

'lost' (or won, depending on which side of the fence you stand), the legitimate terrain of politics has been redefined. Trade agreements are economic arrangements made necessary by the restructuring exigencies of globalization, and the political and social impacts, if any, are incidental. Trade arrangements have moved from being on highly contested political terrain to being accepted (and often barely noticed) as an inevitable part of globalization, one other thing to be done on the road to eventual prosperity. It is simply not conceivable to imagine the political engagement around trade policy which was evident a decade ago -- the space for politics has been profoundly redefined.

Beyond the attempted negotiation and occasional conclusion of formal free trade agreements, the Liberal government has also embraced trade diversification through a series of 'Team Canada' initiatives. These voyages, travelling international road shows with the Prime Minister at the helm, and a supporting cast including Cabinet ministers, provincial premiers, municipal government officials, and business leaders, have targeted quickly growing regions of the world economy in search of trade and investment opportunities for Canadian firms. These high-profile delegations are considered necessary to give political importance to what are essentially business trips. As a senior official at the DFAIT argued: "We open the doors, and our business people walk through them. We can act as a catalyst and, if it comes down to competition between Canada and another country, that's where the political overlay can make the difference."²⁹ Foreign economic policy became akin to an economic dating service, with state officials at all levels actively engaged in supporting the pairing up of firms and market opportunities, ever hopeful that the right 'match' will be made. What is most interesting about the 'Team Canada' initiative, however, is the extent to which it plays onto the depoliticized terrain surrounding the discourse around globalization.

Team Canada trade missions first began a year after the Liberal government came to office, and followed upon two smaller scale trade promotion visits by the Prime