

# Redefining Borders: Labor Migration and National Sovereignty

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## ABSTRACT

In the wake of worldwide economic and political restructuring, migrations have both accelerated and have a growing presence in national labor markets. To a large extent, the role this labor takes within different economies reflects state policies toward achieving competitiveness. As illustration, this paper pursues two questions: what meaning can be attributed to the economic purpose of immigrant labor in diverse socio-economic systems; and accordingly, what implications can be drawn about the fluidity of borders as a result. Distinctions are made among liberal, corporatist, and authoritarian governments using examples from the United States, Japan, Germany, and Kuwait. The conclusion is made that the redefinition of borders, and hence national sovereignty, is inextricably tied to the demarcation of internal and external labor markets, and to the leverage the state maintains in reconciling the two.