

**Bias towards skilled migration in Brazil during the Lula Era:
Influence of the Knowledge-Based Economy Paradigm**

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Despite its reputation as an immigration country, its favourable demographic conditions and the window opportunity resulting from the demographic transition, Brazilian migration policies remain quite restrictive and selective, favouring, in a concealed way, the entry of skilled and highly skilled migrants. But unlike the policies of developed nations, differentiation mechanisms linked to human capital are not made explicit in the Brazilian regulatory framework. However, the language of skills become quite popular in the country and the discursive bias towards highly skilled migration can be easily traced within the migratory debate (especially during the PT/Lula era).

By adopting a similar regulatory framework and reproducing an analogous discourse to those of developed nations, Brazilian policies restrict regular entry channels to skilled and highly-skilled migrants and force an important group of unprofitable migrants to resort to unsafe routes, perils journeys, irregular entry or stay. But as much as some stakeholders in Brazil would like to limit immigration to highly skilled people and as much as we can see an increase in the educational profile of recent arrivals, low skilled migrants will continue to come as a consequence of different factors, some of them linked to the inherent dynamic of migrations (e.g. chain migration and network, migrant's agency, migration lifecycle, migration industry), some linked to the restrictiveness of migration and asylum policies in developed countries and others reflecting the political emergence and the nature of the insertion of Brazil in the global economy.

Moreover, these discourses seem greatly disconnected from the productive structure of the Brazilian economy and of its insertion in the international division of labour, heavily dependent on the production and export of primary products, natural resources and commodities (Naidin& Ramon, 2014). In this sense I would like to give some attention to how PT administrations strategically sought to reposition Brazil in the Global Order and to change the country's insertion in the international division of labour. Country Plans developed by the Secretariat of Strategic Affairs (linked to the Presidency) during Lula's administration reveal expectations of how state planning

and state led capitalism could bring the country to this new position by 2020. So the official promotion of high skilled migration by state officers would go hand in hand with these long-term goals. In this sense, the idea of a Knowledge-Based Paradigm¹ that frames our understanding of political, social and economic affairs seems quite appealing, as in Brazil a socialist and so-called leftist government shared and actively promoted a type of social order and values created and fomented by core countries.

¹Knowledge-Based Economy (KBE) theoretical and policy paradigms¹, are relevant for our research both because, as a hegemonic ideology, it influences our lives in so many ways (Wodak& Meyer, 2009) and because it helps us trace back the nexus between the language of skills and migration. Actually, “analyzing, understanding and explaining the impact of the Knowledge-Based Economy on various domains of our societies; [and] the recontextualization of KBE into other parts of the world and other societies” has already been indicated as an important contemporary research agenda (Wodak& Meyer, 2009; Muntigl et al, 2000; Jessop, 2008). Representing a successful economic imaginary¹, the KBE paradigm has performative and constitutive force (Jessop, 2008).