The invisible barriers of Schengen

A quantitative research on the EU's visa-issuing practises

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I. Preface

Dear reader,

I present to u my bachelor thesis 'The invisible barriers of Schengen'. This thesis provides a quantitative perspective on an issue around the visa-issuing practises of Schengen. I've have conducted my research from February till August 2020. Thus, it has taken me a lot of time to come to a conclusion.

There are a few reasons that this has taken me this much time. Firstly, I have underestimated the difficulty of this subject matter. It took me quite some time to wrap my head around and I have been lost many times in the rabbit hole that is the Schengen visa regime. My initial goals were way to complex, which has taken me some time to consider. Furthermore, the strange time that occurred when the universities were closed due to COVID19, has kept me from working on my thesis. While I prefer to work outside my home. In addition, my family situation has had its ups and downs in this uncertain time.

However, personally I need to work on my ability to ask for help, while I have not had many meetings with my mentor. I usually refused to do this, while I thought that I did not do enough work to present anything. Thus, getting myself stuck in a writer's block, neglecting the fact that I just need to communicate with my mentor to move forward in my research.

Luckily, I did free myself of this downwards spiral and I have learned allot from it. Besides, I have learned many things from this subject which was something I did not know much about in the first place. Therefore, it has been a challenge, but a good one.

Finally, I want to thank my mentor Henk van Houtum for giving me the freedom to explore this subject and giving me the feedback when asked. I hope this thesis provides an interesting perspective on the subject matter and you enjoy its contents.

Liam Brown

Nijmegen, 9 October 2020

II. Abstract

This research test, through the usage of quantitative data if the established factors, wealth, religion, and refugees correlate with the current Schengen visa-issuing practises exemptive and/or restrictive behaviour towards certain third country nationalities. The SPSS regression analyses do support the factors.

III. Summary

This thesis uses a quantitative approach to measure what influence certain factors have on the restrictive and/or exemptive behaviour of the Schengen visa regime. As established in previous theories on this subject. I have chosen 3 factors (wealth, religion, and refugees). Against these factors a series of quantitative analyses has been conducted, to check if any variance in the data of visa-issuing practises could be explained by these factors. Furthermore, the quantitative research on this subject is a bit outdated and not many have used quantitative data in their theories. Thus, by conducting my research I can reinforce the theories and with the underlying data describe a part of Schengen visa regime in its most recent form.

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1 Introduction

I find that we are not always aware of our freedom of movement. Usually we take it for granted, for example when going on holidays to countries within the EU without any harsh border control, moving through several countries within a day and with ease. Even when traveling to countries far outside Europe and the Schengen zone, we can choose from a wide range of countries without having to apply for a visa.

For people like us, being born within the EU's borders, the established visa policy seems like it enables a certain freedom in our mobility. But what about the other end of the spectrum? There are many citizens of certain countries who do not have this luxury of having many opportunities to travel (visa free) to places. For those people, the implementation of the visa can be constraining their freedom of movement to a certain degree we in the EU find hard to imagine.

Through the Henley and Partners index (HPI), which calculates the so-called "passport strength" of a certain country, we can observe a global discrepancy in the distribution of mobility. This index is deemed as an important metric in determining the strength of passports and the ease of travel for business, leisure, diplomatic relations, and tourism (Harpaz 2013; Park 2017). For instance, the Netherlands has a rank of 6, giving it excess to 186 countries without its citizens having to apply for a visa (Henly and Partners, 2020). As opposed to a country like Syria, only having 29 countries on this list. Although, this ranking of passports has a lot of impact on its holders, not much research has been done on this subject matter (Okagbue et al., 2019).

Mostly rich, powerful, and democratic regimes acquire the most visa free travel privileges (Smith and Timberlake, 2001; Mau, 2010; Mau et al., 2015; Reyes, 2013; Hakyemez, 2014). In addition, when looking at the passport index, the higher ranks ranging from 1 to 10 are mostly dominated by EU (Schengen) countries. These countries have developed the usage of visas into a system that controls the movement of people far outside the external borders of the EU (Bigo & Guild, 2005; van Houtum & Bueno Lacy, 2020). Yet, *"To date the Schengen visa regime has been relatively neglected in border and migration studies, especially when compared with the attention that more visible forms of border control and irregular migration have received."* (Scheel, 2018, p.1). As the securitisation and patrolling of the border control has grown, attempts to remain unseen or to escape from border guards has led to the death of many would-be immigrants who are trying to get into the EU (van Houtum, 2010).

However, the borders that the current visa system puts into place aren't physical objects or guarded by people with weapons, *"but are watched over by bureaucrats armed with paper and entrenched in faraway embassies"* (van Houtum & Bueno Lacy, 2020, p.714). An example of this 'paper border' can be traced back to 2001, when the common Schengen list of visa-required countries (also known as the visa "black and white list") was created. As described as the *paper border* by van Houtum & Lacy (2020), it made a sharp discriminatory distinction between countries whose citizens require a visa paper to enter the EU. As stated by a number of researchers: *"largely Muslim, African and overall less affluent countries – and those exempted from it – largely OECD members as well as a few countries in South America and Asia"* (Mau et al. 2012, 2015; Neumayer 2006; Salter 2003, 2006; van Houtum 2010; van

Houtum and Lucassen 2016) (van Houtum & Lacy, 2020, p.714). In addition, van Houtum highlights that this discrimination is forbidden by law in all Member States of the EU, thus the EU is running against its own Copenhagen criteria and Lisbon Treaty. *"Which, in effect, almost entirely closed off legal migration channels to the EU for the large majority of the world"* (van Houtum, 2010, p.714). Nevertheless, it seems that more studies focus on the enabling factors the Schengen visa has on international relationships between neighbouring countries like Belarus, Turkey, Moldova and Morocco (Bossong & Carrapiço, 2016; Jileva, 2002; Lena, 2019; Özdemir & Ayata, 2018). Yet, the problematic constraining factors the Schengen visa regime uses on certain third countries, is what I'm interested in.

To understand where the problem arises for foreigners, when coming into contact with the Schengen visa regime, you have to look at its consulates. These are mostly located in the capital cities of the third country nationals far away from the EU's physical borders. For a big part of the global population the European borders start at the consulates, when lodging a visa application (Guild 2001, 2003). These consulates have to operate under the 'Community Code on Visas' (CCV). This was implemented in 2009. Its goal was to contribute to the development of a system that facilitates legal travel and counteracts illegal migration (Moreno-Lax, 2017). This led to the creation of the so-called 'Visa Information System' (VIS) (ec.europa.eu, "Visa Information System (VIS)", 2020). The VIS connects consulates in non-EU countries and all external border crossing points of Schengen States. It processes data and decisions relating to applications for short-stay visas to visit, or to transit through, the Schengen Area. The system can perform biometric matching, primarily of fingerprints, for identification and verification purposes (ec.europa.eu, "Visa Information System (VIS)", 2020). Therefore, these systems are essential in maintaining the pre-border of the European Union.

In addition, the data that consulates provide on visa applications can be used to determine the Schengen visa regime's restrictiveness towards certain third country nationals. As some researchers, although not many, have used this quantitative data to develop and test their theories. For example, Neumayer (2006) claims to be one of the first to create a global dataset on visa requirements. His goal was, *"trying to uncover the reasons why states impose visa restrictions on passport holders from certain countries but allow visa-free travel for individuals from other countries"* (Neumayer, 2006, p.77). Furthermore, Mau used the Henley & Partners index to offer a critique of restrictions on mobility rights enforced by liberal states (Mau, 2010). *"On the basis of empirical data on visa regulations, it demonstrates that mobility rights are distributed highly unequally, favouring citizens from rich democracies."* (Mau, 2010, p.1). Also, Whyte uses the Henley and Partners index to test what factors in- or decrease the travel mobility of certain countries (Whyte, 2008). Both datasets use the visa requirements as the independent variable. Therefore, looking at how many countries a certain nationality can travel to without a visa.

Yet, to research the enabling and constraining factors that derive from the visa-issuing practises of Schengen visa regime, only using the visa requirement as an independent variable is not enough for my research. *"As the restrictiveness of the border varies between visa list countries. It can be significantly more difficult or easy to obtain a visa depending on the nationality of the traveller. Finally, these existing sources do not include data on cooperative and conflictual governance dynamics"* (Hobolth, 2012, p.33).

Thus, finding any difference in the restrictiveness of certain member states towards different third country nationals needs a different measurement tool. That is why Hobolth's mobility barrier index will be used in this research. This tool was constructed to create the European Visa Database: *"containing comprehensive information on the visitor visa requirements, consular coverage abroad and issuing practices of European Union (Schengen) states" (Hobolth, 2012. p33).* Its main goal was to analyse how the common EU visa policy has been applied in practice by member states in the period from 2005 to 2010. Therefore, it can be used to analyse the restrictive and or exemptive behaviour Schengen member states have towards certain third country nationals, but also depict this with a much greater variance. This means that a recreation of this dataset is needed, only with data that is not outdated.

With this recreation of the dataset, the constraining factors (for third country nationals) that derive from all the previous studies will be tested again. Only this time with data from 2018 to give the most recent possible depiction of the visa-issuing practises within the Schengen visa regime and their behaviour towards third country nationals.

1.1 Relevance

First of all, the research's scientific relevance derives from the fact that it tests the hypotheses of different theories from years ago, thus checking if the claims that have been made still hold up today.

Furthermore, it checks the robustness of the Hobolth mobility barrier index. Therefore, its conclusions can be used to substantiate any arguments for a more recent representation of the Schengen visa regime, one that uses data from 2018.

Secondly, the societal contribution emanates from the fact that this research can be used in the debate about visa policies, but also a reason to reassess these policies within the EU. Besides, this research can show a different perspective on the way we perceive the European external borders.

1.2 Aim of research

The aim of this research is to test if the established factors -derived from previous studies- still correlate with the Schengen visa-issuing practises exemptive and/or restrictive behaviour towards certain third country nationalities. First, by running a regression analysis relating possible factors of visa sending countries -like wealth, religion, and refugees- to Schengen its visa policy. Secondly, I recreate my own Mobility Barrier Index. By retracing the steps of Hobolth but apply data from 2018 and use it as a tool to measure if there is any correlation in the increasing or decreasing mobility of third country nationals. This is also based on religion, wealth, and its refugee population. Therefore, testing if the different theories centred around the so-called 'paper border' are still relevant to this day.

1.3 Research question

To get an understanding of the in- or exclusive behaviour of Schengen's visa-issuing practises, the main question that arises is:

How can we explain the exemptive and/or restrictive behaviour of the Schengen regime its visa-issuing practises based on the most recent quantitative data?

To answer this main question the following sub-questions are formulated:

What accounts for the Schengen visa regime?

This will simply answer what data is and is not included in this field of research.

How do visa issuing practises operate?

Furthermore to get a clear understanding of the research object, an explanation on how visa operates will be given.

What is the current state of Schengen its visa regime?

Thereafter I will briefly explain how the EU's visa policy works and what procedures are present when applying for a visa to enter any Schengen member state. Furthermore conceptualising the Schengen visa regime.

What possible factors are playing a role in the exclusion of third countries from the EU's visa free travel policy?

This part will test if the factors that the theories have presented, still have any relevance to this day. Yet, to understand these theories in the context of the Schengen Visa regime, a recreation of the Hobolth Mobility barrier Index is implemented. This measurement tool for restrictiveness will be used as the dependent variable to measure the restrictiveness of the EU (visa receiving) countries towards the non-EU (visa sending) countries. Hobolth has created the indexes from 2005 till 2010, but I will recreate the indexes for 2018. Thus, following his exact steps, but using more recent data.

Therefore, before the prior questions are answered, a short section (right after the conceptual model) will give a summary of this process. Which answers the question:
How is the Mobility barrier index constructed?

After this, the following question will be answered:
Do the same factors also correlate with Hobolth's Mobility barrier index?

This sub-question will re-apply the relevant factors to test if there still is any correlation with the Mobility barrier index as its independent variable. Furthermore, testing Hobolth's theory with more recent data, but also checking if it succeeds to improve its explanatory power. To test this, the visa refusal rates will be used as an independent variable to compare what model is better.

Finally, all the results will be translated into a narrative that tries to answer the main question, giving its conclusions on the validity of all the theories.

2 Theoretical background

First, this chapter will explain the underlying ideas and theories that are the drivers of this research. The relevant literature around the subject has been collected, organized by research question, and reviewed. Secondly, the hypothesis for this study is stated based on the research, and lastly the corresponding conceptual model is illustrated and explained.

2.1 Literature review

As stated before, the main goal of this thesis is to answer the question:

'How can we explain the exemptive and/or restrictive behaviour of the Schengen regime its visa-issuing practises based on the most recent quantitative data?'

But to resolve this question it is important to see what already has been discussed in the literature surrounding this subject.

In the literature I have found that Neumayer (2006) claims to be the first researcher to create a global dataset with information on visa requirements. He has examined the distribution of visa requirements and discusses the unfairness of this distribution. Besides this, the Henley & Partners index has been used for the establishment of international mobility barriers by Whyte (2008) and Mau (2010). Both datasets measure per state if a citizen can enter any other country with or without a visa.

Moreover the discussion on the unfairness of visa requirements comes forward in many other literature when talking about the EU's common visa policy exclusion of largely Muslim, African and overall less affluent countries (Mau et al. 2012, 2015; Neumayer 2006; Salter 2003, 2006; van Houtum 2010; van Houtum and Lucassen 2016). In this case, when talking about the common visa policy, the EU's so-called visa "black and white list" (later re-branded as the "negative and positive list") is put forward as a prominent display of nativist discrimination (van Houtum 2010). As the list may suggest, this is what is used to distinguish countries whose citizens require a visa paper to enter the EU and those who are exempted from it. In addition, the list of countries that are exempted are dominated by mostly rich, powerful, democratic regimes (Smith and Timberlake, 2001; Mau, 2010; Mau et al., 2015; Reyes, 2013; Hakyemez, 2014). Thereby showing an ever-growing polarisation of the so-called "mobility rich" and the "mobility poor" (Mau et al., 2015).

2.1.1 Schengen its practises
'How do visa issuing practises operate?'

The European commission describes the following description of her visa policy towards third country nationals:
"The EU has a common list of countries whose citizens must have a visa when crossing the external borders and a list of countries whose citizens are exempt from that requirement. These lists are set out in Regulation (EU) 2018/1806. Generally, a short-stay visa issued by one of the Schengen States entitles its holder to travel throughout the 26 Schengen States for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. Visas for visits exceeding that period remain subject to national procedures" (ec.europa.eu, "Visa Policy").

To acquire a visa as a third country national, there are a lot of steps beforehand. First, you need to file a visa application at the right embassy/consulate, or visa centre, depending on the country you are in and which Schengen country you want to visit (Schengenvisainfo, 2020). To proceed with the visa application, an actual appointment must be made. These can be booked online or in person. Then, in the application itself the following information needs to be provided:
- Your personal information,
- Information on your background,
- Your purpose of wishing to enter the Schengen Area,
- Other details regarding your trip.

For the interview, the applicant must appear in person and the following must be presented (Zampagni, 2013):
- an application form, as set out in Annex I of the Visa Code.
- a valid travel document.
- a photograph.
- supporting documents as set out in Consulates' forms.
- travel medical insurance.

In addition, Scheel (2018) explains that these formal requirements for a visa mostly do not correspond to the local circumstances of the applicant.

"Consulate Z requires, for instance, no less than 10 different types of documents for a tourist visa, including bank statements, proof of means of subsistence (88 euros per person per day), an employment contract, salary slips for the past three months, a social security card and a print-out of social security contributions for the past 12 months. Yet, the provision of some of these documents may prove impossible for many people as they do not reflect the working and living conditions of a large share of the local population, not only in the country I visited but also in many other countries subject to a visa requirement" (Scheel, 2018, p.2750).

Furthermore Scheel (2018) explains that visa applicants enter Schengen consulates suspects. Therefore, the consular staff always starts with the negative and the applicant needs to convince the staff that she or he does not intend to migrate. In this process the applicant is very uncertain about situation. Yet on top of that, they have to a pay a non-refundable

administration fee when applying for a Schengen visa, for the application to be processed (Schengenvisainfo, 2020). Currently, a Schengen visa fee is €80 per person.

Although not every consulate is the same, it becomes clear that there are a lot of possible discouraging factors in the process of applying for a visa. Moreno-Lax (2017) adds to this issue, that some member states hand over their visa-issuing practises to private companies. Firstly, these companies do not publish their data, therefore allot of information on these visa-issuing practises are lost. Secondly, they can deter applicants in need of international protection, while a private company can work under the domestic legislation of the country the applicant so desperately tries to escape from.

Finally, the refusal of a visa can have catastrophic consequences for the applicant. While the Schengen its visa-issuing process filters out its undesirables, it does not account for the people that are fleeing from life-threatening situations (van Houtum & Lacy, 2020). Furthermore, it creates this paradox where people who are born in a certain country get punished by this so-called 'paper border'. Therefore, these people only chance to enter Schengen is through (as the EU determines) 'illegal' practices.

These are some of the things the mobility barrier index cannot account for. While they are deeply rooted in the system itself and can vary from any consulate or company in any other country. Yet what it can do, is trying to find any patterns within the available data.

2.1.2 Defining Schengen its visa border
'What is the current state of Schengen its visa regime?'

Through consulates that are placed in countries outside the EU, people can apply for a visa (ec.europa.eu, "Visa Policy", 2020). This is not a literal border but can be perceived as a global techno-political mechanism for the EU to selectively order people into wanted and unwanted groups at remote control (Zaiotti, 2016).
When applying for a visa, this where the first deviance between EUropeans and non-EUropeans is made based on arbitrary geographical discrimination (van Houtum & Lacy, 2020). This exclusion of certain nationalities is made far beyond Schengen's physical borders (Bigo & Guild, 2005). As far as eliminating a person's chance to enter the EU legally when still in its native country. Thus, this can be seen as the EU its pre-border (van Houtum & Lacy, 2020).

To understand how this pre-border can be measured, we need to know what factors act as barriers for third country nationals. As this is a quantitative research, there must be a clear definition of a dependent and independent variable. Studies like Mau (2010), Whyte (2008) and Neumayer (2006), describe the dependent variable as a dichotomous variable (1 = visa restrictions in place; 0 = no restrictions in place). Using this as the dependent variable could show us what factors (independent variables) correlate with the excluding nature of the EU's bordering regime.

However, in this day and age the Schengenvisa and its conditions are mostly identical for every member state (Hobolth, 2012). As Hobolth (2014) explains: "*These information sources are, however, not well-suited for analysing the European case as travel visa requirements are almost fully harmonized in Europe today. Hence, they do not contain any variation between member states. Nor are they able to differentiate between third countries on the visa list.*" *(p.426).* Therefore, it is impossible to find any differences in the EU's restrictive nature towards the countries that need a visa to enter the Schengen zone.

Yet, to define the what correlating factors will uncover the non-restrictive and/or restrictive behaviour of the regimes its visa-issuing practises; a recreation of Hobolth's mobility barrier index with data from 2018 would be the most appropriate solution. Hereby using the same independent variables/factors (from the previous regression analysis) that have been deemed as significant indicators of mobility barriers for third country nationals, but using a recreation of Hobolth's mobility barrier index (with data from 2018) as the dependent variable. To understand '*why?*' this index seems like a good dependent variable to describe the Schengen's visa regime, the following arguments will be described below.

First of all, Hobolth includes in his index three dimensions: "*The overall idea behind this indicator is to provide a single restrictiveness score for a country-pair in a year taking into account both visa requirements, issuing practices and consular representation. I set up the indicator as a four-point scale ranging from no mobility barriers to low, medium and high.*" (Hobolth, 2012, p.204).

As Neumayer (2005) explains that the refusal rate variation captures in the enforcement of visa rules. Hobolth however, lays out a set of challenges with using only this measure:

"Firstly, in many cases it is difficult to hand in an application. For example, in conflict countries it might be associated with considerable dangers to travel to a consulate. Embassies can also outright refuse to accept applications from persons with certain types of passports and only allow holders of diplomatic passports to lodge requests. In some sending countries purpose limitations might be in place: applications are only allowed for visits concerning for example family or business." (Hobolth, 2012, p.37).

So, with this analysis we can see if the independent variables are still significant indicators, and show per visa receiving country how strong their restrictiveness is against certain sending countries; but also taking into account some factors which wouldn't be accounted for if using (only) the refusal rate or the visa 'black and white list'. Thus, giving a more detailed description of the EU's visa bordering regime, using the most recent data available. Furthermore, testing the method Hobolth used to create his index and all the other theories for the independent variables. However, what possible independent variables are there to test?

2.1.3 Operationalizing the factors
'What possible factors are playing a role in the exclusion of third countries from the EU's visa free travel policy?'

When talking about the possible mobility barriers for third country nationals: Muslim, African and overall less affluent countries have been fallen victim to this bordering regime (Mau et al. 2012, 2015; Neumayer 2006; Salter 2003, 2006; van Houtum 2010; van Houtum and Lucassen 2016). These factors can be translated into religion, ethnicity, and wealth. Therefore, providing the basis for the independent variables.

These independent variables originate from a variety of theories. For example, Schäfer discusses the European identity and the new visions that were proposed for a so-called 're-territorialisation' of the "European identity" (2007). He argues: *"This construction of this identity has often been made at the expense of southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. The debate over the admission of Turkey and the question which rose out of it—can an Islamic state become a member of the EU?" (p.336).* Hereby formulating religion as a barrier. Furthermore, Mau (2010) tells in his research on visa restrictions that not only economic and political factors, but also ethnicity and religion do play a role in the restriction of certain countries: *"most countries with either black or Islamic majorities are exempted from visa-free travel on a large scale. This may hint at a second, ethnic and religious level of selection" (Mau, 2010, p.349).* The reference to religiosity parallels the wider intense and frequently hostile Western debate about Islam (Salehyan 2009). Hence the following hypothesis is formulated.

Hypothesis 1: If the majority of the population in a sending state is Islamic, the chance of a visa requirement imposed by the receiving country is higher.

When interpreting the economy as a barrier, the distinction between poor and rich countries has been made through the usage of the Gross domestic product (GDP), which is a monetary

measure of the market value of all the final goods and services produced in a specific time period (bea.gov, 2015). An explanatory theory is provided by Bigo & Guild (2005) who describe the so-called fear for the foreigner, which mostly derives from the fear of poverty. In addition, they explain that citizens of poor countries are seen by some as a danger for the preservation of the wealthfare states, while people think this can lead to a higher demand on social services. From this follows that citizens of wealthy countries should have easier access to any Schengen member state than nationals of poor states.

Hypothesis 2 is thus: The lower the income level of a sending state, the higher the change of a visa requirement imposed by the receiving country.

With reference to this fear, there are some researchers that link the fear of refugees and the visa policy (Bø, 1998; Brochmann, 1999; Huysmans, 2000; Ucarer, 2001). For instance, Brochmann provides an example from the Bosnian war: *"a fear of being the preferred target for war refugees turned into a 'domino effect' of visa conditions in the receiving countries throughout Europe" (1999, p.307).* Hereby explaining a factor that is a part of the paper border.
Furthermore, Huysmans explains that migration is usually socially constructed as a security threat to the socioeconomic and political spectrum. As migrants are destabilising for the internal security and correlate with crime/terror (Huysmans, 2000). Thus, this visa system can be used to prevent people from entering the Schengen territory far beyond the actual border, while they are seen as a security risk (Zampagni, 2016). Lastly, in Hobolth (2012), he uses this in his quantitative research by measuring the amount of asylum seekers per sending state.

Therefore, hypothesis 3 reads: The lower the number of asylum applications from nationals of a sending state, the lower the barrier to mobility imposed by the receiving country.

2.2 Conceptual model

By combining the theories, I have created 2 conceptual models.
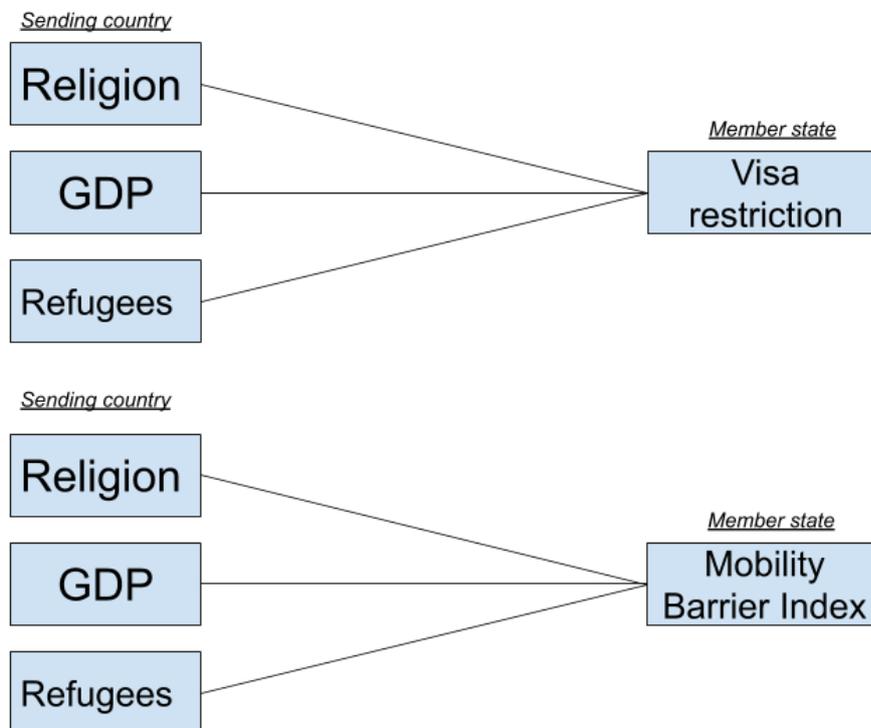
Figure 1

These two models depict the independent variables on the left. These variables have been measured for all third countries. On the right the dependent variable is placed. The left one resembles the EU (Schengen) its visa policy towards all possible visa sending countries. While all member states operate under the same common visa policy, you cannot measure any variance between the member states. However, it does check if the established theories are still relevant in the year of 2018.

That is why the second regression uses a reconstruction of the Mobility Barrier Index with data from 2018 as its dependent variable. This means that it measures the index between every sending country and the receiving member state. Thus, giving a more detailed description of the Schengen visa regime. The following Methodology chapter, this construction will be explained in more detail. Moreover, the 'Research Findings' chapter will show the needed calculations to create the indexes for 2018.

3 Methodology

"One of the essential differences between qualitative and quantitative research is that the former relies on an inductive reasoning approach, while the latter relies on a deductive reasoning approach. Qualitative methods tend to generate theories (inductive), while quantitative methods tend to test theories or hypotheses (deductive). Nevertheless, all research, regardless of whether it is qualitative or quantitative, involves stages that are both inductive and deductive and one does not preclude the other" (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014, p.45-46).

To research the visa-issuing practises of the EU (Schengen) and define its exclusive and/ or non-exclusive behaviour towards certain third country nationals, a more deductive approach has been chosen. Which is why a quantitative approach has been chosen. This approach uses an empirical examination of phenomena via statistical techniques. Its objective is to develop and employ models, theories, and hypotheses from the phenomena subject to the research (Corbetta, 2003). Thus, a desk-research would be the logical approach.

A desk-research is conducted by using already existing data, with the intention to produce new insights through reflexion and analysis (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2000). Furthermore, it tries to use its data through a perspective opposed to the one it was produced with. All this is done without coming into direct contact with the research object. This study uses quantitative, which in contrast to qualitative data provides the extent of the relationships between variables, while the other can clarify and explain those relationships (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

There are two main variants within this method Verschuren & Doorewaard explain (2000). The first consists of a literature study, which analyses knowledge that is produced by others. The second uses already existing data from reliable sources. Of course, both can be combined in one research which is exactly what I will be doing.

Therefore, this chapter will describe the necessary steps that have been taken to create this research. Thus, explaining the field of research, the data sources, and the collection and analysis methods. Finally, a critical reflection of this research limitations is presented, and the appropriate arguments are given of why the alternatives do not suit this research.

3.1 Research field

The Schengen area consists of 26 countries in total. These countries are all part of the common visa policy (ec.europa.eu, "The Schengen visa"). In the "Visa Code Handbook I" it is explained that the common visa policy only applies to the European territories of those Member States.
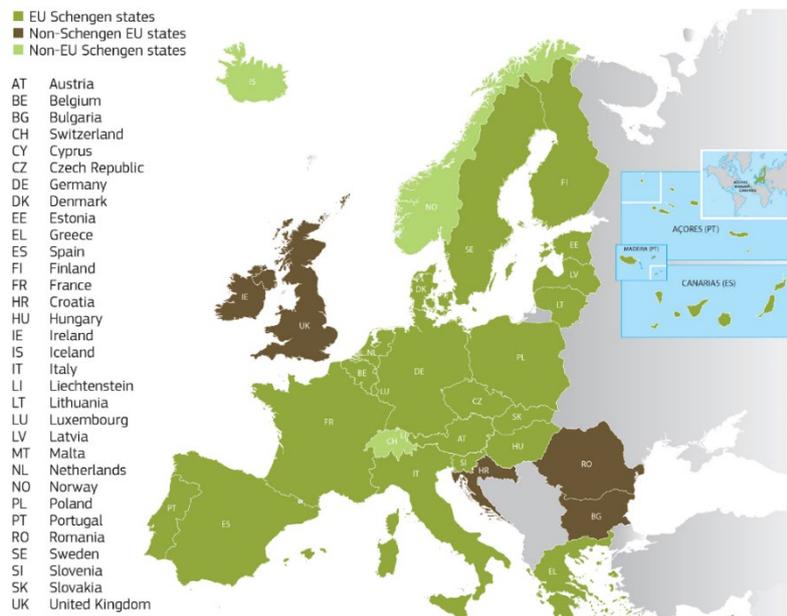

Figure 2

"As regards Denmark, it does not apply to Greenland and the Faroe Islands. When it comes to associated countries (EEA countries), which include Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland: For Norway, the common visa policy does not apply to Svalbard (Spitzbergen)" (European Commission, 2020, p.8).

However, countries like Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, and Romania do not yet implement the Schengen acquis in full. This means that the Visa Code is binding upon them, but until the Schengen acquis is fully implemented these four Member States issue national short-stay visas that are valid only for their own territories *(European Commission, 2020)*. That is why they are not implemented as Schengen member states in the dataset. Thus, in this research a total of 25 Schengen member states were included in the dataset to represent the visa receiving countries. Only Liechtenstein was excluded, while there was insufficient data on the any visa issuing practises to recreate any mobility barrier index and identified as an outlier.

Furthermore, when collecting data from all other countries the '*Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018*' was used to identify what countries exist in the eyes of the EU. "*The visa regulation makes a distinction between "States", "Special administrative regions of the People's Republic of China" and "Entities and territorial authorities that are not recognised as states by at least one member-state".* (Hobolth, 2013, p.6).

Yet Hobolth chose to include them as states in his dataset, so to keep the dataset somewhat similar, I followed his steps. This could be useful for other researchers to compare the results with different years. In doing so a total of 166 visa sending countries where included in the dataset. Yet, Croatia, Holy See and Northern Marianas were excluded due to

too many missing values. In total the dataset covers 191 countries. Hence, the area of research covers almost all political entities in the world.

3.2 Sample Design

The study uses predetermined data from different sources. As explained in the 'Research field', the European Member States and the third countries are the research subjects. In general, the sample size is a central element of a study that affects the generalizability of the results, because a larger sample is presumed to accurately give a reflection of the population and is likely to have a smaller sampling error (Field, 2013). Since there are two separate regressions with different dependent variables, there are also two separate total measurement.

The first one uses the visa restrictions retrieved from "*Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018*" as the dependent variable. This is a dichotomous variable, meaning 0 = 'no visa needed', and 1 = 'a visa is required to enter a member state'. In total there are 166 visa sending countries included in the dataset, thus (N=)166.

The second uses the mobility barrier index as its dependent variable. This is unit of analysis is determined by pairs of receiving and sending countries also in the year 2018. Therefore, the amount of values should be around 25 x 166 = 4.150 measurements. However, due to many insufficient data there are 263I missing values, resulting in (N=)3912 values.

3.3 Data collection

I consolidated data from the 'EU Open Data Portal'. This is an official website of the EU that shares all kinds of data, including Schengen visa statistics. Their most recent information is from the year 2018. So, to conduct a valid regression analysis, all variables are measured in 2018. Thus, the conclusion will only have a say on that year. Besides, the data collection was done in the following steps.

The first step was to include which sending countries are included based on Schengen its visa policy and give them a score of 0, because no barriers are put into place. They simply do not need a visa to enter any Schengen country. For the first dependent variable (Visa Restrictions), this only meant to code the other countries with a 1, which means 'a visa is needed to enter any Schengen member state'. The information to determine this was copied from the EUR-Lex website citing "*Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018*". In total I counted 61 countries who are exempted from requiring a visa to enter any Schengen member state.

Yet, this was only the first step for the creation of the second dependent variable: My version of a mobility barrier index measured in 2018. Therefore, all countries without visa restrictions were coded with a 0 as the first step, but the remaining countries still needed to be coded with the potential options of 1 = Low barriers, 2 = medium barriers, 3 = high barriers. The idea behind this comes from Hobolth ("The Mobility Barrier Index", 2012) who constructed his indexes for 2005 until 2010. He uses the following steps:

- 1. Each dimension is given equal weight

- 2. If no visa requirement is in force a score of 0 is assigned

- 3. If a receiving country does not provide visa-related consular services to a sending country, then a score of 2 is assigned

- 4. If a receiving state relies on the consular services of another for visa-issuing, then they are assumed to have the similar practice

-5. If the visa refusal rate was below 3% a score of 1 was assigned, between 3% and 20% a score of 2, and above 20% a score of 3.
This grouping was based on a quantitative analysis of the total dataset: group one is approximately the first inter-quartile range; group 2 the second and third; group 3 the fourth and last.

-6. If the number of visa applications is very low (below 20% of a modelling estimate) compared to the population size of the sending and receiving country – and the travel distance between them – the score is increased by one (e.g. from 2 to 3).
This is done to consider that receiving states can put barriers into place that prevent people from lodging applications. While in some sending countries, it is not even possible to apply for a tourist visa. In addition, the "*Geographical distance was computed mathematically as the distance between the capitals of the sending and the receiving country in kilometres using the Haversine formula and the latitude and longitude of the cities.*" (Hobolth, 2012, p.85).

Thus, the second step *(step -3.)* was to identify the pairs of receiving and sending countries

who did not have any visa-related consular services between them and assign a score of 2. The following data was retrieved from ec.europa.eu giving an overview of Member States' diplomatic missions and consular posts responsible for processing visa applications and representation arrangements in accordance with Article 8 (1) of the Visa Code. For example, the country of Lesotho needs a visa to enter a Schengen member state, there is not any visa related consular service available within the country itself, thus resulting in a score of 2 for every pair of visa receiving member state and sending third country, as seen in *figure 3*. This official excel document was also used to recreate the consular representation for 2018.

	CITIES	BE	CZ	DK	DE	EE	EL	ES	FR	IT	LV	LI	LT	LU
LAOS	Vientiane	FR	FR		X	FR	DE	DE	X	DE				FR
LEBANON	Beirut	X	X*	X*	X	FR	X*	X*	X*	X*	HU	CH	AT	BE
LESOTHO	Maseru													
	CITIES	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	SI	SK	FI	SE	IS	NO	CH
LAOS	Vientiane		FR	FR	DE		DE	FR		DE	FR			FR
LEBANON	Beirut	X	IT	X*	X*	X	ES	HU	X	AT	*	FR	X*	X*
LESOTHO	Maseru													

Figure 3

All receiving countries are seen on in the top row with their official abbreviations. Moreover, the left columns show the sending countries with the additional city where the visa applications are issued. The X shows where the receiving country does have a visa issuing practise in the sending country. Furthermore, where applications are submitted to an external service provider under Article 43 of the Visa Code, an asterisk (*) is indicated.

"Receiving states participating in the European Union's common visa policy can enter into consular representation agreements with each other. This means that France, for example, represent many of the smaller member states abroad and issue visas on their behalf." (Hobolth, "The European Visa Database", 2012).

	CITIES	BE	CZ	DK	DE	EE	EL	ES	FR	IT	LV	LI	LT	LU
TURKEY	Marmaris					*	*							
TURKEY	Trabzon					*					*	*		*
TURKMENI-STAN	Ashgabat	DE			X	DE	DE	DE		IT	DE	DE		DE
	CITIES	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	SI	SK	FI	SE	IS	NO	CH
TURKEY	Marmaris													
TURKEY	Trabzon		*		*	*		*	*					
TURKMENI-STAN	Ashgabat			DE	DE		DE			DE	DE		DE	DE

Figure 4

For example, while looking at Turkmenistan (as seen in *figure 4)* most receiving Schengen member states are represented by another big country like Germany (DE), thus resulting in the assumption that those smaller member states enforce the same barriers as the representative member states *(step -4.)*. This document has been analysed for all countries.

Thereafter, the visa refusal rates of all the member states towards the documented sending

states were implemented. While the restrictiveness of a receiving country's visa issuing practice is estimated in existing research by using the visa refusal rate or its mirror image, the recognition rate (Guild 2010; Mau 2010). To ensure that the research is doable within the selected timeframe, I focused on the short-stay visas. These kinds of visas are specifically aimed towards tourism, economic activities, and family visits. They are prominent barriers for traveling, trading, and the protection of refugees (Hobolth, 2014, p.425) and they play an important role in external border policy of the EU (Bigo & Guild, 2005; Brochmann, 1999). Furthermore, within the scope of short stay visas the refusal rates from all sending countries per Schengen member state were collected from ec.europa.eu "Visa statistics for consulates, 2018" (2018). Moreover, within this document the "Not issued rate for uniform visas" was used to redistribute predetermined scores -based on the interquartile ranges of the total dataset- to the remaining pairs of sending and receiving countries *(step -5.)*.

The refusal rate is calculated: *"as the number of refusals divided by the total number of visa decisions (refused plus issued). The key idea behind this measure is that it provides an approximation of how strictly the issuing criteria are enforced when applications are processed. The larger the share refused the fewer persons is deemed to fall within the scope of what constitutes a legitimate traveller. The higher the share of rejections the more restrictive the rules are enforced."* (Hobolth, 2012, p.244).

This indicator resembles the use of recognition rates to compare asylum systems (Neumayer 2005). Thus, the refusal rate captures important variation in the enforcement of visa rules which is otherwise simply ignored. However, Hobolth also discussed a set of challenges with this measure. These challenges are considered in the 'Research limitations' section. Finally, I had to include the population sizes of all the sending and receiving countries and the distance between them *(step -6.)*. This step tries to address the issue that only using the refusal rate does not measure the ways in which receiving countries are able to prevent applications from being lodged in the first place. The information including the data on the all the countries population sizes in 2018 was retrieved from data.worldbank.org, "Population, total" (n.d.). However, the distances between sending and receiving countries was retrieved from Hobolth dataset itself (Hobolth, "The European Visa Database", 2012). The latter did not have to be from 2018, while the distances between sending and receiving states have not changed within the 6 years. The exact calculation and implementation of this data will be explained in the 'Quantitative analysis' section.

After this, the data for the independent variables were collected. These are the possible factors that might play a role in the exclusion or exemption of certain third countries. Researchers like Guild (2010), Mau (2010) and Neumayer (2006) have already done this by looking if the EU did or didn't allow visa free travel for all possible nationalities and concluded that factors like ethnicity, wealth and religion might play a role. The site data.worldbank.org provides the needed data to measure these factors. This data is produced by the World Bank Group (WBG): a family of five international organizations that make leveraged loans to developing countries ("The World Bank", n.d). The five international organisations partner up with the private sector and governments mainly to aid poor countries and produce open data about certain aspects within all countries. The two variables this study will test is wealth and refugees' number of every visa sending country in 2018. Therefore, a list of all the countries GDP and the refugee producing number per country have been collected from this source.

Furthermore, data from Hobolth's 'Mobility barrier index' was used to collect data on the religion per visa sending country. His data shows which sending countries have an Islamic majority and which do not. Yet his data was collected from 2010, therefore I have tested if this was still accurate for 2018 by crosschecking his data with a list from the Central Intelligence agency ("The world Factbook", 2018). Although the many years between the two measurements, no major differences were spotted between the two lists.

3.4 Quantitative analysis

After collecting the data, it had to be analysed. The raw data coming from the internet sources were downloaded and rearranged in Excel and then imported into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Furthermore, the dependent variable for the second regression – the mobility barrier indexes - had to undergo a few steps, before it could be used. As the actual data is not copied from Hobolth his dataset but reconstructed with all the necessary data from statistics originating from 2018. Therefore, I had to follow his instructions on how he constructed his indexes.

Lastly, the raw data was organized and prepared by renaming and labelling the different variables, which made it easier to analyse. All data analyses were done with linear regressions. A linear regression is used to "determine whether the independent variable(s) affect or relate to the dependent variable(s)" (Foster, Barkus & Yavorsky, 2005, p.11). Naturally, this relation is assumed to be a correlation. While variables correlate with each other, but not necessarily with a causal relation between each other.

Yet, there might be some underlying assumption of causality, when measuring if there is any correlation in the increasing or decreasing mobility of third country nationals based on religion, wealth, and its refugee population. Suggesting that there might be a bias within the system preventing certain nationals from entering any Schengen countries legally.

The equation of linear regression is $y = c + bX$

In general, a linear model its assumption is that the relationship is linear in nature, showing "dependent variable Y is related to the independent variable X" (Foster, Barkus & Yavorsky, 2005, p.11). This thesis will attempt to test the causality assumptions behind the visa issuing practises with the statistical data on countries using the linear regression method. To do that, a few general assumptions of data must be met before the actual regression analyses can be done. The first being that there is a normal distribution of the residuals, which can be analysed by using the histograms or the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. In addition, most variables have undergone a logarithmic transformation, to better fit the model assumptions of normal distribution (Agresti and Finlay 1997, p.561). This is necessary to reduce the skewed nature of the variables, and a log transformation is thus a good option for 'pulling in' outliers and ensuring that the variable complies with the requirements.

Secondly, there should be no multicollinearity which means that independent variables would correlate to strongly with one or another. Furthermore, the relationship between continuous data needs to be linear and homoscedasticity may not occur, meaning there is no clear pattern with the distribution of residuals. Both can be tested by consulting the scatterplots.

Moreover, the model itself needs to be interpreted through the Model Summary, the ANOVA test, and the Coefficients. The ANOVA showing if the effects of the independent variables is greater than the effect of individual differences (Foster, Barkus & Yavorsky, 2005). The Model

Summary will produce an R-square telling the overall explanatory power of the model itself, and the Coefficients will tell the individual effects on the independent variables when the dependent variable changes with one value. In the 'Research findings' chapter the assumptions will be tested to show if the criteria have been met.

3.5 Research limitations

While a desk-research saves a lot of time in conducting interviews and/or surveys, it does have its limitations. The first one derives from the fact that you are using secondary data that has been produced for other purposes than this research intended (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007). Thus, I do not have the full control, like one would have in a survey or case study, to produce the data that suits my research best. This means that I must base my research design around the available data which can be constraining. The data that I will be using derive from different sources: The EU, The World Bank and existing research. They are all based on different entities with their own agenda. While relying on administrative data collected and published by public authorities, the data validity could be influenced in distinct ways. As Hobolth describes (2012), that the figures depend on the methods and concepts used by national agencies, and the resources they allocate to the task. The choices and potential shifts in procedures made by these agencies cannot be easily identified. Since some of the differences in the statistics might just be a matter of variation in data collections techniques and not because of control practices as such. Furthermore, while the data is made available publicly to enforce transparency in the visa issuing practises, it might give certain governments an incentive to manipulate the figures. "In the Schengen setting, visa figures are used to foster transparency in implementation practices. Member states might thus be tempted to distort figures to prevent criticism from their peers." (Hobolth, 2012, p.35). Besides, some countries outsource their visa-issuing practises to private companies, whose data is not made public. Thus, I cannot know for sure if the data that is provided by them is completely unbiased. This limitation could apply for the theories that are used in this research. Therefore, a one-sided perspective on the research material could be quite inevitable.

Another con of this research method is the absence of any contact with the research units. The data just consists of numbers, yet there are people behind these numbers. For example, the visa-application process consists of a face-to-face interview, where a lot of factors might play a role in the exclusion process of certain nationalities. Therefore, using only quantitative data misses out on any information that can be observed from human interaction. This also decreases the validity of the research while it lacks a dimension of triangulation. Yet, because of the given circumstances there were no qualitative methods implemented. Within the regression analyses the data goes through tests to check the assumptions on validity and robustness. Additionally, this is shown in the 'Research findings' chapter. Moreover, it is important to analyse the data critically and triangulate the findings based on the data of other studies. Therefore, this study has chosen the variables based on previous studies to check their validity, in a triangulating the findings based on the database with other studies. The general linear model its assumption is that the relationship is linear between the independent and dependent variable (Field, 2013). Yet, as some variables are transformed using the natural log, small changes can have a big impact. Minor alterations matter a lot for small countries but less so for larger ones. Thus, this has an impact on the formulation of the conclusions.

When looking at the research process itself the limitations arise from the fact that I do not have any coding knowledge. Thus, I had to enter most data manually. This did take allot of time, but more importantly can be prone to mistakes. Although being very careful with the data, this also enforces the importance of reviewing the data by other researchers.

Then there is the disadvantage arising from the indicators itself in the second regression analyses. In addition, when using a dependent variable that is based on an index the amount of variation is reduced in relation to using a variable like the refusal rate that is measured in percentages. Therefore, the results of the second regression analyses are cross-checked with a model that uses the visa refusal rate as an alternative indicator. This is done to see if what model is a better predictor.

3.6 Reflecting on alternatives

When assessing which research methods to choose from alternative options have been considered, but they were not ideal. Here are the main reasons for this.

First, when looking at this issue with a qualitative approach, simply using surveys and experiments as a method can be complicated, because the goal is to analyse a global system, Schengen's visa regime. Thus, working with a large amount of data to give my conclusion. This process itself can already be pretty time consuming, while I must collect data from 26 Schengen member states, let alone all the other possible countries that can apply for a Schengen visa. Hence, surveys and experiments on a scale like this do not seem feasible in the given timeframe (Davies & Mosdell, 2006).

Second, a case study would not work while this method tends to aim for an in-depth explanation on the subject matter (Simons, 2009). For instance, asking the question: *'How does a consulates restrictive behaviour towards certain third country nationals come forward in its practise?'* Although an interesting topic, the nature of this research is descriptive and uses quantitative methods to come to its conclusions. Therefore its goal is not to find underlying explanations of *'why'* the current common visa policy operates as it does, but my aim is to set out the foundations of what possible barriers are being presented for third country nationals in the most recent data (Singh, 2007). Thereby giving a more generalised statement on the issue.

As Singh explains: A Descriptive research *"is used to describe an event, a happening or to provide a factual and accurate description of the population being studied. It provides the number of times something occurs and helps in determining the descriptive statistics about a population, that is, the average number of occurrences or frequency of occurrences"* (Singh, 2007, p.65). This will be done in the context of testing hypotheses on any possible factors that play a role in the exclusion of third country nationals. By showing what relations the data presents, using statistical data as valid arguments, but not deciphering the underlying mechanisms. So, the already present theories on this subject matter will be tested with the most recent data on the Schengen visa regime. For these reasons, a grounded theory approach would not be ideal either, while this also has an approach that derives from qualitative research.

4 Research findings

This chapter will test the two conceptual models by using the linear regression analyses method with SPSS.

However, before the actual regression analysis the construction of the MBI is shown with the required calculations, hence answering the question: *"How is the Mobility barrier index constructed?"*

Furthermore, as seen in the conceptual model chapter, there are 2 independent variables with both their separate regression analysis. The first one represents the initial barrier that Schengen does or does not apply on a third country, the requirement of a visa. Therefore, showing what the current state of the EU's visa regime is and answering the question: *"What possible factors are playing a role in the exclusion of third countries from the EU's visa free travel policy?"*

Finally, the question: *"Do the same factors also correlate with Hobolth's Mobility Barrier Index?"* is answered. By testing the chosen theories behind the independent variables from Mau et al. 2012, 2015; Neumayer 2006; Salter 2003, 2006; van Houtum 2010; van Houtum and Lucassen 2016; and Hobolth, 2012, a more in-depth presentation of the Schengen visa regime is given. Moreover, to test if the explanatory power of this model has improved, a model with the visa refusal rates as an independent variable will briefly be used to compare what model is better.

4.1 The dependent variables

To measure what restrictive or exemptive behaviour the visa-issuing practises of Schengen might have in place towards certain third country nationals, two separate multivariate regressions are used. Hereby, the first regression analyses utilizes the same dependent variable Mau (2010), Whyte (2008) and Neumayer (2006) used to describe what countries do and do not need a visa to enter the EU in the first place. Thus, this is a dichotomous variable (1 = visa restrictions in place; 0 = no restrictions in place).

4.1.1 Measuring restrictive and/or exemptive behaviour

For the second regression analyses the dependent variable will be the reconstruction of Hobolth mobility barrier index. The index itself is an ordinal scale ranging from 0 to 3, meaning 0 = No barriers; 1 = Low barriers; 2 = medium barriers; 3 = high barriers. The unit of analysis are pairs of receiving and sending countries in the year 2018. A data point is, for example, France (receiving country) in Algeria (sending country) in 2018, meaning that France could oppose no barrier or a low up and to including a high visa restriction barrier towards Algeria. As Hobolth constructed his index for 2005 until 2010, I will build upon this by following his steps, but I use data from 2018 to create my own index with measurements for that year.

As stated before, Hobolth ("The Mobility Barrier Index", 2012) constructed his index in the following way:
- 1. Each dimension is given equal weight

- 2. If no visa requirement is in force a score of 0 is assigned

- 3. If a receiving country does not provide visa-related consular services to a sending country, then a score of 2 is assigned

- 4. If a receiving state relies on the consular services of another for visa-issuing, then they are assumed to have the similar practice

-5. If the visa refusal rate was below 3% a score of 1 was assigned, between 3% and 20% a score of 2, and above 20% a score of 3.
This grouping was based on a quantitative analysis of the total dataset checking the interquartile ranges of the visa refusal rate: group one is approximately the first inter-quartile range; group 2 the second and third; group 3 the fourth and last. Additionally, I used SPSS descriptive statistics to calculate the inter-quartile range for my dataset and similar results were observed. The result can be viewed in the *Appendix 8.1*.

-6. If the number of visa applications is very low (below 20% of a modelling estimate) compared to the population size of the sending and receiving country – and the travel distance between them – the score is increased by one (e.g. from 2 to 3).
This is done to consider that receiving states can put barriers into place that prevent people from lodging applications. While in some sending countries, it is not even possible to apply for a tourist visa. In addition, the "*Geographical distance was computed mathematically as the distance between the capitals of the sending and the receiving country in kilometres using the Haversine formula and the latitude and longitude of the cities.*" (Hobolth, 2012, p.85).

While there are no major shifts in the distances between countries, I trusted that the final data on this subject did not have any errors.

The calculation of the modelling estimate was done within SPSS. The model is a simple linear regression with population sizes of the receiving and sending countries, as well as the travel distance, to estimate application numbers. All the variables except distanceKmRcSc were transformed using the natural log to better approximate a normal distribution. The key results of this analysis can be seen in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Estimating the number of visas applied for			
Model	B	t	Sig.
Constant	-0.470	-0.634	0.526
Log population size Sending Country	0.417	12.361	0.000
Log Population size Receiving Country	0.491	7.149	0.000
Distance km Receiving-Sending countries	-0.980	-13.653	0.000

R square = 20.8%
N = 1180

This is where I ran into some trouble. The R square was < 30%, thus the predicting power of the model was very weak. This issue might be explained by the lack of data the visa applications produce for 2018. Many countries did not lodge any applications, yet this could men two things. The first being, these countries simply did not lodge any visa applications, or the data of these countries was not registered. This results in many missing values, that can be interpreted as 0 or MISSING. Therefore, I did not include this step in the transformation of my data. The following effects of this are discussed in the 'Reflections' chapter.

4.2 The Model assumptions

As explained in the 'Quantitative analyses' paragraph in the 'Methodology' chapter, there are a few tests that need to be done before a regression analyses can happen correctly. These are the following rules (Field, 2013):
- Variables need to have a normal distribution of residuals.
- There should be no multicollinearity between independent variables
- Homoscedasticity may not occur
- Linear relationships between continuous data should occur

First of all these are the main variables that are used for the regression analyses:

Table 2			
Name	Type	Measure	Description
incomeGDPcapitaSC2018	*Independent*	*Ratio*	*GDP per capita of a visa sending country*
IslamMajority2018	*Independent*	*Dichotomous (Dummy)*	*Does a sending country have an Islam majority? Yes/no*
AsylumPOP_OGsc2018	*Independent*	*Ratio*	*Asylum population of every sending country*
visaRequirement	*Dependent*	*Dichotomous (Dummy)*	*Does a third country national need a visa to enter Schengen? Yes/no*
MOBBARINDX2018	*Dependent*	*Ordinal*	*The Mobility Barrier Indexes of 2018*

4.2.1 Normal distribution and Linear relationships

By checking one by one the histograms of all the variables, the skewedness could be noted and if needed transformed or discarded to better the analyses. Additionally, the variables AsylumPOP_OGsc2018 and incomeGDPcapitaSC2018 were skewed and therefore transformed with a natural log. Furthermore, the p-p plots were used to check for the linearity in the independent variables are illustrated in the *Appendix 8.4/8.5*. After the log transformations the data did fit the narrative of a linear distribution. A log transformation is necessary when data appears skewed and showing an exponential relationship, *"while this a good option for 'pulling in' outliers and ensuring that the variable complies with the requirement of a normal distribution"* (Agresti and Finlay 1997, p. 561).

As the skewedness was to the right, the recoding also made sense from a narrative perspective, because it accounts for the very likely difference in relative effects. As Hobolth (2012) states *"a poor country becomes 10% more affluent this is likely to make a very substantial difference on living conditions. A rich country increasing its wealth by a similar factor is unlikely to experience the same degree of change."* (Hobolth, 2012, p.58). Also, when looking at asylum populations the same logic can be applied. The histograms are illustrated in the *Appendix 8.2/8.3*.

4.2.2 Multicollinearity

A way to detect is to run a regression analysis and swap out the chosen dependent variable for every independent variable and run a regression for every possible combination (Field, 2013). Then by reading the VIF (variance inflation factor) values the variables can be checked. No multicollinearity was detected while the VIF values did not exceed a value of 3. In fact, the values stayed in between 1.018 and 1.214. All the needed SPSS outputs can be seen in *Appendix 8.6*.

4.2.3 Homoscedasticity

Thereafter, the scatterplots of every independent variable were analysed to check if there was a somewhat constant variance of the errors. This step helps to ensure that the assumption of independent observations can be upheld homoscedasticity. If this is not the case the possible results would be very uncertain (Agresti and Finlay 1997, p.534). The raw SPSS data can be seen in the *Appendix 8.7*. However, no large majority of heteroscedasticity was found, thus complying to the model assumption of Homoscedasticity.

4.2.4 Missing values analysis

Finally, a missing value analysis was conducted. As explained in the methodology chapter, some countries were excluded because of insufficient data. Thus, table 3 shows the remaining missing values.

Table 3

		MOBBARIN DX2018	LNincomeG DPcapitaSC2 018	Islam majority 2018	LNAsylumP OP_OGsc201 8
N	Valid	4150	4125	4150	4150
	Missing	0	25	0	0

Upon further inspection, there was no reason for concern, while there are not many values missing. Only the GDP per capita from 2018 was missing for North Korea, while there is not any valid data available for this.

4.3 The results

The aim of this research is to test if the established factors -derived from previous studies- still correlate with the Schengen visa-issuing practises exemptive and/or restrictive behaviour towards certain third country nationalities. First, by running a regression analysis relating possible factors of visa sending countries -like wealth, religion, and refugees- to Schengen its visa policy. Secondly, I recreate my own Mobility Barrier Index. By retracing the steps of Hobolth but apply data from 2018 and use it as a tool to measure if there is any correlation in the increasing or decreasing mobility of third country nationals. This is also based on religion, wealth, and its refugee population. Therefore, testing if the different theories centred around the so-called 'paper border' are still relevant to this day.

4.3.1 Visa restrictions

My starting point is checking what countries do or do not need a visa to enter the EU. Thus, the first dependent variable is a dummy variable containing the score 0 or 1. For example nationals of countries such as Japan, Australia and Mexico can travel visa free to countries within the EU for 90 days or within 180 days. They have no visa restriction put against them from any Schengen member state, therefore a score of 0 is added. All other countries who need a visa before they can legally enter a country within the EU have a score of 1 added to them. These are Nationals from countries like Afghanistan, Algeria, and Indonesia.

What possible factors are playing a role in the exclusion of third countries from the EU's visa free travel policy?

To answer this question a multivariate regression analysis has been utilized. Because the visa restriction on a sending country is the same for all member states, the regression has been done with data of one member-state as the receiving country. Thus, there are 165 observations (N), while the missing values have been discarded. The key results are as follows:

Table 4: Model 1		
Variables	B	Sig.
Religion	*0.257*	*0.000*
GDP	*-0.037*	*0.017*
Refugees	*0.045*	*0.000*
Model strength		
R square	*0.322*	
F	*25.513*	*0.000*

Let's start with the first variable that has the hypothesis: *If the majority of the population in a sending state is Islamic, the chance of a visa requirement imposed by the receiving country is higher.*

From the information the regression analysis provided we can conclude that there is a significant relation between countries with a majority of Islamic people and the requirement

of a visa to enter the EU (Sig. = 0.00). Looking at the coefficients it states, if the visa requirement increases from 0 (no visa requirement) to 1 (visa required) the sending country also increases from 0 (no Islam majority) to 1 (an Islam majority). Besides this is what has been expected while the relation is positive (B = 0.257). Therefore, the hypothesis is approved.

The second hypothesis stated: *The lower the income level of a sending state, the higher the chance of a visa requirement imposed by the receiving country.*
This variable also has a significant relation with the dependent variable (Sig. = 0.017). Furthermore, the B = -.037 which means there is a negative relation. This is in line with the expectation, while it tells us that when the GDP of a sending country is higher the chance of having to apply for a visa is lower. Thus, poor countries are more likely to succumb to this first barrier of visa requirement.

Hypothesis 3: The lower the number of refugees fleeing from a sending state, the lower the change of a visa requirement imposed by the receiving country.

Lastly the variable of asylum seekers from sending countries, does have a significant relation with the dependent variable while the Sig. lesser then 0.05 is. Furthermore, it has a weak relation to visa requirements (B = 0.045). So, the data does support the hypothesis. Only the relation is not very strong. Therefore, this was mostly the expected outcome, while the explanation would be that countries where a lot of refugees are fleeing from would have a lower chance of traveling visa free to the EU. Nevertheless, I thought the relation would have been stronger, while refugees are mostly seen as undesirables when looking at Europe its (bordering) reaction towards them.

Overall, the model can account for 32,2% of the total variance in the visa requirements, when looking at the model summary. Besides taking the F-test in consideration, we can conclude that there is indeed a relation between the independent variable and dependent variables.

4.3.2 Critical discussion
When interpreting the model it becomes clear that the EU its visa policy might exclude countries based on religion, wealth and its refugee producing numbers. Although upon further inspection, wealth does not seem to provide as much explanatory power than expected. It seems that religion has the strongest relation with excluding countries, and thereafter its refugee producing numbers. Thus, the explanatory theory provided by Bigo & Guild (2005) that describes the so-called fear for the foreigner -which mostly derives from the fear of poverty- can be linked to these results. Although statistically significant, GDP might not be the optimal predictor and thus it could be defined in a different way to better measure poverty.
    Furthermore, the hostile Western debate about Islam described by Salehyan (2009) is something that could be interesting to further explore. While religion does have the strongest relation. Therefore, basing my conclusions on the model, it seems that in 2018 there still is some bias in the visa policy based on the factors. However, there might be some unmeasured factors that influence the results that need to be included. For instance, the political relationship between Schengen member states and the visas sending countries.

4.3.3 MBI

In this part I will discuss the findings of the second multiple regression analysis. In addition to the first one: all independent variables stay the same. However, this time the dependent variable contains a reconstruction of the Mobility Barrier Index of every sending country, based on data from 2018. Every Schengen member state receives visa applications sent from different third country nationals, but these applications can be refused for any reason. Yet the MBI also considers the differences in restrictiveness per Schengen member state. Therefore, the variance in the MBI might be connected to the 3 factors (GDP, Religion, Refugees), as well as giving a better model for the restrictive and/ or non-restrictive nature of the current Schengen visa regime. Therefore, the following sub-question will be answered:

Do the same factors also correlate with Hobolth's Mobility barrier index?

These are the key results:

Table 5: Model 2		
Variables	B	Sig.
Religion	*0.606*	*0.000*
GDP	*-0.082*	*0.000*
Refugees	*0.101*	*0.000*
Model strength		
R square	*0.330*	
F	*677.230*	*0.000*

The information this regression analysis provides makes us conclude that there is a significant relation between the MBI and all the dependent variables (Sig. = 0.00).

Let's start with the first variable that has the hypothesis: *If the majority of the population in a sending state is Islamic, the chance of a visa requirement imposed by the receiving country is higher.*

Looking at the coefficients it states, if the barrier to mobility rises for example from a 0 (no mobility barrier) to a 1 (low mobility barrier) or from a 1 to a 2 etc. The sending country also increases from 0 (no Islam majority) to 1 (an Islam majority). This is what has been expected while the relation is positive (B = 0.606) and has a way stronger effect than in the previous model. Therefore, the hypothesis is approved.

The second hypothesis stated: *The lower the income level of a sending state, the higher the chance of a visa requirement imposed by the receiving country.*

This one has a Beta (B) equal to -0.084 which means there is indeed a negative relation, yet not a very strong one. This is for the most part in line with the expectation, while it tells us that when the GDP of a sending country is higher the chance of having to apply for a visa is lower. Thus, we can conclude with this data that poor countries probably are more likely to succumb to this first barrier of visa requirement.

Hypothesis 3: The lower the number of refugees fleeing from a sending state, the lower the change of a visa requirement imposed by the receiving country.

Lastly the variable 'amount of asylum seekers from sending countries' does have a significant relation with the dependent variable, which is a different outcome then with the visa requirement model. Furthermore, it has a positive relation to the MBI with the beta equal to 0.101. Which means that the data does support the hypothesis. If the number of refugees fleeing a sending country is lower, the mobility barrier that the receiving country puts into place also gets lower.

This is exactly what was expected. Countries with a lot of refugees fleeing from it, probably are seen by Schengen member states as dangerous places and do not want too many refugees entering their borders. Thus, the mobility barrier rises.

Overall, the model can account for 33% of the total variance in the visa requirements. Besides taking the F-test in consideration, we can conclude that there is indeed a relation between the independent variable and dependent variables. Besides, it has a better explanatory power than the previous (visa restrictions) model. To check its robustness, I have been comparing this model with one that uses only the visa-refusal rate as its dependent variable, its explanatory power is way better. Since the R square of the refusal rate model equal is to 16%.

4.3.4 Critical discussion

The second model does have a better explanatory. When comparing the results, it seems that all factors improve in their relation towards the dependent variable. However, its improvement is not as major as expected. Thus, the model does account for the restrictive and/ or non-restrictive nature of the current Schengen visa regime with the given factors.

Furthermore, no major differences are spotted within the two models when looking at the factors influence. So, to link this back to the previous theories, there seems to be a correlation. Yet, the relations shown in the model are not as strong as hoped. This could be improved on by including different factors to measure wealth, religion, and refugees. Or there also might be other factors that influence the data in ways that I could not account for. It is interesting that, refugee numbers have a bigger influence on the exemptive or exclusive behaviour of Schengen member states than its GDP. I thought there might be a connection between them, while poverty can be a consequence for fleeing from a country. Thus, Schengen could put up barriers to prevent people from these countries to lodge visa applications. However, I failed to implement a penalty score that accounts for receiving states putting barriers into place that prevent people from lodging applications. Therefore, more information and data about the relationship between receiving and sending countries should be collected to further dismiss or argue these theories.

5 The conclusion

Finally the main question can be answered: 'How can we explain the exemptive and/or restrictive behaviour of the Schengen regime its visa-issuing practises based on the most recent quantitative data?' As this research set out to test if the established factors still correlate with the Schengen visa-issuing practises exemptive and/or restrictive behaviour towards certain third country nationalities. The previous discovered outcomes do support that fact.

Yet, from its sub-questions like 'What is the current state of Schengen its visa regime?' we can conclude that there are many other factors that operate as restricting barriers for third country nationals, which cannot be accounted for in the available data and the mobility barrier index. These possible barriers are imbedded in the visa applying process and in the fact that some visa-issuing practises are handed over to private companies.

Furthermore, when looking at the Schengen its visa travel policy, the established factors do correlate. Which means that the theories still are relevant to this day. As the data showed, there seems to be a discriminatory behaviour based on wealth, religion, and refugees. In addition, the explanatory theory provided by Bigo & Guild (2005) that describes the so-called fear for the foreigner -which mostly derives from the fear of poverty- can be linked to these results. However, as stated before GDP might not be the optimal predictor and thus it could be defined in a different way to better measure poverty.

Furthermore, the hostile Western debate about Islam described by Salehyan (2009) is something that could be interesting to further explore. While religion does have the strongest relation. When looking at the theories linked to refugees (Bø, 1998; Brochmann, 1999; Huysmans, 2000; Ucarer, 2001). The model does support their perspectives. The explanation for this could be for instance: *"a fear of being the preferred target for war refugees turned into a 'domino effect' of visa conditions in the receiving countries throughout Europe" (Brochmann, 1999, p.307).* Yet, further research needs to be conducted to get a more certain answer to these claims. Besides, I suspected the two factors 'GDP' and 'Refugees population' to correlate with each other. While there might be a connection between them because poverty can be a consequence for fleeing from a country. However, this was fortunately not the case.

Thus, when looking at the data and conceptual model, both models were statistically significant. However, the regression model with the MBI did give a better model fit, where all variables increased their influence. Although this increase was not very much and there are still some uncertainties within this model. For instance, I failed to implement a penalty score that accounts for receiving states putting barriers into place that prevent people from lodging applications. Therefore, the perspective provided in this paper offers a good background for selecting cases for in-depth study. While it fails to give any definitive answers on the subject matter, it does give an indication that the theories are still relevant to this day. Thus, more research on Schengen and its visa issuing practises is advised.

Overall, the chosen factors can explain a part of the variance in the exemptive and/or restrictive behaviour of the Schengen regime its visa-issuing practises. Which also corresponds with all the theories that have been used in this research. Therefore, the European Union should also reassess their strategy and visa policies to better represent its own Copenhagen criteria and Lisbon Treaty, while it seems that the behaviour of their visa issuing practises do have a indication that these discriminatory factors still relevant to this day. Although nothing is certain, the most recent data available has given its suggestions.

6 Reflections

Looking back at the journey that has been made to come to this final point, I find myself in a position of uncertainty. While I missed many opportunities to ask for any feedback, ideas and so on. This is the one of the things I do regret, while my urge to do everything on my own has made this journey very long. Yet, I have learned a lot from it. For example, I need to just write and ask questions later. Letting the thesis develop itself through this process. I have accomplished this in a much later phase of my bachelor year; therefore, I never had the chance to present anything (which was in my opinion) worthy to my mentor. Which kept me from progressing in the earlier stages of my thesis. This is something I need to work on, because now I must turn in my thesis, without any feedback to improve it more.

Secondly, I have underestimated the process of collecting data. The recreation of Hobolth's mobility barrier index has taken me quite some time, while the many documents and countries I had to recode was harder than I thought. Besides, I encountered so many problems when trying to figure out how the index was constructed.
Therefore I had to cancel my initial plan, which was to construct a map giving a visual representation of the Schengen visa regime. Furthermore, I could only implement three dependent variables. This was the case because to include a variable, allot of time had to be spend in excel to reconstruct the data, so it fit in SPSS. Moreover, I had some difficulties with the program crashing and deleting most of my process, which added way more time to my research than I had planned.

Overall, when looking at the research process, I am very critical of myself and I hope to improve in my research skill. In addition, I should have been more precise with choosing a research method. While I was unsure of my initial direction, my methodological base was not very strong in the beginning. It was not easy for me to picture what my final result would be. I had difficulty translating what was in my head and I had many conflicting ideas while constructing my thesis. Therefore, I had to retrace, and redo allot of steps in my research to correct my questions, data, and analyses taking up allot of time. Moreover, I had a hard time understanding how to measure visa restrictions via an index. This resulted in a lot of lost time trying to find the right explanations to recreate my own indexes. Most importantly, I should have worked on my planning and preparation since time did get the best of me. This probably could have prevented my stalling during the beginning the pandemic. While my schedule was all over the place and my home situation was not optimal for studying. However, when I finally did get a clear vision of my research, I found my workflow to improve. Only this came at a much later time.

When looking at the contents of my research. I could have taken more time to try to triangulate my findings with some qualitative approaches. For instance, by choosing a smaller research field (N), I could have made more room to use a qualitative approach to support the theoretical aspects of my research. In addition, I had to divert allot of time towards the creation of my dataset. However, I did succeed in reconstructing a mobility barrier index of 2018 to test the chosen theories. The only issue that arrived was from the fact that I failed to recreate a model for estimating the visa applications received to consider that receiving states can put barriers into place that prevent people from lodging applications. Therefore, the explanatory power of the final model might have been weaker than I hoped.

For future researchers I recommend building upon the dataset and collect statistical data themselves, to further strengthen its validity. Additionally, checking its contents with a critical perspective to improve its robustness. Besides, a qualitative approach on the subject matter would be interesting to find out what processes are visible within a visa issuing practise. Therefore, collecting qualitative data to find out where this exemptive or exclusive behaviour comes from and further confirm or dismiss it. Finally, I would recommend to research with a more case-oriented approach, like on a country level. To get a better understanding how countries operate on visa issuing and the differences that might occur between one and another. Thus, shedding light on Schengen its visa regime in a more in-depth analysis.

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