

The Role of Corporations in a Multi-layered Migration Governance System: Regulating the Admission of Labour into the UKⁱ

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Abstract

This study examines the interplay between international labor mobility norms codified in multilateral and bilateral trade agreements and national immigration policies, focusing on the UK case. The empirical evidence shows that company-related mobility has not only been the main category liberalized within the trade arena, but it is also the primary source of labor mobility to the UK, sustained by the involvement of the private sector in migration governance. The UK sponsorship model has led to a “permissive privatization” of admissions for company transferees at the expense of other types of mobility. The findings reflect broader approaches to global labor mobility, especially in the “North”, where the clash between political and economic goals on migration is steadily intensifying.

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