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India-Canada Trade and Immigration Linkages:

A Case of Regional (Dis)advantage?

Margaret Walton-Roberts

Series editor: Linda Sheldon, SFU;
Krishna Pendakur, SFU and Daniel Hiebert, UBC, Co-directors

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	5
1. INTRODUCTION	6
2. TRADE-IMMIGRATION INTERSECTIONS	7
3. THE STILLBORN CHILD? THE CANADA-INDIA TRADE CONTEXT	11
• 3.1 Trade	11
• 3.2 Immigration	13
4. METHODOLOGY	18
5. FORCED RANKING QUESTIONS	20
6. REGIONAL (DIS)ADVANTAGE	36
7. POSSIBLE ROUTES FORWARD	40
• 7.1 Education	41
• 7.2 Accept and invest in the Punjab “comparative advantage”	44
8. CONCLUSION	47
REFERENCES	50
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	58



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INDIA-CANADA TRADE AND IMMIGRATION LINKAGES: A CASE OF REGIONAL (DIS)ADVANTAGE?

Margaret Walton-Roberts

Wilfrid Laurier University

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ABSTRACT

Recent work has addressed the intersection between the mobility of skilled workers, product innovation and export market development, suggesting that nations that encourage or host large skilled immigrant populations might benefit from the specific cultural and economic competencies they possess. Examination of this issue through a comparative framework allows us to assess how different policy contexts might capture or squander the benefit of this economic and cultural resource. In this research project, a comparative qualitative study of British Columbia in Canada and New South Wales in Australia was undertaken to explore how key actors in the field of trade with India assessed the success of their respective national policies to capture the potential trade return from immigration, in this case from India. This paper reports on the Canada results. Using qualitative interviews with traders and officials familiar with India-Canada trade, this paper argues that rather than the regional advantage Saxenian (2006) sees linked to the movement of skilled Asian professionals in the IT industry, a discourse of regional disadvantage is present in Canada with relation to Indian immigration and its role in building effective trade links with India. The paper argues that the geography of immigration results in a situation where competing political, cultural and economic relations both support and undermine the development of effective trade networks but that the discourse of disadvantage or deficiency associated with the nature of immigrants to Canada masks more structural deficiencies on the part of the Canadian state.

1. INTRODUCTION

In an age of global interconnectedness, scholars are increasingly interested in *how* goods, information and people are mobilized within global networks and how these networks articulate with innovation processes and the development of goods and ideas. While quantitative measurements of international flows of people, goods and information are useful for understanding the magnitude of flows and the depth of international interconnectedness that now represents the global economy, researchers are increasingly seeking a greater qualitative understanding of the nature of these linkages. For example, how are small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) formed and sustained, especially when they are born global and span countries with very different business traditions? Recently, social scientists (including economists and business management scholars), have been inquiring into how the cultural context these transnational entrepreneurs operate within might shape their business practices (Driori et al. 2006; Riddle et al. 2008; Portes et al. 2002) and how international flows, particularly the international mobility of skilled professionals, shape the nature of product innovation (Saxenian 2006). 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 the source and destination regions. Saxenian (2006) has clearly found this to be 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 main argument of Saxenian’s work is that the transnational business activities of foreign scientists trained in the US do not undermine US competitiveness; rather, they enhance it through a process of

collaborative global network innovation. The lessons 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 development.

2. TRADE-IMMIGRATION INTERSECTIONS

One area that is aligned to this cultural view of business practices is the understanding of how immigration informs trade. Clearly the current interest in transnational entrepreneurs incorporates an implicit belief that global international migration and mobility does impact trade beyond just increasing and changing consumption patterns. This aspect of many economies is taken for granted and builds on a long awareness of the role migrant traders play in forging trade networks and initiating exchange across vast distances. The most convincing research on this connection tends to be anecdotal. Literature from various national perspectives on trade and immigration indicates that geographic, historic and economic contexts structure the linkages between trade and immigration differently. Indeed, Helliwell's (1997) assessment of the relative failure of international trade theory to account for border effects on trade leads him to geographic trade literature that emphasizes history and location in order to account for patterns of international trade. This obviously includes the role of immigrants and immigration networks and how they intersect with specific social and economic contexts of economic exchange and social organization.

In the US, Light, Zhou, and Kim (2002) are definitive in their analysis of the link between immigration and trade, arguing that immigrant entrepreneurship, English fluency and middle-man minority status expand American foreign trade. They suggest the US's import market is already saturated; therefore

immigrant traders can have little impact on increasing imports but do have an effect on exports because they offer a corrective to the US's cultural and linguistic insularity. These results support and extend Gould's (1994) findings that immigrant entrepreneurs expand exports but not imports. However, this is contrary to Kohli's (2002) findings for Switzerland and Girma and Yu's (2002) UK research, which found that non-Commonwealth immigrants increased imports over exports. Dunlevy's (2006) analysis of the immigrant trade effect across the US found the pro trade impact of immigrants is strengthened when higher levels of corruption exist in the source country and is also enhanced by language dissimilarity between the sending and receiving country. In Australia, the potential for cultural diversity to expand trade has been of political interest since the late 1980s (Hage 1998; Stanton and Lee 1996). As with Helliwell, Stanton and Lee review various trade models that attempt to explain international trade and argue that only theories based on imperfect competition in markets can capture the dynamic nature of trade and immigration links for the Australia case. Stanton and Lee test the available export and census data and find a weak association between increased export growth and growth of ethnic groups emerging in the late 1980s (507).

In Canada, Globerman (1995) concluded that there is no relationship between trade (aggregated imports and exports) and immigration and that the two policies should not be considered together. Baker and Benjamin (1996), however, suggest a strong link exists between trade and immigration in relation to Asia Pacific countries, and Head and Reis (1998, 33) attempt to quantify the relationship, yet conclude: "Determining how immigration and trade are linked has proved elusive. Yet, there continues to be strong evidence that the link is there." As we can see, overall research on trade and immigration links tends to be contradictory. The potential for a positive correlation be-

tween trade and immigration might certainly exist, yet quantitative analysis has not conclusively demonstrated a universal relationship. The reliance on trade data to model such relationships is also problematic when we consider possible shortcomings in the quantitative trade data collected, as Assanie and Woo (2004) argue is evident in the trade of services data between India and Canada.

There is still an underdeveloped awareness of the nature of the explicit link between immigration on the one hand and trade on the other, and an even smaller amount of work has assessed how government policy might support or retard the formation and success of such linkages. One important question to ask is how effective governments are in tapping into immigrant business networks and utilizing and nurturing their particular cultural capacities in the area of developing export markets and building strategic links. In an attempt to understand the role these associations have in contributing to trade, Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) commissioned research on the extent, nature and activities of Asian Ethnic Business Associations (AEBAs) (Asia Pacific Foundation 2004). The report found information on over 142 active AEBAs of varying sizes and mandates and recommended that the "mainstreaming" of such organizations should be a future goal, noting how "the "hidden advantage" of AEBAs for Canada's commercial interests in Asia remains largely underutilized" (8). This focus on the links between immigration and trade can be criticized for fetishizing ethnicity and converting it unproblematically into economic value. This "multiculturalism means business" agenda has been seen as a neoliberal co-option of ethnic diversity (Cope and Kalantzis 1987; Mitchell 2001). Hage (1998), in particular, has critiqued this discourse of "productive diversity" for the way it exploits ethnicity "to make it yield a kind of ethnic surplus value" (129). Such

criticisms themselves entail contradictions, since they critique the *inclusion*, rather than exclusion, of immigrants into the formal economy. Of course the point of such critical observations is with regard to *how* immigrants are included in economic processes and how the manner of inclusion furthers neo-liberal discourses. In this paper, my purpose is to examine how effective the state is, or is perceived to be, in the actual inclusion of immigrants into these economic mechanisms in the first place.

Trade policies can also act to undermine or exclude the activities of cross-border migrant traders (Keely 2003; Peberdy 2000; Peberdy and Crush 2001; Gallegos 2004; Mosk 2005). In addition, other legislative, tax, and immigration policies can curtail immigrant entrepreneurs, as Wong (2004) highlights with regard to how Canadian citizenship residency requirements suppress the success of transnational entrepreneurs. Research on transnational immigrant entrepreneurs has also assessed how policy contexts can constrain opportunity structures for immigrants (Crick et al. 2001; Stanton and Lee 1996; Collins 2003; Rath and Kloosterman 2000; Kloosterman 2003; Teixeira et al. 2007). In the case of Canada, ineffective immigrant labour market policies can create the context for “blocked mobility” (Light and Bonacich 1988), leaving immigrants little option but the entrepreneurial route. We see this in the non-recognition of foreign credentials and immigrant earnings discrepancies (Bauder 2003), which together create a cohort of recent immigrants where transnational behaviour is borne of necessity, not necessarily desire (Wong 2004; Ley 2003, 2005, 2006; Waters 2002; Hiebert 2002). In this regard, it is important to identify how policy can both compel immigrants toward economic transnationality because of poor integration yet also restrict these economic transnational behaviours once immigrants do attempt to succeed in this area. Part of the larger problem is the complexity and diversity of processes involved in

trade and immigration. The overwhelming scope of these processes illustrates the need for geographically contextualized empirical research on the matter. To that end, this research project examines the trade immigration relationship between Canada and India and contrasts it to the Australia-India relationship. In this paper, the Canada data is examined. The paper begins with an assessment of the wider context of the trade and immigration relationship Canada has with India before moving into presentation and discussion of the interview results.

3. THE STILLBORN CHILD? THE CANADA-INDIA TRADE CONTEXT

3.1 Trade

Canada's trade with India is seen as complementary and concentrated in a few sectors. The Confederation of Indian industry notes that 90 percent of Canada's exports to India and 67 percent of India's exports to Canada are accounted for by products that are among the top ten exports of each (Canadian Council of Chief Executives and Confederation of Indian Industry 2008). India's major exports to Canada include garments and textiles; jewellery and precious stones; organic chemicals; coffee; spices; light engineering goods; footwear; and leather products. India's major items of import from Canada include newsprint, wood pulp, asbestos, potash, peas, iron scrap, copper, minerals, and industrial chemicals (FICC). India-Canada trade is growing, but commentators argue the relationship is still well below its potential relative to both the growth of the Indian economy and the performance of other nations' trade with India (Canadian Services Coalition 2007; Evans 2008; Touhey 2007; Canadian Council of Chief Executives and Confederation of Indian Industry 2008). During the early to mid 2000s, Canada lagged in the growth of exports to India when compared to other industrial nations (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: INDIAN IMPORTS FROM SELECTED NATIONS, 2000–2007, IN \$US MILLION

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Germany	1866.63	1759.59	2028.11	2918.58	3868.31	4015.35	6023.63	12666.48
USA	3629.52	3015	3149.63	5034.86	6291.49	7001.35	9454.74	12604.7
Switzerland	2620.73	3160.14	2870.76	3312.75	5817.92	5939.92	6555.8	9115.26
UAE	2138.84	658.98	915.09	2059.85	4581.96	4641.1	4354.08	8639.01
Australia	1079.33	1062.76	1360.1	2649.24	3561.1	3824.53	4947.91	6835.91
Singapore	1506.44	1463.91	1304.09	2085.38	2582.16	2651.4	3353.77	5470.16
Korea (Rep.)	1210.12	893.76	1141.37	2829.19	3194.09	3508.77	4563.85	4778.68
Japan	2355.32	1842.19	2146.45	2667.69	3005.96	3235.13	4016.1	4590.84
UK	2727.86	3167.92	2563.21	3234.35	3431.35	3566.2	3930.3	4171.67
France	737.04	640.81	844.26	1090.23	1380.7	1894.1	4113.3	4155.72
Belgium	3474.89	2870.05	2763.01	3975.92	4566.29	4588.92	4725.14	4139.92
Italy	744.05	723.58	704.79	1071.04	1322.77	1373.1	1855.63	2681.07
Russia	617.47	516.66	535.51	959.63	1265.38	1322.74	2022.19	2114.06
Canada	380.51	396.3	529.43	566.29	725.89	775.72	919.87	1514.21
Netherlands	445.45	437.53	466.47	535.56	758.94	791.46	1049.55	1156.49

Source: India Department of Commerce.

As India's economy continues to expand and Canada's relative detachment from this emerging economic powerhouse becomes more and more apparent, there has been greater attention directed at enhancing the flagging relationship. Minister for International Trade Stockwell Day's visit to India in early 2009 has resulted in high-level discussions and a commitment from both nations to engage in discussions regarding a free trade agreement.¹ This is a long-awaited development, since in the past Canada has been criticized for lacking a clear strategy regarding relations with India (Gupta 2006). For example, in 1998 Delvoie was optimistic that the increasing connections emerging as a result of India's economic growth would be the most likely way to overcome the relative indifference between Canada and India, [AUTHOR: I added "the" because otherwise the meaning is a little unclear – this way, the increasing connections already exist; if instead, you mean that Delvoie suggests increasing

1 See <http://www.international.gc.ca/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/india-inde.aspx> accessed March 10th 2009.

the connections as means to overcome difference, then you could move “the” to after increasing, i.e. “increasing the connections.” If you leave it without any “the,” the reader has to figure this out him/herself.. hope that makes sense!] but by 2002 observers were still of the opinion that “Indo-Canadian relations remain virtually stillborn” (Rubinoff 2002, 854). Part of the chill in relations between the two countries relates to Canada’s extended nuclear sanctions in the 1970s and again in the 1990s, as well as ongoing tension over terrorism linked to Sikh separatists in the past and Sri Lankan groups in the present (Delvoie 1998; Rubinoff 2002; Bolan 2005; Hyndman 2003). These diplomatic challenges have generally undermined relations between the two nations, in spite of the fact that Canada is home to a large Indian immigrant population, which should be an obvious and important resource in building trade links. Any exploration of this trade and immigration nexus in the case of the comparatively weak trade relationship that exists between Canada and India demands we examine the nature of Indian immigration to Canada.

3.2 Immigration

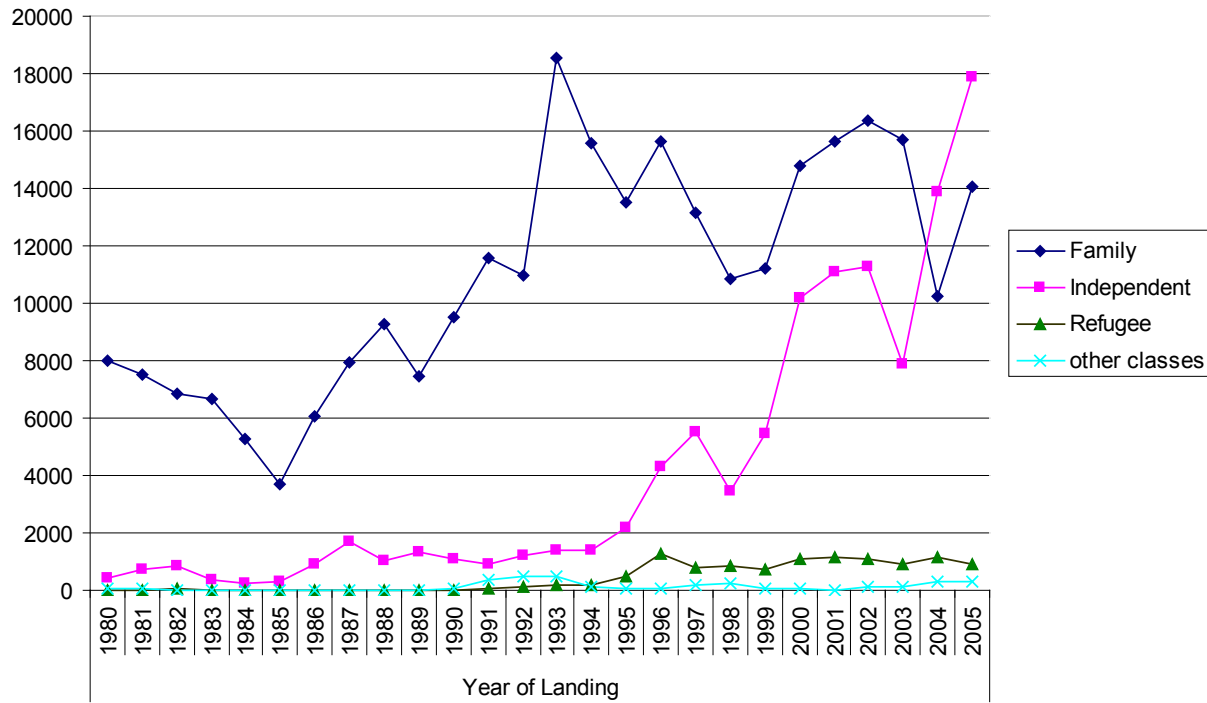
Attempting to effectively model the links between immigration and trade has confounded economists, but social scientists more generally seem content to explore these processes at an empirical level in order to reveal the dynamic interactions that can occur across a global economy marked by substantial mobility of humans, capital and ideas. In this attempt to reveal the connections between seemingly discrete flows, the nature of geographical difference is relevant at various scales. Certainly the world region and national scale has framed much macro analysis of trade and immigration, but increasingly, a finer grained meso and micro spatial analysis is necessary in order to explain

how specific immigrant cultural resources inform global economic processes of exchange. As Saxenian (2006, 94) explains with regard to Asia:

Institutions, languages and cultures vary significantly between the countries of the region, and in large countries like India and China there are important regional differences as well. The regions often have distinct dialects and even languages as well as differing cost structures, markets, infrastructures, regulations, and so forth, all of which require localization and, in some cases, different business models.

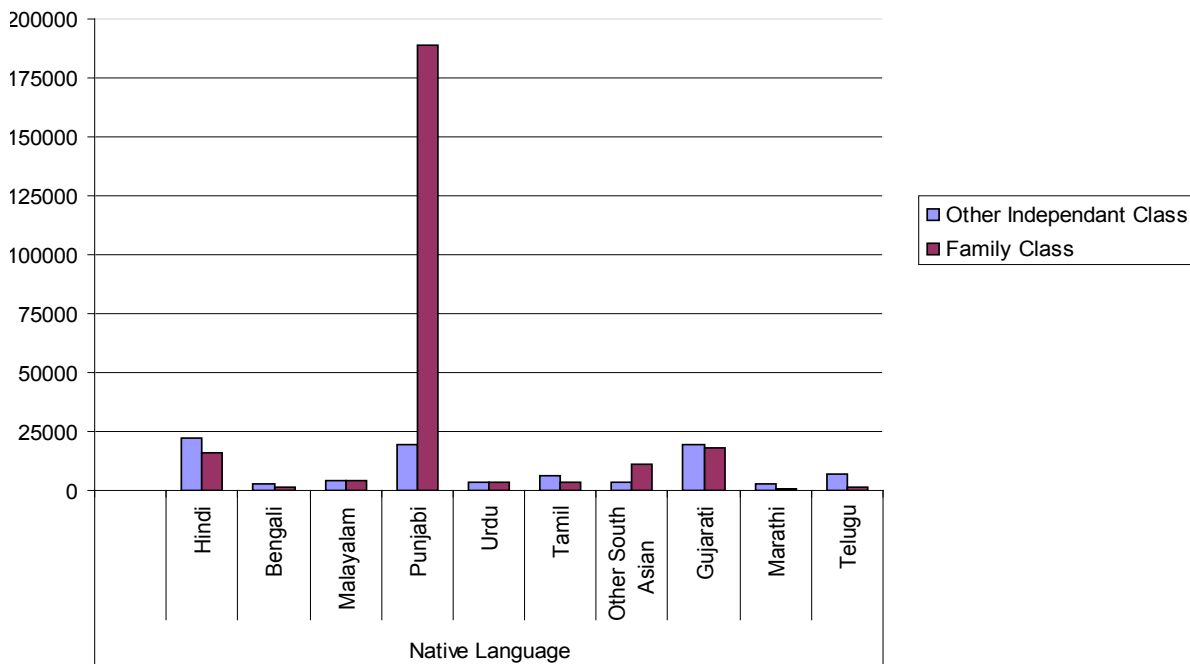
Such regionalism is also evident in the nature of migration circuits that have emerged. Historically, Indian immigration flows to Canada have been very regionally and culturally specific with the majority of immigrants being Jat Sikhs from the Doaba region of Punjab. The dominance of Punjabi immigration to Canada is the product of a combination of effective utilization of family and marriage migration routes (Walton-Roberts 2003; Mooney 2006) and effective political participation in Canada, both of which have reinforced network migration and resulted in the re-territorialization of specific regional identity (Tatla 1999; Walton-Roberts, forthcoming). Over the last few years, this has begun to change, as an examination of immigrant class and native language of Indian immigrants to Canada reveals (see Figures 1 through 3). Clearly if one is to understand the link (or lack thereof) between trade and immigration in the Canada-India context, critically assessing the spatial dimension of immigration is necessary.

FIGURE 1: INDIAN IMMIGRATION TO CANADA, 1980-2005. CIC LIDS DATA.*



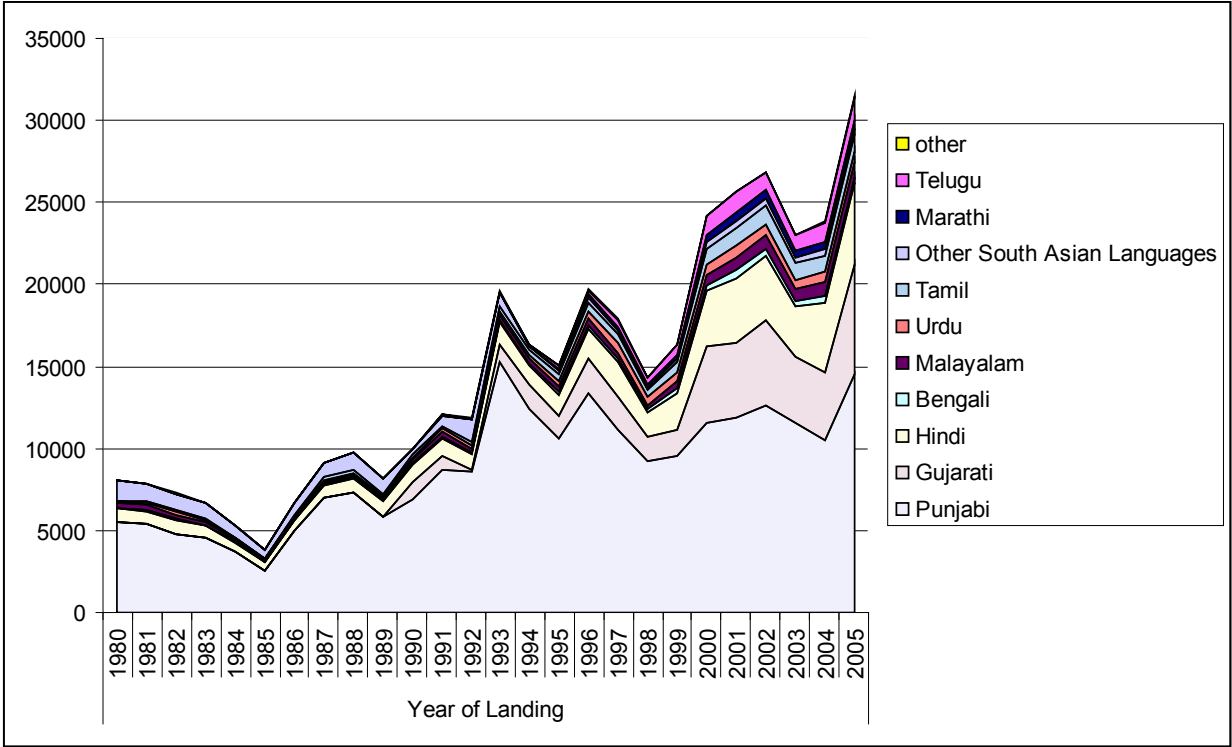
*Numbers are of people who registered India as their last country of permanent residence.

FIGURE 2: INDEPENDENT AND FAMILY CLASS IMMIGRANT LANDINGS FROM INDIA, 1980-2005, BY NATIVE LANGUAGE. CIC LIDS DATA.*



*only including counts above 2000.

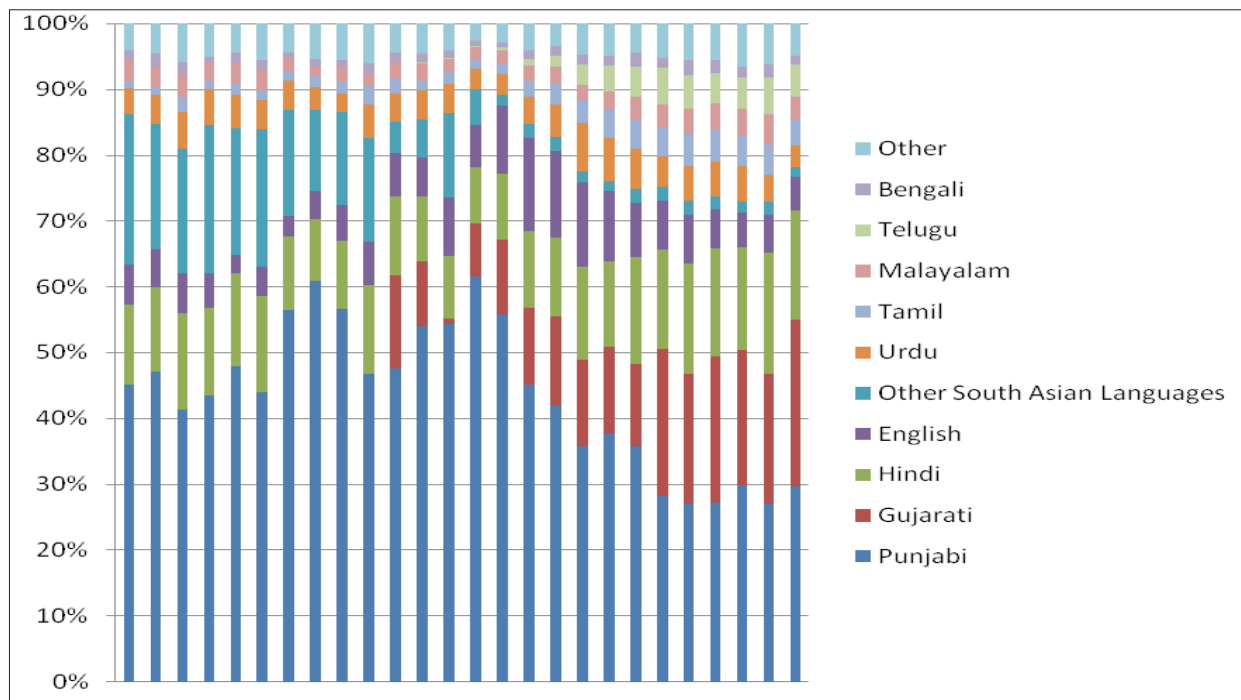
FIGURE 3: INDIAN IMMIGRANTS BY YEAR OF LANDING AND NATIVE LANGUAGE, 1980-2005. CIC LIDS DATA.



In the last few years, there has been a shift toward greater diversity in the linguistic origins of Indian immigrants to Canada, which can be read as a proxy for regional origin. This has occurred in tandem with an increase in the number of skilled immigrant landings from India. In 2004 the number of economic class immigrants from India slightly exceeded family class for the first time in two decades and since then, has rapidly increased (see Figure 1). Other language groups are overrepresented in the independent category compared to Punjabi (Figure 2), and the diversity of language groups increased in the early 2000s to the point where Punjabi native language was evident for only about half of all Indian immigrants, down from a high of 75 percent in the mid 1990s (Figure 3). The geography of immigrant settlement is also highly differentiated across Canada. The dominance of Punjabi immigration is intensified when we compare immigrant landings by province of settlement.

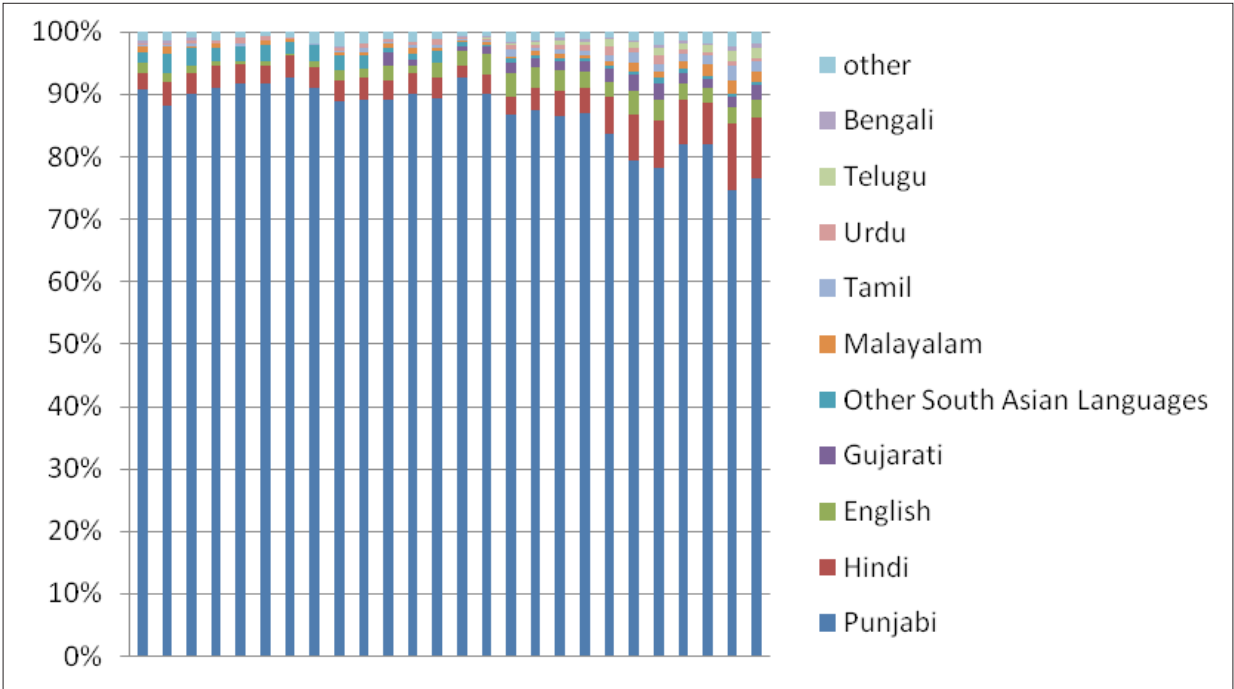
Figures 4 and 5 clearly illustrate the dominance of Punjabi as Indian immigrants' native language in BC. Here, Punjabi never drops below 70 percent of the total share of Indian immigrants' native language over the period 1980-2005. This compares sharply to Ontario, where in the 2000s Punjabi fell to below 30 percent of the total. How does this regional specificity correspond with relations between India and Canada, and what, if any, bearing might it have on trade relations?

FIGURE 4: PERCENTAGE SHARE OF NATIVE LANGUAGE OF IMMIGRANTS FROM INDIA TO ONTARIO, 1980-2005.



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada Landing Immigrant Data System (LIDS).

FIGURE 5: PERCENTAGE SHARE OF NATIVE LANGUAGES OF IMMIGRANTS FROM INDIA TO BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1980-2005.



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada Landing Immigrant Data System (LIDS).²

4. METHODOLOGY

Thirty qualitative, semi-structured interviews with government officials, corporate employees and ethnic Indian entrepreneurs involved in trade and trade promotion between India and Canada were conducted between May and August 2008 in the Fraser Valley and Lower Mainland, BC. The sample selection criteria were constructed through a combination of references from the research project’s community partner, the BC Regional Innovation Chair in Canada-India Business and Economic Development and snowball sampling. Aspects of the sample are shown below in Table 2. Just over one third of the sample are members of the Asia Pacific Trade council, suggesting the sample

² My thanks to Dan Hiebert for supplying the data on language and province of arrival.

has captured a population with an active interest in India-Canada business relations. The collective experience offered by the sample were seen as suggestive of their ability to a) assess how effectively various levels of the Canadian government currently utilize the skills of immigrants to enhance trading relations with India, and b) reflect on how the policy and regional context of trade and immigration informs this process.

TABLE 2: DETAILS OF THE BC INTERVIEW SAMPLE

Business/entrepreneurs (n=19)	
Agriculture	2
Manufacturing/pharmaceutical/biotech	3
Lumber, construction, transportation	3
Legal and business services	11
Government employees/politicians (n=6)	
Municipal	2
Provincial	2
Federal	2
Educational sector (n=5)	
Public sector	3
Private consultants	2
Total	30
Additional notes on sample:	
Asia Pacific Trade council/advisory committee members	11
# of Indian immigrant respondents	14
# of non-immigrant respondents of South Asian ethnicity	8

Each interview consisted of a series of eight general questions focused on the respondent's awareness and assessment of the immigration/trade link, their own experiences working with immigrant and/or state agents and organizations, and their assessment of various advantages immigrants might possess as well as barriers they may face in developing export trade with India. Three of the questions demanded forced ranked responses. The interview schedule is attached as Appendix 1. Interviews occurred across the Greater Vancouver Regional District between May and August 2008 and were con-

ducted and transcribed by research assistant Danielle Miller. The author later coded the interviews using the qualitative data software *Nvivo*, and assessed them for key themes. The paper begins with a review of the forced ranking answers.

5. FORCED RANKING QUESTIONS

a) From what labour market position can immigrants best enhance trade?

The first ranked question asked respondents to assess from what position Indian immigrants and people of Indian ethnicity could best contribute to improving trade relations with India. The purpose of this question was to assess whether problems in the integration of Indian immigrants into the formal labour market might influence Canada's ability to benefit from this potential human capital resource. As Table 3 shows, established Indian immigrant's labour market outcomes are similar to the Canadian-born, but for recent and very recent arrivals, the outcome is much poorer than their Canadian counterparts (Gilmore 2008). This is particularly troubling when we consider the fact that more recent immigration from India has been marked by a significant increase in skilled independent migration, as shown in Figure 1. At a time when India's economy is growing, the ineffective inclusion of increasingly skilled Indian immigrants into Canada's formal labour market suggests a loss not only for those individuals but also for the Canadian and Indian economy.

TABLE 3: LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS AGED 25–54 BY PERIOD OF LANDING

Canadian-born	4.9	87.4	83.1
Very recent Indian immigrants	9.6	76.3	69.0
Recent	6.1	80.9	75.9
Established	5.5	86.3	84.1

Source: extracted from Gilmore, 2008.

In order to assess the importance of this labour market context, the first ranking question asked respondents where they thought immigrants could best be positioned in order to assist in trade development. Responses to this question assist in determining how significant the labour market barriers for immigrants are seen to be with regard to building trade with India. The answers reveal a strong sense of similarity among respondent points of view, in that twenty-one respondents ranked option a) "as entrepreneurs directly involved in trade" either first or second. In this regard, self-starter immigrant entrepreneurs who create their own opportunities, regardless as to whether they resort to this activity by choice or through "blocked mobility" (Light and Bonacich 1988) are seen as the best option for building trade. From this perspective, the labour market integration of immigrants is perhaps not one of the most significant factors that would prevent trade development by immigrants on the ground, if those immigrants are self-starters creating their own opportunities. That option b) "corporate officers" ranked second-highest overall with nineteen first or second rankings does suggest that the incorporation of immigrants as corporate employees in larger mainstream companies that are conducting business in the South Asia region, or planning to enter it, is important. Following on from this, barriers to the labour market inclusion of Indian immigrants into positions that are on par with their previous educational qualifications (which in the case of very recent immigrants is higher due to the increase in independent immigration) can be interpreted as a significant obstacle to Canada's efforts to move into a renewed trading relationship with India.

TABLE 4: BASED ON YOUR OPINION, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS OFFERS INDIAN IMMIGRANTS AND CANADIANS OF INDIAN ORIGIN THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO BOOST TRADE WITH INDIA? (1 MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR, 5 THE LEAST)



One reason why the ineffective utilization of the pre-migration skills of very recent Indian immigrants is a potential barrier to enhancing Canadian trade with India is due to the complexity of the Indian business context. Entry into the Indian market is a challenge for Canadian companies, and Assanie and Woo (2004) have shown that a quality field presence in India is crucial for Canadian companies that desire to expand into the South Asian region:

If India is going to be part of your firm's global growth strategy, it will be important to establish and nurture a quality field presence. Ideally, this field presence should be headed by a country manager who should be a company employee reporting directly to senior management. The role of the India country manager cannot be over-emphasized. This person will be the company's face, eyes *and* ears in the country. Business relationships will be

made or broken depending on the abilities of the country manager to establish relationships with Indian clients. (Assanie and Woo 2004, 6).

Assanie and Woo highlight how valuable such employees can be, with reference to the success stories of Hummingbird, a Toronto-based information management company. Hummingbird's Asia-Pacific regional manager cites the number of Indian ethnic origin staff they employed as one reason for their successful entry into the Indian market. A similar scenario for XStream software is also recounted, where the Indian cultural linkages possessed by senior management were cited as important to the company's Indian entry strategy (Assanie and Woo 2004). In both of these Canadian companies, Indian ethnic origin staff were seen as vital to the success of their employer's expansion into India. While being someone of Indian ethnic heritage might be useful, however, it is not enough to guarantee business success. What is required is that such a person be familiar with the particular commercial sector as well as the business culture of both Canada and India. Gaining such expertise demands experience in the Canadian labour market beyond the type of survival jobs that many skilled Indian immigrants tend to be forced into during their initial settlement experiences (Bauder 2003).

The interview responses suggest the location of immigrants within the formal labour market is only one position from which to influence trade relations, as the first placing of "as entrepreneur..." reveals. Responses strongly support "corporate officer" as the second most positive labour market location from which to enhance India linkages, but respondents did not necessarily agree on the *prima facie* value of having Indian ethnic origin CEOs to facilitate entry into the Indian market:

You know . . . I think that there is almost, there is a fallacy in it, in thinking that just because someone is from India that they know the Indian market. (BC11)³

Such doubt regarding the actual usefulness of the link between the country of trade and country of immigrant origin was not widely vocalized by respondents. Rather the collective ranking to this question is well represented by the following quote that highlights the overall interaction envisioned between these labour market positions, regardless of the ethnicity of the person:

[It is] the entrepreneur who always has a better sense of the opportunity than anybody else. It's the entrepreneur who is directly involved . . . and that is absolutely number one. Without that, the governments will not see any movement . . . and the bureaucrats will not see any movement. So in my mind, it always starts with the entrepreneur. And then number 2 (b) is "as corporate officers directing corporate expansion into Indian markets" . . . it's a senior officer of now a larger entity that sees the market and is now giving direction to the junior managers to look at the Indian market . . . and in the corporate scene, it has to come from that level, it has to come from a high level of sponsorship. Otherwise the middle level managers really have no incentive to look at new markets unless the company decides that it's a strategic focus. And then number 3(d) "as members of trade associations focused on India" . . . now this is number 3 because for the first two, this becomes a network where these groups . . . the entrepreneur and the corporate officers can interact and learn from each other and share information . . . and so in my mind, the watering hole for the entrepreneur and the corporate officers . . . are trade associations. (BC2)

This overview of the interaction between different players in the trade system does not necessarily suggest there is any unique trait possessed by immigrants; it merely highlights the relative influence these occupational locations have in the process of transacting and creating international trade. The inter-

³ All interviewees are identified by a number and the prefix BC represents British Columbia.

view sample recorded their strongest agreement for this question by determining that “elected members of government” offered the least opportunity to boost trade, with twenty-five of the respondents ranking it fourth or fifth. The distorting role politics plays in the development of an India focus for Canada, particularly BC, was highlighted by a handful of respondents in particular reference to the regional dimensions of Indian immigration to Canada. All this hints to a great degree of frustration at the political dimensions of Canada’s trade relationship with India. Indeed, wider political relations have been seen as one of the reasons for Canada’s relative disinterest in India as a potential growth market in the past, and these issues will be explored later in the paper.

b) How are immigrants useful to trade creation?

TABLE 5: COULD YOU RATE HOW IMPORTANT YOU THINK THE FOLLOWING FACTORS ARE IN EXPLAINING IMMIGRANT’S VALUE TO TRADE DEVELOPMENT? (1 MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR, 5 THE LEAST)

a) Linguistic Skills	4.0	5	2	2	1	9	15
b) Cultural familiarity Indian society/culture	2.5	3	5	7	12	5	0
c) Knowledge of the Indian market	1.8	1	14	8	3	3	1
d) Family/personal connections	2.8	2	4	9	8	5	4
e) Risk-taking entrepreneurial skills	3.3	5	4	4	6	7	9

There was fairly strong agreement again on the second ranking question that considered the multiple factors often associated with immigrant/ethnic value with regard to building trade. "Knowledge of the Indian market" was ranked first or second by twenty of the sample. In a testament to the strength of the network age, "personal connections" were seen as the second most important factor with twelve selecting it as first or second. This was followed by "cultural familiarity," which in turn supports personal connections. Interestingly, the two least important factors were seen as linguistic skills and risk-taking entrepreneurial skills. The latter point contradicts the idea that immigrant entrepreneurs might possess or at least demonstrate some kind of innate risk-taking behaviour compared to Canadians, as pondered by the Conference Board of Canada (2007) and Mandel-Campbell (2007). This sentiment arises from the argument that Canada possesses a strong business conservatism, which is rooted in the inertia born of dependence on the geographical proximity of the US, and that immigrant entrepreneurs might not exhibit such inertia. The interview respondents did not see any automatic link between entrepreneurialism and immigrant status, as revealed in the last place ranking accorded to that option, with fourteen ranking it fourth or fifth. This result also supports Bauder's (2008) conclusion that the relationship between ethnicity and positive attitudes toward self-employment is weaker than current literature would suggest. When it comes to enhancing Canada's trade capacity with India, this finding suggests that rather than banking on some *innate* ethnic qualities immigrants might possess, greater success may be found in working to assure the equitable inclusion of immigrants into all aspects of the formal labour market.

Linguistic skills are often seen as central for the development of international trade (Dunlevy 2006), but India's English language usage led most

respondents to discount specific linguistic skills as important for trade, with twenty-three ranking it fourth or fifth. According to Light (2008), the growth of English as a dominant global second language replaces the traditional middle man minority position, which was long held by immigrant and minority arbitragers. There are great convergence pressures that make English a pan-Indian language of exchange, and this is certainly evidenced in the rise of the call centre in India and debates around linguistic hegemony that surround it (Sonntag 2009). Many of those interviewed argued that this linguistic hegemony was a positive factor in trying to build trade in India:

“Linguistic skills” . . . not important. You know English . . . you’re good. Because . . . if I leave Punjab and I go to Haryana, the next neighboring province/state, I don’t understand the majority of the stuff they speak. And . . . the Punjabi’s different, the Hindi’s different . . . Okay, if I go to Gujarat, I can’t understand it, if I go to Rajasthan, I can’t understand it . . . I go to Mumbai, I can’t understand it. The only common thread is English. It’s not even Hindi. . . because none of these people speak a consistent level of national Hindi. (BC16)

Some of the people might be old in, in the school business or different businesses, but that doesn’t mean that they can’t speak English. Because of the British rule, it, English has been . . . [the] business language in India. Plus English is a non-controversial language in India. For instance if you speak in Punjabi or in Hindi and if you go down South like in Kerala . . . to do business, they won’t like you. But [if] you speak English, they will accept you. (BC20)

Despite the apparent linguistic homogeneity suggested by widespread English usage, there is immense regional linguistic diversity across India, which suggests there is still a place for local expertise in the development of business and trade links. Language is not just a technical issue; it is also deeply cultural, and linguistic skills permit a deeper cultural understanding of the busi-

ness process. Respondents recognized that such linguistic skills can be valuable during negotiations:

I've gone into a number of meetings and . . . I may be the only person of Indian origin from . . . the Canadian side . . . I can probably sense things in the room, things that are not being said, things that I can recognize in the body language and things that I just know from a historical perspective where they're coming from, which another person . . . may not understand. So culturally, I think it's important that . . . you know those nuances. (BC24)

"Linguistic skills" are extremely helpful because, you know, you can immediately bond and connect and, and also understand . . . there's . . . the local way . . . there are so many different dialects and especially in India. So, it can be some sort of a handicap, unless you have good partners with you who . . . [are] experts in the market and, and people who have the language skills then . . . you're okay. (BC25)

It gives you an advantage if you know English and Gujarati and you're working in Gujarati-speaking area. There's not doubt about . . . you know, it gives you an advantage. Not only because . . . of local insight but . . . the subtleties of the language . . . I'm sure it gives some advantage. (BC19)

c) Barriers immigrants face in creating trade

TABLE 6: COULD YOU RANK THE FOLLOWING BARRIERS INDIAN IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR'S IN CANADA FACE IN DEVELOPING EXPORT TRADE WITH INDIA? (1 MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR, 5 THE LEAST)

a) Contradictions between trade and immigration policy (i.e. visa denial)	2.33	1	10	9	4	5	2
b) Poor financial assistance for immigrant entrepreneurs from Canadian banks	3.23	5	4	4	8	4	9
c) Weak connections between immigrant business and government trade agencies	2.57	3	7	6	9	4	3
d) Under-representation of immigrants as CEOs	3.67	4	1	3	5	12	8
e) General lack of Canadian interest in entering the Indian market	2.57	2	7	8	4	3	6

The third ranking question examined the greatest barriers to the development of trade faced by Indian immigrants and ethnic entrepreneurs, and revealed the continued concern some people have with visa issuance. The problem of gaining visitor visas for business travelers from India has been highlighted before (Walton-Roberts, forthcoming; Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada 2004), and in this case, nineteen out of thirty ranked this problem either first or second in importance. Interview responses acknowledge the inherent conflict they saw as evident in relations between the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), which respondents identified with humour but also a great sense of annoyance and irritation:

Yes (*laughter*). They don't really talk to [each other], they are two different ministries right . . . And, I mean, even though they are housed together . . . They have different mandates, different Ministers, different objectives . . . the [immigration] officer has . . . a lot of discretion and . . . it's really about proving to the officer that you're not a flight risk . . . So it's your job to convince me that you're not [but] I already think that you are . . . So that's a mindset that needs to change . . . Typically our embassies, our immigration is about keeping people out . . . we have this mindset that comes from, I don't know, from the sixties or fifties . . . where we think that everybody wants to move to Canada, and it's not the case (*laughter*). (BC11)

If you want to have a healthy trading relationship with a . . . with a country, in my view . . . it's not just about the, the flow of goods. It's about the flow of people. I don't know about you, but if I wanted to come to visit a country and I went to apply and that country said, "no, you're not welcome," I wouldn't . . . have a very good feeling about that country. That happens to . . . Indian citizens by the hundreds every day . . . across the socio-economic spectrum. It happens to people who are in a position to invest millions of dollars here. And they're told "no, you can't have a visa to come here." So, until we come to grips with that, and . . . address that, I think we are going to continue [to] lose out. (BC14)

It's the immigration who report directly to the Minister of immigration here. And so then they don't take kindly to any input from the Consulate side. (BC21)

They get [a] warm reception from all the trade officials but when they go to apply for visitors . . . visa or business/traveling visa, the immigration people in our Canadian system, really have no sense of who's who and . . . basically just treat everybody with a lot of suspicion. (BC6)

I mean, that's number one (*laughter*). I mean, even if it's not number one, everybody insists on making that number one because every sort of association, meeting . . . that problem always comes forward. (BC5)

Ya, that's a huge issue. There's a lot of that . . . for right reasons and wrong reasons. (BC9)

It's a competitive market . . . Australia will welcome them with open arms, the UK will welcome them with open arms. If we're not as competitive, we won't make it. When I was in India, they were talking about this problem with visas. And . . . they used the analogy of the difference between Canada and Australia and saying that if there were ten applicants for visa, Canada would deny nine and consider one . . . Australia would open up fifteen!
(BC13)

There are several factors these observations touch upon, from the idea of the dated institutional attitude that may be possessed by CIC officers, to the recognition that immigration is now a globally competitive arena where Canada will "lose out" to other immigrant-receiving nations who appear to be more welcoming to Indians. But, while the statements above clearly demonstrate the immense dissatisfaction many felt with respect to the visa issuance problems, there was some disagreement within the sample, as seven people placed this problem fourth or fifth:

I suppose if there's [trade] missions trying to come here, there could be difficulties but I think business missions typically don't have problems with visas. So I don't see that as being a real issue. (BC10)

I've never heard . . . of a legitimate business person who said I can't get a visa. (BC12)

I personally think, and I, you know, disagree with my colleagues on this, I personally think that this visa issue is, is overblown. (BC18)

This . . . "contradictions . . . trade and visas," this is all useless. I don't think this applies. (BC8)

And most of the applications that get denied are . . . faulty of some sort or there are some mistakes in them. And . . . once that's changed up, you'll probably see some of the visa restrictions ease up hopefully. (BC22)

Well, it isn't [a problem] but for them it is because they have a population there that gives wrong information . . . and then they come here, pretending to be someone they're not and then you can't find them after that. (BC4)

Some of these contrarian responses speak to the challenges CIC faces from the heavily regionalized immigrant relationship Canada has with India. References to "a population that gives wrong information" and "faulty" applications, even "right and wrong reasons" arguably reflects the immense pressure CIC faces from network-driven immigration from Punjab. Stories about problems with the veracity of documents, issues of various forms of fraudulent applications—whether visitor, student, spousal or business visa applications—have consistently appeared in Indian newspapers. CIC officers have been forced to find ingenious ways to overcome or manage the immensely inventive schemes emerging in the Punjab region to facilitate overseas migration (for example, see Bharti 2008). In Punjab the term *kabootarbaazi* or "pigeon flying" has been used to describe the process of securing fraudulent visas to send people overseas. The trade is suspected to involve genuine political, cultural, trade and sporting missions that include individuals intent on remaining overseas. The business is estimated to be worth over C\$25 million annually in Punjab alone (Singh 2003). One of the first things to point out about this practice is that it is indeed a form of trade, which together with the explosion of legitimate transnational immigration consultants operated by Indo-Canadians proves the maxim that increased immigration does lead to increased trade between source and destination country. On the other hand, we can see how the less legitimate dimension of this trade in human mobility can reinforce an institutional mindset borne of suspicion in the case of the Delhi CIC office. When this regional frustration has been expressed publicly by immigration officials with visiting missions (Bailey and Gandhi 2007), it has been castigated

in the press as racial bias, as opposed to the more complex *regional* bias it actually represents. This context can act as an impediment to genuine trade development and suggests that rather than the regional advantage Saxenian (2006) finds in the case of Indian immigrants and the Silicon Valley, the idea of regional *disadvantage* is taking hold with some officials in the context of Indian immigration to Canada. This disadvantage is partly due to the density of networks that overpower the ability of the state to control or manage human flows, and the subsequent institutional mind-set of persistent suspicion that has emerged from this intersection contributes to some of the limitations seen occurring when it comes to legitimate Indian business groups.

The second most significant barrier to trade cited after visa issuance was general government disinterest in building trade with India. Canada's geographical proximity to the US and the nation's dependence on trade with the world's largest economy has limited efforts to seek market share in other regions. Despite calls for greater trade diversification, over 80 percent of Canada's exports enter the US market, and this gravitational pull is extremely hard to resist:

DFAIT's current policy is really clear. You know, United States, United States, United States. (BC19)

I'm saying that we've got to find new markets, we've got to go in and find out why we're losing market share, and what do we have to do to gain that share . . . and nobody seems to be putting any effort into it . . . they're just not. And the committees that are formed are going and trying to do the same thing over and over again . . . which doesn't make any sense. (BC4)

This lack of interest could not be overcome with the usual practice of launching a trade mission. Trade missions, on the contrary, were seen as highly po-

liticized photo opportunities that did not necessarily lead to any sustained engagement.

There's a sense amongst educators, business people, if you have a trade mission, once you're home from the trade mission . . . you know, your work is done when, in fact, that's when your work begins . . . you don't just show up to India and pretend that anybody is going to be interested in meeting you because . . . they have . . . mission fatigue. (BC18)

Perhaps one of the more surprising findings with regard to barriers to trade is with regard to the question about the under-representation of immigrant CEOs. When we consider the poor labour market integration of recent Indian immigrants as discussed earlier, the lack of Indian immigrant CEOs is ranked fairly low by the sample, with twenty people ranking it fourth or fifth place. As one respondent stated:

"Under-representation of Indian immigrants as CEOs," actually I don't think that is a problem . . . I see lots of people in pretty senior places who are Indian so . . . I'm gonna put that as five right off the bat because that's not been my experience. (BC13)

It is possible that the visible presence of Indian immigrants in senior positions reflects the successful performance of established Indian immigrants in the Canadian labour market, as Gilmore's (2008) work indicates in Table 3. Certainly the sample did not acknowledge the lack of Indian origin CEOs as a barrier. In fact, the whole idea that Indian-origin CEOs would be valuable to companies wishing to expand into India was even queried by some:

"Under-representation of Indian immigrants as CEOs in Canadian companies" . . . you know what? That's not important. That's really not . . . Indian immigrants, if they were CEOs and if they were unnecessarily driving the strategy towards India when it's not ready, that's not right too. (BC16)

The rational economics of the market was also seen to trump the notion that the cultural capital of Indian-origin CEOs is somehow innately good when it comes to entering the Indian market:

Last is “under-representation of Indian immigrants as CEOs in Canadian corporations”. . . that really has nothing to do with it, in my view . . . emotionally, yes, someone may sit down and listen to somebody [because he/she is of Indian origin] . . . but at the end of the day, I’m only going to do it if it makes good business sense. (BC2)

But, the cultural capital a person of Indian background could offer to the process of expansion was articulated by one respondent who clearly represented how cultural knowledge of the system might ease the frustration many people feel in their efforts to enter the Indian market:

I think placing an Indian person, a person of Indian origin over there [India] would benefit them simply because they understand the culture and they understand why something didn’t happen. (BC9)

Clearly there is a balance to factoring in the importance of cultural background when making market assessments, but in difficult markets like India, entry takes commitment, and personal commitment born of national pride and affiliation was identified as a powerful motivating factor in Saxenian’s (2006) analysis of cross-border development of the Indian IT industry. In this study, the US-trained Indian engineers placed in India by US companies played a fundamental role in initiating cross-border linkages between Indian and US-based IT companies, in the face of immense regulatory barriers. Saxenian identifies how some IT professionals’ focus was on the development of India as much as it was to see their companies succeed, and she argues that “many other expatriate Indians also actively pursued corporate initiatives in India, combining a personal commitment to India with bottom-line efforts to improve business efficiency” (283). Undoubtedly, the Canadian context differs

from the US in the geography and nature of migration flows. In the US, the community Saxonian came to see as the bridging population between India and the US IT sector were mostly international students who converted their status after their studies. This brings us back to the idea of the specific territoriality of immigration flows and the potential for regional disadvantage this might be seen to produce. As such, our attention is drawn to the territorial specificities of diaspora and the active processes that reinforce this linkage over time and space.

6. REGIONAL (DIS)ADVANTAGE

In 20 percent of the interview responses, the regional dimension of the Indian immigrant population was specifically highlighted as having some bearing on the trade and immigration nexus, with the majority seeing it as a limiting factor. The active spatial reproduction of Punjab in Canada and the way this influenced the relations Canada constructs with India was indicated:

When people come from other areas of India to Canada, not from Punjab, and they come to Abbotsford . . . they say things like I feel like I'm in the Punjab. (BC13)

This immigrant place-making and the remaking of the landscape by immigrants from Punjab was seen by some as a limiting factor when it comes to trying to establish economic links with Indian regions outside of Punjab:

To the people from Punjab in Canada or BC, there's no other place in India *but* Punjab. They've lived all their life [there], they come here, go back, they get off in Delhi, get a car or train back to Punjab . . . To them, Punjab *is* India . . . that's why I'm saying . . . "cultural familiarity with and understanding of Indian society and economy" is very little from the people here, they just relate to their own area and not India as a whole. (BC4)

This disadvantage was also regionalized with respects to Canada:

What is our strategy in India? There's not one. So you have groups . . . so for example in BC, we would have a Punjab-based idea of marketing in India rather than . . . going to Delhi or Mumbai where all the money is. Why are we doing that? Simply because our elected officials are of Punjabi [origin] largely; in Toronto you have a much more focused and . . . ambitious program because you have...different Indian Diaspora having different relationships. (BC15)

Some respondents explained the perceived limitations they see in this migratory flow in terms of immigration category, i.e., the dominance of family or network migration, which in turn was constructed as non-entrepreneurial:

Most of the people that come to this country come on a family reunification . . . So . . . it's, it's, you know, it's your aunt, it's my uncle, it's my cousin . . . regular people with, you know, degrees in medicine, or arts, or this or that . . . not necessarily entrepreneurs, right. (BC11)

Most of the people here . . . are mostly labourers . . . like Punjab is a farming community, full of villages and they do farming so they go to school for a few years and then they start working . . . they don't finish their schooling. There's more and more schooling done now, but in the earlier days, a lot of the people came here and get [got] labour jobs, they don't have a lot of education . . . (BC4)

Just as there are stereotypes about the conservative nature of Canada business, immigrants in general were cast as being averse to risk in their entrepreneurial activities:

There's a saying in India that "it's always good to hop . . . on a bus . . . that's in... motion" so when you do a convenience store, you know that you are going to get a certain base level of income. And that's what a lot of immigrants do, it's not like . . . they're entrepreneurial or anything. (BC12)

This tight regional immigration bias and how it has informed immigration policy has resulted in material changes in the practices of educational consultants

interested in developing ties with India. One consultant spoke of actively diversifying their potential market spatially in order to overcome the regulatory barriers this network migration had created and spoke about reaching out to other parts of India in order to secure student visas:

They [international education programs] are growing quickly, so rather than concentrating on an area like the Punjab, where chances of getting a visa are slim to none, we're dealing with groups in Mumbai, Delhi . . . where there's more opportunity. (BC15)

Respondents were well aware of the political implications of decades of network migration from Punjab. One important area of success for Indian immigrants in Canada, particularly those from Punjab, has been political representation and active citizenship (Hunter and Wood 2000). This political context was seen as influential in making trade with India an issue of apparent importance to some politicians:

Nothing much is happening, it's all talk . . . the politicians are showing an interest and are moving in this direction . . . because of the pressure on them from the Indian community. (BC2)

While this political inclusion model indicates a successful process of integration and structural multiculturalism, some respondents found the highly politicized nature of the Punjabi community and the deeply translocal relationship between Canada and Punjab to be a disadvantage when it came to developing effective trade networks with India more broadly:

Now Punjab knows only Punjab. See, that's the problem. Okay, when we took a delegation, or joined a delegation with the Premier Gordon Campbell . . . all the officials, government officials, who were traveling with us or . . . with the Premier's [entourage] . . . practically thought [of] India as Punjab. (BC5)

At the end of the day . . . any politician . . . they need votes. For some reason . . . I don't know why, they think going to Punjab is going to get them votes. Every politician goes there . . . Mike DeJong . . . the Premier . . . Prime Minister . . . I don't know what it is. Your population base is here, this is where you [are] going to get the votes, you need to serve the community here . . . how [does] going to Punjab actually give you votes? . . . I, I really don't understand that. (BC16)

I think that there's a lot of politics involved and . . . the problem is that for certain business owners, like for instance, myself . . . if you're not in the political loop, you're not really involved in any of these delegations and . . . that's a problem. (BC9)

Government has gone three or four times [to India] . . . and they go there and they go to the villages . . . they go to all the kinds of stuff, and all they want to do is convince the community here they're interested in India to get . . . election votes. They don't do anything . . . They go around . . . do this, do that, get photo opportunities . . . everything's paid for by the Canadian taxpayer, and they come back and say "whoa, there's huge opportunities." *Where's the money?* . . . where's the programs? None. (BC4)

Real business people . . . are not going to India, they're going to markets within India. . . you know, there's this corridor between Bangalore and Bombay . . . where we should be manufacturing, where we should be selling things . . . So I think good business people are the ones who should lead the way. And if you, if you let government tell you where to go . . . you know, every government in, in this province is now going to have to get elected on the backs of the Punjabi vote, and so they'll say "well of course you have to go to the Punjab . . . eight of your MLAs are Punjabi and from the Fraser Valley so that's why you're here." (BC18)

These comments indicate the degree to which Canada's relations with India are seen as highly regionalized, and this geography has been reinforced by both network migration and a political process that recognizes the importance

of this region of India in the domestic Canadian political context. In this regard, Canadian politics has become incredibly translocal, while Canada's trade relationship has failed to become adequately globalized. The frustration some of the respondents expressed at this situation is clearly exposed. Rather than seeing a measured awareness of the economic necessity of enhanced trade with India, some respondents see mere lip service being paid in order to secure domestic access to political power. In this regard, immigration intersections are seen to serve the democratic political process, as opposed to building trade, as if this were a zero sum game. However, there are ways in which these processes can intersect to enhance political, cultural and economic exchanges generally.

7. POSSIBLE ROUTES FORWARD

The geography of immigration from India to Canada has clearly embedded BC into the Punjab consciousness. The India-Canada case highlights how immigration-trade links are not about aggregate numbers or macro spatial links, but are instead reflective of very specific socio-spatial network formations. Saxenian's work, for example, focuses on very specific communities of internationally trained graduates. In effect, her new Argonauts represent a highly selective community that was positioned into a unique context in Silicon Valley. Canada arguably does not possess similar resources, but there are some useful points that can be offered in relation to the specific context of the immigration links that do exist.

7.1 Education

Education is perhaps the most promising field within which Canada can enhance its connections with India, but it is also by comparison the most weakly organized. Commentators argue that the structural impediments of a fractured federal/provincial education system have limited Canada's ability to develop a coordinated approach to educational opportunities in India, and indeed Canada, with "less than 3% of market share, has nowhere to go but up" (Scherf and Macpherson 2008, 3). Indeed, when compared to Australia, where international education is the fourth largest export (Australian Government 2005), Canada's position is incredibly lackluster. For example, while Australia has over eighty thousand Indian tertiary students (Hawthorne, 2009), Canada issues only twenty-five hundred visas a year to Indian students (Scherf and Macpherson 2008). India's demographic future entails a burgeoning number of young adults coming from a growing middle class who face a seriously undeveloped and strained domestic higher education sector. This context is not lost on countries competing for international students, such as the US, Australia, New Zealand and the UK, who have all increased their share of the international student market (Scherf and Macpherson, 2008).

There has been a call for greater effort to be directed to the coordination of resources in order to enhance academic mobility between the two nations within a reciprocal educational partnership development model. Such a model would move beyond the "low investment– high return" approach to higher education student recruitment that India has been rightly suspicious of (Scherf and Macpherson 2008; Martin and Touhey 2008). The challenge of creating greater integrity within Canada's international educational strategy is just one part of the puzzle, since policy issues with regard to student status also

place Canada in a poor light compared to other nations, particularly Australia. Australian researchers are able to track the number of onshore (trained in Australia) and offshore (trained overseas at Australian institutions) students taking up Australian permanent residence (PR). This is a fairly simple process that is virtually guaranteed if the student meets certain criteria, and a decision in each case is usually rendered within three weeks of application (Hawthorne 2009; Guo 2009). Compared to Canada's recent Canadian Experience Class, the Australian model is much more streamlined and gives people the option to convert their PR status to citizenship after just two years of residence.

Canadians are well aware of the growing potential of the international education market, and the Canadian trade commissioner in Punjab commented on the increased number of educational professionals he sees visiting India:

Of course, one sector everyone looks up to Canada in is education. Education, international exchange, curriculum development, offshore campuses set up here . . . I see a lot of links there, especially around Chandigarh, you know we have visits every week coming from Canada in this area. Education is a basic platform, so we are trying to get this platform and follow the Canadian model . . . I see that as a growing sector . . . (Interview, Chandigarh, November 2008)

In discussions with Canadian entrepreneurs and officials about education, despite the deep connection between Canada and northern India, the comparison between Canada and Australia was offered as evidence of the superior Australian approach to Indian relations:

A lot of people in India have education from . . . everywhere. We met several people who have a degree from the UK, one from the US, maybe one from Australia . . . Australia has a very heavily targeted Indian population. You can't really go anywhere without seeing something about Australia when you're in India . . . they're way ahead of us. (BC13)

Take education for an example . . . the, the Australians have managed to coordinate themselves better than we have as a country. (BC14)

Part of the inadequacy of British Columbia's international education model in particular was the targeting of English language training, which was seen as inappropriate for India's needs:

What do you do when your whole education industry does not have something of value that they can offer to India? Their programs are built around . . . and I'm just talking elementary level, not postsecondary . . . they're built around ESL. Okay, English as a Second Language. They don't need English. India doesn't need English. (BC16)

Beyond the transfer of students, Canada's intellectual relationship with India was also seen as poorly developed with regard to building dynamic innovative knowledge partnerships:

You got things like the Shastri Foundation and things like that are, that don't do anything . . . you know, they give money to . . . Indian lecturers read Margaret Atwood. You know that's not, that's not the future . . . of our trade with India . . . helping them understand Canadian literature. (BC18)

In such a competitive environment, educational affiliations and exchanges provide important routes of connection between markets and present valuable service exports that Canadian schools, colleges and universities are already exploring. An explicit focus on the greater internationalization of programs in BC and enhanced linkages with BC-based institutions, many of which are already evident, is clearly something parts of Canada are well positioned to exploit. The recruitment of students from India is an area that emerged in the interviews as problematic. Saxenian's new Argonauts were originally international students, and Florida calls international students the "canaries of the coal mine," since he sees their entry into hi-tech knowledge markets as vital

to national economic competitiveness. A number of the interview respondents felt Canada's rejection rate for international students from India was too high. Further analysis of this situation will reveal if the problem is the process or the pool of applicants. Regardless, the comparison to Australia does suggest Canada's system might need to be better tuned in order to capture potential "Argonauts," and if the current pool of applicants is not seen as offering the potential needed, then more effective marketing of Canadian universities overseas needs to be achieved. This is a challenge under the current model of international student recruitment (Bond et al. 2007). Recent reports agree that there is a need to renew Canada's educational links with India (Scherf and Macpherson 2008). The deficiency in educational trade between Canada and India is due not to the regional aspect of the immigration networks between the two nations but rather, to structural constraints and barriers in Canada's higher education sector that are borne of federal-provincial splits and disagreements. Solving this conundrum is a significant challenge, and any administrative hang-ups related to how entrenched migratory channels between Punjab and Canada might distort the visa application process merely adds a further layer to this deeper dysfunction.

7.2 Accept and invest in the Punjab "comparative advantage"

As much as some boosters of trade with India would hope for greater regional diversification in the type of network formations that occur, the "comparative advantage" of a Punjab link can also yield some benefits for Canadian goods and service exports. There are two directions that can be mobilized if Canada wants to increase its Indian exposure via this route. The first is to accept the dominant networks already established with Punjab and seriously examine how more officially mandated connections could enhance the economic

value of such links. This connection has been occurring organically within BC with the development of the BC Regional Innovation Chair in Canada-India Business and Economic Development, at the University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford. The \$2.5 million endowed position was jointly funded by the BC government and the local business community, a community comprised of a large number of immigrants originally from Punjab. In this regard, the immigrant community is already supporting advancements in Canada-India trade links, as opposed to being the barrier to greater trade that some respondents have suggested this regional group may be. The BC government is also focusing on this regional strength with the creation of an investment and skills liaison in-market representative in Punjab (BC Government News release 2009). In light of this local action to enhance linkages, a valid question to ask is how institutional federal capacity might enhance this nexus. Certainly, the federal government has already invested in the Punjab region with the presence of a consulate office in Chandigarh, but the value of this move was seen as highly controversial at the time due to charges of political influence resulting from the dense network migration processes already in place in the region (Szonyi 2003). An alternative or parallel strategy might compensate for the regional bias in immigration by placing greater emphasis on the rest of India, especially the IT centers in the south. This appears to be happening, and by April 2009, there will be eight Canadian trade commissioner services (TCS) across India.⁴ This will exceed Australia's current presence of six offices. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has also publicly stated the need to expand out from the traditional focus on northern India (Vaidyanath 2008).

⁴ An eighth TCS is planned to be opened in Ahmedabad Gujarat in April 2009, see <http://www.international.gc.ca/canadexport/articles/90204b.aspx>.

An area that has already been earmarked by the federal government as a promising trade avenue to exploit with India is the agriculture and agri-food sector.⁵ Despite the recent fanfare about the new India of software development and IT, the reality is that India is a nation where 60 percent of the population depends on the rural economy. The agricultural sector in India has been deemed to be “in crisis”: increases in production have stagnated, basic infrastructure in rural areas from roads to food storage facilities are lacking, and though Indian and international conglomerates have been making inroads into the agricultural sector, government constraints in regards to exports and agricultural sales and marketing act as barriers to improving efficiency in both production and trade opportunities (Asia Pacific Bulletin 2006). The plight of farmers has also long been of concern since indebtedness, suicides, and land consolidation are all constant challenges, especially in Punjab, which rather than being solved by the market, are more aptly a reflection of capitalist market influence (Wilson 2008). While this is not the “Shining India” of the IT sector, recent agricultural production increases and the governments’ introduction of a National Rural Employment Guarantee Program has led to some positive outlooks. In response to this, as well as the contraction of urban middle class consumption due to the global economic slowdown, corporations are turning to rural markets in order to boost sales. The economic consequences of any improvements in the standard of living for those engaged in rural livelihoods do suggest an important focus for Canada, considering already preexisting trade strengths. Improvements in agricultural production and distribution, product diversification, and substitution could all create openings for companies to enter the field, either to develop local capacity or to import produce. This holds some promise for all of Western Canada with regard to its

⁵ See <http://atn-riae.agr.ca/asia/4574-eng.htm>.

basic oilseed and pulse crops, but in the case of British Columbia, diversification into dried fruits and berries does offer some possibilities if supported effectively, and many entrepreneurs in this region have already been exploring these opportunities. The deep structural problems in Punjab agriculture will not be overcome through trade alone—indeed, they may be exacerbated by it. However, a willingness to develop environmentally sustainable solutions to production and distribution challenges through joint ventures and technology transfer in agricultural and environmental technology may facilitate development opportunities that positively impact the majority of India's population while also providing a competitive edge to Canadian companies seeking entry into the Indian market. Such negotiations could draw upon the long established Canadian links that already exist in northern India.

8. CONCLUSION

We live in a time when the convergence between human mobility and economic growth is becoming more and more closely interwoven. Alongside the structural violence of exploitation of cheap migrant labour, there are competitive immigration regimes emerging for skilled professionals and international students. What is clear is that when it comes to engaging with India through the use of immigrant "ethnic surplus value," Canada's relative failures are due not only to the regional specificity of immigration but also to the structural pressures of economic geography (proximity to the US), political geography (the failed federalism apparent in the organization of higher education), and the conflicting processes of economic and political practice. Democratic processes have also become immensely translocal as Canadian politicians seek electoral support via the extra-territorial constituencies in Punjab. All of this

suggests that Canada's political economy is already well linked into India via immigration, but just not in quite the way economists imagine it.

The perceptions of critical social scientists also seem to miss the mark with regard to trade and immigration links. While the focus on the links between immigration and trade can be criticized for fetishizing ethnicity, interviews for this study suggested that governments are in fact not terribly good at co-opting this immigrant value. This certainly appears to be changing as the current government voices its recognition of the need to expand Canada's presence throughout all parts of India, enhance the trade relationship, and encourage Canadians of South Asian background to become more involved in Ottawa (Vaidyanath 2008).

These findings also highlight the importance of understanding the specificity of immigrant translocal networks. The classed, religious, regional and gendered aspects of immigration are influential in the kinds of networks created and how those networks are envisioned and utilized, or not, by state officials. Indian immigrants to Canada have created powerful networks, but not all of them meet the narrow vision of a trade network, at least not one that can be easily measured and registered in the balance of trade statistics on a quarterly basis. On the other hand, the discursive power of negative portrayals of immigrant networks between Canada and Punjab do have the very real potential to limit ongoing connections that could lead to development for both India and Canada when they are used to derail and deny opportunity, such as in the case of international student mobility and educational linkages. There is an important balancing act underway in Canadian statecraft between maintaining the security and integrity of the border whilst also striving for a competitive international position with regard to trade and economic development. In the case of India, this has been a complicated relationship to manage.

The power of immigrants to contribute to economic development is clearly evident as we move into a new round of “the war” for talent. Saxenian’s work in this regard is highly specific to a US context where legislative and regional economic contexts encouraged and utilized immigrants. The US has an aggressive student recruitment process and a straightforward, competitive means of converting status via the H1B process. With these tools, the US has had great success incorporating skilled immigrants into the economy in a timely way. In the case of Canada, what we are witnessing is a shift to a greater skilled, more linguistically diverse Indian immigrant population. While this may satisfy those who feel the regional bias evident in Indian immigration has skewed Canada’s relationship with this emerging powerhouse, Canada will still squander this “ethnic surplus value” if skilled Indian immigrants are not incorporated into the formal labour market more effectively. Interview respondents highlighted the importance of competency in particular sectors, and this suggests you cannot bank on immigrants transforming Canadian trade with India if they cannot transform Canadian businesses as well.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Please could you explain how your work relates to export trade and trade development with India?
2. Do you think Canada's trade relationship with India has changed over the last decade, and if so, how?
3. Based on your opinion, which of the following positions offers Indian immigrants and Canadians of Indian origin the best opportunity to boost trade with India? (Rank 1 being most important, 5 being least important). Can you also explain your ranking?
 - a. As entrepreneurs directly involved in export trade
 - b. As corporate officers directing corporate expansion into Indian markets
 - c. As government bureaucrats assisting in trade development with India
 - d. As members of trade associations focused on India
 - e. As elected members of government
4. Could you rate how important you think the following factors are in explaining immigrant's value to trade development? (1 being most important, 5 being least important) Can you also explain your ranking?
 - a. Linguistic skills
 - b. Cultural familiarity with and understanding of Indian society and economy
 - c. Knowledge of the Indian market
 - d. Family/personal global connections
 - e. Risk taking entrepreneurial skills shaped by their cultural/immigrant background.
5. Could you rate the following barriers Indian immigrant entrepreneurs in Canada face in developing export trade with India? (1 being most important, 5 being least important) Can you also explain your ranking?
 - a. Contradictions between trade and immigration policy (for example visas being

- denied to visiting business people from India).
- b. Poor financial assistance for immigrant entrepreneurs from Canadian banks
 - c. Weak connections between immigrant businesses and government trade agencies.
 - d. Under representation of Indian immigrants as CEOs in Canadian corporations
 - e. General government/ business community's lack of interest in entering the Indian market (which might pose a problem in finding partners and funding).
6. To the best of your knowledge in what ways, if any, does the BC and Canadian Government utilize the skills of Indian immigrants to enhance trade with India?
7. Can you identify any other practices/policies evident in Canada that either enhance or curtail the ability of immigrants to enhance trade opportunities?
8. Do you think the provincial and national government trade agencies should do more to utilize the skills of Indian immigrants and people of Indian origin?