# Globalisation and Cultural Deterritorialization: Traditions of Christmas Celebration

## Introduction

According to BBC, the business transaction of Alibaba on Single's Day broke the record made by itself(2019). Thanks to the establishment of Alibaba, the Chinese consumers could do online shopping directly with the commercial tenants on a global scale, which has brought out economic benefits and transregional communications. Alexander pointed out that the increasing trade, multi communicating media, numerous transnational institutions and companies, and overseas travel all lead to Globalization (2003, pp.157). Besides buying the products from abroad, more and more Chinese people are celebrating Christmas. During Christmas time, young people would like to celebrate with their friends, meanwhile, businessmen catch a good chance to promote the goods. The tradition of celebrating Christmas has landed on another location far from its original place. In Marti's opinion, this could be described as deterritorialization, a major characteristic of globalization, indicating the existence of social forms beyond the limitation of certain locations. In order to find out whether globalization brings about deterritorialization, this paper will compare two relevant articles first and then turn to my own opinion followed by an empirical case.

## Literature Comparison

According to Hopper (2007), the globalization tendency is regarded as to break the bond between culture and location, which means that one culture and its beholders could exist in other different places from its original territory. Thus, it could be called cultural deterritorialization. Hopper also pointed out that human migration plays an important role in cultural deterritorialization. During the migration process, the developments that are facilitating globalization, such as advanced transportation, developed media networks as well as modern communication technology, have been used accordingly (2007).

Beyond the migrants, trading flows, capital, media images, and cultural symbols might also break the ties of culture and location. Furthermore, the location might be changed as well. To some extent, the external culture does have the ability to impact the local culture, which makes people quite hard to keep the concept of cultural home (Hopper, 2007).

At the end of the article, Hopper (2007) also states critical perspectives of cultural deterritorialization. Firstly, the contribution of contemporary globalization to cultural deterritorialization should not be exaggerated due to the reason that it existed in early immigration communities. Secondly, beyond globalization, the strengthen characters of cultures themselves facilitate cultural deterritorialization as well. Thirdly, the retention of territoriality for culture in the context of globalization is still meaningful for governance and identity.

According to Appadurai(2015), the cross-societal combination was facilitated by the transmission of technology and innovation in the 18th and 19th centuries. During that time, European capitals flowed to other parts of the world and consequently created current

nationalism at a global level. He also mentioned Anderson's view in his article that same ethnicity groups from different areas have a strong connection even in a long distance. The development of transportation and information technology has made us step into a "global village", and new media also has weakened our location awareness.

Moreover, Appadurai (2015) pointed out the complexity of the current global economy, which is related to the disjointedness between economy, culture, and politics. In order to look into this disjointedness, he put forward a concept of 5 'scapes': ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes, which provide various perspectives. The movement of people, technology, capital, information, and the interconnection of political images are leading to heterogeneity other than homogeneity. According to Appadurai (2015), such globalization brings out Cultural deterritorialization and reproduction.

In addition, Appadurai (2015) did mention the advantages of deterritorialization, such as in film industries, tourism field, and art market. However, he seemed to stress more about the disadvantages of deterritorialization, especially when talking about nation-state and religions.

Overall, both Hopper and Appadurai mentioned that global transfers of technologies, media, and capitals led to cultural deterritorialization, which enabled migrants to reproduce their own culture at a new location, on one hand, cultural deterritorialization might also prevent them from understanding and embracing the culture of host nation on the other hand, or even cause conflicts. However, Appadurai stepped a little bit further, he indicated that there is a possibility that some migrants would like to return to their homeland when dealing with some religious and political issues.

## Case study

In my opinion, globalization does lead to cultural deterritorialization. Furthermore, I do agree with the point of view of Hopper that the notion of the original culture might be impacted by the external culture in the context of globalization. I would like to explain my opinion by associating an example related to my own experience.

During the Christmas of 2019, I went to a coastal city in the southern part of China called Xiamen to spend my holiday. This was the first time that I went back to China during Christmas time after I have been living abroad for 8 years. I was shocked by the celebration atmosphere of Christmas in this second-tier city in China. I knew that more and more Chinese people are celebrating Christmas, however, I hadn't expected such a big celebration, which even made me feel that I was still in Europe at some certain moments. It seems that the Christmas celebration had already been deterritorialized successfully.

According to Hopper (2007), in the context of globalization, trading flows, capital, media images, and cultural symbols might break the ties of culture and location. When getting closer to Christmas, numerous promotion advertisements in the name of the Christmas celebration showed up in many different kinds of forms, on TV, on social media, advertising board in front of shops and so on. Besides all kinds of advertisements, more and more Christmas trees and related decorations had been set up, especially in shopping malls, hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues. To my surprise, there was even a Christmas tree at my friend's home with a very pretty decoration. Gradually, playing pop music in shops became replaced by

Christmas songs, the majority of which were in English. Meanwhile, more and more salesclerks and waiters dressed in Christmas costume or at least in a Christmas hat.

Hopper (2007) stated that deterritorialized culture might be indigenized. The Christmas celebration in China is obviously in this case. Although the Christmas celebration had been reproduced in another location with a different culture, the Chinese style was deeply embedded in it. On that Christmas Eve, I received an apple from my friend, she told me that the pronunciation of Christmas Eve and apple in the Chinese language are similar, and the Chinese translation of Christmas Eve also has the meaning of peace and safeness. Thus the apple was chosen as a gift to give me best wishes. That was quite interesting to me. I even found some specially decorated apples were sold at fruit store at that Eve. Gavin (2019) mentioned in his article that Chinese people don't celebrate Christmas as same as the westerners do, moreover, he also regarded the Christmas celebration in China as a big commercial success. I do agree with Gavin because this is also what I found in China. Religious rites have been ignored, traditional Christmas dinner has been replaced by local Chinese cuisine that has nothing to do with the Christmas tradition, and new elements have been added to the deterritorialized Christmas celebration. Furthermore, it seems that the whole concept of the Christmas celebration has been blurred. I asked some of my friends about their understanding of Christmas, but no one could explain the exact meaning of celebrating Christmas, which is related to religion. To my surprise, all these friends mentioned one thing that they regarded Christmas as Chinese New Year in the west. However, the two are not celebrating the same thing. Christmas celebration in China seems like a good chance for businessmen to promote business and for normal people to get together with friends. On one hand, there is no doubt that globalization leads to the cultural deterritorialization of Christmas. On the other hand, deterritorialized culture might be indigenized as well. In addition, we should be aware to what extent such a deterritorialized culture is still related to the original territorial-based culture, or, we should remove the veil of cultural deterritorialization and just regard it as a new culture.

## Conclusion

That globalization does lead to cultural deterritorialization seems like a consensus. Both Hopper and Appadurai have testified it. During the globalization process, advanced technology, transportation, and media networks had made cultural deterritorialization implemented. One culture could exist elsewhere without being bonded with a certain location. However, Hopper focused more on homogeneity, especially the important role that migrants had played during this process. Appadurai stressed more on heterogeneity by explaining the religious and political issues.

In my point of view, I do agree with Hopper and Appadurai that globalization leads to cultural deterritorialization. Moreover, I approve of Hopper's standpoint that deterritorialized culture might be indigenized, which is embodied in the case study above. Furthermore, there is a question for myself: what is the boundary of deterritorialized culture and a new culture? I would like to find out the answer through the following study.

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