

Global China and the Future of Capitalism – Populism, Precarity, and Labor Migration: The U.S. Case

Abstract

A cornerstone of Donald Trump's populist appeal is his anti-immigrant animus. His rhetoric repeatedly reinforces the view that immigrants have unfairly "cut in line" ahead of hard-working U.S.-born workers. Yet despite their legendary willingness to take "jobs Americans don't want," immigrants are at best a minor player in the dramatic economic restructuring that has upended the economic prospects of U.S.-born workers and forced many to join the ranks of the precariat since the 1970s. Growing xenophobia obscures the actual forces propelling this four-decade-long drama, namely business strategies promoting deregulation, deindustrialization, and de-unionization (by 2017, 89 percent of the U.S. workforce was non-union). This talk will explore the changing relationship of immigrant workers to the U.S. labor market and labor movement in the United States.