

Effect of Strong Passport on Economic Growth: How African Politics Have Incapacitated Their Passports

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Abstract: African states and few Asian nations accepted an inferior position by allowing their citizens to seek visas when they want to travel to western countries, while their peers from western nations can enter the said nations at a will. The problem is that Africans did not reciprocate the demands of visa requirement by westerners. The article will disseminate how African passports became useless at the expenses of western countries and how they mint billions of dollars from the wealthy citizens of the world who seek these strong passports to enable them travel for leisure and business purposes without deterrent. Thus sabotaging the economy of African countries. The study found that top 40 African countries in terms of their population have an average passport rank of 90, which means that these 40 most populous countries can access only 58 countries without visa. These 40 African countries have an average population of 32.7 million, and average land area of 726,801km². On the same note, forty top European countries in terms of population have an average population of 14.8 million, and land area mean of 147,085. But these European countries have average passport rank of 16, and average access without visa of 172 countries. This means that African countries do not reciprocate visa conditions in the European countries meaning that they allow European citizens to enter visa free in their countries, while African citizens have to struggle in order to get European visas.

Keywords: Passport, Strength, Politics, Visa, Africa, Europe

1. Introduction

London-based immigration consultancy 'Henley & Partners' ranks 199 passports, which is called the Henley Passport Index ranks the power of passport using the number of countries that the passport holder can visit without a visa or can obtain visa on arrival. Some countries, mostly, western and few Asian countries convinced African countries that their citizens are superior and will be allowed to visit their countries without visa requirements, while African citizens has to be charged nonrefundable high visa fee, vetted for eligibility, before allowing to visit their countries. This contributed the upsurge of their passport power and downgrading the African passports. Traditionally, passports were a mere letters of introduction to identify the citizenship of a traveller. At the beginning of 19th century, majority of existed countries had no visa restrictions; rather they encouraged immigration to attract intellectuals and investors from other countries. Visa requirements surfaced around 1960th when many African countries got their independence

and became states to restrict "poor and uneducated" Africans to migrate to western states. But the situation has since changed and Africans are educated, became affluent, and manage their affairs. It would be prudent if the restrictions were bilateral, instead, it was one sided where 'former' masters can enter the new states, while only the mighty and the educated African citizens are allowed to travel to western countries, causing brain, manpower, and business drainage on the side of African countries. Henley passport index ranks passports according to the destinations that the holder can enter without prior visa requirement, apply online, or can obtain the visa on arrival. Japanese passport holds the title of the most powerful passport, with visa-free access to 193 countries, followed by Singapore and South Korea. In Africa, South Africa has the most powerful passport with 105 visa free countries due to the fact that there is large population of European citizens. Although these top countries are from Asia, they are the minority and from number 4 to 50th are held by the European and American countries. Kenyan passport holders need visa for 115 countries 60 of them

require mandatory interview for illegibility. In terms of the countries that Kenyan passport holders can travel are 15 African countries, mostly in east Africa, five Asians, and few Caribbean islands.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

The power of passport is very essential in business adventures, holidays, education, and visiting family and friends [1]. Powerful passports facilitates movement of the holder, reduce the cost of travelling by over 30%, determines the number of countries one can invest, improves employment opportunities, and accessing high quality education [2]. The power of the passports is the gateway in accessing all those opportunities and many countries improve the power of their passports through bilateral relations with other countries, while others negotiate and convince other countries to allow their citizens to come their countries while restricting and subjecting unwarranted visa requirements on their peer citizens, thus making their citizens to access larger labor markets, high quality education, and business opportunities. Some countries provide citizenship by investment, attracting high value individuals to invest their countries thus reducing the rate of unemployment and increasing government revenue, but it depends the power of the passport of that country [3].

Mounting studies have been conducted to evaluate the importance of powerful passport for the individual investor, traveller, and the economy in general [4, 5], the right to travel, and the passport problem [6]. The numbers of countries that the holder can access without visa, get visa on arrival, or can apply online and obtain visa within short period of time outlines the power of a passport. The main benefits of holding strong passport is that it will enable the holder to visit many countries, access business opportunities, quality education, and tour many countries when he/she wishes. Two streamlines can be described the benefits that accrue for the holder of powerful passport as well as the country who owns that passport. The holders will save time and travel expenses since he/she don't want to apply visa. At the same time, the country of the citizen will collect taxes from the overseas investment of her citizens. Giving the example of myself, I wanted to travel to Somalia with a Kenyan passport. I applied visa, waited two weeks, and paid \$210 plus \$220 air ticket. This is almost 50% of my travel expenses. Hartwig-Peillon [7] demonstrated the effect of citizenship and residency by investment in the EU and original countries of these citizens. The researcher indicated that CIP programs cause brain drainage and unemployment to their motherland, while these citizens searching strong passport by investing contribute low unemployment high revenue, buoyancy of economy to the host countries. Okagbue, et al., [8] argued that countries with powerful passports privileges have low corruption cases and conflicts, and perceived to be happier than weak passports. Freisleben

[9] added that human capital assets move from weak passport countries to strong passport holders affecting positively the economy of the strong passport countries and negatively on weak passport countries. Gamlen, Kutarna, [10] stated that Immigrant Investor programs (IIPs) by wealthy countries with powerful passports have worsened the situation of poor countries. The "citizenship for sale" program attracts wealthy companies and individuals from the poor countries to buy their citizenship, invest in their new countries, and improve the economy of the host, leaving their motherland in shambles [11]. The wealthy countries use these organizations and individuals to finance development projects, drive economic growth, technology innovation, and catalyze local economic activity.

3. Benefits That Accrue for the Citizens with Powerful Passports

Strong passport have tremendous benefits for the holder and the general economy of the country [12]. The benefits that accrue for the citizens include:

- 1) It is ticket to the world. Imagine you have weak passport and got an emergency to travel abroad. The first thing you will think is Visa for that country, illegibility, and how long it will take. But if you have strong passport, all you have to do is to go travel agent and get a return ticket.
- 2) More work opportunities. Work opportunities are not uniform across the globe and some economies have better remuneration for different qualifications. Weak passport holder will not be able to take advantage of these opportunities in other countries due to visa restrictions.
- 3) Access to better quality education: western countries own universities that lead education and technology. Weak passport holders will not be able to access this quality education without incurring high cost and forfeiture of quality time, which strong passport holders will not experience.
- 4) Improved safety and security for the holder: Strong passport holders have better mobility than weak passport holders and are able to move to a safer countries in case of war outbreak or other security issues as it happened in Ukraine.
- 5) Peace of mind: citizens that hold powerful passport have peace of mind knowing that they will be able to travel whenever they want, in case of necessity to travel, while citizens of poor countries have small destinations to choose from.
- 6) Investment opportunities: having strong passport will enable one to access and cherry-pick from large swathe of countries for investment because he can visit and explore without going through tormenting process of visa interview.

Benefits of Having Lousy Passport

According to my experience, some times having lousy

passport helps one financially. Before my graduation in 2018, the university compelled us to participate a seminar at a university in USA. The over all cost of travelling and accommodation was about \$5000. I raised the fund ready to travel, but luckily the US embassy declined to give me the visa on the spot and claimed that they want more time to look into my application. While waiting the decision of the embassy, I decided to buy a plot in Soykimau at the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya using that fund. After 5 years, the university exempted me from the seminar, allowed me to graduate without travelling to USA, the embassy have yet to decide my application, and the value of the plot stands at \$30,000 and appreciating. I felt very sad at that moment of visa denial, but now I am very happy and richer because of holding that lousy passport.

4. Benefits That Accrue for the Countries with Powerful Passports

Many countries host Citizenship by Investment Programs (CIPs) through which high net worth individuals can become citizens of those countries by investing specific amount of money in their economies [13]. The reason is so much more complex than just quick boost to the economy of the host nation. Some Caribbean nations give the option of donating nonrefundable money to a government fund in exchange for citizenship, while in other countries, one have to invest specific amount of money in their economy to qualify for citizenship. The benefits that accrue for the host country include:

4.1. Direct Influx of Foreign Cash

The direct influx of tangential cash can play a substantial part in economic growth of the host country. For example, CIP program contributed 25% of Dominica's GDP in 2017 and by 2019, the CIP cash amounted 50% of the government's total revenue. They also provide 20% of their citizens an affordable housing using the fund from the CIP proceeds. EB-5 visa of United States of America is another successful example of citizenship by investment. Apart from the \$800,000 one has to invest in the economy before getting the visa, the individual is subject to US tax on their worldwide income and required to report their foreign accounts and assets to the IRS. This generates billions of dollars for US revenue as many people pursue their strong passport, while at the same time, attracting wealthy individuals from poor countries, thus further plummeting the economies of poor countries. The USA government limited EB-5 visa applicants from each country to 10,000 [14]. Many countries like china, India, and Vietnam have surpassed that limitation, causing a waiting list for EB-5 visa applications. This translates \$8billion cash flow from the small economy of Vietnam to the gigantic economy of USA. Over 193 countries apply this visa and the effect of job creation, tax revenue, and improvement of the general economy of USA is paramount on the local generated

revenues [15]. It is obvious that the only reason these investors are flocking to the US country is the strong passport and the political stability.

4.2. Giving Tax Break to Its Citizens

Since large chunk of their GDP is covered by the CIPs, nations with strong passports are able to offer low or even no tax residency to their citizens and residents. In most of these countries, you won't find income tax, capital gains tax, withholding tax, or inheritance taxes; while companies listed on their shores have a wide array of tax exemptions to pursue. This tax leniency attracts even more investors and businesses to that country, boosting their economies further. It also attracts more investors to its CIP, which is vital to the entire framework of government revenue. As the CIP generates funds, the country does not have to rely on taxes, which in turn attracts more people from high-tax countries to the CIP programs. It is a closed-loop cycle that benefits every entity involved for the host country, while the motherland of these investors suffer the consequences of CIPs.

4.3. Developing Infrastructure

Many countries face damage of their infrastructures by different threats and the government with strong passports can utilize CIPs fund to fix quickly and efficiently. Apart from maintenances, some countries are planning to build new and better infrastructure using this fund. For example, in 2017, US launched hurricane relief fund investment option within and without its citizens by investment programs, and this gave steady income to help rebuild the damaged infrastructure of US.

4.4. Job Creation

Caribbean nations use their CIPs fund to construct high-end resorts to bolster tourism sector of the nation. In the process of these constructions, jobs such as engineers, designers, and laborers are created. Local businesses can also supply the materials for these gigantic projects further creating more posts. In big economies with very strong passports are able to collect trillions of dollars to fund titanic projects and create hundreds of jobs for their economy.

5. Comparison of African and European Passports

To attract foreign investors through CIP, the passports of that country must be very strong combined with investment opportunities. Investment opportunities are abundant in Africa but they lack strong passport compared to European, Caribbean, and Americas. The study selected 40 top African countries in terms of population and their land area, passport rank, and the number of countries that the holder can access without visa requirement. Mean and standard deviation of passport rank, access to foreign country, and land area were calculated and analyzed to compare the passports of these

nations. Table 1 below is shown forty most populous African nations, land area, population, passport rank, and the number of countries that the holder can travel without visa requirement.

Table 1. Population, Land Area, Passport Rank, and Access Without Visa of Top 40 African Countries.

No	Country	Land area km ²	Population	Passport rank	Access without visa
1	Nigeria	923,768	206,139,589	100	46
2	Ethiopia	1,104,300	114,963,588	100	46
3	Egypt	1,001,449	102,334,404	94	53
4	DR Congo	2,344,858	89,561,403	103	42
5	South Africa	1,221,037	59,308,690	55	105
6	Tanzania	945,203	59,734,218	76	72
7	Kenya	580,367	53,771,296	76	72
8	Uganda	241,037	45,741,007	80	76
9	Algeria	2,381,741	43,851,044	94	53
10	Sudan	1,861,484	43,849,260	103	42
11	Morocco	710,850	36,910,560	82	65
12	Angola	1,246,700	32,866,272	95	51
13	Ghana	238,534	31,072,940	82	65
14	Mozambique	801,590	31,255,435	84	63
15	Madagascar	587,041	27,691,018	91	56
16	Cameroon	475,442	26,545,863	95	51
17	Cote d'Ivoire	322,460	26,378,274	90	57
18	Niger	1,267,000	24,206,644	93	54
19	Burkina Faso	274,000	20,903,273	88	59
20	Mali	1,240,192	20,250,833	92	55
21	Malawi	118,484	19,129,952	75	74
22	Zambia	752,614	18,383,955	76	72
23	Senegal	196,723	16,743,927	90	57
24	Chad	1,284,000	16,425,864	93	54
25	Somalia	637,657	15,893,222	107	35
26	Zimbabwe	390,757	14,862,924	81	66
27	Guinea	245,857	13,132,795	92	55
28	Rwanda	26,798	12,952,218	86	61
29	Benin	112,622	12,123,200	85	62
30	Burundi	27,830	11,890,784	95	51
31	South Sudan	644,329	11,193,725	101	44
32	Togo	56,785	8,278,724	92	55
33	Sierra Leone	71,740	7,976,983	83	64
34	Libya	1,759,540	6,871,292	104	41
35	Congo	342,000	5,518,087	97	49
36	Liberia	111,369	5,057,681	96	50
37	Central Africa	622,984	4,829,767	94	53
38	Mauritania	1,030,700	4,649,658	87	60
39	Eritrea	117,600	3,546,421	101	44
40	Namibia	752,614	2,540,905	70	79

Algeria is the largest country in terms of land area with 2,381,000 km² and a population of only 44 million. The passport rank of this great African country is 94th with only 53 countries that the holders of this passport can access without visa. The most populous country, Nigeria is not in a better position. The rank of Nigerian passport is ranked 100th with visa free access to only 43 countries, mostly Caribbean

islands. The best-performing passport in the continent belongs to South Africa with index of 55 and visa-free access of 105 countries. But recall that few years back, this country was ruled by Europeans and are still have large population of theirs, and that is the reason this country is in the neighborhood of European passports.

Table 2. Mean, Std deviation of land area, population, passport rank, and access to visa free countries.

	Visa free access	Passport rank	Population	Land area
N	40	40	40	40
Minimum	35	55	2,540,905	26,798
Maximum	105	107	206,139,589	2,381,741
Mean	58.2	89.5	32,733,442	726,801.4
Median	55.5	92	19,690,392	63,0320.5
Variance	112	112	1.488E+15	3.742E+11
Std. deviation	10.6	10.6	38,572,525	611,743
Sum	2327	3578	1.31E+9	29,072056

The average visa free countries are only 58 with average rank of index 90. The average land area of these 40 African countries is 726,801km² with average population of 32,733,442. To compare Africa to European countries, the table below shows top most 40 European countries in terms of population with their land area, passport ranking, and the countries that their citizens can travel without visa.

6. European Countries and the Passport Power

Europe, USA, and the Caribbean countries are the majority of countries that their passports are sought by the wealthy investors from poor nations and benefit trillions of dollars from them that these investors advance to get those strong

passports. The table below shows land area, population, passport rank, and the number of countries that the holder can tour without visa. Anyone researching passport power and foreign investors in exchange of their passport would not ignore United States of America. But since she is not in Europe, the researcher have imprinted separately. United States of America have a dozen “citizenship by investment” programs and make trillions of dollars from this programs due to business and employment opportunities combined with strong passport. USA has a population of about 320 million with land area of 9.834 million km² and very strong passport (number 7 in the world). This makes very attractive around the globe and this immigrant nation takes advantage of it. Table 3 shows the land area, population, passport rank, and the number of accessible countries.

Table 3. Population, Land Area, Passport Rank, and Access Without Visa of Top 40 European Countries.

No	Country	Land area km ²	Population	Passport rank	Access without visa
1	Germany	357,386	84,079,811	3	190
2	France	551,695	67,939,000	6	187
3	UK	242,495	66,329,000	6	187
4	Italy	301,318	58,853,482	4	189
5	Spain	498,511	47,432,805	3	190
6	Ukraine	603,628	41,130,432	35	144
7	Poland	312,685	38,014,000	10	182
8	Romania	238,397	19,038,000	16	174
9	Netherland	41,198	17,710,526	5	188
10	Belgium	30,510	11,584,008	7	186
11	Greece	131,940	10,678,632	8	185
12	Czech republic	78,866	10,519,913	8	185
13	Sweden	450,295	10,502,959	5	188
14	Portugal	88,416	10,361,800	6	187
15	Hungry	93,030	9,689,010	9	183
16	Belarus	207,600	9,255,500	71	78
17	Austria	83,858	9,061,848	5	188
18	Switzerland	41,290	8,770,283	7	186
19	Bulgaria	110,994	6,838,937	17	173
20	Serbia	88,361	6,797,105	38	136
21	Denmark	44,493	5,883,562	5	188
22	Finland	338,145	5,550,312	4	189
23	Norway	385,178	5,455,582	7	186
24	Ireland	70,273	5,123,536	6	187
25	Croatia	56,594	3,879,074	17	173
26	Georgia	26,900	3,688,600	52	116
27	Bosnia/Herzegovina	51,129	3,475,000	51	118
28	Lithuania	65,300	2,835,988	10	182
29	Moldova	33,846	2,597,100	48	121
30	Slovenia	20,273	2,107,180	0	182
31	Latvia	64,589	1,886,300	11	181
32	Estonia	45,339	1,331,796	11	181
33	Cyprus	9,251	918,100	15	176
34	Luxemburg	2,586	645,397	4	189
35	Montenegro	13,812	617,683	46	124
36	Malta	316	520,971	8	185
37	Iceland	102,775	376,248	12	180
38	Liechtenstein	160	39,315	14	178
39	Monaco	-	39,150	16	174
40	Vatican	-	800	27	154

Germany is the most populous country with about 84.1million and land area of 357,386km². Ukraine is the largest country in Europe when included the annexed

provinces by Russia. But the German population is 1/3 of Nigeria and the land area of Ukraine 1/5th of Algeria. Table 4 shows mean, standard deviation, land area, population,

passport rank, and the number of countries that that the passport holders can access without visa.

Table 4. Mean, Std Deviation of Land Area, Population, Passport Rank, and Access to Visa Free Countries.

	Visa free access	Passport rank	Population	Land area
N	40	40	40	40
Minimum	78	3	800	00
Maximum	190	71	84,079,811	603,628
Mean	172	16	14,788,969	147,085
Median	183	9.5	6340,333	74569.5
Variance	704	276	4.631E+14	2.821E+10
Std. deviation	27	17	21,518,926	167,968
Sum	6870	643	591,558,745	5,883,432

The average visa free countries for the European countries are 172 with an average rank of index 16. The average land area of these 40 countries is only 147,085 km² with average population of 14,788,969 million.

7. Discussions

The average land area of the forty African countries is 726,800km² with a population mean of 32.7 million. This vast country formed by the average of forty most populous African countries can access only 90 countries with passport rank of 58. In the European scrutiny, the average land area of the selected forty countries is 147,085km², 1/5 of African formed country land area, and a population of 14.8 million, less than 1/2 of African formed population. But the average European passport rank is 16, with access to 172 countries without applying visa.

8. Conclusion

It is very unfair for African countries to accept inferiority by western nations. This inferiority is the result of denying African citizens free access to western countries while western citizens have access to African countries unexceptionally. If western countries reason that they are protecting their motherland from criminals, migrants, and terrorist from Africa, their citizens also contain terrorists, mass shooters, sex tourists, child molesters, and general criminals. In terms of migration, Europeans also migrate and start businesses in Africa. There is large population of Americans and other European natives who have large and small businesses in Africa. Large descendants of Europeans are also citizens in Africa like South Africa, Botswana, Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Africans who are migrating to Europe are brain drainage to the Africans since wealthy and the educated lots are the ones migrating to Europe due to political stability, while Europeans are exporting peasant farmers to the continent.

9. Recommendations

Africa has every resources and raw material that exist in this planet in terms of fertile land, minerals, human resources, and conducive environment. Their citizens are not supposed to migrate unfriendly climate in foreign lands like

Europe and America but are supposed to be the other way. The problem is that western countries attracted the continent's technocrats and business moguls to their safe and political stability. If the continent want to compete for these able people and convince them to invest and stay in their motherland, they must build strong foundation of democracy, safe transfer of power, and create attractive environment for their sons and daughters who eagerly migrating and building western countries instead of their motherland.

- 1) Improve passport power- the world became small village due to technology and humans; particularly business people highly value mobility for different reasons. It is unwarranted to see your country, as an animal shed where everyone can enter at a will, while over valuing other sovereignties and allowing their citizens to enter whenever they decide. African countries should reciprocate 100% for visa applications in order to make African passports very strong since the future of land resources rest in the continent and many countries would travel to Africa. At least African states should remove visa requirements among themselves in order to strengthen their passports.
- 2) Negotiate with other nations to allow African citizens to enter as many countries as possible- African countries have the mentality of inferiority to their colonizers resulting weak African passports and strong European passports. Due to hammering and molding by the Europeans in centuries, the continent became susceptible and moldable by their former masters, but the question is: how Ethiopia, the only non-colonized African country was convinced to accept that inferiority of their citizens by not reciprocating visa issues.
- 3) Utilize technology in food production- Africa remains net importer of food, yet it has 60% of world's arable uncultivated land. A whooping 93% of the continent's land area is arable and instead of exporting food output to the world, the continent imports from Europe, where cultivation is possible only 3 months of the year.
- 4) Authorize movement of people and goods among the African states- Before one century, the Europeans put fences among families of the mother continent separating brothers and sisters and giving names never heard by Africans. The Europeans came to Africa without borders from Cape Town to Cairo and subdivided among themselves. They created 13

countries in West Africa with the size of Somalia giving them French currency and names to each country. It reached a point of Africans fighting each other as francophone or Anglophone. To remove this backwardness, Africans must remove barriers of movement; create common market, and currency among themselves.

- 5) Ignore colonial dividing lines- the so-called countries in Africa were one time united, and Europeans divided as it is today. To be a commissioner of province in Africa is more powerful than being president of 50,000km² country. The continent has every thing that supports life in this planet except visionary leadership. Even if it is not possible to unite as a continent, unite regionally; like West Africa, East Africa, North Africa and Central Africa. This will form large countries that can negotiate other countries in the world and improve passport power, thus increasing the movement of their citizens.
- 6) Reciprocate 100% to the world in terms of visa issuance- the European passports became very powerful because they convinced their former colonies that their citizens are more superior than theirs instigating European citizens to move and invest wherever they want in the continent and restricting African citizens. To avoid this, counter with their visa issuing systems by treating them exactly the same way they treat African citizens. If your citizens have to be interviewed to get visa, do not allow Europeans to apply visa online. It is amazing that within the continent, reciprocity is automatic without exception but very tolerant to Europeans and other western countries on visa issues.
- 7) Create business and employment opportunities to reduce brain drain to western countries- many citizens from Africa are migrating to western countries after graduating from different fields causing brain and wealth drain. This is caused by corruption, nepotism, and lack of business and employment opportunities in Africa. Some times, a student from Africa is given full scholarship to study abroad by his/her motherland and disappear after graduation. Although the government has invested his/her education, the pasture is greener on the other side where he/she is educated and westerners don't hesitate to employ and give permits, leaving the motherland broke and destitute.
- 8) Create political stability and smooth transfer of power - many potential investors evaluate the riskiness of investing in Africa due to unpredictable power transfer and violence after every election if there is one. This creates risk and uncertainty causing migration of the high and the mighty of the population leaving only the underprivileged in the society to stay in the country.

This causes unemployment, insecurity, and acceptance of inferiority by the western countries due to lack of revenue for the government.

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