Potential reasons for Apple to invest in Didi:

1. For Apple Pay service:

3/5 Not likely:

Apple Pay is very different from Alipay or Wechat Pay in China. Apple pay is not an online payment, actually it is an offline payment system using NFC in your iphone for pos machines. For services provided by Didi, it is more likely that people would pay by online system like Alipay or Wechat since it is quite unlikely for every Didi driver to have pos machine or a hardware device to support Apply Pay in their car. With online payment system, a customer can make the transaction as long as s/he has internet access which is the best solution for business like Didi.

For political reasons:

I don’t comment on political matters, but I don’t think it will help Apple anyway. If just $1billion dollars is enough for Apple to open some market for its service, Facebook would have done so already. Going back history, every field of business Chinese government protected worth billions of dollars. Take Facebook as an example, if Facebook was allowed in China, there would be no Tencent or Tencent wouldn’t be as giant as it is today. This means China would have lost one of the several billion dollar companies. Chinese government is no fool, so this investment may not be able to help Apple is the market is what Tim Cook wanted.

1. To help sell iphones

How? By putting advertisement in Didi?

1. To get the data for driverless car

This is a possible reason, but there are several questions we need to answer first:

1. How much data can Apple gain?

I believe transportation is the next big thing. No matter it is as big as a super fast train Hyperloop or as small as a Xiaomi Scooter or it is the driverless car technology we are talking about, a lot of companies are try to change the way we transport. Also, there are a lot of problems that is yet to be solved in traffic, like dangerous car accidents or inevitable traffic jams. So there is no wonder for company as giant as Apple to step into the game. And spending $1billion for some data related to this problem would be very helpful, especially when Apple is developing its own driverless technology. BUT, how much data can Apple ‘buy’ by investing $1 billion dollars? Also why would Didi give some important data to Apple? Maybe Didi will share part of the data but how much would that be then? These are all the important questions. Here is another blog discussing about this problem.

1. Do Apple really have driveless technology?

Even though Tim Cook hinted at the company’s electric car ambitions, we haven’t found out anything yet. You maybe thinking, how do we know about it? Here is the thing, if you want driverless car technology, you need to test it on the road. You can’t just hide the car in the Apple building and do the simulations, technology doesn’t work that way. If Apple is testing its driverless car, people would have found out something. Maybe someone would twitte “Oh look, this is Apple’s autonomous car, it is driving in California…”And later some media may claim that this is just a rumor. But people would have got something. Think about iphone7, to be honest, how many released pictures of iphone7 have you seen already? Even though it is a small mobile device, people manage to have a peek of it. Why would people not have info about something as big as a car? The walls have ears, if something is happening, we should be hearing it right now. Thus, the only explanation left is that Apple has not yet developed any usable prototype. Now the situation is simple, Apple is already one step behind Tesla, so it decided to get the data of the biggest market in the world and then try to catch up. What do you think?