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QNI Quality of
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EXPERT COMMENTARY

North vs. South or Integrated vs. Isolated?
Notes on the Global Grouping of Nationalities
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North vs. South or Integrated vs. Isolated? Notes on the Global Grouping of Nationalities

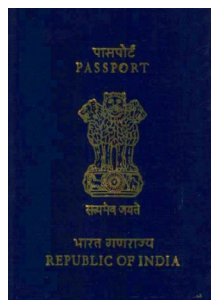


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The QNI offers a high-resolution view of the world's nationalities, highlighting the different values they carry for the people who hold them. The most obvious way of looking at this data-rich index is to treat it as a ranked listing that allows us to compare different nationalities and trace the changes in their relative positions over time. There are other ways, however, of using the QNI. Rather than looking at how individual nationalities measure up, we can analyze how they can be arranged into groups that share key characteristics.

The very concept of measuring and classifying nationalities as sets of rights and benefits that are available to individuals is novel. Until recently, there were no data that would allow us to evaluate the actual lived experience of citizenship in different countries. Therefore, traditional classifications focused on defining categories for countries rather than nationalities. The most common models for categorizing the world's countries are geopolitical – the division into first, second and third worlds – and economic – the division into global north and south. I will first discuss these traditional ways of classifying countries and then explore the new possibilities for ranking nationalities that the QNI and other indices open up.



Cold War era passports

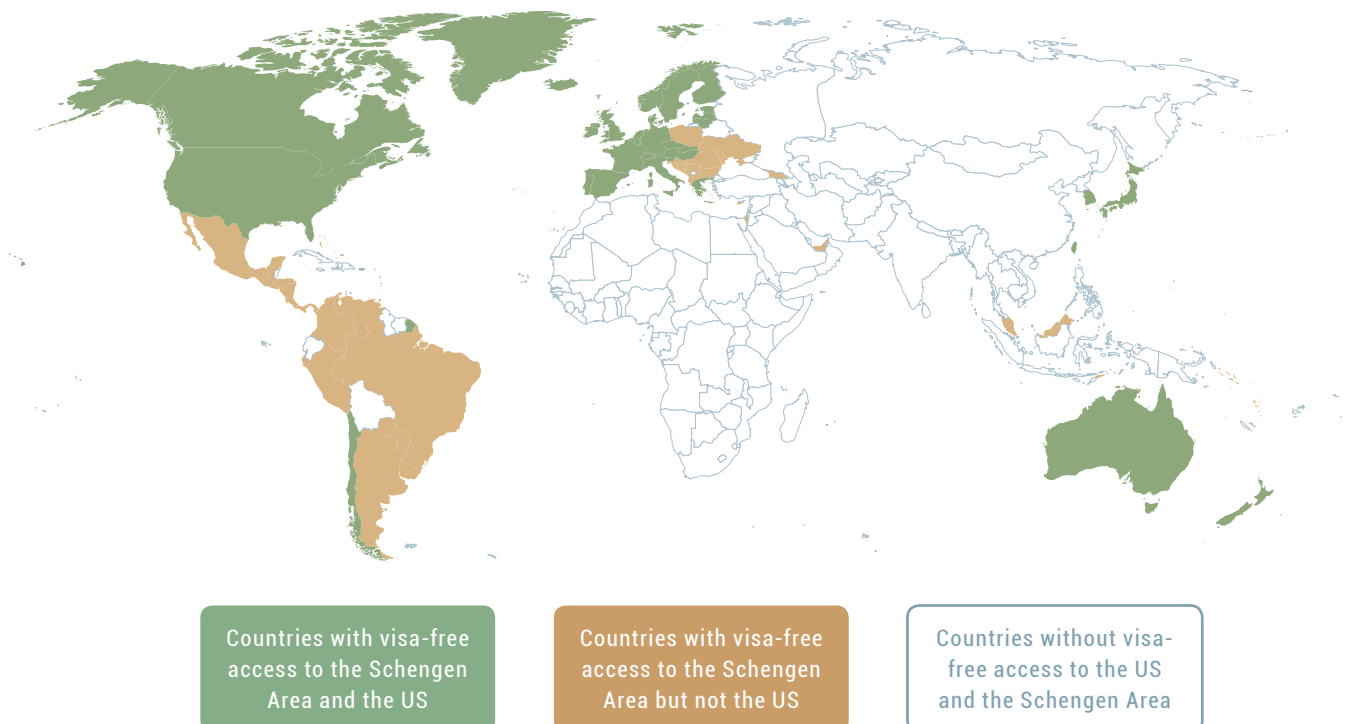
The most classic way to group countries is the division of the globe into the first, second and third world. These terms, which come from the Cold War era, originally referred to countries' political-ideological orientation. The first world included members of NATO and several other Western-oriented countries, the second world consisted of communist countries, and the third world included

the non-aligned nations of Latin America, Asia and Africa. After the fall of communism, the term 'second world' disappeared, while 'first world' also became less common (except perhaps in the ironic expression 'first world problems'). The term 'third world', in contrast, remained in circulation. However, its original, political meaning seems to have been forgotten. Instead, it is now used mostly to refer to a country's level of economic development. As such, it remains ambiguous and overly broad. For example, take Mexico, Kazakhstan, Haiti and Uganda. All four are considered third-world nations. How meaningful is that categorization, however, when the per capita income in the former two countries is 10 times higher than in the latter two?

As the Cold War division of the world into solid political-ideological blocs became less relevant, the tripartite grouping was replaced by a dichotomous classification which assumed many names: developed and developing countries, global North and global South, the West and the Rest – or simply high-income and low-income countries. All these models share the assumption that the world is composed of two groups of unequal size – a relatively small prosperous elite of Western countries and a large number of less developed countries. It makes sense to treat Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand (plus Japan and Republic of Korea) as a single group, given the relatively similar lifestyles and institutions shared by citizens of those highly-developed countries. Regarding 'the Rest', however, the problem raised in the previous paragraph remains unresolved: is it justified to group all non-Western countries in one category and ignore the obvious differences between them?

This question becomes even more complicated when we realize the degree to which our conventional ways of thinking about how the world's countries group together are loaded with prior assumptions and prejudices. Behind those seemingly neutral, technical terms – first and third, developed and developing, north and south – hide deep-rooted and powerful historical structures of colonialism and race. In very

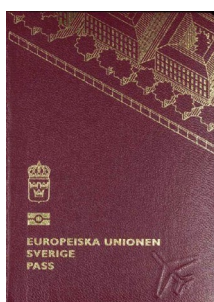
The World's Countries by Access to the US and the Schengen Area



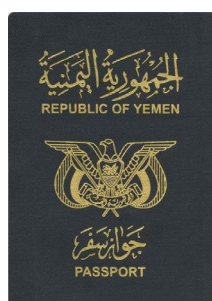
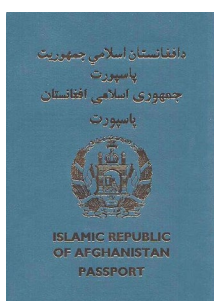
broad terms, the first (or northern, developed etc.) world mostly consists of former colonial powers and its population is mostly white; the third world mostly consists of former colonies and is populated by non-whites.

It is undeniable that those systems of colonialism and racial inequality which prevailed for centuries still exert a powerful influence on the world we live in. Nonetheless, the economic dynamism of the past three decades and the rapid growth of some non-Western regions are creating new economic and political configurations, rendering some of these old dichotomies obsolete. We should therefore come up with novel and innovative ways of thinking about the economic and political structure of the world. And the best way to go beyond our preconceived notions is to use objective data. Fortunately, over the past several years, numerous international indices have appeared which rank a country's performance in terms of economic wellbeing, social development, income inequality, Travel Freedom, security, democracy and other indicators. These new data allow us not only to identify patterns that the traditional geopolitical or cultural-historical categories overlooked, but also to learn about the lived reality of being a citizen in different countries. In other words, we can analyze and compare not just countries but also nationalities.

The QNI uses some of these new data to rank nationalities on a number of dimensions, including Human Development, Peace and Stability and Economic Strength, as well as a novel component which determines the external value of nationality. This latter indicator, the most innovative aspect of the index, pertains to the value of a country's citizenship outside its borders. I will discuss two kinds of classifications which emerge when looking at two of those external citizenship factors: Travel Freedom and Settlement Freedom.



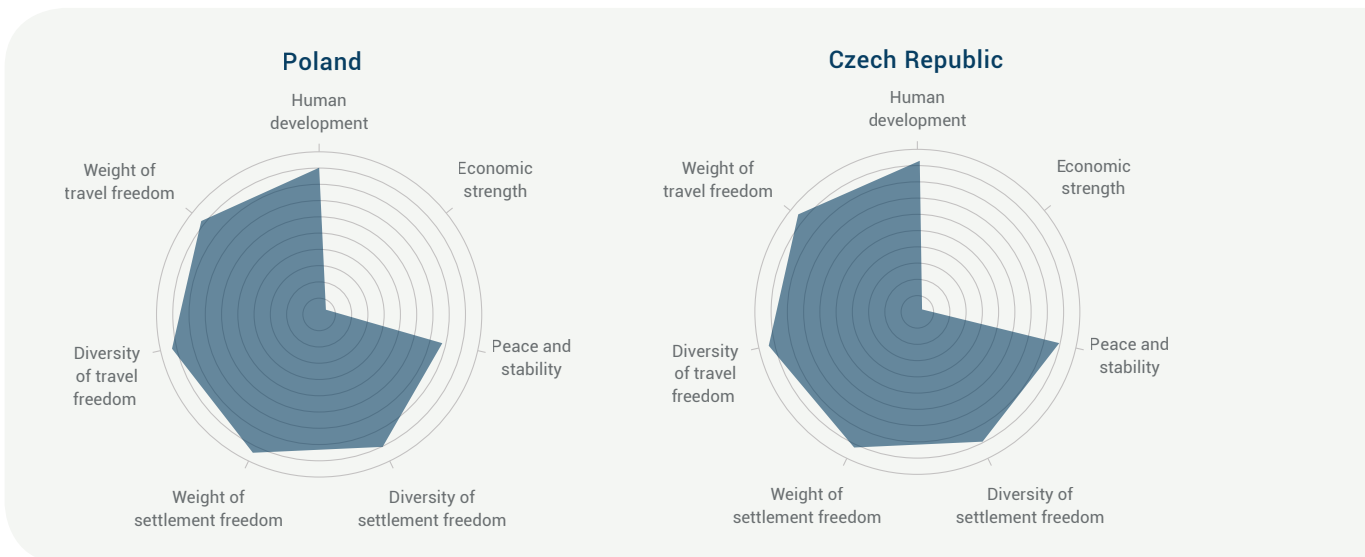
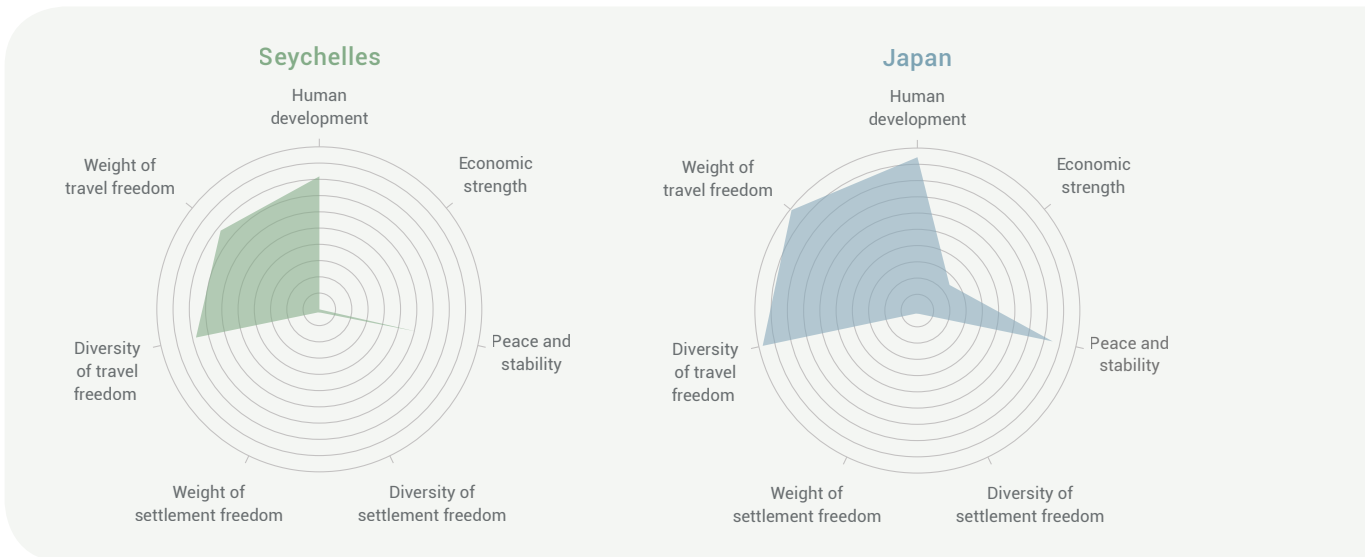
When calculating Travel Freedom, the QNI uses the methodology of the *Henley & Partners Visa Restrictions Index*, which draws on data from the IATA. It ranks all the world's passports by the number of countries to which they allow visa-free access. A quick look at the ranked list offers no surprises: at the top of the list are nationalities of rich countries in Western and Northern Europe and East Asia, while the lowest places are occupied by African and South Asian nationalities. We can, however, take the analysis a step farther and construct groups of nationalities categorized by their degree of Travel Freedom.



A good starting point would be the visa regimes of the two major Western political units: the US, and the EU's zone of free movement, the Schengen Area. Owing to their prosperity and security, these regions are attractive to many millions from all over the world – would-be immigrants, tourists, refugees, smugglers of goods and humans, even terrorists.

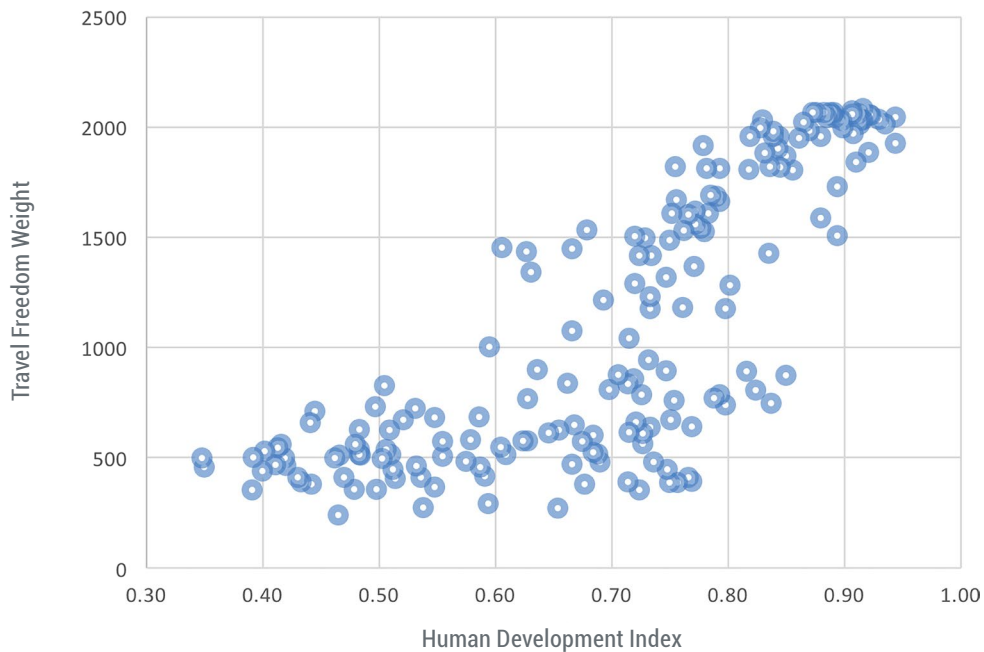
Easy access to those regions is a scarce resource from which the majority of the world's population is excluded: citizens of most countries must obtain a visa before visiting the EU or the US. By looking at who these Western blocs let in freely, we can identify which nationalities are perceived as trustworthy and which are seen as automatic suspects.

The US Visa Waiver Program is highly exclusive. Citizens of about 40 countries may enter the US without visa, including most Western and Central European countries as well as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Brunei Darussalam, and Chile. These countries' passports can be described as providing the top tier of global mobility. The EU (more specifically, the Schengen free-movement zone) is less restrictive. In addition to the citizens of all the countries who may enter the US without a visa (and the US itself), visa-free access to the Schengen Area is permitted to citizens of most Latin American, Caribbean and Balkan countries, as well as citizens of Israel, Malaysia and the UAE. There are close to 60 countries whose citizens enjoy visa-free access to the EU but not to the US. These nationalities occupy a kind of middle position in terms of freedom of movement. Citizens from the roughly 100 countries that make up the rest of the world (including almost all Asian and African nations) have no visa-free access to either bloc, placing them in the bottom rung of global Travel Freedom.



We can thus divide the world into three tiers of Travel Freedom based on the visa policy of these core Western regions. The resulting groups do not quite align with the first, second and third worlds of the Cold War era. In fact, the structure of the world as it emerges from this model is a small elite of privileged nationalities, an even smaller middle stratum and a large mass of lower-tier countries where the large majority of mankind lives. This bears a strong resemblance to a Marxist-inspired model of the capitalist world system developed in the 1970s by the American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein. Wallerstein argued that the world economy was dominated by a core of rich Western countries (analogous to the bourgeoisie in Marxist theory), while almost all other countries belonged to the global periphery, comparable to Marx's proletariat. He also pointed out a small number of countries like Mexico or Turkey, which play an intermediate role in this global division of labor and which he described as the semi-periphery. The grouping of the world's nationalities by Travel Freedom parallels Wallerstein's model of a core, semi-periphery and periphery. This suggests that the current hierarchy of Travel Freedom – and more broadly, of nationality value – remains closely associated with historical positions within the capitalist system. In a forthcoming article that will be published in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, I explore this global structure in greater depth and use it to explain the patterns of demand for a second citizenship.

The Correlation Between Development and Travel Freedom



The second aspect of external citizenship included in the QNI is Settlement Freedom. This concept represents a novel global development whereby countries provide extensive rights of settlement and employment to citizens of other countries. Typically, this new form of citizenship is created in regional blocs and serves as a crucial step in their economic and political integration. The pioneer of Settlement Freedom is the EU – the oldest, biggest, richest and best-integrated regional bloc in the world. Citizens of EU member countries lead the world in terms of Settlement Freedom. Following EU nationalities in the global ranking of Settlement Freedom, however, we find some unexpected contenders: the citizens of nations which are members of ECOWAS followed by other regional unions such as Mercosur in South America, the GCC and the EAEU, which includes five post-Soviet countries.

In the same manner that Spanish nationality provides citizenship rights in Germany or Belgium, increasingly Brazilian nationality also entails some rights in Argentina, Liberian nationality includes some rights in Nigeria and Armenian nationality provides rights in the Russian Federation. Currently, those external citizenship rights are not as extensive (or attractive) as those offered by EU citizenship, but they are growing continuously. In contrast, many countries are not members of any regional union and do not enjoy any freedom to settle abroad. This list of 'isolates' is very diverse, ranging from poor countries like Chad to rich countries like Canada.

This manner of thinking about external citizenship in terms of rights in neighboring countries leads to a ranking and grouping of nationalities that is less centered on the West and thus, in a sense, more 'democratic'. Here, the key distinction is between citizenship in countries which have embarked on the path to regional integration – whether in Europe, Africa, South America or Asia – and those which did not. If regional unions around the world continue to consolidate and the scope of rights included in them continues to grow, the importance of this component will increase, making region-wide freedom of settlement a key right that individuals would come to expect from their nationality.

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The concept of residence and citizenship planning was created by Henley & Partners in the 1990s. As globalization has expanded, residence and citizenship have become topics of significant interest among the increasing number of internationally mobile entrepreneurs and investors whom we proudly serve every day.

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