

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The phenomenon of globalization has an undoubtedly big contribution in increasing the cross-border interaction, including mobility. Along with the high intensity of transnational mobility, the issues of passport power and politics of visas have gained more attention in the international study. It was supported by the fact that passport and visa are the prerequisite documents for every individual to enter another country. In this case, a passport is used as a proof of identity and/or citizenship of a person, while a visa confers a right on an individual to enter the destination country for a specified time (Chi-Yung and Whalley, 2005:6).

Besides being the prerequisite documents of transnational mobility, passport and visa are the reflections of geopolitics and the country's stature towards the others. Moreover, they also imply the relationship between the two nations (Strutner, 2014:1). In consequence, it is natural that each country has a different passport power. The passport power itself is measured by the number of destinations that can be accessed by a passport holder without a visa requirement, or by enclosing a visa on arrival (VoA) which can be obtained when the individual has arrived in the destination country. Therefore, passport power is also seen as a privilege for a citizen of a certain country to enter another territory without permission from the foreign authority before travel (Passport Index, 2019:1).

Referring to the basic assumption of Realism and Neoliberalism about states' behavior, the rank of global passport power is expected to create a predicted pattern. Some people might claim that freedom of international mobility only belongs to the developed country, with the argument that rich and powerful countries can force weaker countries to give them visa-free access (Luedtke et al., 2010:148). This argument might be affirmed by the reality that most Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) members, which consists of the world's highest incomes countries, enjoy the freedom in entering more than 100 countries without visa requirements. Nevertheless, it should be highlighted that the passport

power is not fully determined by military power or wealth of a country, which can be seen in the case of China's passport.

As the so-called rising power, Chinese passport only occupies the 56th place in the Global Passport Power Rank 2019 which was compiled by Passport Index (2019:1). The rank is given since China's passport holders can only enter 76 out of 199 registered countries without a visa requirement. Those 199 registered countries consist of 193 members of the United Nations, Taiwan, Macau, Hong Kong, Kosovo, Palestine, and the Vatican. Moreover, in the 2019 Global Passport Rank compiled by Henley and Partner Passport Index (2019:1), China's passport was even placed on the 69th rank with visa exemptions on 70 of 227 destinations (including micro territories) which are registered on the database of International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The arrangement of global passport rank, both from Passport Index and Henley and Partner Passport Index, is based on the total mobility score of a country. For each destination that can be entered without a visa, the passport gains one mobility score. One mobility score is also given if the passport holder can visit another country by obtaining VoA (Henley and Partners, 2019:1). Those two criteria show that the mobility score is obtained if the passport can be used to enter another country without a pre-departure visa requirement. That is to say, the passport holders do not need to wait for the foreign authority's permission to enter their territory.

Data of the Passport Index (2019:1) shows that most of the countries who granted visa-free for China's passport holders are African countries, such as Ethiopia, Egypt, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Thus, geographical proximity cannot be categorized as a determining factor in international mobility freedom of China's passport holders. Furthermore, China's passport holders have no visa-free privilege from its neighboring countries, namely Japan and South Korea. China's passport holders are even obliged to apply for a pre-departure visa before entering Hong Kong territory, although it is part of China's Special Administrative Region (Passport Index, 2019:1).

Regarding these conditions, opinions arise that the high freedom of mobility for China's passport holders in Africa is linked to the close economic relations between China and the Africa region. To be noted that China has played an important role in the development of several countries in the Africa region (Mlambo et al., 2016:261). However, the link between close economic relations and freedom of mobility in China-Africa case cannot be seen in the case of China-Hong Kong. Though Hong Kong receives more than 50% of China's outward direct investment (ODI), Chinese passport holders are still obliged to enclose a pre-departure visa to enter Hong Kong territorial (Dollar, 2016:2; Passport Index, 2019:1). The same conditions are also seen in the case of China-US, China-Australia, and China-UK. Even when those countries are the main destinations of Chinese foreign investment, the data shows that Chinese passport holder does not get the visa-free privilege while entering their territorial (Passport Index, 2019:1).

Not only in terms of economy and geographical proximity factors, but the discrepancy of passport power theory in China's passport case can also be seen in terms of tourism. Pointing out to Neumayer's (2006:14) statement, tourism destination countries will tend to loosen its visa restrictions to attract foreign visitors, while the tourist-sender countries tend to get no visa restrictions in various countries, primarily from those tourism destinations countries. With a total of 129 million international departures throughout 2017, China is considered as the biggest tourist sender for several countries. The 10 main destinations for Chinese travelers are Thailand, Japan, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, the United States, South Korea, and Maldives (Ctrip and China Tourism Academy Joint-Report, 2018:6).

Nonetheless, only three of the ten destination countries decide to give the freedom of mobility for the Chinese passport holder. Those three countries are as follows: (1) Indonesia with visa-free access for 30 days; (2) Thailand with VoA privilege for 15 days; and (3) the Maldives with VoA privilege for 30 days. The other seven of the top destination countries decide to obligate Chinese tourists to enclose a pre-departure visa before the trip. Therefore, Neumayer's (2006:14)

assumption about the linkage between visa and tourism does not apply in the China's passport case.

The explanations above show that the economic power of China, specifically in the form of investment and its role as tourist sender, does not increase Chinese freedom of international mobility significantly. The visa requirement policy for China's passport holders is implemented both by developed and developing countries. However, the data of Passport Index (2019:1) shows that there is a common pattern of behavior among the high-income/developed countries regarding the issue of Chinese passport holders' mobility. In this case, the high-income countries are represented by the OECD.

Currently, all of the 36 members of the OECD implement the visa requirement policy for Chinese passport holders who would like to enter their country. Although some of the OECD members are the main destination of Chinese foreign investment (UK, US, Australia) and tourists (US, Japan, and South Korea), none of the members loosen the visa restriction towards Chinese citizens. This case has brought a gap of knowledge as if China's bargaining power, especially the investment and tourist source, does not give a remarkable impact on China's passport power. This, subsequently, raise the need for exploring further factors that might affect China's passport powerlessness towards the OECD countries.

1.2 Research Question

Concerning the background that has been described above, this research addresses 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?

1.3 Literature Review

In the past two decades, several academicians have contributed in analyzing the factors that affect the passport power of a state. Some notable scholars are Neumayer (2006:14), Luedtke et al. (2010:151), Koslowski (2014:19), Mau et al. (2015:7), Gulzau et al. (2016:4). Although each research was done in a different year, every scholar found various commonalities of factors that lie behind the

passport power. In general, those factors can be grouped into three categories, i.e: (1) the factors that lie in the sender countries; (2) the factors that lie in the destination countries; and (3) the factors that lie outside or between the sender and destination countries.

Regarding the first category, Neumayer (2006:14), Luedtke et al. (2010:151) and Mau et al. (2015:7) explain that several conditions in the sender countries should be taken as important considerations before giving the visa-free access to their citizens. Those conditions cover: (1) the history of political conflict; (2) democracy and transparency level; (3) economic condition of the country; (4) number of populations; (5) potential number of tourists; and (6) health and education level of the citizens. The first and second factors are based on the assumption that a nation's history of political conflict, democracy, and transparency level are the determining factors of mass migration and refugee flow. Moreover, democracy and transparency are related to the trust of one state toward another state. These factors are considered as important since trust is the most essential element in the visa-waiver negotiation between states.

Concerning the third factor, which is the economic condition of the sender country, scholars see that the wealth or economic power of the sender countries is significant because of two reasons. First, if the economic condition of the sender country is deficient, the citizens tend to migrate to the more prosperous countries to improve their economics. This then raises concerns about the mass migration of workers. Conversely, if the sender countries have strong economic power, the possibility for the country's citizen to get visa-free access is higher, with the hope that visa-free access grant will give a spill-over effect to the economic condition of the destination countries (Neumayer, 2006:14; Luedtke et al. 2010:151; Mau et al. 2015:7).

Similar to the reason for the first, second, and third factors, the number of populations in the sender country also possesses great importance in the considerations of visa-waiver from the destination countries. The higher the population, the lower the possibility for the country to get a visa-free grant from the other, for it is aimed to stem the flow of migrations. Meanwhile, in terms of the fifth

factor, the high number of tourist potential is assumed to raise the possibility of visa-waiver grant towards a country. Last but not least, the health and education level of the sender country is linked to the consideration of human resource quality and the prevention of the spread of endemic diseases by the immigrants (Neumayer, 2006:14; Luedtke et al. 2010:152; Mau et al. 2015:7).

On the subject of the second category, which refers to the factors that lie in the destination countries, Neumayer (2006:15) stated tourism is one of the key reasons for a country to implement a visa-free policy towards several countries. That is to say, tourism destination countries tend to loosen its visa policy to attract foreign visitors. Besides supporting the tourism field, the decision to loosen the visa policy is also motivated by the country's intention in increasing the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI), international trade, the flow of science, and international business. About the third category, several scholars argue that the implementation of visa-waiver policy, to some extent, is set on various factors which lie outside or between the sender and destination countries. These factors might take the form of the historic or economic relations between states. This kind of relationship usually generates a reciprocal behavior, in which the countries will give visa-free privilege towards each other's citizen (Neumayer:2006:16)

Still, in the discussion of the third category, Neumayer (2006:15) and Luedtke et al. (2010:151) agree that historical values such as colonial relations and commonwealth types of government often push the colonial countries to perform the visa-free policy towards their ex-colonies and vice versa. This view is based on the assumption that both colonial and its ex-colony share common cultural heritages which create a sense of belonging between the two nations. The consentaneous between Neumayer (2006:14) and Luedtke et al. (2010:151) can also be seen in their common view about the importance of economic relations, especially trade and investment, in determining visa policy. They argue that the economic relations between states are often followed by the increase of labor migration, which subsequently becomes the concern of both countries in deciding whether they need to loosen or tighten the visa policy towards each other (Neumayer, 2006:14; Luedtke et al. 2010:151).

Furthermore, Luedtke et al. (2010:151) also elucidate some additional factors which get to be countries' consideration in carrying out the visa-policy. The first factor is the geographical position, with the assumption that geographical proximity and language homogeneity promote the visa-free policy between countries. The second factor is international terrorism which is linked to national security. In line with the view of Luedtke et al. (2010), Koslowski (2014:18) emphasize the significance of international terrorism and national security issue within the consideration of visa-waiver policy. Through the analysis of the US' Visa-Waiver Program's Dynamic, Koslowski (2014:19) pointed up the significant change of visa policy post 9/11 tragedy. With this regard, terrorism has become the main consideration for countries in permitting an individual to enter their territory, particularly those who come from the Islamic states.

Adding the previous factors, Gulzau et al. (2016:4) then found out that the passport power is not only determined by traditional factors which have been mentioned by Neumayer (2006:14), Luedtke et al. (2010:151), Koslowski (2014:19), and Mau et al. (2015:7). Later on, Gulzau et al. (2016:4) explain how regional integration also plays a role in shaping the visa policy. Gulzau et al. (2016:5) argue that the contemporary regional groupings have encouraged the liberalization of human capital among countries in the region. In the further step, regional integrations are arguably able to increase the bargaining power of a country in the visa-waiver negotiation. This condition refers to the possibility of a regional group to impose standardization of foreign relations, whether among the countries within the region or with the other external powers (Gulzau et al., 2016:5).

The previous literature reviews have shown that the passport power of a state is determined by a variety of factors that influence the eligibility of a nation in obtaining visa exemptions. Even so, none of the research above presents an adequate answer to the Chinese passport issue. Instead of explaining the reason behind its powerlessness, those factors exhibit numerous anomalies between the reputedly determining factors of passport power and China's passport power. In particular, regarding the case of China and the OECD members, some notable anomalies can be seen in the following matters: (1) how the economic benefits

offered by China, especially in the form of investment, is not impactful to the freedom of Chinese passport holders mobility in OECD countries; (2) how most Chinese tourists' top destinations countries, including some OECD members, still impose the visa restriction, albeit the fact that China can supply a high number of tourist; and (3) how two of OECD members, namely South Korea and Japan, decided to require a pre-departure visa from Chinese passport holder despite their geographical proximity (Passport Index, 2019:1).

The insufficiency of the preceding literature in explaining China's passport issue has grown the need to explore some alternative factors which could provide a satisfactory answer regarding China's passport powerlessness. Concerning this, the author argues that China's passport powerlessness towards the OECD countries is associated with the factor of international order and international recognition. The use of these two factors departs from two reasons: (1) the distinction between China' and the OECD members' position within the international order; and (2) states' tendency to give freedom of mobility towards countries with similar background, especially in terms of political and economic condition (Mau et al, 2012:51)

In this exposition, the international order factor explains how China's rise poses challenges on the liberal order where the OECD members play a significant role (Gungwu and Yonian, 2008:3). China's challenges subsequently affect the OECD's recognition of China, in which China obtained a negative reputation. Over the years, this negative reputation has put China on a disadvantageous position in international politics. Instead of being perceived as part of great power, China is continuously regarded as a threat to the international community. The threat label has arguably demolished China's bargaining power to obtain passport power. This is supported by the notion that the visa-free access to the Western states is linked to a level of trust and country's acceptance in the Western alliance of states (Ginsburg, 2008:8).

1.4 Theoretical Framework

In analyzing the reason behind China's passport powerlessness, the author uses two interconnecting theoretical frameworks. The first framework is the international order and its role in shaping states' behavior. The second framework is the international recognition which reflects the international acceptance of status and role of a state. Both international order and international recognition explanations then lead to further analysis of how factors beyond the domestic condition affect the freedom of international mobility, specifically in the case of China's passport holders.

1.4.1 International Order and Its Role in Shaping States' Behavior

The term 'order' has various meanings in the context of international politics. An order essentially indicates stability and a structured pattern of relationships among states (Hurrell, 2007:2). Ikenberry (2001:23) defines order as a set of governing arrangements between states, including its fundamental rules, principles, and institutions. That is to say, an international order can be built out of combinations of alliances, organizations (formal or informal), rules and requirements, norms, as well as another form of interactions that Mazarr et al. (2016:7) call as 'ordering mechanism'.

It is important to note that the terms international order and international system refer to two different meanings. The international system itself points to the comprehensive global context in which states operate. Furthermore, the international system reflects all forms of interaction that exist among states, whether in the economic, social, political, cultural, and even ecological aspects. From the neorealist perspective, the international system is characterized by two main features which put constraints on state's behavior and push them to interact in certain ways, i.e.: (1) the anarchic nature; and (2) the polarity, where the distribution of power across states exist (Mazarr et al., 2016:8).

Compared to the concept of the international system, the concept of the international order is beyond such widely systemic realities, where it discusses the organized configurations within the international system. International order

presumes the existence of institutionalization or established structure built by the ordering mechanisms. This ordering mechanisms arguably play some role in governing the relations and behaviors among actors within the international system. Once an order is established, it will become one of the factors that shape states' behavior and preferences. Therefore, international order can be perceived as an input that affects states' behavior and/or an output of stable and predictable relations among states (see Figure 1.1 below) (Mazarr et al., 2016:8-9). In this research, passport and visa issuances can be identified as a form of order in international mobility. The author views that passport and visa act as an input of international mobility order, which aims to create an output of ordered and regulated international mobility of people.

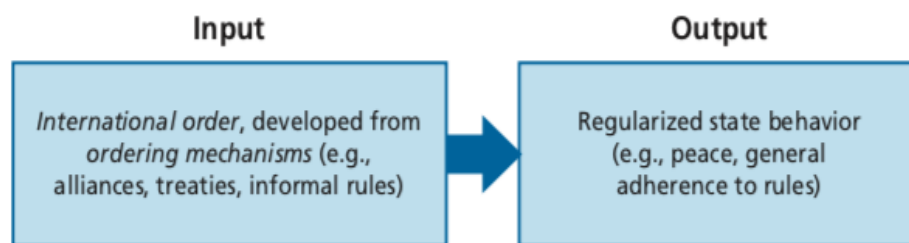


Figure 1.1 Schematic Understanding of the Role of International Order
(Mazarr et al., 2016:9)

Aside from the existing order in international mobility, it needs to be underlined that the world currently works under the liberal order. The liberal international order poses an open and rule-based international order which comprises three main elements, namely: (1) the security order; (2) the economic order; and (3) the human rights order (Kundnani, 2017:4). The liberal international order is constructed and maintained through the promotion of liberal values and the development of various institutions. The OECD itself, which Smythe (1998:24) called as the “missionary for values of liberalization”, plays significantly as the input of liberal international order, especially in the economic domain.

The OECD’s role as a liberal international economic order’s input is shown by its commitment to promote liberal economic ideas through policy

recommendations and developmental aid provision. With this regard, the OECD aims to shape an open and inclusive international economy. In addition, the OECD also promotes the implementation of democratic values through the Washington Consensus (Ruckert, 2008:102). However, the OECD's liberal economic order is challenged by the extraordinary economic growth of China and its increasing presence in the economic development field. The use of China's economic power remains enigmatic and unpredictable (Shambaugh, 2013:21). Since China is an illiberal power, the OECD's response towards the rise of China is rather negative. OECD's negative response is reflected in OECD's recognition of China, which is further explained in the following sections.

1.4.2 International Recognition and Its Impact on Citizen's Freedom of Mobility

International recognition is a crucial aspect of international politics, and thus it becomes one of the main goals of every state. When a state possesses international recognition, it can position itself as an entity worthy of acceptance and respect among other important global actors (Bolewski and Rietig, 2008:83). Furthermore, international recognition also represents a process of how a state becomes an actor and takes a particular identity within the international system (Greenhill, 2008:344). Broadly stated, international recognition matters to international politics for it is linked to how states regard themselves and engage with the others.

For some scholars, international recognition is often regarded as the synonym of honor, prestige, and reputation. In the context of international politics, Wendt (in Murray, 2018:11) found out that states' desire for recognition can take two forms, i.e. the "thick" and "thin" recognition. The thin recognition refers to a situation where a state is being acknowledged as an independent subject in a community of law (Strömbom, 2014:171). In essence, thin recognition is about the acknowledgment of the state's sovereignty which makes it become a legitimate actor in international relations.

On the other hand, the thick recognition emphasizes on actor's alterity and the struggle to gain acknowledgment of distinction, uniqueness, or a particular

identity (Gustafsson, 2015:2). Through thick recognition, states sought to attain a respectful social standing in relation to others. There are two main forms of thick recognition that most countries focus on, namely: (1) the power status, in which it is often achieved from material strength in the form of military and economic clout; and (2) the normative particularity, which it links to actor's ideological, national image, and soft power. When a state has achieved thick recognition, it tends to enjoy various privileges in international relations (Zhang, 2017:12-13).

The international recognition, both in the sense of thick and thin recognition, plays an important role in increasing the legitimacy of states' behavior within international relations. The legitimacy makes the states' behaviors seem internationally or domestically acceptable and right. For example, when a state is recognized as a hegemon, the other states tend to follow its direction and accept the social structure in which its power exercised. Moreover, international recognition helps the states in growing mutual trust, consolidating solidarity, as well as expanding cooperation among actors (Zhang, 2017:13).

The international recognition also frequently promotes the potential of fungibility, for which a simple confirmation of a state's qualities can naturally expand to an admiration of the entire entity (Zhang, 2017:13). This fungibility potential then explains the nexus between international recognition and states' freedom of mobility, which is seen in the case of OECD. By being internationally recognized as the developed and high-income countries, the OECD members occupy the top 20 of global passport ranks (Luedtke et al. 2010:150). It indicates an expanded admiration of their wealth, which created the perception that citizen of OECD members does not pose a threat in the form of economic migrants.

Contrary to the OECD members, China grapples various challenges both in attaining thick and thin international recognitions. First, in terms of thin recognition, China is still engaged in a battle over diplomatic recognition with Taiwan (Rich, 2009:160). Second, in terms of thick recognition, challenges for China stand on two main issues, i.e.: (1) China's incapability of solving and influencing the decision regarding crucial international problems; and (2) Western's perception towards China as a threat of the current international order

(Zhang, 2017:15-16). Nonetheless, this exposition focuses on the discussion of the latter factor.

The author views that China's lack of thick recognition is linked to China's position as an out-group within the existing liberal international order. The out-group status has fueled the fear that China's growth may destabilize the status quo. Consequently, China's status as a great power is constantly debated, especially in the Western world (Deng, 2008:103). China's marginalized status in the international politics then contributes to China's passport powerlessness towards the OECD members, considering that the OECD members will only loosen its visa restrictions to the developed or semi-developed liberal democratic nations (Luedtke et al. 2010:147)

1.5 Thesis Statement

Based on the aforementioned theoretical frameworks, the author argues that the powerlessness of China's passport towards the OECD members is generated by two interconnecting factors, namely the international order and international recognition. Regarding the first factor, the OECD members who take a significant part in the creation and maintenance of the liberal international economic order perceived China's rise as a threat to the existing order. Furthermore, China's threat-label inflicts the marginalization of China's status in international politics. China's lack of international recognition then leads to a low level of trust towards China's passport holders, despite China's possession of material power which is supposed to support the acknowledgment of the thick recognition.

1.6 Research Type

This thesis is an explanatory type of research which aims to explore the reasons behind China's passport powerlessness towards the OECD members by seeking the connection between two variables. With this regard, China's passport power act as the dependent variable, while the international order and international recognition act as the independent variable. Therefore, this research explains in details as to how the international order and international recognition affect the

freedom of Chinese passport holder mobility in OECD countries, which subsequently take part in determining China's passport power.

1.7 Research Scope

The scope of this research is narrowed on the explanation of how the two factors, specifically the international order and international recognition, affect China's freedom of international mobility in the OECD countries. The freedom of international mobility itself is represented by the visa-free or the VoA access enjoyed by the states. The scope of this study starts from the year 2014 until 2018. The year 2014 is chosen because there was a significant increase in Chinese international mobility, in which China issued 16 million passports within a year, signifying the decline of exit restriction for the Chinese citizen. Meanwhile, the year 2018 is chosen because this research focuses on China's passport status towards the OECD members by the time January 1st 2019, whereas the data shows that all of the OECD members still enforce the visa requirement towards Chinese passport holders.

1.8 Data Collection and Data Analysis

For this research, the author collected various primary and secondary data. The primary data of this research was obtained from the Chinese government official website which provides the documents of China's visa-free access and visa negotiation status with various states. Withal the official documents, the author also used several secondary data in the form of books, journals, international media news sites, and working papers which are published by credible think tanks and publishers. In addition, the author used and processed some data from two credible international sites, namely the Passport Index and Henley and Partners Passport Index. In analyzing the data, the author used the qualitative method of research. The qualitative method of this research refers to the author's interpretation of the data that cannot be described numerically.

1.9 Discussion Structure

This thesis consists of three discussion chapters. Chapter two discusses the OECD's role in creating and maintaining the liberal international economic order. Chapter three identifies China's challenges on the OECD's order and examines how the challenger-label affects the OECD members' recognition of China. Chapter four comprises further analysis on the impact of China's misrecognition on Chinese freedom of international mobility in the OECD countries. Here, freedom of mobility is represented by the number of visa-free access, which later determines China's passport power. Last but not least, Chapter five serves the conclusion of this thesis by outlining essential findings, confirming the thesis statement, as well as pointing the recommendation for further research.