

# Research on the Influences of Tourism on the Process of Local Urbanization in Western Regions Taking Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot of Xinjiang Province as an Example

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## ABSTRACT

In recent years, urbanization research has gradually become a research hotspot in academia, but there are few literatures on the influences of tourism development on urbanization in the western region. By consulting the relevant literature and materials of Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot in Xinjiang and Fukang City, this paper studies the regional and industrial reallocation of resources in Fukang City due to tourism development, the transfer of surplus rural labor force to urban employment, and the changes in space, economy and society based on the current situation of the research area by interview method. The research results show that tourism has a significant impact on population urbanization, economic urbanization, social and cultural urbanization and environmental development in Fukang City.

**Keywords:** *tourism, western region, urbanization process, Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the academic circles, there is a general consensus that the development of tourism has a significant role in promoting the process of local urbanization, which is based on the national level. However, China has a vast territory, the economic development of each region is significantly different, and the development stage of urbanization process is also different. In contrast, the economic development in western China is lagging behind and the process of urbanization is relatively slow. In Xinjiang, tourism has become a new driving force to promote the adjustment of local industrial structure, increase residents' income, get rid of poverty and become rich, and promotes the coordinated development of new urbanization and industry, agriculture and other service industries in western China. How to correctly guide the local use of tourism resources, make reasonable planning, meet the needs of tourists for food, housing, travel, shopping and entertainment, introduce local residents to participate in all aspects of planning, development and utilization, and promote the process of local urbanization is a hot topic. This paper aims to explore the influences of tourism development on the urbanization process in Xinjiang. What factors play a key role? This paper selects Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot in western Xinjiang as the research object, and discusses the influence of Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic

Spot on the urbanization process of Fukang City based on urbanization theory and stakeholder theory.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Research status in foreign countries

In the early 1970s, the level of urbanization in developed countries in Europe and the United States generally exceeded 60%. Tourism has developed rapidly. As a driving force for the development of urbanization, it plays an increasingly prominent role in rapidly expanding the built environment of cities, unique utilization and development mode, vigorous development of the tertiary industry, flexible labor system, etc., and has become a hot topic in tourism and geography (Qian, 2012). With the development of tourism, the industrial structure of cities has changed, the scale of cities has been expanding, and the population and labor force of cities have increased rapidly, accelerating the process of urbanization (Mullins, 1991). The rapid development of tourism, industrial characteristics, tourism and major events are the important driving forces to promote the "regeneration" of underdeveloped areas (Hannigan, 1995). Stakeholders refer to the individuals and groups that can influence the realization of an organization's goals or the process of an organization's goal realization.

This definition enriches the content of stakeholders. (Freeman, 2006)

### *B. Research status in China*

The process of population, economy and society transferring from countryside to city is called urbanization. From the perspective of sociology, it is a dynamic process of transforming rural lifestyle into urban lifestyle, which improves the living standards of residents and social living standards. Yang Dejing (2014) proposed that as the driving force of urbanization, the development of tourism makes the city and its surrounding areas have urbanization phenomenon. Tourism urbanization is an inevitable phenomenon with the continuous development of urbanization process, and is the product of social and economic development to a certain stage. Tourism has an interactive relationship with the process of local urbanization. Urbanization promotes the development of tourism resources, tourism products and tourist market. Tourism plays a decisive role in urban space expansion, spatial transformation, urban function improvement, capital and industrial agglomeration (Zhou Shaoxiong, 2002). The industrial structure and agglomeration effect of tourism affect the dynamic mechanism of urbanization and external economic development, and urbanization also brings various elements for tourism development (Shi Long, 2007). Based on the national research, it is believed that the development of tourism will have a significant positive impact on urbanization (Zhong Jiayu, 2014). There is also a conclusion that there is no correlation between international tourism income and regional urbanization rate (Xu Jie, 2010). Some scholars believe that there is a correlation between tourism and urbanization, but there is no causal relationship, which is contrary to the current qualitative research (Yang Changpeng, 2012). Enterprises pursue profits, the government considers tax, employment, legal responsibility, tourists pay attention to price, and villagers pay attention to income and participation. Therefore, in the development of tourism urbanization, the relationship between stakeholders is very important, and the relationship between stakeholders should be coordinated, which will promote the sustainable development of tourism (Sun Jiuxia, 2009).

## **III. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA AND RESEARCH METHODS**

### *A. Overview of the study area*

Heavenly Pond is one of the components of "Xinjiang Tianshan" natural heritage site and an outstanding representative of temperate desert mountainous ecosystem. Heavenly Pond Scenic Spot is located in Fukang City, Changji Prefecture, Xinjiang, covering an area of 548 square kilometers. The overall

terrain gradually rises from north to south. It is located in a typical continental temperate climate zone. It is a "wet island" in the center of arid desert. The annual average temperature is 2.55°C, the relative humidity is 70% - 85%, and the annual average precipitation is 443.9 mm. Heavenly Pond Scenic Spot is located in Bogda world natural heritage site, accounting for 68.27% of the nominated sites of Bogda heritage. It is a typical representative of the vertical natural belt in temperate and arid regions of the world. In 2007, it was rated as a 5A scenic spot, and in 1980 it was named the first batch of national famous scenic spots.

Fukang City is located in the central part of Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, to the north of Tianshan Mountains and to the south of Junggar basin. Its terrain is high in the southeast and low in the northwest. Fukang City is adjacent to the east of Jimsar County, to the west of Midong District of Urumqi city, and to the north of Fuhai County of Altay Prefecture. It has jurisdiction over 3 sub-district offices, 4 towns and 3 townships. From the south to the north, people can see natural landscapes such as snow-covered glaciers, forest meadows, Gobi desert, alpine lakes in a straight-line distance of 80 km. Fukang City has rich tourism resources, unique natural tourism resources and rich ethnic customs. The world-famous natural heritage "Tianshan Mountain" and the national 5A Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot are located in Fukang city. Taking advantage of good location and relying on the tourism brand of Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot, the tourism industry has gradually become the dragon head in the tertiary industry of Fukang City by optimizing the development pattern of tourism resources, paying attention to the diversified operation of tourism resources, continuously increasing the construction of tourism infrastructure and excavating the connotation of tourism culture.

### *B. Research methods*

By consulting the relevant literature of Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot and Fukang City in Xinjiang, and aiming at the current situation of the research area, this paper uses the interview method to study the reallocation of resources in Fukang city caused by tourism development, the transfer of rural surplus labor force to urban employment, and the changes in space, economy and society. Through e-mail, WeChat and other means, the author has interviewed scenic spot managers, government functional department managers, and relevant scholars of research institutions, foreign tourists and local residents. The interviewees answered the questions about the impact of tourism resources attraction, tourism capital promotion, tourism consumption pull, and tourism policy drive on urbanization process. The author collected and sorted out detailed interview records, and

used A, B, C, and D. (As shown in "Table I"). In addition, the information and data obtained from the interview are verified through official channels, scenic

spots and other channels to ensure the maximum approximation to the truth.

TABLE I. LIST OF INTERVIEWERS

Interviewer number	Identity of interviewee	Age	Gender
A1	The administrator of management committee of the scenic spot	50+	Male
A2	The staff of management committee of the scenic spot	30+	Female
A3	The staff of management committee of the scenic spot	40+	Male
B1	The administrator of functional government departments	55+	Male
B2	The staff of functional government departments	40+	Male
B3	The staff of functional government departments	35+	Female
C1	The scholar of research institution	40+	Male
C2	The scholar of research institution	50+	Female
C3	The scholar of research institution	55+	Male
D1	Tourist 1 (from area inside Xinjiang)	30+	Female
D2	Tourist 2 (from area outside Xinjiang)	20+	Male
D3	Tourist 3 (from area inside Xinjiang)	50+	Female
D4	Tourist 3 (from area outside Xinjiang)	30+	Female
E1	local resident 1 of Fukang City	30+	Female
E2	local resident 2 of Fukang City	40+	Male
E3	local resident 3 of Fukang City	50+	Male
E4	local resident 4 of Fukang City	40+	Male
E5	local resident 5 of Fukang City	50+	Male

<sup>a.</sup> Source: the data was collated by the author.

**IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Urbanization caused by the tourism is a necessary trend of urban development. Taking Fukang City, where Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot is located in Xinjiang, as a case study, this paper sorts out the relevant literature of tourism urbanization, and studies the urbanization of Fukang City based on the urbanization theory and stakeholder theory, so as to provide reference for the study of urbanization caused by tourism.

*A. The influences of tourism on population urbanization of Fukang City*

The urbanization of tourism population generally refers to the process of population gathering to urban areas driven by tourism development, from rural population to urban population, and increasing urban population. It includes not only the localization of foreign population, but also the non-agricultural transformation of local population. Tourism industry has the characteristics of long industrial chain and wide span, and strong employment driving force. One direct tourism employment opportunity can drive more than three indirect employment opportunities. Driven by the tourism industry of Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot, the employment opportunities in Fukang City have increased significantly. Many local residents who used to be farmers and lay off from home have come to work in succession (the staff of the scenic spot management committee). Here, many local farmers have transformed from agricultural workers into tourism service personnel and managers, which has promoted the growth of urban population (local

residents of Fukang City). With the arrival of a large number of foreign tourists for sightseeing and leisure vacation, a large number of urban population and consumption has increased (scholars of research institutions). Therefore, from the perspective of regional development, tourism plays an important role in the process of population urbanization.

*B. The influences of tourism on the economic development of Fukang City*

The tourism development of Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot supports the economic development of Fukang City through the multiplier effect, aggregation effect and integration effect of consumption, investment and employment. The GDP of Fukang city increased from 1.583 billion yuan in 2000 to 16.879 billion yuan in 2017; the number of tourists increased from 1.142 million in 2003 to 6.01 million in 2017; and the tourism income increased from 200 million yuan in 2003 to 9.65 billion yuan in 2017. The radiation development of Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot has led to an increase in the number of amusement projects. It also extends to the coverage of scenic spots around Fukang City, providing one-stop service (tourists). The food, housing, transportation, tourism, shopping and entertainment of tourists have the characteristics of wide industrial base, wide employment promotion and large investment. Through the integration and cluster development of tourism industry, the linkage development of tourism industry, the primary industry, the secondary industry and the tertiary industry is realized. With the development and progress of social economy, the integration, clustering and ecological development trend of large tourism

industry is becoming increasingly prominent (scholars of research Institution).

#### *C. The influences of tourism on the social and cultural development of Fukang City*

The sum of spiritual wealth accumulated in the process of re-creating material wealth is called social culture, which reflects the degree of social civilization. The development of tourism has a wide range of impacts on urban economy, society, cultural tradition and ecological environment. With its unique tourism resources, Heavenly Pond in Tianshan Scenic Spot attracts tourists. Tourists "bring" their money to scenic spots and beautiful villages for consumption, effectively realizing the redistribution of wealth between rich and poor areas (tourists). A variety of foreign ideas also followed, and some advanced and avant-garde ideas radiate to the residents around the town, driving the transformation and innovation of the ideas and values of the residents of tourism towns (local residents of Fukang City). Through good tourism experience, tourists can display and spread a good image of the city through word of mouth. Making full use of the media and vigorously publicizing the tourist destination is the channel and position to spread and improve the image of the city.

#### *D. The influences of tourism on the construction of environmental protection in Fukang City*

Compared with other traditional industries, tourism has a relatively small impact on the environment and is an environment-friendly industry. At the same time, tourism environment is the basis of tourism, and it is a kind of tourism resources. To develop tourism industry, it is required to first create a good natural environment for tourists (government functionaries). In the process of developing tourism, the tourism ecological construction and pollution control measures have been widely adopted, such as planting trees, planting flowers, actively controlling soil erosion, water pollution, air pollution and other phenomena, gradually enhancing people's awareness of environmental protection, beautifying the ecological environment, and realizing a virtuous cycle of natural ecological environment. It aims to achieve resource conservation and environment-friendly development, so as to promote the overall coordinated and sustainable development of population, economy, society and environment in Fukang City.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Through interviews with scenic spot managers, government functional department managers, relevant scholars of research institutions, foreign tourists and local residents, the author analyzes the impact of tourism development on the urbanization process of

Fukang City. Fukang City has a fragile ecological environment, rich tourism resources, low level of urbanization, insufficient industrial support, numerous migrant workers, etc. as well as the development trend and characteristics of tourism. Tourism is undoubtedly the best choice to promote the process of urbanization. The research in this paper is only a preliminary exploratory study, and there are many problems to be further studied. In the future research, this study puts forward the following suggestions. First, it is necessary to compare the cases under different natural conditions, different social, economic and cultural conditions, and summarize the characteristics and differences of various types of tourism urbanization. Second, there are many theories of urbanization, involving more contents, covering a wide range, and lacking a leading theory. Therefore, the research on the basic theory of the new tourism urbanization is still to be improved.

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