

Public Abstract

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Title:The Impact of the Chinese Air Cargo Hub Project on the Business Climate of St. Louis

In 2007, business and civic leaders in St. Louis approached the Chinese government with a proposal called the Big Idea, which called for the creation of an air cargo hub at St. Louis Lambert International Airport. This set in motion a process in which the Chinese government evaluated the prospect of locating an air cargo hub in St. Louis, Missouri. In this process the Chinese delegation met with a diverse group of business, government, and education leaders in St. Louis to assess the merits of international collaboration. This process has not only led to cultural exchanges, but also created new interactions between business and civic leaders in St. Louis. Using St. Louis as a case study, this study will analyze how the business climate in St. Louis is altered because of the professional interactions associated with the Big Idea. Through interviews with business, government, and education leaders, the study explores how this experience has altered perceptions of international business opportunities and government and business collaboration. The findings clearly demonstrate that the St. Louis business culture is changing due to this collaboration. This change has been fostered by the clarity of vision and the use of guanxi, a Chinese term for interpersonal relationship, by St. Louis officials. The findings will shed insight on how international collaboration can foster collaborations within a region and open up possibilities for future cooperation and business growth. This study will also contribute to a greater understanding of how guanxi is utilized to build cross-cultural collaborations, and it will add to the growing literature on Actor Network Theory.