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**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE BELT AND ROAD IN THE  
POST-EPIDEMIC ERA FROM A COMMUNICATION SCIENCE  
PERSPECTIVE**

Master's thesis  
Speciality 1-23 80 11 Communication

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Minsk, 2022

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## INTRODUCTION

The Belt and Road Initiative, as an important decision of the Chinese government to achieve win-win cooperation with other countries in the world, is of great significance to promoting the all-round development of China and other neighboring countries in political, economic, social, and cultural fields. Since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative, China has focused on infrastructure development, strengthened all-round connectivity, created new impetus for world economic growth, and created a new platform for international economic cooperation, giving a strong boost to world economic development.

Countries along the Belt and Road have different resource endowments and are highly complementary to each other economically, so there is great potential and space for cooperation. Policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and closer people-to-people ties are the main areas of cooperation. To jointly build the Belt and Road, economic and cultural communication is a kind of values of diversity and inclusiveness. If China wants to maintain emotional ties and build deep friendship with the people of countries along the Belt and Road, it must attach importance to economic and cultural communication and attract the active participation of countries along the Belt and Road with the charm of economic and cultural integration.

At the beginning of 2020, however, the global economy stagnated due to the ravages of COVID-19. The economic, cultural and policy reciprocity of the Belt and Road cooperation was seriously affected. Some developing countries have suffered the most. At present, China is making all-out efforts to prevent and control the epidemic, maintaining “normalization of Epidemic prevention” and actively promoting the resumption of work and production in an orderly manner. Relevant government departments have issued a few specialized policies and measures to stabilize foreign trade, foreign investment, and employment.

The Belt and Road Initiative is China's top-level design with a global vision. Guided by the principles of extensive consultation, shared benefits, and joint contribution, it is a path of peace, friendship, and development for building a global community with a shared future and promoting common development and prosperity of all countries in the world. At present, although COVID-19 is still raging around the world, the economy of various countries continues to suffer a heavy blow and fail to recover, leading to the trend of “anti-globalization” in many countries. However, due to the correctness of its guiding ideology and theoretical system, the strategic design of the overall design and the inevitability of economic globalization, the Belt and Road strategy will become an important way for China to comprehensively promote the resumption of work, production and market while maintaining the “normalization

of Epidemic prevention”, and to open an economic breakthrough in the “post-Epidemic era”.

In the wake of COVID-19, the Belt and Road Initiative should achieve higher-quality development. More emphasis should be placed on the concept of unity and cooperation, and more efforts should be made to find the common discourse and common interests between China and the countries co-building the Belt and Road initiative. The Belt and Road cooperation will help all parties better cope with the economic, social, and environmental impacts of the epidemic.

This thesis uses literature research method, investigation method, case study method and content analysis method to carry out relevant research. The author mainly refers to papers related to the Belt and Road and international economic and cultural exchanges and communication, investigates the policy adjustments and news related to the Belt and Road Initiative since the outbreak of the epidemic, and makes analysis and summary. Combined with practical cases, such as The China-Belarus Industrial Park and the Confucius Institute, this thesis analyzes the current situation of economic and cultural transmission since the outbreak of the epidemic, analyzes the problems involved, and thinks about solutions. Finally, all the information is integrated to analyze the development prospects of the Belt and Road Initiative in the post-epidemic era.

## MASTER'S THESIS ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE, COVID-19, POST-EPIDEMIC ERA, COMMUNICATION, POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COMMUNICATION, INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION, CHINA-BELARUS COOPERATION, CHINA-BELARUS INDUSTRIAL PARK, GREEN DEVELOPMENT.

*The relevance of the research topic* lies in the fact that an important decision of the Chinese government to achieve win-win cooperation with other countries in the world, the Belt and Road Initiative is of great significance to promoting the all-round development of China and its neighboring countries in political, economic, and social fields and culture.

*Object of research* – the Belt and Road Initiative in the Post-Epidemic era.

*Subject of research* – opportunities and challenges of the Belt and Road Initiative in the Post- Epidemic era.

*The goal of the master's thesis.* To explore the opportunities and challenges of the Belt and Road initiative in the post-Epidemic era from the perspective of communication, solve problems, seize opportunities, and deepen China-Belarus exchanges and cooperation.

*Research Objectives:*

1. to study the basic concepts and theoretical basis of international economic and cultural communication in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative.
2. to analysis the cooperation and development between China and Russian-speaking countries along the Belt and Road.
3. to analysis the challenges and opportunities of the Belt and Road initiative for China-Belarus cooperation in the post-epidemic era.
4. to put forward suggestions on the development of the Belt and Road International economic and cultural exchanges in the post-epidemic era.

*Methods of research.* Literature research method, investigation method, case research method, content analysis method.

The *structure of the master's thesis* includes introduction, three chapters, conclusion, list of references and two appendixes. The volume of the master thesis is 75 pages. The work contains 3 tables, 3 figures, 59 sources.

The author confirms that the work was done independently, and calculation and analytical material cited in it correctly and objectively reflects the state of the process being studied, and all theoretical, methodological provisions and concepts borrowed from literature and other sources are accompanied by references to their authors.

## ОБЩАЯ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА РАБОТЫ

**Ключевые слова:** «ОДИН ПОЯС, ОДИН ПУТЬ», COVID-19, ПОСТЭПИДЕМИЧЕСКАЯ ЭПОХА, КОММУНИКАЦИЯ, ПОЛИТИЧЕСКАЯ ЭКОНОМИЯ КОММУНИКАЦИИ, МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНАЯ КОММУНИКАЦИЯ, КИТАЙСКО-БЕЛОРУССКОЕ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО, КИТАЙСКО-БЕЛОРУССКИЙ ИНДУСТРИАЛЬНЫЙ ПАРК, ЗЕЛЁНОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ.

*Актуальность темы* исследования обусловлена решением китайского правительства по достижению взаимовыгодного сотрудничества с другими странами мира в рамках инициативы «Один пояс, один путь».

*Объект исследования* – инициатива «Один пояс, один путь» в постэпидемическую эпоху.

*Предмет исследования* – возможности и вызовы инициативы «Один пояс, один путь» в постэпидемическую эпоху.

*Цель исследования* – изучить возможности и вызовы инициативы «Один пояс, один путь» в постэпидемическую эпоху с точки зрения коммуникации, решения проблем, использования возможностей и углубления китайско-белорусского обмена и сотрудничества.

*Задачи исследования:*

1. изучить основные концепции и теоретические основы международной экономической и культурной коммуникации в контексте инициативы «Один пояс, один путь».
2. изучить сотрудничество и развитие между Китаем и русскоязычными странами вдоль «Пояса и пути».
3. проанализировать вызовы и возможности инициативы «Один пояс, один путь» для китайско-белорусского сотрудничества в постэпидемическую эпоху.
4. выдвинуть предложения по развитию международного экономического и культурного обмена в рамках «Пояса и пути» в постэпидемическую эпоху.

*Методы исследования* – системный анализ, сравнительный анализ, анализ документов, кейс-стади, статистический анализ, контент-анализ.

*Структура магистерской диссертации* включает введение, три главы, заключение, список литературы и два приложения. Объем магистерской диссертации составляет 75 страницы. Работа содержит 3 таблицы, 3 рисунка, 59 источников. Автор подтверждает, что работа выполнена самостоятельно, и приведенный в ней расчетно-аналитический материал правильно и объективно отражает состояние изучаемого процесса, а все теоретические,

методологические положения и концепции, заимствованные из литературы и других источников, сопровождаются ссылками на их авторы.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **BASIC CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL BASIS OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL COMMUNICATION UNDER THE BACKGROUND OF THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE**

The Belt and Road Initiative aims to build a “Road of peace”, “Road of prosperity”, “Road of openness”, “Road of innovation”, “Road of civilization|” and “Road of health” through connectivity, to achieve win-win sharing, drive regional community of interests and promote the building of a “community of shared future for mankind”. In the past eight years, it has made great progress and become the world's largest platform for international cooperation and one of the most popular international public goods. At the same time, there are also some problems and new challenges that deserve further exploration. The Belt and Road Initiative has contributed Chinese wisdom and solutions to improving global governance and building a community with a shared future for mankind. From the perspective of cultural values, the Belt and Road Initiative aims to enhance cultural integration and value recognition among countries along the routes for the historical and practical inheritance of mutual learning among human civilizations.

### **1.1 Concept of the Belt and Road Initiative**

The latest Belt and Road initiative was first proposed by President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China during his official visit to Kazakhstan in September 2013. Delivering a speech titled “Promoting Friendship among The People for a Better Future” at Nazarbayev University, Xi Jinping pointed out that innovation in development concepts is essential to vigorously strengthen economic ties, deepen cooperation and expand development in the Eurasian region. At the same time, he stressed the need to forge ahead, continue to open and jointly build the silk Road Economic Belt. To truly achieve this, it is necessary to focus on the work of individual regions, link them up and gradually expand to the whole region [1, p.131].

On the concrete implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, he detailed five major steps that need to be taken: (1) Strengthen government communication, that is, countries along the Belt and Road should communicate with each other and formulate future economic development plans through negotiations. (2) Enhancing road connectivity from the Pacific to the Baltic Sea to connect transport corridors in Asia so that participating countries can build transport networks. (3) Strengthen trade cooperation and promote the flow of goods. (4) Strengthen currency circulation, enhance the ability to withstand financial risks and enhance economic



competitiveness. (5) Expand cultural exchanges and strengthen people-to-people ties. Once President Xi Jinping announced the Belt and Road Initiative, it has received a wide and positive response from the international community.

The Belt and Road Initiative aims to promote connectivity between the Asian, European, and African continents and their adjacent seas, establish and strengthen connectivity partnerships among countries along the Belt and Road, build an all-dimensional, multi-tiered and multi-dimensional connectivity network, and achieve diversified, independent, balanced, and sustainable development of countries along the Belt and Road. This initiative all the way along the connectivity project will promote the development strategy of the docking and coupling, the excavation of the regional market potential, promote the investment and consumption, creating demand and employment, the enhancement of the people of all countries along the people-to-people and cultural exchanges and civilization, to meet people from different countries to know each other, mutual trust, respect, sharing the harmonious, peaceful, and rich life.

#### *The basic connotation of the Belt and Road Initiative*

The concept of the Belt and Road is short for “Silk Road Economic Belt” and “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”. It means to rebuild the ancient “Silk Road” by land and sea and promote economic and trade exchanges and peaceful development between China and other countries in the world. There is no doubt that this is a comprehensive framework aimed at building cooperation and exchanges between Eurasian countries, facilitating cross-border flows of goods, services, and people, and promoting deeper integration. Xi stressed that the initiative will not only bring benefits to China, but also bring greater benefits to Eurasia. The main aim of the initiative is to promote the orderly and free flow of economic factors, efficient resource allocation and deep integration of regional markets by strengthening connectivity between Asian countries, The European and African continents and their adjacent seas, Xinhua reported. The initiative emphasizes that all countries and international and regional organizations can participate, respect, and cooperate with each other to seek common prosperity. It's not an empty slogan, but a tangible effort that can bring tangible benefits and results to countries in the region.

All the way on the Belt and Road Initiative in the international society, the public and public opinion are highly recognized, think this initiative aims to establish a link between the Eurasian and adjacent sea area and friendly to each other, at the same time establish along with the national political and economic aspects of the multi-party cooperation, strengthening inter-operability of foreign countries, and promote the economic construction and development and so on various aspects, Efforts should be made to realize the mode of modern economic diversification and promote the balanced and sustainable development of countries along the Belt and

Road under the international trend. At the same time, the initiative will promote the alignment and coupling of national development strategies to explore the future potential of regional markets, promote foreign investment and international consumption, and create domestic and foreign demand and job opportunities. On the other hand, it will also promote cultural exchanges among countries, promote mutual trust and friendly relations among people of all countries, and strive to create a prosperous, strong, harmonious, peaceful, and happy life. By November 20, 2021, China had signed 206 cooperation documents on Belt and Road Cooperation with 141 countries and 32 international organizations.

The Belt and Road Initiative is an open and inclusive regional cooperation initiative, rather than an exclusive and closed "clique" of China. Today's world is open, openness leads to progress, while isolation leads to backwardness. China believes that only by opening can we discover, seize, and actively create opportunities and achieve our national goals. The Belt and Road Initiative aims to turn the world's opportunities into China's, and China's opportunities into opportunities for the world. Based on this cognition and vision, the Belt and Road open oriented, hope through strengthen the infrastructure such as transport, energy, and network connectivity construction, promote the orderly flow freely, efficient resource allocation and economic elements market depth fusion, to carry out a wider range, higher level, at a deeper level of regional cooperation. We should build an open, inclusive, balanced, and beneficial regional economic cooperation architecture to address issues of economic growth and balance. This means that it is a multi-dimensional, open, and inclusive cooperative initiative. It can be said that the open and inclusive feature of this initiative distinguishes it from other regional economic initiatives.

The Belt and Road initiative is a platform for practical cooperation, not a geopolitical tool for China. The Silk Road spirit of "peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit" has become the historical heritage shared by mankind. It is an important initiative of the modern era that follows this spirit and principle. By strengthening all-dimensional and multi-tiered exchanges and cooperation among relevant countries and fully tapping their development potential and comparative advantages, we have formed a mutually beneficial regional community of interests, destiny, and responsibility. In this mechanism, all countries are equal participants, contributors, and beneficiaries. Therefore, this initiative has been characterized by equality and peace from the very beginning. Equality is an important international norm that China adheres to and a key foundation on which it builds. Only cooperation based on equality can be long-lasting and mutually beneficial. The equal-footed and inclusive cooperation features of the Belt and Road reduce obstacles to its implementation, improve the

efficiency of joint construction, and facilitate the implementation of international cooperation. At the same time, the Belt and Road cannot be built without a peaceful and peaceful international and regional environment. Peace is the essential attribute of the Belt and Road and an indispensable factor for its smooth progress. All this determines that the Belt and Road should not and cannot be reduced to a tool for political contest between major powers.

The Belt and Road Initiative is a joint development initiative based on extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits, rather than China's foreign aid plan. It is promoted through specific projects based on bilateral or multilateral linkage and is a development initiative and plan formed after full policy communication, strategic alignment, and market operation. In May 2017, the Belt and Road Initiative of international cooperation in peak BBS roundtable summit communique emphasized in the construction of the basic principles of BRI, including the market principles, namely the principal position of fully understanding the role of market and enterprises, to ensure that the government play a proper role, the government procurement procedures should be open, transparent, and non-discriminatory. The core subject and supporting force of the Belt and Road construction is not the government, but the enterprises. The fundamental method is to follow the law of the market and fulfill the interest demands of all parties through the market-oriented operation mode. The government plays the guiding and service functions of building platforms, creating mechanisms, and guiding policies [2].

The Belt and Road Initiative is a bridge to promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges, rather than a trigger for a clash of civilizations. The initiative spans different regions, cultures, and religions. But rather than a clash of civilizations, it has brought about exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. While promoting infrastructure construction and enhancing the synergy between production capacity cooperation and development strategies, it has also made people-to-people ties one of its priorities. By carrying forward the Silk Road spirit, carrying out the building of the Intellectual Silk Road and the Health Silk Road, and conducting extensive cooperation in science, education, culture, health, and people-to-people exchanges, the Belt and Road Initiative will have a more solid public support and social foundation. Therefore, construction of this initiative is to mutual communication civilization barriers to civilization, civilization beyond civilization conflict, civilization coexist beyond civilization is superior, for related people pitched a new bridge to strengthen communication and understanding, strengthen dialogue, exchanges for different cultures and civilizations mutual learning has built new ties, promote mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutual trust [3].

BRI offers a new path and direction for global governance. In today's world, challenges are frequent, and risks are increasing, the impact of the financial crisis is

still being felt, the development gap is widening, anti-globalization sentiments are surging. The serious challenge of deficit of peace, development and governance is facing all mankind. This fully shows that there are structural problems in the existing global governance system, and it is urgent to find new solutions and countermeasures. In the face of new challenges, new problems and new situations, China's global governance proposal is to build a community with a shared future for mankind and achieve win-win outcomes for all. The Belt and Road Initiative is a concrete practice towards this goal. The initiative calls for equal participation, inclusiveness, and shared benefits for all countries, and calls for joint efforts to meet the challenges facing the world economy, create new opportunities for development, seek new drivers of development and expand new space for development, to move toward a community with a shared future for mankind. It is in line with the principle and concept, the Belt and Road real problems for national development and management system, to create a new development bank, the silk road fund, such as new international mechanism, built form, multi-channel exchanges and cooperation platform, which can not only alleviate global governance mechanism representative today, validity, timeliness is difficult to adapt to the reality demand of trouble, And to a certain extent, to reverse the public product supply situation, boost the morale of the international community to participate in global governance and the confidence, at the same time, to meet the developing countries, especially emerging market countries to change the requirements for global governance mechanism, strengthen the notion of emerging and developing countries, is to promote the development of the global governance system toward a more just and reasonable breakthrough [4].

The Belt and Road Initiative has added new impetus and provided a new platform for balanced and sustainable global development. Focusing on infrastructure construction, this initiative promotes the orderly and free flow of economic factors and promotes macro policy coordination between China and relevant countries. For the developing countries participating in its construction, it is a historic opportunity to realize their own industrialization and modernization. Moreover, the vision and direction of this initiative are highly aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations, and there is every reason to enhance synergy and reinforce each other. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that both the Belt and Road Initiative and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aim at sustainable development, seek to provide opportunities, global public goods and win-win cooperation, and are committed to deepening national and regional linkages. He stressed the importance of strengthening the link between the initiative and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order for the countries concerned to benefit fully from the potential of increased links. In this regard, the Belt and Road Initiative also contributes to the smooth realization of the UN 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development.

“The Silk Road has shaped the world of the past, even the world of today, and will shape the world of the future”, says Peter Francopan, a British historian and author of *The Silk Road: A New History of the World*. As a road of peace, prosperity, openness, innovation and civilization, the Belt and Road will surely go a long way and benefit the whole world [2].

*The priorities and significance of the Belt and Road Initiative*

Countries along the Belt and Road have different resource endowments and are highly complementary to each other economically, so there is great potential and space for cooperation. With policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and closer people-to-people ties as the main contents, we should strengthen cooperation in the following areas. Strengthening policy communication is an important guarantee for the Belt and Road Initiative. We should strengthen inter-governmental cooperation, establish a multi-tiered inter-governmental mechanism for macro policy communication and exchange, deepen converging interests, promote political mutual trust, and reach new consensus on cooperation. Countries along the Belt and Road may fully communicate and synergize their economic development strategies and countermeasures, jointly formulate plans and measures for promoting regional cooperation, resolve cooperation problems through consultation, and jointly provide policy support for practical cooperation and the implementation of large-scale projects.

Infrastructure connectivity is a priority area in the Belt and Road Initiative. Based on respecting the sovereignty and security concerns of relevant countries, countries along the Belt and Road should strengthen the synergization of infrastructure construction plans and technical standard systems, jointly promote the construction of international trunk routes, and gradually form an infrastructure network connecting all subregions in Asia and Between Asia, Europe, and Africa. We will strengthen green and low-carbon infrastructure construction and operation management and consider the impact of climate change in construction.

Investment and trade cooperation is a key part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Efforts should be made to address investment and trade facilitation, remove investment and trade barriers, foster a sound business environment within the region and in other countries, and work with countries and regions along the initiative to establish free trade zones, to unleash potential for cooperation.

Financial integration is an important support for the Belt and Road Initiative. We should deepen financial cooperation and advance the development of a currency stability system, an investment and financing system and a credit system in Asia. We will expand the scope and scale of bilateral currency swap and settlement among countries along the Belt and Road. Promote the opening and development of Asian

bond markets. We jointly promoted the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS Development Bank, and relevant parties held consultations on establishing a financing institution of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. We should deepen practical cooperation among the China-Asean Interbank Association and the SCO Interbank Association and carry out multilateral financial cooperation in the form of syndicated loans and bank credit. We will support governments of countries along the Belt and Road as well as enterprises and financial institutions with high credit ratings in issuing RMB bonds in China. Qualified Chinese financial institutions and enterprises can issue RMB bonds and foreign currency bonds overseas and encourage the use of funds raised in countries along the Belt and Road.

Closer people-to-people ties are the social foundation for the Belt and Road initiative. We should carry forward the spirit of friendship and cooperation of the Silk Road, carry out extensive cultural and academic exchanges, personnel exchanges and cooperation, media cooperation, youth and women exchanges, and volunteer services, to lay a solid public support for deepening bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

We should strengthen exchanges and cooperation between non-governmental organizations of countries along the Belt and Road, conduct extensive public welfare and charity activities in education, health care, poverty reduction and development, biodiversity, ecological and environmental protection, and improve working and living conditions in poverty-stricken areas along the Belt and Road. We should strengthen international exchanges and cooperation in cultural media, actively use online platforms and new media tools to create a harmonious and friendly cultural ecology and public opinion environment [5].

The strategic goal of the Belt and Road Initiative is to build a community of shared interests, shared future and shared responsibilities featuring political mutual trust, economic integration, and cultural inclusiveness. It is a community of mutually beneficial interests, shared future, and shared responsibilities for all countries in the world, including the Eurasian continent. It has three missions:

(1) Exploring the path to economic growth

The Belt and Road Initiative is a major innovation that China, as the locomotive of world economic growth in the post-financial crisis era, has turned its advantages in production capacity, technology and capital, experience, and model into advantages in market and cooperation, and implemented all-round opening-up [6]. Through the construction of this initiative, we will share the dividends of China's reform and development as well as the experience and lessons of China's development. China will strive to promote cooperation and dialogue among countries along the Belt and Road, establish a new type of global development partnership that is more equal and balanced, and consolidate the foundation for long-term and stable

development of the world economy.

## (2) Rebalance globalization

Traditional globalization originated from the sea and was born from the sea. Coastal areas and maritime countries developed first, while land countries and inland countries lagged, forming a huge gap between the rich and the poor. Traditional globalization was initiated by Europe and carried forward by the United States, forming the “Western-centered theory” of the international order, resulting in a series of unbalanced and unreasonable effects such as the subordination of the East to the West, the subordination of the countryside to the cities, and the subordination of the land to the sea. Now, the initiative is driving global rebalancing. This initiative encourages westward opening-up, promotes the development of the western region, central Asia, Mongolia and other landlocked countries and regions, and promotes the concept of inclusive development in globalization in the international community. At the same time, it is China's initiative to promote China's high-quality production capacity and industries with comparative advantages to the west, which will benefit the countries along the silk Road and the coastal countries first. It also changes the history of central Asia and other belt along the Silk Road as a corridor of trade and cultural exchanges between the East and the West and becomes the "trough" of development. This will transcend the gap between rich and poor and unbalanced regional development caused by the globalization pioneered by The Europeans and promote the building of a harmonious world of lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity [6].

## (3) Create a new type of regional cooperation

As a strategy of all-round opening-up, the Belt and Road initiative is innovating theories of economic development, regional cooperation, and globalization with theories of economic corridor, economic belt, and international cooperation in the 21st century. The Belt and Road Initiative, which emphasizes the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits, has gone beyond the Marshall Plan, foreign aid and the “going Global” strategy and brought new ideas to international cooperation in the 21st century” [6].

Economic belt "silk road" concept, is different from the history of all kinds of "economic zone" and "economic union", compared with more than two, economic belt has high flexibility, wide applicability and operability is strong, the characteristics of all countries are equal participants, in line with the voluntary, collaborative propulsion principle, carry forward the ancient silk road is compatible and the spirit of the package.

## **1.2 Impact of COVID-19 on the Belt and Road initiative**

Globally, COVID-19 has infected more than 320 million people and killed more than 5.5 million. Countries have taken lockdown measures to varying degrees to prevent and control the epidemic, which has slowed down cross-border flows of goods, people, and capital, and caused a serious setback to globalization. In terms of COVID-19 transmission, the first three months of 2020 were the early stages of COVID-19 outbreaks in Belt and Road countries. As of January 31, 12 Belt and Road countries had reported confirmed COVID-19 cases. While 18 and 30 Belt and Road countries reported confirmed cases of COVID-19 in February and March, respectively, only two countries have reported confirmed cases after March, namely Yemen and Tajikistan, which began reporting confirmed cases on 10 April and 1 May 2020, respectively. While China gradually brought the spread of COVID-19 under control in May 2020, other countries along the Belt and Road witnessed rapid development of COVID-19 outbreaks. In response to the spread of the virus, countries have suspended production, imposed regional closures, social isolation, restrictions on the movement of people, and disrupted transportation. As a result of these measures, production activities, international trade, and global industrial and supply chains have all been impacted. Affected by the global environment, many aspects of the initiative have been greatly affected. For example, cooperation agreements signed between governments cannot be implemented or must be postponed, many large-scale infrastructure construction projects have been suspended, and some trade, investment and people-to-people exchanges projects have also been hit by the spread of the epidemic.

*Comparative analysis of the development of the Belt and Road before and after COVID-19.*

#### 1. Policy communication before and after COVID-19.

Policy communication refers to the establishment of a multi-tiered exchange mechanism and platform between governments to communicate and align economic development strategies and measures, and jointly formulate plans and measures to promote Belt and Road cooperation. Therefore, the number of intergovernmental cooperation documents signed, and the number of cooperative countries can be regarded as a measure of the effectiveness of policy communication. To analyze the impact of the epidemic on the policy communication of the Belt and Road Initiative, the number of countries and international organizations that signed government cooperation agreements with China before and after the outbreak of the epidemic and the number of agreements can be compared to analyze the impact of the epidemic.

First, in chronological order, by May 14, 2017, the Chinese government had signed more than 50 intergovernmental cooperation agreements with countries and international organizations along the Belt and Road [7]. By September 8, 2018, China had signed 123 cooperation documents with 105 countries and 26 with 29



international organizations [8]. By the end of 2018, China had signed 170 intergovernmental cooperation documents on Belt and Road Cooperation with 122 countries and 29 international organizations [9]. By the end of July 2019, the Chinese government had signed 195 intergovernmental cooperation agreements with 136 countries and 30 international organizations [10]. By the end of January 2020, China had signed 200 Belt and Road cooperation documents with 138 countries and 30 international organizations. By June 23, 2021, China had signed 206 cooperation documents on Belt and Road Cooperation with 140 countries and 32 international organizations [11].

Table 1.1 – Statistics of Belt and Road Cooperation documents signed by China with other countries and international organizations

Time	The length	Number of national and international organizations	Number of cooperation documents signed
9.8.2018-12.31.2018	About four months	17	21
12.31.2018-7.31.2019	7 months	15	25
7.31.2019-	5 months	2	5
01.31.2020-6.23.2021	About a year and five months	4	6

Footnote – Source: own development

It is in line with development expectations that the number of signatories and the number of intergovernmental agreements increased over time in the first few years. Therefore, excluding the period of rapid growth from 2014 to 2017 after the Belt and Road Initiative was put forward, the incremental number of signed documents since September 2018, as shown in Table 1.1, can better reflect the impact of COVID-19 transmission on policy communication. In the one year and five months since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, i.e., from January 31 to June 23, 2020, the number of newly signed cooperation documents is 6, corresponding to the number of countries and international organizations is 4. From September 8, 2018, to January 31, 2020, 52 cooperation documents were signed, corresponding to 34 countries and international organizations. Since the end of January 2020, there has been a significant decline in the number of national and intergovernmental cooperation agreements due to the spread of COVID-19.

## 2. Comparison of infrastructure connectivity construction before and after COVID-19.

The impact of COVID-19 on the infrastructure connectivity of the Belt and Road is mainly reflected in the impact of the epidemic prevention and control on related infrastructure construction projects, such as the temporary suspension or delay

of ongoing projects due to restrictions on the movement of people, isolation, and transportation of goods. But overall, with the industrialization and urbanization of countries along the Belt and Road, there is strong demand for transport and energy development. Supported by diversified funds and booming third-party market cooperation, the construction of infrastructure connectivity projects along the Belt and Road is still making solid progress.

Table 1.2 shows the changes of the infrastructure development index in countries along the Belt and Road from 2014 to 2019. The Belt and Road infrastructure development index includes total development index, development environment index, development demand index, development cost index and development heat index. The development cost index is a reverse indicator, and the higher the index value, the lower the cost. As can be seen from Table 1.2, both the overall development index and the sub-indexes in 2020 declined relative to 2019, with the overall index dropping from 119 to 110. The development environment index, the development Demand index, the development cost index, and the development heat index declined from 115, 130, 107 and 119 to 102, 121, 106 and 110 respectively, indicating that COVID-19 has had a significant negative impact on the Belt and Road infrastructure development. However, given the huge demand for infrastructure development in countries along the Belt and Road, it is expected that the indicators of infrastructure development in countries along the Belt and Road will recover to pre-epidemic highs in the coming years as the COVID-19 pandemic eases and disappears.

The overall infrastructure development index of Belt and Road countries rebounded in 2021, rising to 113 from 110 in 2020. As major economies in the world roll out loose fiscal and monetary policies and accelerate the global vaccination process of COVID-19 vaccine, the economic recovery of Belt and Road countries in 2021 shows significant signs, and the recovery trend of the infrastructure industry is increasingly obvious. Of course, infrastructure development in Belt and Road countries is still far from recovering to the pre-COVID-19 level due to adverse factors such as the continuation of the epidemic, inflationary pressure, and rising costs.

Table 1.2 – Belt and Road Infrastructure Development Index 2014-2020

	Overall development index	Development Environment Index	Development demand index	Development cost index	Development heat index
2014	116	115	133	97	110
2015	118	115	133	103	115
2016	117	113	132	102	116

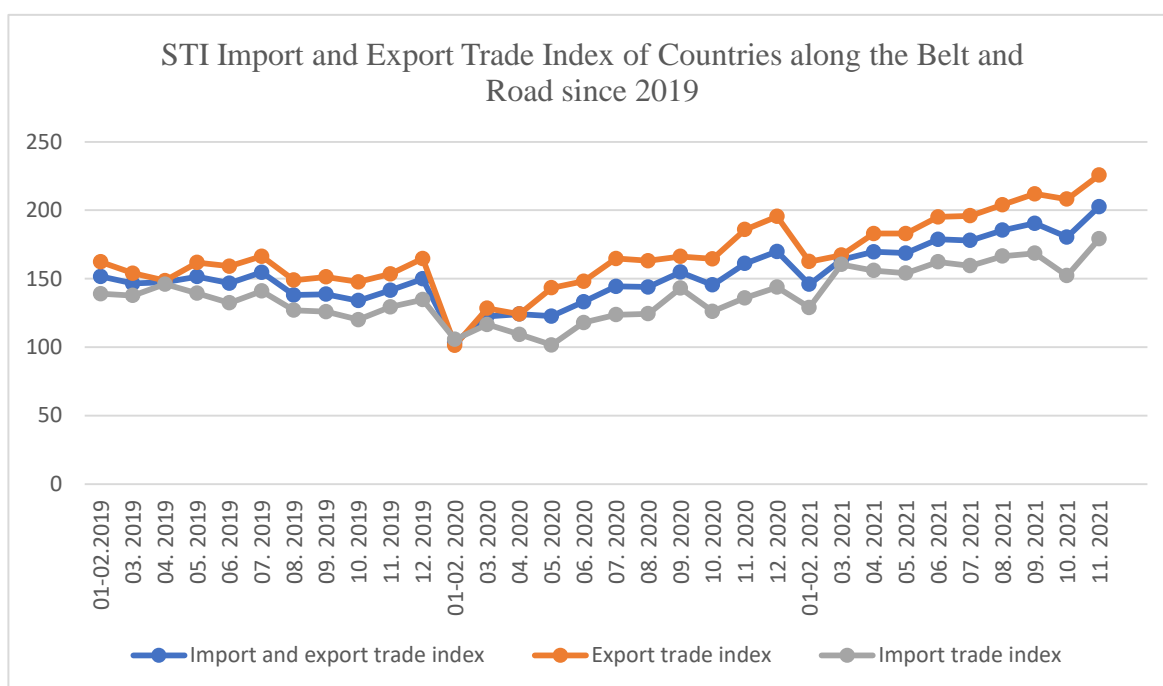
2017	117	113	130	107	114
2018	121	116	132	110	121
2019	119	115	130	107	119
2020	110	102	121	106	110
2021	113	107	112	105	125

Footnote – Source [12]

### 3. Comparison of unimpeded trade development before and after COVID-19.

In 2019, China's import and export volume with countries along the Belt and Road reached 9.27 trillion yuan, up 10.8% year on year, accounting for 29.40% of China's total import and export volume, with exports up 13.2% and imports up 7.9%. In 2020, bilateral trade between China and countries along the Belt and Road reached 9.36 trillion yuan, up 1.0 percent year on year, accounting for 29.1 percent of China's total foreign trade. Imports decreased by 1.8 percent and exports increased by 3.2 percent [13]. In the first half of 2021, bilateral trade between China and countries along the Belt and Road reached 5.35 trillion yuan, up 27.5 percent year on year, including 3.03 trillion yuan in exports and 2.32 trillion yuan in imports, up 29.1 percent and 25.6 percent respectively [14].

Compared with 2019 and the first half of 2021, China's import, and export trade with countries along the Belt and Road plunged in 2020, indicating that the spread of COVID-19 and the upgrading of prevention and control measures in some countries along the Belt and Road have restricted manufacturing, logistics and transportation and other production and business activities, thus restricting international trade between China and countries along the Belt and Road. The impact of the epidemic on unimpeded Trade between China and countries along the Belt and Road can be seen from the STI (Maritime Silk Road Trade Index) (figure 1.1). From January to May in 2020, STI Belt and Road trade index declined significantly. From January to February, March, April, and May, In the STI, the import and export indices of countries along the Belt and Road were -10.61, -3.92, -4.81 and -9.16, respectively. In the STI, the export indices of countries along the Belt and Road were -17.11%, -6.80%, 3.50% and -3.29%, respectively. STI import indices of countries along the Belt and Road were -3.23 percent, -0.46 percent, -13.77 percent, and -16.44 percent, respectively. The STI import and export index of countries along the Belt and Road has declined year-on-year, especially the import index, which indicates that COVID-19 has had a great impact on trade between China and countries along the Belt and Road. However, since June 2020, the STI has generally tended to increase year-on-year. It shows that trade between China and countries along the initiative is on the rise as China effectively controls the COVID-19 epidemic.

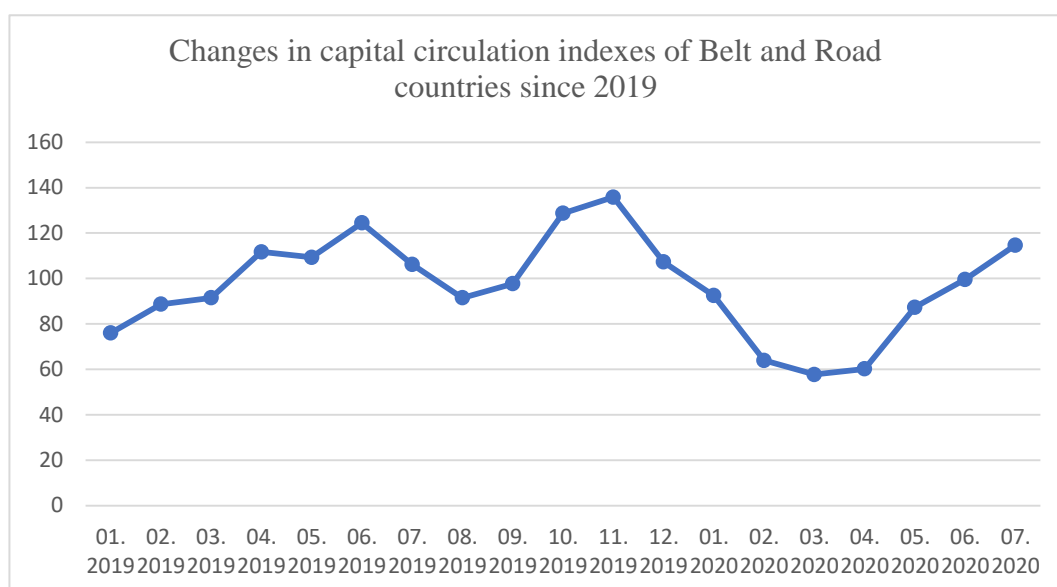


**Figure 1.1 – STI Import and Export Trade Index of Countries along the Belt and Road since 2019**

Footnote – Source [15]

#### 4. Comparison of financial financing before and after COVID-19.

Financial integration depends on the needs of social productive activities. Expansion of social productive activities will increase the demand for financial integration, while contraction of social productive activities will reduce the demand for financial integration. Therefore, the epidemic may affect financial integration by affecting social productive activities. The changes in capital circulation indexes of BRI countries since January 2019 (figure 1.2). The Belt and Road Index takes 100 as the cut-off point. If the index is lower than 100, the financial connectivity between countries along the Belt and Road has decreased, while if the index is higher than 100, the financial connectivity between countries along the Belt and Road has increased compared with the previous period.



**Figure 1.2 - Changes in capital circulation indexes of Belt and Road countries since 2019**

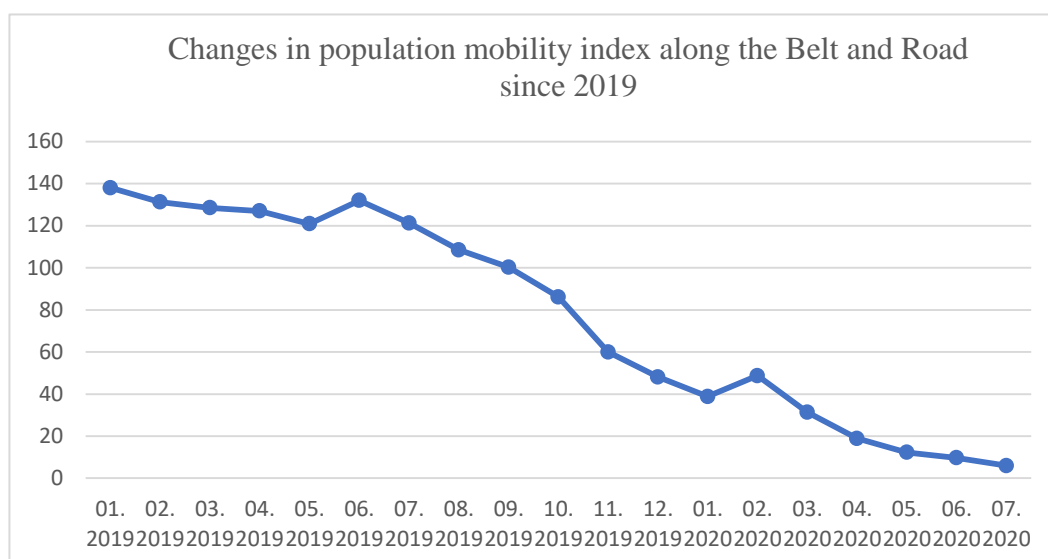
Data source: [16]

As can be seen from Figure 1.2, from January to June 2019, the index increased significantly, from 76 in January 2019 to 124.5 in June 2019, indicating that the capital exchanges between China and countries along the Belt and Road increased significantly. After declining in July and August 2019, the capital circulation index of countries along the Belt and Road rose rapidly to 135.8 in September, October, and November 2019. Although it dropped to 107.3 in December 2019, it was still more than 100, indicating that the financial integration of the Belt and Road is still strengthening. However, from January to March 2020, the capital circulation index of countries along the Belt and Road continued to decline sharply, reaching the lowest point of 57.7 in March 2020. From April to June 2020, although the index resumed its upward trend, it was still below the drought line of 100, indicating that it may be affected by COVID-19. Financial exchanges between China and countries along the Belt and Road continue to decrease. In July 2020, the index recorded 114.7, indicating increased financial flows between China and countries along the Belt and Road after COVID-19 was contained in China.

In 2018, 2019 and 2020, China's non-financial direct investment in countries along the Belt and Road was 15.64 billion US dollars, 15.04 billion US dollars and 17.79 billion US dollars respectively. China's non-financial direct investment in countries along the Belt and Road reached us \$7.43 billion, up 13.8% year on year. This shows that the epidemic has barely affected China's non-financial direct investment in countries along the Belt and Road.

## 5. The flow of people before and after COVID-19.

The impact of COVID-19 on BRI mobility is mainly reflected in the following three aspects: First, with the rapid spread of the epidemic around the world, there may be misunderstandings among people in countries along the initiative, such as believing that the COVID-19 virus originated in one of the countries along the initiative, or that people from one of the countries brought the virus into their own country while traveling, thus adversely affecting people-to-people ties. Second, the epidemic prevention and control measures adopted by some countries along the Belt and Road, such as regional isolation, travel restrictions, port closure and air route suspension, have made it difficult for people to travel between countries, which is not conducive to people-to-people exchanges and people-to-people exchanges. Third, coordinated response among countries, such as telemarketing, experience-sharing, donation of supplies and international assistance by medical teams, can help strengthen contacts among countries and enhance mutual understanding and affection among people. The change of population mobility index in the Belt and Road from January 2019 to July 2020 (figure 1.3). From January 2019 to July 2020, the population mobility index of the initiative continued to decline, dropping from 138 in January 2019 to 6.0 in July 2020, indicating that the growth rate of personnel exchanges between China and countries along the Belt and Road has been on the decline since 2019. From January to September 2019, the population mobility index of the Belt and Road was above 100, above the boom-bust line, indicating that although the overall growth rate of personnel exchanges between China and countries along the Belt and Road continued to decline during this period, the scale of population mobility was still on the rise compared with the previous period. Since October 2019, the population mobility index of the initiative has all been below 100, below the boom line, indicating that since October 2019, the scale of population mobility between China and countries along the initiative has been on the decline compared with the previous period. Affected by the Spring Festival, the index in February 2020 increased by 9.9 month on month. However, under the influence of imported COVID-19 cases and the upgrading of targeted prevention and control, the population mobility index of the Belt and Road continued to decline from 48.7 in February to 6.0 in July 2020. Therefore, the population movement index between China and countries along the Belt and Road continues to decline, which has a negative impact on the movement of people along the Belt and Road.



**Figure 1.3 - Changes in population mobility index along the Belt and Road since 2019**

Footnote – Source [16]

### **1.3 Theoretical basis of international economic and cultural communication in the context of the belt and Road Initiative**

#### *Economic communication*

Adam Smith and David Ricardo's classical absolute and relative industrial dominance of trade, Eil, F. Heckscher and Beltil, G. Ohlin's factor endowment theory, From the Paradox of Leontief to the theory of new factor endowment, dynamic trade, national competitive advantage and intra-industry trade, China has repeatedly verified the narrowness of “mercantilism”. As a responsible developing country, China has made great efforts to promote “trade liberalization” in international trade to avoid trade protectionism. Adhering to the global value of “a community with a shared future for mankind”, China has actively promoted global cooperation, effectively defused the adverse impact of frequent and sudden global events on the global economy and demonstrated its sense of responsibility for lifting the world economy out of the shadow of recession.

#### 1. From the perspective of “free trade Theory”.

“Free T Rade T Heury” is the general name of a series of trade theories advocating trade liberalization and demonstrating that Free trade brings increased benefits. The wealth of Nations, written by Adam Smith, was originally intended to answer the question put forward by the capitalist ruling class at that time: “How to effectively increase the wealth of a country?” This proposition, the book for the “division of labor” phenomenon of empirical analysis, refuted the prevailing in the street “mercantilism”. “Mercantilism” emphasizes that independent economies must sell more and buy less in cross-border trade, or even sell only without buying, to

make the gold and silver carrying wealth flow into the country and increase the total wealth of a country. This is the basic theory of trade protectionism. Adam Smith not only is the founder of economic theory, is also the modern trade theory lay people, it pointed out based on the wealth of nations under the absolute superiority, cross-border trade, the inevitability of and empirical all-win pattern of international division of Labour, must be on the premise of free trade between countries, therefore, and became the father of the theory of “free trade”. After the end of the Second World War in the last century, the theory of free trade has been greatly enriched and developed, such as the theory of relative advantage, natural endowment, H-O theory, Leonneve paradox and other free trade theories, which have been verified, and have also guided the development of the theory since the war.

The development of world economy, “the wealth of nations” is proved by the fact that fully central Asia when Smith expounded the cross-border elements of the free flow of welfare increase and the wealth effect, humans began to despise “mercantilism” short-sighted, but not any historical stages, all participating countries, international trade can be “equal” in cross-border free flow of elements sharing international trade dividends. For example, the 19th century was an era of colonialism full of blood and tears. It was also an era in which factors flowed freely among colonies and produced the wealth effect of primitive international division of labor. However, the “dividend” of international trade was completely plundered by the guns and ships of some industrially developed countries. Therefore, the theory of free trade, in the modern human development of a considerable period, directed a naked strong invasion and plunder weak countries dirty “plot”. The author thinks that, nowadays the development of the theory of free trade, effective dismisses the “trade protectionism”, demonstrates the “isolation” is bound to lag behind the truth, however, countries are involved in international trade, cross-border elements must be fair and just to share the free flow of “bonus”, this is the free trade theory to the real value of contributions to the development of human The Belt and Road Initiative is an important measure taken by China to pursue fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of free trade.

## 2. From the perspective of “regional economic integration”.

Regional economic integration is an important act to realize the free allocation of factor resources market, and it is the highest stage to realize the free cross-border trade between sovereign and independent countries within a geographical division. The theory dates to 1921, after the “Benelux” phenomenon of World War I and was put forward to reshape the global economic landscape before the end of World War II. “Region” is a geographical concept and reflects the form of trade is not a single bilateral, is a multilateral form of multiple independent economies. The free and barrier-free cross-border flow of factor resources is a typical feature of “regional



economic integration”. With the establishment of the European Union and the landing of the Euro zone, it was the first attempt of human society to abandon its sovereign currency and get together for the same economic purpose under the condition of sovereign independence. To realize the market-oriented allocation of human resources, capital, technology, and other factors that are only possible within the territory of sovereign states within the same scope. These are the initial achievements of world economic development. In the more than 40 years of reform and opening, the practice of this theory has never stopped, from special zones, free trade zones to free trade ports, from China's accession to the United Nations, ASEAN and WTO, to the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and to the Initiative of the Belt and Road Initiative, all of which follow this spirit [17, p.46].

Regional economic integration has become an important carrier of barrier-free flow of cross-border factor resources. Forms of cross-border trade liberalization, from reciprocal arrangements among economies, special zones, alliances, common markets, to the practice of “integration”, have aroused waves of heat in the global economy. However, we still need to calmly observe and seriously think about the practical significance of the continued promotion of this practice. In 2008 the us subprime mortgage crisis caused by the global recession, the worst hit is not the U.S. economy, but its main trade partners “European Union”, individual members of the European Union's economic decline, led directly to the “British Europe”, since 2010, most eurozone sovereign debt crisis in countries bordering the Mediterranean, the economic losses of the EU far exceed those of previous global economic crises [18, p.30]. We see is that the impact of the crisis is most severe in the EU member states of euro members, the members of the European Union assignment sovereign currency to pursue regional monetary integration, and didn't get the desired effect, and the same in the euro zone's Germany, France, not only did not hit in this recession, and more rapid and stable economic development, it is worth our attention. We thinks that the practice of the Belt and Road Initiative to promote integration model is the premise for the theory of constraint, under the action of the free flow of elements in the regional market, profit is regardless of national boundaries, pursuit of higher yields, prompting elements resources in some economies, prevented the wealth effect of the regional economic integration in the whole region Shared fairness and justice, therefore, How to achieve universal benefits of dividends in the region is the current need to pay attention to and think about.

#### *Cultural communication.*

Theory is the forerunner of practice, and a scientific theoretical system is the premise of correct direction of cultural communication. The Belt and Road intercultural communication is based on Marxist cultural communication thought, with Sinicized Marxist cultural communication thought as the direct theoretical basis,

and the theory of cultural communication as an important theoretical resource.

### 1. Marxist thought on cultural exchange.

The Marxist thought of cultural communication is the fundamental theoretical basis of the intercultural communication. The most essential feature of Marxist cultural communication thought is based on historical materialism. The cultural view based on historical materialism mainly contains three aspects: first, material communication is the foundation of cultural communication. Material communication itself contains man's main choice and reflects man's spiritual initiative. In this sense, material communication itself is the spiritual transformation process of people. With the expansion of the scope of material production, the development and progress of productive forces, the economic foundation has been continuously accumulated. Economic basis has a decisive effect on the superstructure, which determines the content and form of cultural communication. Second, the contradiction between productive forces and communication forms is the driving force for the development of cultural communication. Production is premised on the communicative relationship between individuals, which is the relation of production. This kind of relations of production breaks through the scope of a nation or community, mainly refers to the communication relations between external nations. With the development of productive forces, the form of world communication adapted to new conditions is formed, and the unique spiritual products of different nations are transformed into public wealth, thus making culture cosmopolitan, and national culture is developed in the process of international communication. Third, cultural exchanges are relatively independent. Cultural exchange has dynamic reaction. The relative independence of cultural communication affects individual lifestyle, social operation mode and national communication form. It is scientific to use Marxist world outlook and methodology to guide the Belt and Road cross-cultural communication. In the aspect of cross-cultural communication, Marxist cultural communication thought must play a fundamental guiding role.

### 2. Cultural communication thought of Marxism Sinicization.

Sinicized Marxist thought of cultural exchange is the direct theoretical basis of the Belt and Road intercultural communication. Sinicized Marxist thought of cultural communication is the inheritance, enrichment and development of Marxist thought of cultural communication. The more than 70 years since the founding of New China has witnessed the exploration, development, advancement, enrichment, and development of the Sinicized Marxist thought of cultural exchanges. In the exploratory stage, the Party pointed out that Chinese culture belonged to revolutionary culture and stressed that in cultural exchanges, it should actively absorb foreign progressive culture and resist negative culture. At the stage of development, the party's theoretical contributions to cultural exchanges mainly include: first, it puts

forward those foreign cultural exchanges are long-term work. Deng Xiaoping pointed out at the second Plenary Session of the 12th CPC Central Committee that "cultural exchanges with other countries should also develop over a long period of time" [19].

The second is to clarify the principles of cultural exchanges, that is, foreign cultures should be absorbed and used for reference, and treated with caution. In the promotion stage, the Party pointed out that the purpose of cultural exchanges is to build and develop socialist culture with Chinese characteristics. In the enrichment stage, the Party emphasizes cultural exchanges as an important embodiment of the country's soft power. President Hu Jintao raised the status of cultural diplomacy to equal that of political and economic diplomacy at the 10th foreign Ministry diplomatic meeting. Through the stages of exploration, development, promotion and enrichment, Marxist cultural communication thought has gradually realized Chinese Characteristics, modernization, and popularization.

Since the 18th National People's Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Communist Party has put forward a series of new ideas and viewpoints according to the new situation and new tasks facing China, which have become the direct theoretical basis for the Belt and Road intercultural communication. In the developing stage, the party to realize cultural exchanges about the Chinese dream realized, points out that cultural exchanges should not only guide people to objective understanding of contemporary China and the outside world, and to spread Chinese culture to the world, and puts forward the principles of cultural communication, namely, respect the diversity of civilization, equality, and inclusiveness, implement open inclusive, coexistence and co-prosperity of multicultural big pattern. At the same time, the Party pointed out the path of cultural exchanges, proposed that cultural exchanges should take Marxist cultural exchanges as the theoretical source, inherit, and carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture, learn and surpass the excellent foreign culture. The Party pointed out that cultural exchanges should be promoted by expanding the scope of cultural exchanges and expanding the subjects of cultural exchanges. In Xi Jinping's speech, conference and address on the initiative, there are many contents related to cultural exchanges, providing guidance for cultural exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative. In general, after the founding of New China, the Party attached great importance to cultural exchanges and put forward a series of new ideas, new views and new propositions combining historical conditions and tasks of The Times. In particular, the theoretical views on cultural exchanges put forward since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China have played a direct guiding role in cross-cultural exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative.

### 3. Theory of cultural external communication.

Communication goes hand in hand with culture and has a long history. Edward

T. Hall Jr., the founder of cross-cultural communication, has brilliantly argued that “culture is communication, and communication is culture” [20, p.209]. Larry A. Samovar, a famous scholar of cross-cultural studies, believes that culture is a “synonym for communication, but in fact they are largely isomorphic and homogeneous” [21, p.42]. After a culture is born, it will spread consciously or unconsciously. Closed and stagnant cultures do not exist and are doomed. Therefore, communication is the inherent requirement of culture, or its inevitable attribute. Professor Wu Bin, a famous Cultural scholar in China, believes that cultural communication is a kind of cultural communication activity that communicates interpersonal relations, and a universal cultural interaction phenomenon in which people are born in communities, groups and all the coexistence between people in the process of social activities. As far as the scope of communication is concerned, cultural communication includes communication within and between cultural systems.

Communication between cultural systems is “the transmission of cultural characteristics from one culture or society to another” [22, p.137]. Communication from one culture to another is an important means to promote metabolism and maintain a virtuous cycle of the body. Cultural communication is always mutual and two-way. In the process of spreading to the world and influencing the world culture, Chinese culture has also continuously absorbed and learned from the excellent achievements of other cultures, and finally achieved its own extensive and profound.

At present, the international dissemination of Chinese culture is of great significance to the Belt and Road Initiative and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. In his speech at the opening ceremony of the first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Xi Jinping said, “In the Belt and Road initiative, exchanges should replace estrangement, mutual learning should replace clash, and coexistence should replace superiority, and all countries should promote mutual understanding, respect and trust”. The ancient Silk Road was never just a road for trade, but also a road for exchanges among civilizations and cultural transmission. Today, this initiative also calls for enhanced cultural exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. Peng Long, a scholar, believes that the initiative not only contains material content, but also spiritual content. Its construction objectives are all related to cultural exchanges: policy communication and people-to-people bond are naturally inseparable from the exchange and dissemination of ethnic cultures, and the “hard connectivity” of roads, trade and currency will be unstable without the support of the “soft connectivity” based on cultural exchanges, exchanges, and integration [23, p.37].

The Silk Road spirit of “peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit” embodied in the ancient Silk Road is a natural

product of cultural exchanges and dissemination among different ethnic groups in history. In the new era, the silk Road Spirit also depends on countries to carry out cultural exchanges and dissemination based on mutual respect and appreciation, to consolidate the popular support and social foundation of the BRI. A community with a shared future for mankind is not only a political and economic community, but also a cultural community. Cultural community is the most basic and core part of the community of shared future for mankind.

### **Chapter 1 summary**

Thus, the joint development of China and Russian-speaking countries is an inevitable choice to promote the formation of a new pattern of comprehensive opening up. The construction and linkage between China and Russian-speaking countries provides a “green channel” for the harmonious development of economic and cultural exchanges.

On the one hand, it helps to coordinate and allocate high-quality markets and resources, and develop a higher-level, higher-level open economy. Therefore, it will also help to promote the countries along the Belt and Road to form new advantages in international cooperation and competition in the context of the adjustment of international industrial division of labor and the reshaping of economic globalization rules.

COVID-19 is a shock, but also a node and a starting point. Although the current global epidemic is not over yet, in the post-epidemic era, the initiative will surely achieve higher-quality development. Countries along the route should also take active and firm economic and cultural exchange activities to build a green and harmonious the Belt and Road common development path.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CONSIDER THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE IN THE POST-EPIDEMIC ERA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHINA-BELARUS COOPERATION**

#### **2.1 Cooperation and development between China and Russian-speaking countries along the “Belt and Road”**

On November 4, 2014, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in his speech at the 8th meeting of the Central Financial and Economic Leading Group: To promote the construction of the Belt and Road, we must grasp the implementation, from easy to difficult, from near to far, with dots leading the line. From the line to the surface, solidly carry out economic and trade cooperation, solidly promote the construction of key projects, and do it step by step [24]. Therefore, in the process of implementing the Belt and Road Initiative, it should be carried out gradually and country by country. The cooperation and exchange between China and The Russian-speaking countries should be based on the economic development and actual needs of each country, and the cooperation countries and key cooperation areas should be selected. Based on full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each country, the two sides can complement each other's advantages and achieve a win-win situation.

The Russian-speaking countries have different economic levels, some economies are relatively developed, while others lack regional infrastructure. The “Five Links” of the Belt and Road Initiative has promoted cooperation between countries and regions, economic development, and cultural exchanges. “People-to-people connectivity” has actively promoted the friendly exchanges between the people of China and the nine Russian-speaking countries, which is a source of motivation from the people and has enhanced the willingness of the two countries to cooperate in education. “Policy communication” provides a strategic guarantee for promoting cooperation and exchanges and formulating cooperation plans and measures. The “unimpeded trade”, “infrastructure connectivity” and “financial connectivity” initiatives have effectively increased the demand for talent between the two countries and expanded the space for educational cooperation. Under the “Five Links” initiative, China and Russian-speaking countries urgently need to strengthen bilateral communication, understand the needs of the people in the relevant countries, understand the economic operation, history, culture, and social development of the two countries, to better formulate development policies in line with the national conditions of both sides. China is the world's second largest economy and an important investor in the Belt and Road Initiative. Chinese enterprises going global will drive the development of infrastructure, trade and

finance in Russian-speaking countries and meet the needs of regional economic development. Therefore, the "Five Links" under the initiative has more effectively promoted and promoted cooperation between Russian-speaking countries and regions and promoted mutual learning and mutual benefit among cooperative countries by introducing high-quality resources, improving cooperation mechanisms and personnel exchanges.

*Economic and trade aspects.*

In the economic and trade cooperation between China and Russian-speaking countries, represented by Russia, both countries attach great importance to the cooperation in the region as northeast China and eastern Russia are adjacent to each other. In 2002, China proposed revitalizing the old industrial base in northeast China, supporting the acceleration of the adjustment and transformation of the old industrial base in northeast China and other regions, and promoting the development of alternative industries in resource-based cities and regions. In 2003, the Chinese government on the implementation of the strategy of rejuvenating northeast China and other old industrial bases several opinions, put forward to promote upgrading of industrial structure in northeast China, the transformation of resource-dependent cities such as goals and tasks, emphasized to promote further open the domestic and foreign, make full use of the northeast China and adjacent regions such as Russia, Japan and South Korea's geographical advantage, We should give full play to the conditions and advantages of existing ports in northeast China and strengthen cooperation with neighboring countries. Subsequently, several preferential policies for regional development were issued to accelerate reform and opening and promote the revitalization of northeast China. In 2018, the Plan for The Development of China-Russia Cooperation in the Far East of Russia (2018-2024) was officially approved. This is another guiding document specifically for China-Russia regional cooperation after the expiration of the Outline in 2009. It further specifies the specific projects and contents of China-Russia cooperation in the Northeast and Far East. It provides corresponding guarantee in policy and law, which has specific guiding significance to the cooperation between China and Russia [25, p.124].

According to data released by China's Ministry of Commerce, China-Russia trade in goods reached 146.87 billion dollars in 2021, up 35.9 percent year on year. Faced with repeated ups and downs of the global epidemic and weak economic recovery, China-Russia economic and trade cooperation has defied the trend and achieved leapfrog development. Bilateral trade volume has reached a new record high, and China has remained Russia's largest trading partner for 12 years in a row. According to the statistics of the General Administration of Customs of China, China imported 334.29 billion yuan of energy products from Russia in 2021, up 47.4% year on year, accounting for 65.3% of the total value of China's imports from Russia in

that year. Russia remains China's largest source of energy imports, the second largest source of crude oil imports and the largest source of electricity imports [26]. Accelerating the social and economic development of Siberia and the Far East is one of Russia's strategic tasks. Russia plans to actively promote local cooperation, attract Chinese investment and technology, and expand global transport and trade routes. At present, Russia has begun to modernize and upgrade the Baikal-Amur railway and the Trans-Siberian Railway. By 2024, its capacity will be increased 1.5 times by increasing transit cargo volume and shortening transport times. In addition, port infrastructure in the Russian Far East has been developed. All this will further enhance the complementarity of the Chinese and Russian economies. Alexander Isurin, chairman of The Russian Railway Container Transport Company, a subsidiary of Russian Railways, believes that with the in-depth docking of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union, Russia-China cross-border railway transport will usher in new development opportunities and become one of the markets with the greatest growth potential in Russia [27].

In terms of agricultural products, since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Ukraine in 1992, a series of agreements have been signed between the two governments, and friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields has developed smoothly. In 2011, China and Ukraine formally established strategic cooperative partnership, which provides an important guarantee for the steady and sound development of bilateral relations. Ukraine is located along the Belt and Road and is one of the first countries to participate in its construction. The establishment of strategic cooperative partnership and the Belt and Road Cooperation link provide opportunities for the rapid growth of agricultural trade between the two countries.

According to Chinese statistics, the trade volume between China and Belarus reached us 3.03 billion dollars in 2020, up 10.7% year on year and hitting a new record high. According to the statistics of Belarus, the trade volume between China and Belarus reached 5.425 billion dollars, an increase of 125 million dollars year-on-year, among which Belarus exported 1.196 billion dollars to China, an increase of 162 million dollars year-on-year and imported 4.229 billion dollars from China. The trade mix is increasingly diversifying, with potash's share of exports to China shrinking to 43 per cent and agricultural and wood products exports tripling. In 2020, 12 new Belarusian product manufacturers were approved to export to China. As of March 1, 2021, a total of 105 Belarusian agricultural producers were recognized by China. In the first quarter of 2021, Belarus's agricultural exports to China increased by 87.7 percent [28]. On June 30, 2020, Belarus news agency the interview with the first deputy prime minister Mikhail Khodorkovsky of sinop pointed out that since 2015 China provide economic and technical assistance for



about 130 million dollars a year to Belarus, mainly used for the construction of social housing in Belarus, college students' dormitory and other infrastructure, including The China–Belarus Industrial Park “Great Stone” of science and technology center, apartment buildings, substation, etc. In the next 3-4 years, it is expected that the planned construction projects will reach 800 million dollars. Affected by the epidemic, China's investment in Belarus in 2020 dropped to 104.5 million dollars, of which direct investment was 54.4 million dollars [29]. China's direct investment mainly flows to Belarus' industry, construction, transportation, and logistics.

China and Azerbaijan have similar development strategies. First, both countries attach great importance to connectivity and foreign trade policies. Azerbaijan is balancing the relationship between east and West, in which economic development is a strategic priority for both countries. Azerbaijan's economic diversification can be combined with China's economic restructuring and upgrading. They both pursued foreign policies of independence and peace. Both China and Azerbaijan attach great importance to political stability. A stable political order is considered a prerequisite for economic development.

The coordinated development of China and Russian-speaking countries is an inevitable choice to promote the formation of a new pattern of all-round opening-up. At present, The Chinese economy has been fully integrated into the world economy, with close economic and trade exchanges at home and abroad, extensive circulation of resources and factors, and deep integration of domestic and foreign markets. China's development is closely linked to that of the rest of the world, and its development and linkage with Russian-speaking countries provide a “green channel” for this connection. On the one hand, it will help coordinate and allocate quality markets and resources at home and abroad, expand the connotation and extension of opening-up, and develop an open economy at a higher level and level. On the other hand, also help to promote China's east Midwest open together, benefit balance weak domestic slow fast east west, sea land development situation, the coordinated development of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, the Yangtze River economic belt and other major docking strategy, build a wider range of open area, for China to further promote the inland open, expand the depth and width of the open economy. Under the background of the adjustment of international industrial division of labor, the remolding of economic globalization rules and the transformation of domestic development mode, China's inherent advantages of cooperation and competition are gradually disappearing, and the accelerated construction and layout of the connectivity network will enable China's foreign trade to form new advantages of international cooperation and competition.

#### *Cultural exchange and education.*

Among the Russian-speaking countries represented by Russia, the total

enrolment rate of higher education in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Moldova is 56.3%. Among them, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus have entered the stage of universal enrolment, with enrolment rates exceeding 70%. There are 123 cooperative educational projects between China and CIS countries, including 119 from Russia, 2 each from Ukraine and Belarus. Most of them are in universities in northeast China, and there are relatively few educational cooperation and exchange platforms with other Russian-speaking countries [30, p.62]. Russia actively promotes, support education cooperation of cis countries law text structures, mutual recognition of academic system, the commonwealth of independent states (CIS) open sex network planning, to promote the education resource sharing and joint ventures, to enhance education influence in the process of the commonwealth of independent states (CIS) countries, formed in Russia as the center of the development of the integration of education. The cultural exchanges between China and Russia show a momentum of development in multiple levels and fields. Since 2008, China and Russia have held cultural festivals, Art festivals for Chinese and Russian college students, Higher education exhibitions and film exhibitions in turn. China and Russia have also held “Year of Language”, “Year of Tourism” and “Year of China-Russia Media Exchange”. Chinese and Russian universities regularly hold university forums, such as the China-Russia Higher Education Forum [31, p.61]. China and Russia have a wide range of cooperation in higher education, such as project education, institution education, long-term and short-term cooperation and exchange, student exchange and language training, playing a leading and exemplary role in cooperation with Russian-speaking countries.

With Russia is given priority to, mainly concentrated in the history, current situation and talent cultivation in China and the Russian zone 9 countries education cooperation study, through the cooperation between China and Russia history origin, cooperation and development of higher education research and found, depth, broad prospects for cooperation, the two countries marked achievements were scored in the joint ventures, mainly manifested in the level of diversity, rich forms, Cooperation in a wide range of professional subjects, more complete. This has brought great opportunities for development and cooperation between the two countries in the breadth and depth of intercollegiate exchanges and cooperation. Some scholars reviewed the current situation of cooperation in education, science and technology, overseas students, and language promotion, and prospected the future of cooperation. Some scholars have paid attention to the development of overseas students and educational programs. The overall cross-border flow of Chinese and Russian students has shown an increasing trend, and educational programs have shown a positive development trend. There are a wide range of disciplines and majors, and a large proportion of natural science fields [32, p.58]. There are some scholars to comb,

Belarus education cooperation between China and Belarus education cooperation between the two countries entered a new period, launched the Belt and Road Initiative, fast development, the education cooperation between government dominant, strategic orientation, the frequent interaction between the exchanges, continuously improve cooperation mechanisms, communication system and content of cooperation gradually deepened.

Respectively by some scholars in China and Georgia, Kazakhstan, central Asia and other countries of the education cooperation were analyzed, and thinks that make full use of both technical and professional advantages, make market-oriented high-tech achievements, exploration and innovation, pay attention to the education cooperation strengthening the cooperation of the society in various fields of education, especially in the aspect of development path to exploration and innovation, such as students, scholars, exchange of visits, Give full play to their respective advantages in scientific research projects and academic forums [33, p.421] [34, p.62] [35, p.12]. Also have some scholars in Inner Mongolia, Xinxiang, northwest university as the research case, focused on China and the Russian national education cooperation mechanism, cooperation in running schools, such as the status quo of talents cultivation, think should start from the problems, put forward laying solid foundation of laws and regulations, adjusting the training objectives, establish teachers team reserves and so on, to explore innovative education cooperation [36, p.24].

The mode of educational cooperation between countries should be established in a reasonable form according to the actual needs and national conditions of the two countries, which should not only adapt to the social political, economic, and cultural environment, but also learn from the existing mature mode of educational cooperation. Therefore, the mode or mode of educational cooperation refers to that two or more educational institutions, in accordance with the rules of their own educational system, develop win-win cooperation, combine theory with practice, and generally maintain stable, sustainable, and operational characteristics.

Educational cooperative institution mode refers to Chinese educational institutions and foreign educational institutions jointly establish an educational institution to carry out cooperative education, generally divided into independent institutions and non-independent institutions.

1. An independent institution refers to a school-running entity jointly invested by both Chinese and foreign parties to establish a cooperative school, possessing independent and free legal person property, possessing legal conditions for running the school, being able to independently undertake the responsibility of running the school, and having obtained the approval of the state education administrative department. Having the board of directors, independent property rights, the right to recruit students, the autonomy of internal management and other autonomy in

running a school is a highly autonomous mode of running a school. It is also an innovative mode of running a school in China in recent years.

2. A non-independent institution refers to a Chinese-foreign cooperatively run school that does not have the qualification of an independent legal person. Such cooperatively run school is generally affiliated to a certain school and is the secondary college of the school. In terms of legal status, the relationship between institutions of higher learning and non-independent Chinese-Foreign cooperatively run schools is the relationship between parent and child, leader and led, and non-independent institutions are the main ones in China's higher education cooperatively run schools with Russian-speaking countries. According to the information released by the Information Platform for the Supervision of Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools of the Ministry of Education of China, as of February 2022, there are a total of 18 cooperative running schools in China with Russian-speaking countries, among which 16 are the most cooperative running schools with Russia, and only one institution (Shenzhen North Science Moscow University) has independent legal personality. There is one cooperative school running institution with Belarus and one cooperative school running institution with Ukraine. There is no cooperative school running institution with other Russian-speaking countries at present [37].

From the aspect of running a school, the project-running mode is the inevitable stage of establishing cooperative school-running institutions, which is the further deepening of cooperative school-running projects. According to the information released by the Information platform for the supervision of Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools of the Ministry of Education of China, as of February 2020, there are 118 undergraduate cooperation programs between China and Countries in Russian-speaking areas, including 103 with Russia, 13 with Belarus, and 2 with Ukraine. There are 34 cooperation projects in vocational or vocational education, including 26 with Russia and 8 with Belarus [37].

There are mainly two modes of educational cooperation in overseas education:

1. Overseas institutions running schools. In the field of Sino-Foreign cooperation in running schools, we should not only introduce excellent foreign educational resources, but also go abroad with the improvement of China's education level year by year and the continuous rise of China's comprehensive national strength. In 2015, Beijing Jiao tong University (BJTU) established Sino-Russian Jiao tong University Alliance with Jiao tong University in St. Petersburg, Russia, creating a new mode of international talent training and overseas education for rail transit.

2. Hold Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms. Confucius Institutes are non-profit educational institutions jointly established by China and foreign countries. They are an important form of overseas cooperation in running schools

between China and Russian-speaking countries, as well as an important measure to improve the country's soft power and international influence. Confucius Institutes are generally located in foreign universities and research institutes. Their main purpose is to carry out colorful teaching and cultural activities based on their own advantages, promote Chinese language teaching, and spread Chinese culture, and carry out exchanges and cooperation in Chinese language teaching and education and culture between China and foreign countries, gradually forming a distinctive mode of running schools abroad. According to the currently released information, as of February 2022, China and 9 Russian-speaking countries have established a total of 46 Confucius Institutes, including 19 in Russia, 6 in Ukraine, 6 in Belarus, 4 in Kyrgyzstan, 5 in Kazakhstan, 2 in Georgia, 2 in Azerbaijan, 1 in Armenia, and 1 in Moldova; a total of 7 Confucius Classrooms have been established [38].

Under the Belt and Road Initiative, projects and industries in Russian-speaking countries have yet to develop a relatively prominent talent demand trend, and the employment of students with Russian as their first foreign language is subject to certain restrictions. At the same time, due to the insufficient number of enterprises with global influence in Russian-speaking countries, the demand space for talents is relatively limited, which affects the choice of students' enrollment intention, leading to the situation that the national level is more active, while the enterprises and non-governmental level are not active enough. On the other hand, China's advantage disciplines for Russian-speaking countries attention degree is not enough, cooperation on professional choice does not adapt to the current shortage of the development of science and technology talent, the urgent request of Russian-speaking countries represented by Russia in the rocket, aviation, aerospace, engineering fields such as geology, mining, nuclear power has a higher level of teaching and scientific research, some professional has a world-class level, However, from the perspective of the subject fields involved in the current cooperative education projects, the overall number of these specialties is too small, and the two parties cannot really benefit from the superior educational resources of the other party in the cooperation process [39, p.19]. Education cooperation, therefore, need to rise to the national level to carry on the overall planning, overall design, the creation of the government, enterprises, universities, research institutes cooperation mechanism, the formation of government leading, enterprise leading, fostering talent and the support industry in the virtuous cycle of the enterprise, optimization of different levels and school category of cooperation, to adapt to the talent development needs of different levels, complementary advantages, Promoting sustainable development.

## 2.2 Challenges of China-Belarus cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative in the Post-Epidemic era

### *In economy and trade.*

The third social and economic Development plan of Belarus from 2010 to 2016 once again clarified the importance of opening its market to foreign investors and formulating preferential policies to attract more foreign investment. It also emphasized the need to strengthen market ties with other countries and further improve the management mechanism of foreign economic activities. As can be seen from Table 2.1, the situation of attracting foreign investment in Belarus in recent years has not met expectations. In addition to a slight increase in 2014, foreign investment attracted continued to decline in the following three years, picked up in 2018, but slightly decreased in 2019. However, the enthusiasm for economic and trade cooperation between China and Belarus remains strong. According to Belarus statistics, China's direct investment in Belarus exceeded 160 million dollars in 2014, making It the seventh largest direct investor in Belarus. In 2018, China maintained its position as the seventh largest investor in Belarus, accounting for 3.1 percent of investment in the Real economy, following Russia (38.3 %), the United Kingdom (25.7 %), Cyprus (7.8 %), Poland (4.1 %), Ukraine (3.7 %) and Germany (3.4 %) [40]. In the first half of 2020, all sectors of the Economy (excluding banking) attracted us \$4.5 billion of foreign investment, led by Russia (42.8%), Cyprus (10.9%) and Austria (7.9%) [41].

Table 2.1 – Foreign Investment attracted to Belarus in 2014-2018

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Foreign investment flowing into the real economy	150.844	113.442	85.59	97.285	108.42	100.068
Direct investment	101.689	72.414	69.286	76.342	85.371	72.332
Stock portfolio	0.106	0.051	0.028	0.084	0.039	0.067
Other	49.049	40.977	16.285	20.859	23.859	27.669
Net inflows of foreign direct investment (excluding liabilities for goods, construction, and services of direct investors)	18.117	16.118	13.072	12.468	16.349	13.272

Footnote – Source [42]

Up to 2015, Chinese enterprises' investment projects in Belarus mainly included the assembly of home appliances, automobile assembly, investment, and construction of five-star hotels and residential communities, as well as textile, agriculture, and light industry.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, economic and trade cooperation between China and Belarus has achieved fruitful results, which is largely due to the continuous development of political and diplomatic relations between the two countries. In contrast, the potential of China-Belarus economic and trade cooperation has not been fully tapped, and the development of bilateral economic and trade cooperation is still facing a bottleneck. One example is the obvious fluctuation in China-Belarus import and export trade in recent years. In general, the deepening of China-Belarus economic and trade cooperation faces at least three challenges.

First, the economic size of China and Belarus is quite different. The COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 caused economic recession and even social unrest in many countries around the world. In the first three quarters of this year, China's GDP reached 72.28 trillion yuan, with a year-on-year growth of 0.7%, turning positive. The annual GDP exceeded 100 trillion yuan, with a year-on-year growth of 2.3%, showing a huge potential for development. Belarus has a small economy, with a population of only 9.4084 million in 2020, a long-term deficit in foreign trade, insufficient foreign exchange reserves and serious currency depreciation. The huge economic differences are not conducive to the complementarity of the twin economies.

Belarus is particularly concerned that the influx of Chinese goods will have a strong impact on the survival and development of relevant industries and pose a severe challenge to the stability of its own market. Belarus has taken trade protection measures (anti-dumping measures) against some Chinese goods to protect its domestic market. These Chinese goods, including citric acid, corrosion-resistant stainless-steel kitchenware, seamless steel pipes, track-type bulldozers, and truck tires, continued to expire in 2020 [43, p.22]. Of course, The protective measures taken by Belarus against some Chinese goods are not only a concern over China's huge economic advantage, but also a negative response to the failure of Chinese companies to fully respect the operating rules of the local market. It needs to be acknowledged that a few Chinese enterprises, after entering the domestic market of Belarus, have adopted the strategy of selling more products at low prices to make profits, thus undermining the local market order. It is to be expected that acts that do not respect the local rules of the game will be met with passive resistance from the local market.

Secondly, Belarus's economic structure still needs to be adjusted. Belarus is the current of the planned economy system, the implementation of incremental reform, single economic structure, mainly based on industrial projects, accounted for more

than 25%, given the industry's contribution to the domestic economy industrial added value reached more than 80%, in contrast is the lack of services and the first industry, the first industry accounts for less than 7% in 2019, The serious imbalance in the domestic economic structure makes its economic development dependent on foreign trade, especially energy supplies from Russia. However, due to international sanctions and unstable oil prices in recent years, Russia's economic development prospects are not clear. Once the Russian economy is in turmoil, it will inevitably lead to a decline in the economy of Belarus. In addition, the main industrial enterprises in Belarus are state-owned, which are inefficient in operation and lack market competitiveness. Moreover, such state-owned ownership is prone to rent seeking, which makes it difficult for foreign enterprises to integrate into the market.

Although China is the world's second largest economy and has become the largest trading partner of many countries, it has never been the largest trading partner of Belarus. An important reason for this is that China is not the first choice for the multilateral balanced diplomacy practiced by Belarus. Russia has always been regarded by Belarus as the primary object of development in its foreign relations. It has very close ties with Russia in many aspects, including politics, economy, diplomacy, and culture. Since the signing of the customs Union agreement between Belarus and Russia in 1995, the two countries have been advancing the integration process. While participating in Russia-led regional economic integration, Belarus has long been committed to promoting the integration process with Russia. The integration relationship between the two countries has been deepening, from the Russia-Belarus community to the Russia-Belarus alliance, and then to the establishment of alliance countries. Although Russia's domestic economic development level does not match its status as a political and military power, it has long occupied the position of the largest trading partner of Belarus. Belarus meets many of its commodity needs through Russia and its dominant Eurasian Economic Union.

Finally, the investment environment needs to be improved. Belarus has long been the supply of capital relies on Russia's economic aid, the country's debt level is as high as more than a third of its gross domestic product (GDP), and in 2021 the debt repayment period, and the contrast is due to the annual trade deficit, lead to its foreign exchange reserves continue to decline, foreign exchange reserves and foreign debt scale has been formed upside down. Under this situation, the capital flow of state-owned enterprises is seriously insufficient, and the investment is seriously insufficient. Due to its long-term economic sanctions, planned economy, imperfect financial system, legal system and administrative mechanism and international environment, foreign direct investment has been reduced year after year. In the global economic freedom index, trade freedom index and financial freedom index ranking in



the bottom. Belarus, whose population is mainly ethnic Belarusian, leans towards Russia ideologically and politically. According to polling data in Belarus, more than half of the people choose to strengthen economic cooperation with Russia to reverse the economic downturn, while the support for closer cooperation with China is mainly supported by senior government officials. If Belarus's political situation changes, its foreign policy will change.

China-Belarus Industrial Park is a good example of mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Belarus, which is of great significance to the deepening of bilateral economic and trade cooperation. The obvious progress made in the construction of China-Belarus Industrial Park in recent years is largely due to political advantages. There are difficulties in the construction of the park in terms of matching concepts and systems, docking legal standards, cost of production factors, exchanges between parks and personnel training.

*In terms of cultural exchange.*

Cultural communication content is limited, lack of connection and integration with the Belt and Road. As an organization that shows the essence of Chinese culture to all parts of the world, Confucius Institutes should formulate appropriate cultural communication strategies according to different regions and different cultural communication environments. Since the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, the Confucius Institute at Belarus State University has brought many tangible benefits. However, from the current situation, the college still lacks the interface with BRI, and many cultural communication contents are relatively thin, limited to traditional Chinese knot, paper cutting and wood carving, lack of new ideas, have little connection with the Belt and Road, and the construction and presentation of Chinese culture platform is not perfect. The number of Chinese teachers is insufficient, and the linkage of teacher training at home and abroad is lacking. The Confucius Institute for Chinese Studies in The Republic of Belarus State University is the earliest Confucius Institute established in Belarus. Compared with other Confucius Institutes in Belarus, the number of local teachers is relatively sufficient, but even so, there is still a trend of shortage. The Institutes has begun to take targeted measures to solve this problem. Since 2019, the two-year Chinese teacher training program for local primary and secondary schools in Belarus has provided many teacher resources for the cooperation sites, making up for the shortage of local Chinese teacher resources to a certain extent. In addition, the number of Chinese language teachers is obviously insufficient. In 2019, there were 18 Chinese teachers among the 45 faculty members, a considerable number compared with other local colleges, but still unable to meet the actual needs of college development. Not only is there a lack of quantity, but there is also a lot of room for improvement in the quality of the talent pool. The quality of teachers is uneven, the cooperation between China

and Belarus is not close enough, and the strength of the main body of communication is insufficient, and the reserve is not sufficient, so the transmission of Han culture will have no lasting power and the transmission effect will be greatly reduced.

There is a lack of research results on the objects of cultural communication. By reviewing the research achievements and teaching status of the Confucius Institute for Chinese Studies in the Republic of Belarus State University, it is not difficult to find that it pays little attention to the study of Chinese culture learners in Belarus. As a key link in the chain of cultural communication, it is very necessary for learners to study specifically. The college focused most of its energy on the construction of the teaching staff, ignored the in-depth analysis of the specific situation of the communication object, and failed to select or design the activity form of cultural communication according to its needs. What are their advantages and disadvantages compared with most Chinese learners? Or how to tap more potential Learners of Chinese culture? What are the different needs of people of different classes in different regions of Belarus for Learning Chinese? How do you accept Chinese culture? These are all areas that Confucius Institutes need to make up for.

Finally, we cannot ignore the challenges that the digital economy will face in the post-Epidemic era. On the one hand, the economic dislocation caused by COVID-19 has increased the trend of deglobalization. The outbreak disrupted the global industrial chain and international trade. The disruption of production in the manufacturing sector of developed countries triggered a trend of economic deglobalization, especially supply chain deglobalization. The epidemic has largely prevented the cross-border flow of people, as well as goods and capital. Facts have proved that it is faster and more serious than the impact of the 2008 financial crisis. The epidemic has strengthened some forces leading to the regression of globalization, and spawned new anti-globalization forces, bringing challenges to the globalization and transformation of the digital economy. On the other hand, the outbreak of COVID-19 has accelerated the maturity of digital technology and promoted the transformation of digital economy globalization. Digital solutions have been used to improve surveillance and security during the pandemic, such as using artificial intelligence and big data to determine the geographic location of patients or high-risk groups. Digital solutions can not only increase public awareness of the epidemic, but also be used to develop online pre-detection and diagnosis and improve surveillance and security. Outbreak, online education, remote medical treatment, a new life such as telecommuting, rapid development of new forms, traditional industries are moving into the direction of digital, digital technology offers a new tool for many fields and access to information, in daily life and social activities, maintain and the production and business activities play an unprecedented role. Digitalization has become a basic need, and the digital economy has played a role as a macroeconomic stabilizer during

the epidemic, buffering the impact of the epidemic on the offline economy to some extent. The contactless transaction nature of the digital economy has enabled it to overcome the adverse impact of the pandemic and demonstrate its resilience against "anti-globalization". As COVID-19 is brought under control and economies are unlocked, economic activity gradually returns, but not quickly. The Economist coined the term "90% economy" to describe the post-lockdown economy, which depicts a lonelier and less interesting society in which people are more likely to work than play. One might think that widespread vaccine coverage would quickly return the world economy to normal, but the pandemic would leave scars, businesses unwilling to invest now would mean less productive capital in the future, and the recession caused by the pandemic would keep the world economy in sub-health for some time to come.

In the post-epidemic era, with the continuous innovation and in-depth development of digital technology, compared with the real society, the digital society in cyberspace accounts for an increasing proportion in all fields, and the network society characterized by digitalization, networking, intelligence, and interconnection has greatly facilitated people's lives. But at the same time, because of its huge value and centralized storage management mode, data becomes the key target of network attack. Extortion attacks and data leakage have become a major security problem in the construction of digital Belt and Road. First, large-scale cross-border transmission of network data implies the risk of information leakage. At a time when digital infrastructure such as the Internet of Things (IoT), communication networks and big data are repeatedly attacked by high-risk vulnerabilities globally, no matter for countries or companies themselves, any cyber-attack will cause huge data security risks. For example, once network security problems such as network fraud, data monitored by other countries, theft of trade secrets, and invasion of privacy occur, they will cause irreparable property losses and security risks, and even lead to a decline in national credibility [44, p.69]. Second, the boundary between network data security and social development is increasingly blurred. Along with the expansion of the digital and information technology, the digital technology gradually permeate to civil aviation, transportation, environmental protection, energy, water conservancy, and other countries economic pillar industry, and with the national security, politics, diplomacy, national, economic and cultural ties increasingly close, lead to both digital "neighborhood" all the way along the route network data covering state secrets, and involves the commercial information, This puts forward higher requirements for the original network data security measures. More alarmingly, concerns about online data security may prompt countries to reduce digital interdependence, which makes each side vulnerable to the other's strategic actions.

In a word, network data has had a profound impact on economic operation mechanism, social lifestyle, and national governance capacity. In the post-epidemic

era, security issues such as data production, collection, processing and sharing during the construction of the digital Belt and Road need to be recognized and solved from the perspective of overall security, to continuously improve the data security level of the digital Belt and Road. Because the network data security problem of sublimation will inspire and create digital thinking, this kind of thinking characterized by worries about double the network security and the digital economy, it not only emphasizes the technology progress for network sovereignty and the influence of network security, also emphasized the importance of digital advantage, and will eventually reduce the other countries to participate in the enthusiasm of the digital Belt and Road.

The outbreak and spread of COVID-19 have had a significant impact on the global economy, but it has also provided an opportunity to promote digital economy cooperation between China and Belarus. However, it is undeniable that no matter how the economic development process is after the epidemic, the future is bound to develop towards the trend of digital economy globalization. Digital economy has become an important engine for global economic recovery under COVID-19, and the globalization of digital economy will be a new pattern of China-Belarus economic cooperation in the future.

### **2.3 Opportunities for China-Belarus cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative in the Post-Epidemic era**

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, China and Belarus have worked together to overcome difficulties and further strengthened cooperation in all areas. In the fight against the epidemic, the two countries have stood together and helped each other. In 2020, after the outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan, President Lukashenko sent a special letter of sympathy to Xi Jinping, and then instructed the Belarusian government to provide China with 40 tons of humanitarian supplies by military aircraft on two occasions, and repeatedly instructed relevant Belarusian countries to support China's fight against the epidemic. The Belarusian government has taken concrete measures to carry out effective cooperation with the Chinese side and provided convenient, friendly, and non-discriminatory measures for Chinese nationals, workers of Chinese enterprises and Chinese students in Belarus. The Chinese government and people from all sectors of society have also provided Belarus with medical supplies. The Chinese Embassy in Belarus has also provided 10,752 novel coronavirus nucleic acid test kits to Belarus, helping Belarus strengthen its epidemic prevention capacity and public health system. In addition, with the support of the Belarusian government, the “Spring Seedling” program was launched in Belarus, and all Chinese citizens in Belarus were able to receive free vaccinations. All these fully demonstrate the high level and particularity of China-Belarus relations.

In terms of economic and trade cooperation, the China-Belarus Industrial Park is a landmark project of the Belt and Road Initiative and a demonstration project of mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries. At present, The China-Belarus Industrial Park has moved from construction to high-quality development. Although some investment projects and investment plans cannot be implemented normally due to the epidemic, the park has made considerable progress in construction and operation.

Despite the impact of COVID-19 on international transport, China-Europe freight trains have maintained steady growth, which reflects the solid foundation that the Belt and Road Initiative has laid for China's positive trade development with countries along the routes. By July 2021, the park has attracted 71 resident enterprises from 13 countries, with an intention to invest more than 1.2 billion dollars and create more than 1,000 direct jobs. As the first Chinese medicine project enterprise in Belarus, The New Era Biotechnology Company has filled the gap in the Chinese medicine industry in the park, creating conditions for the medical and health cooperation between China and Belarus. After entering the park, the Eurasian Railway Company will invest in the construction of freight railway stations in the park, to realize the docking of railway transportation channels such as the China-Europe Freight trains with the China-Belarus Industrial Park, which is of great significance to the future development of the industrial park. The Torch Park project was the first to enter the park in the year of the epidemic, playing a leading role in attracting investment and resuming work and production. The Innovation Center for The Industrialization of Scientific and Technological Achievements between China and Belarus will undertake the mission of cultivating and incubating high-tech industries internally and promote international innovation cooperation in the park after it is officially put into operation. The commencement ceremony of the Minsk International Exhibition Center project means the systematization of supporting facilities in the park, which will guarantee the long-term benign development of the park. The China-Belarus Industrial Park was listed by the Belarusian government as the first 5G test zone and the first unmanned vehicle test zone. On September 4, 2020, China-Belarus Industrial Park won the Global Service Demonstration Case Award at the China International Service Trade Fair. China-Belarus Industrial Park was awarded the best Special Economic Zone of the Belt and Road Initiative in the 2020 Global Free Economic Zone Rating held by "FDI" magazine on October 15.

In the area of cultural cooperation, the two countries have recognized each other's academic degrees since 2018. China carries out 40 government scholarship exchange programs every year. In 2020, nearly 1,000 Belarusian students were studying in China, while more than 5,000 Chinese students were studying in Belarus, more than 4,000 of whom were studying in universities in Minsk. Higher education

institutions of the two sides have signed more than 400 cooperation agreements. Since 2016, the Chinese Embassy in Belarus has established the "Chinese Ambassador's Scholarship", which has funded a total of 148 Belarusian college and high school students to learn Chinese. Beijing International Studies University, Tianjin Foreign Studies University, Xi'an International Studies University and Beijing Foreign Studies University have also set up departments of Belarusian. Scientific research cooperation between the two sides is also very close. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Belarusian Academy of Sciences have established the China-Belarus Cultural Cooperation Forum, which hosts international seminars in turn every year. The two schools have implemented the consensus reached by the two heads of state and established the China-Belarus Development Analysis Center to serve the intergovernmental Cooperation Committee and cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative. In terms of cultural cooperation, the ministries of Culture of the two countries set up cultural centers in each other's countries from 2016 to 2017 and held cultural activities such as "Happy Chinese New Year" performances for many years, serving as a window for people of the two countries to get to know each other. Due to the impact of the epidemic, the offline face-to-face exchanges between China and Belarus in cultural cooperation have been suspended. Instead, the two countries have focused on online publicity and exhibitions, including world Heritage in China, Beautiful China photo Exhibition, China poverty Alleviation Photo Exhibition, and the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of the CPC. In terms of media cooperation, Belarus's mainstream media, including the Belarusian Telegraph Agency, Belarus Today and other major TV stations regularly reprint current political news from China's Xinhua News Agency, China Central Television and People's Daily. The "Window to China" section of the website of Belarus Today regularly reports economic, political, and social information about China, and displays pictures of tourist attractions.

From the perspective of digital economic globalization, the Digital Belt and Road is not only a concrete practice of high-quality Belt and Road development, but also a new plan to build a community with a shared future for mankind. The outbreak and spread of COVID-19 have dealt a heavy blow to the construction of the digital Belt and Road while affecting the development model of countries and the process of global governance for a long time. However, in the post-epidemic era, the digital Belt and Road will promote the modernization of national governance capacity and empower the world's economic development.

In the post-epidemic era, innovative development of digital infrastructure will become a new international hotspot and accelerate the shift to high-speed, full-coverage and intelligent direction. Although developing countries started digital infrastructure construction late, they are seizing the new opportunities of digital

development to carry out digital transformation planning. Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and other African countries are actively strengthening capacity building in communication facilities, e-commerce, and digital technologies. To promote the development of Africa's digital economy, the African Union formulated and released the agenda 2063 action Plan [45]. Among them, Pan-African E-Network and Cyber Security, as flagship projects of this agenda, pay special attention to the construction of broadband Network infrastructure on the African continent, aiming to ensure Network information Security in Africa and reverse the unfavorable situation of Africa as the “digital depression” of the world [46, p.45]. Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia have also made digital economy and digital society a national priority. They have started to build digital infrastructure, improve regulatory legal frameworks, promote cashless payments, and improve logistics. On January 22, 2021, ASEAN held its first digital Ministers' Meeting and released the ASEAN Digital Plan 2025, which sets out goals and paths for ASEAN's digital development in the next five years and aims to build ASEAN into a leading digital community and economy driven by secure and transformative digital services, technologies, and ecosystems [47]. Central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, have all introduced digital economy development strategies and committed themselves to the construction of digital infrastructure such as communication technology infrastructure, e-commerce, and smart cities [48, p.122]. In general, to promote the development of their own digital economy, more and more international actors begin to strengthen the construction of digital infrastructure from the aspects of top-level design, concept guidance and practical operation. This provides ideas and construction methods for digital economy cooperation between China and Belarus.

In the post-epidemic era, countries around the world will increasingly rely on digital infrastructure, digital economy, and digital technology. In this context, the willingness and demand of China and Belarus to participate in the digital Belt and Road will greatly increase. At present, COVID-19 has also added many new issues to the construction of the digital Belt and Road. Among them, development, and security issues, such as the digital divide, online data security, US digital hegemony and global digital governance deficit, will hinder the construction of the digital BRI. Therefore, China and Belarus need to jointly explore policy support and national strategy alignment to jointly promote the process of digital transformation and modernization of countries along the Belt and Road and build a digital economic community to enhance the development level of digital economy in both countries and jointly build a digital Belt and Road.

The world today is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century. Changes

in the balance of power and relations among countries have led to adjustments in the international power structure and changes in the international order and global governance model. The arrival of a new round of scientific and technological revolution and the spread of COVID-19 have further intensified such changes. In the post-epidemic era, China and Belarus are in such a changing international environment. We need to keep pace with The Times, explore the space and path of bilateral cooperation, and promote the solution of global issues while safeguarding the interests of our two countries, to contribute wisdom and strength to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

First, China and Belarus should strengthen political and economic cooperation and jointly build a community of health for mankind. At present, the epidemic is still recurring, and there are also mutated viruses, such as Omicron. It is not known how long the epidemic will last and what the consequences will be for human society. Safeguarding the lives and health of citizens is a top priority for both governments. The initiative of building a community of health for mankind was first put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping in March 2020. China and Belarus have their respective strengths in the medical field. First, the two sides need to continue to strengthen bilateral health cooperation, establish a health cooperation mechanism, and share information and experience with each other in vaccine development, infectious disease prevention and treatment, emergency medical assistance and other areas to enhance the capacity to deal with the epidemic. On June 11, 2021, Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko signed Decree No. 215, the Amendment to the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Belarus, expanding the priority development areas of the China-Belarus Industrial Park, including biopharmaceuticals, medical products, medical services, and laboratory diagnostics. In 2019, the China-Belarus Traditional Chinese Medicine Center was established in Belarus, providing medical services to the Belarusian people. In 2020, Beijing Jintai Cultural Institute will settle into China-Belarus Industrial Park and prepare to engage in TCM diagnosis and treatment services. On July 21, 2021, China-Belarus Industrial Park Development Company, Qingdao Chengyang District People's Government, China CAMC Engineering Co, Ltd., Zhongheng Glory (Beijing) Science and Technology Co, Ltd., signed the cooperation agreement of China-Belarus Industrial Park and Qingdao China-Belarus International Traditional Chinese Medicine Health Industrial Park. The results of the medical technology cooperation between Nanjing University of Science and Technology and Francisk Skorina Gomel State University will benefit patients with joint replacement. In the future, research institutions and enterprises of China and Belarus may also explore joint research, development and production of medical devices and supplies. Under the multilateral framework, China and Belarus should jointly maintain and promote the leading role of the World Health Organization in



building a community of health for mankind and strengthen the exchange of health information and the training of medical personnel under the multilateral frameworks such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the China-Central and Eastern Europe Cooperation Mechanism. exchange and cooperation in areas such as epidemic prevention and relief and promote the construction of a “Healthy Silk Road”.

Second, we need to synergize our strategies and jointly build a community of shared interests. At present, China has begun to realize the second Centenary Goal of building a modern socialist country in an all-round way. The 14th Five-Year Plan, the first five-year plan on the new journey, has been launched. The main goals for economic and social development during the 14th Five-Year Plan period are to achieve new results in economic development; New progress was made in reform and opening; The level of social civilization has been improved; New progress has been made in ecological progress; People's wellbeing reached a new level. The effectiveness of national governance was further improved. The plan includes 19 chapters and 65 summaries. The 12th part of the Belt and Road initiative proposes to pursue opening-up in a wider scope and at a deeper level, leverage China's advantage in the super-large market, promote international cooperation, achieve mutual benefit and win-win results, promote the steady and long-term development of the Belt and Road Initiative, and build a community with a shared future for mankind. In 2021 is the 30th anniversary of independence, Belarus, and Belarus in 2021-2025 was the start of the implementation of economic and social development planning, planning is put forward in the next five years development goal is: through the high quality of economic growth, increased social capital, as well as the life, work and is true of the conditions for self-realization, and ensure social stability and the increase of the citizens' well-being. To this end, we need to expand the domestic market, start a new investment cycle, improve the business environment, and reduce risks and costs for investors and enterprises. Real GDP in 2025 will be at least 1.2 times that of 2020, and life expectancy will increase to 76 percent. By 2020, fixed asset investment will exceed 1.2 times that of 2020, exports will exceed 50 billion US dollars, real disposable income will increase 1.2 times, and pension increases will exceed the rate of inflation. Priorities for Belarus's development include a happy family, a strong region, an intellectual state, and a partner state. The year 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Belarus. The two countries and the development of bilateral relations stand at a new historical starting point, to both sides have reached a strategic consensus guidance, heads of state around a common goal, the plan of the two countries effective use of the existing multilevel communication mechanism, through the cooperation to strengthen consultation and coordination, formulate specific agenda, and solid foundation to carry out the cooperation project, ensuring high quality development of relations

between China and Belarus.

Third, China and Belarus should strengthen cooperation at the international level and promote democracy in international relations. Both China and Belarus are developing countries and cherish independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Are equal both think that all nations, big or small, should respect each other, opening up and cooperation, mutual benefit and win-win results, argues that comply with international norms on the basis of the charter of the United Nations, through dialogue and consultation to resolve differences and contradictions, maintain and practice real multilateralism, oppose unilateralism and hegemony, to oppose the use of violence and military means to resolve international disputes, We oppose interference in other countries' internal affairs and willful sanctions against other countries. At present, the global governance system is facing unprecedented challenges. International relations are entering a new cycle characterized by re-globalization, re-ideology and re-nationalization. Unilateralism, hegemonism, interventionism, cold War mentality and zero-sum game prevent developing countries from safeguarding their legitimate rights and interests. China and Belarus should plan future cooperation from a long-term and broad perspective, take the initiative to adapt to the changes in the international environment and take an active part in the reform of the international order so that the changes in the international environment will benefit the interests of China, Belarus, and other developing countries. To this end, our two countries should strengthen cooperation under multilateral frameworks, advocate and practice the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind, jointly uphold the international order with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter at its core and make the global governance system more just and equitable.

Fourth, China and Belarus should strengthen investment and economic and trade cooperation to promote high-quality development of the Belt and Road initiative. The two sides should first take measures to ensure the sound development of existing investment and cooperation projects. This is because some companies have seen their business volume decrease during the epidemic and their operating funds shrink due to exchange rate fluctuations. To attract each other and expand investment, the two sides could discuss the signing of laws on investment security and regulations to continue simplifying customs procedures. The future needs to pay attention to the operation of Chinese enterprises after the implementation of the new tax law. Apart from strengthening cooperation in agriculture and renewable energy, China and Belarus also need to explore innovative ways of cooperation, such as developing e-commerce, digital economy, and green economy, to ensure the vitality of China-Belarus cooperation. Belarus is a transportation hub on the Eurasian continent, with more than 80 percent of China-Europe freight trains passing through Belarus. Container traffic of China-Europe freight trains passing through Belarus in

2020 increased by 1.6 times, and the volume in the first half of 2021 was the same as that in the first nine months of 2020 [42]. Belarus can continue to explore the Chinese market and expand exports to China. In addition, the alignment of laws, regulations and standards is very important, but the first thing is to solve the problem of information asymmetry. China and Belarus may establish legal service centers or legal cooperation networks to promote and align laws, regulations, and standards in their respective industries, and provide consultation and services for enterprises' investment cooperation.

Fifth, China and Belarus should continue to strengthen sub-national cooperation and people-to-people and cultural exchanges to consolidate the social foundation for bilateral cooperation. There is close communication between government agencies of China and Belarus, but sub-national cooperation and people-to-people exchanges are not extensive and in-depth enough, which is not conducive to the long-term development of bilateral relations. After the epidemic is brought under control, the two sides need to resume cultural, and people-to-people exchanges as soon as possible. They should make full use of the existing exchange platforms to conduct frequent and colorful cultural, scientific, technological, and educational exchanges, with special emphasis on media cooperation and youth exchanges. We will continue to increase exchanges between parliaments, political parties, and non-governmental organizations, increase exchanges between women, youth and people with disabilities, and step-up dialogue and exchanges between think tanks, to foster diverse and interactive people-to-people exchanges.

## **Chapter 2 summary**

From the perspective of economic and trade cooperation between China and Belarus, although the economic cooperation between the two countries has achieved fruitful results, this is largely due to the continuous development of political and diplomatic relations between the two countries. In contrast, the potential of China-Belarus economic and trade cooperation has not been fully tapped, and the development of bilateral economic and trade cooperation is still encountering bottlenecks.

From the perspective of culture and education, the cultural exchange between China and Belarus still lacks the connection with the Belt and Road. The content of many cultural transmissions is relatively thin, limited to traditional Chinese knots, papercuts, and woodcarvings. All the way has little connection, and the construction and presentation of the Chinese cultural platform is not perfect. The number of Chinese major teachers is insufficient, and the training of teachers lacks the cooperation between countries.

In addition the changes in the balance of power and mutual relations between countries have triggered the adjustment of the international power structure and promoted changes in the international order and global governance model. In the post-epidemic era, China and Belarus are in such a changing international environment. They need to keep pace with the times, explore the space and path of cooperation between the two countries according to the changes in the international environment, and strive to promote the solution of global problems while safeguarding the interests of the two countries, to contribute wisdom and strength to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **SUGGESTIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES ALONG THE BELT AND ROAD IN THE POST-EPIDEMIC ERA**

Any kind of communication, no matter in the social soil of any country or nation, is characterized by initiative, diversity, commonality, openness, and dynamism, which is the objective law of the development of things. Following the objective law of development is the basic requirement of economic and cultural exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative.

#### **3.1 Follow the development law of communication**

Improve the right to speak in economic and cultural exchanges. Cultural dynamism refers to the dynamic reaction of communication to social existence. The dynamism of culture is determined by the principle of relative independence of social consciousness. Although the formation and development of culture is based on social existence, there is imbalance between culture and social existence. Economically strong countries are not necessarily culturally advanced, and economically backward countries are not necessarily culturally backward. The relative independence of culture is highlighted in the dynamic reaction of culture to the foundation of its formation. After the formation of culture, it will become a factor of social and historical development, acting on other social and historical factors, thus affecting the development of social and historical.

In the economic and cultural exchanges of the Belt and Road, the development of cultural dynamism requires the improvement of economic and cultural discourse power in the exchanges. To do this, the following four points need to be done. First, highlight the content of discourse. "Content" is the core of communication. In economic and cultural exchanges, political color should be diluted as far as possible, while national localization characteristics should be displayed, and its own cultural resources should be mined, especially the excellent traditional culture should be paid attention to improve the discourse content. Second, active discourse subject. Discourse subject is the most active element in discourse power. The economic and cultural exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative are not at the official level, but from the official level to the non-governmental level. Therefore, it is necessary to activate non-governmental entities, including non-governmental organizations, institutions, and individuals, as well as enterprises and other entities, so that each entity can show its own strength and realize linkage. Third, enrich the carrier of discourse. Discourse power is realized through media communication, and enriching

discourse carriers means enriching communication media. New media such as the Internet, and smart technology should be introduced. Fourth, maintain the discourse environment. Harmonious, stable, safe, and unimpeded discourse environment is the basis and premise of enhancing international discourse power.

National characteristics should be respected in economic and cultural exchanges. Influenced by many factors such as production and lifestyle, religion, geography and nationality, people in different countries and regions have different characteristics in their way of thinking, aesthetic views, and emotional expression, thus forming different ways of thinking, moral concepts, and value standards. Mao Zedong has clearly put forward the policy of “letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend” in his “On Ten Relations”. Deng Stressed that state-to-state relations should not be based on social system or ideology but should draw on each other's strengths in competition and seek common ground while reserving differences. Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao have also called for respecting cultural diversity in the world. “The diversity of civilizations, just like the diversity of species in nature, together form the source of life on our planet”, Xi Jinping said [49, p.103]. Respect for cultural diversity is also the consensus of the world. The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions adopted by UNESCO represents the respect for cultural diversity by the people of the world.

Recognition of cultural diversity requires respect for ethnic characteristics of heterogeneous cultures [50, p.44]. The cultural structure and psychology of the countries along the Belt and Road are different from other countries and nations, showing the most basic characteristics of local culture. Unique culture has become a significant label of a country and a nation, which is their most precious spiritual wealth, the source of wisdom for the development of a country and the growth of a nation, and the most attractive charm. In southeast Asia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and water-sprinkling festival culture of Theravada Buddhism, Vietnam, and Singapore is mainly culture of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam culture in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei mainly, while the Philippines and east Timor for the Catholic culture, all kinds of cultural convergence coexist in southeast Asia. The exchange and convergence of heterogeneous cultures in Southeast Asia is the full embodiment of the common respect for ethnic characteristics of heterogeneous cultures by countries and nations in Southeast Asia. Based on respecting different cultures, more attention should be paid to building cultural exchange platforms and improving cultural exchange mechanisms.

The most prominent feature of Marxist cultural view is to understand and reveal cultural paradigm and cultural essence based on the materialist standpoint of practice. Marx believed that practice is the important factor that distinguishes human

beings from animals. Human beings can independently and creatively understand the objective law of the development of things and make use of and use this law to create things with humanistic nature that cannot be generated by natural laws. Human creation is a creation of beauty, and culture is rooted in the process of human creation of beauty, and the process and result of human creation form culture. The economic and cultural exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative should not only strengthen mutual understanding, exchange, and cooperation, but also explore the historical and cultural commonality of the countries along the initiative and enhance the recognition of the commonness of the countries.

To enhance the sense of cultural identity among countries, efforts can be made in three aspects: awakening the common cultural memory, enhancing the common identity, and outlining the common bright future of the countries along the Belt and Road. First, awaken the common political and cultural memory of countries along the Belt and Road. Many of the countries along the route were once along the ancient Silk Road. The ancient Silk Road mainly started from East Asia, through central and west Asia, and connected with European countries, southeast Asia, South Asia, and other regions. The initiative follows the route of the ancient Silk Road and covers many regions and countries in Asia, Europe, and Africa, relying on the Eurasian land bridge. Along the ancient Silk Road, China and the countries along the route have accumulated profound friendship and shared common cultural memories. Third, outline a bright future for all countries along the Belt and Road. Good hopes for the future are shared by the countries and people along the routes. Only by linking their futures together can we jointly build the Belt and Road.

Efforts should be made to foster cultural exchanges and sharing. The openness of culture means that cultural development should be inclusive and inclusive. If a country or a nation wants to develop its culture, it should not remain unreformed and complacent. Instead, it should fully absorb and learn from fine cultures from other countries and use them for its own use. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, China should give full play to the “public property” of culture and form an open system of cultural sharing with countries along the Belt and Road. Acknowledging the openness of culture requires the construction of cultural exchange and sharing. To construct the situation of cultural exchange and sharing, we should selectively learn from different cultures in economic and cultural exchange. Any culture has its unique charm, which is worth appreciating and learning from.

Promote innovation of cultural theory and practice. The dynamic nature of culture means that culture does not change with the changes of social history and times. The dynamic nature of culture is determined by man's practicality. According to Marx and Engels, people's social spiritual culture is the conscious expression produced by people's realistic relations and activities, people's production,

communication, social organization, and political organization. The generation and development of culture are closely related to people's practical activities. People's continuous practical activities make culture change constantly, so culture is dynamic.

Recognizing the dynamic nature of culture requires promoting cultural innovation. Cultural innovation includes both theoretical innovation and practical innovation. If cultural theory transitions ahead of cultural practice, it may lead to the radicalization of cultural practice; if cultural theory lags cultural practice, it will hinder cultural practice. Cultural innovation in the pursuit of diverse content, but also to grasp the scale of cultural innovation.

The key problem of practice innovation. The key to solve this problem is to grasp the cultural needs of the masses. High-quality cultural development is the cultural demand of the masses. Therefore, promoting high-quality development of culture is the primary goal and measuring stick of cultural innovation. Only by promoting high-quality development of culture can culture truly meet the needs of the public.

### **3.2 Improve the participation of communication subjects**

The purpose of economic and cultural exchanges is to encourage people of the countries along the Belt and Road to participate more in the initiative, enhance friendship among the people of the countries along the Belt and Road, and promote people-to-people exchanges. Therefore, subject participation needs to be improved. At the official level, the government should establish the concept of economic and cultural exchanges, publicize, and promote the Belt and Road Initiative to countries along the Belt and Road through speeches and visits, and formulate relevant systems and mechanisms to provide institutional and institutional guarantee. At the non-governmental level, enterprises, schools, think tanks, social organizations, and the public need to give full play to their own strengths, combine their own characteristics and use their own resources to carry out economic and cultural exchanges, and become a group of “cultural ambassadors” with an international vision and an open mind.

The government has enormous capacity and resources. The most direct way is for the government to lead economic and cultural exchanges, starting from the following two aspects: first, to establish a sound and perfect institutional framework to guarantee and promote exchanges between countries. To promote economic and cultural exchanges, the key lies in institutional building and implementation. The establishment of a sound institutional framework can guarantee the mutual inspection, visit, tourism, study between countries. The continuous improvement and improvement of the system design provides the implementation space and



environment for the all-round, multi-level, normative and effective operation of the exchange between countries. Second, promote economic and cultural exchanges at the government level. The government should not only recognize and respect the spontaneity and initiative of exchanges, but also consciously play an important role in this regard. To this end, the government should strengthen management in practice, set up various forms of exchange programs at the government level, enhance the understanding and consensus of the people of the countries along the Belt and Road, enhance mutual trust and mutual reliance of the people of the countries along the Road, and constantly open new prospects.

With the increasing production and operation activities of enterprises and the continuous expansion of the scope of communication, corporate image has an important impact on the national image and national culture. To be competitive in economic exchanges, enterprises of various countries also need to rely on culture, and cultural exchanges also need to rely on the power of economy, and enterprises need to play their unique role.

To play the unique role of enterprises, we can start from the following three aspects: First, enterprises should form a chamber of commerce. Enterprises should form chambers of commerce to pool their strength and share trade outcomes with countries along the Belt and Road. At the same time, enterprises can actively participate in local public welfare activities to get involved in the local conditions and customs of countries along the Belt and Road. The second is to combine economic and cultural exchanges with enterprise strategies. The government should guide enterprises to participate in exchanges as an important part and provide them with training and consulting services. Enterprises should increase investment in the Belt and Road and provide financial and personnel protection. They can also invite representatives of enterprises and organizations from countries along the Belt and Road to inspect factors that enterprises are concerned about. Third, enterprises should not only have products and technology, but also brand and brand value. The advantage of technology and product is the foundation of the enterprise, and the use of product and technology advantage is the weight of the enterprise to participate in the Belt and Road construction. At the same time, enterprises should not only rely on products and technologies to show their strength, but also create brand values to win the trust and respect of local governments by creating high-quality Belt and Road brands. To be specific, enterprises can change their concept and start from asset light to create some asset light projects with brand value, such as catering, folk customs, education, traditional Chinese medicine, cultural industry, mobile medical care, health care, etc. These projects can quickly form a scale, walk into the people along the road, and achieve the goal of people-to-people exchanges.

Promote cultural exchange among academic think tanks. Academics and think

tanks are the main subjects of Belt and Road research. They provide effective intellectual support to the planning, mechanism design and policy advisory research of the Belt and Road and play a unique role in expanding consensus and promoting cultural communication and exchanges. The initiative needs to further mobilize the power of academia and think tanks to make more contributions in economic and cultural exchanges. To further enhance the role of academia and think tanks, we suggest strengthening the following three aspects. First, improve the research level of academic circles and think tanks. Academics and think tanks should accurately grasp the new trends and problems of the initiative and make use of scientific research resources to conduct in-depth studies. Second, enrich the promotion channels of academic and think tank achievements. Academia and think tanks should bridge the gap and create a favorable atmosphere for public opinion. Publish the latest research results through academic journals, forums, and publications. Academics and think tanks should establish a sound mechanism for sharing results, strengthen cooperation and integrate resources. Third, strengthen cooperation and exchanges between academic circles and think tanks. Academic circles and think tanks of other countries should speed up the establishment of cooperation and exchange mechanisms with them.

Social organizations also play an important role in economic and cultural exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative. Social organizations serve as lubricants for non-governmental exchanges. They can play a positive role in solving many problems that the government and enterprises cannot or cannot solve. By the end of 2018, China had 816,000 social organizations, nearly double that of a decade ago [51, p.36]. Although social organizations have a large base, they still face many problems in participating in economic and cultural exchanges. Social organizations have not fully played their role, and their civil, regulatory, and integrated functions have not been fully played. The General Report on the Evaluation of China's National Social Organizations (2019) suggests that social organizations should be included in the plan of the initiative. The report puts forward some Suggestions to promote social organizations to participate in the significance of reference to the economic and cultural exchanges, including depth to participate in the "area" of the people's livelihood aid, the civil society organizations included in the "area" as well as foreign aid system, to break the current of the construction of civil society organizations to participate in the "area" all sorts of policy and system obstacles, In particular, it is important to clarify as soon as possible the policies, regulations and specific operational methods for social organizations to set up overseas offices and simplify their procedures.

Communication with the people is the goal and means of economic and cultural exchanges between countries. Build emotional foundation between people,

promote communication between people. People as independent individuals, the government should promote the friendship between the people in a sincere attitude and solve problems in a responsible manner, to establish friendly and equal relations.

### **3.3 Strengthen communication and cooperation in different fields**

#### 1. Promote exchanges in education.

Culture is one of the core elements of the Belt and Road Initiative. More than 200 definitions of culture have emerged around the world. Many definitions of culture are derived from the wide scope of culture, which requires the continuous expansion of cultural exchanges in economic and cultural exchanges. We should promote the integrated development of culture and different fields and form an overall and coordinated pattern of cultural opening.

The internationalization of education is an inevitable trend, the development of education is the common vision of the countries along the Belt and Road, and the promotion of education cooperation is the common measure of the countries along the Belt and Road. Educational cooperation can be started from the following three aspects: First, make full use of existing cooperation mechanisms and platforms. At present, countries along the Belt and Road have established many Confucius Institutes, Confucius Classrooms, and overseas cultural centers, and signed cultural cooperation agreements and other intergovernmental documents. The Belt and Road education cooperation should make full use of the existing cooperation platforms and mechanisms, to “make full use of talents and goods”. Second, make plans according to different education stages. Education can be divided into preschool education, basic education, vocational education, higher education, and adult education. Different educational stages have different characteristics, so educational cooperation should fully combine the characteristics of different educational stages and formulate corresponding plans. In terms of vocational education, it is suggested that more efforts should be made to train technical and managerial personnel in developing countries along the Belt and Road. In terms of higher education, it is suggested to expand cooperation in running schools, expand the scale of students sent to each other, and establish inter-school visiting, academic exchange, personnel exchange, and training programs to exchange young students and scholars. In terms of adult education, it is suggested to develop internship positions and provide training opportunities with countries along the Belt and Road. Third, cooperation with international organizations. The education cooperation of the initiative should cooperate with international organizations. We can try to cooperate with UNESCO to promote colleges and universities to obtain the teaching position of UNESCO, jointly issue academic certificates with UNESCO, and cultivate all-round talents with

international vision.

## 2. Promote exchanges in science and technology.

Science and technology are the primary productive force. The development of science and technology promotes social progress and civilization progress. To promote economic and cultural exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative, scientific and technological innovation exchanges between countries should be actively promoted. The BRI scientific and technological exchanges and cooperation should focus on the following three aspects. First, focus on scientific and technological innovation. In scientific and technological cooperation, particular emphasis should be placed on scientific and technological innovation to drive scientific and technological progress. The role of scientific and technological innovation in cultural exchange is obvious. In the fight against COVID-19, for example, the acquisition, transportation, and use of supplies, as well as the development, experimentation, and use of new drugs, all rely on the power of scientific and technological innovation. [”Science and technology are sharp weapons in mankind's fight against diseases, and mankind's victory over major disasters and epidemics cannot be achieved without scientific development and technological innovation”, Xi Jinping said [52, p.2]. Science and technology are important ways for mankind to learn from each other among civilizations. Second, leverage China's scientific and technological advantages in frontier fields. According to the report 2019 Research Frontiers and 2019 Research Frontiers Heat Index, China ranked the second in the world with 33 leading frontiers in 2019. Among the ten disciplines, China ranked first in chemistry and materials science, mathematics, computer science and engineering, and ecology and environmental science. It ranks second in five fields: agriculture, botany and zoology, Earth sciences, biological sciences, physics, economics, psychology, and other social sciences [53, p.5]. Strengthening scientific and technological cooperation along the Belt and Road and sharing scientific and technological achievements among countries along the Belt and Road can promote the development of civilization and social progress in these countries. Third, take scientific and technological cooperation in areas related to people's livelihood as a breakthrough. “At present, how to promote all-round social progress is an important issue concerning the national economy and people's livelihood” [54, p.10]. People's livelihood is the key to national economy and people's livelihood. The government should make overall arrangements for funds and projects of various departments in international scientific and technological research and development, integrate various scientific and technological resources and carry out scientific and technological cooperation in an orderly manner. It is important to strengthen scientific and technological cooperation and services in areas related to people's livelihood to bring more tangible benefits to the people of countries along the Belt and Road, such as

water-saving irrigation, improved animal husbandry, high-yield cotton, agricultural product processing, epidemic prevention and control, desertification prevention and control, environmental protection, and disaster prevention and reduction. In addition, bilateral or multilateral science and technology parks and science and technology research and development centers will be set up to strengthen cooperation in scientific research projects and high-tech industries and build a “silk Road of science and technology” [54].

### 3. Promote exchanges in the field of tourism.

Tourism is the carrier of culture, culture is the soul of tourism, culture and tourism have a strong correlation. To strengthen tourism cooperation under the Belt and Road is to promote the development of the initiative.

The key to expand tourism exchanges in the Belt and Road region is to combine economy and culture with tourism. The key to the combination of culture and tourism is to transform abstract cultural symbols and civilization concepts into cultural products and give tourists intuitive feelings. To develop cultural tourism, it is necessary to highlight regional, characteristic, and comparative advantages, and avoid miscellaneous activity themes, empty content, and single form. At the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Chinese tour group travel service enterprise group of CITS travel CNS, CNS mission to build the “silk road landscape epic journey – central Asia + 11 Caucasian Tours”, “Tour Adriatic – 13, Slovenia, Croatia, and Italy Tours”, “romantic – explore ancient Greece through time 11 Tours” tourism theme, covered along more than 50 countries, to build along the characteristic travel boutique made a demonstration. Taking the successful application of the Silk Road as an opportunity, we will build an international brand of Silk Road tourism by relying on the famous cultural heritages along the Silk Road, and gradually form a high-end and high-quality tourism route along the Silk Road [55, p.283]. In addition, to carry out cultural tourism, we should strengthen the tourism cooperation mechanism and improve the facilitation level of tourist visa for countries along the Belt and Road. Through cultural tourism projects, promote the development of tourism economy and strengthen the spiritual communication between the people.

### 4. Promote exchanges in sports.

“Sports exchanges are increasingly becoming part of China's engagement with countries along the Belt and Road”. Xi Jinping said [56, p.13]. The Belt and Road Initiative provides a broad stage for sports, and sports cooperation helps promote cultural cooperation. The Belt and Road sports cooperation should focus on the following three aspects. First, we should give full play to the boosting role of international sports cooperation. The popularity of national fitness campaigns and the degree of participation in international sports cooperation are also important indicators of a country's modernization [56, p.13]. The Olympic Games is an

important carrier of international sports exchanges, the largest comprehensive games in the world, and the cultural symbol of the Olympic spirit. The successful hosting of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing is an important opportunity to strengthen international sports exchanges and cooperation, especially among countries along the Belt and Road. Second, give play to the basic role of the sports industry. Sports industry is a resource-saving and environment-friendly industry, which is popular in countries along the Belt and Road. Exchanges and cooperation in sports industry should lay a foundation for cultural exchanges among countries along the Belt and Road. By building a sports industry, the people of countries along the Belt and Road will be attracted to participate and their interest in absorbing each other's sports culture will be stimulated. Third, make use of the bridge function of international sports cooperation platform. Provide scientific and technological support, activity venues and human resources for sports cooperation among countries along the Belt and Road through international joint laboratories, international sports organizations and sports colleges and universities in countries along the BRI.

#### 5. Promote exchanges in the field of health.

Public health is about the health of the people, the prosperity of the country and the happiness of the people. Global health matters concern the health of the world's people as well as global security, stability, and development. Health cooperation should focus on the following two aspects. First, strengthen cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) through cooperation platforms such as who and forums. Second, the cooperation should focus on the prevention and control of infectious diseases. At present, COVID-19 has spread across the world and the post-epidemic era has arrived. The urgent task for countries along the Belt and Road is to prevent and eliminate COVID-19. The COVID-19 outbreak has exposed the world's shortcomings in infectious disease prevention and control. Countries along the Belt and Road should establish a joint prevention and control mechanism and a personnel training mechanism to protect the physical and mental health of their people [57, p.33].

### **3.4 Adhere to the path of green development and improve the communication cooperation mechanism**

Economic and cultural exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative are an important part of China's diplomatic work. They are long-term and systematic, involving different departments, groups and personnel of different countries, ethnic groups, and regions. So, build a standardized, normalized, and long-term cooperation mechanism, make more full use of the resources, make the Belt and Road extends to more countries, affect more people, share resources and information, to guide,

coordinate and support the Belt and Road under the initiative of smoothly and vigorous development of economic and cultural exchange.

#### 1. Improve the top consultation mechanism.

“Top” refers to the person in a leading position in a country or group. Strengthening exchanges is a shared vision among the top officials of countries along the Belt and Road. In the history of the world, the success of any cause in any era cannot be achieved without leadership from the top, and the leadership plays a leading role for a country and a collective.

Since the initiative was put forward, China has conducted communication, dialogue, exchanges, and cooperation with countries along the routes on transportation, energy, export trade, industrial development, and infrastructure construction. Formed along the initiative automobile industry development international BBS competitive consultations, the Belt and Road of the rule of law consultation and tax collection and administration “in” cooperation mechanism multilateral consultations, the Belt and Road economic information platform CDN to accelerate competitive consultation service consultation mode, these countries along the consultation mechanism between China and promoted the cooperation on major projects. These consultation mechanisms are characterized by a multi-layered framework for practical cooperation in dozens of the Belt and Road, led by leaders' meetings and supported by ministerial meetings. However, the current top consultation mechanism needs to be further improved, mainly because the existing promotion mechanism is mainly an informal cooperation model, which brings problems and challenges that cannot be ignored. It is not conducive to the high-quality and sustainable development of the Belt and Road Initiative [58, p.28]. Belongs to informal mechanisms existing top consultation mechanism, the weak binding agreement signed under this mechanism, the suggestion for top consultation mechanism combined with multilateral functional organization structure, by joining multilateral functional organization structure, strengthen the binding agreement and functional, that assure a top consensus can get real supervision and implementation. The economic exchanges of the BRI can try to establish such a mechanism. At the same time of top dialogue and consultation of various countries, UNESCO and international cultural exchange organizations can be involved to play a role of supervision and coordination, to ensure that agreements signed between countries become binding and enforceable documents. As the opportunity for cooperation matures, the high-level implementation mode of “informal dialogue mechanism + formal dialogue mechanism + free trade area + multilateral formal functional organizations” will be adopted for institutional construction [58, p.30]. In the future, the top consultation mechanism of Belt and Road economic exchanges can be developed into the mode of “informal dialogue mechanism + formal dialogue

mechanism + formal multilateral functional organizations”.

## 2. Improve the cultural sharing mechanism.

Countries along the Belt and Road have formed diverse cultures due to their roots in different histories and regional soils. Due to the diversity, dynamics, openness and other characteristics of culture, cultural exchange is not subject to human will. The development of world history has proved that culture can only develop through communication. The economic and trade exchanges along the ancient Silk Road reflected the cultural exchanges, in which the long-established Silk Road culture was formed. Countries should advocate cultural sharing and institutionalize cultural sharing.

The Belt and Road culture sharing mechanism should be open, inclusive, cooperation and mutual benefit as the basic principle, cultural resources to producers, consumers as the main body, a mechanism of sharing platform builder and culture in China and countries along the excellent national culture as the content, through modern management means, combined with modern technology, the different national culture, integration, integration and sharing [59, p.149]. The Belt and Road cultural sharing mechanism should include the following. First, the organization and coordination departments. Organizations as cultural sharing mechanisms should include state cultural departments, folk cultural institutions, and individuals. National cultural departments make top-level design and strategic arrangements for cultural sharing, and folk cultural institutions are the main practitioners and implementors of cultural sharing. Individuals, combining with their actual conditions, participate in activities organized by folk institutions or organize and hold relevant cultural exchange activities. Second, the way of resource aggregation. The countries along the Belt and Road are rich in cultural resources, which are characterized by dispersion and dynamism. At the same time, modern management means are used to classify, sort out and summarize cultural resources to form cultural resources that are easy to query, view and use. Third, management evaluation system. For the cultural resources that have been published on the cultural sharing platform, it is necessary to understand the resources access and user feedback and form a professional report. Experts review and discuss relevant content, and ultimately evaluate relevant cultural resources. At the same time, it is necessary to predict the trend of users' cultural needs and make plans to meet users' cultural needs.

## 3. Improve the media communication mechanism.

Media communication refers to a country spreading its national ideas to the outside world to achieve some purpose. Media communication is sometimes a strategy, but in general it is a way of human inheritance, or even the way of inheritance itself. To improve the communication capacity of media requires a sound communication mechanism. We should focus on the following three areas. First, the



core of a sound media communication mechanism is the content of communication. Its content must meet the expectations of the people of the countries along the route. At least make people form an initial impression of a culture from the perceptual and open space for a more elegant culture. Secondly, the key to improving the media communication mechanism is the communication method. The current development goal of the news communication industry is “full media, holographic media, full media, and full effect media”, which is a new orientation for news communication. In terms of media communication, we should seize the value highland of Belt and Road network culture and promote timely and accurate dissemination of cultural content through 5G technology, digital media, artificial intelligence, block chain and other high-tech technologies. Third, focus on trade. Trade is the most intuitive content of media communication. Trade data reflect the level of communication capacity, content quality and means. In terms of trade communication, cultural trade barriers between countries should be reduced or even eliminated to expand the free flow of products across borders and regions.

#### 4. Improve the talent guarantee mechanism.

The economic and cultural exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative are based on talent guarantee.

The initiative needs talents in minor languages and inter-disciplinary talents with both minor languages and business knowledge. In the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative, the mission of communication and integration undertaken by language and characters has become increasingly prominent. In economic and cultural communication, if one party does not master or understand the language of the other party, the communication will be completely impossible. If one party only knows how to communicate but does not know the business at all, there will be comprehension barrier. Therefore, countries along the Belt and Road need "multilingual" international talents, that is, comprehensive talents with both language proficiency and certain business knowledge. From the current situation, “multilingual +” type of international talents is extremely scarce, so it is of great importance and urgency to cultivate “multilingual +” type of international talents. Therefore, the economic and cultural exchanges under the initiative need to improve the talent guarantee mechanism to cultivate “multi-lingual +” international talents and provide talent guarantee and intellectual support for the initiative. Specifically, measures to improve the talent guarantee mechanism include: 1. Introduce several excellent language teachers, open more courses in minor languages and set up special language schools in minor languages in countries along the Belt and Road. Through these measures to train Chinese minority languages and foreign Chinese language talents to make facilities. 2. Colleges and universities should guide students to develop into “multilingual +” international talents. Through the establishment of major courses,

minor majors, etc., the foreign language major and other majors are cultivated to cultivate a group of talents who “know the language, understand the country, and focus on the field”, and through social practice, overseas exchanges, etc. Knowledge of national customs and social history.

### Chapter 3 summary

For the successful further development of the Belt and Road initiative, it is possible to realize the next measures.

It is necessary to follow the development law of communication. In the economic and cultural exchanges of the Belt and Road, the initiative of culture should be brought into play, and the economic and cultural discourse power should be improved in the exchanges. In addition, respect the national characteristics of each country, respect the heterogeneous culture, at the same time enhance the sense of cultural identity between countries, and create a community of cultural integration. Efforts should be made to build a situation of cultural exchange and sharing, give full play to the “public property” attribute of economy and culture, and form an open system of cultural sharing between countries.

The improvement of the participation of the main body of communication. The purpose of economic and cultural exchanges is to make the people of the countries along the route participate more in the Belt and Road, enhance the friendship among the people of the countries along the route, and promote people-to-people bonds. Therefore, there is a need to increase the participation of subjects. At the official level, the government should establish the concept of economic and cultural exchanges, publicize, promote the Belt and Road to countries along the route through speeches, organizing visits, etc., and formulate relevant systems and mechanisms to provide institutional guarantees. At the non-governmental level, enterprises, schools, think tanks, social organizations, and the public need to actively exert their own strengths, combine their own characteristics, and use their own resources to carry out economic and cultural exchanges, and become a group of "cultural messengers" with an international perspective and open-mindedness.

The communication and cooperation strengthening in different fields. There are mainly cooperation and development in the fields of education, science and technology, tourism, sports, and health.

The improvement of the various communication and cooperation mechanism. Economic and cultural exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative are an important part of China's diplomatic work, which is long-term and systematic. Therefore, it is necessary to build a standardized, normalized, and long-term cooperation mechanism to extend the Belt and Road initiative to more countries and realize resource and information sharing, to guide, coordinate and guarantee the smooth promotion and vigorous development of economic and cultural exchanges under the initiative.

## CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this article, we introduce the concept of the Belt and Road Initiative and summarize the cooperation focus and significance of the Belt and Road Initiative. Based on the comparative study of the development of trade and finance before and after COVID-19, this paper analyzes the impact and status quo of COVID-19 on the Belt and Road Initiative and expounds the current constraints on the development of the Belt and Road Initiative. Taking the economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and Russian-speaking countries under the Belt and Road Initiative as an example, this paper studies the theoretical basis of international economic and cultural exchanges and dissemination under the background of the Belt and Road and the problems existing in this process and draws the following conclusions.

Therefore, the main research results of international economic and cultural exchanges and dissemination in the context of the Belt and Road are as follows:

1. The joint development of China and Russian-speaking countries is an inevitable choice to promote the formation of a new pattern of comprehensive opening up. The construction and linkage between China and Russian-speaking countries provides a “green channel” for the harmonious development of economic and cultural exchanges. On the one hand, it helps to coordinate and allocate high-quality markets and resources, and develop a higher-level, higher-level open economy. On the other hand, it will also help to promote the countries along the Belt and Road to form new advantages in international cooperation and competition in the context of the adjustment of international industrial division of labor and the reshaping of economic globalization rules.

2. From the perspective of economic and trade cooperation between China and Belarus, although the economic cooperation between the two countries has achieved fruitful results, this is largely due to the continuous development of political and diplomatic relations between the two countries. In contrast, the potential of China-Belarus economic and trade cooperation has not been fully tapped, and the development of bilateral economic and trade cooperation is still encountering bottlenecks.

3. From the perspective of culture and education, the cultural exchange between China and Belarus still lacks the connection with the Belt and Road. The content of many cultural transmissions is relatively thin, limited to traditional Chinese knots, papercuts, and wood carvings. All the way” has little connection, and the construction and presentation of the Chinese cultural platform is not perfect. The number of Chinese major teachers is insufficient, and the training of teachers lacks the cooperation between countries.

In summary, the changes in the balance of power and mutual relations between countries have triggered the adjustment of the international power structure and promoted changes in the international order and global governance model. In the post-epidemic era, China and Belarus are in such a changing international environment. They need to keep pace with the times, explore the space and path of cooperation between the two countries according to the changes in the international environment, and strive to promote the solution of global problems while safeguarding the interests of the two countries, to contribute wisdom and strength to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

From the perspective of the relationship between China and Belarus, the two countries should strengthen political and economic cooperation and jointly build a community of human health; strengthen strategic alignment and jointly build a community of interests; strengthen cooperation at the international level and promote the democratization of international relations; strengthen investment and Economic and trade cooperation to promote the high-quality development of the Belt and Road; to strengthen local cooperation and people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and constantly consolidate the social foundation of bilateral cooperation.

From the perspective of the Belt and Road international economic and cultural exchanges and dissemination in the post-epidemic era, countries along the route need to follow the following development recommendations:

First, it is necessary to follow the development law of communication. In the economic and cultural exchanges of the Belt and Road, the initiative of culture should be brought into play, and the economic and cultural discourse power should be improved in the exchanges. And respect the national characteristics of each country, respect the heterogeneous culture, at the same time enhance the sense of cultural identity between countries, and create a community of cultural integration. Efforts should be made to build a situation of cultural exchange and sharing, give full play to the "public property" attribute of economy and culture, and form an open system of cultural sharing between countries.

Second, improve the participation of the main body of communication. The purpose of economic and cultural exchanges is to make the people of the countries along the route participate more in the Belt and Road, enhance the friendship among the people of the countries along the route, and promote people-to-people bonds. Therefore, there is a need to increase the participation of subjects. At the official level, the government should establish the concept of economic and cultural exchanges, publicize, and promote the Belt and Road to countries along the route through speeches, organizing visits, etc., and formulate relevant systems and mechanisms to provide institutional guarantees. At the non-governmental level, enterprises, schools, think tanks, social organizations, and the public need to actively exert their own

strengths, combine their own characteristics, and use their own resources to carry out economic and cultural exchanges, and become a group of "cultural messengers" with an international perspective and open-mindedness.

Third, strengthen communication and cooperation in different fields. There are mainly cooperation and development in the fields of education, science and technology, tourism, sports, and health.

Finally, adhere to the path of green development and improve the communication cooperation mechanism. Economic and cultural exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative are an important part of China's diplomatic work, which is long-term and systematic. Therefore, it is necessary to build a standardized, normalized, and long-term cooperation mechanism to extend the Belt and Road initiative to more countries and realize resource and information sharing, to guide, coordinate and guarantee the smooth promotion and vigorous development of economic and cultural exchanges under the initiative.

COVID-19 is a shock, but also a node and a starting point. Although the current global epidemic is not over yet, in the post-epidemic era, the initiative will surely achieve higher-quality development. Countries along the route should also take active and firm economic and cultural exchange activities to build a green and harmonious the Belt and Road common development path.

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## APPENDIX A

Table A1 - Statistics of belt and Road Cooperation documents signed by China with other countries and international organizations

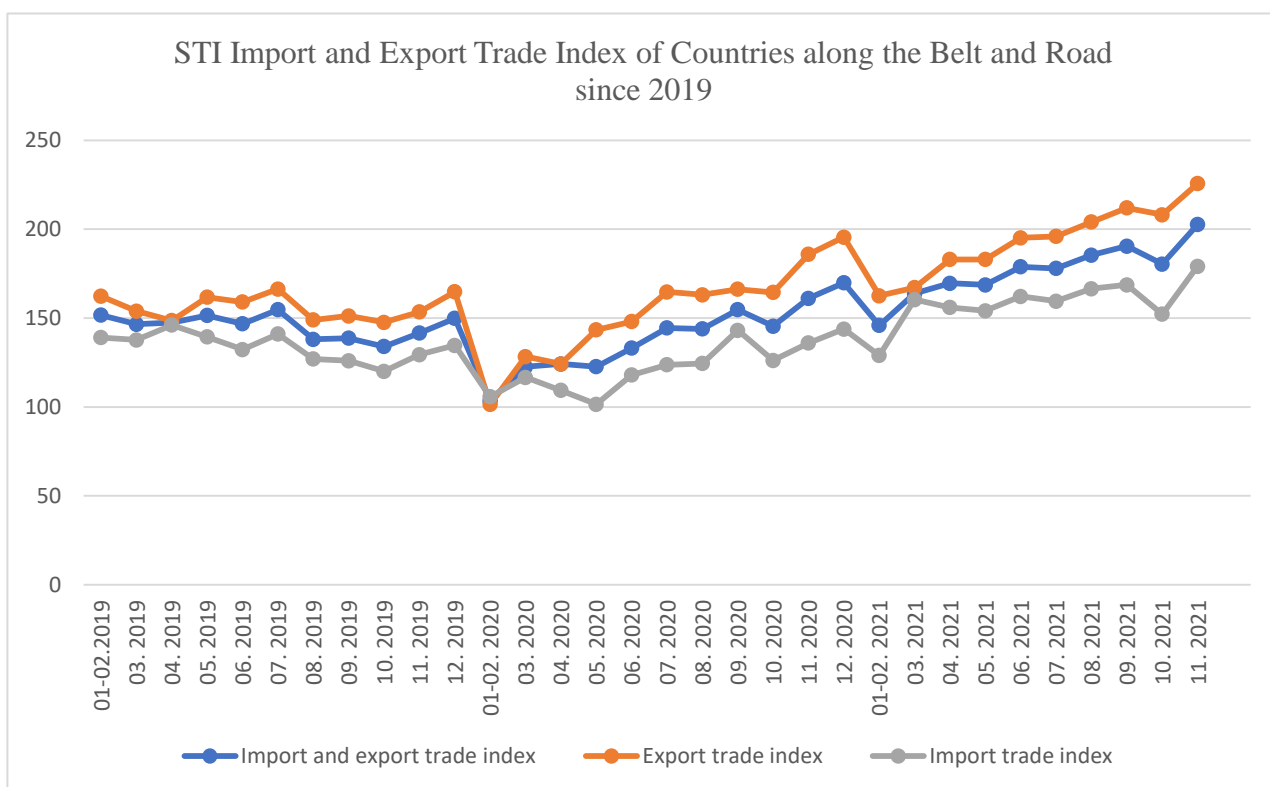
Time	The length	Number of national and international organizations	Number of cooperation documents signed
9.8.2018-12.31.2018	About four months	17	21
12.31.2018-7.31.2019	7 months	15	25
7.31.2019-	5 months	2	5
01.31.2020-6.23.2021	About a year and five months	4	6

Footnote – Source: own development

Table A2 - Belt and Road Infrastructure Development Index 2014-2020

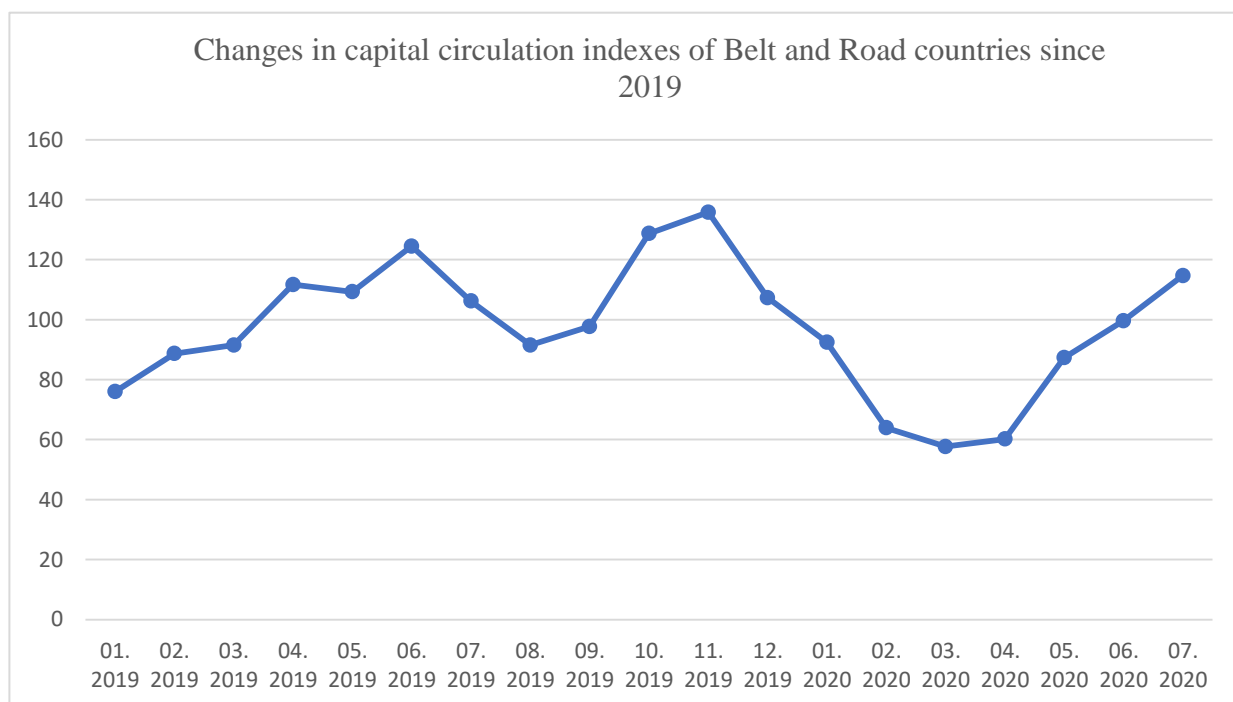
	Overall development index	Development Environment Index	Development demand index	Development cost index	Development heat index
2014	116	115	133	97	110
2015	118	115	133	103	115
2016	117	113	132	102	116
2017	117	113	130	107	114
2018	121	116	132	110	121
2019	119	115	130	107	119
2020	110	102	121	106	110
2021	113	107	112	105	125

Footnote – Source [12]



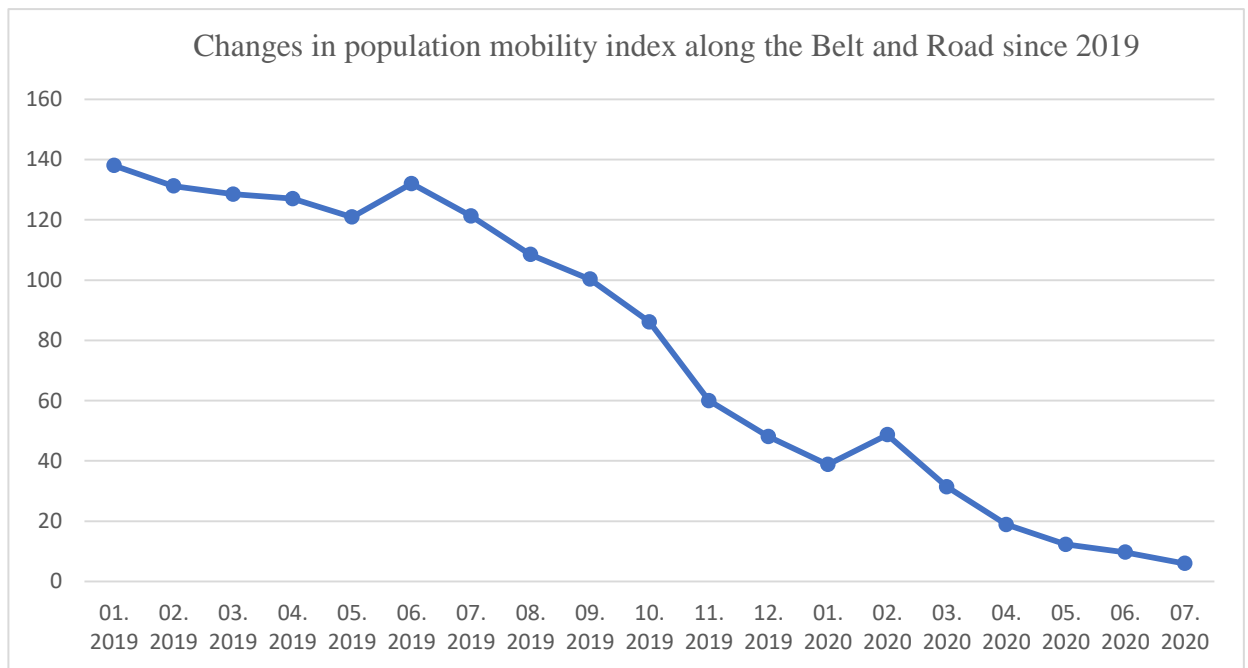
**Figure B1 – STI Import and Export Trade Index of Countries along the Belt and Road since 2019**

Footnote – Source [15]



**Figure B2 - Changes in capital circulation indexes of Belt and Road countries since 2019**

Footnote – Source [16]



**Figure B3 - Changes in population mobility index along the Belt and Road since 2019**

Footnote – Source [16]