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Article

China in the world: One Road One Belt

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the intricate relationship between rapid urbanisation and the operational dynamics of Chinese enterprises, comprehensively examining the profound implications of urbanisation as a dual driver of both unprecedented opportunities and formidable challenges within the broader context of China's ongoing socio-economic development. By employing a rigorous SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis framework, the study systematically evaluates the multitude of internal and external factors that significantly influence corporate performance in rapidly evolving urban environments. To provide empirical depth, the research utilizes Beijing and Tai'an as primary case studies, representing distinct tiers of urban development. The comprehensive analysis covers the core characteristics of modern urbanisation, its far-reaching demographic impacts, and the inherent strategic value for businesses. This includes critical advantages such as accelerated market expansion, superior infrastructure networks, and enhanced talent attraction capabilities, alongside associated risks like severe resource constraints, environmental pressures, and intensified market competition. Furthermore, the research identifies and formulates tailored SO (Strengths-Opportunities), ST (Strengths-Threats), WO (Weaknesses-Opportunities), and WT (Weaknesses-Threats) strategies specifically designed for different urban contexts, thereby providing crucial insights into how enterprises can proactively adapt to shifting urbanisation trends. Ultimately, the paper offers highly actionable recommendations intended to help business leaders and government policymakers effectively leverage urbanisation dividends, mitigate emerging operational risks, and promote high-quality, sustainable economic development within China's complex urban-rural integration landscape.

Keywords: urbanisation; chinese enterprises; swot analysis; regional development; strategic adaptation; demographic change

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1. Introduction

1.1. Problem

Urbanisation is regarded as a key factor in human social development. In developed or rapidly developing countries, the level of urbanisation is notably high. Germany's urbanisation rate stands at approximately 77.4%, while China's urbanisation rate is around 75%. The characteristics of China's urbanisation include a rapid pace and significant challenges. It not only facilitates commercial development but also presents numerous obstacles [1].

Urbanisation and rising incomes are driving the consumer market. Year-on-year, the figure rose by 7.4%, representing an increase of 3.8 percentage points compared to the growth rate of industrial value added. In developed or rapidly developing countries, the level of urbanisation is significantly high. On one hand, it enables commercial development; on the other, it is associated with a range of challenges.

The positive effects of the gradual expansion of the consumer market, the growing population, and the rise in income levels driven by urbanisation have led to a thriving consumer market. The value has increased year-on-year, in line with the growth rate of industrial value added. The city boasts excellent industrial support and infrastructure, offering outstanding external conditions for commercial development. According to available evidence, the total length of the network extends over 100,000 kilometers, placing it at the forefront in a global context [2].

1.2. Objectives

The aim of this thesis is to gain an in-depth understanding of the concept of urbanisation and its development. A further focus is placed on analysing the role of urbanisation in business contexts. Additionally, the advantages and disadvantages, opportunities, and risks of urbanised cities in China for Chinese businesses are explored [3]. Finally, the implications for Chinese businesses are thoroughly discussed.

1.3. Structure of the Work

The thesis is divided into five sections [4]. The first chapter outlines the significance of urbanisation and its economic implications, while also setting out the research objectives. Chapter two examines the concept of urbanisation, its socio-economic impacts, demographic changes, and business interdependencies. Chapter three, focused on the 'SWOT analysis,' defines concepts and objectives, clarifies strategic evaluation goals, analyses functional value by emphasising the cross-analysis of internal and external factors, summarises the advantages of the universality and systematic nature of tools, and discusses four types of strategies, presenting specific approaches such as exploiting opportunities, avoiding risks, and transforming weaknesses. Chapter four is divided into two parts and employs the 'Context-SWOT Analysis' framework. In the sections on Beijing and Tai'an, the current state of urban development is presented, followed by a systematic four-dimensional analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and concludes with the proposed SO-ST-WO-WT combination strategy. Chapter five provides an overview and analysis of the work, addresses the research questions, and offers recommendations for future development.

2. Basic Definition

2.1. Urbanisation

2.1.1. Definition

This paper examines urbanisation and its implications for businesses in the People's Republic of China. The focus is on analysing the urbanisation process as a driver of market opportunities, a challenge in terms of resource availability, and a strategic framework [5]. The study analyses specific opportunities and risks for businesses in urbanised cities. This encompasses the economic factors of market access and competition, as well as the social and environmental aspects of skilled labour availability and environmental regulations. The aggregate effects on business performance, adaptation strategies, and long-term development are evaluated to formulate recommendations for action for businesses and policy-makers.

2.1.2. Meaning

The term 'urbanisation' refers to the process of population concentration from rural to urban areas, which is accompanied by the expansion of urban areas and an increase in population size. The process of urbanisation is not only manifested in population migration but is also accompanied by far-reaching changes in various areas, including the economy, society, culture, and the environment. This analysis concludes that urbanisation should be regarded as one of the most significant features of contemporary social development. It is highly relevant in terms of its impact on the economy, society, and the environment [6].

2.1.3. Features

This study examines the impact of the urbanisation process on the socio-economic structure of societies. Empirical findings indicate that urbanisation is primarily characterized by the transformation of the labour force structure from the primary sector to the secondary and tertiary sectors, the diversification of occupational roles, the increased social and racial heterogeneity of the population, and the diversification of urban lifestyles, housing patterns, and family structures. These changes are associated with a declining trend in fertility rates, a delay in the age of marriage, and an increase in non-marital partnerships. However, this process is also linked to social marginalisation and a rise in extreme poverty.

2.1.4. Consequences

Young people, in particular, are migrating from the countryside to cities in search of better jobs, housing, and a wider range of shopping and leisure facilities [7]. Many rural regions are experiencing a decline in birth rates, while the average age of the population is rising.

As a result of this influx, many towns and cities are experiencing an expansion of their built-up areas, which is closely associated with the displacement of rural regions. This process is commonly referred to as urban sprawl [8]. The affected areas are undergoing a transformation often described as 'greenfield development,' evolving from urban peripheries into urban spaces. Residential buildings, shopping centers, and industrial estates are being constructed as part of this transformation.

Urban planners and rural development officers face a wide range of challenges related to urbanization. In urban areas, these challenges include increasing land requirements, rising housing prices, growing soil sealing, and limited infrastructure provision. In contrast, rural regions encounter entirely different issues [7]. It is essential to develop solutions to address the problems of urban sprawl and the neglect of rural areas.

2.1.5. Trends

The vast majority of the global population, and a proportion that is steadily growing, lives in urban areas [9]. An analysis of urbanisation rates in Asia and Africa reveals that, while these regions experience comparatively low levels of urbanisation overall, significant differences exist between individual countries. Current transformations in rural and urban areas represent a highly topical field of research. The global trend of urbanisation is reflected in significant migration to urban settlements. An analysis of historical developments shows that this trend has occurred repeatedly. This paper examines the causes of global urbanisation, arguing that resource scarcity in rural areas, the creation of employment opportunities, improvements to urban infrastructure, and armed conflicts are the main drivers of global urbanisation.

A global analysis of demographic trends suggests that the world's population will continue to grow. Population density is expected to be distributed far more heavily in urban areas than in rural areas in the foreseeable future. However, this general trend cannot be universally applied to all regions worldwide, as significant differences depend on a wide range of factors [10]. Relevant factors include landscape, politics, infrastructure, values, employment opportunities, and new working environments with a high proportion of home working. Furthermore, a nuanced analysis of the issue is required, as simplistic categorisation of urban and rural areas can no longer be considered adequate.

Apart from urban centres and rural areas, numerous intermediate categories exist, such as small and medium-sized towns and suburban areas. In Western industrialised countries, there is a growing trend towards urbanisation, accompanied by a blurring of distinctions between town and country. This blending involves lifestyles, social structures, and parts of the infrastructure. Trend researchers observe that the countryside is increasingly becoming the city, and the city is increasingly becoming the countryside. The question of whether urbanisation should be viewed as positive for humanity requires examination. There is no definitive answer to this question. From a global perspective, cities can be regarded as key factors in the development of trade and industry [11]. They account for a significant share of global economic output and represent a crucial factor in

job creation. Urban centres are tasked with providing adequate infrastructure for their populations, but this responsibility often comes with a substantial environmental impact.

2.2. Demographic Change

2.2.1. Definition

Demographic change is a complex concept that encompasses various structural and developmental processes within the population. These include, in particular, the age structure, birth rates, and mortality rates. In recent years, demographic change in Germany has been significantly influenced by immigration and the aging of the population [12].

2.2.2. Impact

Demographic change is a complex concept that encompasses various structural and developmental processes within the population. These include, in particular, the age structure, birth rates, and mortality rates [7]. In recent years, demographic change in Germany has been significantly influenced by immigration and the ageing of the population. Demographic trends are marked by an increase in the proportion of older people and a decline in the proportion of younger people. Certain sectors of the economy face a shortage of apprentices, while others lack skilled workers. Another important aspect to consider in this context is the increased demand for medical care resulting from demographic change. Ensuring the care and support of these individuals is a critical task. The financial costs associated with this care and support are substantial.

2.2.3. Policy Measures

The government has set itself the goal of addressing the challenges arising from changes in the demographic structure. To this end, a catalogue of measures is to be implemented, comprising the following elements: financial incentives to promote fertility, an extension of parental leave, optimization of childcare, a reform of the old-age security system, the development of the silver economy, an adjustment of immigration policy to attract highly qualified talent, and the promotion of balanced population development [13].

It must be noted that policymakers are attempting to manage the consequences of demographic change. Under the regulations in force in Germany since 1996, parents have a legal right to a nursery place for every child who has reached the age of three. A further measure that has been taken is to facilitate the granting of work permits for foreign workers [4].

2.2.4. Trends

The global population growth rate is slowing further, fertility rates are declining, and demographic change is advancing [5, 6]. Developed countries generally face the phenomenon of population decline and a shortage of skilled labor, while Africa and South Asia continue to experience significant economic growth. The process of urbanization is accelerating, and the number of megacities is increasing. Analysis of demographic data shows that the region has undergone a significant shift in its population structure, attributable to the migration of immigrants. In some areas, the population has declined due to war and climate crises. Medical advances have extended life expectancy, while low fertility rates have led to a reversal in population trends and increased pressure on social security systems. Future developments will likely be characterized by more uneven population growth and far-reaching adjustments to economic and social structures.

3. SWOT Analysis

3.1. Definition

The letters S, W, O, and T represent strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The purpose of this SWOT analysis is to identify measures that effectively leverage opportunities while mitigating risks. Companies utilize this tool not only to position their business but also to develop suitable strategies [10]. The SWOT analysis can be applied to

the entire company, a specific sub-region, or an individual project. This analytical approach is commonly employed in process optimization, among other applications.

3.2. *How It Works*

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool that helps an organisation or individual assess their strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. This provides valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of a business or organisation, enabling the development of targeted strategies to reinforce and capitalise on them. A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool that helps an institution or individual assess their strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. This provides sound insights into the strengths and weaknesses of a company or organisation, enabling the development of targeted strategies to reinforce and capitalise on them.

3.3. *Internal Factors*

SWOT analysis serves as a valuable tool due to its illustrative nature, ease of visualization, simplicity, and ability to reduce complexity. It is highly adaptable for addressing positioning issues, determining strategic direction, and making other decisions, while enabling a thorough examination of internal and external influencing factors [6, 13].

Despite its advantages, SWOT analysis has certain limitations. The quality of its outcomes is significantly influenced by the selection of factors, and there is a potential for subjective interpretation. Additionally, distinguishing between specific factors can be challenging. Furthermore, SWOT analysis provides only a snapshot and requires regular updates to maintain its relevance [13].

3.4. *External Factors*

In a SWOT analysis, weaknesses refer to internal factors that fail to achieve the results expected as part of strategic planning. It is often beneficial to analyze strengths first before addressing weaknesses, as this establishes a clear basis for determining what constitutes success or failure. Identifying internal weaknesses serves as a crucial starting point for implementing targeted improvements in relevant projects [8, 13]. Conversely, risks in the SWOT analysis pertain to external factors that may pose challenges. The key distinction is that risks typically fall outside the company's sphere of influence and are therefore beyond its direct control. A thorough risk analysis can encompass a wide range of issues, from global events such as pandemics to dynamic shifts in the competitive landscape.

3.5. *External Factors*

A SWOT analysis typically considers four strategies for evaluation and implementation [6].

Strengths + Opportunities (SO strategy): This approach emphasizes leveraging individual strengths to enhance profitability or expand market share [13]. It is advisable to nurture and develop these capabilities for sustained growth.

The ST strategy focuses on analyzing strengths and mitigating risks. By utilizing individual strengths, this strategy aims to minimize potential threats effectively.

Weaknesses and Opportunities (WO Strategy): This strategy seeks to capitalize on opportunities to address weaknesses [10, 13]. When market conditions permit, it is recommended to transform weaknesses into strengths through strategic actions.

Weaknesses and Risks (WT Strategy): In cases where vulnerabilities and risks are identified, developing an avoidance strategy is essential. Risk areas should be circumvented or counteracted using existing strengths. If avoidance is not feasible, weaknesses should be addressed through targeted improvement measures.

4. **Practical Examples**

4.1. *Bei Jing*

4.1.1. Background

Empirical evidence supports the hypothesis that it is advisable to avoid areas of risk or to counter them using one's own strengths. Where this is not possible, it is recommended that weaknesses be addressed through appropriate measures. The development of a polycentric urban landscape is a defining feature of urban expansion in China, as can be seen, for example, in the core business districts of Financial Street, the Central Business District, and Zhongguancun. The consumer goods market is of considerable size. In 2022, total turnover reached 1.37 trillion yuan. At the same time, the Chinese capital, Beijing, is advancing the development of an international consumer hub, with more than 40% of this urban area designated for the digital economy. Furthermore, the business environment is being continuously optimized.

4.1.2. SWOT Analysis of Urbanisation in Beijing

This analysis of the current situation in Beijing concludes that the process of urbanisation in the Chinese capital has brought significant economic vitality, a well-developed infrastructure, rich cultural resources, and a strong atmosphere of innovation. However, there are also drawbacks such as traffic congestion, high property prices, air pollution, and population pressure.

The specific skills and resources relevant to the individual in question are listed below. The city is a national political and economic centre, around which a strong resource aggregation effect can be observed. There is a high concentration of high-end talent, and the city is a leader in scientific and technological innovation. A perfect infrastructure and a well-developed transport network are in place. The tertiary sector accounts for more than 80%, and the modern service industry is prominently represented.

The weaknesses include challenges associated with an excessive concentration of population and functions [7, 12]. This situation leads to traffic congestion and high property prices. Furthermore, a shortage of water resources has been identified, which places significant pressure on the natural environment. Another issue addressed in this study is the relocation of non-capital functions, which faces challenges.

This analysis identifies a number of opportunities arising from the coordinated development of Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei. This development contributes to regional balance and is further promoted by the digital economy and the construction of international consumer hubs. Furthermore, the spatial layout is being optimised through the 'reduction-oriented development' policy.

Risks: Urban governance is highly complex, competition for industrial modernisation is intensifying, and resource and environmental constraints are being exacerbated by climate change [3, 12].

Given the relevant factors, Beijing has the opportunity to implement specific development plans. The aim of these plans is to build on strengths, capitalise on opportunities, and minimise risks [12].

The strengths and opportunities arising from the SO strategy are of crucial importance in this context. Building on the province's central location and drawing on scientific and innovative resources, efforts are being stepped up to establish an international consumer hub city. The aim is to promote the integration of the digital economy and the high-end service industry, as well as to strengthen the leading role in the coordinated development of Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei.

As part of the ST strategy, an analysis of strengths and risks is carried out. It is recommended that existing infrastructure and talent advantages be utilised to hold one's own against regional competition, that the spatial layout be optimised through 'reduction-oriented development,' and that resource consumption and environmental impact be reduced.

Weaknesses and opportunities (WO strategy): The opportunity to resolve non-capital functions should be seized to restructure the urban industrial system and address the issue known as 'metropolitan disease.' This can be achieved through the harmonisation of rail transport and public services [12].

Weaknesses and risks (WT strategy): Compensating for developmental contradictions through strict population control and ecological management is an absolute necessity to prevent the risk of declining competitiveness, which is induced by the delay in industrial modernisation [6, 13].

In order to fully capitalise on current advantages, expand development opportunities, and mitigate development risks, it is essential for Beijing to fully leverage its strengths in the culture of scientific and technological innovation. This involves promoting the development of the digital economy, optimising the planning of polycentric spaces, controlling environmental pollution, and advancing the low-carbon transition. Furthermore, deeper coordination between Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei is required, whilst non-capital functions should also be promoted [2]. Another objective is to improve the level of international exchange. Management must also be improved to strike a balance between high-quality development and risk prevention and control.

4.2. Consistent Performance

4.2.1. Background

Tai'an is a city in the central Chinese province of Shandong. It serves as the headquarters of the company 'Taishan Tourism,' which has developed a business model centered on cultural tourism. In 2022, the city's gross domestic product is projected to reach 319.8 billion yuan, with 49.6% derived from the secondary and tertiary sectors. As a renowned tourist destination, Tai'an attracts over 80 million visitors annually, fostering the growth of industries such as hospitality, gastronomy, and cultural and creative enterprises. The city's industrial focus includes equipment manufacturing, the development of new materials, and biomedicine, with leading companies such as Taishan Fiber Glass playing a significant role. In recent years, emerging sectors like e-commerce and modern logistics have been actively cultivated. However, challenges persist, including economic and commercial imbalances that require attention. By advancing the integration of Jitai and establishing the Taishan Cultural Heritage Demonstration Zone, Tai'an has accelerated the development of a diversified management system that integrates cultural tourism with science and technology.

4.2.2. SWOT Analysis of Urbanisation in Tai An

An analysis of the current situation in Tai'an suggests that urbanisation in the city brings certain benefits. These include the rich cultural and tourist resources associated with Mount Tai, a remarkable natural environment, and a lower cost of living [9]. However, there are also certain challenges, including a one-sided industrial structure, the outflow of highly skilled workers, and inadequate urban facilities.

The hotel is situated within the Mount Tai World Heritage Site, which is characterised by outstanding advantages in the cultural and tourism sectors [11]. Access to public transport is considered convenient thanks to the Beijing-Shanghai and Beijing-Taiwan high-speed rail links. The hotel's integration into the economic sphere of the provincial capital is evident. The region is rich in distinctive agricultural resources, such as Taishan tea and Feicheng peaches.

Weaknesses include: the city is small in size, and the influence of the central urban area is limited. Furthermore, the industrial structure is unique, and the city is overly dependent on tourism. The extent of urbanisation within the county is uneven, and the brain drain of high-calibre talent is evident.

The present analysis of the data and facts suggests that a number of opportunities are emerging in Shandong Province that should be seized [2, 6]. Factors to be considered in this context include the potential to establish a pilot city for national cultural tourism, policy support for the transition from old to new forms of energy, the rise of new business models such as health tourism and the green economy, and the modernisation of traditional industries through the digital economy.

Potential risks include competition for cultural and tourism resources in neighbouring cities, potential constraints on the ecological environment's carrying capacity, the ageing population, and structural contradictions in employment during the

industrial transition period. Taking all relevant factors into account, Tai'an can implement the following development plans to strengthen its strengths, increase opportunities, and minimise risks in the future.

The strengths and opportunities arising from the SO strategy are of crucial importance in this context. The potential of the Taishan Cultural Tourism IP and the Jitai integration form the basis for the creation of a distinctive economic belt characterised by the combination of 'cultural tourism and healthcare'. The aim is to develop smart tourism and ecological agriculture strategies that will help to enhance the city's appeal.

As part of the ST strategy, an analysis of strengths and risks is carried out. Capitalising on the advantages of the transport hub is crucial to outperforming the surrounding competition. It is essential to promote the integration of Taishan culture and modern industry, to develop distinctive cultural and tourism products, and to avoid homogenisation.

Weaknesses and Opportunities (WO Strategy): The policy of transforming old and new kinetic energy helps to offset the sector's shortcomings. Furthermore, emerging industries such as new materials and biomedicine are being promoted, and the county's economic integration is being improved [10, 12].

Weaknesses and risks (WT strategy): It is considered necessary to strengthen policies for talent development, improve public services to retain the population, and address resource scarcity through environmental protection and intensive development [7, 8].

To capitalise on current advantages, expand development opportunities, and avoid potential development risks, Tai'an has the opportunity to leverage Taishan's cultural and tourism resources to establish itself as an international tourist destination. One possible approach could be to promote the integration of 'cultural tourism +' industries and cultivate new forms such as healthcare and research. In this project, the transformation of old and new kinetic energy is being driven forward simultaneously. In addition, emerging industries, such as the manufacture of new materials and high-end equipment, are being developed. Furthermore, the guidelines for attracting talent are being optimised. The objectives of this project are to strengthen urban infrastructure, improve the standard of public services, establish an ecological model of 'mountain-city integration', and achieve an organic unity of high-quality development and risk prevention and control [11].

5. Summary

This paper examines the economic implications of urbanisation in China, using Beijing and Tai'an as case studies. The analysis explores the effects of increasing urbanisation on the country's economic development, focusing on positive aspects such as market expansion, the availability of labour, and improved infrastructure.

These factors contribute to the modernisation of industry and the stimulation of consumption. Additionally, negative effects such as high property prices, traffic congestion, and environmental pollution are discussed. Urbanisation also presents new opportunities, including the development of the digital economy, the rise of green industries, and the potential for coordinated regional development. However, companies face risks such as market volatility due to policy adjustments, intensified competition for resources, and uneven urban-rural development. Businesses are encouraged to demonstrate flexibility, while the government should implement measures to achieve high-quality urbanisation. Suggested measures include optimising urban planning, promoting industrial transformation, improving social security, and strengthening environmental policies.

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