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## The global mobility divide: How visa policies have evolved over time.

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## **The Global Mobility Divide:**

### **How visa policies have evolved over time**

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*How powerful is your passport? More than a simple grant of access into a country, passports and the visas they contain are a reflection of geopolitics, the relationship between two nations, and a country's stature relative to the rest of the world...*

*(Huffington Post 06/30/2014)*

#### **Abstract**

While visa policies are the major instrument for regulating and controlling the global flow of people, little is known about how they have changed over time. Accordingly, scholars have expressed the need for large-N datasets which cover more than one point in time. This article takes up this challenge and presents for the first time a global overview of the changes in visa waiver policies based on a newly created database containing the visa waiver policies of over 150 countries for 1969 and 2010. We find that, on average, visa-free mobility has increased over the past 40 years. However, not everybody has benefited from these developments. In fact, visa waivers are increasingly unequally divided: While citizens of OECD countries and rich countries have gained mobility rights, mobility rights for other regions have stagnated or even diminished, in particular for citizens from African countries. Overall, we find a clear bifurcation in mobility rights, leading to a 'global mobility divide'.

Keywords: Database, Mobility, OECD, Visa policies, Visa Waivers

## 1. Introduction

Globalisation is usually understood as an increase and intensification of cross-border transactions (French 2000; Held et al. 1999, Spiro 2008). It has been suggested that the “importance of space and territorial boundaries declines” (Spiro 2008: 4) and the model of the state as a ‘container’ is under erosion (Beck 1997, 2007; Held et al. 1999; Sassen 1996, 2006; Zürm 1998). Indeed, there is a clear increase in the cross-border mobility of goods, capital, services, information and people over time. However, it is clear that the rationale and policy implications of cross-border movement of people differ and that an increase in numbers does not necessarily need to mean a loss in control capacity. Border and control policies surrounding the mobility of people are highly sensitive and contested policy domains and stand in stark contrast to other policy domains, where the trend of de-bordering is relatively clear. While migration policies have received considerable attention from comparative researchers, much less is known about global shifts in border policies dealing with short term mobility, which represents the bulk of cross-border movement of people. However, the study of visa regimes is of utmost interest to migration research, as restrictions in this area are directly related to states’ attempts to control immigration.

The question of how visa regimes have developed over time is heavily under-researched and remains almost a “virgin subject for academic research” (Whyte 2008: 132). With this article we seek to answer the following questions: Have borders become more open or more restrictive over time for short-term travellers? Have mobility opportunities been enhanced for all groups of citizens or only for a few? And, if so, which groups do benefit? While these are straightforward questions, they have not yet been answered. We attempt to address these questions by looking at the evolution of visa waiver policies on a global level. We view visa waiver policies as the major strategy for fostering desired forms of mobility and controlling or hindering less desired ones. Citizens who enjoy visa-free travel to another country can be considered ‘trusted travellers’ who encounter zero or low levels of control, whereas those who still require visas are tightly controlled.

Based on a new dataset, the Visa Network Data, which contains information on global visa waiver programmes from 1969 and 2010, we provide an account of how visa policies have evolved over a 40 year period. Unlike previous studies which mostly considered visa regimes with a larger scope at a single point in time only, we analyse and compare visa regimes at two

points in time. For every country in the sample we collected data on how many and which other states are exempt from visa obligations. Because we are discovering new territory and presenting data from a newly established dataset for the first time, our analysis remains largely descriptive. However, our article allows some of the core theses and debates in this field which previously lacked empirical foundation to be addressed.

## **2. Globalisation, Mobility, Visa Policies**

The issues of mobility of people and the organization of border control feature prominently in globalisation literature (Albert and Brock 1998; Anderson 2000; Sassen 2006). However, despite significant increases in travel and cross-border mobility, eminent scholars assume that “mobility remains a scarce resource” (Bauman 2002: 83) and that the mobility of persons does not follow general globalisation trends.<sup>1</sup> It has been predicted that enhanced opportunities to move will apply neither universally nor uniformly across the globe, and we are witnessing the emergence of a new system of stratification built on an unequal access to mobility rights (e.g. Bauman 2002; Shamir 2005; Beck 2007). Shamir (2005: 200) claims that “the differential ability to move in space – and even more so to have access to opportunities for movements – has become a major stratifying force in the global social hierarchy.” If this is true, one could justifiably speak of a new and global ‘mobility divide’ (analogous to the ‘digital divide’).

A group of scholars interested in concrete processes of re-bordering have posited that borders increasingly differentiate between ‘worthy’ or ‘trusted’ travellers and those considered ‘not trusted’ or ‘risky’ (see e.g. Torpey 2000; Rygiel 2008; Walters 2006). They assume that states tend to enforce a tougher selection across these two categories and thereby serve their dual interests in both openness and closure. Here, border selectivity is seen as a central reaction to the opportunities and risks stemming from globalisation and the increase in overall mobility. The underlying idea is to prevent unwanted people possibly presenting a threat to the security, wealth or identity of the country from entering. Among these unwanted people are “potentially violent demonstrators, criminals, hooligans and terrorists, but also people seeking political asylum, people who have already been rejected, and potential illegal immigrants, and even culturally distinct groups, poor travellers and those who do not promise any benefits” ([name

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<sup>1</sup>The concept of ‘mobility citizenship’ ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]; Urry 1990) is an attempt to capture the role of rights related to mobility more thoroughly, distinguishing the ‘right to move’ from the ‘right to stay’, with the first reflecting mobility in a broader sense and the second relating to migration/immigration.

deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]). Most often, very heterogeneous ‘threats’ are conflated when speaking of ‘wanted’ and ‘unwanted’ migration (Ceyhan 2005).

In general, nation states insist on their right to decide whether a person may enter and stay in the country and the “regulation of movement contributes to constitute the very ‘state-ness’ of states” (Torpey 1998: 240). Visa policies can be seen as the central instrument of mobility restriction and control concerning the vast majority of cross-border movements. People normally apply for a visa in their home country at an embassy or consulate affiliated with their destination country and must provide personal information to be eligible for a visa. The underlying idea of requiring people to have a visa before entering a country is clearly one of ‘remote control’ (Zolberg, 2006: 443) or ‘pre-emptive mobility governance’ (Broeders and Hampshire 2013) by which states try to prevent people from approaching the territory or starting their journey without prior permission. Requiring a visa allows states to exercise exterritorial control in the sense that the encounter between the control agency and potential border-crossers already takes place in the countries of origin. There, destination countries still not face any legal responsibilities for potential visitors, immigrants or asylum seekers yet ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]). Moreover, exterritorial control is advantageous for destination countries since they can involve private actors in control activities. For example, the transport business can function as a control agent when destination countries urge airlines and shipping companies to control for passports and visas before embarkation (Bigo and Guild 2005; Salter 2010). However, visa restrictions are also costly: they carry an administrative burden and require personnel. Additionally, they might hinder and deter the kind of mobility which countries desire for economic reasons. For example, as Neumayer (2011) has shown, by raising travel costs and deterring unwanted visitors, visa restrictions can be harmful to foreign investment and trade flows. Moreover, travel and tourism make up a substantial share of the global economy, now equating to 9.5 percent of total GDP, 1 in 11 of the world’s total jobs, 4.4 percent of total investment and 5.4 percent of global exports.<sup>2</sup> Hence, visa restrictions may substantially hinder states in reaping the benefits of economic globalization.

One can argue that in the era of globalisation states face two conflicting demands, namely the need for speedy border crossings for desired forms of mobility and tough control and deterrence for unwanted travellers. Hence, a general visa policy seems to be ineffective, if not

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<sup>2</sup> (accessed July 20, 2014).

problematic. Therefore, states have launched visa waiver policies for citizens of a number of countries, who are entitled to enter a territory without prior permission. This group of people benefits from visa waivers because of the passports they hold. Hence, passports have unequal power, as the headnote at the beginning of our article suggests. The holder of a particular passport not only enjoys rights related to their country of citizenship but also acquires a certain status within the global mobility regime.<sup>3</sup> Still, for the majority of citizens still face visa restrictions (or enjoys visa waivers) based on their nationality for most destinations.

The attraction of mobility rights related to a certain passport even makes it one central motive for changing citizenship (Wunderlich 2005; Witte [forthcoming]). Moreover, some countries have launched programmes for the acquisition of visas or passports of high mobility power. Upon payment or generous investments in the country, these countries offer either limited permission to stay or full citizenship to wealthy people who wish to enhance their individual mobility rights. For example, Portugal sells its ‘golden visas’ for an initial period of one year.<sup>4</sup> Malta even offers a ‘golden passport’ to private individuals if they invest at least 1.15 million euros and have lived in the country for at least one year.<sup>5</sup> Citizenship-by-investment programmes particularly highlight the alleged benefit of having a ‘high power passport’. Henley & Partners, a private company specializing in so-called ‘international residence and citizenship planning’ for wealthy clients, have a very telling statement on their website:

A person of talent and means need not limit his or her life and business to only one country. Making an active decision with regard to your residence and citizenship gives you more personal freedom, privacy and security.<sup>6</sup>[...] In today's globalized world, visa restrictions play an important role in controlling the movement of foreign nationals across borders. Almost all countries now require visas from certain non-nationals who wish to enter their territory. Visa requirements are also an expression of the relation-

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<sup>3</sup> Besides, some states have invented so called ‘trusted traveller programs’ as the US did with the SENTRI program (for Mexicans) and the GLOBAL ENTRY program (for example for own, Dutch, Mexican and South Korean citizens). Travellers from these countries can apply for the status of a “pre-approved, low-risk traveller”. After a rigorous security check and interview, clearance can be given. Trusted travellers, mostly frequent travellers and businesspersons, can identify themselves at the border (e.g. by fingerprint verification at a kiosk) and pass through quickly. This way states avoid renouncing the speedy border crossing of a small but wanted group of travellers.

<sup>4</sup><http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/wirtschaftspolitik/das-goldene-visum-wird-portugals-verkaufsschlager-13108347.html> (accessed August 25, 2014).

<sup>5</sup><http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25959458> (accessed August 25, 2014).

<sup>6</sup><http://www.henleyglobal.com/residence/overview/> (accessed October 23, 2009)

ships between individual nations, and generally reflect the relations and status of a country within the international community of nations.<sup>7</sup>

These policy programmes fuel the debate amongst migration scholars on questions of justice, fairness and transparency. Some scholars emphasize the role of the ‘golden passport’ programmes by arguing that, today, “the primary value of citizenship lies in the mobility rights attached to passports” (Shachar and Bauböck 2014: 1).

Over the last decade, research has made important progress by developing indices for migration policies, citizenship and integration and building extensive comparative datasets (e.g. Gest et al. 2014; Helbling 2013; Koopmans 2013; Ruhs 2013; Niessen and Huddleston 2009). However, this trend towards collecting and comparing indicators related to migration, citizenship and integration has largely neglected the issue of short-term mobility and visa policies. This is surprising as short-term mobility is closely linked to migration on at least two levels. First, “contemporary migration often begins as tourism, study visits or temporary work abroad” (Koslowski 2004: 4). In other words, those who come with a long-term perspective have often visited the destination country previously on a short-term basis and thereby probed into other countries, expanded their networks, visited friends and family and made themselves familiar with future opportunities related to migration plans. Accordingly, research has shown that the introduction and removal of visa requirements has an effect on the timing and volume of migration. Visa restrictions, for example, reduce immigration, but may also encourage long-term settlement and decrease circular migration, so that the immigration-reducing effect is partly counterbalanced (Czaika and de Haas 2014). Secondly, short-term mobility is also a central entry channel for irregular immigration, mainly through visa overstaying. In other words, people may arrive legally but then stay on after their visa has expired, so that states reluctance to grant a visa is often a form of precaution. In fact, the majority of irregular immigrants present in the OECD today entered their country legally but overstayed their visa (Clandestino Project 2009; Guild 2001). Hence, next to general security concerns the (assumed) willingness to return – established by personal documents and interviews – is a strong criterion for visa issuance or denial. Therefore, when issuing a visa many destination countries put much effort into scrutinising an applicant’s intent to return. For example, applicants for a Schengen visa have to give proof of a regular source of income or a work contract in

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<sup>7</sup><http://www.henleyglobal.com/citizenship/visa-restrictions/> (accessed October 23, 2009)

their home country. Interviews with applicants on their family status and other personal circumstances are supposed to help consular officers to assess the likelihood that they return before their visa expires ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]). Countries which have been observed to send a high share of visa-overstayers are often exempted from visa waiver programmes (Siskin 2004: 2).

Some recent pioneering studies have dealt with visa policies either on a European or global level (Neumayer 2006, 2011; Hobolth 2014; [name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]; Whyte 2008), but they are mostly cross-sectional in nature and thus do not allow an understanding of long-term trends or changes over time. Very few studies scrutinise changes over time; those that do look at a handful of selected OECD cases ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]) or are limited to a subset of countries. Czaika and de Haas (2014), for example, traced 38 destination countries between 1973 and 2012 to measure when these countries introduced or waived visa requirements. So what do we know from the few existing studies on visa policies? Cross-sectional evidence suggests that there is indeed a global hierarchy of visa freedom ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]; Neumayer 2006; Whyte 2008). Poor countries and those with dictatorial regimes or civil conflict have been found to face higher mobility barriers, while OECD countries seem to be privileged (Neumayer 2006; Whyte 2008: 132; [name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]; Finotelli and Sciortino 2013). Moreover, OECD countries disproportionately benefit from visa waiver programmes, while they tend to impose visa restrictions on other countries outside of the OECD world (Neumayer 2006). The strongest restrictions have been imposed upon countries expected to produce potential illegal immigrants and which are known as refugee sending countries or countries sending larger numbers of visa-overstayers. According to Siskin (2004), to qualify for the maintenance of visa-waived travel for their citizens in the US, countries need to maintain a ‘disqualification rate’ of below 2 percent, i.e. less than 2 percent of national passport holders must have violated the entry conditions. On the other hand, bilateral trade and cultural and commonwealth links have been found to positively affect visa relations (Neumayer 2006; O’Byrne 2001). Moreover, tourist destinations have been found to be particularly open towards citizens from high-income countries (O’Byrne 2001).

The following novel analysis will move beyond a purely cross-sectional view and focus on four main issues which are central to the debate. First, we ask whether there has been an over-



all increase in visa waivers over time as suggested by single case studies ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]). Second, we will look at gains and potential losses in visa-free travel, by separating the OECD-world from the other countries and studying them from a longitudinal perspective. Third, we differentiate between continents with the aim of providing valuable insights into the global clustering of the changes found. Related to this issue, the fourth section provides an overview of the top and bottom ten countries in terms of benefitting from visa free waivers in 1969 and 2010. We investigate whether rankings have changed and, if so, who the winners and losers of this change are.

### ***3. The Visa Network Data***

Our data on visa waiver policies come from the Travel Information Manual (TIM), issued monthly by the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) since 1963. This handbook compiles authoritative information on visa obligations used by airlines and travel agencies concerning travel requirements (i.e. passport, visa, health) of all sovereign states. Airlines are the main users of this data, to comply with existing laws and regulations and to avoid carrier sanctions, so the level of accuracy can be regarded as very high. We are able to cover two points in time, namely the years 1969 and 2010. While 2010 tells us something about the recent global visa patterns, we have chosen 1969 because at the beginning of the 1970s countries started to readjust their visa policies in response to symptoms of globalisation, including migration. From single case studies we know that visa waiver programmes were expanding before this period (i.e. including more and more countries), while after this period a kind of sorting can be observed, meaning that some countries which had previously benefitted from visa waiver policies were now excluded and new ones admitted ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]). Moreover, the frequency of visa introductions and removals increased throughout the 1970s, and since then visa policies “have played an increasingly important role in preventing people from certain countries entering a national territory” (Czaika and de Haas 2014: 8). Other historical events might have played a role too, like the oil shocks in the 1970s, growing unemployment in the OECD world, or the changing approach towards ‘guest workers’ in Western Europe – all leading to a more proactive use of visa policies to regulate mobility. Thus, comparing 1969 and 2010 covers the major reordering period for visa waiver policies.

The current version of the TIM can be ordered online, but acquiring an archived version proved difficult. We eventually contacted the IATA office in the Netherlands (IATA Nether-

lands Data Publication in Amsterdam) who allowed us to make a photocopy of the original archive version from 1969. The TIM has a section on every country worldwide, indicating from which countries and under which circumstances (duration of travel, costs, necessary documents providing identification, exceptions for special groups for diplomats, expats etc.) travellers may enter without a visa. From this we coded the relation between the respective country and any other. Those cases were defined as visa freedom if normal tourists and business people were allowed to approach the country without an application procedure before departure and stay in the country for at least 90 days, which is a standard for a tourist visa. We used the information for December of each year and entered the information manually into the database. Thus, the dataset for each year is basically a cross table with over 150 countries in columns and the same set of countries in rows. This results in a socio-matrix of visa freedom relations, with every country case being a possible sender and receiver of a visa waiver agreement. In doing so, we treat destination countries the same as emigration countries, taking into account that these roles can change over time. We collected data at the state level, i.e. whether state A lifted visa obligations for the citizens of state B (coded as 1) or not (coded as 0). If two states do not agree on a visa waiver, border-crossers have to apply for a visa even for visits that do not exceed three months.<sup>8</sup> For each of the over 150 countries in the sample, we can count the number visa-free travel possibilities.<sup>9</sup>

We excluded very small states (e.g. Andorra), small island states (e.g. Tuvalu) and countries with an unsettled international status in 2010 (e.g. Kosovo). Very small countries and island states are rarely destination countries for global mobility and hardly capable of administering extraterritorial control (visa are often issued at the border). As they cannot afford fully fledged visa procedures in their embassies they tend to have uniform regulations for every other country, i.e. either giving visa freedom to all countries or to none. For 2010, we coded 166 states. In a second step, we tried to track the information for these countries for 1969, which was possible for 155 states. The difference stems from states that did not exist in 1969 (e.g. Bangladesh), states that became independent or reunited (e.g. Germany) or simply missing data (e.g. for Mongolia). The generally higher number of countries included in both samples is partly due to coding all former member states of the USSR and Yugoslavia as single states in

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<sup>8</sup>In the dataset a visa waiver is defined as a directed positive relation from one state to any other. This way, we can distinguish between no relation between two states, one-sided relations and mutual relations. This is of utmost importance, since it would be wrong to assume that bilateral visa policies are mainly reciprocal ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]). Moreover, such data is relational and allows for social network analysis.

<sup>9</sup> For questions concerning the database please consult [name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process].

1969 as well. The complete dataset consists of 3,767 data points for 1969 and 5,392 for 2010, and thus has an unprecedented global coverage.<sup>10</sup> For each country, visa-free travel possibilities to over 150 other countries are defined allowing us to give a comprehensive account of the global patterns of visa relations.<sup>11</sup>

## **4. Changes in Visa Waiver Policies**

### **4.1 Expansion of Visa Waivers?**

While the invention of the passport and visa system is historically speaking a rather recent development, one which can be seen as part of the “monopolisation of the legitimate means of movement” by modern states (see Torpey 2000), after World War II it developed into a comprehensive and almost universal system of mobility control and regulation. However, processes of globalisation (we refer here to the so-called third wave of globalisation starting during the 1980s), i.e. increased mobility activities, greater connectedness across borders and processes of re-bordering, have put this system under pressure. As mentioned above, we assume that visa waivers have become more popular over time, thanks to states’ interests in mobility and the dysfunctional aspects of a universal visa requirement. By implication, this means that the number of visa waivers should have increased and, thus, possibilities for visa-free travel should have expanded.

Indeed, as Table 1 shows, the average number of possibilities for visa-free travel (per passport) has increased from 24 in 1969 to 32 in 2010.<sup>12</sup> The increase is substantial, but modest. Given the number of countries in the sample, it is possible to calculate the maximum possible number of visa waiver programmes and relate this to the number of empirically observed programmes. This measure is called network density. It increased from 0.16 in 1969 to 0.20 in 2010, indicating a world becoming somehow more closely connected in terms of freedom of movement. While there is an overall increase in visa-free travel possibilities, the standard deviation also increased (1969: 17.9; 2010: 27.8), indicating an increased stratification of associated mobility rights.

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<sup>10</sup>To our knowledge, the most extensive study in terms of time coverage is the DEMIG VISA project that is currently working on a dataset for the period 1973-2012. However, that dataset only covers 38 selected destination countries (Czaika and de Haas 2014).

<sup>11</sup> This dataset was complemented with secondary data on GDP per capita (PPP, power purchase parity, from the Penn World Table) and the Polity-IV index measuring the level of democratisation, since earlier studies have suggested that these are factors explaining a country’s positive visa freedom relations with other countries ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]; Neumayer 2006). However, in particular for 1969 there is a larger amount of missing data for these macro-indicators.

<sup>12</sup> This increase also holds if we standardise the sample using the 155 countries from 1969 as the base.

[Table 1 about here]

## 4.2 The Bifurcation of Visa Waivers

However, the increase in average numbers tells us little about the global distribution of visa waiver agreements. Figures 1 and 2 provide information on the distribution of possibilities for visa-free travel in 1969 and 2010. Additionally, a line indicates the cumulative percentage of visa waivers by country. The figures show that in 1969 visa waivers were much less widespread than today. In 1969, citizens of only twenty percent of all countries in the sample could travel without a visa in more than 35 countries; in 2010 this was more than 35 percent. Still, in 1969 and 2010, values in the range from 16 to 20 (visa exemptions) are most frequent (mode 1969: 16; 2010: 17). We also see that in 1969, some countries occupy the middle region of the distribution, while in 2010 this region is nearly empty. Thus, the figure indicates a greater polarisation – if not a bifurcation – of visa-free travel in 2010 than in 1969. We do not have a normal distribution or something similar but rather two clusters, one at the lower end of the distribution and one concentrated at the upper end. Interestingly, in 1969 only six percent of all countries had over 65 visa waivers. In 2010, this number grew to seventeen percent. The counterpoint is a larger number of countries with few and stagnating opportunities for visa waived entry.<sup>13</sup> Overall, the data tell us that the possibility of visa-free entry is unequally divided, a trend which has been reinforced over time. Hence, the promise of globalisation as the simple creation of greater mobility opportunities for all does not seem to hold. Mobility rights based on visa-free travel are instead unequally distributed – a mobility divide has indeed intensified over time.

[Figure 1 about here]

[Figure 2 about here]

The literature suggests a clear pattern of the apparent mobility divide, with the West or North being privileged and the global South being excluded ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]; Neumayer 2006; Whyte 2008). Some even claim that liberal Western

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<sup>13</sup>See also appendix 1 for further information on the visa freedom of countries.

countries have heavily influenced the global mobility regime to their advantage by establishing highly asymmetrical visa relations: “[W]hile liberal states are successful in extending the mobility rights of their own citizens far beyond the Western world (if not globally) they do little to strengthen or grant these rights for non-rich and non-democratic countries” ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]). This thesis leaves open the question whether there has always been a hierarchy of unequal mobility rights or whether there is indeed a bifurcation in visa-free travel, with the OECD countries being successful in “maximising their own citizens’ opportunities for visa-free travel” ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]).

Table 2 provides some evidence by distinguishing the average number of visa free travel for OECD member states and non-OECD countries for both samples. For methodological purposes, we base the OECD/non-OECD classification on OECD-membership in 2010.<sup>14</sup> It is striking how much higher OECD-countries and their citizens rank in terms of visa-waived travel compared to non-OECD countries. Even though their visa waiver numbers were already high in the late 1960s, they have managed to increase the number of visa-free travel possibilities for their citizens substantially (by 27 on average, in particular those states which became OECD-members during that period). By contrast, the large group of non-OECD countries is stagnating at a low level in terms of visa-free travel to foreign spaces (a modest increase of 3.85).<sup>15</sup>

[Table 2 about here]

Still, there is a high standard deviation for the OECD in 1969 and the non-OECD countries in 2010. For the first case, this can be explained by the coding procedure which uses the OECD membership in 2010 as its basis. More interesting is the non-OECD group: Table 3 below shows those non-OECD countries with a visa freedom equal to or higher than 60. These are the countries of the non-OECD cluster with a relative high number of visa waivers. Interestingly, these countries have a relatively high GDP per capita (PPP) (which rose from \$8,324 in

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<sup>14</sup> The OECD group contains all member states as of 2010, along with, for the 1969 sample: Australia, Austria, Belgium Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

<sup>15</sup> Of course, the groups are still diverse, with a standard deviation of 20.12 for the OECD countries and 10.11 for non-OECD countries in 1969. For 2010 the standard deviations are 8.17 for OECD countries and 20.20 for non-OECD countries, respectively.

1969 to \$55,838 in 2010), some are democracies and many are part of important bodies of regional integration (EU, MERCOSUR). Formally, they might not have been a member of the OECD (in 2010), but most of them share important features of countries committed to democracy and market economy.

[Table 3 about here]

#### **4.3 Different Countries, Different Continents, Different Freedoms?**

Having described the general trend of visa policies and their global distribution, the analysis now turns to the latter issue by examining the significance of countries and regions (continents). Figures 3 and 4 depict the possibilities for visa-free travel for all countries in 1969 and 2010. Black and dark-grey states display high visa freedom, whereas light-grey states have only low numbers of visa waivers.<sup>16</sup> What is most striking is the loss of mobility rights by African countries when comparing the two points in time. The winners are North and South America as well as the European countries, in particular Eastern Europe, which have been able to gain additional visa freedom. Many other countries did not see much change in terms of the “power” of their passport.

[Figure 3 about here]

[Figure 4 about here]

These findings are also confirmed by Table 4, which provides information on the average number of visa waivers per country by region for 1969 and 2010. The figure is quite revealing in several ways: First, it shows that Europe (+23) and the Americas (North: +20<sup>17</sup>; South: +18) exhibited the greatest increase in the number of visa waivers. Citizens from those regions have by far the most ‘powerful’ passports in terms of visa-free travel. Conversely, the figure illustrates that countries in Asia (+5) and Oceania (+4) were unable to substantially increase visa-free travel for their citizens.<sup>18</sup> Even more striking is the decrease in possibilities for visa-free travel for African (-4) countries. While all other continents have gained at least some mobility rights, African citizens have lost them. One possible reason is the shift in policy and attitudes by countries which see themselves as potential recipients of migrants from Africa. Indeed, the ‘Wall around the West’ (Andreas and Snyder 2000) is primarily a fence of protection against African migrants. Looking more closely at visa policies, case studies reveal

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<sup>16</sup>For the exact visa freedom of a given country, see appendix 1.

<sup>17</sup>North America, here, also includes Central American countries.

<sup>18</sup>See footnote 11 for details on Oceania.

that in the late 1960s and early 1970s visa policies vis-à-vis African countries were part of foreign policy rather than migration control, so that countries from the so-called ‘developing world’ also had a chance to benefit from visa waiver agreements. In the case of Austria, for example, the majority of agreements with these countries at that time were arranged during visits when “Austrian government officials wanted to express their goodwill and had nothing else to give” ([name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]). An increase in immigration from these African countries due to relaxed visa obligations was not expected at that time. This, obviously, has changed, with the fear of irregular migration from Africa leading to an exclusion of Africans from enhanced forms of openness. Moreover, European countries harmonized their visa policies in 2001 and now have a common list of countries from which citizens have to apply for a visa before travelling to the EU. While strengthening the intra-EU process of policy making, this harmonization might have weakened relations between African countries and their former colonial powers in Europe.

[Table 4 about here]

#### **4.4 Winners and Losers**

Having identified the unequal distribution of visa waivers in terms of regions and its development over time, we ask who the winners and losers are in this new divide (see Figure 5). Countries that have shown a gain in mobility rights include former members of the Eastern bloc (Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) that are now members of the European Union. In some sense, they have become incorporated into the Western group of states. However, immediately before the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, many of these countries were exempted from the visa requirement when travelling to Western Europe (but not in the late 1960s). But as the former Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia did not allow free exit of their own citizens, the openness of the West was merely symbolic. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall and increased mobility towards Western Europe, the visa requirement was reintroduced and only abolished in the course of EU accession.<sup>19</sup> Visa waivers, then, represent “a level of trust that symbolizes countries’ acceptance in the Western alliance of states” (Ginsburg 2008: 8). Furthermore, a group of countries now among the richest in the world managed to establish a sizeable number of visa waivers for their citizens. Countries which have lost visa waivers are mainly former colonial states and countries in the politically fragile Middle East. Actually,

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<sup>19</sup> Accession to the European Union generally goes hand in hand with ratifying the Schengen Agreement that demands to open internal borders to the Schengen Area and guarantees freedom of movement within that area.

during their time as colonial states or shortly after, many of these states held a higher standing than they did in 2010 after having experienced unstable political regimes, poverty, dictatorship, and civil wars subsequent to de-colonialisation.

[Figure 5 about here]

## **5. Conclusion**

The article sets out a new research agenda dealing with global mobility and the worldwide distribution of mobility rights. Against the background of the globalisation literature, it was argued that states seek to participate in global exchanges, including cross-border mobility of persons, but have an ongoing interest in control so that they are impelled to find ways to combine both. We have focused on short-term visa and visa waiver policies as major instruments to allow swift border crossings and openness on the one hand and control and mobility deterrence on the other.

By presenting a new Visa Network Data with a unique data coverage and giving a descriptive overview of changes in visa waiver policies between 1969 and 2010, we have not only established highly relevant new insights, we also show how such data can be used and what potential they have. We find that, overall, visa waiver programmes have significantly increased since 1969. However, not everyone benefits from them: While citizens of OECD countries can travel visa-free to many parts of the world, those from non-OECD countries are lagging behind. At the same time, we find another divide between OECD and non-OECD countries, as citizens from Europe and the Americas have gained global mobility rights, while those coming from Oceania and Asia have been excluded from this development. Citizens of fragile and economically under-developed states in Africa have even lost mobility rights in 2010 compared to 1969. Hence, we observe an increased global mobility divide over the last 40 years which fosters inequality between citizens of the ‘Global North’ and the ‘Global South’ in terms of mobility rights.

We see our contribution as the start of a larger research endeavour rather than the final word. Recent publications (Neumayer 2006; [name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process]; Whyte 2008) clearly indicate a rising interest in this topic and we see several possible avenues for future research. For example, further analysis should seek to establish explanations for the mobility divide we have found in this article and make use of the data’s net-



work structure. Differences in terms of wealth, religion, colonial history or political regime might be pertinent factors which could potentially explain this divide. As far as network structure is concerned, one objective will be to explore the structure and dynamic of the visa relationships on the basis of country dyads. The role of regional integration worldwide would be another worthwhile subject for investigation. It will also be crucial to extend the data collection to cover more points in time and a longer time period. Notwithstanding the specificity of the issue at stake, we see a clear need to establish a link with the wider field of research in migration and immigration and not to start a decoupled endeavour limited to 'mobility experts'. In our view, mobility and migration are closely interwoven and should necessarily be analysed in context in order to understand the various forms of codetermination.

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**Appendix 1.**

<b>Number of Visa Waivers</b>	<b>Countries (1969) N=155</b>	<b>Countries (2010) N=166</b>
<b>0</b>	/	/
<b>1</b>	Albania, Brunei, Cambodia, Comoros Islands, Fiji	Afghanistan, Somalia
<b>2</b>	Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Hong Kong, Mozambique, Myanmar, Somalia	Cambodia, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Pakistan
<b>3</b>	Afghanistan, Burundi, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, Vietnam	Comoros Islands, Djibouti (Rep.), Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iraq, Laos, Sudan, Timor Leste
<b>4</b>	Liberia	China, Korea (Peoples Rep.), Vietnam
<b>5</b>	Germany (East), Korea (Rep.), United Arab Emirates	Angola, Bhutan, Congo (Kinshasa), Egypt (Arab Rep. of), Iran, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan
<b>6</b>	Ethiopia, Thailand	Bangladesh, Haiti, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen Rep.
<b>7</b>	Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria	Gabon, Indonesia, Jordan, Mozambique
<b>8</b>	Egypt (Arab Rep. of), Iraq, Philippines	Burundi, Mongolia, Rwanda
<b>9</b>	Congo (Kinshasa), Guinea (Rep.of), Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia	Cameroon, Cuba, India, Libya, Philippines
<b>10</b>	Bahrain, Libya	Algeria, Congo (Brazzaville), Dominican Rep., Thailand
<b>11</b>	/	Chad, Madagascar, Uzbekistan
<b>12</b>	Cameroon	Albania, Central African Rep.
<b>13</b>	Haiti	/
<b>14</b>	/	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Bosnia Her., Kazakhstan, Morocco, Tajikistan, Uganda
<b>15</b>	Guatemala, Nicaragua, Swaziland, Togo	Kyrgystan, Papua New Guinea
<b>16</b>	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Congo (Brazzaville), Cuba, Estonia, Gabon, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Latvia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Zimbabwe	Colombia, Georgia, Moldova, Namibia, Oman, Zimbabwe
<b>17</b>	Kuwait	Belarus, Benin, Guinea- Bissau, Guyana, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritania, Togo, Zambia
<b>18</b>	Benin, Bolivia, Central African	Nigeria, Swaziland

	Rep., Chad, Korea (Peoples Rep.), Mauritius	
19	Burkina Faso, Honduras, Mauritania, Panama	Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia
20	Dominican Rep., Russia	Bahrain, Cote d Ivoire, Fiji, Guinea (Rep.of), Kuwait, Peru, Senegal, Tanzania
21	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay	Botswana, Kenya, Qatar, United Arab Emirates
22	Israel, Peru, Senegal, South Africa	Solomon Islands, Ukraine
23	/	Ghana
24	Algeria, Botswana, Colombia, Cote d Ivoire, Ecuador	Jamaica
25	/	/
26	Chile, Czech Rep., Hungary, Lesotho, Niger, Portugal, Slovak Rep., Sri Lanka	Sierra Leone
27	Argentina, Brazil, Guyana, Poland	Gambia
28	India, Zambia	Russia
29	/	/
30	Uruguay	/
31	Bosnia Her., Croatia, Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, Nigeria, Serbia, Slovenia	/
32	Ghana	South Africa
33	Bulgaria, Japan, Romania, Sierra Leone, Singapore	Trinidad Tobago
34	Kenya, Morocco, Uganda	/
35	Greece Jamaica Malawi	Turkey
36	Malaysia, Tanzania, Trinidad Tobago	/
37	/	/
38	Malta	/
39	/	/
40	Gambia, Pakistan	/
41	Turkey	/
42	New Zealand	/
43	Tunisia	Serbia
44	Cyprus	Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro
45	/	/
46	/	/
47	Iceland	Nicaragua
48	Australia, Austria, USA	/
49	/	Honduras
50	/	El Salvador, Guatemala
51	/	/
52	Spain	/
53	/	Mauritius

54	Canada	Panama
55	Ireland	/
56	/	Costa Rica, Paraguay, Venezuela
57	/	Brunei
58	/	/
59	/	/
60	/	/
61	/	Uruguay
62	/	Croatia, Mexico
63	Finland	/
64	/	Malaysia
65	Italy, Switzerland	Hong Kong
66	/	Brazil
67	Belgium, Luxembourg	Bulgaria, Chile
68	France	Hungary, Latvia
69	Germany (West)	Argentina, Estonia, Lithuania
70	Netherland, Norway	Czech Rep., Israel, Poland, Slovak Rep.
71	/	Australia, Romania
72	/	Cyprus, New Zealand, Singapore, Slovenia
73	Denmark	Korea (Rep.)
74	Sweden	/
75	/	Canada, Greece, Portugal
76	United Kingdom	Austria, Iceland, Malta, Spain
77	/	France, Japan, Switzerland, USA
78	/	Belgium, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom (GB)
79	/	Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg
80	/	Denmark, Sweden
81	/	/
82	/	Ireland



## Tables and Figures

Tables:

**Table 1.** Average number of visa-free travel possibilities and density of visa relations (1969/2010)

	Visa Network Data, 1969 (N=155)	Visa Network Data, 2010 (N=166) <sup>20</sup>
Visa-free Travel ( $\bar{X}$ )	24,30	32,48 (33.57)
Minimum	1	1 (1)
Maximum	76	82 (80)
Density	0.16	0.20 (0.22)

**Table 2.** Average number of visa-free travel possibilities by OECD and non-OECD countries (1969/2010)

	Visa-free Travel $\bar{X}$ (Std. Dev.)	
	1969	2010
Non-OECD	18,06 (11.06)	21.91 (20.12)
OECD	46.53 (19.82)	73.53 (8.05)

**Table 3.** Non-OECD countries with a visa-free travel possibilities  $\geq 60$  (2010)

<b>Non-OECD Countries with a visa-free travel possibilities <math>\geq 60</math> (2010)</b>	
Country	Visa-free travel
Uruguay	61
Croatia	62
Malaysia	64
Hong Kong	65
Brazil	66
Bulgaria	67
Latvia	68
Argentina	69
Lithuania	69
Romania	71
Cyprus	72
Singapore	72
Malta	76

<sup>20</sup> In brackets we supply information on a network with N=154 which only entails visa relations for countries that are also present in 1969 (with the exception of East Germany).

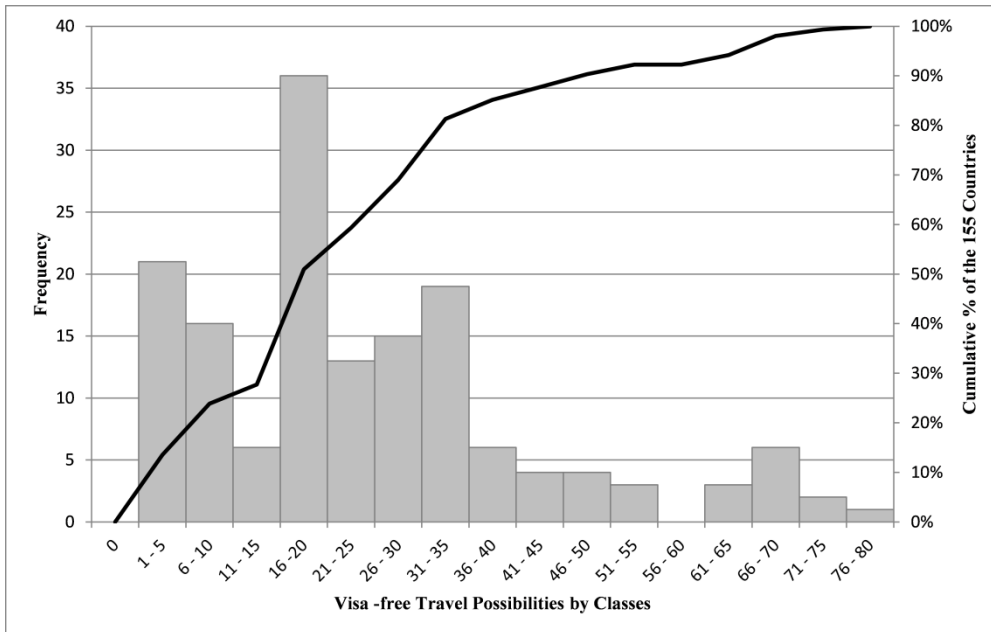
**Table 4.** Average number of visa-free travel possibilities by continents (1969/2010)<sup>21</sup>

	Visa-free Travel Possibilities $\bar{X}$ (Std. Dev.)	
	1969	2010
Africa	18.57 (11.34)	14.56 (9.09)
Asia	13.90 (10.98)	18.93 (22.34)
Europe	40.27 (21.45)	63.65 (21.25)
North America	25.21 (12.42)	43.00 (22.45)
Oceania	30.33 (20.89)	33.83 (27.31)
South America	23.82 (4.04)	41.90 (22.93)

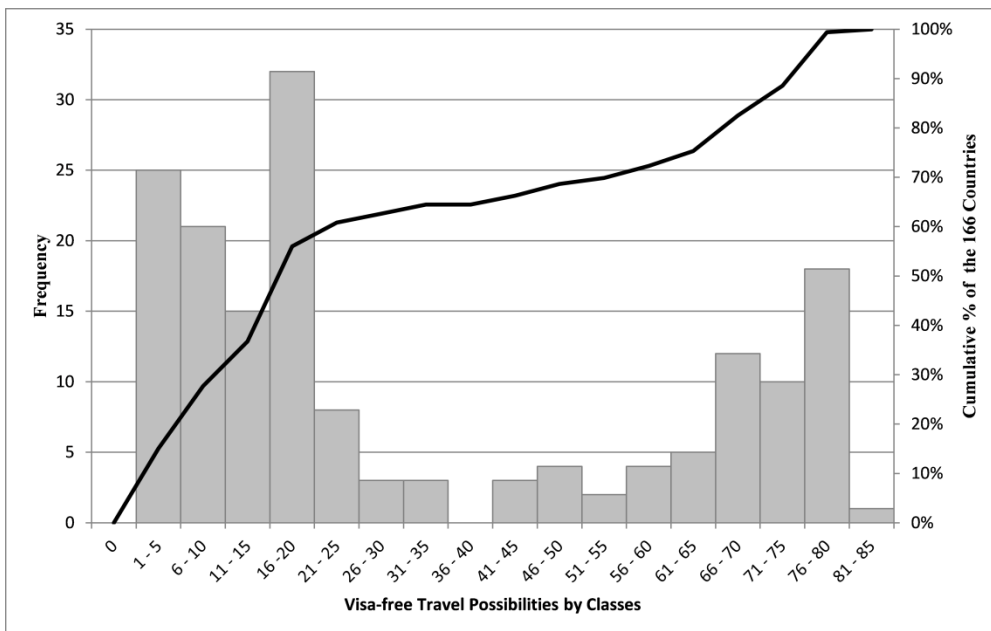
<sup>21</sup> Again a sample with N=154 for 2010 with countries already present in 1969 was constructed. Means are close to the data supplied in table 4 with the exception of Oceania where visa freedom is at 54.33 when three smaller countries are excluded (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste). Therefore, Australia and New Zealand exhibit a growth of visa-free travel possibilities.

Figures:

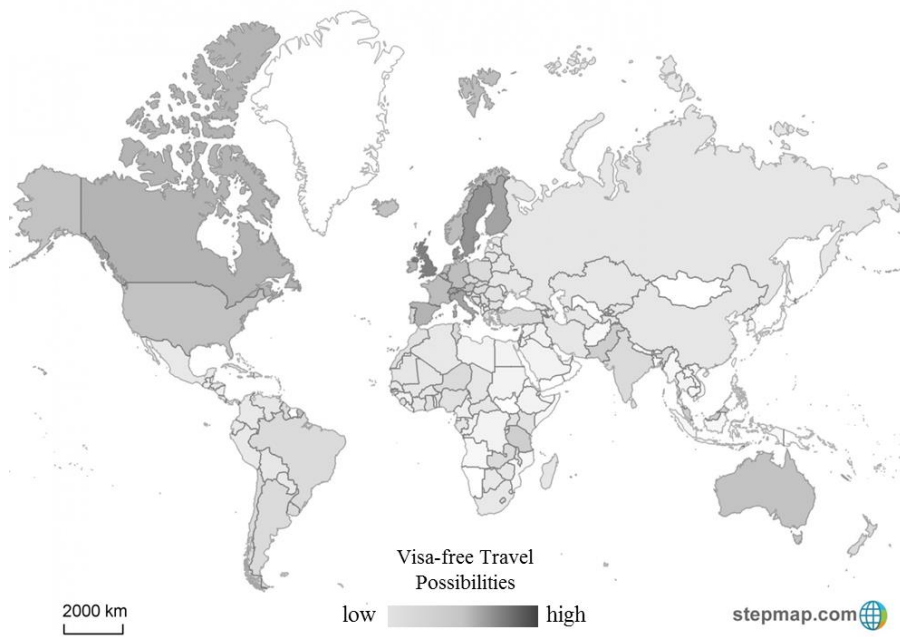
**Figure 1.** Frequency plot and cumulative percentage of travel-free travel possibilities by country (1969)



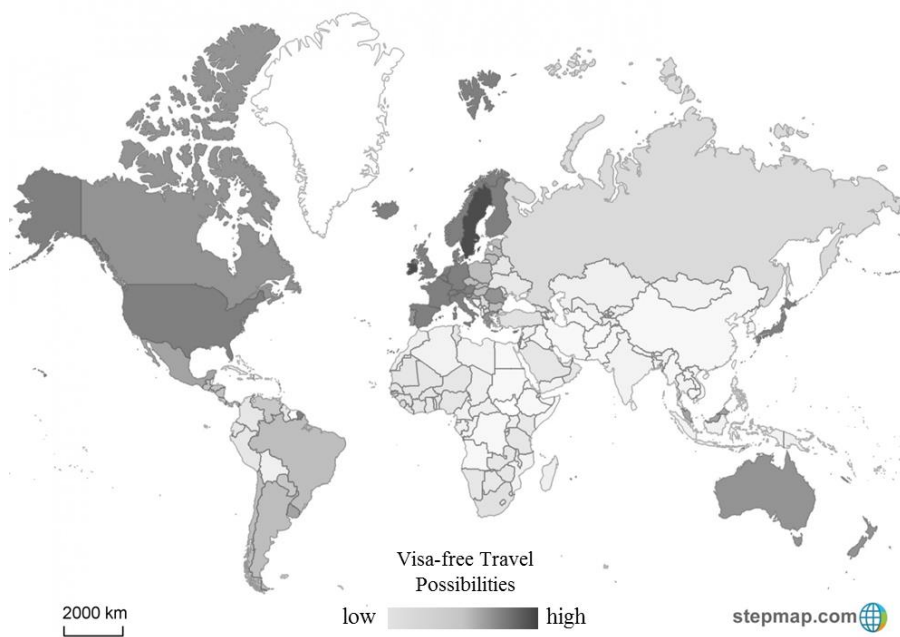
**Figure 2.** Frequency plot and cumulative percentage of visa-free travel possibilities by country (2010)



**Figure 3.** *How powerful is your passport? Countries and their visa-free travel possibilities (1969)*



**Figure 4** *How powerful is your passport? Countries and their visa-free travel possibilities (2010)*



**Figure 5.** Countries with the highest gains or loss of visa-free travel possibilities from 1969 to 2010

