

# *The Impact of U.S.-China Tensions on People Mobility*

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## *Abstract*

Using novel monthly air passenger traffic data, we assess the impact of U.S.-China tensions on people inflows from China to the U.S. We find that there was a 6 percent decline in air passenger flows from China to the U.S. compared to other source countries during the period between 2017 and 2019. When differentiated by geographical locations, relative to other U.S. airports, U.S. airports near universities with a significant presence of Chinese students are found to have experienced a more than 10 percent annual drop in passengers originating from China. A further investigation reveals that the decline in people inflows is mainly attributed to the loss of passenger arrivals in August and that this decline is consistently more significant than the decrease experienced by airports near tourist destinations during the same period. These findings provide updated evidence of the detrimental effect a hostile political climate could have on international people mobility between two major scientific powers.

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