UNEQUAL IM/MOBILITIES

Why do visa policies exclude certain groups of people but not others?

An analysis of the Schengen visa policy

[THE ISSUE

- Increasing cross-border movements of people, products, services, capital and information unjustly inspire the image of a *borderless* world[1].
- Visa policies selectively **restrict** and **control** human mobility from afar[2].
- In the Schengen area, the abolition of internal border controls has coincided with the **hardening** of the *external borders*[3].
- **To safeguard security**, the Schengen visa policy has established fully harmonized *visa requirements*, *carrier sanctions* and *shared databases*.

[WHY IT MATTERS

Visa restrictions ⟷ **'Policing at a distance'** ⟷ **Carrier sanctions**

Burden of proof

Precautionary risk management based on *categorizing* certain nationalities as common trait of persons *perceived* more likely to be a **security threat**

KEY FINDINGS

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SPECIFIC TYPES OF SHORT-TERM MOBILITY

The so-called **'black'** and **'white' Schengen list** determine the countries whose nationals are subject to visa restrictions and those who are not[4].

This *division* is based on several criteria, whereas concerns relating to **'illegal' immigration**, **public policy** and **security** are highlighted as of utmost importance.

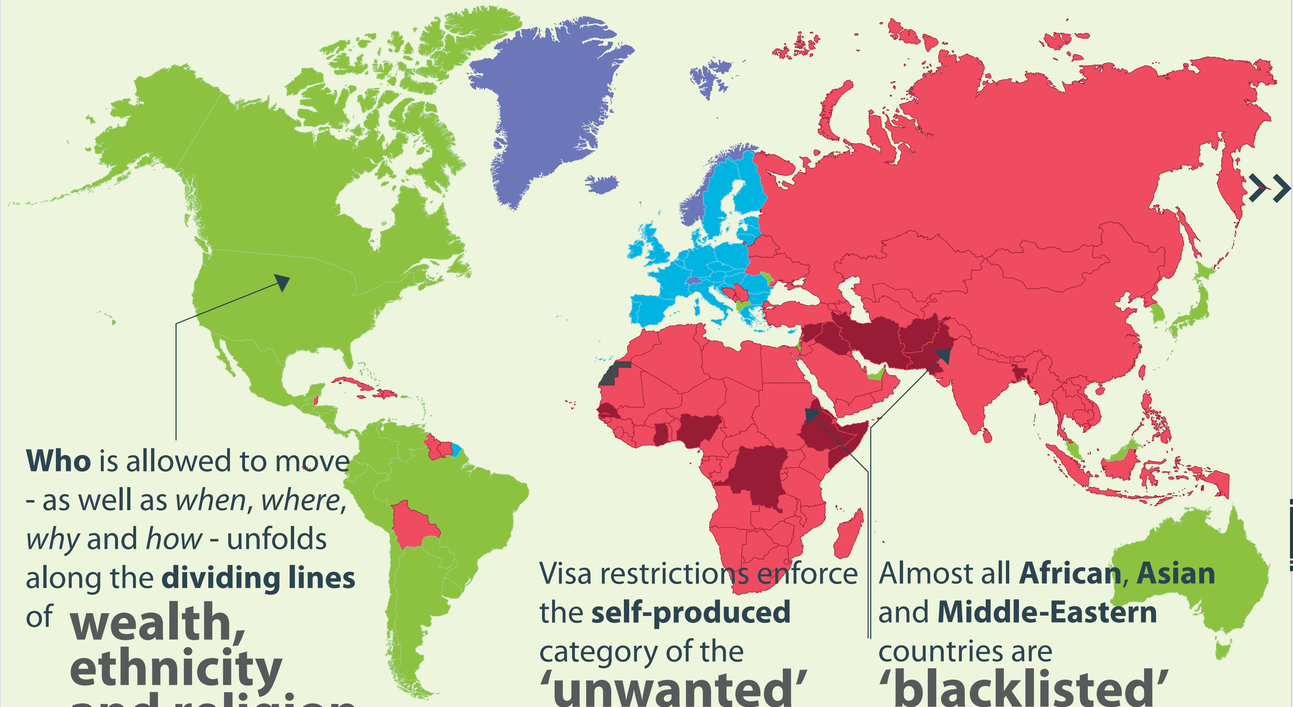
Drawing a link between including particular countries on the 'black' Schengen list and a decrease in security risks, this definition of **'unwanted'** movement *implicitly states that nationals from 'blacklisted' countries are more likely to be 'illegal' immigrants or criminals*[5].

IMMOBILIZATION OF THE 'UNWANTED' THROUGH SELECTIVE BORDER CONTROL

The Schengen visa policy does not explicitly deny mobility rights but *sorts* between the individuals who can travel freely and those who need permission to do so.

This **selective tolerance** towards human mobility exposes how certain human movement has come to be criminalized as 'illegal' because *it has been defined as such*.

Justified in the name of security, 'unwanted' becomes a **non-self-chosen label** attached to an individual's identity *based on their nationality*.



Who is allowed to move - as well as *when*, *where*, *why* and *how* - unfolds along the **dividing lines** of **wealth, ethnicity and religion**

Visa restrictions enforce the **self-produced** category of the **'unwanted' traveler**

Almost all **African**, **Asian** and **Middle-Eastern** countries are **'blacklisted'**

METHOD]

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS[6]

THROUGH A SECURITIZATION LENS[7]

1. European Commission's (EC) proposal for a new visa list regulation[8]
2. EC's Visa Code Handbook guidelining the application process[9]

DISCURSIVE + NON-DISCURSIVE FORMATIONS OF SECURITY

Secondary analysis of the use of biometric data throughout the visa application process[10]

THE SCHENGEN VISA MAP

- Visa required to enter the EU
- Visa required to enter the EU and for transit
- Visa-free access to the EU for up to 90 days
- Visa status unknown
- EU member states
- Special visa-free provisions (Schengen treaty or other)

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