



Regional Policy for Skilled Migration in Australia and Canada

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This paper analyses the recent Australian and Canadian regional policies for skilled and business migration. First, it briefly discusses the common population and socioeconomic trends that are behind these policies in both countries such as past immigrants' concentration in the largest cities, concerns related to the population size and the demographic composition of the Australian and Canadian jurisdictions as well as skill shortages outside the largest cities. The policies in both countries have similar objectives of improving the dispersal of migrants, supporting population growth, responding to skill shortages and pursuing economic development by means of business migration. Second, the paper deals with the policies' nature and practice. Although the policies seem to be addressing their objectives with similar measures, the paper shows that the Australian state/territory and the Canadian provincial responses differ partially. Factors underpinning these differences are discussed. The differences notwithstanding, it is concluded that the design of these policies seem potentially capable of addressing their population and economic objectives. This paper also argues that the governments are highly active in their regional migration policies. Evaluation of the actual policies' outcomes shows that they have not yet succeeded in addressing their objectives at any considerable scale, with few exceptions in both countries. Reasons for such limited success are discussed. The paper finally suggests some cross-country policy exchanges that could improve their outcomes and additional solutions, especially relevant in the Australian context that might be considered as policy results-enhancing measures.