

Nihan: Hello, everyone. Welcome to our event hosted by the [LSE Higher Education Blog](#). I'm Nihan Albayrak-Aydemir and I'm one of the co-chairs of this panel together with Lee-Ann Sequeira. Today, we have an amazing [panel](#) on passport privilege, where we'll be talking about various repercussions of holding a passport from the Global South in academia. I was an international student in the UK for the last seven years, and I had faced many difficulties in academia because of my passport, such as not being allowed to work, or not being able to attend some conferences because of visa procedures.

What was striking for me was that none of the people around me were even aware of such difficulties because they had passport privilege. As a result of this, last year, I [wrote](#) a blog about this issue to tell the world about what we, as scholars without passport privilege, go through. It has been very well received; so many people reached out to me to say that they are going through similar things and our struggles are often not reasonable enough. We organised this panel today to start some discussions around this issue, and I hope you'll enjoy it and find it useful.

I want to start with Johanna by focusing on the experience of migration. Studying abroad is often seen as the first step in international mobility. What effect does the current regime of UK passport and visa protocols have on the student migrants, like international scholars coming to the UK to study or work, and British scholars going abroad?

Johanna: Thank you, thank you, Nihan and Lee-Ann for inviting me to speak. International students on courses of longer than six months need a visa to study in the UK, and those on full degrees, on courses lasting more than a year, count in immigration statistics. Immigration in the UK, as I'm sure a lot of people know, is a highly politicised issue, and so inevitably, international students get drawn into these discussions, these discourses. I just want to spend a few moments, very briefly, looking at how the UK has discussed immigration and visas.

Many of you will have seen the story, probably covered in the press a few days ago, about proposed legislation that home secretaries will have the power to suspend or delay the processing of visa applications from countries that do not "cooperate" with the UK government, in relation to the removal from the UK of nationals of that country who are required to enter the UK but do not have permission. This clause in the Nationality and Borders bill also allows for the Home Secretary to impose additional financial requirements for visa applications, so, that is to increase fees for visa application if countries don't cooperate.

This will inevitably impact international students, particularly students from the Global South applying for a visa to study in the UK, and it reflects a wider sense of UK immigration and the visa system as hostile to immigrants, including international students from specifically poor parts of the world. I'd also like to mention this widespread assumption that was debunked in 2017, that international students particularly from the Global South don't leave, and they overstay. In 2017, the ONS published data, as a result of an exit survey of migrants, that basically said that 97% of all students from the Global South on student visas actually do, in fact, leave when they're thought to leave. Prior to that, there was a sense of around 100,000 a year, were overstaying illegally. I think that surprised the press, and I think that surprised

the government as well, but it just underpins this discourse and this assumption that students are trying to trick the system, or they have some sort of ulterior motive.

In terms of recent changes, that I'd just like to very briefly run through, you've got, obviously, COVID and the traffic light system, you just have a look at the list of countries, the list of red countries compared to amber and green countries and you'll see what students, if they do come, have to be quarantined in a hotel at their own expense, which of course will exclude a lot of students. You've got Brexit, which obviously only applies to students from the EU, and I think one thing that this has highlighted for a lot of our students is what other students not in the EU have always had to go through.

They've always had to pay the surcharge for the NHS, they've always had to pay this visa processing fee, and also, of course, tuition fees, I'll come back to that in a minute, which are obviously hugely inflated for international students. Other changes is the post-study work visa, which will allow students from now on to live and work in the UK for up to two years after graduating, which I think will be important, and has been significant in conversations I've had with prospective and current international students.

Then finally, I don't know what the implications of this will be, but you have the new migration partnership between the UK and India. This migration partnership, we don't really know, but a small clause in that is that they will expedite visa applications from students from India. Again, we will have to wait and see what the impact of that is.

In terms of effects, very quickly, what are the effects on students, I'm just going to discuss issues of exclusion, quality, and equity. Obtaining a visa, many poor students will automatically be unable to secure a visa to come to the UK because they'll be unable to demonstrate over a 28-day period, the proof of finances that are required. For London, to live in London, you have to show that you have £1,334 in a bank account for a 28-day period. Interestingly, I found this out yesterday, there is a list of countries that are excluded from this requirement, because when I went as an international student to Canada, I had to show proof of finances. If you look at the list of countries excluded, they are wealthy countries. Again, students from the Global South will have to prove this financial status.

There's also, of course, fees, so foreign students in the UK can pay up to three times as much as the domestic student for the same course. When you talk to colleagues in Europe, sometimes they're just surprised by this or shocked by this. Stuart Tannock, who's at UCL, in the IOE has argued in his book. "It is this kind of fee differential that periodically leads to charges by international students, and others, that universities in the UK treat these students as cash cows and are more interested in making a profit out of these students than promoting higher education internationalism, or safeguarding international student well-being."

Just a final word before I shut up, I think the agreement with India, which was part of this trade deal that we've all heard a lot about, and the assurance that student visas for Indian students will be expedited, I think this just basically supports this general feeling, a general sense that international students are valued for the economic

benefits that they bring. Arguably, we could say that this results in them being exploited by the current system. I'll stop there.

Lee-Ann: Thank you so much, Johanna. Appreciate you reducing it all down to the time limit. It almost seems, from what you're describing, that this cash cow status of Indian students works to the detriment, then, of their rights and how they're seen in universities. As a former international student myself, it's been quite interesting how there are so many processes, policies, procedures in place to improve the well-being of home students, and one often doesn't see anywhere close to the same amount for international students. It is a very, very stark reflection of that fact. Thank you so much.

If I could put the next question to Ulrich: it's about COVID vaccines. The highly unequal access to COVID vaccines and the significantly higher vaccine rate in high-income countries has created a vaccine apartheid. Today, almost half the population in the UK, I think, are vaccinated. Whereas, I think in Kenya, the estimate is that only 30% of its population will be vaccinated by 2023. That again, just brings into stark relief, the difference between high-income countries and low-income countries. How do vaccine passports, introduced as a result of COVID-19, increase passport or visa privilege, especially within academia?

Ulrich: Thank you so much Lee-Ann. I think this is one of those things that's just a very complex issue. We'll try to do it justice in the next five minutes. I say mixed effects. At first glance it would appear that COVID vaccination is nothing new. As in talking about vaccine passports, because, as we all know, the yellow card already exists for which you have to get vaccinated against things like yellow fever, for example, if you're going to endemic regions, or you're from endemic regions. It would seem as though this is nothing new. When it comes to COVID, high income countries are publishing lists of authorised vaccines to get into the countries. An example is Germany. They're excluding vaccines like the Chinese vaccine Sinopharm or the Russian vaccine.

When we go back to the map of vaccination around the world again, like you mentioned, lower mid-income countries are nowhere close to what high income countries have done in terms of access to vaccines, as well as vaccine coverage. Many low-middle income countries are yet to receive enough vaccine doses, and to just make matters worse, there is a great sense of vaccine hesitancy that has caused a slow uptake in Cameroon, where I am right now, because people are just so hesitant. This hesitancy is linked to the infodemic related to COVID-19. Medical professionals and personnel, people who are more likely to be global health researchers or researchers, international researchers, are even more hesitant. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, there is a lot of vaccine hesitancy with some of the major figures in terms of public health admitting on TV that they haven't been vaccinated.

When you take all these elements together you have a very complex situation. Unfortunately, being from a low and middle-income country, when we talk about travel, it's a lot about the geopolitical and diplomatic relationships between your country, and the country that would be your host country at a time you're travelling. When you take COVID aside and take into consideration all this great sentiment of

anti-immigration, you find out that it's going to be very difficult to travel very soon, because if you're from a country where your major vaccine donor is China, for example, well, there's nothing much you can do about getting access to a vaccine and travelling. Now if you're going into a country that doesn't want to get the Sinopharm vaccine, you're basically calling for individuals to start getting those doses by themselves, and so the wealthier people, even from the low and middle income countries, will be the one getting access to vaccines. The less wealthy people, often who are at the grassroots, have knowledge of what we want to know because be it in economics, global economics, global health, there's that disconnection between the higher-ends of signing documents at places like the United Nations or the World Bank and what happens on the ground. If we want to bridge that gap, we need to get more and more of those people from low and middle income countries, and who are on the ground who do not have access to all these things.

I will end like I started, COVID-19 vaccine passports and the effects on travel for researchers is very complex, and it will probably be on a case by case basis depending on which country you're from, and where you're trying to go to. It will depend on access to vaccines. It will equally depend on the geopolitical relationships, and diplomacy between your country and your host country. That just makes it even so much more difficult, because you have to forget the research for a moment and just get versed with all these nuances before you're able to travel. Which just adds a psychological burden. Thank you.

Nihan: Thank you very much Ulrick. That was amazing especially pointing out that vaccine passport is not something new. It reminds me of the Brexit, when Brexit first happened in the UK, we received lots of emails from universities about not being over and not worrying about our visas, but this was directed to EU students, but as international students all through the years we did not receive such support.

I would like to continue with Ross to ask about visa procedures now. With reference to immigration and visa processes, do you think universities are contributing to making it a more fraught experience for international students and staff, or a more equitable one?

Ross: It still is a tricky question, and I think universities and HE institutions are in a really difficult place. They don't necessarily want to be having to enforce increasingly restrictive immigration controls, much like Johanna was alluding to earlier, immigration in the UK is highly politicised, and we have been through a time since probably about 2009-2010, where the immigration system in the UK and the student immigration system wrapped up in that, has become increasingly tight. However, universities and HE providers have found that the system, as it currently stands, has transferred a lot of the responsibility, that would've traditionally sat with border, control onto them. They are finding themselves enforcing these increasingly restrictive immigration controls without really ever having agreed to do so. It's been something that's been imposed.

HE institutions, as we know, are first and foremost places of learning and research. Yet since 2009, when this new system, the original points based system - you may have heard a lot trialed over the last few years about the introduction of a point-

based immigration system in the UK, where we've actually had one since 2009, so it's nothing new, but when that first came in, since then, education providers have been forced to accept legal responsibility for the international students, and staff, that they recruit from overseas. They literally have to sponsor them and have to take responsibility for them so that they can obtain their visas to enter the country. The Home Office are really clear about this. Being able to sponsor these visas is a privilege and not a right.

It's a really important privilege for universities, as Johanna said, it's a huge income driver, whether or not you agree with that. It is a massive income driver for universities, but also, we are in pursuit of a diverse student body, because it is widely accepted as a positive learning experience for all concerned, the more diverse the student and staff body is. It's really important for universities. Yet they are finding themselves now in a situation where they have this privilege to bring in students and staff, but that privilege comes with a myriad of responsibilities, and HE institutions have to implement these responsibilities. There is a very real and significant threat of losing that privilege if they don't. What we've seen since 2012 is the fact that more and more of those so-called privileges that institutions are striving to maintain have actually fallen, possibly unknowingly, onto international students themselves. Universities are not just protecting themselves, they are protecting the rights, or the limited rights of their international students.

I'll give you an example. If an international student wants to work part-time, or if they want to bring in their family members, or even take advantage of the new graduate route that we heard about earlier, they need to make sure that they are studying with an institution that has a track record of immigration compliance. That's a track record of immigration compliance as assessed by the home office. If they don't, if their provider isn't seen as compliant enough, then they will lose those simple rights. They could be taken away from them. The visa processes that students and staff encounter may therefore seem bureaucratic, and in many cases they are, and potentially they might even seem discriminatory. I'm sure we've all got experiences of when we've been caught out by them. They've been done in a burdensome way. They've not been a very pleasant experience, but unfortunately they are necessary burdens that have been put in place to protect some of the, admittedly limited, benefits that our international students are still currently able to access. Some of these processes, they are far from perfect, and in my career as a consultant, I've seen numerous examples where they would benefit enormously from a more student-centric and compassionate design. I think some of the compassion is missing amongst universities when they are going through these processes but, inevitably, they are always going to be unpleasant by the virtue of the task of what they are checking. In that way, yes, they do create a more fraught experience. It would be impossible to sit here and argue that they don't, but equally, without them, I think we would find that there would very quickly be even greater levels of inequity.

Lee-Ann: Thanks for that Ross. That's a difficult position to be in, and how does that make you feel in your role where you're trying to straddle these different priorities? I don't know if you want to speak to it now or later, but it would be interesting to hear from your perspective.

Ross: Indeed. It is a tricky role to play because we want all of our students to have a great experience. Coming to the UK to study is such a fantastic opportunity, and we want our students to be able to make the most of that, to focus on their learning, to focus on their experience, and to focus on making the most of their time here. Yet, so often, a lot of that focus has to be taken away to deal with immigration and visa bureaucracy.

That is very hard to straddle because universities have invested a lot to be able to maintain this sponsor status and continue bringing in those students. Those of us who work in this space, I'd like to think that we do try to do that with compassion, and we do try to understand what the students are going through. Obviously now, with Brexit, it's an even greater challenge that we have because there's significantly more volume having to go through these processes. It is difficult and we do see where it goes wrong. We see very real and live examples. I see them on a daily basis in my role where it has gone wrong and students, staff have to leave. They have to leave partway through a program potentially, or they can't pursue that opportunity of their dreams that they wish to. It is heartbreaking and it is very upsetting. We strive to do what we can in order to smooth that as best we possibly can, but we are working in an extremely regulated and extremely bureaucratic space with that.

Lee-Ann: Thank you. Thank you for your candor. That's really helpful to get a picture from the other side.

Claudio, if I could put the next question to you. I read your interview in *American Anthropologist* and it was wonderful. You talked about the commodification of diversity. You rightly state, in my opinion, a Southern attitude requires that we avoid celebrating diversity as an academic commodity. Now, in your view as a scholar who has studied inequality across Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe, what's your perspective on this, have visa and immigration controls in high-income countries commodified diversity further? Is it possible to decolonise without dismantling these colonial funding and immigration practices?

Claudio: Thank you so much, Lee-Ann, and Nihan for the invitation to be here with you guys. I think it is definitely and possible, but very challenging in many ways as well.

While I suppose that mainstream institutions long for representation of diversity from people from the South, or underprivileged identities within its academic community, namely, and especially amongst students, administrative staff, and visiting professors; sometimes it's not so open to receive diversity as permanent in their department, as permanent faculty, for example. That's one starting point.

While Southern thinkers and thinking have got more movable recently, once they are decontextualised, CVs and diplomas from Southern institutions are not so convertible or so mobile like this. If you are a Southern scholar, you have to make yourself palatable for a northern institution, if you want to have a more stronger position from where you address things which might be important for science at large.

Following up a little bit on what most of us were saying, but Johanna and Ross were very clearly addressing on the idea of visas, I suppose that we've been shifting from a source of securitisation framework to a more market-oriented framework as well on border management. This is something that some scholars are pointing to, especially Juliette Dupont wrote about that.

If you're a Southern scholar, so by Southern scientists, depending where you're from in the South, you have to apply for visas only to cross airports. Even if you're going from a Southern country or region to another Southern country, you cannot avoid stepping in the North. This is, I believe, a money machine for the flow of money flowing from the South to the North. Not normally as you guys pointed out, it's normally at the expenses of the South actually. The flow of money is still reproducing a colonial framework through which the circulation of people is understood.

Another aspect would be going with that to address a bit more of the passport privilege idea that Nihan has rightly pointed to: what are the consequences for a scholar if she or he is not so physically movable? Is it like you are not able to take nice pictures for your Facebook or Instagram or what? I think it is a bit more than that because it has consequences on your CV.

As you rightly pointed, your capacity to transit affects your capacity to be transitive. If you're not movable, you cannot be transitive. You cannot make yourself more understandable or convertible. You cannot be understood elsewhere apart from the society or the academic environment where you are originally from.

Normally, scientific environments are very much national-based, there is this bias, but of course, if you come from a mainstream environment, the norm is the world. If you do the rules, if you set the ground, if you set the boundaries for what is a relevant scholar to be, because your national environment is the norm, then it makes things much more complicated. If you're from Uganda, Uruguay, or elsewhere, comparing if you are from the US, UK, or Germany, then probably it gives a second consequence.

While Southern thinkers are movable, and CVs are not so movable, if you're a southern scholar, you have to prove three times more, or maybe 10 times more that you are competent, or that what you're saying is relevant, not because what you're saying is not relevant per se, but because, honestly, your CV or diploma does not grant you the position you need from where to speak fluently the language of the institution. You have to decontextualise yourself in order to get more understandable in other situations.

I suppose also that the funding is a big issue, this is not only that the money is flowing in one single direction to support a colonial framework. It's not that money is only circulating from the North to the South, but from the South to the North, in large amounts.

The presence of many scholars from the South and the North is not only depending on grants or facilities that are granted from Northern institutions, from mainstream institutions, but they have to trust on governments, philanthropy, and family support from the South. The money flowing from the South to the North is also very relevant

to that regard. There's a really huge commitment of families to support their children or their people to make themselves more scientifically movable having granted - this is the lesson, one of the most important points for me, longing for certification. That is one of the most important things that people are looking for when they come to the North.

They want a certificate or diploma so that they get themselves more movable. Understand Southern identity or passport as an ontological dimension, meaning that you're from the South, you have this ontological stance to understand these things or to be facing these things. But because there is also an intersectional, I suppose, dimension on the passport privilege, if you're a man, if you're a woman, so origin, class, race, gender play a role on this as well. It's really not that, "I am an exemplary from the South." You have to take this into consideration as well, and the privilege of the diplomas. That's another dimension, I suppose, which is important to remark. Thank you so much.

Lee-Ann: That was really, really interesting and a lot to think about. Thank you so much. I was wondering about something else, and to take a slightly, perhaps play the devil's advocate. Most of us are successful scholars from the Global South on this panel, who are living or working or have lived or worked outside the Global South. Skeptics would point us, to our success as examples that passport privilege does not exist. Or, at least, that it does not have a significant impact on our careers. Would you agree? Would you not agree? If not, could you share an example, if you're okay with doing that, about how it shows up in your area of research, how it manifests itself in your work or your personal experience? Who wants to take that loaded big question first?

Ulrick: I'll take a crack at it if you don't mind.

Lee-Ann: Thanks, Ulrick.

Ulrick: Yes, thank you. It's always easy to take that point of view of taking a few people because we are really just a few of very many people who have not been able to "make it", because, I agree with what Claudio said, your capacity to move today in this world will really translate how much you can move in the professional ladder, whatever your profession is. It really determines that if you stay put in one area, you're not able to do that. I'll just share my personal experience with passport privilege because I think it's important to highlight this here.

I'm originally from Cameroon, a physician and I'm working in global neurosurgery, as well as global surgery. Three years ago, I was going to the World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva, Switzerland, where we were supposed to work and contribute to the World Health Assembly. That was in May, and a month later, I was going to join my new programme at that time which was at Harvard Medical School in the United States. I asked for a visa. Before asking for a visa, I booked an Airbnb in Geneva. Anyone who's been to Geneva knows how expensive Geneva is. I got flight tickets, return flight tickets, I didn't just book them, I bought them. Then I had to put money in my account, keep it for a while and then ask for the visa. And come the time, I was denied the visa. The reason was that visa officers weren't convinced that I was going to come back to Cameroon after the World Health Assembly. Bear in mind, I had

added documents showing that in June, I was starting at Harvard, and that I was going to ask for a visa for the United States.

Who in their right mind would think that you'd go to Geneva, stay at Geneva instead of going to Harvard, right? Still, they insisted. I went to the Ministry of External Relations in Cameroon, tried to get this sorted, but there's again, a geopolitical, diplomatic relationship between Cameroon and Switzerland that's quite complex. I wasn't able to go to that event. I lost a lot of money trying to get the refund on Airbnb, and I couldn't even get a refund on the flight. I had paid all of that out of pocket. That's what happened.

Now beyond the money I lost, I think one of the things that happened with COVID, everyone was lauding the efforts and effect of the internet, but the internet can never replace physical presence. Anyone who's been at a conference, at a meeting, knows how much that is important with building human relationships that can push you in your career.

I'm not the only one. When you have that profile, when you're young you don't have, what they would, call ties. I don't know how you define those ties. When you talk about family ties, if anything folks from the Global South have more family ties than most folks in the Global North. My family, if I had to count everybody in my family would be like hundreds, right? It's like "you don't have the ties that will make us believe that you would come back", and I missed that opportunity.

I want to link it now back to when someone says, "oh, there's no passport privilege." I fast-forward, I'm at Harvard and we have projects, we have to travel. We had to go to China. It was tough, I couldn't go to China while I was there. We had to go to another event again in Geneva because you have to take so much more time to do that application and get money aside. I know so many folks from the Global North. I'm not sure they would have the money I've been asked to keep in my account for as long as I've kept them to get a visa. Now, if you tell me that is not a privilege. We need to redefine the word privilege then.

Lee-Ann: Thanks. That is a really powerful example, and sorry that you have to put yourself out there and make yourself vulnerable to bring these issues to the fore. I've been there, and just the fact that you have to submit your documentation and explain the most basic of things to bureaucrats that defies common sense or any intellectual ability, I find it humiliating at times and insulting, and really diminishing, but yes. Thank you for that. Is there anyone else who'd like to, especially for people who have not been at the receiving end of this, it would be really useful to hear about these experiences. But again, I don't want to put anyone on the spot because I do appreciate it's quite personal. Claudio?

Claudio: Yes, I can share some experiences. One workshop, a big one I was organising in Sao Paulo, we had on teaching African history, and we had a lot of students from different parts of Africa. The foundation which sponsored this had a contract with a travel agent for booking the flights. Normally, what you think when you're from somewhere and you're booking a flight you just go to the internet and choose the best route time that you think it's suitable for your trajectory, but in this case we were confined. We should do it through the through this travel agent.

We had a professor coming from Ouagadougou. We suggested he could fly Ouagadougou-Dakar-Sao Paulo. I don't know if you realise how close it can be comparing if you travel elsewhere, but the travel agent decided to make this gentleman travel through Paris instead which doubled the time of a number of hours that he was flying and changed the amount of the ticket from €750 euros to €2,500. It is really sad that at the same time asking for this gentleman to fly much more, it was an exhausting trip, and also to apply for a Schengen visa. We are still not able to get out of this colonial frame mindset. When we are thinking about the same, like how we do transitivity within our regions. This is the history of so many of us.

If you have to come from Southeast Asia, South Asia to Latin America, you cannot avoid unless if you don't fly through Europe, and there are not so many options for that. It's not only to think about next time you go to book your flight with a low cost company, but also on how flight connections make the hubs in order to reproduce colonial circulation of goods and people. It does, of course, have long historical roots, and, of course, it's difficult to change it, but institutions in that regard can play a role, suggesting for alternative routes that would make this trip less exhausting for people, and sometimes even less money-consuming.

Nihan: Thank you very much Claudio. That was a really interesting point to make. We all have been there, we've experienced these issues, but thinking about the more systematic roots of colonisation in academia and in our work was interesting. I would like to continue with that to ask a final question about awareness before we move on to the Q&A with the audience.

Before that, now I want to ask all of these panellists, when you think of the people you worked with, most of us are scholars from Global South working in Global North, when you think of the people you work with, do you think those with passport privilege are aware of their privileges, and why do you think it's important to authorise awareness of this issue?

Johanna: I just have a very quick thing to say, I suppose in relation to my teachings. I teach a third-year undergraduate course on migration and transnationalism, and actually one of the first things I do with the students - we have a very diverse groups of students -, but what comes across, I ask them to think about their own passports and their own passport privilege and it is interesting. Many of them are dual-passport holders, and will use a different passport depending on what's convenient. It's easier to travel on this passport to this country, or this passport.

That level of privilege I think is something that - I myself experience this kind of privilege - but certainly in my teaching, one of the first things I do is I get students to reflect on the fact that not everyone's experiences with migration are the same, because we do have a lot of international students and a lot of migrant students in the classroom. But when you scratch the surface and discuss their experiences with them, they're nevertheless quite privileged. They find mobility easy and it's just breaking down that initially and saying, "you find it easy, but borders and barriers and boundaries are different for different people who are differentially placed in this system." That's what I was going to say. It's one of my starting points for actually getting students to think about this.

Ross: If I could just come in to follow on from that. One of my roles that I do at London Business School, and previously where I've worked, is supporting colleagues who wish to bring in potentially academic visitors and scholars from all over the world, who wish to bring them in to either conduct research, or teach, or even potentially mark exams, lecture, and all of those. The number of conversations I have had with colleagues who come to me and say, "I have this particular expert in this field that would like to come over to deliver a short series of lectures. Please, can you just give him the paperwork, or give her the paperwork that she needs to come into the country?"

No. I'm afraid it doesn't work like that. There are significant hoops that they have to jump through at their end, there are significant hoops that we have to jump through at our end, and they're not going to be able to get into the country next Wednesday, even though you got a lecture booked with them. This is a conversation that I have had monthly with various academics around, academic colleagues. I think there is a real lack of understanding amongst those of us who haven't suffered with this passport privilege. I do think it is very important that the issue is highlighted.

Ulrick: Yes. I'm just going to add a little bit to that. I think the difficulty with anything that's defined as a privilege is that for those in that position it is a right, and they've never known anything different. Fortunately, a lot of folks in academia have never been in a position to find out what is for them is not the same reality for others. I think that, in my experience anyway, most academics from the Global North that have found how things have been different for their Global South colleagues have been pretty great at providing moral support, because beyond moral support there's nothing much that they can do, just because that's the rule.

On the other hand, as well, I like to call this, "the passport penalty." A lot of folks from the Global South are not necessarily aware of the passport penalty until they decide to travel. It's not uncommon that there's actually an entire industry in the Global South of folks helping people trying to navigate the visa system because it is different for the UK, it's different for France, it's different for Germany, and if you don't go through them you'll have a really hard time.

Be it the passport penalty or the passport privilege, you need to shed a spotlight on it. You need more and more of the stories told, and you really need it to be associated with things that people are more likely to be familiar with. I think in the UK one of those things is just the Premier League. If it was affecting a play-off of Manchester United, it's not the same, unfortunately, as though it was affecting the students from Oxford. That's just how it is.

I think Ross spoke about the economic value of international students. It's a £25 billion market, the Premier League is like £8 billion, so if we ask the question if it's really about economics, it would make sense that things should be easier for international students than the professional football player, but football just has that position where everyone just associates easily with football than with international students because the whole image of, "they are coming to the UK to get our jobs, to get all the money, and to go." Whereas it's the other way around. It's about storytelling and politics.

Lee-Ann: Thanks so much for that, Ulrick, Claudio, Ross, Johanna. Would you like to add any comments Nihan before I bring the session to a close?

Nihan: I just would like to thank everyone for joining us and for participating, and for Lee-Ann for co-organising this channel. Also, I wrote that blog post I wasn't aware of the, maybe, main systematic issues of this topic, but you all brought some really interesting perspectives and I'm so looking forward to reading your work.

Lee-Ann: This's been such an illuminating discussion. Our panellists have spoken about the ontological and intersectional dimensions of passport privilege, the recent flurry of UK regulations and policies that have exacerbated the exploitation of international students, the lack of understanding of this issue by those who have always enjoyed passport privilege, and how this is an issue that goes beyond economics and money but can be improved through storytelling and politics.

A big thank you to our wonderful panelists, Johanna, Ulrick, Ross, and Claudio, who have come together, despite their busy schedules, logistical challenges, and COVID, to share their insights on a very important and evolving issue. I would also like to express my gratitude to Nihan, my co-chair and comrade-in-arms, who kicked this off with her very prescient post, [*The hidden cost of being a scholar from the Global South*](#). Thank you so much for writing about this and creating awareness on this issue.

Finally, I would like to thank our lovely audience. Thank you for making time and effort to attend and participate. Please continue to talk about this issue on Twitter, Insta #passportprivilege, and look out for the podcast recording on the LSE Higher Education blog, which will be published soon. Thank you.

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