



Title: India-Canada trade and immigration linkages: A case of regional (dis)advantage?

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Research Question: How effectively do national governments utilize the skills of immigrants to enhance trading relations with their source countries? How does the policy and regional context inform this process?

Importance: Literature on the role of transnational entrepreneurs argues that immigrants can become the “new Argonauts” of the global economy and create cross-regional trading relationships based on their cultural familiarity with multiple national contexts. Saxenian (2006) has clearly found this is the case with foreign-born US-educated technology entrepreneurs who exploit their knowledge and links with Silicon Valley in order to expand research and production to sites overseas. The lesson from Saxenian’s study on the “new Argonauts” is that immigrant populations who combine cultural and technical know-how can be a massive asset to their adoptive country with regard to economic development. This paper will examine how policy can help or hinder such practices, and how particular national and regional contexts shape the nature and success of immigrant transnational entrepreneurs.

Research Findings: This paper reports of the first part of a comparative international study on the relationship between trade and immigration in the case of Canada-India relations. Subsequent papers will report on the Australia-India case. The research examines the perceptions of traders and government and trade officials with regard to how they interpret the links between immigration and trade. The research highlights how specific immigration networks between India and Canada, and various Canadian policy contexts have been seen to restrain the successful development of India-Canadian relations.

Implications: The need for greater integration and analysis of the sometimes competing relations between immigration and trade policy has to be acknowledged in the context of India-Canada relations in order for the trade relationship to improve in line with that of similar countries like Australia. Certain obvious areas of concern are higher education linkages including international student recruitment, as well as a more concerted effort to acknowledge and exploit the special relationship Canada already possesses with Punjab. Recent developments indicate British Columbia is pursuing this route.