

## The Intensification and Selective Nature of Immigration Regulation Policy in the United States

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In recent years, two opposing images of migrants and migration have existed together in parallel. On the one hand there are the migrants involved in industries using new specialist technologies such as IT and biotechnology and who are considered a necessary resource for greater economic growth and the overall stimulation of the economy. On the other hand are the migrants subject to exclusion as diversity expands and who are seen as a troubling phenomenon as they overcome national borders at will. However, are these flows of migrants which upon first glance appear to be completely in contrast to one another, really two completely different types of migration caused by the worldwide expansion of economic disparities?

In the United States the numbers of “illegal” immigrants increased considerably in the 1990s and with that increase exclusionary movements sprung up nationwide. On the surface, border control and welfare regulations were strengthened. However, the increase in illegal immigrants did not abate. In the latter half of the 1990s the number of highly skilled migrants coming on short-term visas also rapidly increased. While these two flows are often debated separately, in actual fact, the conditions for their existence are influenced by politico-economic trends at which America is at the forefront. Namely that the regulation of illegal immigrants, rather than being carried out with the intention to control migration, is actually a mechanism for creating and maintaining a supply of labor with both limited rights and a weak negotiating power. Meanwhile, the short-term visa programs for highly skilled migrants have swiftly and flexibly supplied labor power for the rapidly growing IT industry while regulating people’s understanding of migrants rights and the possibility for longer term residency. Labor is created and supplied in accordance with the employer’s needs. In this sense, both of these different migratory flows can be said to be two sides of the same coin.

In this presentation I will discuss these two contrasting trends with regards to the neoconservatism that has directed American society over the past 2 centuries and the composite amalgam with which that neoconservatism has embroiled itself with a neoliberalism that founds itself on faith in the mechanism of the market (an association in which fissures exist that one might call the neoconservative-liberalism composite). In particular I will focus and analyze changes which have taken place since 9/11.