

Fortress Europe: more open to some

Mogens Hobolth

Research theme

Today, the majority of the world's citizens have to apply for a Schengen visa to legally enter the European Union for a short stay. This common visa policy has not escaped academic attention and is often argued to be highly exclusionary.

The gap in the literature

But how restrictive is the European visa policy in practice? A visa requirement without doubt in itself restricts mobility. But existing research has tended to assume that visas have the same restrictive impact for all third country nationals.

Research question

Are some third country nationals more able than others to enter the European Union on a short-term three month basis?

Preliminary answer

Yes they are! Visa refusal rates vary from country to country. Citizens from Belarus, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, for example, enjoy low refusal rates whereas about half of all applicants from Algeria and Afghanistan are denied access to the EU.

Next steps

To what extent can the variance be explained by differences in affluence, level of armed conflict, race and religion? And how similar are the EU-countries in their visa-issuing practice?

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Data

The analysis is based on official EU-data on short-stay visas applied for, issued and refused from 2005 to 2008. Comprehensive information is only available for this period. The Council's General Secretariat publish the information based on information from the member states.

Methods

The dataset, containing about 8.000 observations in total, is analyzed using standard descriptive statistics and overview maps. There are several potential validity problems. In particular, the member states might interpret and measure key categories differently.

