Hypothesis:

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aims to promote economic exchanges between China and other countries. Our hypothesis is that countries that have well accepted this initiative should observe an increase in the number of exports made to China. To assess the degree of acceptance of the project, we collected data on social media, in this case, Twitter, mentioning the BRI project.

We then ran a gravity export model, by controlling for the yearly weighted sentiment score of the tweets by the country user.

**Data and method**

We used the well-known gravity econometric model to test our hypothesis that countries that have a positive regard for the project should observe an increase in the level of exports to China. As in physics, the model assumes that the level of trade between two countries increases with their mass, or economically speaking, GDP, and decreases with the distance between them.

Where

* *exportsit* is the log of exports of exporter i to China in year t,
* *gdpit* is the log of the GDP of the exporter during year t,
* *popit* is the log of the exporter i’s population during year t,
* *twitterit* is the variable we built and is a measure of the activity on twitter related to the BRI project by exporter inhabitants.

We also included time-fixed effects and country-fixed effects.

The twitter variable is the normalized sum of tweets by country i inhabitants.

We also used the number of retweets,

**Twitter**

The twitter data have been collected by Chun Yin Man, David Alexander and Junxi Qian trhough the Twitter API by using the keywords [“belt and road”, “one belt one road”, “new silk road”, “maritime silk road”, “silk road economic belt”] in both the tweet contents and hashtags. The authors also provided a dataset of the users, including all the information from their twitter account, such as the self-declared location specified in the profile of the tweet's author. The original dataset contains more than 500,711 posts made from 7 September 2013 to 30 November 2021.

Trade data is acquired from the United Nations COMTRADE database, while data on GDP, population size, and exchange rates are sourced from the World Development Indicators (World Bank, 2023).

Une image contenant diagramme

Description générée automatiquement

**Main results**

As the Chinese government launched the Belt and Road initiative in 2013, we collected data on the trade. Our hypothesis is the following: b

**Annexe**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Field** | **Description** |
| tweet\_id |  |
| likes |  |
| retweets |  |
| sentiment\_polarity |  |
| user\_id |  |
|  |  |