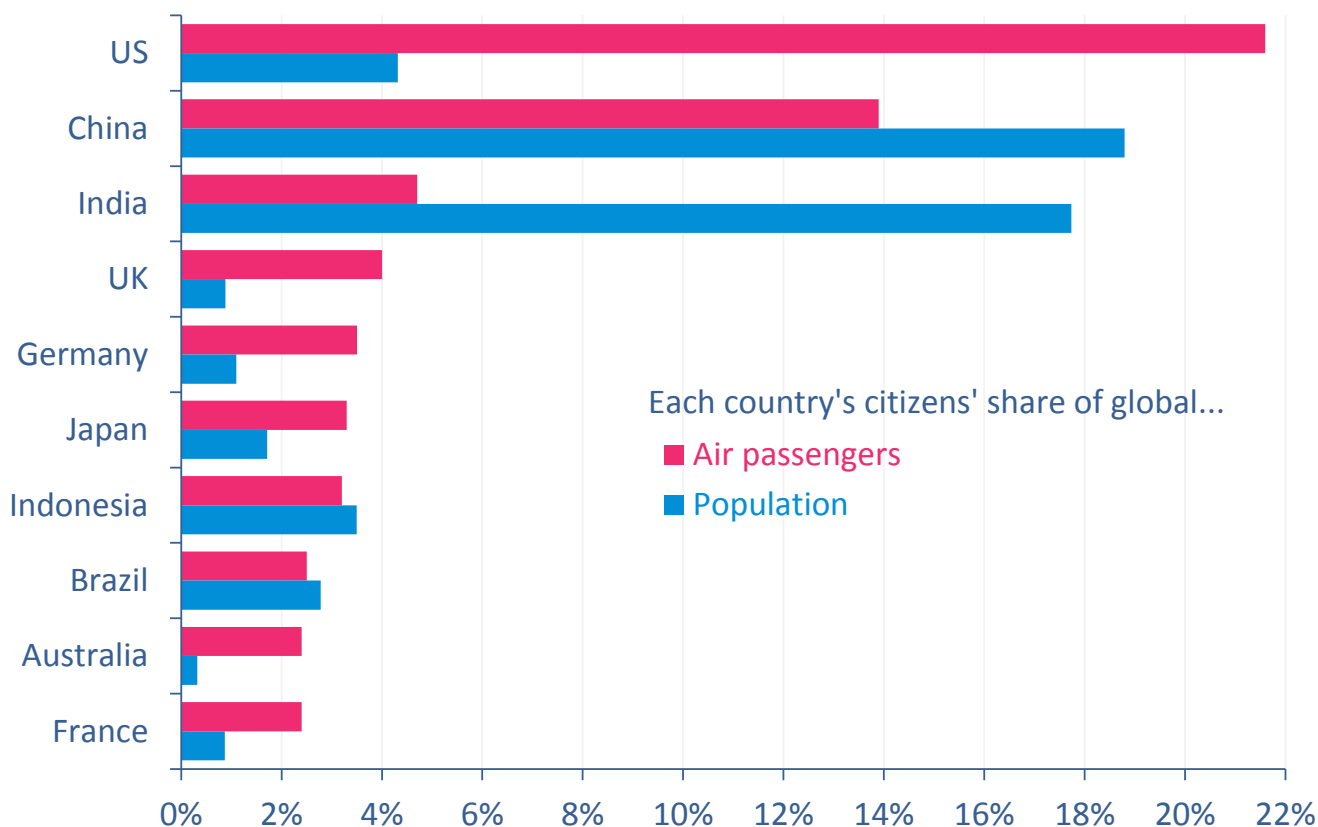




IATA ECONOMICS' CHART OF THE WEEK

25 AUGUST 2017

PASSENGER SHARE VS POPULATION SHARE: WHY DO THEY DIFFER?



Sources: IATA WATS, UN POP

- This year's [World Air Transport Statistics](#) publication included for the first time a breakdown of global air passenger traffic by nationality. Today we focus on the top-10 nationalities, whose citizens make up more than 60% of global traffic.
- Intuitively, one might expect a country's citizens' share of the global population to be approximately equal to the comparative share of air passenger traffic. However, as this week's chart shows, this is not always the case. There are some examples where the latter far exceeds the former: for example, citizens of the US make up almost 22% of global air passengers but less than 5% of the world's population. By contrast, despite making up almost 18% of the world's population, citizens of India currently account for less than 5% of global air passengers.
- The lack of a clear relationship between a country's share of the global population and its citizens' share of air passenger traffic is partly explained by differences in economic development: citizens in richer countries can simply afford to travel by air more often than those in poorer nations. (Tellingly, the six developed countries in our chart account for just 9% of the world's population but nearly 29% of global output.) The rest of the variation in citizens' air passenger shares relates to aviation-specific factors, such as differing levels of market maturity as well as a wide range in regulatory regimes and air freedoms. Differences in market characteristics, including whether the domestic network is geared towards hub-and-spoke operations, for example, can also explain some variation at a country level.
- Looking forward, the disparities in passenger shares by nationality are not going to disappear quickly. However, we expect to see some degree of convergence between air passenger and population shares over time, particularly as aviation's center of gravity continues to shift towards the fast-growing markets in Asia over the coming years (eg, see [link](#)).

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