

Temporary migration in Australia: the entrepreneurial state, rights, belonging and everyday security |

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Patterns of migrant mobility have fundamentally changed in recent decades, impacting on countries of immigration such as Australia, also referred to as 'settler' societies. The rise of temporary migration is desired by many states to fulfil labour shortages and for sectors such as higher education. Temporary visas for work and study offer a pathway to individuals, particularly where other pathways are not able to be accessed. In this paper, we seek to evaluate the complexity of temporary migration in contrast to the longstanding approach to migration as nation-building of settler societies with predominantly one-way, permanent immigration where migrants are encouraged to a citizenship pathway. The changes in migration patterns and the increase in temporary rather than permanent migration impact on individuals, communities and the governments that regulate the flow of populations. In such an increasingly fluid context, temporary migrants are also more susceptible to forms of abuse and exploitation in a host society, with fewer forms of redress due to their status as non-citizens and non-permanent residents in the countries in which they work or study. This paper draws in part on fieldwork conducted in the Asia-Pacific with migrants intending to make temporary migration journeys to Australia. This fieldwork and other studies of temporary migration in Australia indicate that basic rights and security for migrants are often absent or 'traded off' to access visas.