

The Politics of Visas

by Adam Luedtke, Douglas G. Byrd, and Kristian P. Alexander

In February 2008, the province of Kosovo declared independence from Serbia. In an effort to facilitate Kosovo's independence and influence the January presidential elections in Serbia, pro-Western and EU policymakers frantically attempted to offer "carrots" to the Serbian leadership. One of these carrots was the prospect of visa-free travel to the EU.¹ Unlike Americans, Canadians, and citizens of other developed countries, Serbs could not enter the EU without first obtaining a visa at an EU consulate in their home country.

The previous year, Russia, the EU, and Central European countries debated the American proposal to install missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic. The fact that the Polish did not enjoy visa-free travel to the United States had been a point of contention between the US and Poland for many years, especially since most other EU citizens enjoy visa-free travel to America. Poland became a member of the EU in 2004, and is a key strategic ally in NATO. A canvass of Polish opinion on this found that Poles do not perceive any gains from their cooperation with the Americans. For instance, Leszek Pieniak, a restaurant owner near the proposed base said at the time, "We have not received any benefits from our cooperation with the Americans so far—not one thing...not in Iraq, not in Afghanistan, not in Poland—nothing. We don't even have visas. I'll tell my grandchildren that maybe in twenty years they'll have a shot at visa-free travel to the US."²

The example above highlights the importance of visa politics on the minds of both the public and policymakers. When the United States or another First World country grants visa-free travel rights, it is taken as a sign that a country has made it into the developed or semi-developed club of nations. In addition, the granting or refusal of visa-free travel may have significant social and economic affects. Why do US policymakers decide that Poles should or should not be able to travel to the US without first going to an American consulate in Poland to be scrutinized as a potential risk? What makes some countries' citizens welcome, leaving others to undergo more rigorous checks? This question is particularly important, because as wars become more dangerous, countries increasingly focus on metrics of influence outside of military force.³ The struggle for control over national borders is widely discussed and plays a major role in domestic political alignments. While the right of

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a citizen to leave a country is enshrined in the UN Declaration on Human Rights, free entry into another country is not similarly guaranteed.⁵

In this paper, we will examine visa-free travel and attempt to answer the following question: why is visa-free travel granted, and why is it denied? Our paper tests a variety of variables, from geography to instances of terrorism, and attempts to develop a coherent explanation for granting of visa-free travel. In doing so, we not only acknowledge the importance of international travel and migration in the everyday economic and social sense, but also in the larger theoretical sense. Globalization heightens the importance of such controls and simultaneously makes border control more difficult. Unlike immigration policies that only achieve marginal control over borders, visa policy is state directed, though it may be influenced by a variety of factors. In this sense, we hope to not only theorize visa policy, but also to explore wider discussions about globalization, state sovereignty, and policy making. Of course, it would take many volumes to explore these topics in great detail, but we hope our research can serve as a starting point for more inquiry into these issues.

To answer why states make their decisions regarding visa policy, we construct a data set spanning 156 countries for the year 2006, measuring the exact number of countries granting visa-free travel rights to each of these 156 countries. This dependent variable ranges from 12 (Afghanistan) to 130 (Denmark, Finland, United States). We test 19 independent variables using OLS regression, finding that colonial heritage (British or Spanish), terrorism, democracy and wealth are the most important predictors of visa-free travel rights. Surprisingly, health, trade, population size, geographic location and religion do not appear to play a causal role.

TESTING

Before discussing the hypotheses about why states choose to allow visa-free travel or not, let us first examine the data in a descriptive manner. We might expect to see a clear and obvious pattern of rich and powerful countries enjoying the most visa-free travel. This would follow from both realist and neoliberal assumptions about state behavior. Rich and powerful states may be able to pressure weaker states to allow visa-free travel. Additionally, poorer states may believe that by allowing visa-free travel from rich countries, problems such as large-scale illegal immigration or refugee crises will not arise. Therefore, our initial intent is to conceptualize visa-free travel rights as a measure of national influence and how closely this influence fits into the actual data. While operationalizing national influence is fraught with difficulty, the amount of visa-free travel granted to a nation is an interesting and measurable appraisal. So, how closely does the number of countries allowing visa-free travel to a given country follow the conventional wisdom about that same country's wealth or power? Table 1 shows the number of countries granting visa-free travel to citizens of that country, for 2006.

The information in Table 1 seems to confound the hypothesis that powerful state citizens will enjoy visa-free travel. If the index score is an indicator of national influence, it makes sense that the United States would have the highest score, yet it

TABLE 1

Finland, 130	Vatican City, 87	Ecuador, 41	Armenia, 27
Denmark, 130	Croatia, 84	Namibia, 41	Congo (Brazzaville), 27
United States, 130	Belgium, 83	Zimbabwe, 41	Chad, 27
Ireland, 129	Bulgaria, 83	Suriname, 40	Tajikistan, 27
Sweden, 129	Guatemala, 82	Mauritania, 39	Cuba, 27
Germany, 129	Paraguay, 82	Kuwait, 39	Cameroon, 26
United Kingdom, 128	Panama, 82	Uganda, 39	Madagascar, 25
Italy, 128	El Salvador, 81	Bahrain, 38	India, 25
France, 128	Honduras, 80	Mali, 38	Dominican Republic, 25
Japan, 128	Nicaragua, 75	Tunisia, 38	Bosnia/Herzegovina, 25
Spain, 127	Romania, 73	Senegal, 37	Mongolia, 24
Norway, 127	Barbados, 71	Qatar, 37	Gabon, 24
Switzerland, 127	Bahamas, 71	Niger, 37	Egypt, 24
Belgium, 127	Macau, 71	Guinea, 37	Uzbekistan, 24
Netherlands, 126	Trinidad and Tobago, 66	Cote d'Ivoire, 37	Rwanda, 23
Luxembourg, 125	South Africa, 65	Oman, 36	Algeria, 23
Austria, 125	St. Vincent & Grenadines, 64	Marshall Islands, 36	Haiti, 22
Canada, 125	St. Lucia, 63	Cape Verde Islands, 36	Mozambique, 22
New Zealand, 125	Antigua and Barbuda, 63	Benin, 36	Sri Lanka, 22
Portugal, 123	St. Kitts-Nevis, 62	United Arab Emirates, 35	Sao Tome and Principe, 22
Singapore, 122	Grenada, 60	Russian Federation, 35	Jordan, 21
Malaysia, 120	Belize, 58	Togo, 35	Timor Leste, 21
Iceland, 120	Jamaica, 57	Burkina Faso, 35	Eritrea, 20
Greece, 120	Solomon Islands, 54	Nigeria, 35	Equatorial Guinea, 20
Australia, 120	Guyana, 53	Micronesia, 33	Comoros Islands, 20
Lichenstein, 116	Gambia, 53	Philippines, 33	Laos, 20
Republic of Korea, 115	Mauritius, 52	Guinea-Bissau, 33	Nepal, 20
Malta, 115	Turkey, 52	Serbia & Montenegro, 32	Djibouti, 19
Cyprus, 113	Dominica, 52	Ukraine, 32	Turkmenistan, 19
Hong Kong, 110	Seychelles, 52	Belarus, 32	Libya, 19
San Marino, 109	Lesotho, 51	Palau Islands, 32	Bhutan, 19
Chile, 109	Tuvalu, 50	Colombia, 32	Angola, 19
Monaco, 108	Kiribati, 49	Liberia, 31	Vietnam, 18
Poland, 106	Samoa (western), 49	Saudi Arabia, 31	Ethiopia, 18
Slovenia, 105	Malawi, 48	FYROM, 31	China, 18
Israel, 104	Botswana, 48	Yugoslavia, 31	Yemen Republic, 18
Burnei, 101	Fiji, 47	Morocco, 30	Pakistan, 17
Hungary, 101	Sierra Leone, 47	Indonesia, 29	Burundi, 18
Argentina, 101	Vanuatu, 47	Moldova, 29	Lebanon, 17
Brazil, 99	Tonga, 46	Thailand, 29	Albania, 17
Uruguay, 99	Kenya, 46	Georgia, 28	Cambodia, 17
Andorra, 99	Maldives, 46	Bangladesh, 28	Sudan, 17
Czech Republic, 98	Swaziland, 46	Moldova, 29	Congo (Kinshasa), 16
Mexico, 98	Ghana, 45	Thailand, 29	Syria, 16
Slovakia, 97	Zambia, 45	Georgia, 28	Myanmar, 15
Costa Rica, 95	Nauru, 44	Bangladesh, 28	Somalia, 14
Lithuania, 94	Taiwan, 42	Kyrgyzstan, 28	Iraq, 15
Venezuela, 92	Peru, 41	Central African Rep., 28	Iran, 14
Estonia, 91	Papua New Guinea, 41	Azerbaijan, 28	Afghanistan, 12
Latvia, 91	Tanzania, 41	Kazakistan, 28	

is tied with two small Scandinavian countries with the highest score. Why are Russia and China scored so lowly? Surely, any measure of national influence would score these countries much higher. The Republic of Ireland enjoys basically the same visa-free travel as the United States, though it has only recently experienced economic success. Additionally, the Republic of Ireland has historically been a net emigration country.

Since the top twenty countries are all members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with high per capita income and effective democracies, one might think that there is a nexus of wealth, democracy, and power that indicates high scores. However, beyond the top twenty highest ranked countries, the trends become more complicated. Singapore, ranked twenty-first, has less-democratic political institutions and is not an OECD member. Similarly, Malaysia, ranked twenty-second, has a significantly lower GDP and is also not an OECD member. Despite a majority Muslim population, Malaysians are allowed visa-free travel to more countries than ten other OECD members ranking in the top forty-five. Interestingly, the worst performing OECD member is not Mexico but Slovakia, an EU member whose per capita income is far above Mexico's. Why would a relatively poor Latin American country enjoy greater visa-free travel than a wealthier EU member? It should also be noted that Chile scores well above other EU members, including the rich, small countries of Slovenia and Estonia who have both begun using the Euro. Therefore, an analysis of the data suggests that wealth and power alone do not suffice to predict our dependent variable.

Undoubtedly, political bargaining between countries plays a role in visa-free travel. In 2008, the EU refused to submit detailed passenger information on transatlantic flights to the US, so the US began to approach EU member countries bilaterally. The US offered visa-free travel to citizens of the EU member countries that would cooperate. Renata Goldirova, of the EU Observer, wrote, "some member states are in favor of signing up to additional security measures, hoping it will ease their way to a visa-free travel to the United States. The Czech Republic and Estonia seem the most eager to agree to bilateral deals."⁵

From the above examples, we see that visa-free travel can be given away due to political motivations, as a bargaining chip in international negotiations. It is obvious that wealth or democracy do not provide a perfect correlation with a country's visa-free ranking. Could these political bargaining explanations make up the difference? While our measures of political influence must unfortunately suffice as indirect proxies for bargaining leverage in particular situations, what other factors might explain the anomalies in Table 1? Muslim countries scored quite low, at least relative to their wealth. Asian countries seemed to score fairly low as well, while Latin American countries scored highly with the exception of Colombia. Perhaps there are broad geographic patterns, religious discrimination based on the fear of terrorism, or links with former colonial powers that can account for some of the variation. The next section outlines our hypotheses for explaining the variation in Table 1.

This paper will use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to find correlations

between a country's visa-free score—the number of countries granting that country visa-free travel—and possible explanatory variables for this score, which are defined and measured as follows:

GEOGRAPHIC REGION

As mentioned above, perhaps certain geographic regions have advantages. A region like Latin America, where countries enjoy peaceful relations and linguistic homogeneity, might allow a higher visa-free score. By contrast, a region like East Asia fosters tense international relationships and greater linguistic diversity which could lead to less visa-free travel. Dummy variables were included in our model for North America (including Central America and the Caribbean), South America, Asia, Africa, Europe and Oceania (including Australia).

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COLONIAL HERITAGE

Linked with, but not identical to geographic region, is the idea of colonial heritage. Many former colonies retain strong links with the powers that colonized them and often enjoy travel advantages to these countries. Former colonies may speak the same language, share common cultural traits and historical experiences, and may even share a common allegiance to a Monarch. In addition, many former colonies continue to share institutional bonds forged during colonization, such as those within the British Commonwealth.⁶ This can be seen, for example, in the French *pièdes-noirs* in Algeria, Greeks in Turkey, and Jews worldwide enjoying the right to reside in Israel.⁷ Thus, we include dummy variables to test the influence of being a British, French, Portuguese, or Spanish colony. If such connections are truly relevant, we should expect a link between heritage and a higher visa-free travel score.

POPULATION

In terms of potential movements of people, larger populated countries elicit more fear among their smaller counterparts, who might be afraid of a “tidal wave” of migrants and be reluctant to grant visa-free travel to citizens of larger countries. A glance at the position of China and India in Table 1 would seem to reinforce this proposition, since if it was based on wealth or political influence, these countries should score much higher. Perhaps this could help explain the high visa-free scores of countries like Finland, Denmark, and Ireland who have smaller populations.

WEALTH

Given the apparent income distribution in Table 1, it would be wise to test the effect of wealth. Even though China and India are rich in terms of total GDP, they

are not rich in per capita GDP. Thus, their citizens would not be seen as “rich” per se, and would be considered potential economic migrants, whether legal or illegal. Visa requirements could help screen out this large pool of potentially poor immigrants, since the typical visa interview focuses on the burden of proof that the traveler has financial means sufficient enough to not arouse a suspicion of economic

MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA, HAVE MADE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WEALTH AND GRANTING VISAS. THIS TYPE OF VISA FOR SALE POLICY UNDERLINES THE ROLE THAT WEALTH MAY PLAY IN GRANTING OR DENYING VISA-FREE TRAVEL.

migration. Therefore, GDP per capita is added to the model. It should also be noted that many countries have explicit visa programs intended to attract rich investors and potential tax payers. For example, “Canada has granted entry to virtually anyone who would invest at least 250,000 in a Canadian business.”⁸ Many other countries, including New Zealand and Australia, have made the connection between wealth and granting visas. This type of visa for sale policy underlines the role that wealth may play in granting or denying visa-free travel.

TRADE

Wealth is related to the amount of trade that a country conducts. The hypothesis here is that countries with more open trade policies will give and receive more visa-free travel, since they are sending not only goods, services, and capital to their trading partners, but often also the human flows that must inevitably accompany this trading relationship. Thus, the model includes an independent variable measuring foreign direct investment.

FREEDOM

It was mentioned earlier that democracy seems to have an effect on visa-free travel, though it is not clear if this effect is independent from other variables such as wealth. In other words, does the fact that rich democracies dominate the top rankings say more about the wealth of these countries or their democratic nature? Obviously, the answer is both. Our model can test relative effects by including a freedom variable, which averages the Freedom House scores for political rights and civil liberties for each country. Additionally, do democracies intrinsically view citizens of like systems as less threatening, concomitantly granting them visa-free travel?

EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Perhaps policymakers are more worried about the educational skills and health of potential migrants than other factors. In today’s globalized economy, the skilled business traveler is becoming more ubiquitous and sought after than ever. This is a factor of a country’s educational system. Governments would seem to be more

reluctant to grant visas to illiterate immigrants than to English-speaking professionals.

Health epidemics that still plague the developing world could also be a factor. Many rich countries go to great lengths to quarantine and police against diseases like tuberculosis (TB). Countries that experience higher rates of these communicable diseases might find it harder to obtain visa-free travel to other countries. Thus, the model adds a variable for secondary school completion rate and another variable tracking the number of TB cases in a country, since this disease (other than the short-term panics over SARS and H1N1) generally causes health officials the most day-to-day worry.

ISLAM, TERRORISM, AND VIOLENCE

Our final category of three potentially related variables is perhaps the most interesting, because it takes into account security concerns, religious phobia, and the post-9/11 crackdown on immigration. Anecdotally, we noticed on Table 1 that many lower scoring countries tend to be plagued with terrorism or civil wars, and we especially noticed that many Muslim countries scored lower than their wealth would seem to suggest (i.e. the United Arab Emirates fairly close to the tail end of the list despite its high per capita income). We decided to attempt to separate out and test for these factors. One variable, number of terrorist attacks carried out in a given country (in 2006), is taken from the START Global Terrorism Database at the University of Maryland. This will allow us to test whether real terrorist attacks have an effect on a country's visa policy. Alternatively, visa policy can be driven in part by Islamophobia and a perceived, if not real, terrorist threat. Thus, we add a second, dummy variable indicating whether a country's population is 20 percent Islamic or more. Finally, to capture general security issues that might drive visa policy, we included a measure of arms imports taken from the World Development Indicators (World Bank). In doing so, we hope that the amount of arms imported into a country can tell us something about that country's relative bellicosity or potential for insecurity.

RESULTS

Table 2 shows the effect of all these independent variables on the dependent variable, which is the number of countries granting visa-free travel to citizens of a particular country. Our r-squared statistic is .803, meaning that this model explains about 80 percent of the variance across countries in terms of the degree to which they enjoy visa-free travel. The sample size is 156 (the number of countries with data for all variables). No systematic biases were predicted among the missing countries, as they tended not to follow a pattern in terms of any of our variables of interest. Significant variables ($P < .05$) are highlighted in bold.

The first impression that one gets from the results is that there are some surprises and some more obvious findings. Let us discuss the less surprising findings

first. Looking at the standardized betas for Freedom and GDP per capita, it seems that they are the two most important explanatory factors, as suggested at the outset.

TABLE 2

Variable	B (unstandardized)	(standardized)	P
(Constant)	82.025		.000
Arms Imports	.00000000646	.061	.254
Tuberculosis	.004	.018	.749
Education	.000	.000	.997
Population Size	.00000000028	-.023	.684
British Colony	10.467	.123	.026
French Colony	4.898	.048	.360
Portuguese Colony	3.420	.014	.738
Spanish Colony	17.514	.151	.023
Islam (20%+ of population)	-3.069	-.038	.493
N. America	-11.426	-.086	.493
S. America	-8.471	-.059	.609
Asia	-20.024	-.218	.158
Africa	-22.008	-.271	.145
Europe	4.157	.046	.778
Oceania	-17.402	-.107	.282
Trade (FDI)	-.046	-.054	.198
Terrorism (# of attacks)	-.417	-.099	.049
Freedom	-3.526	-.348	.000
GDP per capita	.002	.461	.000

If free markets and democracy really do influence a globalized economy, and if visa-free travel rights are a bargaining chip between countries, then we seem to have found important evidence that both wealth and democracy matter on their own. On our combined fourteen point Freedom scale, taken by combining the Freedom House scores for political rights and civil liberties, a country's one point jump on this scale results in that country's citizens getting visa-free travel rights to almost an additional four countries (-3.526, since higher numbers on the Freedom House scale represent less freedom). Furthermore, a per capita income jump of \$1,000 results in

two more countries granting visa-free travel rights to that country's citizens. A jump of \$10,000 will result in twenty more countries willing to allow that country's citizens in without visa checks.

More surprisingly, out of our three "insecurity" variables, only the number of terrorist attacks was significant. If a country has three additional terrorist attacks that take place on its soil in one year, it loses visa-free travel rights to one country. Ten more terrorist attacks and its citizens are denied visa-free travel to an additional four countries. Arms imports, however, have no significant effect.

While these results are fascinating, our null finding here has an even more dramatic impact. We find that being a country with at least a 20 percent Muslim population has no significant effect on visa-free travel rights enjoyed by these countries. This would cast doubt on theories that a general "Islamophobia" permeates world politics and immigration policy more specifically. Combined, these three factors, and the effect they have on visa policy, suggest some very interesting possibilities. First, it seems that the post-9/11 environment, which often fails to differentiate between, or even equates, Islam and terrorism, has not strongly influenced the process of granting visas. However, there does seem to be a direct link between instances of terrorist acts and the denial of visa-free travel, suggesting a rational decision making process that does not simply involve a broad denial of visa-free travel to Muslims. Thus, at least in terms of the politics of visas, we are not operating in a "brave new" post-9/11 world, where Muslims, regardless of origin, may face obstacles to travel internationally.

This result is inconsistent with the hypothesis that globalization may lead to reduced freedom to travel. Ronen Shamir discusses globalization as simultaneously freeing the movement of goods, ideas, and people, but also as the "emergence of a new cultural/normative global principle that operates as a counterbalance to the normative principle of human rights."⁹ Globalization has led to a process of "closure, entrapment, and containment" based the "paradigm of suspicion."¹⁰ In this paradigm, individuals who are labeled as suspicious are denied entry and contained in their own countries. Finally, Shamir argues that, "explicit links between immigration from Moslem countries and terrorism are rapidly emerging" creating a strong rationale for the denial of travel rights to Muslims.¹¹ However, whether or not such a global paradigm exists, our research does not find a strong link between citizens travelling from a Muslim country and the denial of visa-free travel. Instead, we found that coming from a country that has significant instances of terrorist acts will increase the likelihood of needing a visa to travel internationally. It would be interesting to further examine visa policies in upcoming years to see whether or not one's religion (or precisely, the religious makeup of a person's country) plays a larger role in the denial or granting of visa-free travel than it did circa 2006.

Amazingly, health epidemics, educational attainment, geographical location, and population size do not seem to be statistically linked with visa-free travel rights. The size and geographical findings might be especially puzzling, until one considers a related factor—colonization. Since most Spanish colonies were in Latin America,

most French colonies in Africa, and so forth, this variable (linguistic ties, historical closeness) might have a stronger influence than anything else. We find this to be true in the case of Spanish and British colonies. Simply being a citizen of a former British colony grants one visa-free travel to more than ten additional countries, *ceterus paribus*, while having been a Spanish colony grants nationals visa-free travel to nearly eighteen more countries. French and Dutch colonial pasts, however, were not statistically significant.

CONCLUSION

This paper began with a rather ambitious mission, to conceptualize visa-free travel rights as a measure of national influence in a quickly globalizing world. Looking at the descriptive data, it did seem that the more powerful countries scored near the top, with the notable exceptions of China, Russia, India, and Pakistan. Instead, what we seem to be left with is a measure of influence that is biased towards rich democracies with few or no terrorist attacks, and former British or Spanish colonies.

While we were perhaps too grandiose in attempting to measure national power, we now have a clearer picture of the politics of visas, in terms of why some countries' nationals enjoy these rights while others do not. As we saw from the quotes at the beginning, this is a controversial hot-button issue in many countries emerging from communism or other alternative governance structures to developed, liberal democracies. These countries feel that they deserve the visa-free travel rights, and are incensed at what is perceived to be unfair treatment by the world's powerful nations. But with immigration on the rise as both an economic and a security concern, it seems that countries are not in a rush to expand their visa-free lists any time soon. As Castles and Miller argue, "until recently, international migration had not generally been seen by governments as a central political issue...it was only in the late 1980s that international migration began to be accorded high-level and systematic attention."¹² The modern system of border controls, is itself a very new invention, and has steadily increased in importance over the years.

We must not ignore the role politics play in the granting and denying of visa-free travel, as in the concept of a buffer zone between the EU and Eastern Europe. The once seemingly permanent line between Western and Eastern Europe has become quite tenuous. In order to restrict immigration from poorer countries, the EU has cultivated buffer zones between themselves and the poorer Eastern and Southern Europe. "Restrictive policies in Western Europe are forcing Central and East European states into a 'buffer role,' obliging them to absorb asylum-seekers who fail to gain entry into Western Europe and/or restrict asylum-seekers' access to the borders of potential 'receiving' states."¹³ Thus, the EU has required member-states, like Poland, to end the granting of visa-free travel to countries that are not prospective members prior to ascension, thus creating a buffer zone between the EU and potential immigrants.¹⁴ In this sense, the EU has utilized the granting or denying of visas as a measure to prevent immigration from Eastern Europe. Furthermore,

Poland used EU money to upgrade its border security, while simultaneously reducing the number of countries who enjoy visa-free travel to Poland (citizens of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine all need visas as of October 2003).¹⁵ This illustrates the vital role that visa policies play in maintaining what has, often critically, been called *fortress Europe*.

The phenomenon of restricting visas is not limited to Eastern Europe. For example, Morocco was similarly forced to limit unrestricted travel from Sub-Saharan Africa in order to receive preferential treatment from the EU.¹⁶ Governments treat visas as a bargaining tool, a quid pro quo at its most obvious. In addition, during the recent war between Georgian separatists and Tbilisi, sympathetic European politicians struck a deal to equalize the EU's visa policy towards both Georgia and Russia, both of which require visas to enter the EU.¹⁷ We cannot ignore the role that politics plays in visa policies, even if that role is hard to measure across borders.

One particularly interesting case is the former Yugoslav Republics. While Croatians already enjoy visa-free travel to the Schengen Area, Serbian, Macedonian, and Montenegrin citizens await such benefits, which are expected to come in 2010.¹⁸ Yet, for citizens of Bosnia the situation is much more difficult. Croatian citizens of Bosnia have the option of carrying a Croatian passport and once Serbia is granted visa-free travel to Europe next year, Serbs are expected to apply for Serbian passports in large numbers. This undoubtedly "weakens Bosnia's fragile statehood."¹⁹ The power of visa-free travel cannot be understated, especially in the poorer areas of Europe like Bosnia. Furthermore, this situation exacerbates the divided loyalties in Bosnia. The political consequences could not be higher. Bosnia's survival as a state requires some measure of cohesion, which has been undermined by the current visa situation in the Balkans. As *The Economist* argues "bureaucratic anomalies can have mighty consequences."²⁰

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In terms of the future of movement restrictions, our research offers some interesting suggestions. In order to see a gradual lifting of visa restrictions around the world, we would need to see an increase in democracy and wealth and a decrease in terrorist attacks. It also should be noted that barring a complete collapse of globalization, the need for visa-free travel will continue to be high.

Further studies could do more to link visa-free travel with national power or influence, in either a conceptual or theoretical way. As movements of people become more important this issue holds the key to a greater understanding of international politics in the coming years. Specific case studies may reveal interesting and perhaps surprising results about what type of motivations drive state behavior. In the cases of both Poland and Morocco, we have seen countries make choices that side with the larger more powerful interest (the EU) to the detriment of other countries, with

whom they had traditionally much in common.

In addition, efforts are currently underway in the European Union to unify the European visa regime. As was discussed in the introduction, the United States used the promise of visa-free travel to influence both Poland and the Czech Republic to allow American missile defense technology on their soil. Currently, only the fourteen older EU members plus Slovenia enjoy visa-free travel to the US. Greece and eight other members who joined in 2004 require visas to enter the US.²¹ The European Commission advocates a common European visa policy from and toward America, which has proven to be quite contentious. European solidarity plays a role in the current dispute between the EU and Canada over visa-free travel for Czech citizens. In 2007, Canada stopped allowing Czech citizens to enter Canada without being granted a visa.²² Canadian authorities were trying to curb asylum claims by the sizeable Roma community in the Czech Republic. In response to Canada's policy, the EU has threatened to start a 'visa war' with Canada unless visa-free travel is restored to Czech citizens.²³ The solidarity shown by the EU so far underlines the salience of visa issues, not only in Prague, but also in Brussels. In this respect, visa politics touch on the complicated and vital issues surrounding European integration. Visa policies may provide a fruitful line of research for furthering theories of European integration, and perhaps could serve as a crucial test of unity.

It will be interesting to see which countries move up or down the table and which anomalies arise, remain, or are wiped away. For instance, why is Ireland so far above Australia? Both are rich democracies and former British colonies with no reported terrorist attacks in 2006. Thus, the 20 percent of variation that our model cannot explain must be included. Perhaps future studies can operationalize variables that capture these small differences. The Irish, once a major source of worldwide immigration, enjoy visa-free travel to nine more countries than the Australians. If the Nepalese peace process goes forward, will citizens of relatively tiny Nepal, known for Buddhism and trekking, be able to travel without a visa to more countries than their current score of twenty permits? Why does the Dominican Republic score the lowest among Latin American countries? It is only three places above its chaotic, war-torn, UN-administered neighbor Haiti, at twenty-two. Why do the Taiwanese enjoy less than half the visa-free travel (42 countries) than their ethnic counterparts from Hong Kong (110 countries)? Is it because countries fear sanctions from China if they were to grant visa-free travel to the Taiwanese, thus essentially recognizing Taiwan as a country?

In conclusion, it would appear that the politics of visas is much more complicated than a simple measurement of economic power or even democracy. If we recognize the importance of visa-free travel, then perhaps our research will serve as a good starting point for further research. Our findings suggest that a variety of variables may play a role, and more country-specific research needs to be done in order to develop an in-depth explanation. For example, the major anomalies of China and Russia stand out. Why have countries been so unwilling to grant visa-free travel to these two powerful countries? These and other fascinating questions can be

answered by further studies utilizing different variables, time periods, or more in-depth, process-tracing case studies analyzing the dynamics of a particular bilateral relationship, such as the Poland-US case.

Our research does not claim to present an explanation of the world's bilateral visa agreements, many of which were consummated many years before our data was collected. Instead, we have presented a broad view of worldwide visa policies, and we have attempted to isolate those variables which can best explain the variation in our dependent variable. During this process we have begun to see some clear patterns, with wealthy democracies having greater access to the world without the need of visa approval. Overall, we think that the politics of visas present an interesting opportunity for further research and theorizing.

Notes

¹ *The Economist*, Vol. 386 Issue 8564, January 26, 2008, 14.

² "Polish Town Leery of US Missile Defense," *Foxnews.com*, <http://www.foxnews.com/wires/2008Jan19/0,4670,PolandMissileDefenseTown,00.html> (accessed Oct. 30, 2009).

³ Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, "Complex Interdependence and the Role of Force," ed. Robert Art and Robert Jervis, in *International Politics 4th Edition* (New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1996); Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations* (New York: Norton, 2001), 125.

⁴ Goran Rystad, "Immigration History and the Future of International Migration," *International Migration Review*, no. 26 (1992), 1175.

⁵ Renata Goldirova, "Brussels attacks new US security demands," *EU Observer*, February 14, 2008, <http://euobserver.com/?aid=25657>.

⁶ Rystad, "Immigration History and the Future of International Migration," 1181. Also, it is important to note that migration within the Commonwealth was open and free prior to 1962, though since the 1981 British Nationality Act it has become much more restrictive.

⁷ Myron Weiner, *The Global Migration Crisis: Challenges to States and to Human Rights*, (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 114.

⁸ George Borjas, "The New Economics of Immigration: Affluent Americans Gains, Poor Americans Lose" in ed. Anthony Messina and Gallya Lahav, *The Migration Reader: Exploring Politics and Policies* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2006), 319.

⁹ Ronen Shamir, "Without Borders? Notes on Globalization as a Mobility Regime," *Sociological Theory*, no. 23 (2005), 199.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹² Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, *The Age of Migration* (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 13.

¹³ Sarah Collinson, "Visa Requirements, Carrier sanctions, 'Safe Third Countries' and 'Readmission': the Development of an Asylum 'Buffer Zone' in Europe," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, no. 21 (1996), 76.

¹⁴ Castles, *The Age of Migration*, 86.

¹⁵ Ewa Kepinska and Dariusz Stola, "Migration Policy and Politics in Poland," in ed. Agata Gorny and Paolo Ruspini, *Migration in the New Europe* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 171.

¹⁶ Castles, *The Age of Migration*, 125.

¹⁷ Valentina Pop, "EU moves towards visa facilitation for Georgians," *EU Observer*, September 25, 2008, <http://euobserver.com/?aid=26811>.

¹⁸ *Economist*, Vol. 392 Issue 8642, August 1, 2009, 46-47,

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=43525336&site=ehost-live>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Renata Goldirova, "EU calls on US to respect bloc's powers in travel security issues," *EU Observer*, July 3,

2008, <http://euobserver.com/?aid=25795>.

²² Valentina Pop, "EU threatens Canada with visa war," *EU Observer*, September 16, 2009,

<http://euobserver.com/22/28695>.

²³ *Ibid.*

