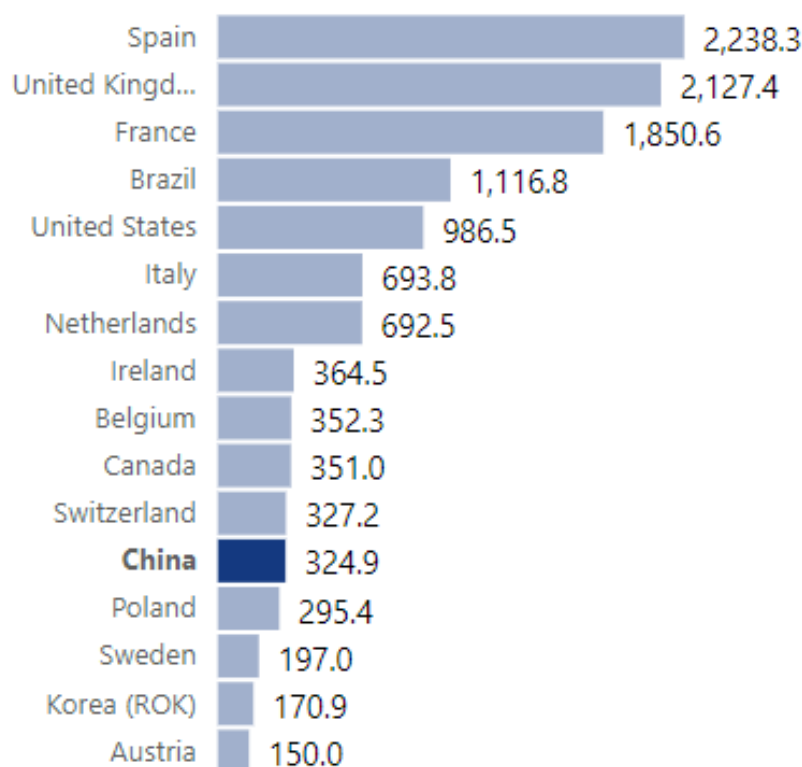
From 1949 to the 21st century, through civil diplomacy and foreign hospitality, to generating foreign exchange, boosting consumption and solving employment, to improving the cultivation of citizens and serving people's livelihoods, the evolution of tourism policy objectives has always been in line with the strategic objectives of national economic and social development. According to the *Notice of the "Fourteenth Five-Year Plan" for tourism development* by Chinese government published in 2021, by 2025, there will be a steady increase in the level of tourist development, the modern tourism system will be a reliable source of

³ Source: <https://bbs.qyer.com/thread-3406274-1.html>

supply, there will be an abundance of high-quality tourism, and the need for mass tourism consumption will be more successfully met. The foundation for controlling and preventing epidemics will be reinforced, and the travel and tourism industry will fully comply with the requirements (Chinese State Council, 2021).

Since 2010, the figures for Chinese tourists to Portugal have grown steadily and rapidly. According to Chart 1 (page 16), the number of Chinese (arrivals) visiting Portugal has increased 10 times in the last decade.

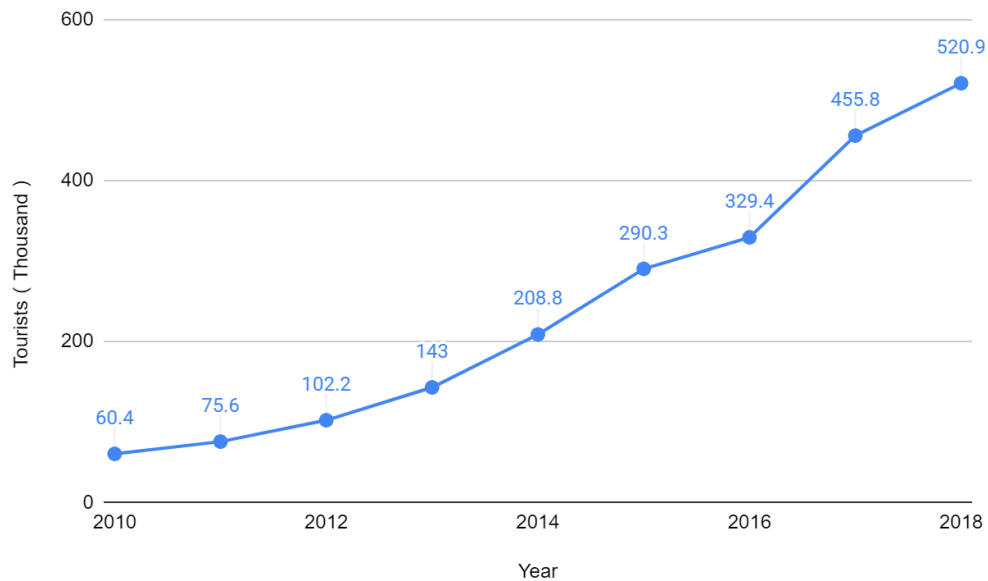
Figure 9: Arrivals of Tourists at All Types of Accommodation Establishments in 2018 to Portugal



Source: UNWTO Global and regional tourism performance Tourism flows

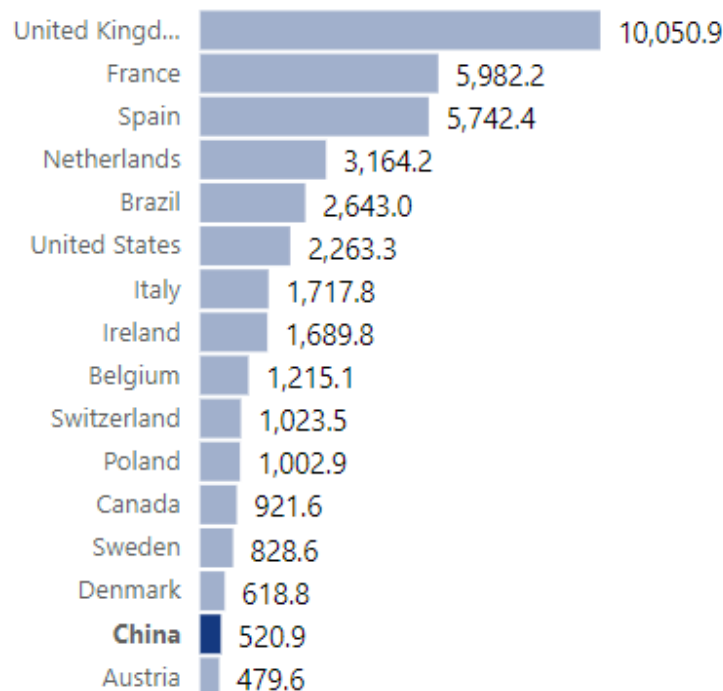
As shown in Figure 9, according to UNWTO, the number of Chinese tourists arriving in Portugal reached the 12th position of all countries with 325k arrivals in 2018.

Figure 10: Overnight stays of Chinese Tourists at In All Types of Accommodation Establishments in 2018 to Portugal



Source: UNWTO Global and regional tourism performance Tourism flows

Figure 11: Overnight stays of Tourists to Portugal rank in country in 2018



Source: UNWTO Global and regional tourism performance Tourism flows

As for overnight stays data, China at the 15TH in 2018. Among the top source markets, the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Ireland are European

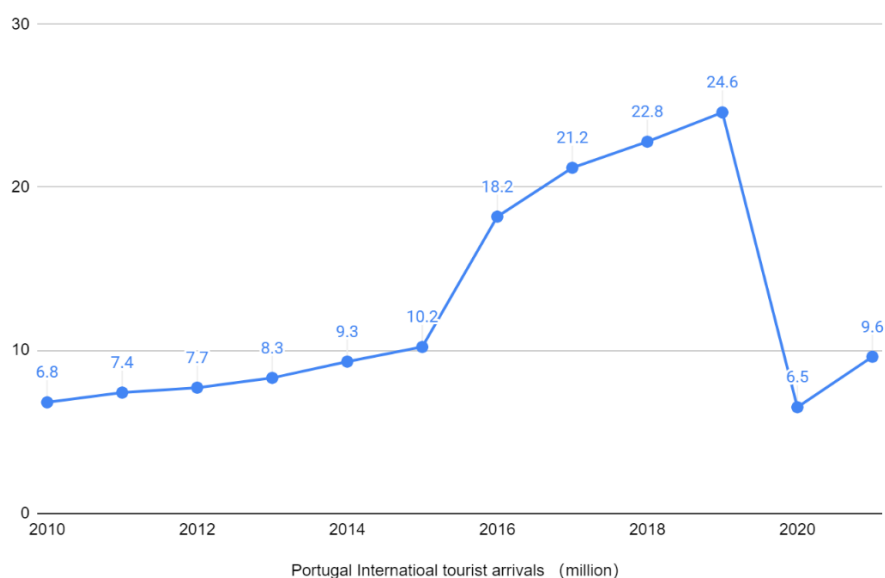
countries, the United States and Brazil are American countries and China is the only Asian country. The Chinese market is particularly important for Portugal in its search for new tourism growth, and given the proximity of European countries to Portugal and the fact that both Brazil and Portugal are Portuguese-speaking countries, the potential of the Chinese market remains very high. As Chart 12 shows, China does not appear to be at the top of the list of inbound tourists due to strict epidemic control policies, but all other countries have remained relatively stable.

Figure 12: Tourist arrivals in Portugal, 2020-2021

País de residência	2020	2021	Tx Var (%)	Quotas	
				2020	2021
TOTAL	6 480,1	9 616,7	48,4%	100,0%	100,0%
Espanha	1847,4	2 906,4	57,3%	28,5%	30,2%
França	1057,9	1546,8	46,2%	16,3%	16,1%
Reino Unido	823,3	1020,6	24,0%	12,7%	10,6%
Alemanha	552,5	768,6	39,1%	8,5%	8,0%
Suíça	345,5	539,1	56,0%	5,3%	5,6%
Países Baixos	235,7	372,4	58,0%	3,6%	3,9%
Bélgica	176,4	300,3	70,2%	2,7%	3,1%
Itália	161,9	261,6	61,6%	2,5%	2,7%
Irlanda	96,1	201,4	109,7%	1,5%	2,1%
Países Nórdicos	118,3	185,5	56,8%	1,8%	1,9%
Outros da Europa	238,4	470,0	97,2%	3,7%	4,9%
Estados Unidos da América	132,6	294,6	122,2%	2,0%	3,1%
Brasil	284,3	276,9	-2,6%	4,4%	2,9%
Outros do Mundo	409,9	472,5	16,3%	6,3%	4,9%

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estatística IP

The tourism system is a complex social and economic system with highly interdependent components; it is presented as an open system (Beni, 2001). The epidemic has struck a major blow to global tourism, with global tourist arrivals falling by 80.4% in 2021 compared to 2019, according to UNWTO statistics. The number of outbound travellers from China had been growing well until the outbreak of the epidemic in 2020. In 2021, outbound tourism is forecast at 25.62 million, a 17% recovery compared to 2019 and a 27 per cent increase compared to 2020. Outbound tourism remains largely stagnant compared to the over 100 million trips made before the epidemic.

Figure 13: Portugal International tourist arrivals (million)

Source: UNWTO

In 2021, the number of non-resident tourist arrivals to Portugal will have reached 9.6 million, corresponding to an increase of 48.4% compared to 2020, representing only 39.0% of the value obtained in 2019 (24.6 million). For Portugal, Spain remained the main inbound market for international tourists (share of 30.2%), having registered an increase of 57.3% in 2021. The French market (16.1% of the total) kept being the second main inbound market, increasing by 46.2%. Tourists from the United Kingdom (10.6%) increased by 24.0% in 2021, while the German market (8.0%) grew by 39.1%.

Table 9: International tourist arrivals of Portugal 2019-2021

Region	International tourist arrivals (Million)			Change (%)	
	2019	2020	2021	2021/2020	2021/2019
Total	1466	405	427	+5.4%	-70,9%
Europe	745	238.5	286.8	+20.3	-61,5%
European Union	540	181.4	209.5	+15.5%	-61,2%
America	219	69.8	82.4	+18.1%	-62,4%
North America	146	46.5	57	+22.6%	-61,1%
Asia & Pacific	360	59.1	20.7	-65%	-94,3%
Middle East	73	19.8	18.5	-6,6%	-74,7%
Africa	68	18	18.4	+2,2%	-73,0%

Source: UNWTO – World Tourism Barometer, May 2022

The data in the table above shows that, in terms of regions, Portugal suffered an overall decline in arrivals in 2021 compared to 2019, with Asia and the Pacific suffering the largest decline at 94.3%. While Asia and the Middle East are the only regions that still have not recovered compared to 2020, with North America and Europe recovering by more than 20%. The main reason for the lack of recovery in Asia is the poor performance of the Chinese market, where Portugal's revenue in 2021 is -52.5% (compared to 2020), while the performance of the rest of Asia, excluding China, is promote at 5.3% and the overall performance of the region is down decline at 13.2% (Bank of Portugal, 2022).

According to the *China Outbound Tourism Development Annual Report* (Yang, 2021), safety issues were a key concern for respondents, with the main factors affecting outbound travel being "safety" and "lack of time". Outbound travel is only possible if the epidemic is adequately controlled, with 82.8 per cent of respondents travelling only if they are confident that there are no new infections in a destination. 81.6% of respondents said they would choose to travel within the country rather than out of the country in the coming period, and 71.7% were less likely to travel by air due to the outbreak. The characteristics of online access to information channels were further strengthened. Social media and travel-related websites were the most popular channels for respondents to obtain information on outbound travel. The epidemic has had a significant impact on respondents' choice of travel agent, and the choice of outbound travel methods has become more diverse. Only 25.08% of respondents chose to travel with a travel agency, a decrease of 37.79% compared to 2019. The majority of respondents expected their future outbound travel to last less than a week. The proportion of respondents planning to stay for 1 to 7 days was over 60%, with nearly 50% of them staying for 4 to 7 days. The proportion of respondents planning to stay for more than 15 days was less than 10%.

Another relevant and important figure is the media presence of Portuguese tourism in China. Table 10 shows the number of followers of the official accounts of the tourism departments of some of the major countries on China's largest social media platform Sina Weibo, it reflects to some extent the ease of access and quality of travel information available to Chinese travellers. Although this is not a direct confirmation of Chinese traveller's interest, it does demonstrate that the number of followers in Portugal tourism offices is significantly smaller than other countries', and indicates the current situation of information quality with regard to the lack of coverage of tourism information of Portugal.

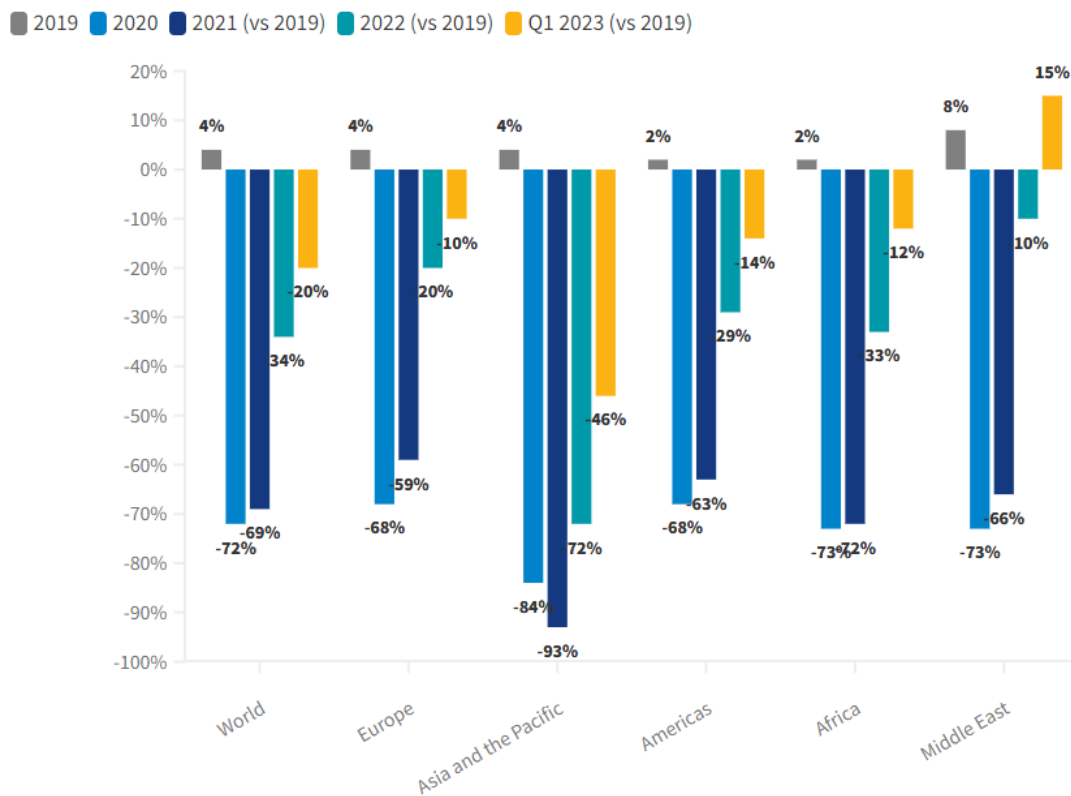
Table 10: Number of followers of selected national tourism agencies on Sina Weibo

Weibo Account	Number of followers (Approximate)
Germany Tourism	1682,000
France Tourism Development Agency	1637,000
United States National Tourist Office	875,000
Finland Tourism	699,000
Italian National Tourist Office	610,000
Denmark Tourism	536,000
New Zealand Tourism Agency	417,000
Netherlands Tourism Board	392,000
Spain Tourism Office Beijing	209,000
Poland Tourism	120,000
Visit Portugal	52,000

4.2 COVID-19 and the restart tourism in China

After taking a severe impact in 2020 and 2021, the tourism sector is attempting to rebound. According to data released by UNWTO, international tourist arrivals reached 80% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2023. (-20% compared to the same quarter of 2019) boosted by strong results in Europe and the Middle East. An estimated 235 million tourists travelled internationally in the first three months, more than double those in the same period of 2022. Europe and the Americas recorded the strongest results in 2021 compared to 2020 (+19% and +17% respectively), but still both 60% below pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 14: International Tourist Arrivals, World and Regions



Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Data as collected by UNWTO, May 2023.

As economies open to the world and become increasingly interlinked, how China recovers from the pandemic will have impact for a large number of countries. In a world that is interconnected through several channels, such as trade, commodities, financial and tourist flows, a shock to one country can resonate throughout multiple interrelated economies. China is one of the largest economies in the world and a significant trading partner for many countries, receiving more than 30% of exports from countries, At the same time, it is the world's largest source country for tourists and its tourism policies will influence international tourism, and how China manages its recovery will affect closely linked partner economies.

According to the China Outbound Tourism Development Annual Report (Yang, 2021), China's annual outbound tourism is 20.334 million in 2020, down 86.9% year-on-year, amidst the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic. In 2021, outbound tourism is forecast at 25.62 million, 17% of the same period in 2019, but up 27% year-on-year compared to 2020. Outbound travel remains largely stagnant compared to the over 100 million trips made before the epidemic.

As China's economy recovers in 2021, the tourism market is also showing signs of recovery. In terms of household demand, while there are signs of improvement such as the surge

in domestic tourism and consumption during Golden Week October, 2020 (Financial Times, 2020), which signals a release of some pent-up demand, household consumption will take time to recover (China Daily, 2020). At the same time, domestic travel is regaining popularity, while being momentarily hampered by sporadic COVID-19 outbreaks.

For the Chinese market, several studies have analysed the changes in behavioural preferences of the Chinese tourists resulting from the pandemic. In a 2021 study, researchers concluded that due to the pandemic, Chinese tourists have reduced their preferences for traveling to geographically, culturally and administratively distant destination countries. They show greater preference for natural, rural and cultural destinations after the pandemic has passed; they also prefer trips of shorter duration and distance (Huang et al, 2021). While those conclusions partly reflect a certain change in the choice of destination by Chinese tourists, it should be noted that this change is predicated on China's stricter control policy of the epidemic. China maintained stricter entry restrictions up until the end of 2022; for example, many countries have lifted visitor restrictions or require only vaccine certificates or negative virus testing certificates for arrivals starting in 2022, and the European Commission announced on May 17, 2022, that all EU member state flights may not force passengers to show their test reports, vaccine certificates, and entry health documents before boarding. At the same time, China announced their new entry policy in June 2022 that the "14-day intensive quarantine medical observation plus 7-day home health monitoring" would be changed to "7-day intensive quarantine medical observation plus 3-day home health monitoring". Although this notable reduces the time required for isolation in a hotel or somewhere, it still means that Chinese tourists must spend more time and financial costs to travel out of China. If a Chinese tourist travels to Europe, although the one has unrestricted access to the destination, he still faces a minimum of 7+3 days of medical quarantine when he or she returns to China, which gives potential international travellers a policy signal that international travel is "discouraged". The other countries concerned need to dynamically adapt their international tourism development strategies to reduce the impact of adverse shocks caused by economic fluctuations in other countries (Chen et al., 2021).

Table 11: Portugal and China on entry Policy, August 2022

Items	Portugal	China
COVID-19 test	NO	YES
Restriction level	Not Restrictive	Partially Restrictive
Restrictions lifted	No restrictions	Partially in place
Entry restrictions	NO	YES
Flights suspended	NO	NO
quarantine	NO	YES

Source: UNWTO easy travel

According to the UNWTO August 2022, 81 countries around the world have lifted their entry restrictions on COVID-19, including 8 in Africa, 19 in the Americas, 6 in Asia, 43 in Europe and 5 in the Middle East, including Portugal but excluding China. Asia is the region with the lowest number of lifted restrictions (UNWTO, 2022) .

In December 2022, China made a major change to second level control of the Covid-19 epidemic, which came into effect on 8 January 2023, signalling the end of more than two years of strict controls (Xinhua, 2022). At the same time, the international community has responded to the potential for a large number of tourists from China by introducing travel restrictions in a number of countries.

Table 12: Restrictions for Travellers coming from China in January 2023

Region	Number of Country/ Region
Europe	14
Asia and the Pacific	8
Americas	7
Africa	3
Middle East	2

Source: UNWTO easy travel (www.unwto.org/tourism-data/unwto-iata-destination-tracker-easy-travel)

Portugal:

Passengers whose first embarkation point is China (People's Rep.): - must have a negative COVID-19 NAAT or rapid antigen test taken at most 48 hours before departure from the first embarkation point; or - are subject to a COVID-19 NAAT or rapid antigen test upon arrival. - This does not apply to passengers younger than 12 years. 2023/1/9

Italy

Until 31 January 2023, 1. Passengers whose first embarkation point is China (People's Rep.) or who arrive on a direct flight from Hong Kong (SAR China) must have: - a negative COVID-19 antigen test taken at most 48 hours before arrival; or - a negative COVID-19 NAAT test taken at most 72 hours before arrival. - This does not apply to passengers younger than 6 years. 2. Passengers whose first embarkation point is China (People's Rep.) or who arrive on a direct flight from Hong Kong (SAR China) are subject to a COVID-19 test upon arrival. 2023/1/1

France

Passengers whose first embarkation point is China (People's Rep.), Hong Kong (SAR China) or Macao (SAR China) must have a negative COVID-19 antigen or PCR test taken at most 48 hours before departure from the first embarkation point. - This does not apply to passengers younger than 12 years. 2. Passengers whose first embarkation point is China (People's Rep.), Hong Kong (SAR China) or Macao (SAR China) must have a completed sworn statement obtained at <https://cn.ambafrance.org/> <https://cn.ambafrance.org/> 3. Passengers whose first embarkation point is China (People's Rep.), Hong Kong (SAR China) or Macao (SAR China) are subject to a COVID-19 test and self-isolation for 7 days upon arrival. 2023/1/5.

Source: UNWTO easy travel

By the first half of 2023, the path to recovery for Chinese outbound tourism is clear. The message of tourism has been buoyed by fewer and fewer controls. However, Chinese tourists still face five major problems in resuming their travel to the EU. These five issues have been mentioned in the section 1.2 of this article. They are: airfares between Europe and China, the resumption of direct flights between Europe and China, the increased length of visa approvals, the rising cost of travel to Europe due to epidemics and geo-conflicts, and the loss of former European professionals associated with China.

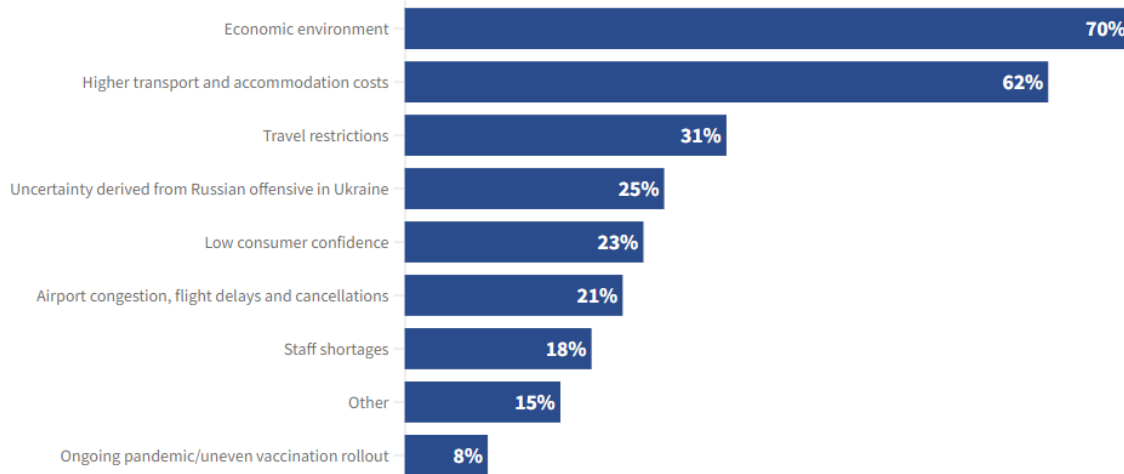
- Flights from China to Europe are still too expensive, whether on Chinese airlines or on other national carriers. Travel data company ForwardKeys states that flights from China to Europe are still 80% more expensive than they were before the COVID-19 outbreak (Soler, 2023).
- Number of flights between China and Europe has not yet returned to pre-epidemic levels. China's decision to ditch its zero-Covid policy has triggered a surge in flight bookings, according to the latest data from ForwardKeys. On 7th December, Chinese

authorities announced that a negative PCR test would no longer be required for air travel between provinces. Domestic flight bookings immediately surged 56% on the previous week and continued to increase 69% the following week. On 26th December, China removed all COVID-related restrictions on domestic air travel; and bookings surged again, reaching 50% of 2019's level in the final week of the year. An analysis of airport hub performance in the China-Europe airline market based on tickets sold for travel in H1 2023 (as of 13 April) reveals that the busiest hubs are Amsterdam Schiphol, Dubai International, Frankfurt, Istanbul and Incheon airports. The latter achieved an impressive +375% increase in connecting travellers compared to 2019 levels (ForwardKeys, 2023). Most Chinese passengers who use Incheon as a connecting hub are travelling to France and the UK in Europe, as direct capacity from China to these two destinations has decreased by -85% and -58%, respectively," said Dai.

- The visa approval process is too complicated and time-consuming. Chinese people need a visa to travel to most European countries, and the application process is cumbersome, requiring a large number of documents and proofs; most importantly, the waiting time for a visa is much longer than before the outbreak. A survey by *Dragon Trail International*, a Beijing-based digital marketing company for the Chinese travel industry, shows that Chinese people applying for a visa to travel to Europe can get a visa in about two days, compared to two months today (Wei, 2023). Another 2023 survey showed that 75% of travellers said they plan to visit Asian destinations in 2023, with Hong Kong, Macau and Thailand topping the list, apart from the distance factor, visitors do not need to spend any more time on obtaining access permission. (Parulis-Cook & Kadeerbieke, 2023).
- The increased cost of travel in Europe. Inflation in Europe, due to geopolitical and other reasons, has led to an increase in the associated cost of travel. For example, the Spanish tourist destination of Mallorca announced that various offers for tourism on the island, including hotels, transport and food and drink, have been raised by an average of 33% this year compared to last year; furthermore, in Frankfurt, Germany, the price of a daily bus ticket alone has risen by around 20% compared to the pre-epidemic period.
- Many European tourism workers who received Chinese tourists lost their jobs during the epidemic, with job vacancies and a reduction in professional service workers. As a result of the sharp decline in Chinese tourists during the epidemic, many people

working in related industries lost their job, resulting in a post-epidemic tourism service that is far less capable than before.

Figure 15: What are the main factors weighing on the recovery of international tourism?



Source: UNWTO conducted a global survey among its UNWTO Panel of Tourism Experts on the impact of COVID-19 on tourism and the expected time of recovery. Data as collected by UNWTO, May 2023.

The above five reasons for China are similar to the findings of a UNWTO-led survey. The biggest concerns of travel experts about the recovery of the tourism industry are the economic environment and the high cost of travel, followed by travel restrictions (e.g., visas), the geopolitical crisis and the lack of consumer confidence, the number of flights, and staff issues.

5. Analysis and Discussion

Chapter Overview: This section presents and analyses the results of the empirical research (Delphi method and the questionnaire survey of Chinese students). Experts show a generally positive view of the BRI, but at the same time some of them express concerns about its future, mainly due to the impact of geopolitical conflicts; there is a high correlation between the BRI and tourism, with China being one of the most important markets for Portuguese tourism section. In the cooperation between two countries, Macau's role as a bridge and window should be valued. They agree that cooperation in policy is the most effective strategy to develop market potential. In terms of visitor demand (as assessed by Chinese students in Portugal), climate, natural landscapes and historical sites were the three tourism resources most likely to attract of Chinese tourists.

5.1 Delphi method results analysis

In sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 two rounds of the Delphi questionnaire will be analysed. For questions that provide options, the respondents' choices are displayed and for questions that require a completed response, representative responses are selected for analysis.

5.1.1 First round result analysis

By July 2022, a total of 30 questionnaire responses had been received. Of these, 15 stakeholders from China and another 15 non-Chinese stakeholders answered the questions, the response questionnaire maintains a balance between roles and nationalities, categorized as following table.

Table 13: First round of questionnaire collection by category

Category	Portugal	China	Total
Government	2	2	4
Business	3	5	8
Academic	5	4	9
Society	5	4	9
Total	15	15	30

The following is an analysis of the responses to the first round of questionnaires. In order to distinguish between the collected answers and analysis, the collected text will be shown in italics in text box, and the analysis is shown in standard text.

On the first question: How much do you think you are aware of the Belt and Road Initiative? Not surprisingly, all the experts knew something about the BRI, with no one choosing the option of 'no knowledge', but at the same time only one expert considered himself to be fully knowledgeable about the BRI, with most choosing to know well or knowing some.

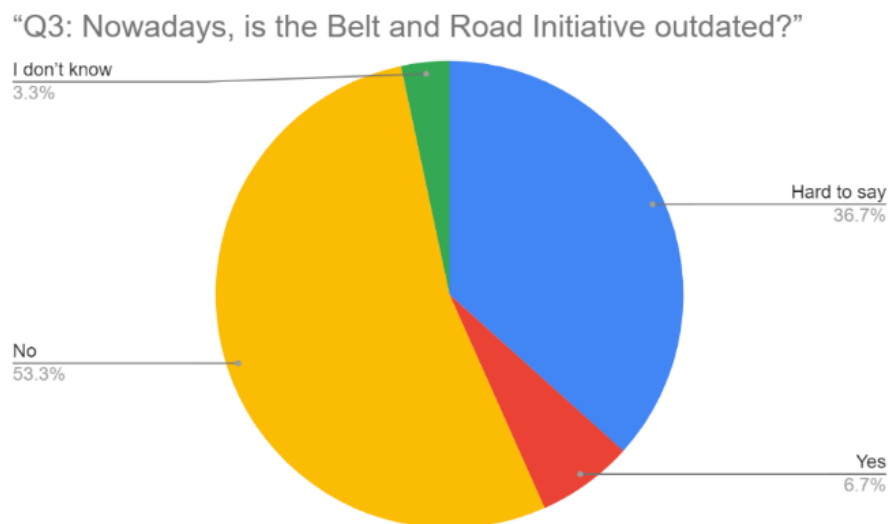
On the questions 2: the Belt and Road Initiative proposes five main objectives to strengthen multilateral cooperation. Please rank these five objectives in terms of their potential for tourism development:

Table 14: Importance ranking answers

Item Importance Rating	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Policy coordination	11	6	6	2	5
Facilities connectivity	10	7	8	2	3
Unimpeded trade	3	9	8	8	2
Financial integration	3	3	4	9	7
People-to-people bonds	3	5	4	7	11

Experts believe that policy connectivity and infrastructure cooperation are the core elements of the Belt and Road Initiative. This reflects the core of the experts' opinions on the Belt and Road initiative, where, interestingly, the movement of people between people is considered to be the least important. The people-to-people is an important expression of the BRI with regard to tourism, cultural exchange and education, shows that most experts consider the Belt and Road Initiative to be first and foremost an economic and political plan. In other words, the potential of the Belt and Road Initiative regarding the cultural exchange and tourism component has not yet been fully exploited and recognised.

Q3: Nowadays, is the Belt and Road Initiative outdated?

**Figure 16: Is BRI outdated?**

Just more than half of those surveyed believe that the Belt and Road Initiative is not outdated and still fulfils its intended purpose, but many are uncertain about its future. There are many experts who are sceptical about the sustainability of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Q3.1 Do you think the Belt and Road Initiative can overcome the challenges of geo-conflicts and anti-globalization (e.g., trade wars, regional conflicts and wars, COVID-19 pandemics) and why?

Many people are uncertain about the future of BRI, and their most representative view is that war has blocked transport routes, it shows their concern about the sustainability. Also, some people claimed that the different position on some issue could made the initiative' implication become more uncertain.

Key words: War, geopolitical

The Russian-Ukrainian war has created too much uncertainty.

I believe China will have a major influence in the outcome of these major concerns given as example. Depending on China's position on the geopolitical aspect, the BRI may have to be delayed or not in the coming years.

The Belt and Road faces many difficulties, the biggest one being geopolitical uncertainty. With the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war, neighbouring countries are facing a lot of problems.

There are many international organisations and initiatives, but external challenges will not be reduced or mitigated by this.

Further, some argue that Belt and Road is totally unable to deal with the challenges. For those who believe that the Belt and Road Initiative cannot be successfully implemented, the reasons they give are similar to those given in Chapter 2 of this paper. These experts believe that the Belt and Road Initiative cannot overcome the geopolitical challenges of the countries and regions involved.

If it was the case (if it still works well), it had already ended the Ukraine-Russia war.

...The damages (by the war) created from this action, will endure for a long, long time even in a post-war scenario thus the BRI will face major constraints

Another group (the majority of experts in this group are from China) expressed optimism about the ability of the BRI to meet the challenges:

I think it can be overcome. The challenges facing Belt and Road are regional,

...many countries depend on such investments...

It is difficult, but necessary. It should be an inevitable development in world history.

On the question 4: From a personal point of view, do you hold a positive or negative opinion of the Belt and Road Initiative in general?

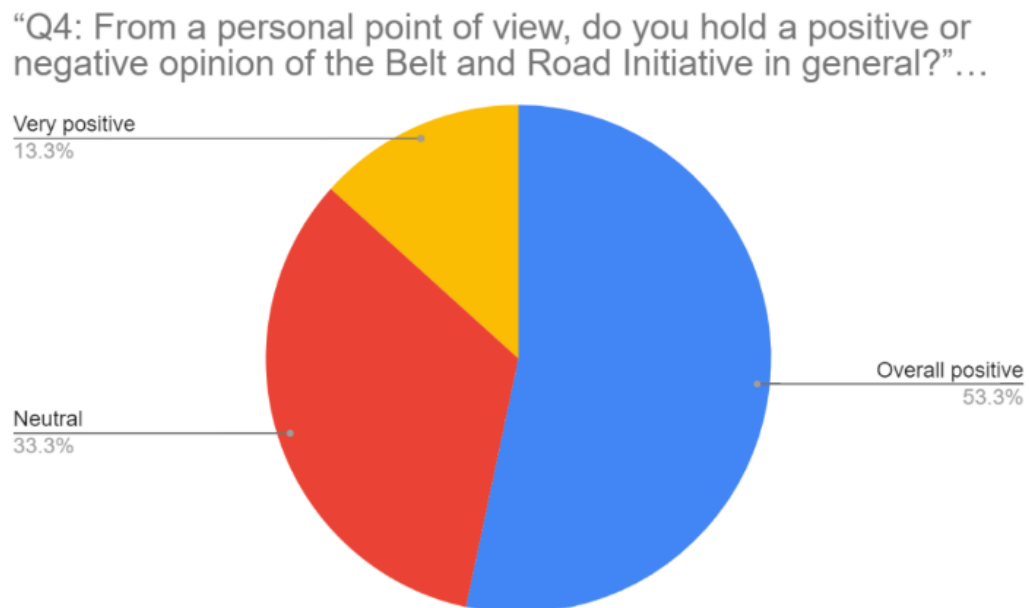


Figure 17: Expert opinion on BRI in general

Surprisingly, not a single respondent had a negative view of the BRI, with some expressing some negative views in the reasons, but they still chose to be neutral. More than half of the survey respondents considered the Belt and Road Initiative to be generally positive.

4.1 Why?

This was one of the key questions in the questionnaire and the answers were very interesting. Respondents basically split into two groups. Nearly all agreed that the ideas of globalization and economic development and economic cooperation presented by the Belt and Road Initiative were positive:

*Because I'm all in favour of multilateralism, economic development and multiculturalism
It's a good plan to boost global trade, especially important for China and Europe. Overall, it is positive.*

But not all chose to maintain a positive view of the Initiative. There are two reasons for this:

- a. those in this group believe that the Belt and Road cannot be successfully implemented;

*If the Belt and Road can be successfully implemented.
Because life of host countries did not improve and China win-win rethoric was just in words, instead of bringing real benefits.*

- b. those in this group believe that the Belt and Road Initiative carries other geopolitical problems.

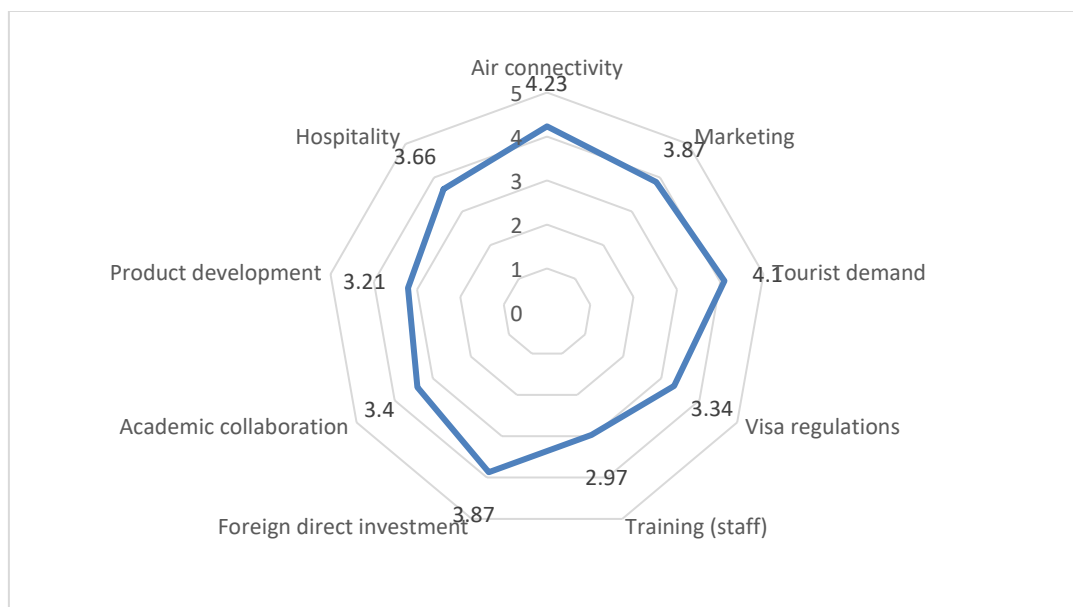
*the invasion of the Russian Federation of Ukraine, and the war that is going on, and bearing in mind the key strategic geographical location of these two countries for the BRI proposal, it has shown the fragilities of the current model of the plan, unfortunately.
I am a little sceptical about its real purposes.*

Q5: To what extent do you think the Belt and Road Initiative will be pivotal in the development of tourism between China and Portugal?

Respondents generally felt that there was a positive relation between Belt and Road and tourism. No one chose the 'no relevance' option. The relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative and Tourism is widely recognised.

Q6: Rate which areas, within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, may be of mutual interest for tourism development between Portugal and China. (1=not important,5=very important)

Figure 18: Average score of each tourism items



In terms of specific impacts, the four items considered to be the most influential were, respectively, air transport, tourism demand, foreign direct investment and the marketing. Air connections are considered to be the most important, and given the geographical location of China and Portugal, air is almost the only means of transport for Chinese tourists visiting Portugal. Whether you reach other European countries directly or through Portugal, several factors about airline, such as ticket price, number of direct flights and airports of take-off and landing, affect travel data and experiences. Tourism demand and the market are the other two main factors determining the choice of tourists. This is related to the market presence and promotion of Portugal in China. In addition, direct investment is considered important, including, not limited to, the movement of people from large Chinese companies investing in various sectors in Portugal, and the growth in the number of visitors from individual investors (e.g., golden visas).

Q7: Because of the special historical relationship between China and Portugal (e.g., Macau), Portugal has certain specificities or facilities to cooperate with China compared to other EU countries. Do you agree?

Over 70% of those surveyed believe that Portugal and China have a "special historical relationship" and that this relationship makes Portugal different from other EU countries when it comes to working with China. This special relationship lies not only in a successful and peaceful political practice, but also in Macau's role as a cultural and economic platform. From the perspective of the Chinese government, Macau is a conduit to the entire Portuguese-speaking world, a conduit that though to a huge market. Likewise, Portuguese-speaking countries can use this platform to expand their business activities and influence in China, as mentioned in the second chapter of this study.

Q7.1 Why?

It has been typically argued that Macau can be used as a kind of platform for links between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

...it is more of a platform to meet all the Portuguese speaking countries in terms of economic relations....

-We, humans, have natural tendencies on worrying about unfamiliar cultures and overthinking. Thus, in this aspect, it is better to have a historical relationship than nothing at all. At least, the false sense of this minimal connection will open lots of mutual conversations.

-One of China's positioning for Macau is to increase its connectivity with Portuguese-speaking countries.

-Macau is a bridge between China and Portugal.

The development of Macau reflects the tacit understanding between China and Portugal.

At meanwhile, another part doubts about the effect of this relationship.

...unfortunately, I don't think it puts Portugal in a better position than the major European countries, for example.

...its political influence is very weak...

This kind of historical relationship may not influence the investment.

A small number of experts are suspicious about this relationship, or consider it to be of little use, they do not consider Macao to be a major factor in relations between Portugal and China.

Q8: Is direct Chinese investment in the Portuguese tourism sector (for example, building or investing in resorts) a good way to attract Chinese tourists?

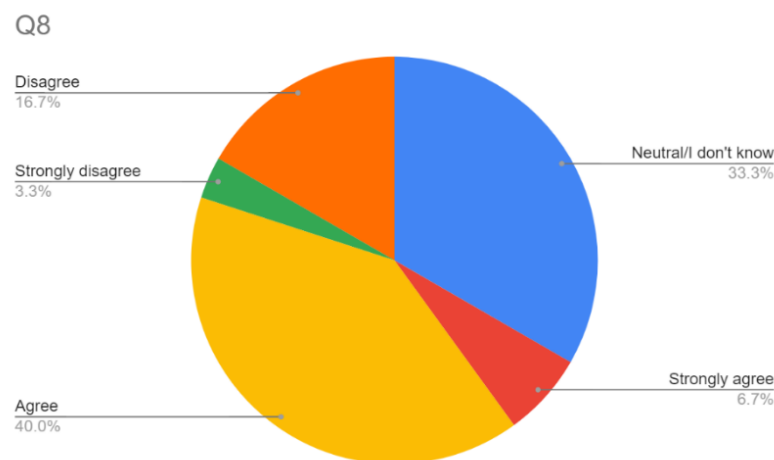


Figure 19: Is direct investment in portuguese tourism a good way for China?

8.1 Why

Agreed:

-The more engaged Chinese companies are in the destination market...the more they will be willing also to push for sales in mainland China and SARs HK and Macau source markets.

-Direct investment is a good way to open up new markets.

-It can drive tourists, and for Chinese tourists, it is an act of advertising in itself.

-If local tourism operators are Chinese, they will surely be more active on the promotion of Portugal in China.

Disagreed:

I think the modern Chinese tourist is not scared to travel by himself like previous Chinese tourists in the past....overall I believe this is definitely not one of the main reasons why Chinese people would visit Portugal.

Most Chinese travellers have little interest to know who invested a hotel or tourism site.

On this question, there are nearly equal numbers of supporters and opponents among experts. Direct investment is not regarded as an effective method of collaboration. Some view direct investment in the tourism industry as a direct means of entering a new market or as a quick method of advertising to the Chinese market. However, another group feels that tourism-related investments, such as hotels and resorts, do not influence the selection of tourists. In addition, they stated that the majority of people do not care who owns hotels or resorts.

Q9: Do you think that another similar China-EU Tourism event could help the recovery of the EU tourism sector in the future?

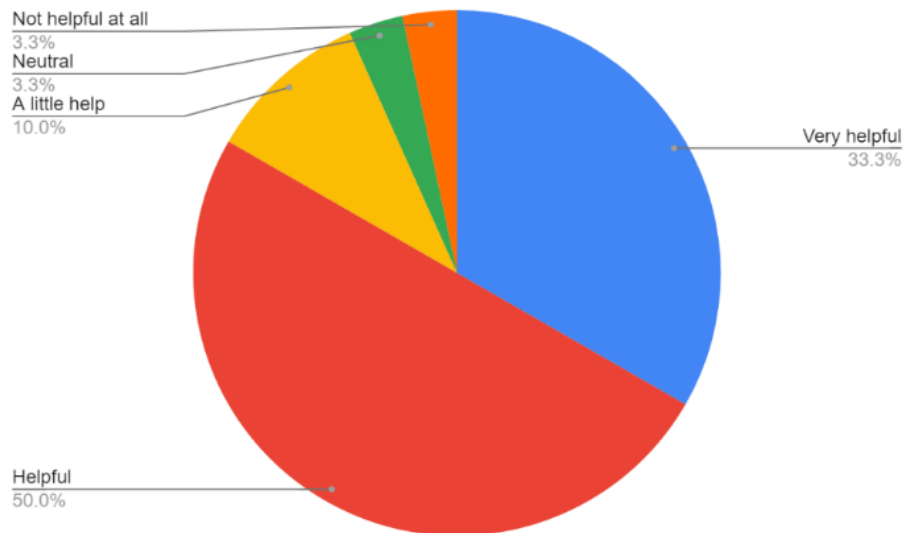
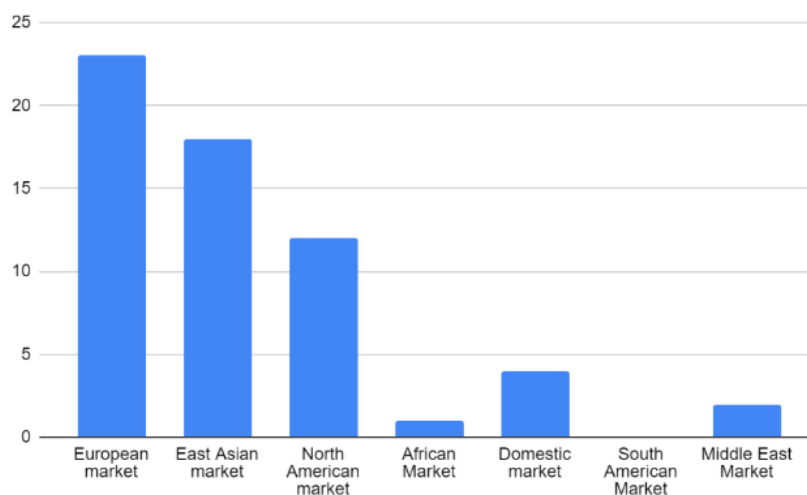


Figure 20: Experts' opinions on the China-EU Tourism event

Respondents generally agreed that a tourism festival-like event could significantly boost visitor numbers, which is what the 2018 proved to be. The majority believe that this has had a very positive impact on the recovery of the tourism market in Europe.

Q10. Respondents were asked to choose up to two most important markets each, Europe and East Asia, a being considered the most important.

Figure 21: Which regions are important for the Portuguese market



Experts believe that the European market is the most important market for Portugal and the Asian market is the second most important.

Q11: If you have any additional views or comments on the Belt and Road Initiative and Sino-Portuguese tourism cooperation, you can leave it below.

-Right now, the Chinese tourists are not coming because they will have to do quarantine in China when returning, as well as the scarcity of flights and eventual flight bans in China.

-Once all this disappears, the Chinese tourism will boom. Portugal should definitely anticipate this phenomenon in order to be ready to welcome the Chinese tourists.

-There (Portugal as a nation brand) needs to be increased promotion and exposure in China.

-The road is winding and the future is bright.

Based on the analysis of the first round, to design the second round of questionnaires, the second questionnaire focused on the following questions:

- 6) It was generally agreed that the BRI and tourism present a high correlation, and that Portugal and China have a special historical relationship, how can the Belt and Road Initiative be retaken/upgraded in ways that can more effectively develop tourism between China and Portugal?
- 7) Air connectivity, marketing, tourism demand and direct investment were identified as the four most important elements, which needed to be ranked twice and asked for the best measures and advice for each project
- 8) In terms of price and style, how should Portugal be positioned as a tourist destination?
- 9) In the first questionnaire, the question of advertising and promotion was mentioned several times by the respondents. Direct investment is not recognized by most people, so what is the best way to promote?
- 10) It is generally agreed that the Asian is very important, so what are the most attractive Portuguese tourism resources for Chinese tourists?

Based on the analysis of the results of the first round, and with the help of Professor Carlos, a second questionnaire was designed.

5.1.2 Second round result analysis

Table 15: Second round of questionnaire collection by category

Category	Portugal	China	Total
Government	1	2	3
Business	3	4	7
Academic	4	4	8
Society	3	3	6
Total	11	13	24

Following is an analysis of the second round of questionnaire results.

Q1: According to the first round, 83.3% of the respondents felt that there was a positive relation between the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and tourism. In your opinion, how can the Belt and Road Initiative be retaken/upgraded in ways that can more effectively develop tourism between China and Portugal?

-With the exchange of information and connection of policies between the two sides, we need to make the Belt and Road a real and viable policy, not just a paper one.

-The BRI should devote more attention to paid-advertisement on TV both in Portugal and China, by stressing what tourists should see in each country.

-The opening of the epidemic control measures does not allow for the free movement of Chinese people and Chinese tourists in Portugal at the moment.

-Language is the foundation and the platform of Portuguese language education in Macau should be used to get more students who understand Portuguese history and culture involved in the tourism industry.

-Find the optimal mix of policy and the tourism sector so that the policy's potential can serve the tourism industry and practitioners more effectively; Effectively communicate with the tourism authorities of both nations. To enhance combined publicity between the public and business sectors, organise experience visits for friendly citizens of the two nations.

The most representative expressions were how to make the already agreed cooperation of the BRI better serve the tourism sector and to strengthen Portugal's focus on the development the national tourism brand of the Chinese market. Also, language talents and the impact of the epidemic were mentioned.

Q2: In the first round, 76.7% of the respondents believe that China and Portugal have a special historical relationship and that both can benefit from it. Which aspect of this unique relationship should be developed and practised more by the tourism sector?

I have sorted the experts' responses to this subject into four categories. For the special historical relationship between China and Portugal, the experts believed that the tourism sector could make use of policy development (45.8%), economic platforms and information sharing (20.8%), staff education (16.7%), and cultural exchange (12.5%), with one expert noting that all modalities should be fully utilised, but the foundation is based on staff education. As with the first issue, the experts agree that cooperation in tourist policy is the most effective strategy to develop market potential.

Q3: According to the first round, people consider 4 items as the most concerning China-Portugal tourism relations. Please rank this new shortlist, and point out up to three initiatives for each item that may help improve tourism between Portugal and China.

Items	Re-rank of importance	Initiatives (up to 3)
Air connectivity		
Tourist demand		
Foreign direct investment		
Marketing		

After re-ranking the four most critical elements, the results show that the participants consider Marketing (41.7%) to be the most important, followed by Tourist demand (29.2%), Air connectivity (16.7%) and Foreign direct investment (12.5%). The participants highlighted the need to strengthen the presence of the Portuguese tourism brand in China. In the fifth question below, participants also elaborate on what they consider to be the most important way of developing a test market in China. At the same time, foreign direct investment is still considered a relatively unimportant item, which is also in line with the results of the first round.

Q4: The East Asian market was considered by the panel members to be the most important market outside Europe for Portugal, according to the first round. In your opinion, what are the most attractive tourist assets/resources in Portugal for East Asian tourists? (Please rank up to the following options)

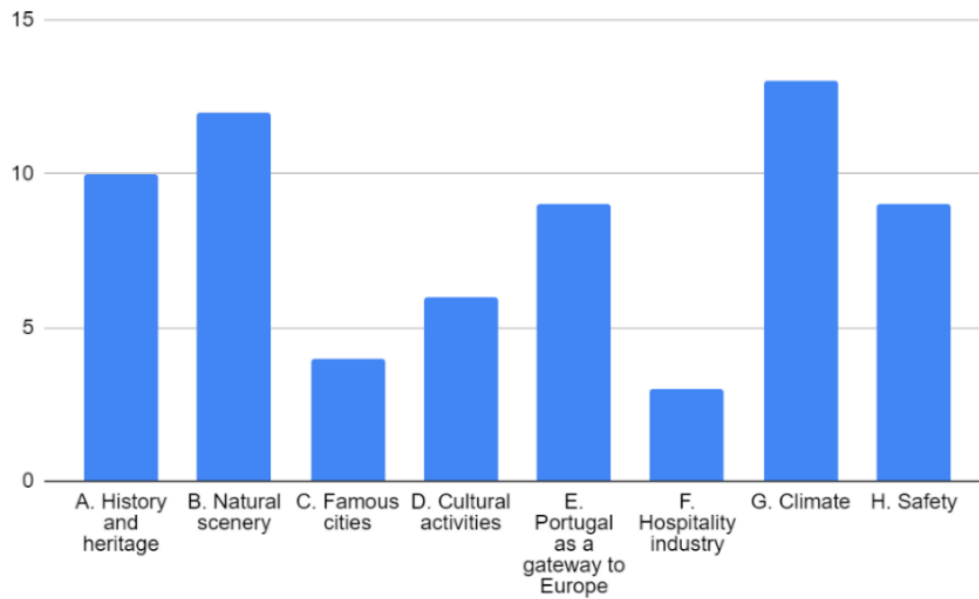


Figure 22: The most attractive tourist assets/resources in Portugal

For this question, experts were allowed to choose up to three options, and the results showed that, climate, natural landscapes and historical sites were the three tourism resources most likely to attract the attention of Chinese tourists. Also, safety and Portugal as a stopover in Europe were the most mentioned factors.

Q5: Many people mentioned that the ‘existence’ of the Portuguese tourism brand in the Chinese market should be boosted. What are the best ways to increase the awareness of the Portuguese national tourism brand in China?

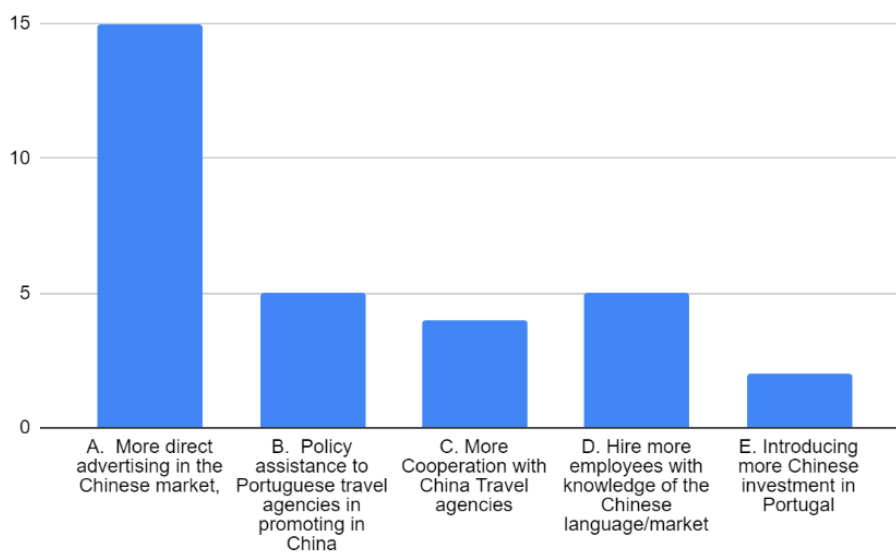


Figure 23: the best ways to increase the awareness of the Portuguese national tourism brand in China

Experts can choose up to two options in this question, with more direct advertising being considered the most important marketing tool, far more than any other option. At the same time, other methods are still not to be ignored.

Q6: For the Chinese market, Portugal as a national tourism destination brand should advertise itself as a...? (Pick more than one)

- A. Price-friendly destination
- B. Intermediate destination.
- C. Luxury destinations
- D. Diversity destinations (coast, mountains, islands, forests, etc.)
- E. I don't know

Only two experts thought that Portugal should be presented as a "luxury destination" in the Chinese market and that it would be a good choice for price-sensitive consumers. More than half (56.6%) of the experts believe that Portugal should be considered as an affordable or medium-priced tourist destination. At the same time 33% of the experts chose that Portugal should promote itself as a multi-tourist destination. Because this technique surveys a broad and representative sample of experts, the information obtained could be utilized by all levels of government, industry associations and tourist operators to make policy decisions regarding the development of tourism. This is especially important for individual operators, many of whom have small business organizations.

The two rounds of the Delphi process resulted in the following consensus: the relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative and the tourism sector deserves to be explored further; Macau plays an important role in Sino-Portuguese cooperation; Portuguese market development in China is considered important and direct advertising is considered to be a proven way of doing so. The analysis of the results will be detailed in 5.3.

5.2 Analysis of questionnaire results

The questionnaire for Chinese students in Portugal examines the relationship between Tourism Information Quality, Tourism Destination Image, Intention to visit and Tourist Satisfaction, as well as their awareness of the Belt and Road Initiative. This survey is mainly aimed at analysing the behavioural preferences of Chinese tourists travelling in Portugal.

The demographics of the respondents yielded the following main information, firstly, the majority of respondents were female, accounting for 69.3% of the total, more than half of them were aged between 20 and 35 years (53.2%) and around 76% of them had been in Portugal for more than 1 year. The other three questions discussing the respondents' travel preferences show that 61% of the respondents consider Portugal to be their top foreign travel destination and the vast majority of them, 83.9%, had not visited Portugal as a tourist before studying abroad. It is the frequency of travel of the respondents that is more dispersed, with the most common frequency of travel being once every 2 to 3 months.

Table 16: Demographic Profiles and Characteristics of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	59	28.8%
Female	142	69.3%
Other or prefer not to say	4	2.0%
Age		
15-20	10	4.9%
20-25	109	53.2%
25-30	63	30.7%
30+	23	11.2%
Time spends in Portugal		
Less than 1 year	49	23.9%
One to two years	70	34.1%
Two to three years	37	18%
More than three years	49	23.9%
Was Portugal your first choice to study abroad?		
Yes	125	61%
No	80	39%
Have been to Portugal previously as a tourist?		
Yes	33	16.1%
No	172	83.9%
Frequency of travel in Portugal		
Once a month or more	44	21.5%
About once every two or three months	75	36.3%
About once every six months	51	24.9%
Once a year or less	35	17.1%

This study adopted the two-step analysis approach suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). In this paper, the reliability of the measurement model was first tested using SPSS and Amos.

Table 17: Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Factor loading	Mean	S.D.	CR	AVE
Information Quality ($\alpha=0.819$)	IQ1	0.628	3.537	1.135	0.821	0.536
	IQ2	0.780	3.454	1.113		
	IQ3	0.736	3.176	1.093		
	IQ4	0.775	3.195	1.081		
Destination Image ($\alpha=0.847$)	DI1	0.881	3.654	1.011	0.849	0.653
	DI2	0.778	3.698	0.932		
	DI3	0.760	3.356	0.963		
Tourist Satisfaction ($\alpha=0.798$)	TS1	0.716	3.673	0.947	0.800	0.501
	TS2	0.667	3.898	1.068		
	TS3	0.757	3.590	0.994		
	TS4	0.687	3.546	1.007		
Intention to Visit ($\alpha=0.859$)	IV1	0.801	3.659	0.918	0.860	0.607
	IV2	0.768	3.771	1.005		
	IV3	0.700	3.317	1.016		
	IV4	0.842	3.634	0.974		
Awareness of B&R ($\alpha=0.890$)	AW1	0.877	3.239	1.149	0.890	0.571
	AW2	0.878	3.112	1.181		
	AW3	0.771	3.073	1.167		
	AW4	0.742	2.805	1.225		
Attitude on B&R ($\alpha=0.849$)	AT1	0.729	3.293	1.001	0.851	0.589
	AT2	0.830	3.537	0.993		
	AT3	0.726	3.678	0.977		
	AT4	0.781	3.756	1.033		

Model fit:

$\chi^2=232.540, df=215, \chi^2/df=1.082, RMSEA=0.020, GFI=0.911, TLI=0.991, CFI=0.993$

Descriptive analysis was conducted to analyse the profile of the respondents. The details of the measurement model evaluation are shown in Table 17. Composite reliability (CR) of all constructs exceeded a critical value of 0.70, ranged from 0.800 to 0.890, suggesting that the constructs showed acceptable reliability (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested that the criteria for convergent validity constructs, factor loadings, and the average variance extracted (AVE) values should exceed 0.5 and those for reliability should exceed 0.7. As can be seen from the convergent validity table, the mean variance extracted from the average variance extracted (AVE) values of each variable ranged from 0.501 to 0.653, indicating that the convergent validity of each latent variable was reliable.

Table 18: Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Information Quality	0.732					
Destination Image	0.523***	0.808				
Tourist Satisfaction	0.680***	0.634***	0.708			
Intention to Visit	0.594***	0.636***	0.680***	0.779		
Awareness of BRI	0.321***	0.341***	0.306***	0.411***	0.819	
Attitude on BRI	0.249**	0.488***	0.375***	0.487***	0.616***	0.768

Note: The diagonal value is the square root of the AVE;

From the discriminant validity table, it shows that each construct’s square root of AVE was compared with the variance shared between the construct and other constructs in the model which means that there is a certain degree of differentiation between the six latent variables of the study, Information Quality, Destination Image, Tourist Satisfaction, Intention to Visit, and Awareness of BRI, Attitude on BRI can be considered as six different constructs, and therefore the discriminant validity of the scale is reliable.

Figure 24: Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

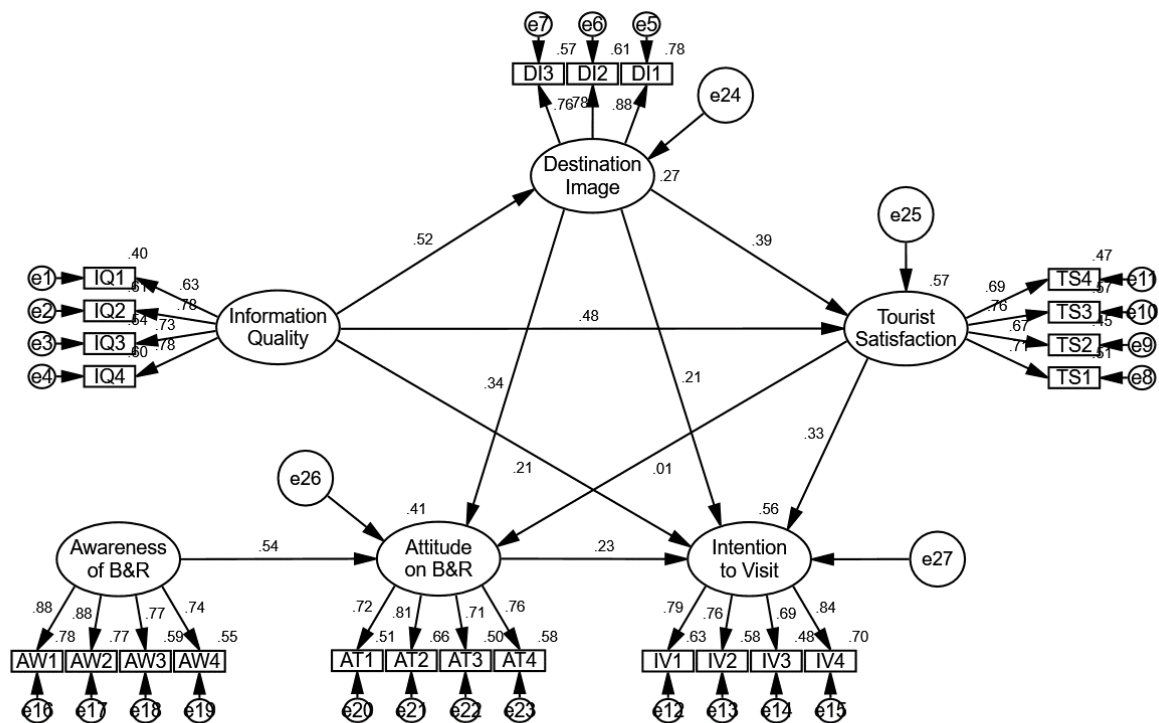


Table 19: Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

	Path	Standardized estimates	t-values
H1	Information Quality→ Destination Image	0.517	5.786***
H2	Destination Image→ Intention to Visit	0.214	2.320*
H3	Information Quality→ Tourist Satisfaction	0.480	4.895***
H4	Information Quality→ Intention to Visit	0.212	2.129*
H5	Tourist Satisfaction→ Intention to Visit	0.329	2.799**
H6	Destination Image→ Tourist Satisfaction	0.386	4.486***
H7	Awareness of BRI→ Attitude on BRI	0.543	6.885***
H8	Destination Image→ Attitude on BRI	0.336	3.304***
H9	Tourist Satisfaction→ Attitude on BRI	0.012	0.121
H10	Attitude on BRI→ Intention to Visit	0.225	3.281**

Total variance explained(R²):R² for Destination Image = 0.268R² for Tourist Satisfaction = 0.572R² for Attitude on BRI = 0.413R² for Intention to Visit = 0.565

Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

Model fit: $\chi^2=262.313$, df=220, $\chi^2/df=1.192$, RMSEA=0.031, GFI=0.901, TLI=0.979, CFI=0.982

The smaller the χ^2/df , the better the fit of the model, usually a value of less than 3 indicates an ideal fit. A root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) of less than 0.05 indicates an ideal fit. Other indicators such as CFI, TLI, etc. are closer to 1, indicating a better fit, above 0.9 indicates a good fit and above 0.80 is an acceptable standard. From the fitting results it is clear that, Model of χ^2/df is 1.192 Less than 3; RMSEA is 0.031, less than 0.05, and CFI, TLI and GFI indicators all reach 0.9 or above, which is generally a good fit for the model.

The path coefficients, t-values and p-values between the variables were obtained after the model was fitted. In general, if the T-value is greater than 1.96, then the p-value is less than 0.05, it can be considered that this path coefficient can pass the significance test within the 95% confidence interval, indicating that the corresponding path hypothesis of the pre-determined model is valid; otherwise, it is not valid. Nine of the ten hypotheses were supported:

The significant positive effect of Information Quality on Destination Image ($\beta=0.517$, $p<0.001$)

The significant positive effect of Destination Image on Intention to Visit ($\beta=0.214$, $p<0.05$)

Information Quality had a significant positive effect on Tourist Satisfaction ($\beta=0.48$, $p<0.001$)

The positive effect of Information Quality on Intention to Visit was significant ($\beta=0.212$, $p<0.05$)

Tourist Satisfaction has a significant positive effect on Intention to Visit ($\beta=0.329$, $p<0.05$)

The positive effect of Destination Image on Tourist Satisfaction was significant ($\beta=0.386$, $p<0.001$)

Awareness of BRI had a significant positive effect on Attitude on BRI ($\beta=0.543$, $p<0.001$)

Destination Image has a significant positive effect on Attitude on BRI ($\beta=0.336$, $p<0.001$)

Tourist Satisfaction had no significant effect on Attitude on BRI

Positive effect of Attitude on BRI on Intention to Visit was significant ($\beta=0.225$, $p<0.05$)

R² of the dominance analysis reflects the extent to which the explanatory variable explains the dependent variable. The R² value of destination image is 0.268, which indicates that the explanatory power of information quality on destination image is 26.8%; the R² value of visitor satisfaction is 0.572, which indicates that the explanatory power of information quality and destination image on visitor satisfaction is equal to 57.2%; The R² value of destination image is 0.268, which indicates that the explanatory power of information quality on destination image is 26.8%; the R² value of visitor satisfaction is 0.572, which indicates that the explanatory power of information quality and destination image on visitor satisfaction is equal to 57.2%; the R² of attitude toward BRI is equal to 0.413, which indicates that awareness of BRI, destination image, and visitor satisfaction on attitude toward BRI The explanatory power of R² for intention to visit equals 41.3%; R² for intention to visit equals 0.565, indicating that the explanatory power of destination image, information quality, tourist satisfaction, and attitude toward BRI on intention to visit equals 56.5%.

Table 20: Results of Indirect effects

Mediating Path	Effect	Bootstrapping (N=5000)	
		95%CI	
IQ→DI→IV	0.111*	0.001	0.237
IQ→TS→IV	0.158*	0.036	0.345
IQ→DI→TS→IV	0.066**	0.017	0.152
AW→AT→IV	0.122**	0.047	0.215

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The 95% range of IQ→DI→IV mediated paths was [0.001,0.237], which did not contain 0, indicating a significant mediating effect of Destination Image between Information Quality and Intention to Visit, with an effect value of 0.111. The 95% range of IQ→TS→IV mediated path is [0.036,0.345], which does not contain 0, indicating that Tourist Satisfaction mediates significantly between Information Quality and Intention to Visit with an effect value of 0.158. The 95% range of IQ→DI→TS→IV mediated path is [0.017,0.152], which does not contain 0,

indicating the significant mediating role of Destination Image, Tourist Satisfaction in the chain between Information Quality and Intention to Visit, with an effect value of 0.158. effect value of 0.066. The 95% range of the AW→AT→IV mediated path is [0.047,0.215], which does not contain 0, indicating that Attitude on BRI mediates significantly between Awareness of BRI and Intention to Visit, with an effect value of 0.122.

5.3 Discussion of the results

In general, as mentioned in the questionnaire design section, the first round of the Delphi method focused on the experts' perceptions of the Belt and Road Initiative itself and the relationship between the BRI and tourism industry. Because this technique surveys a broad and representative sample of experts, the information obtained could be utilized by all levels of government, industry associations and tourist operators to make policy decisions regarding the development of tourism. This is especially important for individual operators, many of whom have small business organizations and who may do not research. The second round of the Delphi method focused on specific projects related to tourism between China and Portugal.

The vast majority of experts have a good or very good perception of the Belt and Road Initiative, a proportion of over 85, just as mentioned in the literature review, the BRI itself has a strong international influence and is widely discussed in various fields, especially in Asia and Europe. On the other hand, the BRI is too complex and involved for those working in the tourism industry to be concerned with the opportunities and challenges that policy and other macro aspects present to the industry, as evidenced by the fact that only 3.3% of respondents described themselves as "fully aware" of it. Challenges may come from geopolitics, economic cooperation, large-scale engineering projects and many other aspects.

By examining the five main objectives of the initiative specifically, policy coordination and facilities connectivity are considered to be the two most important aspects, with major supporters respectively, and well ahead of the third place with minor supporters. This result is not surprising, as the initiator of the BRI is first and foremost a relevant department of the Chinese government, and it is rightly seen by many as a comprehensive strategy that may be based on geopolitics. This addresses the question of who should lead the Belt and Road Initiative and related cooperation, and the answer is the policy makers and the related

companies whose core business is infrastructure development. In contrast, people-to-people exchanges are considered to be the least important aspect. I have already mentioned in the literature review section that although the relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative and tourism, cultural and educational exchanges has been mentioned in many official texts, it is not a major concern. It is particularly important for the tourism sector to take advantage of the policy cooperation mentioned in this initiative, which can be further answered by the presentation and feedback of several questions below.

Another examination of the feasibility of the Belt and Road Initiative was whether it was an outdated or no longer viable scheme, and asked for reasons. On this question experts were split evenly, with around half believing that the BRI will still be relevant in the future, but a further 40 per cent doubting it, and 6 per cent believing it to be an outdated plan. Regardless of the pro and con views, the key words most often mentioned by experts were geopolitics and war, differing in their estimates of the scale of this geopolitical challenge. As mentioned in the chapter on the relationship between the Belt and Road Initiative and geopolitics in the literature review, no matter how the initiative is perceived, geopolitical events will inevitably affect the initiative and the international relations of the countries involved. The next question was about the overall assessment of the BRI, and no expert chose negative, with more than half saying it was generally positive, 30% saying it was neutral, and another 13% saying it was very positive. All experts agreed that the ideas of globalization and economic development and economic cooperation presented by the BRI were positive. But in another section, those who were neutral raised two central questions about the initiative: a. those in this group believe that the Belt and Road cannot be successfully implemented; b. those in this group believe that the Belt and Road Initiative carries other geopolitical problems. The essence of this question is whether the experts believe in the feasibility of a holistic programme of political and economic cooperation in an unpredictable international environment, and according to the results of this study, from a tourism perspective, the experts believe it is generally optimistic. There is no doubt that the tragedy of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has also had a significant negative impact on the recovery of international tourism. According to an ongoing UNWTO follow-up survey, its negative effects are in six main aspects: Added risk to a weak and uneven tourism recovery; Lower consumer confidence; Weaker economic growth and higher inflation; Disruption of Russian & Ukrainian outbound travel; Impact on traditional destinations but also emerging ones; Threatens tourism-related jobs and businesses (UNWTO, 2022) .

The next questions were all about China and Portugal, and China and European tourism specifically. On the question of the relevance of the BRI to and tourism, over 85% of respondents believe that the Belt and Road Initiative and tourism are relevant. This is a very high level of support and it reflects the recognition not only of the Belt and Road for the tourism sector, but also the recognition of the relevant cooperation and practices between China and Portugal so far, or, at least, of the potential for cooperation that the practices offer. As the growing trade and visitor figures presented in the case study section and the literature review section show, tourism practitioners are still excited about the development potential offered by the Belt and Road initiative, despite the impact of COVID-19.

In the second round, in addition to feedback on the results of the first round, specific practical suggestions were made. With a focus on policy cooperation in the experts' responses (which corresponded to the responses on the importance of the relationship between the five objectives and the specific ways in which tourism is affected). Both in terms of the control instruments of COVID-19 (concerning the free movement of tourists and their willingness to travel) and the real implementation of policy cooperation between the two sides rather than just on the surface, the experts also mentioned the question of how to build and develop Macau as a platform for cooperation. The conclusion of this question is obvious, with the vast majority of experts focusing on the implementation of policies in the cooperation between the two sides, whether it be flights, cultural exchanges, language education, policy communication is of paramount importance. In the current phase, policy plays the biggest shadow on the market. This policy is not one-sided and more attention is given to the various Chinese policies, to the neglect of Portugal's input in the Chinese market, where experts consider the commercial development of the Chinese market to be important, but less mention is made of the work done by Portugal in terms of policy input to the Chinese market.

In terms of specific impacts, the four items considered to be the most influential were, respectively, air transport, tourism demand, foreign direct investment and the marketing. In the second round, after Participants highlighted the need to strengthen the presence of the Portuguese tourism brand in China. As two countries very far apart, it is not surprising that airline links were considered important, and indeed this is an important practice and objective of China-Portugal tourism cooperation. Tourist demand and market development were considered to be the shortcomings of Portugal in the Chinese market. In the second round, the experts were asked to choose the best ways to increase the awareness of the Portuguese national tourism brand in China, and they could choose up to two options in this question. Although

direct investment was considered a key aspect of tourism cooperation, more than half of the experts in question 8 were sceptical about direct investment in tourism establishments such as hotels, a typical statement being that Chinese tourists are not overly concerned about who invests in the businesses that provide services when choosing a destination. At a practical level, some Chinese investors have invested in related industries in Portugal, such as real estate, travel agencies, etc., but the direct effect of this investment on the Chinese market is doubtful (although the direct purpose of these investments is not necessarily to attract more Chinese tourists). In fact, it is factors such as market development and direct flights that have more influence on tourists' choice of destination, and these projects are both policy-driven (flights rely on inter-governmental coordination and cooperation) and market-driven (Portugal's understanding of and commitment to the Chinese market).

Although Portugal and China are very far apart, being located at the westernmost and easternmost parts of Asia and Europe, it is known that China and Portugal have a very long historical connection. This is mainly due to the overseas explorations of Portuguese navigators and early colonists, when the Southeast Asian region (now Malaysia and Indonesia) became an early stronghold of Sino-Portuguese exchanges and a window to the Western world for China. Also later, as the occupation of Macau by Portuguese colonists made it one of the most important cities in China for Portuguese and even Eastern and Western exchanges, with the Portuguese arriving in Macau in the 16th century, more than 300 years before the British colonists invaded Hong Kong. With the peaceful handover of Macau in 1999, the city was officially transformed from a symbol of colonial confrontation to a symbol of peace and cooperation. Over 75% of those surveyed in this research believe that Portugal and China have a "special historical relationship" and that this relationship makes Portugal different from other EU countries when it comes to working with China. Some experts believe that this historical connection is weak and only historical, but this view is one-sided and ignores the great commitment of the Chinese government to cooperate with Portugal and Portuguese-speaking countries. In practice, China has invested a great deal of effort in making Macau a window of exchange and cooperation with many Portuguese-speaking countries, with more than 200 million users and a huge market potential.

The second round of questions explored how Macau could be used as a platform, the experts believed that the tourism sector could make use of policy development (45.8%), economic platforms and information sharing (20.8%), staff education (16.7%), and cultural exchange (12.5%), with one expert noting that all modalities should be fully utilized, but the foundation is based on staff education. This result is no surprise, as policy is still considered to

be the core issue that should be looked at. At a specific technical level, cultural tourism festivals - organised under the Belt and Road Initiative - are typical events for tourism promotion, with China and Europe hosting the China-Europe Tourism Festival in 2018. Respondents generally agreed that a tourism festival-like event could significantly boost visitor numbers, which is what the 2018 proved to be. The majority believe that this has had a very positive impact on the recovery of the tourism market in Europe. Another technical aspect lies in the pricing strategy. When asked which market was the most important for Portugal, the European market, the East Asian (China, Japan and Korea) market and the North American market were considered the top three. It is indisputable that the European market, being the closest and most accessible, has been considered by Portugal as the most important tourism market. The East Asian market is considered to be more important than the North American market, which may be influenced by the origin of the visitors, but again the results show that these three markets are far more important than the others (Africa, Middle East, South America, etc.) and can therefore be taken on board. Also confirms the experts' recognition of the great potential of the East Asian market.

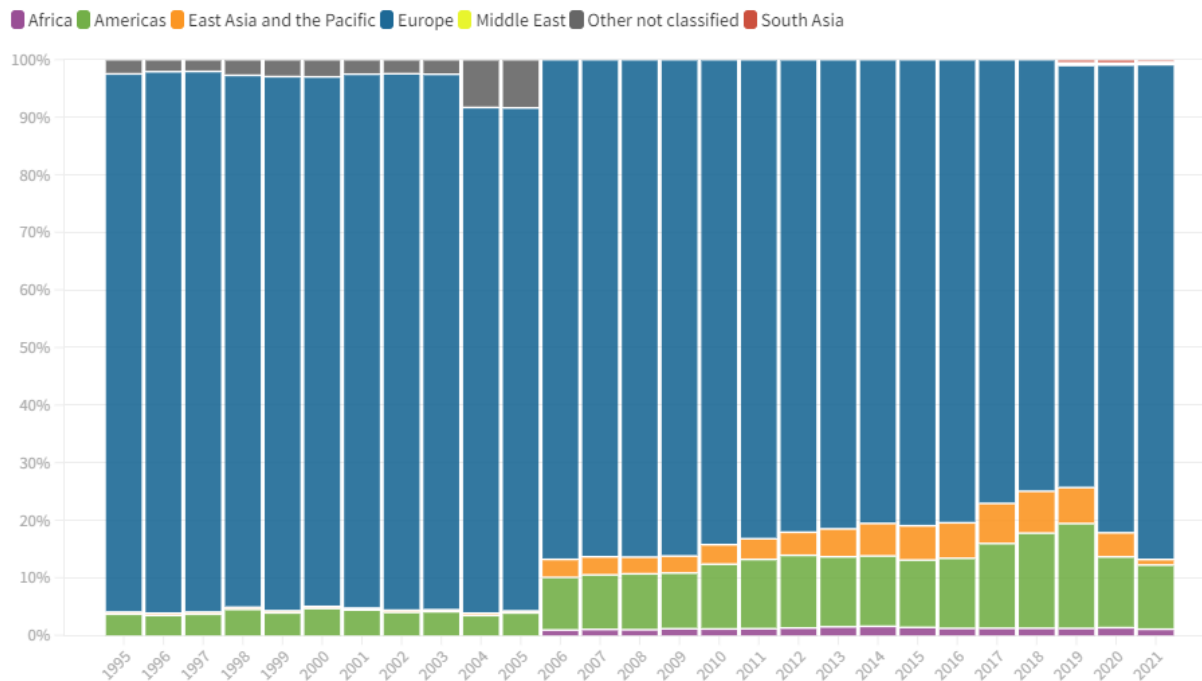
Finally, it is important not to miss the attractiveness of the type of tourism resources that Portugal offers to, the top three being climate, natural resources and historical heritage. This is linked to Portugal's tourism strategy, which has always presented itself as a destination with a perfect mix of climate, natural resources and historical sites, and it is true that Portugal's success in the international tourism market shows the correctness of its tourism strategy, which, of course, cannot be separated from the fundamental fact that Portugal is a country of great history and great beauty. It is not surprising that this tourist considers the climate factor to be the most important. In Asia, Thailand is the most visited market for Chinese tourists and, apart from the price factor, the most important attraction for Chinese tourists is its tropical climate which is suitable for year-round visits and island tourism activities. Portugal's warm climate, along with, heritage and natural beauty labels, is enough to attract tourists from all over the world. The most attractive tourist resources for Chinese tourists are the climate, climate, natural landscapes and historical sites of Portugal, Direct advertising containing these elements should be invested in the Chinese market.

An intriguing outcome of the Delphi Method is that business practitioners are particularly sensitive to the impact of China's travel policy and rarely mentioned by experts who are academic researchers. Those practitioners, some are providers of Portuguese travel services based on China, some are international travel agencies with offices in China, and they are the

most sensitive to the regulation. As mentioned, some expert said that the most important reason for the change in Chinese tourists' post-pandemic travel behaviour is China's epidemic prevention policy. In the course of the expert paper questionnaire, staff from Chinese travel agencies complained to me that they were unable to operate normally because of the epidemic, which was at the height of the epidemic in Shanghai in May 2022, when the Chinese government implemented a strict epidemic prevention policy. In terms of tourism recovery, Portugal and Europe have leading the way. Figures from China also prove that the desire to travel is still there, despite the tighter restrictions faced. CEIC (China Passenger Carried, Civil Aviation; and China Passenger Carried, Railway) data shows that airline passenger numbers increased by 61% between August 2021 and September 2021, then increased by 8% in October, and then decreased by 45% between October and November. Similarly, rail passenger numbers increased by 47% in the same month, increased by 9% and decreased by 42%, the reduction in the flow of people and the policy is closely linked to the local epidemic situation.

Because of the opening up of the rest of the world, there is an information gap for researchers and practitioners alike about this feature of the Chinese market. As of first quarter of 2023, China's immigration policy is still relatively strict, what will be the face of the recovery of Chinese tourists, as the most populous country in the world, will it be drastic or moderate? How the behavioural preferences of Chinese tourists will change in the further? Like will they be more willing to travel to Portugal or the EU because of higher degree of freedom (to avoid the restrictions limit due to the epidemic central) compared to China? Will they be more afraid to participate in cultural events with large numbers of people, such as watching a football match in a football stadium because of COVID-19 or other infectious diseases? The severity of the epidemic policy on tourism activities has been greatly underestimated by outside observers. It is not the intention of this paper to make an assessment of the epidemic prevention policy, as it is difficult to analyse from a single dimension and perspective, but this example confirms the great non-ignored influence of administrative measures on tourism development.

Figure 25: Arrivals in Portugal by region



Source: UNWTO

Despite the many uncertainties, China's outbound tourism recovery is still underway. According to the China Tourism Development Report 2022(Yang, 2022), tourist confidence is recovering and there is confidence to travel to more distant destinations. Among respondents, the majority of desired outbound destinations are Europe, America, East Asia and China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, a significant change from 2021. Compared to 2021, Europe and the US come to the first place as outbound destinations, overtaking Southeast Asia and Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. The proportion of respondents choosing Europe and the US as an outbound destination has increased by 26% compared to 2021. Value for money" is the most important factor for respondents in 2022 compared to last year. In the 2021 survey the health and safety were the first concern and in 2022 this item comes second; it shows that respondents have a more rational understanding of the epidemic and have more confidence in the safety and security of the destination. UNWTO forecasts that the international tourism market size for the full year 2022 will recover to 65% of 2019 levels and international tourism revenues to 70% to 80% of 2019 levels (UNWTO, 2022). In terms of regions, Europe and the Middle East will see the strongest recovery, followed by the Americas and Africa, with Asia Pacific recovering relatively slowly, but the overall situation is starting to improve significantly. The strength of a destination's promotion, the size of its product and service appeal, its safety and security

accessibility and the efforts made in terms of satisfaction will determine their position in the competition in the Chinese outbound tourism market in the long term. It is a process full of uncertainties and opportunities.

The results of the questionnaire for Chinese students should not be ignored, as it shows that the quality of travel information, destination image and travel experience significantly influence their travel visit intention. Information quality, destination image and tourist Satisfaction are a common variable used in studies related to tourism research, and in this case their correlation was demonstrated, similarly to some other studies. I should note that because the respondents had lived in Portugal, many of them also had good Portuguese language skills, they had undoubtedly stronger information-seeking skills than the average self-guided traveller, and due to their experience in Portugal, the respondents also had a very specific knowledge of the destination image of Portugal (they had learnt about it actively in school or in their language studies). As for the average traveller, the difficulty and quality of the information obtained is still very important, the Delphi method also came to a similar conclusion, both surveys illustrate the possible shortcomings of information on tourism in Portugal (especially the Chinese content).



Graphic 13: Journeys to Portugal Revisited Website

(Source: journeytoportugalrevisited.com)

The vast majority of experts believe that direct advertising is the best way to promote Portugal in China, which is in line with the findings of the student questionnaire that the quality of tourism information is directly related to the image of the destination and the tourists' intention to visit. In fact, many attempts have been made in the Portuguese tourism sector for

improve the types and quality of tourism information, an example being the digital platform "Journeys to Portugal Revisited" (journeytoportugalrevisited.com). A Journey to Portugal (1981), a book by the Nobel prize award José Saramago, whose descriptions of places, landscapes, communities, natural and cultural heritage were revisited and contributed to Portugal becoming a literary tourist destination. To mark the centenary of the birth of Portuguese literary giant José Saramago, the Saramago Foundation, in partnership with *VisitPortugal*, has created the "Revisiting Portugal" digital platform. Users from all over the world can discover different routes in an interactive and dynamic way, using 3D maps with Google Earth technology, and the project invites modern authors to retrace Saramago's journey through Portugal and, through their eyes, to revisit and compare the "past" and "present" of the places reached in the book, distilling the "Through their perspectives, they will re-examine and compare the 'past' and 'present' of the places reached in the book, extracting the most valuable aspects of the work, thus encouraging more readers to understand or reinterpret the classic and to further expand the journey to Portugal as depicted by Saramago. Cities to visit on this route include Guimarães, Bragança, Guarda, Coimbra, Tomar, etc. This is a very good opportunity for Chinese tourists to get to know Portugal, but they have two problems: firstly, this website does not have a Chinese version and secondly, Google Maps may not be available in China.

This example illustrates a certain struggle for Chinese tourists in accessing tourism promotion information; on the one hand the Portuguese tourism sector may not have enough resources to produce it in Chinese, or they may not consider it worthwhile to do so; on the other hand, the differences in information policies in China may confuse both sides. Such problems could be recognised and addressed in the Belt and Road initiative, for policy makers and practitioners in the tourism sector on both sides, there is a need to understand each other in order to provide more efficient and useful information. This does not mean that Portugal should cater for a single market without any boundaries, but it is important to be more flexible and local when it comes to business promotion.

Based on the above analysis, the results of the hypothesis have been briefly collated as follows:

H1 taking into account the results of this research, this hypothesis can be validated as quality of tourism information can influence the Portugal destinations image.

H2 can be validated as the image of Portuguese tourism destination shows a positive correlation with the intention to visit.

H3 can be validated as the quality of information significantly affects Tourist satisfaction.

H4 can be validated as the quality of information significantly affects tourists' willingness to visit.

H5 can be validated as tourist satisfaction significantly affects intention to visit;

H6 can be validated as tourism destination image affects tourist satisfaction;

H7 can be validated as awareness toward BRI are significantly influenced attitudes toward BRI;

H8 can be validated Attitudes toward the BRI significantly influences destination image;

H9 disproved as tourist Satisfaction is positively correlated with Attitude on BRI;

H10 can be partly validated as the evaluation of BRI is positively correlated with the intention to visit;

H11 can be partly validated as awareness of BRI and the feasibility of the initiative were positively correlated.

H12 can be validated as the higher the perceived feasibility of BRI, the better the evaluation of it.

As a summary, the conclusions obtained by the Delphi method shows with regard to the awareness and agreement of the BRI, the feedback was very positive, with experts having a generally positive view of the Belt and Road, but at the same time some of them expressing concerns about its future, mainly due to the impact of geopolitical conflicts. According to the experts, there is a high correlation between the Belt and Road initiative and tourism, with China and Asian being one of the most important markets for Portuguese tourism section. In the cooperation between Portugal and China, the active role of Macau should be valued. Experts agree that cooperation in tourist policy is the most effective strategy to develop market potential. Climate, natural landscapes and historical sites were the three tourism resources most likely to attract of Chinese tourists. Portugal should position itself as a medium-priced or cheaper tourist destination.

In this research, both from the perspective of the destination and the visitor shows that Portugal's reputation as a tourism destination requires special attention. In the global arena of political, economic, and cultural competitiveness, a nation's tourism image is its most valuable intangible asset. In the era of information technology, the autonomy of the visitor, the temporal and spatial differentiation of tourism behaviour, and the influence of the destination's image on tourism decisions have all significantly grown.

6. Conclusion

Chapter Overview: This study shows that the relevance of the Belt and Road Initiative and the tourism sector has been demonstrated through transport connections, investment, brand marketing, and staff training. In the context of the BRI, the tourism sector should focus on the following four aspects in the future: First, destination branding and policy cooperation, the creation of a destination brand is believed to be the key issue for Portuguese tourism in the Chinese market, policy cooperation will be its concluding strategy. Second, the tourism experience and pricing strategy cover Chinese tourists' preferences for Portugal's tourism resources and price alternatives. Third, increased cultural interchange and staff training. Finally, the sustainability of tourism is necessary in order to prepare for future repercussions. In the final section, the study's limitations will be discussed.

6.1 Destination Brand and tourism policy cooperation

This study concludes that Portugal's presence in the Chinese market is still low and that Portugal must urgently create a positive brand as a tourist destination in China. The national tourism image is the most important intangible asset of a country in the world of political, economic and cultural competition. Simon Anholt coined the concept of nation branding in 1996, as consisting of three main components: strategy, substance, and symbolic actions (Simon, 2011). Since then, number of relevant studies have noted this and given some advice on how to developing a 'competitive identity' of Portugal nation brand. In the era of information technology, the independence of tourists, the spatial and temporal differentiation of tourism behaviour, and the influence of the destination's image on tourism decisions have all significantly grown. This study also shows that there is a strong connection between the quality of information, image of the destination and the willingness to visit. As the Delphi method result shows that an effective means of improving the image of a destination is direct advertising.



Graphic 14: Visit Portugal promotional material in China



Graphic 15: Portugal Tourism Office on Weibo about the University of Coimbra

The Portuguese tourism industry should pay attention to the quality of tourism information in Chinese language. A similar study on China-Portugal tourism states in terms of information that influence Chinese tourists' travel decisions, useful information and tips of the destination is absolutely the most significant information (Mou, 2016). In the tourism industry, social media has made a huge impact on the way people search and share information and even make a

decision on their destinations. Therefore, social media is considered an important source of tourism information (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Increasingly a greater number of independent traveller's search for information about their trips and even book their trips online or through mobile applications (eMarketer, 2015).

Social media is becoming a distinct tourism marketing and communication tool for marketers in various firms because they can directly interact with tourists and influence decision-making processes of their travel consumers (Kiráľová & Pavlíček, 2015; Noti, 2013). A study of online communication and tourism destination image focuses on the official account of Portuguese tourism sector (@visitportugal), indicated that the most common applied hashtags for describing Portugal as a tourism destination and inspire travellers to visit were related to nature-based activities, like nature, river, beach, ocean, sea. (Kuhzady & Ghasemi, 2019). Cultural heritage is considered to be one of the items that can contribute to the tourism drive (Nobre & Sousa, 2022). Another study on whether the 2008 economic crisis has damaged the image of tourism in Portugal shows that wine is considered to be a new example of a better, more than sun and beach, image that can represent the goodness of Portugal (Montenegro, 2014).

The results of the Delphi method suggest that policy cooperation may be the best way to developing tourism potential. Social globalization significantly alleviates the adverse impact of geopolitical risks on tourism investment, regardless of which indicator is adopted (Gozgor et al., 2021). Policy makers in every country need to dynamically adapt their international tourism development strategies to reduce the impact of adverse shocks caused by economic fluctuations in other countries (Chen et al., 2021). Insensitivity to policy means that market participants will be exposed to greater risk. The development of a good tourism strategy is not only determined by policy makers, but also by the participation and maintenance of all market players, not only in terms of ease of business and trade, but also in terms of the image of the Portuguese brand. The promotion must highlight the products that enhance the tourism experience base on the needs and tastes of the target markets.

In terms of the specifics of policy cooperation, this study concludes that the aviation sector is the one that deserves the most attention. Transport connectivity is a key objective of the Belt and Road Initiative, tourism sector should study and optimise the current Sino-Portuguese air connections, both in terms of accessibility, price and service. Because of its specific geographical location, Portugal has the potential to become an important travel transit point for Chinese tourists who wish to visit Europe and some countries best served by the Lisbon hub (e.g., Brazil and several countries in Africa).

6.2 Tourism experience and pricing strategy

The travel experience and intention to visit show a direct positive correlation. To improve the travel experience of Chinese visitors, market participants should focus on customer demands, give more valuable and accessible information in Chinese, and develop price-sensitive strategies.

Portugal is emerging as one of the leading tourist destinations in Europe, benefiting not only from its favourable weather conditions, the quality of its beaches, and the safety of the country, but also from a rich gastronomic heritage, cultural and leisure activities, and the enormous potential for the development of golf, and boating activities. Climate, natural landscapes and historical sites were the three tourism resources most likely to attract the attention of Chinese tourists. These interesting elements should not be the end of the line, beyond sun, sand and sea, good tourism experience could become a new internal motivation to discover what is distinctive about the country.

The pricing strategy and the travel experience (as displayed in business commercials and through reviews) play a significant role in the process from 'learning about Portugal' to 'choosing Portugal' as a travel destination. A more reliable and competitive pricing strategy means that Chinese consumers could not only gain more knowledge and information, but also make purchases more easily. Make effective use of existing OTA (Online Travel Agency) marketing platforms and enter into long-term business partnerships with well-known OTAs that are more accessible to Chinese consumers, will help Portuguese tourism companies or individuals to get more bookings. Based on a different internet environment to Europe, working directly with Chinese travel platforms makes it simpler to meet the consumer habits of Chinese for Portuguese tourism sectors. Travel companies should be aware of some commercial experiences with the Chinese market, such as the fact that the Chinese New Year is not fixed on the Gregorian calendar each year, resulting in a peak in tourism on different dates each year, and platform competition in China will prompt them to implement platform policies that are more favourable to travel product providers.

In other details, China's outbound travellers often face problems such as Language barriers, currency exchange, electronic payment, tourist visas, etc. The solution to these problems depends on the improvement of the supporting service system for inbound tourism.

6.3 Cultural exchange and staff training

Portugal has an advantage in terms of human resources to expand the Chinese market due to Macau's role as a key Chinese Portuguese language teaching centre and China-Portuguese business platform. In the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, Macau has formed a number of prominent social groups and commercial platform for Portuguese-speaking countries, which encourage political, economic, cultural, and human resource interchange between China and Portugal. Macao has a unique position in relation to Asia, both now and in the past. It was not more than a small collection of fishing villages when Portuguese traders set up a permanent settlement in 1557. For many years after that it was the only Western settlement within Chinese territory (du Cros and Lee, 2007). With return to China in 1999, the city become a symbol of the East-West cooperation and integration, is a display for Portuguese culture and a golden gateway to the Chinese market.

Portuguese language is the fifth most spoken language in the world, with over 200 million native speakers. Up to 2018, the Education and Youth Development Bureau of Macau (Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e de Desenvolvimento da Juventude) in support of Macau's positioning as a "platform for business and trade cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries" and a "world tourism and leisure centre", the "Sino-Portuguese Bilingual Talent Programme" was launched to strengthen the cultivation of bilingual talents and enrich the pool of foreign language talents to enhance Macau's competitiveness. Furthermore, 41 colleges in mainland China (excluding Macau) already provide Portuguese language classes, according to a 2019 report. The number of students and teachers participating in the programme is increasing quickly as a result of the Portuguese language program's rapid rise in colleges across the nation.

For the Chinese side, Macau is not only a gateway to the Portuguese-speaking world, but also a link between mainland China and ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations). Macau itself has many cross-cultural tourism resources and is the window to Portuguese culture in Asia. As an international city, Macau has the key capacity to take on the BRI, and its accumulation of financial investment, trade and shipping, modern services and multinational talent is in line with the core elements of the BRI, including policy coordination, trade facilitation, financial integration, facilities connectivity and people-to-people contact.

With the increasing number of Chinese overseas students, the encouragement of partnership with the BRI has increased the Chinese understanding and familiarity with Portugal. Students from China who have already travelled to Portugal report a high degree of satisfaction

with their trip and are eager to suggest Portugal to others, just as this study shows. The BRI includes a huge variety of sectors around the globe, and there are numerous projects and collaborations in the financial sector, where the experience and staff training model can function as a reference point for the tourism industry.

6.4 Sustainable development

The severe harm inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the significance of sustainable development for the tourism industry. Regardless of attitudes and awareness, the BRI offers a case for sustainable cooperation. The crisis provides an opportunity for reflection and sustainable development of the tourism industry, just like the SARS outbreak slowed significantly the development of Chinese tourism, it also facilitated the reorganisation of Chinese tourist agencies (Breda, 2004).

In 2015, 193 member states unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. The 2030 Agenda is an action plan centered on people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. Sustainable tourism is firmly positioned in the 2030 Agenda. Achieving this agenda, however, requires a clear implementation framework, adequate financing and investment in technology, infrastructure and human resources (UNWTO, 2022). Just as the BRI was advocated when it was referring in 2017, that ‘we need to seek greater complementarity between the Belt and Road cooperation and the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development (Xi, 2017). With or without BRI, the goal of tourism development is not only to attract more tourists to Portugal or to Europe, but also, and more importantly, it will develop customized tourism products and promote mutual cultural understanding, poverty reduction, ecological protection promotes gender equality in the tourism sector to achieving sustainable development goals.

With a huge consumer market and the largest number of international tourists in the world, the potential of the Chinese market remains enormous. Faced with a huge number of tourists, a sustainable development strategy is necessary and it is essential for policymakers and shareholders. Attention should be paid to the possible impact in order to reduce the social and environmental problems caused by tourism activity. Problems that can be foreseen include over tourism due to the explosive growth that might occur as the relaxation of China's strict COVID-19 control policy, possible changes in market impact and behavioural preferences due to the different perceptions of tourists regarding public health issues. Also, the impact of

information quality on destination branding, preferences of alternative destinations for tourist choices, etc. Tourism stakeholders, whether in Portugal, China or elsewhere in the world, should pay more attention to reducing the perceived risk of individual travellers (Mao *et al.*, 2010).

In the near term, even though international travel is restricted and the majority of Chinese respondents still perceive international travel as unsafe and are not planning international travel, a survey conducted by McKinsey in 2022 shows a continued strong interest in international destinations (McKinsey, 2022). Despite the fluctuations, the sentiment survey shows that the desire to travel remains. When there is a clear desire for travel, and demand for outward travel is accumulating, travel sector could anticipate demand spikes and account for emerging travel preferences. Travel companies could choose to modify their strategies in order to better serve their customers. In example, travel companies can be more accommodating to consumers who change their travel arrangements due to the rapid evolution of policy. In addition, cultivate client loyalty by emphasising customer satisfaction and uniqueness. In addition to contacting clients using digital platforms, travel companies can also tailor content and format based on market segmentation.

It is not just about business. The Belt and Road Initiative also proposes sub-divisions called the Green Silk Road, the Healthy Silk Road, the Smart Silk Road and the Silk Road of Peace, which, as these names hope to illustrate, is a vision of sustainable development and a community of shared interests and responsibilities. Steel, concrete, or ports and railways are not all that the Belt and Road Initiative is about. The cultural exchanges and people flow are more representative the core spiritual of the ancient and modern Silk Road: peace, mutual benefit and development, a proposal from the tourism industry as well. The Belt and Road Initiative lays out a clear path for Sino-Portuguese tourism cooperation, with improved information flow, smarter business practises, and a deeper understanding of one another, it will be guiding tourism to limitless potential.

6.5 Research limitation

Although I tried to obtain more information from policy makers in the Delphi questionnaire, I had considerable difficulty in reaching the real core decision makers, which resulted in an imbalance of information when applying the Quadruple helix model (perhaps a common occurrence), with the social and academic groups being the easier targets to reach and obtaining more questionnaire returns. In this study, the analysis of the policies of the Belt and

Road Initiative is based more on official texts and the analysis and reactions of the business community, researchers and the media, which is a complement to the information imbalance. In subsequent studies, the rapid changes in tourism policy should be observed on an ongoing basis, which will be a long-term process.

In the questionnaire section, although the two variables related to BRI show a positive relationship with willingness to visit and destination image, they are only used here as an example and I do not think that this finding is generalisable. On the one hand, this is because the sample size is small and this is only a result generated among Chinese students, which does not indicate the role of this relationship among all Chinese tourists. On the other hand, the relationship between destination image and BRI identity lacks theoretical support and can only be taken as an individual case. From a tourist's perspective, the relationship between having a good impression of a destination and why he identifies more with the BRI (or an alternative international cooperation programme) remains unclear.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, the researcher was unable to obtain up-to-date data on Chinese tourists, and the difference in behavioural patterns between international students as tourists and regular tourists should be noted. Like mentioned the impact of the epidemic on the behavioural preferences of Chinese tourists in section 3.5.3, the epidemic could create a short-term preference change for tourists. People living in different countries during an epidemic can have different perceptions of the travel restrictions and travel experience.

Another issue is the gender imbalance in questionnaire collection, with a much higher number of female respondents than male, this is might linked to the higher gender representation of females in higher education. In addition, based on different national or geographical conditions, it is interesting to compare the perceptions of Chinese students living in different European countries about travel, which is more reflective of Portuguese tourism resources or characteristics, something that is not shown in this study.

References

- Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(3), 411–423.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.103.3.411>
- Anholt, S. (2011). Beyond the nation brand: The role of image and identity in international relations. In *Brands and branding geographies*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Beni, M. C. (2006). *Análise estrutural do turismo*. Editora SENAC.
- Boniface, B., Cooper, R., & Cooper, C. (2020). *Worldwide Destinations*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429259302>
- Bowen, D., & Clarke, J. (2002). Guest Editorial Reflections on tourist satisfaction research: Past, present and future. 8(4), 297–308.
- Breda, Z. (2004). The impact of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) on China's tourism sector. *Tourism Research Journal*, 1(2), 5–14.
- Breda, Z., & Costa, C. (2006). Safety and security issues affecting inbound tourism in the People's Republic of China. In *Tourism, Security and Safety* (pp. 195-216). Routledge.
- Cai, L. A., Li, M., & Knutson, B. J. (2008). Research on China outbound market: A meta-review. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 16(1-2), 5-20.
- Chawla, P., & Iqbal, M. (2020). One belt one road summit 2017 and its implications for CPEC: an overview. *South Asian Studies*, 32(2), 277–284.
- Chen, J., Cui, F., Balezentis, T., Streimikiene, D., & Jin, H. (2021). What drives international tourism development in the Belt and Road Initiative? *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 19, 100544.
- Chen, G. & Will, E. & Steve, S. & Jackey Y. (2020). What can other countries learn from China's travel recovery path? <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/travel-logistics-and-infrastructure/our-insights/what-can-other-countries-learn-from-chinas-travel-recovery-path>
- Chen, G. & Steve, S. & Jackey Y & Zhang, G. (2022) Outlook for China tourism in 2022: Trends to watch in uncertain times. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/travel-logistics-and-infrastructure/our-insights/outlook-for-china-tourism-in-2022-trends-to-watch-in-uncertain-times>
- Chinese State Council. (2022, January 20). 国务院关于印发“十四五”旅游业发展规划的通知 [State Council on the issuance of the "Fourteenth Five-Year Plan" notice of tourism development plan]. GOV.CN. Retrieved April 14, 2023, from

- http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2022-01/20/content_5669468.htm
- COSME of EU. (2017). Grant Agreement Enhancing the Understanding of European Tourism Research on the Potential of the Western Silk Road Highlights. June 2017.
- European Travel Commission. (2018). 2018 EU-CHINA TOURISM YEAR
<https://ecty2018.org/>
- ForwardKeys. (2023, April 25). Forward Keys Data Shows Significant Increase in China Outbound Seat Capacity : The Moodie Davitt Report -The Moodie Davitt Report.
<https://www.moodiedavittreport.com/forwardkeys-data-shows-significant-increase-in-china-outbound-seat-capacity/>
- Gozgor, G., Lau, M. C. K., Zeng, Y., Yan, C., & Lin, Z. (2022). The impact of geopolitical risks on tourism supply in developing economies: The moderating role of social globalization. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(4), 872-886.
- Guo, Y., Kim, S. S., Timothy, D. J., Guo, Y., Kim, S. S., Timothy, D. J., Ã, Y. G., Kim, S. S., & Timothy, D. J. (2007). Development Characteristics and Implications of Mainland Chinese Outbound Tourism Development Characteristics and Implications of Mainland Chinese Outbound Tourism. 1665. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941660701760995>
- Hale, T., & Wang, X. (2020, October 9). Domestic Travel over Golden Week Boosts China's Economic Recovery. *FINANCIAL TIMES*. <https://www.ft.com/content/71a073e4-7a75-4350-9e46-b167b0536e56>
- Henok, B. G. (2021). Factors determining international tourist flow to tourism destinations: A systematic review. *Journal of Hospitality Management and Tourism*, 12(1), 9-17.
- Hongmei, L., & Jinbo, T. (2019). “一带一路”背景下的中非旅游合作 [China-Africa Tourism Cooperation in the Context of BRI]. *Journal of Ocean University of China*, 6, 88–96.
- Huang, S. (Sam), Shao, Y., Zeng, Y., Liu, X., & Li, Z. (2021). Impacts of COVID-19 on Chinese nationals' tourism preferences. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 40(January), 293. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100895>
- Iftikhar, H., Pinglu, C., Ullah, S., & Ullah, A. (2022). Impact of tourism on sustainable development in BRI countries: The moderating role of institutional quality. *PLoS ONE*, 17(4 April), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0263745>
- Jia, S. S. (2020). Motivation and satisfaction of Chinese and U. S. tourists in restaurants: A cross-cultural text mining of online reviews. *Tourism Management*, 78(October 2019), 104071. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.104071>
- Jiang, S., Scott, N., & Ding, P. (2019). Motivations of experienced leisure travellers: A

- means-end chain study on the Chinese outbound market. *25*(2), 225–238.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766718763694>
- Jiang, Y., & Wu, Y. (2020). Impacts of geopolitical risks and economic policy uncertainty on Chinese tourism-listed company stock. May, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijfe.2155>
- Jianqun, T. (2019). Three Geopolitical Theories and the Belt and Road Initiative. *收藏*, 2.
- Jie, Y. I. N., Yafang, L. I. U., Dongxu, Y., & Xiangmin, Z. (2017). Study on Tourism Openness of European Countries along the B&R. *37*(6), 190–197.
- Jing, J. (2016). “一带一路” 战略下中越跨境旅游合作帕累托效率分析 [Pareto efficiency analysis of Sino-Vietnamese cross-border tourism cooperation under the "One Belt One Road" strategy].
- Jinping, Xi (2017). President Xi's Speech at Opening of Belt and Road Forum, May 14, 2017. <https://china.usc.edu/president-xis-speech-opening-belt-and-road-forum-may-14-2017>
- Kanwel, S., Lingqiang, Z., Asif, M., Hwang, J., Hussain, A., & Jameel, A. (2019). The influence of destination image on tourist loyalty and intention to visit: Testing a multiple mediation approach. *Sustainability*, *11*(22), 6401.
- Kaynak, E., & Macaulay, J. A. (1984). The Delphi technique in the measurement of tourism market potential. The case of Nova Scotia. *Tourism Management*, *5*(2), 87–101.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177\(84\)90056-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-5177(84)90056-6)
- Kim, S., Lee, K. Y., Shin, S. Il, & Yang, S. (2017). Effects of tourism information quality in social media on destination image formation: The case of Sina Weibo. *Information & Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2017.02.009>
- Kuhzady, S., & Ghasemi, V. (2019). Pictorial analysis of the projected destination image: Portugal on Instagram. *Tourism Analysis*, *24*(1), 43–54.
<https://doi.org/10.3727/108354219X15458295631954>
- Leandro, F. J. B., & Duarte, P. A. B. (Eds.). (2020). *The Belt and Road Initiative: An Old Archetype of a New Development Model*. Springer Nature.
- Lewis, D. J., Yang, X., Moise, D., & Roddy, S. J. (2021). Dynamic synergies between China's belt and road initiative and the UN's sustainable development goals. *Journal of International Business Policy*, *4*, 58-79.
- Li, T., Shi, H., Yang, Z., & Ren, Y. (2020). Does the Belt and Road Initiative boost tourism economy? *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, *25*(3), 311-322.
- Liu, W., & Dunford, M. (2016). Inclusive globalization: Unpacking China's Belt and Road Initiative. *Area Development and Policy*, *1*(3), 323–340.

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/23792949.2016.1232598>
- Mao, C. K., Ding, C. G., & Lee, H. Y. (2010). Post-SARS tourist arrival recovery patterns: An analysis based on a catastrophe theory. *Tourism Management*, 31(6), 855–861. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.09.003>
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2007). Structural realism. *International relations theories: Discipline and diversity*, 83, 77-94.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2014). China's unpeaceful rise. In *Realism Reader* (pp. 464-467). Routledge.
- MENDES C. A., (2013), A Relevância do Fórum Macau: O Fórum para a Cooperação Económica e Comercial entre a China e os Países de Língua Portuguesa, *Nação e Defesa*, nº134, 5ª Série, p. 279-296.
- MENDES C. A., (2014), Macau in China's relations with the lusophone world, *Revista Brasileira de Política internacional*, vol.57 (special edition), p. 225-242.
- Ming, G. (2018). 一带一路背景下中哈国际旅游合作研究 [Study on International Tourism Cooperation between China and Kazakhstan in the Context of One Belt One Road]. *Journal of Changchun Normal University*, 37(1), 33–41.
- Montenegro, M., Costa, J., Rodrigues, D., & Gomes, J. (2014). The image of Portugal as a tourist destination – an international perspective. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 6(5), 397–412. <https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-09-2014-0022>
- Moreira, C. O. (2022). Portugal as a tourism destination. November 2018. <https://doi.org/10.4000/mediterranee.10402>
- Mou, J. (2016). The Promotion of Portugal as Tourist Destination in China. 1–156.
- Nobre, H., & Sousa, A. (2022). Cultural heritage and nation branding—multi stakeholder perspectives from Portugal. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 0(0), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2021.2025383>
- Ntousas, V., & Minas, S. (Eds.). (2021). *The European Union and China's Belt and Road: Impact, Engagement and Competition*. Routledge.
- Parulis-Cook, & Kadeerbieke. (2023). Chinese Traveler Sentiment Report: April 2023 - Dragon Trail International. Chinese Traveler Sentiment Report: April 2023 - Dragon Trail International. Retrieved April 30, 2023, from <https://dragontrail.com/resources/sentiment-reports/china-traveler-sentiment-report-april-2023>
- Pearce, P. L., Researcher, P., Osmond, A., Candidate, P. D., & Pearce, P. (2015). Puzzles in Understanding Chinese Tourist Behaviour: Towards a Triple-C Gaze 8281.

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2013.11081741>
- Planning, T., & Xiang, Y. (2018). The Characteristics of Independent Chinese Outbound Tourists. May 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2013.783740>
- Ploberger, C. (2017). One Belt, One Road—China’s new grand strategy. *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies*, 15(3), 289–305. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14765284.2017.1346922>
- Renwick, N., Gu, J., & Gong, S. (2018). The impact of BRI investment in infrastructure on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. (K4D emerging issues report), Brighton, Institute of Development Studies.
- Sgroi, M., Vagliasindi, F. G., & Roccaro, P. (2018). Feasibility, sustainability and circular economy concepts in water reuse. *Current opinion in environmental Science & Health*, 2, 20-25.
- Sokhanvar, A., Çiftçio, S., & Javid, E. (2018). Another look at tourism- economic development nexus. 26(March), 97–106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2018.03.002>
- Soler, A. (2023, January 12). The sleeping dragon awakens: travel from China returns. *Forward Keys*. <https://forwardkeys.com/the-sleeping-dragon-awakens-travel-from-china-returns/>
- Sotiriadis, M., & Shen, S. (2017). The contribution of partnership and branding to destination management in a globalized context: The case of the UNWTO Silk Road Programme. *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing*, 3(2), 8-16.
- Teo, H. C., Lechner, A. M., Walton, G. W., Chan, F. K. S., Cheshmehzangi, A., Tan-Mullins, M., ... & Campos-Arceiz, A. (2019). Environmental impacts of infrastructure development under the belt and road initiative. *Environments*, 6(6), 72.
- UNWTO. (2019, February 28). Silk Road | UNWTO. <https://www.unwto.org/silk-road>
- UNWTO. (2022). Impact of the Russian offensive in Ukraine on international tourism. *Impact of the Russian Offensive in Ukraine on International Tourism*. Retrieved April 23, 2023, from <https://www.unwto.org/impact-russian-offensive-in-ukraine-on-tourism>
- Wang, J. (2018). 「一帶一路」是地緣政治戰略嗎? [Is the Belt and Road Initiative a geostrategy?]. *二十一世紀評論*, 16–26.
- Wei. (2023). 这个五一，中国游客为什么不愿意去欧洲旅游了? [Why are Chinese tourists not willing to travel to Europe this May Holiday?]. *Sina*. Retrieved April 30, 2023, from <https://finance.sina.com.cn/wm/2023-04-29/doc-imyrzynt9579402.shtml>
- Wicki, M., Fesenfeld, L., & Bernauer, T. (2019). In search of politically feasible policy-

- packages for sustainable passenger transport: Insights from choice experiments in China, Germany, and the USA. *Environmental Research Letters*, 14(8), 084048.
- Winter, T. (2016). One belt, one road, one heritage: Cultural diplomacy and the Silk Road. *The Diplomat*, 29, 1-5.
- Winter, T. (2021). The geo-cultural heritage of the Silk Roads. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 27(7), 700–719. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2020.1852296>
- World Travel Online. (2010, May 6). Turismo de Portugal launches Chinese website. Retrieved from <http://news.travel168.net/20100506/23806.html>
- World Travel Online. (2014, May 15). Portugal getting closer to China. Retrieved from <http://news.travel168.net/20140515/33276.html>
- Xiaofang, L. (2020). “一带一路”背景下的中国-冰岛旅游经济合作研究 [Study on China-Iceland Tourism Economic Cooperation in the Context of One Belt, One Road]. *China Collective Economy*, 23, 162–166.
- Xinhua News Agency. (2010, October 14). 国航与葡萄牙航开展代号共享合作 [Air China and TAP Portugal undertake codeshare cooperation]. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2010-10/14/c_12660871.htm
- Xinhua. (2020, October 9). Golden Week Holiday Bounce Back Highlights China’s Recovery from COVID19. *China Daily*. <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202010/09/WS5f7ff131a31024ad0ba7daf7.html>
- Xinhua. (2022, December 27). 新冠疫情防控近三年后为何回归乙类管理 [Epidemic is returning to category B management after nearly three years of prevention and control]. Retrieved March 17, 2023, from http://www.news.cn/politics/2022-12/27/c_1129234352.htm
- Zhang, F., Yu, M., Yu, J., & Jin, Y. (2017). The Effect of RMB Internationalization on Belt and Road Initiative: Evidence from Bilateral Swap Agreements. *Emerging Markets Finance and Trade*, 53(12), 2845–2857. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1540496X.2017.1382346>
- Zhang, Y. (2019). Third-party market cooperation under the belt and road initiative: Progress, challenges, and recommendations. *China International Strategy Review*, 1(2), 310-329.

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: The first round of the Delphi Method questionnaire

Opportunities and challenges for Sino-Portuguese tourism in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this Delphi panel, which is part of the research I am carrying out within the scope of the Master in Tourism, Territory and Heritage, at the University of Coimbra, Portugal. This study is supervised by Prof. Carlos Ferreira.

The aim of this study is to discuss the opportunities and challenges for Sino-Portuguese tourism in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). I kindly ask you to fill in the attached questionnaire, which corresponds to the first round of this methodology. The questionnaire consists of 11 questions and can take up to 15 minutes to complete. The information collected will be treated anonymously and only within the scope of this research.

Part 1 - Overview and awareness

Q1: The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a global initiative for economic cooperation launched by China in 2013. How much do you think you are aware of the Belt and Road Initiative? (1= totally unaware, up to 5= fully aware)

- 1. Don't know at all
- 2. Very little
- 3. Knowing some
- 4. Knowing well
- 5. Fully aware

Q2: The Belt and Road Initiative proposes five main objectives to strengthen multilateral cooperation. Please rank these five objectives in terms of their potential for tourism development:

- A. Policy coordination
- B. Facilities connectivity
- C. Unimpeded trade
- D. Financial integration
- E. People-to-people bonds

Q3: Nowadays, is the Belt and Road Initiative outdated?

- Yes
- No
- Hard to say
- I don't know

Q3.1 Do you think the Belt and Road Initiative can overcome the challenges of geo-conflicts and anti-globalization (e.g., trade wars, regional conflicts and wars, COVID-19 pandemics) and why?

Q4: From a personal point of view, do you hold a positive or negative opinion of the Belt and Road Initiative in general?

- 1. Very negative
- 2. Overall negative

- 3. Neutral
- 4. Overall positive
- 5. Very positive

Q4.1 Why:

Part 2 - BRI and Tourism

Q5: To what extent do you think the Belt and Road Initiative will be pivotal in the development of tourism between China and Portugal?

- 1. Irrelevant
- 2. Not much relevant
- 3. Relevant
- 4. Strong relevant
- 5. Determinant relevant

Q6: Rate which areas, within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, may be of mutual interest for tourism development between Portugal and China.

(1=not important,5=very important)

Areas	Rating
Air connectivity	
Marketing	
Tourist demand	
Visa regulations	
Training (staff)	
Foreign direct investment	
Academic collaboration	
Product development	
Hospitality	
Other:	

Q7: Because of the special historical relationship between China and Portugal (e.g., Macau), Portugal has certain specificities or facilities to cooperate with China compared to other EU countries. Do you agree?

- 1. Strongly disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neutral/I don't know
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly agree

Q7.1 Why?

Q8: Some Chinese companies (e.g., Fosun Group) have made significant investments in Portugal. Is direct Chinese investment in the Portuguese tourism sector (for example, building or investing in resorts) a good way to attract Chinese tourists?

- 1. Strongly disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neutral/I don't know
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly agree

Q8.1 Why?

Q9: In 2018, before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the China-EU Tourism Year event organized in the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative achieved a significant increase in Chinese tourists in EU countries. Do you think that another similar event could help the recovery of the EU tourism sector in the future? (from 1= not helpful at all to 5=very helpful)

- 1. Not helpful at all
- 2. A little help
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Helpful
- 5. Very helpful

Q10: Portugal's tourism industry is making a good recovery in 2022, but it still hasn't reached its all-time high in 2019.

In April of 2022, the domestic market contributed with 1.9 million overnight stays and the external markets totalled 4.1 million, the highest value since the pandemic began. Compared to April 2019, the domestic market grew by 15.0% and foreign markets decreased by 4.4%.

(Source: https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_main)

In your opinion, Portugal should invest more in: (pick 2 most important)

- Domestic market
- European market
- East Asian market
- North American market
- South American market
- African Market
- Middle East markets

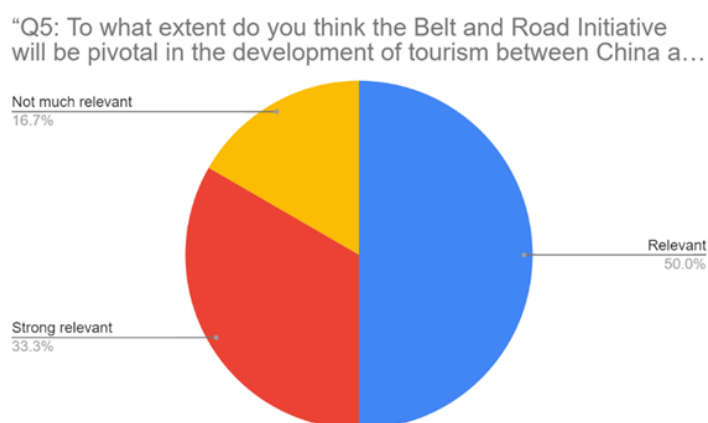
Q11: If you have any additional views or comments on the Belt and Road Initiative and Sino-Portuguese tourism cooperation, you can leave it below.

Appendix 2: The Second round of the Delphi Method questionnaire.

My name is Wang Chen, a master's student in Tourism, Territory and Heritage at the University of Coimbra, Portugal. I am conducting research on Opportunities and challenges for Sino-Portuguese tourism in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, under the supervision of Prof. Carlos Ferreira.

Thank you for your participation in the first round of questionnaires. Based on your feedback, I am kindly inviting you to participate in the second round, which may take up to 15 minutes. Thank you very much.

1. According to the first round, 83.3% of the respondents felt that there was a positive relation between the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and tourism.



In your opinion, how can the Belt and Road Initiative be retaken/upgraded in ways that can more effectively develop tourism between China and Portugal?

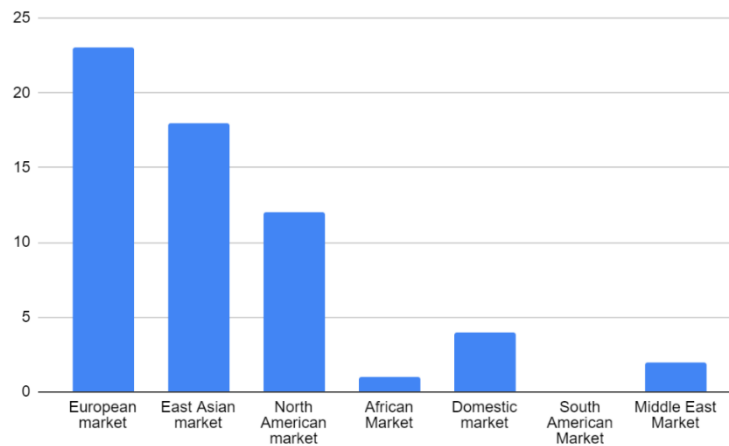
2. In the first round, 76.7% of the respondents believe that China and Portugal have a special historical relationship and that both can benefit from it. Which aspect of this unique relationship should be developed and practised more by the tourism sector?

3. According to the first round, people consider 4 items as the most concerning China-Portugal tourism relations. Please rank this new shortlist, and point out up to three initiatives for each item that may help improve tourism between Portugal and China.

Items	Re-rank of importance	Initiatives (up to 3)
Air connectivity		
Tourist demand		
Foreign direct investment		

Marketing		
-----------	--	--

4. The East Asian market was considered by the panel members to be the most important market outside Europe for Portugal, according to the first round.



In your opinion, what are **the most attractive tourist assets/resources in Portugal** for East Asian tourists? (Please rank up to the following options)

- A. History and heritage
- B. Natural scenery
- C. Famous cities (like Lisbon or Porto)
- D. Cultural activities (sporting events, music festivals, wine routes, etc.)
- E. Portugal as a gateway to Europe
- F. Hospitality industry
- G. Climate
- H. Safety
- I. Other: _____

5. Many people mentioned that the ‘existence’ of the Portuguese tourism brand in the Chinese market should be boosted. What are the best ways to increase the awareness of the Portuguese national tourism brand in China?

- A. More direct advertising in the Chinese market
- B. Policy assistance to Portuguese travel agencies in promoting in China
- C. More Cooperation with China Travel agencies
- D. Hire more employees with knowledge of the Chinese language/market
- E. Introducing more Chinese investment in Portugal
- F. Other: _____

6. For the Chinese market, Portugal as a national tourism destination brand should advertise itself as a...? (Pick more than one)

- A. Price-friendly destination
- B. Intermediate destination.
- C. Luxury destinations
- D. Diversity destinations (coast, mountains, islands, forests, etc.)
- E. I don't know

Appendix 3: A survey questionnaire for Chinese international student in Portugal

Table 1 Demographic profile

Gender:

Age:

Time spends in Portugal:

City you live in Portugal:

When you arrive in Portugal from China, or return to China from Portugal, you prefer:

Direct flights Stopover flights

Table 2 Variables and Questions

Variables	Code	Questionnaire
Information Quality (IQ)	IQ1	When I am travel in Portugal, I could always find enough useful information that I want.
	IQ2	I often see advertisements/information related to Portuguese destinations.
	IQ3	Compared to other countries, Portugal has greater recognition.
	IQ4	I could easily access information about Portugal tourism on Chinese language websites or media.
Destination Image (DI)	DI1	"Travel in Portugal" could give me a clear image of events, foods, and architecture etc.
	DI2	Portugal is considered to be an excellent tourist destination.
	DI3	Portugal always attracted me more than other destinations
	DI4	After I experienced my trip to Portugal, my impression of the country had become even better.
Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	TS1	Travels in Portugal made me feel relaxed and happy.
	TS2	In general, I am satisfied with the natural environment of Portugal
	TS3	During my trip in Portugal, I received good treatment.
	ST4	I was satisfied with the route and sites when I travelled in Portugal.
Intention to Visit (IV)	IV1	I am always willing to travel in Portugal
	IV2	I would recommend others to come to Portugal
	IV3	Portugal is always my first choice for travel
	IV4	I'd like to re-visit some of the places I've already been to
Experience/knowledge	EP1	Was Portugal your first choice to study abroad?
	EP2	Have you been to Portugal previously as a tourist?
	EP3	How often do you travel around the country?
Awareness of BRI	AW1	I am knowing well about the Belt and Road Initiative
	AW2	After coming to Portugal, I have become more interested and aware of the Belt and Road Initiative
	AW3	I often see news about the Belt and Road Initiative
	AW4	I know some specific projects of BRI in Portugal or in the EU.

Attitude on BRI	AT1	I think the BRI are working well.
	AT2	I believe that the Belt and Road has achieved many positive results.
	AT3	The Belt and Road Initiative is important for China-Portugal and China-EU relations
	AT4	There is still great potential for cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative

Appendix 4: Expert Panel of Delphi method

No.	Category	Name	Institution	Work as...	Note(respond)
1	Government	Tiago Brito	Portuguese National Tourist Office Consulate General of Portugal in Shanghai	Coordenador	✓
	Government	Jolin Jia		Gestora de Produto	
	Government	Angelina Fu		Gestora de Produto	
2	Government		China National Tourist Office in EU		✓
3	Government	Li Ji	Chinese Embassy in Portugal	Cultural Counsellor	✓
4	Government		Embassy of Portugal in China		
5	Government		Office of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries		
6	Government		Portugal Global - Trade & Investment Agency (AICEP)	Beijing Office Manager	✓
7	Government	Patrícia Conceição	Embassy of Portugal in Beijing	Press & Information Officer	
8	Government	Lisa	Trade & Investment Officer at Embassy of Portugal in China-	Commercial Dept	
9	Government	R. Pereira	Ministry of Economy and Digital Transition, Lisbon, Portugal		

10	Business		a. Portugal-China Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Lisbon		
			b. Portugal-China Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Macau		
			c. Portuguese Chinese General Chamber of Commerce		
11	Business		BOKIKO	Travel agency: Portuguese tourism product providers in the Chinese market	
12	Business		GOEUGO.com	Travel agency, European travel product provider on several Chinese tour website	
13	Business		DYNASTY VICTORY AGÊNCIA DE TURISMO VIAGENS	Chinese travel agency in Portugal	✓
14	Business	Zhang Yao	ZHUO YUE GUO LV AGENT	Chinese travel agency focusing on European destinations	✓
15	Business		ZHUO MEI TRAVEL	Chinese travel agency focusing on European destinations	✓
16	Business		Bespoke-trip	China Travel agency offers European travel services	
17	Business		Dear Voyage	China Travel agency offers European travel services	✓
18	Business		Kay trip	Chinese agency Offering Portugal tourism products	Headquartered in Germany
19	Business		China International Travel	A European travel agency based in Spain and aimed at Chinese tourists	✓
20	Business		Tours for fun.com	A Chinese travel agency focusing on European tourism	
21	Business		Abreu		
22	Business		Top Atlântico		
23	Business		Club Med	International resorts, Branches in the Algarve, China is the second largest source market	
24	Business		Foliday	FOSUN Group Tourism Division	
25	Business		Miu tour		✓
26	Business		Dearisland Tour Agent		✓
27	Business	Rita Maria Matos	Viagens Abreu, S.A.	Travel Consultant	✓
28	Business		Ping An travel		
29	Business		HANDAN SOUTH tour		

30	Academic	Zélia Breda	University of Aveiro –Department of Economics, Management and Industrial Engineering and Tourism	Full researcher	✓
31	Academic	Pedro Sobral	Peking University	Historian Translator, Portuguese and Chinese language lecturer	✓
32	Academic	Wang Jianwei	Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) University of Macau	Emeritus Professor	
33	Academic	Hou Xiaoying	University of Coimbra	PhD student, research in B&R and Investment	✓
34	Academic	Virginia Trigo	BRU-ISCTE - Business Research Unit	Investigadora Associada	
35	Academic	Laura Ferreira-Pereira	Department of Political Science University of Minho	Professor	Select one of them
	Academic	Paulo Afonso Brardo Duarte	Lusófona University of Porto and University of Minho	Professor	✓
36	Academic	Dimitri Kokoromytis	Political Science Department, University of Utah	Graduate Teaching Assist	
37	Academic	Angelos Chrysogelos	London Metropolitan University	Politics and International Relations Lecturer	
38	Academic	Stephen Minas	Peaking University	Associate Professor of Law	
39	Academic	Liu Heqing	Hohai University	Associate Professor	✓
40	Academic	Li Xiangmin	Confucius Institute Universidade de Coimbra	President	✓
41	Academic	Nuno Canas Mendes	Universidade de Lisboa Instituto do Oriente	Associate Professor /Presidente	✓
42	Academic	F. J. B. S. Leandro	City University of Macau	Professor	
43	Academic	J. T. da Silva	University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal		
44	Academic	I. S. Ferreira	National Institute of Land Management (INGT), Federal University of Pernambuco, Recife, Brazil		
45	Academic	W. Song	University of Macau, Macao S.A.R., China		
46	Academic	L. Song	Tongji University, Shanghai, China		✓
47	Academic	Liao Qianying	KU Leuven		✓

48	Society		Fundação Oriente		✓
49	Society	Yong Liang	ACTEP - Associação de Turismo Chinês em Portugal	Presidente da ACTEP	✓
50	Society	Li Yuyun	qyer.com (the largest Chinese backpacker website)	Portugal section travel Writer	One of them
		@urso	qyer.com	Portugal section travel Writer	
51	Society		TTG Travel Trade Publishing (China)- a tourism industry related newspaper		
52	Society		PuhuaBao Largest Chinese language newspaper in Portugal		
53	Society	Li Guofeng	Jornal Puxin (Chinese language newspaper in Portugal)	Journalists PhD student	
54	Society	Joaquim Coelho Ramos	Instituto Português do Oriente		
55	Society	Wei Mingchen	Student Union of China in Portugal	Chairman of Coimbra region	✓
56	Society	Chen Qiang	Trip.com Group	Professional Chinese Speaking guide in Portugal	✓
57	Society	Peng Bo	Trip.com Group	Professional Chinese Speaking guide in Portugal	✓
58	Society	Yao Weiling	Trip.com Group	Professional Chinese Speaking guide in Portugal	✓
59	Society		The Portugal News		
60	Society		News Trips		
61	Society	Idálio Revez	Publico	Journalists	
62	Society	Bruno Cardoso	Revista Cargo	Journalists / Director de Informação na Revista Cargo	
63	Society	Bernardo Mendia	Portugal-China Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Secretary General	✓
64	Society	Alberto Carvalho Neto	JEUNE - Young Entrepreneurs Organization of the European Union	President	✓
65	Society	Sara P.	Portuguese Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Corporate Relations Manager	✓