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**Inheriting the homeland?  
Intergenerational transmission of cross-border ties in migrant families**

by

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## **Inheriting the homeland?**

Intergenerational transmission of cross-border ties in migrant families.

### **ABSTRACT**

Theories of migrant transnationalism emphasize the enduring imprint of the pre-migration connections that the newcomers bring with them. But how do the children of migrants, raised in the parents' adopted country develop ties to the parental home country? Using a structural equation model and data from a recent survey of adult immigrant offspring in Los Angeles, this paper shows that second generation cross-border activities are strongly affected by earlier experiences of and exposure to home country influences. Socialization in the parental household is powerful, transmitting distinct home country competencies, loyalties and ties, but not a coherent package of transnationalism. Our analysis of five measures of cross-border activities and loyalties among the grown children of migrants shows that transmission is specific to the social logic underlying the connection: activities rooted in family relationships such as remitting are transmitted differently than emotional attachments to the parent's home country.

### **Introduction**

International migration recurrently yields cross-border ties since connections are often part and parcel of the familial survival strategies that propel migration in the first place. Connections then produce greater connectedness, as the density of cross-state ties creates a supportive, "transnational social field" (Fouron & Glick-Schiller 2002, Levitt & Glick-Schiller 2004). Implying that migrants engaged in intense, ongoing cross-border connections will be the neighbors, friends, or acquaintances of migrants engaged in more occasional or even evanescent contacts, this concept points to the ways in which high concentrations of migrants with *varying* degrees of home country connectedness can promote ties for any and all that might be interested.

These accounts explain, both why migration generates subsequent cross-border ties and why those linkages might persist, emphasizing the enduring imprint of the pre-migration connections that the newcomers bring with them. For that very reason they do less well in

illuminating why and how cross-state connections may be maintained by the next generation. While those born in the country of origin *import* and then *retain* homeland ties, those same connections need to be *transmitted* to those born in the country of destination. Generally, as other researchers have shown, the passage from the first to the second generation leads to a weakening, and sometimes even a disappearance of homeland connections. Among some immigrant offspring, however, those ties do persist, in some cases with considerable intensity. Explaining these variations in the transmission of cross-border connections, and accounting for differences in the ways in which the transmission process may vary by type of cross-border activity, remain open, unexplored questions.

These are the issues to which this paper attends. In the remainder of this paper, we argue that the parental household provides the key conduit for the transmission of second-generation home country attachments, via both the homeland-oriented activities and the homeland practices that immigrant parents retain. Moreover, these parental activities do not so much entail a coherent package of homeland oriented interests and activities, but rather distinct competencies, loyalties and ties with distinct mechanisms of social integration (Faist 2000) whose effect in turn will vary across the very distinct types of potential cross border connection.

In the following sections we draw on existing research on second-generation transnationalism as well as theories of social learning and political socialization. We use this literature to develop a set of predictions about how different types of parental cross-border engagements as well as parental incorporation into the host society will shape second generation transnational ties. We then use data from the *Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles survey (IIMMLA)* to assess these hypotheses. Collected in 2003/2004, the IIMMLA interviewed approximately 4500 young adults age 20 to 39 in the Los Angeles

Metropolitan area (Rumbaut et al. 2004). These data, involving quota samples for a variety of Latin American- and Asian-origin second and 1.5 generation groups, are well suited for the purposes at hand. As a survey of the premier U.S. immigrant metropolis, and one with a built-up, welter of connections to the various global sources of today's immigrant population, IIMMLA was conducted in precisely that location most likely to provide the type of transnational social field facilitating cross-border connections. The survey is also unique, containing a wealth of information both about respondents' home country connections at the time of the survey *and* about the home country ties maintained by parents, when the respondents were still children at home. The survey's extensive battery of socio-demographic and migration questions provide further resources for exploring the transmission of homeland ties from one generation to the next.

### **From *how much* to *how*?**

Though a relatively new topic, the study of second generation homeland ties is generating a rapidly growing literature. Levitt and Waters' pioneering collection (2002) of U.S.-based research, the first major entry into the question, provided a mixed assessment, with most authors finding "some evidence that the children of immigrants are transnational actors" (p.4), but also numerous indicators of detachment. The papers also showed that second generation home-country connections vary in type and level of intensity, with clear inter-group and life-cycle differences. Reviewing the transnationalism and assimilation literatures, Morawska found that "significant numbers" of immigrant offspring "engage in different forms of transnationalism;" still, she concluded that assimilation is "much more central" to the second than to the first generation, with the former generally unlikely to maintain "active transnational involvements" (Morawska 2003, p.154).

A number of recent sources provide support for that generalization. Kasinitz et al's study of second generation New Yorkers found that "most groups have low levels of transnationalism, and transnational activities do not always reinforce ties to the homeland ... sustained transnationalism is therefore unlikely to persist into later generations" (2008, p.264). Itzigsohn's (2009) book on first and second generation Dominicans, a population among whom home-country connectedness takes a particularly strong form, demonstrates that home country loyalties and attachments *can* get passed down from first to second generation, albeit in very different form. While a core group of Dominican immigrant offspring regularly engage in transnational practices, it is nonetheless "smaller and less intensively engaged in transnational activities than the first generation" (p.154). Analysis of the 2006 Latino National Survey (N=8,634) shows that, across a variety of indicators, cross-border connectivity dramatically declines from the first to the second generation and then further with subsequent generations (Fraga et al. 2010: 140-142). For example while more than half of Latino immigrants report being in contact with friends and family back home once a week or more often, a little over 30 percent of the second-generation and only 15 percent of the third generation have weekly contact. Similarly, only 10 percent of first generation respondents report having ceased all contact with relatives or friends, as opposed to 20 percent of second-generation and more than 50 percent of the third and later generation respondents. While cross-border political interest and organizational involvement show smaller inter-generational declines, rates for the first generation are already very low.

This decline in cross-border ties may reflect the difficulties entailed in maintaining satisfying homeland connections. While Smith (2006) highlights the many and enduring ties linking second generation Mexican New Yorkers with their hometown (dubbed *Ticuaní*), he also demonstrates the fissures dividing the New Yorkers and the *Ticuanenses*. The former possess

what the latter lack: “designer sneakers, fashionable clothes, and gold chains, present[ing] an image of modernity and power”(p.247), not to speak of something of which many of the stay-at-homes can only dream, namely “the power to leave Ticuani to go north”(p.248). Not surprisingly, returning second generation youth find that “their standing in Ticuani is contested”(p.262). Other studies sound similar themes. The children of former Turkish guestworkers – the functional equivalents of Smith’s Mexican New Yorkers – are often viewed as alien by Turks who stayed behind (Lucassen 2006). At the other end of the immigrant class spectrum, the second generation Chinese- and Korean-Americans studied by Kibria found that homeland trips made them “painfully aware of how suspect they were as true Chinese or Koreans (2002: 50).” Much evidence also suggests that birth and upbringing in a new country generate significant cleavages between immigrant descendants and the people and places from which they stem. Thus, Smith notes that “settlement and transnationalization work at cross-purposes,” with second generation Mexican New Yorkers expecting their futures to unfold in New York, as “the demands of their assimilated lives in New York” (2006, p.204) weaken cross-border engagements. Purkayastha (2005:14), examining second generation South Asians, contends that destination country structures “will be more relevant to the everyday lives of the second generation.”

These fissures notwithstanding, homeland connections do persist among some immigrant offspring. Furthermore, a certain portion of this population maintains intense, continuing cross-border engagements. Hence, a preoccupation with the average experience of diminishing cross-border connectivity may be misleading. Moreover, averages can conceal significant differences across groups and individuals. While Kasinitz et al. (2008) show that only some immigrant offspring, regardless of group, keep up home country connections, they also highlight the extent

of cross-group variation, with levels of remitting and visiting among Dominicans far higher than those of Russian Jews or Chinese. Louie's (2006) comparative case study of Dominicans and Chinese puts the contrasts in still sharper relief, while underscoring the factors that might strengthen homeland contacts in one context and weaken them in the other. Generally lacking Chinese language capacity, making few trips back to China, and then finding the experience difficult due to a communication gap, Louie's Chinese respondents had weak transnational attachments and orientations. By contrast, Spanish retention was higher among Dominicans, who made more frequent visits, which in turn proved more satisfying since the face-to-face interpersonal connection with stay-at-homes was easier to sustain.

Yet, the literature provides no theory about what would lead the children of migrants born "here" to connect with the parental home country "there"; nor does it provide much explanation for within-group, cross-individual differences in the nature and extent of those ties.

Some accounts, however, are suggestive. Studying Chinese and Korean immigrant offspring, Kibria found that exposure to the economic dynamism of their parental home countries bolstered a sense of national pride (Kibria 2002: 167), demonstrating the potential value of "ethnic identity capital" (p.201). Other research, however, suggests that engagement with the parental home country may instead be linked to negative experiences in the local context. Thus, Espiritu found that those Filipino immigrant offspring actively engaged in ethnic politics and mobilization against discrimination politics often felt a strong emotional connection to the parental home country (Espiritu 2003: 204).

By contrast, Smith's in-depth ethnography of Mexican immigrant offspring underlines the importance of the parental household. In this case, homeland attachment stemmed from in-person, physical engagement with the parents' hometown during childhood and adolescence. As



these experiences often entailed long, summertime sojourns of an intense and enjoyable kind, thereby contrasting with the more confined environment encountered back in New York, they generated deep feelings of connectedness. While Smith's study focuses on the connected, the logic of the argument suggests that immigrant offspring lacking the early experience of travel – perhaps because of lack of resources, perhaps because parental lack of legal status preclude return visits – will be unlikely to develop a similarly keen, lasting attachment to the place from which their parents came.

Thus, while the existing scholarship has begun to shift from the question of “how much” to “how,” it only hints at the sources of variation in second-generation homeland attachments. In a sense, the most important implication is never explicitly stated: namely, that connections and connectedness are imparted from parents to children, whether by example (e.g., sending remittances or participating in ethnic associations), by investment (traveling with children to the place of origin), or by imparting the tools (language, familiarity with home country customs) that would allow offspring to sustain home country ties on their own, as adults. Going deeper requires a more focused effort to understand the pathways by which these cross-border connections are transmitted from one generation to the next and the ways in which variations in *parental* home country connections affect those same connections among their adult children, born or raised in the United States. It is to this task of specifying hypotheses to which we now attend.

### **Hypotheses**

The concept of the transnational social field suggests that parental home-country influences are not only widespread but also readily available for the second-generation. But what *concrete* social influences and institutions lead the second generation to engage in cross-border

activity? How do the children of migrants born “here” develop ties and loyalties to the people and places “there” as well as the skills needed to maintain those linkages? These questions are especially relevant since the second generation, born and/or growing up in the host-country is exposed to myriad socializing forces that will orient them towards “here” – the place where they reside – rather than “there” – the place from which they or their parents came. Hence, identifying the source that might nourish homeland connections is crucial to understanding why second generation cross-border ties persist

We contend that one central source of second-generation connections across borders stems from foreign-born parents and the behavioral patterns that the latter adopt both within the household and without. First, social learning within immigrant households provides the mechanisms by which cross-border activities and ties get constructed. Second, differences in retention of homeland traits or practices shape both the competencies needed to keep up homeland ties and the affective dispositions that motivate those engagements. Third parental integration into the host society has potentially contradictory impacts, providing resources for continued home country engagement, but possibly also attenuating those ties. Last, those lessons do not take a common, all-purpose form, but rather vary, depending on the specific choices that immigrant parents make, regarding the range of home country connections; consequently any homeland oriented activity or practice in which parents engage transmits competencies and preferences best suited to that specific cross-border engagement, and not necessarily others.

***Social Learning:*** In emphasizing the intergenerational transmission of home country attachments, we draw on the large literatures on political socialization and social learning, which have long emphasized the ways in which experiences within the parental household during childhood and youth affect civic and political values, attachments, and activities undergone later

in adulthood. (Hyman 1959; Jennings and Niemi 1968; social learning theory more generally Bandura 1977).<sup>1</sup> These approaches have experienced a recent revival in explaining the civic socialization of children and young adults (Niemi and Hepburn 1995; Jennings et al. 2001) and have also been applied to the study of migrant political engagement (Bloemraad and Trost 2008) and socialization (Wong and Tseng 2008).

These perspectives generally take citizenship for granted, applying social learning processes to explain civic engagement and political loyalties in the country of birth. Indeed, as Sapiro notes, “political socialization research has focused primarily on the development of citizenship in the United States” (2004, p.6), assuming away the possibility of nested nationalities, memberships, or citizenships. While nested affiliations of these sorts are precisely the phenomena of interest here, the underlying issue entails the same question as that posed by the students of political socialization, transformed to ask how parents’ attachments linked *to their country of birth* get transmitted to children raised in the parents’ *country of adoption*. Homeland ties are likely to be an integral part of immigrant households. Parents’ engagements with the homeland and the people still living there are likely to influence their children, as they serve as examples within the family context, providing a critical pathway by which the native born second-generation acquires the competencies and loyalties that both motivate and enable homeland engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> There was considerable discussion in the political socialization research whether the family or schools were the more important socializing agents. Hess and Torney (1965) argued that families were “only one of several socializing agents and institutions” while the “public school is the most important and effective instrument of political socialization in the United States” (quoted in Jennings and Niemi 1968). In our context the public school system would be an agent of socialization towards the nationally bounded polity (Anderson 2006; Gellner 1983).

For some types of cross-border ties, such as political interest in the home country, predictions regarding the development of emotional attachments or engagement in transnational organizations from the (narrower) political socialization literature can be extended straightforwardly. Research on political transmission has shown that children growing up in highly political families will be more likely to be politically engaged as adults themselves and have more stable political orientations (Jennings & Niemi 1974; Verba et al. 1995, Jennings et al. 2001). We expect that children of migrants who are actively involved in home country affairs are more likely to be engaged in or interested in homeland politics during adulthood; our data, unfortunately, do not allow us to explore this possibility.

However, the broader set of predictions of the social learning and social cognitive literature are applicable for other types of connections, such as home country visits or the sending of remittances, for which the data set supplies information. According to this set of theories, observational learning through actual and symbolic modeling is a key feature in the acquisition of competencies, attitudes, values and loyalties (Bandura 1986). The process of absorbing social practices and customs from models that display them is central to the reproduction of cultural patterns over generations (Bandura 2002, p.273). An example of just how parental models might be absorbed in the cross-border context comes from a recent ethnographic study of migrants in Finland: “although phoning and staying in touch were mostly parental practices,” and children often just exchanged a few words or just listened, they were nonetheless “incorporated in the transnational communication patterns and knew who called who, how often, and how much it cost (Haikkola 2011, p.1208). Thus, since parents provide the key models for children, we expect that their modeling of cross-border engagement will significantly predict transnational ties in the second-generation.

*H1: Building on the implications of social learning theory we expect that parental influence matters for the cross-border activities of the second generation. Parents who are involved in cross-border activities model homeland engagement and pass on the skills and dispositions that their children will need in order to maintain cross-border activities in adulthood.*

**Home country practices - language:** Differences in retention of homeland traits or practices will yield later differences in children's homeland attachments. Of these, the most important is language, shaping social boundaries in its role as a means of communication. While "anything can become symbolic of ethnicity," as Fishman argues (1989, p.32), language, as the prime symbol system, is particularly likely to play that role and therefore "is often a focus of an 'us-them' concept" (Fasold 1984, p.240). Communication and culture are inextricably intertwined, since language is both a symbol and a tool of membership. As ethnic identity is linked to the very words used to demarcate intergroup boundaries (e.g., *goyim*; *gabacho*), language is in turn part and parcel of those boundaries themselves (Giles and Coupland 1991). Consequently, for minorities of foreign background, language retention and ethnic identity are strongly interconnected (Alba 1990). Last, as the means of communication, language can define the boundaries of membership, excluding all those who lack the ability to speak in a common tongue.

In the host society, therefore, language shift is at once an indicator and a mechanism of the blurring of ethnic boundaries. In the model developed by Fishman, the first generation retains the mother tongue for most purposes, using the dominant tongue only in those domains where its use is required. While their children may be exposed to the mother tongue at home, the dominant tongue rules in all other domains—the neighborhood, schools, and work— and

therefore prevails, relegating the mother tongue to the parental home, where even there it is used with diminishing frequency. Though a variety of factors can modify this process – most notably, the increased density of mother tongue speakers associated with high levels of ongoing international migration, as well as proximity to the country of origin – current research (Bean and Stevens 2003; Alba and Nee 2003; Rumbaut et al. 2006; Lopez and Estrada 2007) indicates that the basic pattern identified by Fishman remains in place.

The conventional literature focuses on the *host society*, concerned with the linguistic boundaries between groups of foreign and native *origin* living on the *same* territory. But the question of second generation engagement in the *homeland* takes a different form: bringing in the *cross-territorial* dimension, it asks whether immigrant offspring, though raised on host society (and hence, from the homeland standpoint, foreign) soil can function in the parents' home society with the competencies approximating those of natives. Thus, while language shift might *reduce host society* social boundaries between foreign origin minorities and native-born majorities it may also *increase* the *cross-border* social boundary between stay-at-homes in the country of *emigration* and foreign-born offspring raised in the country of *immigration*. As noted in the literature review above, numerous empirical studies have shown that an inability to effectively communicate in the homeland tongue weakens satisfying second-generation cross-border engagement. Given these tight interconnections, loss of mother tongue facility is likely to weaken both the motivation to claim a cross-border identity and the capacity to ensure that any such claim is validated by the hometown or homeland community.

*H2: For immigrant offspring, parental linguistic practices during childhood yield dispositions and competencies affecting the potential for later homeland engagement in adulthood.*

***Parental national integration:*** The migrant parents of the second generation engage in cross-border activities, albeit to varying degree. However, they also become integrated into the national societies of the destination countries on which they have converged (Banton 2001). They may learn the host country language, which as a tool for communication fosters interaction with the native born population and as symbol signals membership. Their everyday lives lead to engagement with institutions of the host state, whether via the schools that their children attend, unions or civic organizations in which they participate (Terriquez 2011), or government services that they access. Most importantly, immigrants may acquire citizenship, joining the political community, an action that may increase access to resources, stabilize their standing, but also yield changes in identity and affiliation.

According to many scholars, national integration is fully compatible with, and may possibly even promote, continuing home country engagement. As suggested by research indicating that naturalized citizens are more, *not* less involved in cross-border engagements than their non-citizen counterparts (Guarnizo et al. 2003), political incorporation, via the acquisition of citizenship, may provide the protection needed for the type of open, forthright and public expression of homeland loyalties especially likely to influence the attachments and orientations of immigrant offspring. And since legal resident status also provides the unhindered right to cross borders and travel to home communities, it is also likely to increase the potential for in-person homeland contacts.

Parental integration may also positively influence second generation socio-economic mobility, thereby yielding further *indirect* effects on cross-border connectedness. As recently shown by Bean et al (2011), also analyzing IIMMLA, membership acquisition by Mexican immigrant parents increases educational attainment among their children. In turn, higher levels

of schooling among immigrant offspring could be the source of the material resources needed for travel or remittance sending or the cognitive resources that would facilitate engagement in home country politics.

However, parental integration also has the potential to dampen the transmission of the skills and preferences on which cross-border engagement depends. The symbolic importance of citizenship acquisition may generate a deeper sense of receiving society membership; by opening the door to participation in the host country polity, political incorporation may also encourage political engagement – further drawing the migrant into host country social networks. And following the logic of assimilation theory (Alba and Nee 2003), which forecasts that assimilation will reduce proximity to and dependence on co-ethnics, parental national integration and second-generation social mobility might lead to a distancing from the ethnic infrastructure supporting the transnational social field.

*H3: Parental host society incorporation will have variable effects. On the one hand it may pull families away from transnational social fields thus limiting the transfer of connections to the home country. On the other hand host society incorporation, by increasing material and cognitive resources, may foster second-generation homeland engagement.*

***Parental choices and offspring response:*** Cross-border activities take myriad form, whether involving communication, travel, the sending of remittances, political engagement, profit-making ventures, or philanthropy, to name just a few of the most important types. These different activities are *qualitatively* distinct, as emphasized by Faist (2000) who points out that some cross-border activities and exchanges are particularistic, entailing connections between specific families or kinship groups, whereas others work at a higher level of aggregation, involving identification with a trans-border community. In Faist's view, moreover, each type of



cross-border ties possesses its own social logic, based on a distinct “mechanism of integration” (p.191), set of resources and norms, all of which undergird connectivity.

Many scholars have also underscored the *quantitative* differences in the range and consistency of cross-border activities. High-intensity, across-the-board, activities involving physical movement that characterize the “transmigrants” (Portes et al. 1999) appear to be relatively rare (Portes et al. 2002; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Waldinger 2008). More commonly, migrants engage more selectively, as indicated by the various efforts to identify the multifarious, often intermittent activities that link migrants and homelands. Thus, Itzigsohn et al (2000) write of “broad transnationality “ (p. 323) a concept they coin to describe how migrants’ involvement with homelands could be occasional, lacking in institutionalization, and only sporadically involving physical movement (p. 323); similarly, Levitt (2001) pointed out that, in addition to the transmigrants engaged in “comprehensive transnational practices” others were involved in practices that were “more selective in scope” (2001: 198-9).

Building on this scholarship, and focusing on Faist’s particularistic activities linking egocentric networks of migrants and stay-at-homes, Soehl and Waldinger’s (2010) study of Latino immigrants in the United States showed that the great majority maintained some type of cross-border connection, but that remitting, travel, and regular cross-border communication rarely came together in a single package. Instead, migrants were picking and choosing among the relevant possibilities, generally tending *not* to combine the more costly activities of travel and remittance sending. Furthermore, each option was associated with a distinct set of specific migrant characteristics.

While Soehl and Waldinger conclude that “the typical migrant is the connected,” (p. 1507) other research (Waldinger, Soehl, and Lim, 2012) shows that fewer engage in those cross-

border activities that Faist sees as linked to a collective identity than choose to keep up ties to particular others at home. To be sure, almost every migration includes its cadre of migrants oriented toward concerted action, whether targeted at a hometown or a homeland. Yet involvement is relatively rare and often confined to a stratum of well-established, better-off migrants who have kept up homeland ties. More immigrants pay some attention to homeland politics, which, if talked about with children, may kindle their interest (Wong and Tseng 2008). Yet in the absence of mobilization by homeland-oriented groups and with limited avenues for participation, interest flags, even among those engaged in ongoing interactions with relatives at home.

As argued above, parents typically choose among a range of activities that entail or facilitate cross-border involvement; in turn, each choice yields a likely effect on later second-generation cross-border engagement. For example, sending remittances demands a sense of loyalty and responsibility to a family member not necessary for an emotional attachment to the parental home country. Likewise, feelings of connection to a parental homeland may not entail the skills or interest needed to participate in a homeland-oriented organization. Similarly, one can display an interest in homeland politics without possessing the linguistic fluency needed for easy interaction in the homeland context.

*H4: Hence, in selectively choosing among a broad range of cross-border engagements, immigrant parents do not transmit “transnationalism,” whether core, expanded, broad, comprehensive, or selective. Rather, parents convey particular dispositions or skills bound up with the specific cross-border activities in which they engage. Consequently, arms length involvement – such as those entailed in remittances – yield different effects*

*than those involving in-person, face-to-face interactions, and egocentric engagements bear little relationship to involvements linked to some homeland collective identity.*

Focusing more specifically, we expect that parental remittance sending will have a behavioral modeling effect, as described above. While the act of parental remitting and associated conversation in the parental household may also be part of a learning process that transfers filial obligations to the second-generation, remittance sending is representative of what Faist (2000) labeled “kinship ties”, and therefore we do not expect that, controlling for other pathways, the set of loyalties transferred will extend to other realms such as emotional connections to the parental home, political interest or increased likelihood of visiting.

Though costly, sending remittances is relatively simple. Visits are costlier; as the ethnographic evidence shows, they are also complex to manage, as they have the potential to “emphasize difference as much as generate shared understandings (Mason, 2004: 427). Hence while parents making return visits may send children a signal about the importance of loyalty to the people and places left behind, more may be needed if the children are to sustain those visits during adulthood. By contrast, childhood visits undertaken with parents are likely to impart both the competencies needed to fit in during a visit and the skills and dispositions required for managing and negotiating long-distance that only occasionally involve co-presence. Moreover, if the experience during childhood is positive (see Louie, 2006), the relationships generated and the memories attached to them may fuel further cross-border attachments in adulthood (Haikkola 2011, p.1210).

Similarly, we hypothesize that presence of parental language in the household will have two kinds of effects. As argued above, facility in the parental native language is a competency key to maintaining numerous cross-border activities, most notably those in which language

ability is integral to the experience, such as visiting. As presence in the household when growing up is probably the central transmission mechanism for parental language fluency, we expect that those respondents who grew up in households with a strong home country language presence will be more likely to visit these places as adults, net of other factors.

But language is not simply a tool for communication it also has powerful emotional connotations. Home, as Schuetz noted decades ago, is where shared meanings and understandings can be taken for granted, which is why he understood “‘to feel at home’ [as] an expression of the highest degree of familiarity and intimacy (1944, p.370).” Precisely for that reason, as noted far more recently by Brubaker and colleagues, “the experience of speaking ‘one’s own’ language is often associated with a feeling of phenomenological comfort, a sense of being at home in the world”(2006, p.254). Following these authors, we expect that the presence of the parental home country language will predict emotional attachments such as the likelihood of feeling at home in country of origin. In contrast we expect, that other things being equal, language should matter little, if at all, for homeland oriented activities occurring in the hostland for which linguistic facility is not required, such as political interest in homeland matters or membership in parental homeland oriented organizations.

### **Data**

This paper analyses data from the *Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles survey (IIMMLA)* to assess these hypotheses. Collected in 2003/2004, the IIMMLA interviewed a total of 3440 children of immigrants in the Los Angeles Metropolitan area.

IIMMLA is one of a small number of data sets specifically designed to understand the experiences of today’s second generation. While the other major data sets – the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey (CILS) and the recently released Immigrant Second Generation

in Metropolitan New York (ISGMNY) – also contain information relevant to understanding cross-border connections, IIMMLA is superior in a number of ways. Whereas IIMMLA sampled for persons aged 20-39, ISGMNY sampled for a younger population and CILS much more so (and one with very little variance in age). As IIMMLA respondents are therefore more likely to be living on their own, their cross-border engagements are less likely to reflect direct parental involvement or preference than would be true for the younger CILS or ISGMNY respondents (Jones-Correa 2002, p.234), often still living in their parents' households.

Moreover, only IIMMLA contains information relevant to our concern with intergenerational transmission. Data about home country connections were only collected in the third wave of CILS, pertaining to respondents at that point in time and no other. While ISGMNY asked one question about parents' cross-border activities, the query asked respondents about activities at the time of the interview, as opposed to the temporal focus on activities at the time of respondents' childhood, emphasized by IIMMLA. In addition, IIMMLA includes a wider battery of relevant items, as well as information regarding parents' legal status at the time of the interview, not found in any of the two other surveys. While IIMMLA is not ideal in either question wording or the mix of questions, as to be noted below, it nonetheless remains the richest, most appropriate resource available.

Although all IIMMLA respondents are 20 or over, and therefore can be considered adults, half of these respondents are still living with their parents and thus will be excluded from the analysis. This procedure reflects our interest in understanding how and to what extent parents' activities and traits *experienced by their offspring when children* yield cross-border connections for those same offspring *when adults*. By contrast, most previous research on

second-generation cross-border activity does not distinguish between those who still live with their parents and those who are independent adults (Jones-Correa 2002).<sup>2</sup>

In a first analysis we aggregate all respondents, regardless of place of origin. This gives us a representative view of the processes that facilitate cross-border connectedness in the second-generation in Los Angeles. However, these results may differ across groups, since the cross-border relations of migrants are critically shaped by the circumstances of migration and the context of reception. To address this concern, in a next step we break out respondents by parent's region of origin, looking at three broad regional groupings separately. The IIMMLA survey only provides a large enough sample for one *national* origin group: Mexicans – the largest immigrant population in the US and one with a particular concentration in the Los Angeles area. We group other respondents by region of origin but only those with parents from Asian countries provide a large enough sample to allow stable estimates.<sup>3</sup>

### **Analysis and Variables**

To assess the hypotheses specified above we develop a structural model, summarized in Figure 1, which relates parents' characteristics to transnationalism in the second generation.<sup>4</sup>

The left side displays the variables pertaining to the immigrant generation at the time of

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<sup>2</sup> We note that the timing of data collection as well as the age distribution of the sample entails an important temporal implication: the respondents were born between 1963 and 1983; all entered by the year 2000 and most well before then. Among the Mexican and Central American, a significant minority of the respondents either entered as undocumented immigrants or were the children of parents who entered in an undocumented status. But as the great majority was living in the U.S. as of the 1982 cut-off date for the 1986 amnesty act, most of the former undocumented parents and children had obtained either legal permanent residency and/or citizenship as of the time of the survey.

<sup>3</sup> The IIMMLA survey employed sampling quotas for second-generation national origin categories, relative to the population of the Los Angeles area. Therefore, it under-represents some groups (for example, Mexicans) and over-represents others (for example, Chinese). To adjust for this disparity, we used 2000 US Census data on the number of native born in each national origin category in the Los Angeles Metropolitan region to weight the sample, using the weights when analyzing all respondents, regardless of place of origin, but *not* when disaggregating by place of origin.

<sup>4</sup> For clarity Figure 1 shows only one of the second-generation transnational activities connected to the other variables in the model – in the estimation we model all five simultaneously.

respondents' childhood. The right side displays characteristics of the U.S.-born or –raised children interviewed by IIMMLA, as well as five variables indicating homeland oriented activity or attachment: visits to the parental home country, sending of remittances, membership in organizations related to the parental home country, interest in politics of the parental home country and sense of feeling at home in the parental home country.

To model these variables we chose a structural modeling approach as this gives us two advantages over a standard regression: First, it allows us to create a single variable to represent the concept of parental incorporation into the host society. Second, the structural model allows us to trace the paths of independent variables as they affect the transnational engagement of the second generation directly as well as indirectly. As outlined above parents' incorporation may yield an effect on children's cross-border activity via its impact on parental involvement in cross-border activity or on second-generation resources that might influence cross-border ties, such as education.

----- FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE -----

### **Parents' cross-border activities and retention of homeland traits:**

Our key independent variables indicate to what extent the second generation was exposed to cross-border activities and homeland traits while growing up in their parents' home. The IIMMLA survey provides information on the sending of remittances visits to the home-country and on the prevalence of the home country language in the household. Summary statistics and detailed coding for these variables can be found in the appendix.

*Remitting:*

Respondents were asked whether their parents sent money to anyone in either the father or mother's country of origin. Almost two thirds of the parents did so. Unfortunately additional information that could capture the varied nature of the phenomenon is not available. Data from other immigrant surveys however do suggest that the large majority of those who ever remitted do so on a fairly regular basis, sending money either monthly or several times a year. For example in the 2006 Latino National Survey (Fraga et al. 2006), of those migrants who do remit 85 percent do so at least every couple of months and less than 5 percent of those who remit do so less than yearly. In contrast 35 percent of migrants never sent money back home.

*Return to the home country with parents:*

Respondents were asked whether any parent ever returned to their home country for 6 months or more. In a follow up question respondents were asked whether they joined their parents on this trip. We combined these two variables into a single indicator variable taking the value of 1 if a parent went back and the respondent joined the parent on the return trip and 0 in all other cases.<sup>5</sup> About 11 percent of our respondents made such a trip when growing up. This variable fails to capture the more mundane and also more ubiquitous short-term visits to the home country that may well shape home-country attachments in the second generation. On the other hand, as we have argued above, this question does pick up the time involved, the childhood experience of return, and the company of a parent, all of which are likely to increase the long-term impact of these particular childhood experiences.

Summing up, the parents of the IIMMLA respondents resemble Soehl and Waldinger's "connected", as most retain some cross-border connections but also choose among homeland

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<sup>5</sup> In a separate analysis not shown here we also estimated the effect of parental return when the respondent did not join and find no effects with the exception of interest in politics. This result we argue strengthens our claim that in addition to modeling, the concrete exposure of immigrant offspring during home visits plays a crucial role in the transmission of cross-border connections.



oriented activities. Thus, the majority either returned to the home country for 6 months or sent home remittances. While only one third did neither, an even smaller group, 8 percent, did both.

*Prevalence of home country language in the household:*

The survey asked respondents about the use of the parental language in the household when growing up. This variable is coded in four ordered levels: (1) if English was spoken at home exclusively, (2) if mostly English is spoken at home (3) if the home-country language and English are spoken about the same and (4) if mostly the home-country language was used at home. During childhood, the parental home-country language was dominant in about half of respondents' households ; less than one in ten grew up in a family where English was the only language spoken. However, we also note significant national origin differences, with Asians much less likely to be exposed to their parental mother tongue than Mexicans.<sup>6</sup>

*Parental integration and educational achievement of the second generation:*

Since there is no single way to measure parental integration into the national society of the destination country, we construct a latent variable using three observed variables as indicators: parent's legal status, their English ability and whether they received any education in the US. These variables are indicators of national integration as they bear on the membership status, institutional involvements, and behavioral changes entailed in the process by which immigrants become part of the national society in which they have settled. Our latent variable relates the common variation of the three indicators to the other variables in our model.

Looking at the individual components of this measure we notice that a relatively small portion (about 6 percent) of respondents report growing up without a guardian with legal status.

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<sup>6</sup> In more than half of Asian families English was either exclusively or predominantly spoken at home. In contrast only one third of Mexican respondents grew up in households where English was dominant by this measure. And while 55 percent of the Mexican respondents grew up with Spanish as the dominant language, in only 37 percent of Asian families was the parental home country language dominant.

About one quarter of respondents grew up in households where no parent could speak English well, but in almost half of households both did. Most parents (about 80 percent) did not obtain any further education in the United States. Comparing between Mexicans and parents from Asian countries we see that Asian parents score somewhat higher on all of the incorporation measures. As a measure of educational achievement of the second generation we use years of schooling completed.<sup>7</sup>

#### Analysis and Estimation:

We chose a structural modeling approach as this gives us two advantages over a standard regression: First, it allows us to create a single variable to represent the concept of parental integration and simultaneously estimate the measurement of this variable and the regression equations we are interested in. Second, the structural model allows us to trace the paths of independent variables as they affect the transnational engagement of the second generation both directly and indirectly. For example, parental incorporation may yield a direct effect on children's cross-border activity – by embedding children more into the host society; however, integration may also exercise indirect effects, via its impact on parental involvement in cross-border activity or via such second-generation resources that might influence cross-border ties, as education.

The measurement model for the latent variable  $\eta$  (parental integration) can be written as follows:

$$Y = \tau + \Lambda\eta + \varepsilon$$

Whereby  $Y$  represents our vector of indicators of the latent variable,  $\tau$  are the item thresholds and  $\Lambda$  is a matrix of factor loadings of the latent knowledge variable  $\eta$ . We also use multiple

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<sup>7</sup> Using a categorical variable that indicates the level of degree received gives substantively the same results.

group structural equation analysis. Multiple group analysis estimates the structural equation model separately for each group (i.e. respondents with parents from Mexico vs respondents with parents from Asian countries) but it allows us to constrain certain coefficients to be equal across groups and also to compare the groups by testing differences in coefficients across them. For these comparisons to be valid the latent variable has to fulfill what is called “metric invariance” implying that differences in the observed items are meaningfully reflected in the underlying construct (Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998). Since the observed variables that identify our latent construct are ordered categorical, for this condition to be fulfilled the factor loadings  $\Lambda$  and intercept parameters  $\tau$  have to be the same across groups (Millsap and Yun-Tein 2004). We tested these assumptions and find that for the variable ‘parents legal status’ the cases we grouped under the rubric Asian have different intercepts than the other two groups. However since the loadings and intercepts on the other two variables can be considered equal our model fulfills partial scalar invariance, which is sufficient to allow for meaningful comparison across groups (Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998, p.81). Furthermore we estimated our full model in both variants: once freeing these intercept variables for the Asian group and once constraining them to be equal across groups, the estimates for our parameters of interest are virtually identical in both cases and our substantive conclusions are the same.

## **Results**

### Descriptive Results:

Table 1 presents summary statistics for our five dependent variables.

- *Frequency of visits home since an adult:* The survey provides the number of times respondents have visited their parent’s home country since adulthood. In order to take

into account the varying ages of our respondents we divided the number of visits by the years since the respondent turned 18. We then recoded the variable into 7 categories: no visits, visits once every 10 years or less, once every 5 years, once every 3 years, every 2 years, yearly and more often. Not surprisingly visiting is most frequent among the Mexican second generation where 73% visited their parents' home country at least once as an adult. Nonetheless, a majority of Asian respondents (60%) also visited their parents' home country at least once. Similarly very frequent visiting is more frequent among Mexicans with about 30% visiting yearly or more often while only 8% of Asian respondents do so.

- *Remitting:* The survey asked all 1.5 and second generation respondents whether and how often they had sent money to anyone in their parent's home country. We recoded the information into an ordinal variable with 5 levels: those that never remitted, those who remitted only once or twice so far, those who remit every year, those several times a year and those who remit monthly or more often. The majority of respondents from each group never remitted with Asians being even more likely to never have remitted. Of the Latino second generation about one third state that they remit yearly or more often but not quite one fifth of Asian respondents did.
- *Interest in parents' home-country politics:* Respondents were asked whether they were interested in their parents' home country's politics. Here response patterns were fairly similar across groups though Asian respondents seem to have somewhat lower interest on average. On a four-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree about 60% in each group either agree or strongly agree while roughly 40% either disagree or disagree strongly.

- *Participation in organization associated with parents' country of birth:* The survey asked whether respondents participated in any kind of organization associated with their/their parents' country of birth in the last 12 month. Here Asian respondents were more active with 9% indicating yes while only 4% of the Mexican respondents did. Unfortunately the data does not give detailed information about the exact type of organizations the respondent participated in nor the intensity of participation.
- *Does parents' home country also feel like home:* Respondents were asked to list which country feels most like home, the US or their parents or, in the case of the 1.5 generation, their own country of birth. Multiple answers were allowed. We coded the responses into three categories: the U.S. only (mentioned by about 90% in the weighted sample), both the US and the parent's home-country and a country other than the US.

Just as parents pick and choose among cross-border activities, second generation cross-border engagement is selective. Most respondents maintain at least one connection, but few keep up connections of all type. If we look at a simple sum scale of cross-border engagement<sup>8</sup> we see that less than 10 percent are not connected to the parental home country at all. However less than 1 percent are connected in all five ways and only 5 percent in four of the five dimensions.

The loose, selective nature of these cross-border connections is reflected also by the modest correlations between the five types of border attachments we examine, shown in Table 2. Correlations range in the moderate to low level. Two pairs of activities show moderate correlations: political interest and membership in organizations, neither of which involves direct contact with the parental home country like visiting and remitting. Finally emotional attachment

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<sup>8</sup> This scale simply adds up dummy variables for engagement in the 5 activities. For the variables visiting and remitting we code all respondents who had ever done so as 1. For the variable political interest all respondents who answer agree or strongly agree are coded as 1.

(feeling at home) is correlated with three of the other activities: remitting, visiting and interest in politics.

---- TABLES 1 & 2 ABOUT HERE ----

### Structural model:

#### *Model summary and comparing coefficients across activities:*

We first examine the results of our model to look at which variables affect specific types of cross-border ties in the second generation. In this initial presentation, we focus uniquely on direct effects. To provide a concise overview of the pattern Figure 2 displays the z-statistics of the coefficients for the direct effects of parents' characteristics and second-generation education on the five types of cross-border ties in the second generation, full results are displayed in table 3.

Looking at the first "column", we can see that return to the home country during childhood yields significant effects on adult activities. However, those effects vary across outcomes, yielding a borderline significant effect on remitting but additional, and strong effects on the likelihood of feeling at home in the country of origin (z-score ~4) and the frequency of visits of second generation adults and significant, if slightly weaker effects on membership in organizations. By contrast, parental remitting yields a significant, but sizeable effect (z-score~4.5) on second generation remitting and borderline significant effects on membership in organizations; and interest in parental home-country politics. The coefficients for the other two dependent variables fail to reach statistical significance. Though home-country language yields no single impact quite as great as the impact of parental remitting on child's remitting, it

nonetheless has strong positive effects on second generation remitting, and the place where respondents feel at home as well as the frequency of visits. Looking at the last two columns we can see that our measures of parental integration and of educational achievement in the second generation only yield significant effects on the probability of second generation membership in a homeland oriented organization; coefficients for visiting are also suggestive but not statistically significant at conventional levels. Finally parental integration yields a significant negative effect on remitting in the second generation (z-score  $\sim -5.5$ ) and a somewhat more tenuous negative effect on the probability of feeling at home (z-score  $\sim -2$ ).<sup>9</sup>

Stepping back and looking at the pattern overall we can see four main relationships:

1. *Home country effects:* When adults, those respondents who accompanied a parent on an extended homeland visit during childhood, were more likely to visit that place or do so more frequently, were more likely to feel at home there, were more likely to belong to a homeland oriented organization, and were more likely to remit.
2. *Remittance effects:* Parental remitting, an activity that most closely corresponding to what Faist labeled “transnational kinship circles,” has a substantial effect on remitting in the second generation. Controlling for other variables, parental remitting has no effect on second-generation emotional connection to the parental home country and visits. It has a marginally significant effect on political interest and membership in organizations.
3. *Language use effects:* Mother tongue use in the parental household during childhood has a positive effect on outcomes – most notably visiting and feeling at

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<sup>9</sup> In a robustness test we estimated this model omitting all respondents that came to the US after their third birthday. All results we reported above are substantively the same except for the negative effect of parental integration on feeling at home in the parents’ home country; this effect disappears.

home in the parents' country of origin. Net of other factors, however, the presence of mother tongue during childhood does not increase political interest or participation in organizations, activities that are located in the US and likely do not depend on proficiency in the parental language.

4. *Integration effects* Respondents possessing more education and whose parents' were more familiar with and integrated into American society were more likely to be active in organizations concerned with their parent's home-country, but were less likely to feel at home there or to remit.

----- FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE -----

*Differences between regions of origin:*

Table 3 shows the full results of the models we estimated. The first model reflects the weighted sample of respondents from all origins. In the multiple group analysis we allow the effects of parental characteristics on second-generation cross-border ties to vary while holding the measurement model of parental integration constant across groups.

While there are several instances where effects vary, not all differences are substantively meaningful. For example looking at the effect of parental remitting on second-generation interest in politics we see a significant effect ( $p < 0.1$ ) in the case of Asian respondents but not with those from Mexico. In this case the coefficient is of similar magnitude in both groups but does fall just a bit short of the significance level in the case of the Mexican origin respondents. In other relationships, for example the effect of parental remitting on remitting in the second generation,



there are differences in magnitude yet qualitatively the relationships are the same across groups.

Nevertheless there are several differences worth noting:

- Returning to the home-country in childhood does not seem to increase connectedness among respondents with Asian parents. It does not increase the likelihood of joining organizations oriented towards the parental homeland, nor remitting or emotional attachments to the parents' native country. This finding is consistent with previous research that suggests that for the children of Chinese migrants visits to the home country are often fraught, underscoring the convergence of social and territorial boundaries rather than fostering a sense of cross-border connectivity (Louie 2006). Similarly the presence of the home country language in the home does not increase emotional attachments in the Asian-American second generation as it does among those with Mexican-born parents. However there is a slight increase in interest in parental home-country politics.
- Remitting is a more central cross-border activity in Asian migrant families. The transmission of remitting across generations is more significant in Asian families as compared to those with Mexican origin. Also parental remitting is associated with increases in political interest as well as membership in organizations.
- Parental integration is consistently negatively associated with second-generation remitting and emotional attachment to the parental home country; however we only find a significant *direct* effect on emotional attachment among Asian origin respondents. As we show in the next section the total effect is of similar magnitude in both groups.
- At the same time, higher human capital is positively associated with frequency of visits to the parental home country, a finding consistent with hypothesis H3, which states that

engagement in cross-border activities such as membership in organizations and international travel will be positively affected by educational achievement and the increased resources that are likely associated with parental integration into the host society. Among the Mexican origin respondents the higher resources and human capital that come with parental integration and as indicated by respondents' educational achievement translate into higher likelihood of joining organizations and frequency of visiting while among Asian respondents parental integration has consistently negative effects on cross border activity.

----- TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE -----

*Direct and indirect effects:*

The previous sections discussed the direct effects of parental characteristics on second-generation cross-border involvement. As is typical in multiple regression analysis each effect is to be interpreted *ceteris paribus*. However, as laid out in our model, parental integration may also be associated with changes in parental cross-border activities or increases in educational achievement in the second generation. These effects are summarized in the second part of table 3. It is through these pathways that parental integration can yield indirect effects on second-generation transnational engagement. For example since there is virtually no association between parental integration and the probability that respondents returned as children together with their parents, we expect to see no indirect effects through this pathway. In contrast the presence of home country language seems negatively affected by higher levels of parental integration and thus presents a potential pathway for indirect effects. Comparing across groups we again see some differences. In Mexican families greater incorporation is associated with a significant

increase in second-generation educational achievement while in families with Asian origins there is an increased probability of remitting. These differences will also affect the indirect effects in both groups: increased educational achievement of the second generation is a possible pathway for effects of higher parental integration among Mexican origin respondents, while increased parental remitting associated with better integrated parents may translate into higher second generation cross-border engagement in the case of Asian origin families.

Table 4 summarizes a decomposition of these effects of parental integration on the five aspects of second-generation transnationalism we examined. For each variable the first row presents the total effect, which is the sum of the direct effects presented in table 3 as well as all indirect effects. The following row presents the sum of all indirect effects and the next four rows break out the effects for each pathway.<sup>10</sup>

Looking at the first set of results on the frequency of visiting we see that overall the effect of parental integration on the frequency of visiting is zero whereas the direct effect (Table 3) is positive. We see that in the sample overall as in the separate analyses, parental integration has a negative effect on visiting in the second generation by decreasing the presence of the home-country language at home. As we expected, parental integration on the one hand will mean an increase in resources and human capital for the second generation, which makes travel abroad more likely; however, parental integration also entails a decrease in the presence of home country language, a key competency for trips to the old country as well as a vehicle that

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<sup>10</sup> The coefficients for the indirect effects can also be calculated directly from table 2 by multiplying the coefficients along each pathway. For example the indirect effect of parental integration on visiting via the presence of parental home-country language at home (-0.09) is the product of the effect of integration on the presence of language (-0.49) and the effect of language presence on visiting (0.19). However these calculations do not provide the tests of statistical significance presented in table 4.

transmits emotional attachments. While this story plays out in all three samples the total effect is slightly different in each case. In the Asian sub-sample, there was a non-significant direct effect of parental integration, which then together with a negative indirect effect yields a negative total effect. In the case of Mexican respondents a positive direct effect is offset by a negative indirect effect yielding a total effect that is not significantly different from zero.

Among the Mexican respondents the increase in second-generation human capital associated with parental integration also contributes to higher membership in homeland-oriented organizations while parental remitting presents a small but statistically significant pathway in the case of Asian families. The effect on remitting in the second generation presents a similar pattern, again for the Asian respondent parental remitting is a small but significant pathway while for Mexican families language is pathway for the indirect effect of parental integration.

Finally though the overall effect of parental integration on feeling at home is negative and of the same magnitude in both groups, in the Mexican origin sub-sample the associated decline in the parental language spoken at home is a pathway for this effect but not so in the Asian origin sub-sample.

----- TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE -----

## **Discussion**

Notwithstanding the high level of ongoing international migration to the United States, the relative importance of the second and third generations originating in the Americas and Asia will certainly rise. As suggested by one recent projection (Suro and Passel 2003), by 2050 the foreign-born are likely to comprise only one quarter of the Hispanic population. Whether the

children of migrants maintain homeland ties will therefore be of critical importance to the future of the cross-border connections that the first generation has put in place.

But how do the US born children of immigrants, who have typically had only limited direct exposure to their parents' home country, develop cross-border attachments? Proponents of the transnational paradigm contend that the source of second generation home country ties is to be found in the transnational social fields in which these immigrant offspring grow up, which exposes them to an environment characterized by a back and forth movement of people, ideas, goods and practices. However, for the second generation, the experience of this environment is filtered through the parental household. Consequently, parents' own engagement with the homeland and their retention of homeland practices are likely to exercise much influence over the degree to which their children will form cross-border social ties, attachments and obligations in adulthood.

As we have shown, parental involvement matters, supporting our first, most general hypothesis. Respondents whose parents were actively involved in cross-border activities or who grew up in households where the parent's home-country language was present were more likely to have cross-border ties themselves once they reach adulthood. Four of our five indicators of second-generation transnationalism were positively affected by some measure of parental cross-border involvement. However, we find no effects on interest in the politics of the parents' home country, an exception possibly due to the dataset's lack of a measure of parental political interest (thus precluding an assessment of the impact of political socialization) or reflecting the importance of extra-familial influences on this dimension of second-generation transnationalism.

By contrast, parental integration in the *host society* yields more variable effects. The more embedded are the parents in the United States, the less likely their children feel emotionally

attached to the parents' home and the less likely they are to send remittances. However, for the Mexican second generation parental integration has positive effects on second-generation educational profiles which in turn spurs their participation in homeland organizations and, other variables held constant, increases the frequency of visiting. Thus as we hypothesized (H3), while generally distancing the second-generation from the home country, for activities that are reflective of higher human capital such as political and social engagement and travel, parental integration into the host society may have positive effects. Just as the neo-classic assimilation theory outlined by Alba and Nee predicts, better incorporation of a family into host country institutions and society means more opportunities for social mobility. This mobility in turn can provide resources that allow for greater cross-border connectivity.

Most importantly, migrant parents *directly* impart skills to their children that enable them to maintain meaningful ties to the home-country. Most critical is familiarity with the home-country language. As our results show, the presence of the parental language during childhood translates into increased frequency of visiting in adulthood. That language also yields a greater connection to kinship circles is reflected in the higher likelihood of remitting. Language, of course, is the essence of communication: it is difficult to feel at home or find a fundamental sense of kinship with homeland relatives or communities if the meanings of speech can no longer be taken for granted.

As the complexity of our results shows, rather than growing up in a coherently organized "transnational social field," the second generation gains cross-border connections via a set of distinct ties, each of which has its own "mechanism of [cross-border] integration," to borrow a phrase from Thomas Faist (2000, p.191). As posited in our fourth hypothesis, we find distinct transmission pathways. Parental remitting, an activity located in the domain of intimate cross-

border family relations, has a clear positive effect on remitting in the second generation. But parental remitting is narrowly targeted to a very, specific set of significant others abroad, as suggested by the discrepancy between the huge flows of worker remittances that migrants send to their families, and the meager sums sent as “collective remittances” to be used for some homeland public good (Kapur and McHale 2005). Not surprisingly, then, parental remitting yields only limited effects on all of the other activities and attachments we examined. At the same time, extended home country visits during childhood yield significant positive effects on four of the five outcomes (emotional attachment to the parents’ home country, frequency of visiting remitting, and involvement in homeland oriented organizations). This relationship likely reflects the ways in which visits during childhood reinforce the attachment that immigrant offspring feel, not just to relatives, but also to the larger place and broader set of people left behind.

Although it was not the focus of our inquiry, our results also shed light on the “how much” question: to what extent will cross-border ties persist over generations? That home country connections fall off from first to second generation is a matter of general scholarly consensus. Having examined the transmission process from first to second generations, we are now in a position to forecast likely shifts as the second generation is eventually replaced by [the](#) third. The overall fall-off in second generation cross-border activity means that the third generation will have limited exposure to direct homeland engagements, at least as mediated through the parental household. Just as importantly, they are likely to be deprived of one of the most powerful factors affecting homeland engagement, namely, mother tongue use at home. As we have seen, the presence of home-country language in the home plays a central role for the transmission of home-country ties. Since scholarship clearly demonstrates that English displaces

the parents' native language in the day-to-day life of the second generation at a rapid rate (Rumbaut et al. 2006), this avenue of intergenerational transmission will largely be foreclosed.

In conclusion, we argue that progress in understanding the ways in which the cross-border activities of migrants are transmitted from one generation to another requires a disaggregated approach, separating out the different components undergirding homeland engagement according to the distinct social mechanisms that underpin them. While this paper presents a first step in that direction, much work remains to be done, as parental influence is only one avenue for the transmission of cross-border attachments and transnational engagements of the second generation. Systematic analysis of the effects of contexts outside the home such as ethnic neighborhoods, schools, community organizations, or professional contacts would be important complements to the analysis presented here. While we believe that our findings do capture the general dynamics of the transmission process, and that the transmission of home-country attachments seems to work in similar ways across families from different regions, our separate analysis by region of origin also indicate some cases where differences exist. However, our data allowed us only to compare two very broad regional groupings; further disaggregation by country of origin would surely yield additional insights.



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**TABLES AND FIGURES**

	Full Sample weighted (n=1570)	Mexico (n=552)	Asian countries (N=721)
<b>Frequency of visits to parents' home-country since adult</b>			
never	0.30	0.27	0.40
less than once every 10 years	0.08	0.07	0.17
... 5 years	0.14	0.14	0.17
... 3 years	0.13	0.14	0.12
... 2 years	0.07	0.07	0.06
yearly	0.14	0.16	0.05
more than yearly	0.13	0.16	0.03
<b>Sent remittances</b>			
Never	0.61	0.59	0.72
Once or twice	0.10	0.10	0.11
yearly	0.09	0.09	0.08
several times a year	0.15	0.16	0.06
monthly	0.06	0.06	0.02
<b>Member in organization related to parents' home-country</b>			
Yes	0.05	0.04	0.09
No	0.95	0.96	0.91
<b>Interested in the politics of parents' home-country</b>			
Strongly disagree	0.17	0.17	0.16
Disagree	0.23	0.22	0.26
Agree	0.43	0.42	0.48
Strongly agree	0.17	0.18	0.10
<b>Which country feels most like home</b>			
Parents' country of origin	0.06	0.06	0.04
US and parents' country	0.03	0.04	0.01
US only	0.91	0.90	0.95

*Table 1: Summary statistics for the five types of cross-country activities and attachments analyzed in our model.*

	Visits	Remittin g	Feeling at home	Interest in Politics
Remitting	0.23			
Feeling at home	0.20	0.36		
Interest in Politics	0.07	0.10	0.24	
Membership in HC Organizations	0.09	0.10	0.02	0.19

*Table 2: Polychoric correlations between cross-border activities for the weighted sample*

	Full data weighted		Multiple group model			
	Coef.	z	Mexico		Asian countries	
<b>Direct effects:</b>	Coef.	z	Coef.	z	Coef.	z
<i>Parents &amp; resp. return on...</i>						
Frequency of Visiting	0.32	5.09*	0.34	4.20*	0.26	3.22*
Homeland Organizations	0.32	3.19*	0.40	3.54*	0.03	0.23
Remitting	0.15	2.29**	0.15	2.06**	0.10	1.21
Interest in Politics	0.02	0.39	0.03	0.36	0.03	0.35
Feeling at home	0.32	3.82*	0.34	3.49*	0.19	1.34
<i>Presence of language at home on...</i>						
Frequency of Visiting	0.19	4.47*	0.18	3.07*	0.18	3.72*
Homeland Organizations	0.02	0.30	0.07	0.67	0.00	0.04
Remitting	0.12	2.95*	0.14	2.73*	0.06	1.15
Interest in Politics	0.02	0.48	-0.01	-0.19	0.08	1.70*
Feeling at home	0.24	3.66*	0.31	3.17*	-0.10	-1.30
<i>Parental Remitting on...</i>						
Frequency of Visiting	0.00	0.07	0.02	0.27	-0.08	-1.48
Homeland Organizations	0.23	2.17**	0.17	1.20	0.44	5.05*
Remitting	0.22	4.52*	0.17	2.81*	0.37	6.81*
Interest in Politics	0.10	1.87*	0.11	1.52	0.10	1.83*
Feeling at home	-0.10	-1.25	-0.16	-1.61	0.00	0.02
<i>Educational Achievement on...</i>						
Frequency of Visiting	0.02	1.26	0.05	2.56**	0.04	2.41**
Homeland Organizations	0.11	5.21*	0.13	3.15*	0.04	1.08
Remitting	-0.01	-0.84	0.00	-0.13	-0.08	-3.21*
Interest in Politics	0.00	0.16	0.00	0.08	0.02	0.96
Feeling at home	0.00	0.05	0.00	-0.11	-0.03	-0.91
<i>Parental Assimilation on...</i>						
Frequency of Visiting	0.10	1.72*	0.13	1.87*	-0.02	-0.21
Homeland Organizations	0.19	2.13**	0.29	2.42**	-0.01	-0.10
Remitting	-0.32	-5.67*	-0.34	-5.29*	-0.16	-1.95*
Interest in Politics	0.02	0.26	0.02	0.22	0.00	-0.02
Feeling at home	-0.20	-2.12**	-0.16	-1.47	-0.53	-3.81*
<i>Parental Assimilation on...</i>						
Parents & resp. return	-0.11	-1.61	-0.11	-1.39	0.10	1.04
Parental remitting	0.00	-0.04	-0.03	-0.48	0.17	2.47**
Presence of language	-0.49	-13.45*	-0.45	-9.59*	-0.67	14.14*
Educational achievement	1.08	11.68*	1.01	8.88*	0.00	0.01



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**Measurement model for parental assimilation**

Legal Status	0.72	24.88	0.72	19.99	0.72	19.99
English proficiency	0.87	32.84	0.91	28.16	0.91	28.16
Any Education in the US	0.71	21.39	0.64	17.01	0.64	17.01
CFI	0.95				0.93	
RMSEA	0.05				0.07	

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Table 3: Summary of structural equation models. Direct effects and measurement model.

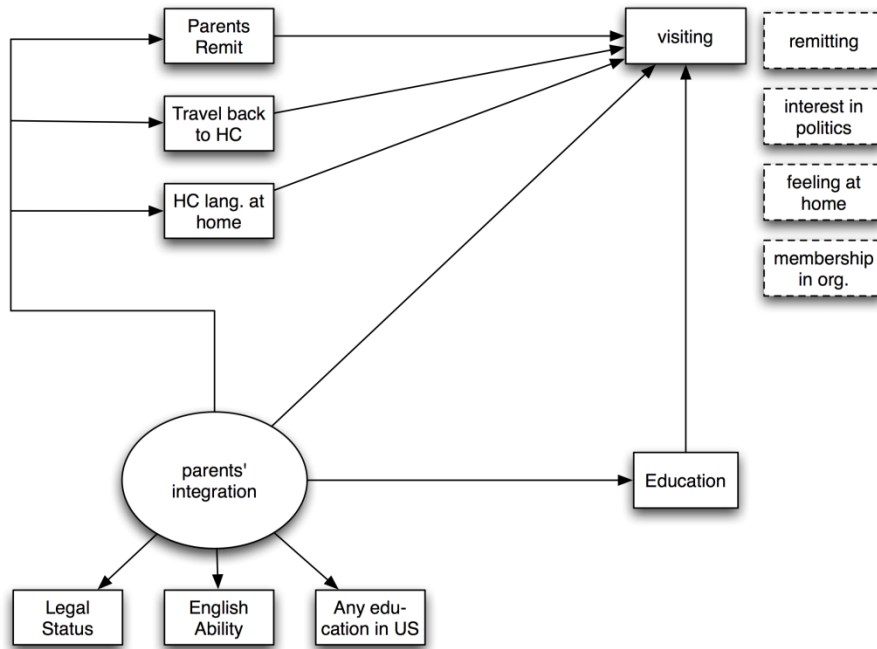
\*\*\* p< 0.01; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1

	All group weighted		Multiple group model			
	Coef	z	Mexico		Asian countries	
	Coef	z	Coef	z	Coef	z
<i>Frequency of Visiting</i>						
Total	0.00	-0.05	0.07	1.26	-0.13	-2.36**
		**				
Total indirect	-0.11	-2.77*	-0.07	-1.43	-0.11	-2.52**
				**		
Via: Resp. education Ret. to home-	0.02	1.27	0.05	2.60*	0.00	0.01
cntry	-0.03	-1.53	-0.04	-1.32	0.03	0.94
Parents						
Remitting	0.00	-0.04	0.00	-0.24	-0.01	-1.27
		**		**		
Language at home	-0.09	-4.24*	-0.08	-2.88*	-0.12	-3.87***
<i>Membership in organizations</i>						
		**		**		
Total	0.27	4.08*	0.34	3.76*	0.06	0.67
Total indirect	0.07	1.42	0.05	0.62	0.07	1.18
		**		**		
Via: Resp. education Ret. to home-	0.12	4.69*	0.13	2.97*	0.00	0.01
cntry	-0.03	-1.48	-0.04	-1.31	0.00	0.22
Parents						
Remitting	0.00	-0.04	-0.01	-0.44	0.07	2.33**
Language at home	-0.01	-0.30	-0.03	-0.67	0.00	-0.04
<i>Remitting</i>						
		**		**		
Total	-0.41	-10.12*	-0.43	-9.11*	-0.14	-2.22**
		**				
Total indirect	-0.09	-2.74*	-0.09	-2.44**	0.03	0.56
Via: Resp. education Ret. to home-	-0.01	-0.84	0.00	-0.13	0.00	-0.01
cntry	-0.02	-1.34	-0.02	-1.19	0.01	0.73
Parents						
Remitting	0.00	-0.04	-0.01	-0.48	0.06	2.36**
		**		**		
Language at home	-0.06	-2.96*	-0.06	-2.72*	-0.04	-1.16
<i>Interest in politics</i>						
Total	0.01	0.12	0.02	0.30	-0.03	-0.60
Total indirect	-0.01	-0.35	0.00	0.01	-0.03	-0.98
Via: Resp. education Ret. to home-	0.00	0.16	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.01
cntry	0.00	-0.38	0.00	-0.34	0.00	0.32

Parents						
Remitting	0.00	-0.04	0.00	-0.45	0.02	1.51
Language at home	-0.01	-0.48	0.01	0.19	-0.05	-1.73*
<i>Feeling at home</i>						
		**		**		
Total	-0.35	-5.12*	-0.34	-4.18*	-0.44	-4.22***
		**		**		
Total indirect	-0.15	-2.85*	-0.17	-2.63*	0.09	1.36
Via: Resp. education	0.00	0.05	0.00	-0.11	0.00	-0.01
Ret. to home-						
cntry	-0.03	-1.49	-0.04	-1.30	0.02	0.77
Parents						
Remitting	0.00	0.04	0.01	0.46	0.00	0.02
		**		**		
Language at home	-0.12	-3.73*	-0.14	-3.16*	0.07	1.26

Table 4: Summary of structural equation model continued. Indirect effects of parental assimilation on second generation transnational activities.

\*\*\* p< 0.01; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1



**Parent's characteristics:**  
Integration and transnational activity

**2nd generation characteristics:**  
Educational achievement and transnational activity

Figure 1: Structural model relating parent's integration and involvement in cross-border activity to cross-border activities in the second generation and educational achievement. For clarity the figure shows only one of the second-generation homeland-oriented activities (visiting) connected to the other variables in the model. In the estimation we model the relationships of all five variables simultaneously. Error terms and some correlations are also omitted from the picture.

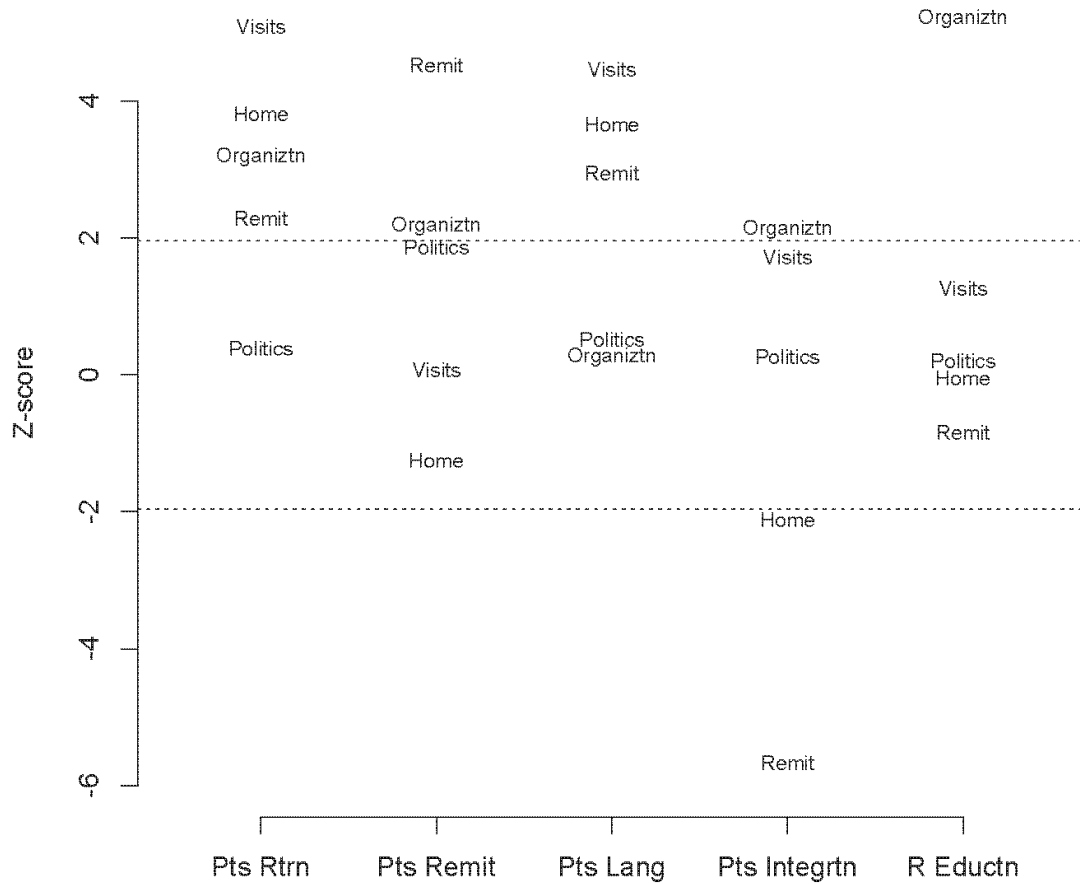


Figure 2: Z-scores for direct effects on the five cross-border activities of the second generation: The frequency of visits to the parent's home country (Visits), the frequency of remitting (Remit), the interest in parents' home country politics (Politics), Membership in organizations oriented towards the parents' home-country (Organiztn) and whether or not respondent feels at home in parents' home-country (Home). The dotted horizontal lines indicate the 5% level of significance ( $\pm 1.96$ ).

**Appendix:**

	Full Sample weighted (n=1570)	Mexico (n=552)	Asian countries (N=721)
<b>Parents integration:</b>			
<i>Legal status of parents:</i> none legal	0.06	0.06	0.04
one has Greencard	0.06	0.07	0.02
both have Greencard	0.16	0.18	0.04
one citizen	0.28	0.28	0.16
both citizen	0.45	0.40	0.75
<i>Parents received education in the US:</i>			
none	0.78	0.80	0.73
one	0.16	0.15	0.19
both	0.05	0.05	0.08
<i>Parents English ability:</i> none well	0.24	0.26	0.18
one well	0.31	0.31	0.23
both well	0.46	0.43	0.59
<b>Parents homeland oriented activities:</b>			
<i>Language spoken at home:</i> English only	0.09	0.07	0.22
mostly English	0.24	0.24	0.30
English and home-country language about equal	0.14	0.14	0.11
mostly home-country language	0.53	0.55	0.37
<i>Parents remitted</i>	0.65	0.64	0.65
<i>Parents and respondent return to home- country</i>	0.11	0.12	0.07
<b>Educational achievement of respondent:</b>			
mean	13.3	12.8	15.8
standard deviation	2.7	2.6	2.1

Table A1: Summary statistics for parental characteristics and second generation educational achievement.