

ABSTRACT

In this globalized world, the main obstruction of international mobility no longer comes from economic or physical constraints, but from the legal constraints imposed by the states in the form of passport and visa. However, the issuance of passport and visa have generated unequal rights in international mobility, as some passports enjoy higher freedom of mobility than others. This condition gave rise to the term “Passport Power” which is measured by the number of countries that can be entered by certain passport holders without enclosing a pre-departure visa. Nevertheless, passport power cannot be not solely determined by the states’ possession of material power, which can be seen in the case of China’s passport. China’s passport is considered as powerless, especially towards the OECD members. Although China plays an important role as the OECD’s top source of investment and tourists sender, none of the OECD members grant visa exemption or VoA access to China’s passport holders. Therefore, this research aims to address the question as to why do all of the OECD members not grant visa-free access to Chinese passport holders, albeit China’s possession of economic power in the form of investment and tourist source. To answer this, the author utilizes two interconnecting theoretical frameworks, namely: (1) international order and its role in shaping states’ behavior; and (2) international recognition and its impact on freedom of mobility of certain nationalities. The author argues that China’s passport powerlessness is affected by some factors beyond its domestic conditions. With this regard, the author discovers that China’s passport powerlessness towards the OECD countries is linked to its position as a challenger of the liberal international order. The challenger-label subsequently leads to the misrecognition of China’s power, in which it is perceived as a threat to the international status quo. Considering the fact that the OECD countries tend to limit the grant visa-waiver to their Western allies, it can be argued that the imposition of visa restriction for China is the extended impact of China’s threat reputation.

Keywords: Passport, visa, China, the OECD, international order, international recognition.

FOREWORD

All gratitude to Lord Jesus for His grace and protection so that the author can complete the thesis entitled “Explaining China’s Passport Powerlessness towards the OECD Countries: The Impact of International Order and International Recognition”. This thesis is submitted as one of the prerequisites to obtain a Bachelor of International Relations degree from the study program of International Relations, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Airlangga. The writing of this thesis originally stemmed from author’s interest in migration study. As the number of cross-border movement continues to grow, the issue of inequality in freedom of international mobility become increasingly visible, intriguing the author to explore the reasons behind this phenomenon.

Nevertheless, the issue of inequal freedom in international mobility is still limitedly explored. The previous studies in international mobility tend to only focus on domestic factors that may bar the cross-border movement of certain citizens. Although the grant of mobility freedom in the form of visa-free access is concluded bilaterally and multilaterally, the author found that there is a pattern in which high freedom is only given to the rich democracies. Departing from this reality, the author seeks to analyze this issue with broader frameworks, which is the international order and international recognition of the state, by narrowing the scope into the case of Chinese passport towards the OECD countries which have different positions within the international system.

In truth, the author is fully aware that this thesis could not be finished without the unwavering support of family, friends, and lecturers of Universitas Airlangga. The author also realize that this thesis is far from perfection and contains various shortcomings. Therefore, the author welcomes all form of constructive criticism and suggestions from each reader. Lastly, the authors hope that this thesis is useful for the future study of International Relations, especially regarding international mobility, international order, and international recognition.

Badung, 29th of June 2020

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIIB	Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDRC	Economic and Development Review Committee
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EPU	European Payments Union
ESTA	Electronic System of Travel Authority
eTA	Electronic Travel Authority
EXIM Bank	Export-Import Bank
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GNI	Gross National Income
IATA	International Air Transport Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization on Migration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NZeTA	New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority
ODI	Outward Direct Investment
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Co-operation
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
UK	United Kingdom
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
US	United States
VoA	Visa on Arrival
WTO	World Trade Organization

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