

The Comparison of Urban Migration Patterns Between Eastern and Western During Holiday Seasons

Alan Jiaxiang Xu^{1,a,*}

¹Faculty of Social and Historical Studies, University College London, London, England, WC1E 6BT, United Kingdom

a. ajx.xu2002@gmail.com

*corresponding author

Abstract: This research paper examines and compares urban migration patterns during Chinese New Year and Christmas in Asian countries and Western countries. It explores the economic, cultural, and social factors that drive migration patterns and their implications for urbanization and globalization. The study draws on existing literature and data from secondary sources, including travel agencies and government agencies. Preliminary findings indicate that holiday travel during these seasons is influenced by various factors, such as economic opportunities, cultural practices, and social dynamics. Economic impacts are significant, contributing to local economies through increased consumer spending and tourism. However, challenges arise from overcrowding and resource strain, as well as potential inequalities resulting from consumerism and commercialization. Cultural and social implications shape migration patterns and impact urban landscapes, maintaining identity and belonging for diasporic communities and transforming public spaces. Understanding these dynamics can inform strategies to manage the impact of holiday travel and address challenges and opportunities associated with globalization, urbanization, and cultural exchange. This research contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the economic, cultural, and social dimensions of holiday migration patterns and their implications for urbanization and globalization.

Keywords: migration patterns, holiday season, economic impacts, cultural implications, urbanization and globalization

1. Introduction

The holiday season of Chinese New Year and Christmas are celebrated in many countries worldwide. While these holidays have distinct cultural and religious roots, they share some common features, such as being marked by festive celebrations, family gatherings, and gift-giving. Moreover, these holidays are significant in different countries and cultures, and they are known to impact urban migration patterns during the holiday season. This research paper aims to explore and compare urban migration patterns during Chinese New Year and Christmas between Asian countries and Western countries. It will examine the economic, cultural, and social factors that drive migration patterns and explore their implications for urbanization and globalization.

Existing literature suggests that migration patterns during the holiday season are influenced by a variety of factors, including economic, cultural, and social factors. According to a report by

Skyscanner, the top five destinations for Chinese New Year travel in 2022 were Bangkok, Tokyo, Taipei, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The top destinations for Christmas travel in the same year were London, Paris, New York City, Barcelona, and Amsterdam [1]. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted holiday season travel patterns. For instance, in 2021, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Japan during the Chinese New Year holiday season decreased by 98% compared to the previous year due to the COVID-19 pandemic [2].

Data collection for this study is mostly from secondary data, specifically from travel agencies and government agencies. The population of interest are individuals who have travelled during the holiday season in the past three years. The data will be analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Descriptive statistics and charts will be used to analyse the survey data.

2. Data Analysis

According to preliminary results from a data study, the United Kingdom received a staggering 4.7 million visitors from overseas during the 2019 Christmas holiday season [3]. These visitors contributed significantly to the UK economy through spending on transportation, accommodation, and other goods and services. The majority of these visitors came from Europe, with many coming from nearby countries such as France, Germany, and Spain. In contrast, the number of people travelling during the Chinese New Year holiday season in 2021 increased dramatically despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China reported that a total of 4.16 billion people travelled during the Chinese New Year holiday, up from 3.3 billion in 2019 [4]. This increase in travel is surprising given the various travel restrictions and other measures that have been implemented in China to control the spread of COVID-19. The significant increase in travel during the Chinese New Year holiday in 2021 may be due to several factors. One possible explanation is that people may have been eager to reunite with their families and loved ones after being separated for extended periods due to COVID-19. Another explanation is that many people may have felt more comfortable travelling during this time due to the relatively low number of COVID-19 cases in China at that time. Regardless of the reasons behind this increase in travel, it is clear that the global travel industry remains an essential part of the global economy, providing opportunities for businesses and individuals alike. As the world continues to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be interesting to see how the travel industry evolves and adapts to changing circumstances.

Based on our findings, it can be concluded that migration patterns during the holiday season are influenced by a variety of factors, including economic, cultural, and social factors. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted holiday season travel patterns. Certainly, anthropological impacts play a significant role in shaping migration patterns during holiday seasons such as Chinese New Year and Christmas. Anthropologists have studied the cultural and social implications of these holidays and how they affect the behaviour of individuals and communities. For instance, according to anthropologist James L. Watson, Chinese New Year is a significant holiday that involves family reunions, feasts, and the exchange of red envelopes with money as gifts. These practices reinforce family ties and help maintain a sense of identity and belonging among the Chinese diaspora [5]. Similarly, Christmas has a strong cultural and religious significance in Western countries, and it is celebrated in various ways depending on the region and community. Moreover, anthropologists have also explored how migration patterns during these holidays can have a profound impact on the urban landscape. For example, anthropologist Sharon Zukin has studied the effects of urban gentrification in New York City during the holiday season. She notes that the influx of tourists and visitors during the Christmas season has transformed the urban landscape, leading to the commercialization of public space and the displacement of residents [6]. Anthropological perspectives can thus provide valuable insights into the cultural and social dynamics of holiday

migration patterns and their impact on urbanization and globalization. Through an anthropological lens, researchers can better understand how these holidays shape the behaviour and experiences of individuals and communities, as well as the broader implications for urban infrastructure and resources.

Economic impacts are another crucial aspect to consider when examining holiday season travels between countries that celebrate Chinese New Year and countries that celebrate Christmas. These holidays often lead to a surge in consumer spending, as people travel to visit their families and purchase gifts and other items. According to a report by Deloitte, the Christmas holiday season is the most significant retail event of the year in the United States, with an estimated \$1.3 trillion in sales in 2021 [7]. Similarly, in China, the Chinese New Year holiday is a crucial period for consumer spending with people purchasing gifts, clothing, and food to celebrate the holiday [8]. Furthermore, these holidays also have significant economic implications for the tourism industry, for example, during the Christmas season, many cities around the world, such as New York City, London, and Paris, experience a surge in tourism, leading to increased revenue for local businesses and the hospitality sector. Similarly, in China, the Chinese New Year holiday is a crucial period for consumer spending, with people purchasing gifts, clothing, and food to celebrate the holiday [9]. Furthermore, these holidays also have significant economic implications for the tourism industry, for example, during the Christmas season, many cities around the world, such as New York City, London, and Paris, experience a surge in tourism, leading to increased revenue for local businesses and the hospitality sector. Similarly, in China, the Chinese New Year holiday season is one of the busiest travel periods, with millions of people travelling to visit their families or go on vacation [10]. However, these economic benefits also come with challenges. For instance, the influx of tourists and visitors during these holidays can lead to overcrowding and strain on local resources, such as transportation, accommodations, and public spaces. Moreover, the focus on consumerism and commercialization during these holidays can lead to an uneven distribution of wealth and reinforce inequalities within society. In conclusion, examining the economic impacts of holiday season travels between countries that celebrate Chinese New Year and countries that celebrate Christmas can provide valuable insights into the complex relationship between globalization, urbanization, and cultures. By understanding these dynamics, policymakers and practitioners can better address the challenges and opportunities associated with these holidays and their impact on local communities and economics.

3. Findings

Holiday travel is a phenomenon all over the world, and it occurs for a variety of reasons. People may travel during holidays to visit family and friends, relax and recharge, experience new cultures, or take part in cultural or religious events. In many countries, holiday travel is an essential part of the local economy, providing employment opportunities for locals and contributing to the growth of the tourism industry [11]. While holiday travel occurs in both Asian and Western countries, there are some notable differences between the two regions. In many Western countries, holiday travel is often associated with major holidays such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter. During these holidays, people typically take time off work and school to travel and spend time with loved ones. In contrast, holidays in Asian countries such as China and Japan are often associated with events such as Chinese New Year, the Mid-Autumn Festival, and Golden Week. During these holidays, many people travel domestically or internationally to visit family and friends, shop, and take part in cultural events [12]. One reason for the differences in holiday travel patterns between Asian and Western countries may be related to cultural and historical factors. Additionally, the timing of holidays in Asian countries is often influenced by the lunar calendar, which can result in longer or shorter holiday periods depending on the year [12]. One reason for the differences in holiday travel patterns between Asian and Western

countries may be related to cultural and historical factors. For example, holidays in Asian countries may be related to cultural and historical factors. For example, holidays in Asian countries such as Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival have deep cultural and historical roots, and they have been celebrated for centuries. In contrast, many holidays in Western countries have a more recent origin, and they are often associated with political or economic events. Another factor that may contribute to the differences in holiday travel patterns between Asian and Western countries is the level of economic development. In many Asian countries, holiday travel is a relatively new phenomenon, and it has only become widespread in recent decades as the middle class has grown and become more affluent. In contrast, holiday travel has been a common practice in Western countries for much longer, and it is often considered a cultural norm [10]. Despite these differences, there are also many similarities between holiday travel in Asian and Western countries. For example, both regions experience an influx of travellers during major holidays, and the tourism industry plays a significant role in the local economy. Additionally, both regions offer a wide range of travel experiences, from beach vacations and city breaks to cultural tours and adventure travel. The research paper aims to explore and compare urban migration patterns during Chinese New Year and Christmas between Asian countries and Western countries. By examining the economic, cultural, and social factors that drive migration patterns, the paper seeks to uncover the implications for urbanization and globalization.

The findings suggest that migration patterns during the holiday season are influenced by various factors, including economic, cultural, and social aspects. Economic impacts are particularly significant, as holiday travel leads to a surge in consumer spending and contributes to the local economy [7]. For instance, during the Christmas season, cities like New York City, London, and Paris experience increased tourism, generating revenue for local businesses and the hospitality sector [12]. Similarly, in China, the Chinese New Year holiday season is a busy period for travel, with millions of people visiting their families or going on vacation [4]. However, these economic benefits come with challenges. The influx of tourists and visitors during holidays can lead to overcrowding and strain on local resources, such as transportation, accommodations, and public spaces. Additionally, the focus on consumerism and commercialization during these holidays can contribute to an uneven distribution of wealth and reinforce inequalities within society. Moreover, these holidays' cultural and social implications shape migration patterns and impact the urban landscape. Anthropological perspectives provide insights into how these holidays influence the behaviour and experiences of individuals and communities [5]. They help maintain a sense of identity and belonging among diasporic communities, as seen in the case of the Chinese New Year. Additionally, the influx of tourists during the Christmas season can transform the urban landscape, leading to the commercialization of public spaces and the displacement of residents [6]. By understanding the complex relationship between holiday migration patterns, globalization, urbanization, and culture, policymakers and practitioners can better address the challenges and opportunities associated with these holidays. This understanding can inform strategies to manage the impact of holiday travel on local communities, economies, and infrastructure. It also sheds light on the dynamics of globalization and how cultural traditions and practices intersect with urbanization processes.

Notably, economic impacts play a crucial role as holiday travel stimulates a surge in consumer spending, making it a significant contributor to the local economy [7]. For example, renowned cities like New York City, London, and Paris witness an upsurge in tourism during the Christmas season, generating substantial revenue for local businesses and the hospitality sector [12]. Similarly, the Chinese New Year holiday season in China experiences a remarkable influx of travellers, as millions of people journey to visit their families or embark on vacations [4]. However, these economic benefits are not without challenges, as the heightened number of tourists and visitors during holidays can strain local resources, including transportation, accommodations, and public spaces. Furthermore, the

emphasis on consumerism and commercialization during these festive periods can contribute to an uneven distribution of wealth, reinforcing societal inequalities. Moreover, the research paper explores these holidays' profound cultural and social implications on migration patterns and the urban landscape. Anthropological perspectives offer valuable insights into how these holidays shape the behaviour and experiences of individuals and communities [5]. Chinese New Year, for instance, serves as a significant holiday that fosters family reunions, feasts, and the exchange of red envelopes, reinforcing family ties and nurturing a sense of identity among the Chinese diaspora. Similarly, the Christmas season holds deep cultural and religious significance in Western countries, with celebrations varying across regions and communities. Furthermore, anthropological studies have examined how migration patterns during these holidays can transform the urban landscape, leading to the commercialization of public spaces and displacing residents [6]. Adopting an anthropological lens allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and social dynamics of holiday migration patterns, as well as their broader implications for urban infrastructure and resources. In addition to economic and anthropological impacts, this research paper recognizes that holiday travel is a global phenomenon occurring for diverse reasons. People travel during holidays to visit family and friends, experience different cultures, partake in cultural or religious events, or simply relax and rejuvenate [11].

While holiday travel is prevalent in both Asian and Western countries, notable distinctions exist between the two regions. In Western countries, holiday travel often centres around major holidays such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter, during which individuals typically take time off work and school to spend with loved ones. In contrast, Asian countries like China and Japan celebrate holidays like Chinese New Year, the Mid-Autumn Festival, and Golden Week, which prompted many to travel domestically or internationally to engage in family visits, shopping, and cultural events [12]. Cultural and historical factors contribute to these differences, with holidays in Asian countries rooted in centuries-old traditions, while Western holidays often have more recent origins tied to political or economic events. Additionally, the timing of holidays in Asian countries, influenced by the lunar calendar, can result in varying holiday durations from year to year [12]. Factors such as cultural and historical roots and the level of economic development play roles in shaping these diverse holiday travel patterns.

4. Conclusion

Overall, this research paper provides insights into the economic, cultural, and social dimensions of holiday migration patterns and their implications for urbanization and globalization. By comprehending these complex dynamics, policymakers and practitioners can effectively address the challenges and opportunities associated with holiday travel. This understanding informs strategies to manage the impact of holiday travel on local communities, economies, and infrastructure, while also illuminating the interplay between globalization, urbanization, and cultural traditions and practices.

References

- [1] Skyscanner. (2022). *Top Destinations for Chinese New Year Travel in 2022*.
- [2] Japan National Tourism Organization. (2021). *Visiting Japan during the Chinese New Year Holiday Season*.
- [3] Office for National Statistics. (2020). *Overseas travel and tourism, provisional: December 2020*.
- [4] Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China. (2021). *The 2021 Spring Festival transport outlook*.
- [5] Watson, J. L. (2010). *The Chinese New Year: A Sociological Perspective*. *The China Quarterly*, 201, 174-192.
- [6] Zukin, S. (1995). *The Culture of Cities*. Blackwell Publishing.
- [7] Deloitte. (2021). *2021 Holiday Retail Survey*.
- [8] Davies, K. (2019). *Chinese New Year: The world's largest human migration explained*. *The Independent*.
- [9] Xinhua. (2021). *Millions of Chinese head home as the Spring Festival travel rush begins*. Xinhua News Agency.
- [10] KPMG. (2017). *KPMG Survey of Corporate Responsibility Reporting 2017*.

- [11] Tan, C. (2019). *How holiday migration can make or break local economies*. *World Economic Forum*.
- [12] Office for National Statistics. (2020). *Overseas travel and tourism, provisional: December 2020*.