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Mobility Diplomacy:

How States Maximize Passport Power

The prerogative to authorize cross-border movement is "the *sine qua non* of sovereignty" and an intrinsic feature of the interstate system as a whole (Hollifield 2012, 347; Freeman 1998; Aleinikoff 2002; Guiraudon and Lahav 2000; Torpey 2000). A state's discretionary power to enforce its borders by filtering visitors is embodied in its consulates abroad and immigration officers at the border—an apparatus that all sovereign states share (see, e.g. Gilboy 1991; Heyman 1995; Kim 2011; Satzewich 2014). The treatment of a passport by consular officials is an indication of whether the entity who vouches for that individual is considered legitimate by the receiving state.[1] The assessment of passports and authorization of cross-border movements is thus one of the most common everyday ways that states recognize each other's sovereignty.

A number of important studies in international relations have shown how cross-border movements factor into interstate power politics; migrants are used as pawns when states strategically instigate or interdict human flows to gain leverage over other states (Greenhill 2010; Tsourapas 2018a; 2018b; Adamson and Tsourapas 2019). But this literature has largely focused on the power politics of *migration* (resettlement across borders) at the expense of *mobility* (pre-authorized access to short-term movement). This neglect is unfortunate because there are immense cross-national differentials in access to visa-free travel that have far-reaching material

[1] For example, the EU does not allow Crimeans who received Russian passports after the annexation of the peninsula in 2014 to apply for Schengen visas (*Khaleej Times* July 23, 2019).

consequences at the micro and macro levels. Global mobility is a form of capital (Flamm & Kaufmann 2006). Like other forms of capital, the uneven distribution of access to pre-authorized movement compounds inequality levels within and across states (Hackl 2018). There are manifold material and immaterial benefits associated with having greater passport power. We know that individuals use citizenship by investment schemes to engage in a form of citizenship 'venue-shopping' to maximize their global mobility (Shachar 2017; Mavelli 2018). But how do *states* increase their capital reserves in this domain? How do national governments maximize passport power?

This article introduces the concept of *mobility diplomacy* to explain how states strategically transact over the pre-authorized movement of their citizens at an aggregate level. Wealth and political stability are insufficient conditions for gaining passport power; governments must leverage these resources to create the external perception of their citizens as "safe" travelers who do not need to be individually vetted. I find that in order to be successful, ruling elites from developing and lesser developed countries must persuade highly developed countries that their citizens will *not* become migrants. The allure of non-immigration is created by projecting the image of state strength in identity management, migration enforcement, and policing and intelligence-sharing. Governments are materially rewarded when they can convince other states that they are reliable security partners who can vouch for their citizens as temporary consumers rather than potential migrants. Unlike material forms of capital, the uneven distribution of mobility derives entirely from the opinion that states have about the desirability of each other's citizens. Passport rankings are a direct reflection of a given state's global standing; they provide a comprehensive metric of how every passport-granting state is perceived and ranked by every

other state, every year. Global mobility is a soft power asset; it is a form of capital that is based on external perceptions of attractiveness that have measurable material effects (Nye 2011).

To demonstrate this concept, I examine an extreme and unlikely case of successful mobility diplomacy—the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In 2018, the UAE passport was crowned the "number one" most powerful passport in the world.[2] This leap occurred in a highly concentrated amount of time: in 2006, UAE citizens could visit only thirty-five countries without a visa, by 2020 this number has increased fivefold.[3] As an Arab and Muslim-majority state, the UAE presents a hard case for changing international perceptions about what makes for a "safe" population that should be allowed to travel without pre-departure security vetting (Sparks 2006; Blackwood 2015). How and why did the vast majority of sovereign states in the world change their formal admittance policies towards UAE citizens in just over a decade?

I find that the European Union played a critical role in increasing the power of Emirati passports. After successfully signing a Schengen visa waiver, the UAE's passport power accelerated exponentially, not only because the Schengen bloc includes access to large number of states at once, but also because the UAE's foreign ministry was able to leverage its successful negotiations with the EU to persuade other states to follow suit. I evaluate the robustness of this

[2] The UAE is number 1 in Arton Capital's passport index (with a current mobility score of 178) (Passport Index 2020).

[3] In the Henley Passport Index, the UAE rose from rank 62 in 2006 (mobility score of 35) to rank 18 in 2020 (mobility score of 171) (Henley Passport Index 2020). The difference in these rankings is due to slight differences in how 'visa-free' travel is coded and the pool of possible destinations. See appendix for explanation of data sources and coding schemes.

finding by examining alternative explanations and including mini-case studies of the 20 percent (n=40) of countries that experienced the greatest increases in their passport power. I find that these states are largely developing countries. While they vary by population and territory size, world-region, majority-religion, and regime-type, the one commonality that they all share is recent visa-free access to the EU's Schengen zone. The critical role played by the EU in all of these cases suggests that as a supranational entity, the EU wields an immense power to reconfigure the *value of national citizenship* for not only its own member-states, but also ones that entirely outside of its geographic and political domain.

I first situate this study in the literature on the power politics of cross-border movement. I then define mobility diplomacy as the means by which states accumulate greater mobility capital, explain the incentives for doing so, and identify the key actors involved. I then explain my methodology and case selection. I begin the empirical discussion of this paper by assessing economic strength and political stability as alternative explanations to mobility diplomacy, finding that neither can account for how states accrue passport power. I then proceed to the case study of the UAE and mini case studies. I conclude by identifying the contributions of this article to the study of power politics and our understanding of the international politics that shape national citizenship regimes.

Investigating the Power Politics of Cross-Border Flows

The mainstream international relations literature has traditionally treated cross-border flows as an issue of "low politics" or domestic politics, rather than a "high politics" issue of inter-state power dynamics (Teitelbaum 1994; Hollifield 2012). This changed after the cold war, and a growing literature now shows how cross-border movements factor into grand strategy and interstate power politics, especially in the realm of international security (Zolberg 1989; Weiner

1992-3; Andreas 2000; Weiner and Russell 2001; Adamson 2006; Rudolph 2003; 2006; Greenhill 2010; Adamson and Tsourapas 2019). While important for demonstrating that cross-border movements generate power asymmetries between states, this literature tends to only recognize cross-border flows as an issue of power politics when it involves the *coercive* dimensions of interstate power and the instigation or interdiction of mass *migration* flows.

Rudolph (2003), for example, argues that migration becomes an instrument of grand strategy when cross-border flows are connected to a state's threat perception across three dimensions: geopolitical interests, material production, and internal security. This has led to a heightened militarization of borders worldwide, especially around highly developed liberal democratic states (Andreas and Synder 2000; Jones 2017). The fear of humanitarian migrants is apparent in the migrant interdiction tactics that the United States, Australia, and EU have deployed to prevent potential asylum-seekers from reaching their territories and claiming refugee status (Andrijasevic 2010; Andersson 2014; Kahn 2019; Lori and Schilde 2020). As Arar (2017) argues, refugee containment in Middle East and North Africa, as a form of "non-migration" to the West, is a crucial aspect of contemporary global migration governance. These studies show that, whether through bilateral relations or by outsourcing to private actors (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Nyberg Sorensen 2013), highly developed states often leverage their power over developing countries to contain cross-border movements.

At the same time, this desire to contain migration also makes developed states vulnerable, because migrant-sending and transit states can strategically use migration flows to increase their bargaining power and induce political, military or economic concessions (Greenhill 2010). This can have the effect of making weaker, less militarily powerful states gain leverage over states that have greater economic or military capabilities. Greenhill argues that democratic states are

more vulnerable to this type of coercion because of their commitments to international norms and treaties. While this form of coercion is underappreciated, it is incredibly common. Indeed, "well over forty groups of displaced people have been used as pawns in at least fifty-six discrete attempts at coercive engineered migration since the advent of the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention alone" (Greenhill 2010, 15). This work precedes the Syrian civil war and Europe's "refugee crisis," but it can presciently explain President Erdogan's 2016 threat to open the floodgates of migrants into Europe in response to the EU's move to suspend talks on Turkey's membership (Timur and Nordland 2016).

The strategic deployment or containment of cross-border flows is not limited to forced migrants; labor migrants are also used as a source leverage in interstate power politics (Thiollet 2011; Adamson 2018; Koinova 2018; Tsourapas 2018a; 2018b; Adamson and Tsourapas 2019). Tsourapas (2018a) develops the concept of *migration interdependence* to show how migrant host states gain leverage over sending states, arguing "that a host state may leverage its position for coercive purposes against a sending state in two ways: either by reducing a sending state's migration interdependence through restriction, or by severing it completely through displacement" (2018a, 385). More than regime-type or international obligations, the efficacy of this form of coercion stems from the target state's level of dependency upon migrants. Adamson and Tsourapas (2019) propose a realist framework for theorizing migration as a form of interstate leverage. Migrants are the material source of this power; the larger the number of jobs and remittances at stake, the greater the receiving state's capacity for instigating behavioral change.

Collectively, these works show how cross-border movements factor into high politics when migration flows are directly connected to security and economic interests. One limitation of this literature is its tendency to fall back on a realist paradigm that focuses on coercion as the

method of inducing behavioral change. This likely stems from a larger tendency to conflate global power politics or *realpolitik* with realism or neo-realism (Goddard and Nexon 2016). This circumscribes the conversation to the material dimensions of cross-border movements (i.e. the size of migrant stocks or flows), hindering our ability to theorize shared perceptions and norms of cross-border authorization as a domain of global power politics in its own right. If security power, economic power, and power over opinion are three essential capabilities that determine global power asymmetries (Nye 2011), then the existing literature has largely focused on the first two of these dimensions, overlooking how cross-border management can also increase or decrease state capabilities in the realm of power over opinion.

As a result, the literature tends to conflate all cross-border movement with *migration* (temporary or permanent forms of forced or voluntary resettlement), while overlooking immense cross-national differences in access to global *mobility* (short-term sojourns regulated by visa-regimes). Attending to the power politics of mobility is important because contemporary border enforcement is about more than restriction; control is less about simply excluding individuals than it is about gaining greater discretionary power over who should be excluded or included and on what basis. States cooperate and compete with each other to simultaneously open and close their borders, "but do so selectively, indicating, quite decisively, whom they desire to admit (those with specialized skills, superb talents, or increasingly, deep pockets), while at the same time erecting higher and higher legal walls to block out those deemed unwanted or 'too different'" (Shachar 2020, 9). Practices like migrant interdiction involve high level interstate cooperation to block "undesirable" individuals, while visa-waivers determine which nationalities are "desirable." Attending to the power politics of restriction *and* access is essential for

understanding how states use the management of cross-border movements to maximize other sources of power and influence the behavior of other states.

Mobility Diplomacy: The Allure of "Non-Immigration"

This section brings research on the power politics of migration in conversation with the interdisciplinary literature on mobility. It puts forth a novel approach to understanding how states accumulate greater mobility capital, explains the incentives for doing so, and identifies the key actors involved.

Migration and mobility are often used interchangeably, but they are distinct—at times even opposed. International migration involves the resettlement of individuals across borders, whereas global mobility is about a national population's baseline level of *access* to cross-border movement. Sager defines mobility as the potential for movement rather than the movement itself. This is because the privilege of mobility comes from both the opportunities to travel when and where one pleases as well as the feasibility of the choice not to travel (Sager 2006, 465). In other words, mobility is "a form of capital, similar to economic, social, or cultural capital" (Flamm & Kaufmann 2006, 167; Kronlid 2008). A robust interdisciplinary literature shows that access to mobility highly stratified and spatial mobility is connected to economic and social mobility (Cresswell 2006; Sheller and Urry 2006; Urry 2007; Bergmann and Sager 2008; Adey *et al.* 2014; Sheller 2018). Mobility and immobility are intimately related, as the sanctioning of certain "qualified" travelers directly builds upon the increased criminalization of other "unqualified" travelers (De Genova and Peutz 2010; Andersson 2014; Jones 2017; Hackl 2018).

A given state's mobility capital can be quantified with passport rankings. While they have not garnered much attention from Political Scientists, passport rankings are a useful metric for illustrating a "relational conception of authority that uncovers hierarchical relationships

between states" (Lake 2007, 49). German passport-holders, for example, are free to travel to 189 countries, while only 26 states allow Afghans to enter without pre-departure authorization (Henley Passport Index 2020). This does not mean that Afghans cannot travel, but it does mean that the costs are exponentially greater for them, as is their likelihood of being criminalized for crossing international borders.

For individuals, greater passport power means less time and money required for travel, larger domains for tourism, and more opportunities for expanding into new markets. For states, greater passport power is a metric of prestige, a marker of a political influence and alliances, and a source of income that can spur tourism and trade. Greater visa-free access can act as a "safety valve" for cyclical unemployment, buffering states' ability to weather economic crises.[4] Soft power has been associated with increases in exports (Rose 2005), and countries that issue more powerful passports have higher exports as well as higher overall levels of international trade (Nitsch 2019). Cross-national differences in access to pre-authorized travel are so stark that an entire industry has emerged to capitalize on the demand for and supply of global mobility, allowing states to profit from their mobility capital by selling passports (Abrahamian 2015; Shachar 2017; Mavelli 2018). The citizenship by investment industry has created a new form of rentierism, allowing states to generate an external source of income that is not connected to the economic exploitation of the resident population. For smaller states, inflows from citizenship-by-

[4] The safety valve doctrine posits that spatial mobility relieves economic pressures (Danhof 1941).

investment programs can have far-reaching macroeconomic implications, creating strong economic incentives for the lobbying of visa waivers.[5]

While the mobility literature has established that there are staggering cross-national differences in access to cross-border movement, less attention has gone to explaining how state's mobility level may change. The concept of *mobility diplomacy* fills this gap; it encompasses all diplomatic processes and lobbying efforts that states deploy in order to increase the power of their passports. I argue that states with lower levels of mobility can change their global standing by using the allure of *non-immigration* to target more powerful states through attraction rather than coercion. The promise of non-immigration is not only used to contain human movement, it can also be a powerful way of lubricating cross-border flows. Mobility diplomacy is a weapon of the weak—it is used by states outside of the highly developed world to convince the "gate-holders" of the developed world that their citizens are safe enough for pre-authorized travel. *Who* the first movers are matters; prestige comes from gaining recognition from the territories perceived as the most desirable to visit and the most discerning when it comes to filtering visitors. States converge on perceptions of population safety (or threat) and the changed behavior of one state can be used to convince others to also ease (or erect) mobility controls. Mobility power is not predetermined by material sources of state power—indeed, opening borders becomes a means of reconfiguring those resources.

This concept directly builds upon Adamson and Tsourapas' (2019) concept of *migration diplomacy* and other studies that show how states use diplomatic methods to achieve goals

[5] For example, inflows from citizenship by investment in St. Kitts and Nevis accounted for 25 percent of its GDP in 2013 (Gold and El-Ashram 2015).

related to migration or strategically use migration as a means of achieving other aims. Adamson and Tsourapas define migration diplomacy as "states' use of diplomatic tools, processes, and procedures to manage cross-border population mobility" (Adamson and Tsourapas 2019, 115-116). This definition (perhaps unintentionally) conflates mobility and migration. For the purposes of analytical clarity, mobility diplomacy is distinct in its scope; it is about efforts to secure pre-authorized short-term movement between two or more states. The object of these negotiations is not to contain or resettle populations but rather to decrease layers of cross-border security vetting. This distinction is useful for lending greater precision to our study of the international relations that structure different types of cross-border movements and how they interact.

On a global scale, the actor that wields the most mobility power is the EU. The source of this power is similar to the EU's market power. Instead of a normative soft power, Damro (2012) argues that the EU influences states by withholding or granting access to its common market. Similarly, by creating a common border-free zone, the EU has constructed an asset that it can strategically withhold or grant access to as a way of influencing the behavior of other states. This power emerged because the principle of free movement is one of the cornerstones of the development of the union. Internal mobility was established by lifting border controls between five countries with the Schengen agreement of 1985, and has since expanded to 26 states with various treaties (Geddes 2008; Boswell and Geddes 2011). For third country nationals, the EU manages cross-border authorization by categorizing all passport-issuing states into a "negative" or blacklist (annex I, countries whose citizens need visas to enter the Schengen zone) and a "positive" or whitelist (annex II, those who have pre-authorized entry) (Council Regulation (EU) 2018/1806). The common visa system means that pre-departure authorization from one member-state grants an individual automatic access to all. Conversely, a rejection from one member-state

leads to an automatic rejection from all. Studies have found that this convergence has heightened the barriers to entry, and some have used the term "fortress Europe" to refer to the militarization of the external border of the Schengen zone concurrently with the lifting of visa controls within it (Ugur 1995; Huysmans 2000; Givens and Luedtke 2004).

The common migration and asylum policy effectively carved out a policy domain for the EU to have its own 'international migration relations' with countries outside of the union (Lavenex 2006; Geddes 2005; 2014). Since 2005, these external relations have fallen under the EU calls its "Global Approach to Migration and Mobility" (GAMM). The EU has developed a range of "mobility agreements" with migrant-sending or transit states to interdict or contain migrants in exchange for development aid, market access, or other privileges (Geddes 2005; 2014; Lavenex and Kunz 2008; Fargues and Fandrich 2012; Içduygu and Üstübici 2014). Jurje and Lavenex (2014), for example, show that the EU engages in strategic issue-linkage by including migration clauses in its trade agreements. The focus of this research has been cross-border *restriction*—the EU's mobility agreements are essentially "immobility" agreements (Geddes 2014, 141). Less attention has gone to showing how the EU also uses *access* to the Schengen zone to forward its interests. As a supranational entity, the EU has large reserves of mobility as an asset as most of the countries at the top of the passport rankings are its member-states. But beyond its own borders, the EU can also strategically grant visa-free access to the Schengen zone to increase the mobility power of other states.

The EU is somewhat unique because it is a highly developed political system that cannot be reduced to a discussion of its member-states and it does not simply act as their agent (Geddes

2014, 144).[6] Outside of the EU, the most important actors are high-level decision makers and the consular staff of national governments who have the power to change and implement official visa policies. There are no hard and fast rules about who should be allowed in as tourists, which makes the authority to grant visa-free travel a flexible domain of discretionary sovereign power that is not constrained by international conventions. Even within democratic states, the right to open or close borders in a targeted way is considered a plenary power of executive authority, less open to judicial review or democratic deliberation than other policy arenas (e.g. Johnson 1993; Aleinikoff 2002; Charles 2010). Executive powers thus have a large amount of discretionary power to establish visa-waivers or erect visa barriers as a way of 'rewarding' or 'punishing' other states. Though less visible in foreign policy negotiations, interior police forces also play a critical role in effective mobility diplomacy. This is because mobility controls can only be eased if foreign states have faith in each other's interior security forces. States project strength by showing that they have control over their passport supply and are effective at migration enforcement.

Methodology and Case Selection

How do states increase the value of their citizenship documents? I answer this question by employing the case-study method for the purposes of theory-building, selecting an extreme case on the dependent variable. Sampling on the dependent variable has been discouraged because it can lead the researcher to unwittingly truncate the sample of relevant cases (Geddes

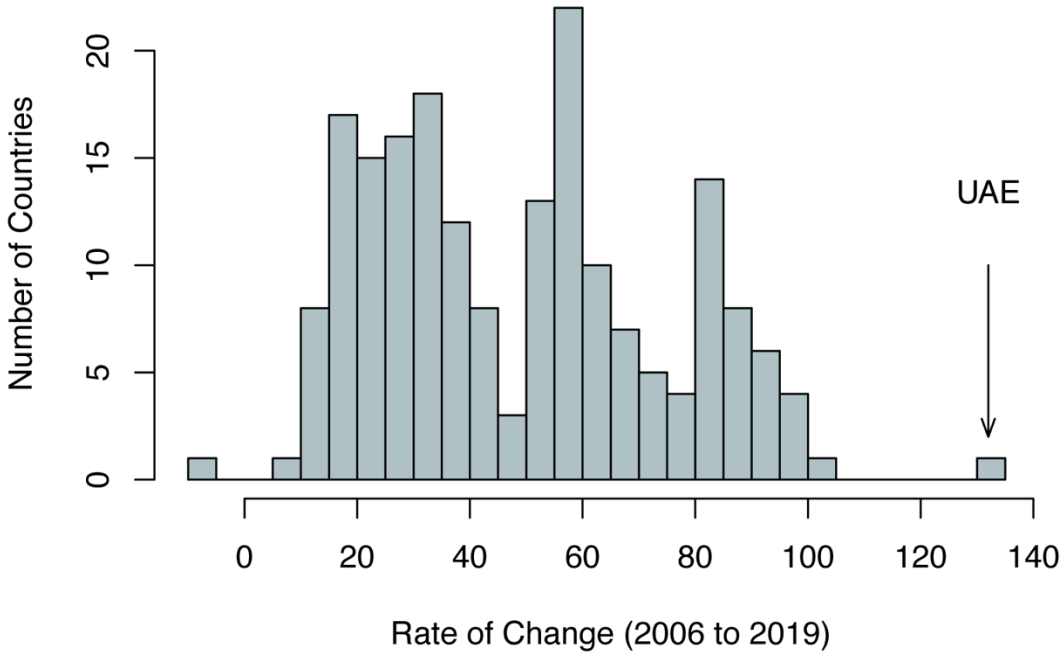
[6] Other common market organizations (ex. Mercosur or the Gulf Cooperation Council) allow for free movement of citizens but unlike the EU they do not have a common visa for third country nationals who must instead apply for authorization from each member-state.

1990; King, Keohane and Verba 1994; Collier and Mahoney 1996). However, it is useful when the researcher is most interested in one end of the outcome of interest. This sampling method allows me to identify which variables are not necessary or sufficient conditions for gaining mobility power. It also serves the heuristic purpose of discovery, allowing me to identify potential causal paths and variables for explaining the dependent variable (George and Bennett 2005, 23).

To inform my case selection, I use two comprehensive datasets of passport rankings (Henley Passport Index and Arton Passport Index). Both rankings calculate passport mobility in a similar fashion: for each destination, if no visa is required, then a score of value = 1 is assigned. A score of value = 1 is also assigned for a visa-on-arrival (VOA), e-Visa, or electronic travel authority (eTA). For destinations that require a visa, the passport is assigned a value = 0. The higher the mobility score the more powerful the passport. Both indices are consulted in this article but all calculations over time are based on the Henley data since a longer timeframe is available (2006-2019) than for Arton's Passport Index (2014-2019).

Figure 1 illustrates the magnitude of changes in the mobility power of all passports since 2006. It shows that increases in mobility scores are much more common than decreases; countries may fall in the global rankings in relation to one another but it is uncommon for established visa-waivers to be withdrawn. One exception to this pattern is Bolivia, which declined by 6 points. Increases in mobility power tend to be common but moderate. One case stands out as being exceptional in the magnitude of change to its mobility score; with a shift rate of 132 points, the UAE is in a league of its own.

Figure 1 Rate of Changes to Mobility Scores for All Countries



Source: Henley Passport Index

To understand why this occurred, I examine the timing and sequencing of the changes to the UAE's mobility power. Process-tracing is particularly useful for understanding how domestic actors mobilize international norms (Gurowitz 1999), and it can be "used to develop, elaborate, or specify more precisely a given theory or hypothesis" (Mahoney 2010, 125). I identify a clear spike in the UAE's mobility score after its foreign ministry negotiated a Schengen visa waiver in 2015, showing that the EU was an important "first mover" in changing international perceptions of Emirati citizens. After identifying this agreement as a critical juncture, I conducted two interviews with officials from the EU delegation in Abu Dhabi (names withheld upon request). I also examined news coverage on the UAE's visa-waivers with the EU and other countries (in Arabic and English), bilateral and multilateral agreements, and parliamentary debates, paying attention to whether any other agreements were signed synchronously.

If, as the sequencing of visa-waivers suggests, the most decisive factor in the UAE's trajectory was its ability to secure an agreement with the EU, then we would expect the EU to have a similar effect on other cases. To check the robustness of this finding, I follow George and Bennett's advice that at times it is appropriate to "include 'mini-case' studies, or less in-depth studies, of a wide number of cases in addition to full studies of the cases of greatest interest" (2005, 23 n 44). I include a brief discussion of the 40 states comprising the top 20 percent of gains in passport power since 2006.

To address alternative explanations, the next two sections assess whether we can use deductive reasoning and existing explanatory frameworks (wealth and political stability) to explain cross-national variation passport power. In the absence of a compelling overarching explanation, I then proceed to inductively examine what the UAE and other states are actually doing to maximize passport power.

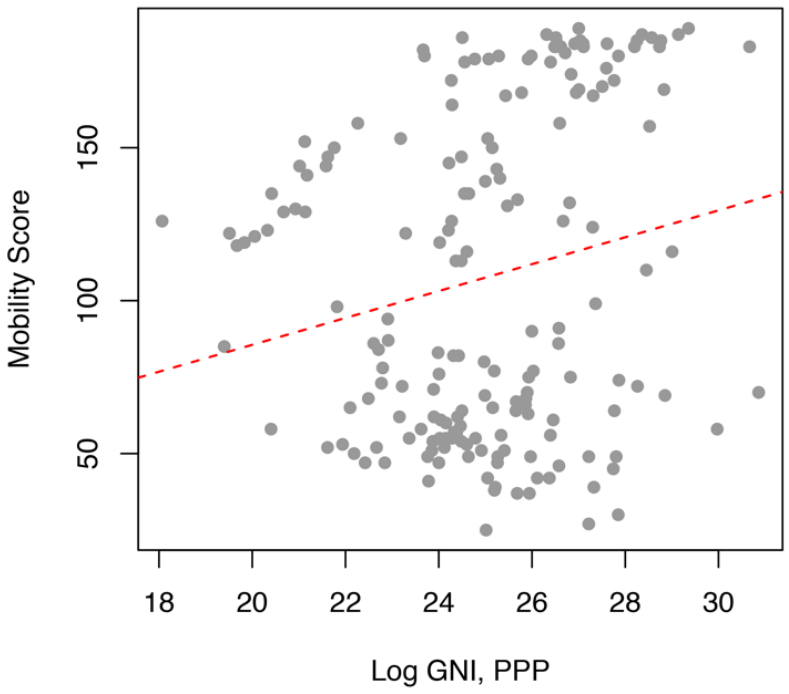
Alternative Explanations: Cross-National Variation in Mobility

Assessing the Role of Wealth

Does increasing a country's wealth increase its citizens' access to pre-authorized cross-border movement? Why wealth would increase the desirability of short-term visitors is easy to imagine; wealth is associated with higher disposable incomes, lower unemployment rates, higher levels of education, access to healthcare, and overall welfare. These factors may act as a sedentary force, making people less likely to assume the risks associated with irregular migration. Citizens of poorer nations, on the other hand, are perceived as being more likely to defect on their temporary authorization to become job-seeking migrants. As a result, we might expect governments to deploy their own consular services to vet these individuals on a case-by-case basis.

Upon empirical assessment, however, the relationship between a country's income level and its mobility score is not as clear-cut as an economic explanation would expect. Figure 2 plots mobility scores (2019) by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita purchasing power parity (PPP) (2018) to assess the causal impact of each country's economic performance in the year prior to its passport ranking. It shows that while there is a generally positive correlation between mobility scores and income levels, there is also significant variation in the mobility power of countries that have similar levels of wealth—especially at higher income levels.

Figure 2 Mobility Score (2019) by Economic Performance (2018)



Sources: Henley Passport Index; World Bank (GNI per capita, PPP)

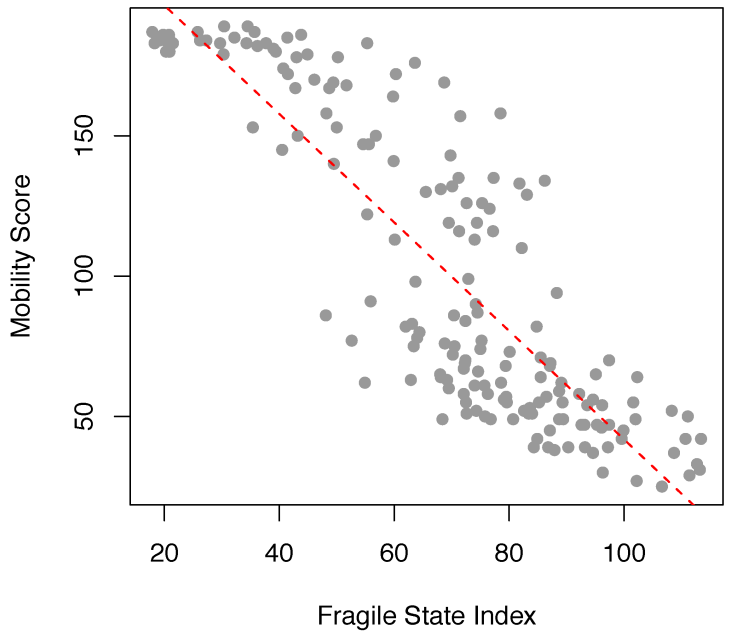
This shows that wealth is an insufficient condition for unlocking global mobility; income alone cannot explain how states accrue mobility capital or why we see such large cross-national differences in access to authorized travel.

Assessing the Role of Political Instability

If wealth leaves much to be explained, how well does political instability account for variation in global mobility? Notably, the countries with the lowest mobility scores are also sites of protracted conflict, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and Yemen (Arton Passport Index 2020; Henley Passport Index 2020). Visa regimes may be more sensitive to political circumstances than economic performance, and we might expect governments to erect greater controls on citizens from unstable states.

This explanation is assessed by using the Fragile State Index (FSI) as an indicator of political instability. Higher FSI scores reflect higher levels of state fragility. Figure 3 plots mobility scores (2019) by FSI scores (2018) to examine the impact of each state's level of instability in the year prior to its passport ranking. The evidence suggests that there is a correlation between instability and immobility; as countries experience greater levels of instability, their passport power decreases.

Figure 3 Mobility Score (2019) by State Fragility (2018)



Sources: Henley Passport Index; Fund for Peace (FSI)

This shows that governments are less likely to welcome visitors from fragile states without subjecting them to an individualized pre-departure security vetting. But the heightened perceived risks of citizens from unstable states can only explain downward shifts in mobility levels. In other words, instability may explain the waning of passport power, but what makes a state's population more attractive to foreign states? To answer this question, the next section delves more deeply into the case that has experienced the largest increase in its mobility power during the twenty-first century.

Mobility Diplomacy in Practice: Evidence from the United Arab Emirates

On December 1, 2018, the UAE reached the first place on Arton's passport index. The timing of this rise to the top was deliberate—the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International

Cooperation raced the clock in time for the UAE's 47th national day, skipping three positions in the span of three weeks (*Gulf News* December 1, 2018). The headlines of all the national news outlets announced this as an auspiciously-timed triumph, and the emblem of the UAE passport and "1 passport index" were projected onto the walls of the Burj Khalifa in Dubai. Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince, gave "thanks to Allah Almighty" for the achievement which "reflects our right approach and future vision" (*ibid*). As the *de facto* ruler of the UAE, he has been the driving force behind its foreign policy and mission to make the UAE the "number one" in international competitiveness rankings since the mid-2000s.[7] Since appointing his brother, Shaikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2006, the UAE has seen an exponential increase in its access to visa-free travel.

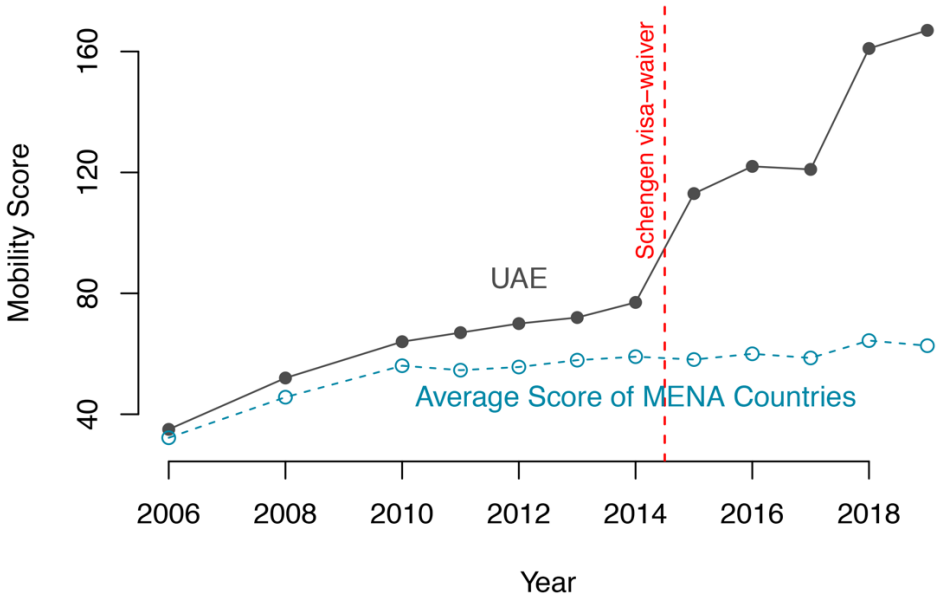
Figure 4 shows that while the UAE had a similar mobility level to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regional average in 2006, it has since significantly outpaced its neighbors.[8] The average growth rate drops slightly in 2011 and then stagnates in the aftermath of the Arab Spring protests. Meanwhile, the UAE's score is slightly above the regional average until 2014; it then accelerates decisively in 2015 with the Schengen visa waiver. Access to the EU's Schengen zone immediately removed restrictions on 26 states that are party to the

[7] In 2009, the UAE established the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority (FCSA) to track the country's position across international rankings (FCSA n.d.).

[8] This average score includes 19 countries: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Palestine/PLO, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Yemen.

Schengen agreement, as well as seven other territories that accept these visas in lieu of their own.[9]

Figure 4 The UAE's Mobility Scores from 2006-2019



Source: Henley Passport Index

The Schengen visa waiver's impact on the UAE's foreign relations expanded far beyond its direct relationship with the EU. As figure 4 illustrates, the vast majority of countries in the world changed their behavior towards Emirati passport-holders only after the EU did. The Schengen visa waiver was "a question of prestige" for the UAE, and its success represented an "exceptional instrument of friendship and exchange" between the UAE and EU (Interview with

[9] Monaco, San Marino, and the Vatican City are not party to the agreement but share open borders with Schengen. Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Cyprus are still negotiating full membership into Schengen, but they allow third country nationals with these visas to enter their territories.

EU delegation in Abu Dhabi, August 22, 2019). The negotiations in Brussels took three years to complete, supported by the establishment of an EU embassy in Abu Dhabi in 2013 (*ibid*).

Unlocking Access to "Fortress Europe"

The European Parliament's (EP) report on the EU-UAE visa waiver lauds the UAE for being "the first Arab State" to move from the EU's blacklist to whitelist, suggesting that "the satisfactory completion of the negotiations with the United Arab Emirates may constitute an example of good practice for the next countries to be transferred from the negative to the positive list" (European Parliament 2015). In its framing to the international community, the visa waiver was characterized as a reward "good" practices—an indication of "how open the UAE is and its desire for a rapprochement with the European Union, including with regard to issues of human rights, migrant workers' rights, women's rights and freedom of expression" (*ibid*). These statements may rhetorically position the EU as exerting a normative liberalizing pressure on its allies by using visa-free entry as a carrot. Despite this gesture, there is little evidence of progress on the UAE's human rights record prior to or during the negotiations. Since 2011, the government has tightened controls on free speech, arresting and even denaturalizing political critics (Human Rights Watch 2019; Freedom House 2019). At the same time as the visa waiver negotiations commenced, the EP passed a resolution condemning the UAE for its intensified crackdown on human rights, including its detention of lawyers, judges, professors, bloggers, students, and religious leaders (European Parliament 2012). After the completion of the agreement, the EP passed another resolution condemning the UAE's human rights record, this time focusing on its arrest of prominent activist Ahmed Mansour (European Parliament 2018).

When it came to rewarding the UAE with concrete material privileges, the EU's own documents show that the promise of non-immigration and security convergence superseded any

commitment to human rights. The contours of the EU-UAE negotiations illustrate several points about the practice of mobility diplomacy. First, cross-border authorization was not open to democratic deliberation. Second, mobility was juxtaposed to migration; the reports systematically lay out all of the reasons why Emiratis are unlikely migrants as central justifications for establishing the waiver. Third, the UAE had to demonstrate control over its passport supply and capacity for migration enforcement and policing. Relatedly, visa-waivers create avenues for deeper security cooperation. In this case, the waiver helped facilitate a second agreement between the UAE's police forces and Europol.

Discretionary Power

The EU-UAE visa-waiver exemplifies what Schmidt (2006) calls "policy without politics"—i.e. the EU's ability to execute policy decisions without political debates. The devolution of border control to the supranational level means that "issues are now regularly dealt within secretive European-level forums, usually comprising officials with specialist expertise and within agency-like structures that often possess a strong bias towards security concerns" (Geddes 2014, 148). Even within the supranational level, the issue of cross-border authorization was less open to democratic deliberation than other policy arenas. The visa waiver was agreed upon by the European Council (EUCO), and implemented for six months before it was presented to the EP for approval (Council of the European Union 2016). The agreement circumvented the regular legislative process and placed the EP the position of having to rubber-stamp a policy that was already in effect.[10]

[10] The ordinary legislative procedure, which technically applies to immigration policies, grants equal weight to the EP and EUCO (co-decision).

In her report to the EP, rapporteur MEP Mariya Gabriel expressed uneasiness with the way that the waiver undermined the EP's power in two ways. First, she:

> queries the practice of signing visa waiver agreements and applying them provisionally before the European Parliament has approved them. The rapporteur observes that this practice is liable to reduce Parliament's room for manoeuvre and is all the more problematic because Parliament is not informed about them as the bilateral negotiations progress (European Parliament 2015).

Second, Article 6 of the legislation delegates the management of the waiver to a Joint Committee of experts between representatives of the UAE and EU (Council of the European Union 2015). Within this arrangement, the EU is represented only by the European Commission and not the EP. Gabriel takes issue with this structure because it prevents the EP from having a direct role in suggesting amendments, monitoring its implementation, or settling disputes between the contracting parties (European Parliament 2015). This suggests that the negotiations were opaque to democratically elected members of the EP, and even after being agreed upon, the waiver remains outside of democratic oversight.

Evidence of Non-Immigration

The justifications provided for establishing the EU-UAE visa waiver (in the text of the agreement, EP report, and interviews) juxtapose cross-border authorization and immigration. The agreement specifies that visa-free entry must conform to less than 90 days in a period of 180 days (Council of the European Union 2015). Emiratis are depicted as "luxury tourists" who are not authorized to partake in any paid activities. Pre-authorized entry is designed to facilitate consumption and increase trade between the UAE and EU, which was valued at EU 51 million in 2014 (European Parliament 2015). The promise of non-immigration is a recurring theme; the

report emphasizes that the "UAE does not present any risk of clandestine immigration or threat to public policy or security, and it has supplied the European Institutions with the necessary evidence to this effect" (European Parliament 2015).

What does evidence of non-immigration entail? According to EU delegates in Abu Dhabi, one way of assessing a country's likelihood of producing migrants comes from Eurostat data on the number of asylum applications, visa-overstayers, and deportations. The number of UAE citizens across all of these categories is negligible (Interview with EU delegation in Abu Dhabi, August 22, 2019). Another metric is declining visa rejection rates. In 2014, Schengen Member States issued the UAE "230,194 short-stay visas, the rejection rate being 7.6%, as 253,765 applications were received. It may be noted that the rejection rate has been halved since 2010, which shows that confidence has increased" (European Parliament 2015). Visa-rejection rates are determined by whether or not consular officials of member-states perceive Emirati citizens to be a flight risk. To inform these decisions, the harmonized visa application captures information that is used to: 1) verify an individual's identity; 2) assess the strength of economic ties to the country of origin/permanent residence; 3) assess public security risks (vaccination history, criminal history and ties to organized crime or terrorist groups); and 4) identify any 'adverse' immigration histories (i.e. visa overstaying, illegal entry, deportation, or visa rejections by other states) (Schengen visa required documents n.d.). Each consular official has the discretionary power to interpret these documents and decide whether or not the applicant is likely to violate the terms of their short-term authorization. A decline in visa rejections across the union lends support for the EU's decision to grant the UAE a blanket visa waiver. Visa applications are a way for destination countries to screen individuals for potential threats;

waiving these procedures signals the EU's confidence in the UAE's ability to conduct this security vetting internally.

Passport Security, Border and Interior Control, and Intelligence-sharing

When it came to securing visa-free access to Europe, it was the foreign ministry's job to sell Emiratis as a 'safe' population—but they were effectively marketing the UAE's interior control over its population. Though absent from the negotiations or news coverage on visa waivers, the Ministry of Interior created the preconditions necessary for securing pre-authorized entry. The most important of these preconditions was the replacement of the existing supply of Emirati passports with biometric e-passports.[11] In 2009, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) made machine-readable passports a key requirement for compliance with international standards (ICAO 2009). That same year, the UAE's Ministry of Interior hired Berlin-based Bundesdruckerei to produce e-passports, the first batch of which were issued in December 2011 (Ghazal 2011).

EU officials expressed a high level of confidence in the UAE's passport security, because "very few people can get these passports and you know that they are very-well vetted. The UAE does not present a threat of fraudulent passports or illegal immigrants" (Interview with EU delegation in Abu Dhabi, August 22, 2019). Few people have access to Emirati passports because of the UAE's exclusionary citizenship regime, which prevents the vast majority of the resident migrant population from being eligible for citizenship (Joppke 2017; Lori 2019). The

[11] The precondition of biometric passports is mentioned in the EP's report on the visa waiver (2015), as well as EU regulations on third country nationals (Council Regulation (EU) 2018/1806).

UAE has the highest concentration of non-citizens in the world and citizens make up only 12.5 percent of the population (National Bureau of Statistics 2010). The proportion of UAE residents who had access to Emirati passports prior to the passport upgrade was already exceptionally small. However, the adoption of a new passport supply created a political opening that allowed the federal government to redefine the boundaries of the Emirati citizenry in even more restrictive manner (Lori 2019).[12] This suggests that when it comes to how citizenship is valued by foreign states (including democracies), securitizing identity documents matters much more than the inclusion of ethnic minorities or migrants.

Another precondition of pre-authorized entry is external confidence in a state's migration enforcement capabilities. Migration enforcement has typically been associated with entry restrictions (Cornelius, Martin, Hollifield 1994), but governments are increasingly deploying policies of "interior border control" to conduct identity checks within their territories (Guiraudon and Lahav 2007; Engbersen and Broeders 2009; Shachar 2020). The UAE has an expanse network of internal identity checks across the public and private sectors and its resident

[12] From 2008-2010, as new Emirati e-passports were under production, the UAE's Ministry of Interior partnered with the Comoros Gulf Holding Group (a private company) and the Presidency of the Union of Comoros to purchase Comoros passports for UAE residents (Abrahamian 2015; Lori 2019). These Comoros passports were issued to ethnic minorities and *bidūn* (stateless groups) in the UAE who, in some cases, were already in possession of Emirati passports. Instead of being able to renew their Emirati passports to receive the new e-passports, they were issued Comoros passports by the UAE Ministry of Interior. They were informed that they could continue to legally reside in the UAE, but as "foreign residents" (Lori 2019).

population is one of the most highly policed and surveilled (Lori 2011). External confidence in the UAE's migration enforcement capabilities is further evidenced by the fact that Abu Dhabi is the only site of a US extraterritorial border outside of North America or Europe (US Customs and Border Protection *n.d.*).

Visa waivers can deepen avenues for security cooperation and facilitate intelligence-sharing. Within a year of the Schengen waiver, the UAE and EU signed an agreement of strategic cooperation between the UAE's police forces and the European Police Office (Europol) on fighting serious crimes and terrorism (Europol 2016). This agreement "in some way confirms that the decision in 2015 was correct. The UAE is a very safe country" (Interview with EU delegation in Abu Dhabi, August 22, 2019). It primarily deals with cooperation in training, crime-prevention methods, and intelligence-sharing to combat terrorism and the trafficking of persons, goods, substances, and illegal financial flows across borders (Europol 2016). The list of specified crimes illustrates how critical interior policing has become to international relations (Andreas and Nadelmann 2006).

Whitelisting the UAE: International Convergence

In 2017, the UAE launched the "UAE Passport Force Initiative" to announce its goal of making the Emirati passport one of the top five by 2021 (Malek 2017). This phase of targeted mobility lobbying focused on using the EU success story to convince other states to also remove restrictions. Sulaiman Al Marzouri, the ambassador who negotiated the Schengen waiver, was re-assigned to the United Kingdom, noting that he was "surprised that the UK has not followed suit… after seeing the EU major breakthrough" (quoted in Bardsley 2017). His current objective is to eliminate all pre-departure vetting of Emiratis entering the UK. The UAE already significantly lessened entry barriers to the UK and Ireland by securing Electronic Visa Waivers

(EVWs) in 2014. In 2018, Ireland expanded these privileges into a full waiver, making the UAE the only Arab country to secure visa-free access to the country (Dennehy 2018).

In 2018, the UAE also became the only Arab country to secure a visa waiver to Canada—yet another highly developed country with a laborious pre-departure screening process. Emirati citizens are eligible for Canada's Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA), which allows travelers to register online before or on the day of travel for expedited approval (Canadian Citizenship & Immigration Resource Center 2018). The UAE also has special privileges with Australia. Emiratis qualify for an expedited procedure (at a higher cost) that allows them to secure a decision within 48 hours of filing (Australian Embassy United Arab Emirates n.d.). Since 2015, Japan, Russia, and most of Central and South America have also followed the EU's lead to grant UAE citizens visa-free access to their territories (Henley passport index 2015- 2019).

This sequential opening of visa-free travel for UAE citizens illustrates how perceptions of nationalities diffuse from one state to another. This is not only the case when political crises render citizens from war-torn countries quickly undesirable to a large number of states. This case illustrates that the inverse, making certain a population more desirable, is also possible with targeted mobility lobbying. The greater the pool of countries who grant Emiratis visa-free access, the more alluring and less threatening Emiratis become globally.

Mini-Case Studies: Top 20 Percent of Mobility Gains

If the EU played a decisive role in increasing the UAE's mobility assets, we would expect it to have a similar effect on other cases. Table 1 identifies the 20 percent of states (n=40)

that experienced the largest mobility gains since 2006.[13] These states have successfully changed the behavior of anywhere between 74 (Slovenia) and 132 (UAE) foreign governments. Why have a large number of states recently converged on the perception that these populations are safe enough to cross borders without being individually vetted?

Table 1 provides information on whether or not each state has gained access to the Schengen zone during the time frame of interest. For the sake of comparison, it also includes six other factors that may be relevant to explaining mobility gains. First, economic development levels are included based on the assumption that states are more likely to perceive individuals from developing countries to pose a greater risk of irregular migration. Developing countries have less infrastructural power over their identity documents (Sadiq 2009), and some cases, irregular migrants have even gained access to national IDs (Sadiq 2005), potentially undermining passport security. Likewise, the size of the national population and territory are included because we might expect larger and more populous states to face greater difficulties registering populations and re-issuing passports in compliance with international standards (Sharman, Das Smith, Gupta 2012).

Information on world regions is included because studies have shown greater mobility controls on South-North flows and a "wall around the West" (Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield 1994; Andreas and Snyder 2000). The dominant religion is included because, in the aftermath of 9/11, the literature has documented a rise in racial profiling and travel restrictions on Muslims

[13] 20 percent of 199 countries in Henley's Passport Index (excluding five cases for which data is not available until 2010: Kosovo, Micronesia, Montenegro, Palestinian Territory, and South Sudan).

(Blackwood 2015; Sparks 2006). Regime-type and civil and political rights, captured with freedom house rankings, is included because studies have found greater cooperation between regimes of the same type (Risse-Kappen 1995). Democracies may be more likely to open their borders as a reward for democratization or the adoption of international human rights norms (Gurowitz 1999; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999). Based on all of these literatures, we might expect greater mobility controls on more populated countries from the global south, especially Muslim-majority states and those with less free political regimes.

Table 1: Countries with Largest Increases in Passport Power

Country	Increase in mobility score (2006-2019)	Economic Development (HDC, DC, LC)	Population (July 2020 est)	Territory (sq km)	World Region	Dominant religion (%)	Freedom House ranking (2019)	Schengen visa waiver (Y/N) or accession* (date)
United Arab Emirates	132	DC	9,992,083	83,600	Middle East	Islam	Not Free	Y (2015)
Taiwan	104	DC	23,603,049	35,980	East Asia	Buddist and Taoist	Free	Y (2011)
Serbia	99	DC	7,012,165	77,474	Southeastern Europe	Orthodox Christianity	Partly Free	Y (2009)
Seychelles	98	DC	95,981	455	East Africa	Roman Catholic	Partly Free	Y (2009)
Albania	96	DC	3,074,579	28,748	Southeastern Europe	Muslim	Partly Free	Y (2010)
Romania	96	DC	21,302,893	238,391	Southeastern Europe	Eastern Orthodox	Free	Y (2002)** joins EU without Schengen
Ukraine	94	DC	43,922,939	603,550	Eastern Europe	Orthodox Christianity	Partly Free	Y (2017)
Mauritius	93	DC	1,379,365	2,040	Southern Africa	Hindu	Free	Y (2009)
Colombia	92	DC	49,084,841	1,138,910	South America	Roman Catholic	Partly Free	Y (2015)
North Macedonia	92	DC	2,125,971	25,713	Southeastern Europe	Orthodox Christianity	Partly Free	Y (2009)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	91	DC	3,835,586	51,197	Southeastern Europe	Muslim	Partly Free	Y (2010)
Peru	91	DC	31,914,989	1,285,216	South America	Roman Catholic	Free	Y (2015)
Moldova	90	DC	3,364,496	33,851	Eastern Europe	Orthodox Christianity	Partly Free	Y (2014)
St. Kitts and Nevis	90	DC	53,821	261	Caribbean	Protestant	Free	Y (2009)
Latvia	88	HDC	1,881,232	64,589	Baltics	Lutheran	Free	Y (2007-8)* Schengen expansion
Barbados	87	DC	294,560	430	Caribbean	Protestant	Free	Y (2009)
Estonia	87	HDC	1,228,624	45,228	Eastern Europe	Orthodox Christianity	Free	Y (2007-8)* Schengen expansion
Lithuania	86	HDC	2,731,464	65,300	Baltics	Roman Catholic	Free	Y (2007-8)* Schengen expansion
Marshall Islands	86	DC	77,917	181	Oceania	Protestant	Free	Y (2015)
Palau	86	DC	21,685	459	Oceania	Roman Catholic	Free	Y (2015)

Bulgaria	85	HDC	6,966,899	110,879	Southeastern Europe	Eastern Orthodox	Free	Y (2007)** joins EU without Schengen
Georgia	85	DC	3,997,000 (2019 est)	69,700	Eastern Europe	Orthodox Christianity	Partly Free	Y (2017)
Antigua and Barbuda	84	DC	98,179	442.6	Caribbean	Protestant	Free	Y (2009)
Croatia	83	HDC	4,227,746	56,594	Southeastern Europe	Roman Catholic	Free	Y (2013)
Czech Republic	83	HDC	10,702,498	78,867	Central Europe	Atheist	Free	Y (2007-8)* Schengen expansion
Dominica	83	DC	74,243	751	Caribbean	Roman Catholic	Free	Y (2015)
Bahamas	82	DC	337,721	13,880	Caribbean	Protestant	Free	Y (2009)
Slovakia	82	HDC	5,440,602	49,035	Central Europe	Roman Catholic	Free	Y (2007-8)* Schengen expansion
Vanuatu	82	LDC	298,333	12,189	Oceania	Protestant	Free	Y (2015)
Grenada	81	DC	113,094	344	Caribbean	Protestant	Free	Y (2015)
Russian Federation	81	DC	141,722,205	17,098,242	Eastern Europe/ Northern Asia	Russian Orthodox	Not Free	N
Samoa	81	DC	203,774	2,831	East Asia	Protestant	Free	Y (2015)
St. Lucia	81	DC	166,487	616	Caribbean	Roman Catholic	Free	Y (2015)
Trinidad and Tobago	81	DC	1,208,789	5,128	Caribbean	Christianity (various traditions)	Free	Y (2015)
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	80	DC	101,390	389	Caribbean	Protestant	Free	Y (2015)
Hungary	77	HDC	9,771,827	93,028	Central Europe	Roman Catholic	Partly Free	Y (2007-8)* Schengen expansion
Tonga	77	DC	106,095	747	Oceania	Protestant	Free	Y (2015)
Tuvalu	76	LDC	11,342	26	Oceania	Protestant	Free	Y (2015)
Solomon Islands	75	DC	685,097	28,896	Oceania	Protestant	Free	Y (2015)
Slovenia	74	HDC	2,102,678	20,273	South Central Europe	Catholic	Free	Y (2007-8)* Schengen expansion

Data sources: *Classifications of highly developed countries (HDC), developing countries (DC), or lesser developed countries (LDC) (UN 2019); population estimates, territory size, world region, and majority religion (Central Intelligence Agency 2020); regime-type (Freedom House 2019); access to Schengen zone, various EU agreements and news coverage.*

Table 1 demonstrates that of the states with the largest increases in mobility scores, the majority are developing countries. This is not simply because developed countries automatically have higher mobility scores, since (as previously illustrated with figure 2) there is significant variation in the passport power of high-income countries. The size of the population and territories vary widely to include some of the smallest (Tuvalu) and largest (Russia) countries in the world. When it comes to world region, the largest geographic cluster comes from the EU's expansion. Another cluster includes countries in Oceania and the Caribbean that have citizenship-by-investment programs. The majority of countries have predominantly Christian populations. About half the sample are democratic regimes, and the remainder are considered 'partly free,' with only the UAE and Russia categorized as 'not free.' With the exception of one case (Russia), all of the countries in this sample have recently gained access to the Schengen zone.

The UAE has seen the highest gains because its government made passport power a targeted goal of its lobbying efforts with most countries in the world. But the mini case studies show that whether it is by implementing the Schengen *acquis*, or joining the EU as a member-state without abolishing internal borders, or simply signing a visa-waiver, states gain mobility power by virtue of their association with the EU. Indeed, even if the sample of cases is expanded to the top 25 percent of states with mobility gains (n=50), then variation across other factors increases, but the factor that remains constant is that all have recently gained visa-free access to the Schengen zone.[14]

Conclusion

"In a labor camp, somewhere in the Persian Gulf, a laborer swallowed his passport and turned into a passport" (Unnikrishan 2017, 5). The opening line of *Temporary People* draws the reader into a world of passports, suitcases, checkpoints, and body scans. A world where fixity in

[14] Timor-Leste, Kiribati, South Korea, Brazil, Argentina, Macao (SAR China), Andorra, Malta, Singapore, Poland.

terms of nationality decides the value of your labor and prospects for mobility and return. For states, greater passport power means more prestige, money, and avenues for cooperation in other policy domains. The staggering unevenness of mobility levels across states has allowed firms and governments to profit off of differentials in the global value of national citizenship. How do states increase the value of their citizenship in the international arena?

The answer for developing states, I argue, is to successfully convince the EU that their citizens will not become migrants. The explanation I posit centers on the role of diplomatic processes that target international perceptions about which passport-holders are "safe." I assess alternative explanations, finding that countries with similar levels of wealth have divergent levels of passport power. Political instability can explain why states might lose passport power, but not how they gain it. The gap left by these approaches, coupled with the case-based evidence this article has brought to bear, suggest the merits of a constructivist approach that highlights the importance of non-immigration as a state posture and pre-authorized movement as a domain of power politics in its own right.

By positioning itself as being at the forefront of migration enforcement, the UAE was able to deepen its alliance with the EU on multiple fronts and leverage that relationship to enhance its reputation abroad. By granting UAE citizens pre-authorized entry to the highly fortified Schengen zone, the EU signaled to other states that the UAE is a "good" actor that can be entrusted with vetting its own population. The mini case studies further show the EU's immense soft power capabilities in the realm of mobility. A quarter of recognized sovereign states in the world have increased their access to pre-authorized movement by virtue of their association with the EU.

The concept of mobility diplomacy reveals the interstate power dynamics that structure who can move where, when, and at what cost. This article contributes to the study of the high politics of cross-border movement in three ways. First, it broadens the scope to include the politics of pre-authorization and *opportunities* for cross-border movement as a source of state power. Second, it shows that migrants are not transacted upon in a vacuum of international anarchy. Negotiations over cross-border movements occur within a context in which national populations' baseline access to cross-border movement is already highly stratified. Attending to the uneven distribution of mobility and how states attempt to change their position in global rankings takes seriously the proposition that hierarchy, rather than anarchy, conditions global power politics (Weber 1997; Lake 2007; Goddard and Nexon 2016). Finally, mobility diplomacy unpegs the high politics of cross-border management from the realist ontology that the existing research is based on. While studies of soft power are not necessarily incompatible with realism, much of the discussion currently focuses on migrants as the material source of leverage and coercion as the means of instigating change. Successful mobility diplomacy, by contrast, is achieved through attraction, which can be a more cost-effective way of instigating change because it means convincing others that your aim is also theirs (Nye 2011).

Two common critiques of soft power are that it is difficult to measure and it is an ethnocentric concept tied to American exceptionalism (Kearn 2011; Thussu 2013; Çevik 2019). Using passport rankings to capture soft power addresses both of these issues. First, on measurement, public opinion polls are commonly used to quantify a country's desirability to foreign audiences (Nye 2011; Rose 2005). However, when it comes to feeling the impact of your state's global standing, the value of your passport shapes livelihood outcomes much more directly than does foreign public opinion. Second, on ethnocentrism, cross-national surveys tend

to focus on the OECD at the expense of the global south. Likewise, soft power indices designed to move away from American exceptionalism tend to focus on states that already have significant military capabilities, economic power, or large territories (ex. China, Russia, and Turkey) (Soft Power 30; Monocle 2020). Because of this selection bias, these measures will only serve to confirm the assumption that soft power is concentrated in the highly developed world, obscuring fluctuations in global influence outside of this realm. Passport rankings, on the other hand, comprehensively measure how *all* passport-granting states rank each other, allowing us to capture how smaller and weaker states have changed their reputation and global standing.

This article explores the world of private entities that measure the international value of national citizenship, the negotiations that the UAE government had with the most powerful national and supranational entities in the world, and the EU's ability to shape global patterns of pre-authorized movement. I show that by actively changing the perceptions of foreign states towards UAE passports, elites in the UAE have radically reconfigured the value of Emirati citizenship without changing the content of citizenship rights domestically. In so doing, I build on a tradition that shows how the international arena shapes national citizenship (Zolberg 1997; Torpey 2000; Cook-Martin 2013). Ruling elites do not respond to domestic pressures as self-contained units; they strategically shape citizenship policies in anticipation or response to other countries (Cook-Martin 2013). This accounts for the fact that states are embedded in an interstate network with unequally distributed power relations (Zolberg 1997; Cook-Martin 2013). Mobility diplomacy illustrates how—through their perceptions of and behavior towards different passports—foreign states can reconfigure the value of citizenship for people who belong to states that are politically, geographically, and culturally distinct.

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