Testing the Transnational Hypothesis: Continued Home Engagement among Asian American Immigrants[1]

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Introduction

Since the early 1990s, transnationalism has emerged as a prominent paradigm in the field of international migration studies (Glick Schiller 1999). The focus of this school of research is on immigrants' continued engagement with their country of origin. In this study, I conceptualize and analyze two dimensions of transnationalism, contact through return visits and remittances, to test hypotheses about the phenomenon of transnationalism. Over the past 2 decades, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that gross remittance flows to developing countries have increased from 28.3 billion US dollars in 1988 to $50.6 billion in 1995, and in 1999 to over $65 billion (Gammeltoft 2002). Travels to home countries are relatively common among Latino immigrants in the US. A national study of Latino immigrants reports that 66% of Latino immigrants have visited their country of origin post-migration to the US and that 35% intend to move back to their original country (Waldinger 2008). An increase in individual-level interactions with countries of origin have lead transnational researchers to document political, economic, and socio-cultural impacts of immigrant transnationalism (for example, Levitt and Jaworsky 2007).

Sociological studies on migration have traditionally focused on the presumed opposite of transnationalism – the assimilation of immigrants to the host society. Past studies emphasized the processes of immigrant adaptation to American society through language acquisition, socioeconomic mobility, and marriage with native-born Americans (for example, Gordon 1964). In general, most empirical research shows that the degree of assimilation increases with increased length of exposure to American society (for example, Alba and Nee 2003). A logical corollary of assimilation research is that contacts with and remittances to the country of origin would decline over time as immigrants become settled and adapted to American society. This view is challenged, however, by the emerging literature on transnationalism, which posits that continued involvement with the country of origin is a common pattern among immigrants (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995). In a recent study, Portes, Haller and Guarnizo (2002) found that transnational engagement among Latino immigrants is associated with higher human capital resources, such as higher education, higher occupational status, and longer length of stay in the US (Portes, Haller and Guarnizo 2002). This literature presents an interesting puzzle: is engagement with the country of origin at odds with assimilation to the American society?

This paper argues that previous studies subsumed two different dimensions -- the socioeconomic resources (i.e. income and education) of immigrants and their attachment to host society -- under one unified label of assimilation. By specifying both of these dimensions and their impact on transnational engagement, I examine whether assimilation to the host country and transnational ties to the home country are competitive, complementary, or independent perspectives. Specifically, my model separates the attachments that may motivate immigrants to maintain home engagement from the socioeconomic resources that enable them to do so. More exposure to the host society, measured by length of residence in the US, would produce socioeconomic resources such as income and education that allows immigrants to pursue cross-national activities. On the other hand, the exposure to American society is expected to decrease the level of home engagement as suggested by classical assimilation studies, because a greater level of attachment to the US reduces immigrants' motivations to remain involved in home country. This framework allows for the possibility that the relationship between assimilation and transnational engagement can be insignificant. As suggested by a group of transnational scholars (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995), immigrants may retain their attachment to their country of origin regardless of their levels of attachment to the US.

I examine these perspectives using a nationally representative sample of Asian immigrants in the US. Previous studies of transnationalism have focused primarily on Latino immigrants (Portes et al. 2002). Despite the socioeconomic, political, and linguistic diversity of immigrants from Asian countries, a general pattern of transnational engagement for Asian immigrants has not been given a central place in the transnational literature. This is a first attempt, to my knowledge, to quantitatively examine the relationships between assimilation and transnationalism among Asian immigrants in the US.

Literature Review

Assimilation Perspective

Assimilation is defined in the sociological literature as the erosion of differences between groups, between the majority population and minorities, and between immigrants and the native-born (Alba and Nee 2003; Gordon 1964; Massey 1981). The classical assimilation perspective argues that immigrants become more integrated into mainstream America as they are exposed to host society, especially across generations. A large body of assimilation studies relies on Gordon's influential book which identified the multiple dimensions of assimilation in American society including cultural assimilation, structural assimilation, marital assimilation, identificational assimilation, attitude receptional assimilation (i.e. absence of prejudice), behavior receptional assimilation (i.e. absence of discrimination), and civic assimilation (i.e. absence of value and power conflict) (Gordon 1964, p.71). The key concept to his model was structural assimilation, which involves immigrants' participation in primary-group associations such as social cliques, neighborhoods, and friendships with the native population. Gordon argued that the entry into such primary groups depends on the acceptance by the majority population. If the native population is willing to include immigrants in their personal associations, structural assimilation induces other types of assimilation. According to Gordon, the entrance of immigrants into primary groups leads to intermarriage, which leads to a loss of ethnic identity. These changes over time, he argued, will eventually lead to the erosion of a distinctive ethnic group and its cultural values[2].

Recent studies on assimilation provide more nuanced processes of immigrant adaptation. Segmented assimilation theory, for example, argues that contextual factors of sending and receiving communities in addition to individual human capital shape immigrants' experience in American society. Segmented assimilation theory predicts three paths toward integration to American society: integration toward middle-class America through upward economic mobility and full acculturation; integration to the underclass with downward mobility; and economic integration and partial acculturation toward the middle-class through co-ethnic communities. The theory suggests several factors that determine the path toward incorporation: individual characteristics associated with the degree of exposure to American society; and structural factors such as political

[2] Gordon also argued that the reluctance of the majority population to accept minorities leads to "eth-class" where class is stratified by ethnic groups.

relations between sending and receiving countries, the nature of co-ethnic communities and prejudice in receiving society, and parental SES (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Zhou 1997). Segmented assimilation theory complements the classical assimilation perspective by providing the explanations for the different rates and patterns of adaptation by ethnic groups. While the rate and the nature of adaptation may vary across groups, large scale empirical surveys find that over generations, majority of immigrants and their children have eventually become similar to native-born Americans in terms of their socioeconomic profiles, residential patterns, language use, and intermarriage (Alba and Nee 2003; Hirschman 1983; Massey 1981; Waters and Jimenez 2005)[3].

Even though assimilation studies do not directly address the relationship between assimilation and transnational engagement, the classical assimilation perspective assumes that assimilation takes place at the cost of immigrants' distinctive ethnic characteristics, which include identity, language and cultural values brought from abroad (Gordon 1964, p.81). Gordon saw assimilation as an interactive process between immigrants and American society and suggested that immigrants' interactions with native-born Americans will gradually supplement those from the old society. Based on this perspective, many researchers assume that assimilation would be associated with the erosion of distinctive ethnic ties and to an eventual decline in engagement with home countries (Alba and Nee 2003; Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Sana 2005). A classical assimilation hypothesis would suggest that attachments to and contact with the country of origin will become less salient over time for immigrants, as they spend more time in the US and progress through generations. Empirically, Alba and Nee noted the loss of mother-tongue fluency over two to three generations and speculated that the lack of language proficiency will weaken the ability of the third-generation children of immigrants to become involved in the life of their home countries, and therefore transnationalism will not extend beyond the third generation (Alba and Nee 2003, p.150).

Transnational Perspective

Transnationalism is an emerging research priority within the field of international migration studies. In the early 1990s, the phenomenon of increased cross-national activities among immigrants was highlighted by anthropologists (Glick Schiller 1999; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton

[3] This has been the case especially for European and Asian immigrants, but has not worked for African Americans.

1992; Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec 2003). The volume and intensity of their economic, political, and social engagement with the country of origin lead transnationalists to argue that immigrants' lives and their identities may be developed in relation to more than one nation and that their engagement with the country of origin does not necessarily decline as a result of increasing levels of assimilation in their destination society. The transnational perspective challenged the perspective of classical assimilation which assumed that immigrants' lives are bounded by nation-states and that assimilation and transnational involvements are incompatible.

The idea of transnationalism has attracted the attention of scholars across disciplines who have conducted a variety of studies using different operationalization of transnationalism. Some scholars have investigated political transnationalism in terms of global citizenship and cross-national political activism (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Keck and Sikkink 1999; Soysal 1997). Others addressed remittances and immigrant entrepreneurship as a form of economic transnationalism (Guarnizo 2003; Portes, Haller and Guarnizo 2002; Sana 2005; Vertovec 2004). Still others have looked at social transnationalism which encompasses identities, behaviors, and social networks that span nation-states (Appadurai 1990; Haller and Landolt 2005; Levitt 1998a; Smith 2002).

The scope and definitions of transnationalism is much debated (Glick Schiller 1997; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004). As several researchers have pointed out (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Itzigsohn et al. 1999; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004), there are two camps in defining transnationalism. On one hand, Portes and colleagues have conceptualized transnationalism narrowly. Guarnizo et al. (2003)'s study, for example, defines transnational migrants as "a new class of immigrants, economic entrepreneurs or political activists who conduct cross-border activities on a *regular* basis" (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003, p1213). Transnational activities, in this definition, are highly institutionalized and constantly sustained. Their definition leads to mutually exclusive categories that identify transnational migrants and those who are not. On the other hand, other researchers (Foner 2005; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995; Kasinitz et al. 2002; Levitt 1998b; Smith 2002) characterize transnationalism as a common practice among all immigrants. Their studies focus on the local-level interactions of immigrants such as developing and maintaining familial and religious ties and sending remittances to those who stay in the sending society. For them, transnationalism is a broad concept that includes sporadic and

occasional activities across countries. Although the level of transnational engagement may vary among individuals, for these authors, all immigrants are capable of conducting transnational activities.

By using the term "transnational home engagement", I intend to emphasize behavioral aspects of immigrants' ties with their home country. This conceptualization rests on the assumption that all immigrants are capable of engaging in the affairs of home country, yet it restricts its scope to the observable and objective measures of transnational involvements. Home visits and remittances are two indicators of transnational home engagement that reflect immigrants' motivation to maintain active connections with the country of origin. Return visits are social practices of immigrants that maintain connections and identity with family and friends in the country of origin, while settling in a new society. Through physically moving between the home and destination countries, immigrants link two distinct localities and social practices and foster a transnational field. Return visits to the home country are especially essential for maintaining transnational ties to original places for those who came to the US when they were young. Qualitative studies on Asian American children of immigrants show that visits to their or their parents' country of origin make a strong impression on immigrant youths. Visiting their original country and having face-to-face interactions with relatives often affirms values that their family brought from abroad and creates an emotional transnationalism that helps them identify with their ethnic origin[4].

Remittances represent the financial involvement of immigrants with the country of origin based on their social connections and obligations beyond national borders. Sending remittances is often considered as part of immigrants' transnational living because of its transformative impact on the lives of those who reside in the home country. The impact of remittances ranges from investment in small businesses to supporting basic household consumption and educational costs (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Vertovec 2004). The significant increase in the amount of worldwide remittances has also contributed to certain nations' GDP as well as to a global economy (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; UNFPA 2006). Although both return visits and remittances are parts of transnationalism, remittances are more likely to be influenced by the financial need of those who live in the home country than return visits.

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[4] One study of children of Chinese migrants describes the experience of return visits as the bridging of identity between being "Chinese" and being "Chinese Americans" (Louie 2002).

Assimilation and Transnationalism

Transnational literature suggests several forms of relationships between assimilation and transnational engagement among immigrants. Figure 1 shows three analytical relationships between immigrants' exposure to the US and the level of transnational engagement: two of which are expected by the transnational perspective; and one is expected by the assimilation perspective.

Line 1 shows the expected pattern of transnational involvement based on the classical assimilation theory which predicts that as immigrants become exposed to their host society, their level of home engagement would decline. The degree of the decline, however, is much debated. On one hand, Alba and Nee (2003) argue that transnationalism will decline significantly after the third generation because of language barriers between the native-born and their relatives in the sending countries, and the ties will disappear eventually. Empirically, many studies show the considerable decline in transnational activities among the second generation. On the other hand, others argue that transnational engagement will not disappear completely even after the children of immigrants reach the third generation. Foner's analysis on Latino communities suggests that this is possible because of the low cost of airfare and the constant inflow of new immigrants from Latin America, which may sustain the transnational field for later generations (Foner 2005). Despite the disagreement as to the degree of erosion by the third generation, both agree that the level of transnationalism would considerably decline as immigrants are exposed to American society. While the temporal framework of these studies rests on a long-term, generational view, the studies would expect a gradual decline of transnational activities for the first generation immigrants is expected as they increase their exposure to the US.

Line 2 represents the first group of transnational studies which argue that the level of transnational engagement will increase as immigrants' exposure to host society increases. Portes and colleagues' studies on transnationalism among Latino immigrants have consistently found that transnationalism is associated with highly assimilated immigrants who have higher educational levels, more years in the US, and higher occupational status. They explain that conducting cross-national activities is a relatively complex task, and therefore requires a certain amount of income, social network, and education (Guarnizo, Portes and Haller 2003; Portes 2003; Portes, Escobar and Radford 2007; Portes, Haller and Guarnizo 2002).

Line 3 expresses another transnational argument, which emphasizes that establishing a new life in a destination country does not necessarily detract their economic, political, and social commitments to their country of origin (Foner 2000; Glick Schiller 1999; Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995; Levitt 2001). These authors show that maintaining multiple identities and loyalties is a normal part of immigrant life. According to Foner (2005), this applies to immigrants in New York City both at the turn of the 20th century and at the end of the 20th century. Foner's historical comparison of first generation immigrants in New York City revealed the sustained familial, economic, political, and cultural connections to the country of origin. Furthermore, Kasinitz et al. (2002) showed that transnational ties, as measured in return visits and remittances, are sustained and continue to play an important role even among the second-generation immigrants in New York. The amount of transnational involvement among immigrants, this line of argument predicts, is constant throughout their lifetime even with the increasing amount of exposure to host society.

The summary of previous literature poses an interesting puzzle: are assimilation and transnationalism at odds with each other? This study considers problematic that assimilation and transnational perspectives do not engage much with each other. In an attempt to provide an integrative framework, this study explains the ways in which both perspectives are at work in explaining immigrant assimilation and transnationalism.

[Figure 1]

Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

I suggest that both assimilation and the transnational engagement are processes that comprise common aspects of the adaptation process. Figure 2 shows my conceptual model which divides assimilation into two components: socioeconomic resources and attachment to American society. I argue that each component produces different mechanisms that link exposure and home engagement. This distinction was not made clear in previous literature, which complicated the debates on assimilation and transnationalism.

[Figure 2]

The first component of assimilation, i.e. socioeconomic resources, indicates income and educational levels that influence the capability of immigrants to engage in cross-national activities such as remittances and return visits. Having a sufficient income and a stable job, for example, would facilitate immigrants' return visits. Trips to Asian countries from the US are relatively expensive compared to trips between the US and Latin American countries, and require a certain amount of resources. Having money would allow immigrants to purchase airplane tickets and take vacation time from employment to visit their countries of origin. Thus, socioeconomic resources should be an important predictor for transnational engagement. Portes colleagues' studies, which found positive relationships between human capital and transnationalism among Latino immigrants, partially highlighted this path (Portes, Haller and Guarnizo 2002).

The second component of assimilation, attachment to the US, has been traditionally associated with their level of settlement in the US. In particular, the acquisition of citizenship and English proficiency are often identified as markers of immigrants' settlement in their destination society (Alba and Nee 2003). My study adds the location of their primary residence and a perceived level of discrimination as another indicator of attachment to the US. Having primary residence in the US should indicate their high level of connection to the US. The degree of discrimination should capture the contextual element of immigrant adaptation, suggested by the segmented assimilation theory. Those who are exposed to a high level of discrimination should have a low level of attachment to the US.

Attachment to the US influences the motivation of immigrants to engage in transnational activities. The assimilation perspective and transnational perspective disagree on the nature of the relationship between attachment to the destination society and engagement in the sending society. Assimilation theory predicts a zero-sum

relationship between attachment to the original country and attachment to the destination country. This theory would argue that the high level of attachment to the US would replace immigrants' old ties and attachment to their country of origin, and reduce their motivation to engage in transnational activities. If this theory holds, immigrants' involvement with their country of origin will decline, as they become exposed to the US. Alternatively, the transnational perspective claims that attachment may have no significant impact on the level of cross-national involvement. As suggested by a group of transnational scholars such as Glick Schiller (1995), immigrants are capable of maintaining multiple attachments: their level of attachment to their countries of origin may remain constant regardless of the level of attachment to the US.

Resources and attachment to the destination society may be influenced by the degree of exposure to the US. Gordon's assimilation model maintains that immigrants' exposure to American society increases the chance of interactions between immigrants and the native-born population. By interacting with the native-born population through schooling, employment, and other institutional settings, immigrants may learn English, obtain socioeconomic resources, establish their new life, and consequently develop attachment in the new society.

I use the number of years spent in the US and age of arrival as indicators of exposure. I include the age of arrival because it takes into account the developmental context of immigrant adaptation to the US. Foner, for example, points out that those who came to the US when they were young learn English and American customs more easily through schools and other institutions, and become engaged with life in the host country (Foner 2002). Put differently, the same amount of time spent in the US may provide different levels of exposure depending on when they arrived to the US: fiver years as a teenager in the US, for example, may offer more opportunities for exposure than five years in the US when an immigrant is in their 40s.

In sum, several hypotheses can be drawn to link the level of exposure to the level of home engagement under several conditions. Immigrants with greater exposure to the US are more likely to experience greater levels of both socioeconomic resources and attachment to the US. If the effect of socioeconomic assimilation outweighs that of attachment to the US, then this will result in greater levels of home engagement than those with less exposure. If the attachment to the US outweighs the availability of resources, then those with greater exposure will be less likely to engage in home engagement, such as sending money to and visiting their country of origin. If, as

suggested previously, the effect of attachment to the US is insignificant to the level of attachment to the country of origin, then, those with greatest exposure and consequently with greatest resources will be most likely to engage in transnational home engagement. It should be noted, however, that the causal relationship between the variables of assimilation and the level of home engagement is ambiguous.

Country of Origin

The relationships between assimilation and transnational activities may be complicated by immigrants' country of origin. The country of origin may affect the level of home engagement for three reasons. First, the home country's governmental initiatives or restrictions on travel, visas and citizenship can influence the immigrants' return visits (Portes et al. 2007; Haller and Landolt 2005; Waldinger 2007). Travel restrictions between the US and Vietnam until mid 1990s, for example, may hinder Vietnamese immigrants' visit to the country of origin. Second, the country of origin may indicate different contexts of exit which leads to different levels of home engagement. For example, immigrants who fled political prosecution in their original countries may seek integration into a destination society and may be less likely to engage in the affairs of their home country (Portes 2003; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Third, economic discrepancies between the country of origin and the US may motivate the immigrants to send remittances back home. Economic obligation to send money home would be stronger for those who came from economically disadvantaged countries. Vietnamese, Filipino, and Indian immigrants are more likely to send money than other nationalities because of the relative economic poverty of their countries of origin (Table 1). Immigrants from Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan, by contrast, are hypothesized to be less likely to send money because of the relative economic wealth of their respective sending countries.

Methods

Data

Data for this study come from a first-generation Asian sample of the National Latino and Asian American Survey (NLAAS). NLAAS was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health to conduct research on psychiatric disorders among Asian and Latino populations in the US. NLAAS collected information from May 2002 to November 2003 from nationally representative samples of adults from four Latino groups (Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Latino descent), four Asian groups (Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and other Asian descent), and a control group of non-Hispanic, non-Asian, white respondents. Household population aged 18 years or older, who met self-identified ethnic group criteria, and those who lived in one of the 50 states and Washington D.C. were asked to participate in the interview survey. Interviews were conducted in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalong or Vietnamese.

Respondents in the NLAAS core sample were selected using a multistage stratified area probability sampling design. Households were sampled from primary sampling units, i.e. metropolitan statistical areas or county units, and secondary sampling units formed from contiguous groupings of Census blocks, which were selected using probability proportionate to size. An eligible respondent in Latino and Asian households was then asked to participate in interviews[5]. The overall sample consists of 2,095 Asians, 2,554 Latinos, and 215 whites. The response rate was 65.6%. My sample consists of Asian respondents who answered that they were born abroad. The sample size of the first generation Asian Americans is 1639, which is about 78% of the entire Asian American respondents (Heeringa et al. 2004).

The core sampling procedure of the NLAAS resulted in a nationally representative, household sample of Asian Americans. Table 2 summarizes the profiles of the Asian American sample and the first generation Asian American sample of the NLAAS, in comparison with Asian American population from the 2000 Census (Reeves and Bennett 2004 December). The demographic characteristics of the NLAAS sample resemble those of Asian Americans in the 2000 Census. Noticeable differences include: Asian Americans of Indian origin are slightly under represented in the NLAAS; those aged between 18 and 64 and the foreign-born are over-represented in the NLAAS; and the median household income is slightly higher for the NLAAS respondents.

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[5] If there is more than one eligible respondent, a single respondent was randomly selected by the interviewer. For the detailed description, see Heeringa et al. (2004).

[Table 2]

The NLAAS data are particularly useful for this paper's purpose because the survey asked not only respondents' levels of adaptation in the US, but also asked the nature and degrees of ties they have with their country of origin. Also, the nationally representative data will allow us to address the prevalence and correlates of transnationalism among Asian immigrants in general. This is particularly important since one of the criticisms of transnational studies has been that studies were often based on qualitative methods and tended to overemphasize the prevalence of transnationalism (Portes et al. 2002; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). In addition, the NLAAS contains a large sample of the first generation respondents (N= 1639) which allows us to conduct systematic analysis on the effects of countries of origin. One of the disadvantages of this dataset, however, is that it does not include those who permanently returned to their home country, which might influence the conclusion of this study. Another disadvantage is that the data are cross-sectional. The lack of longitudinal data limits our ability to test the causal effects of assimilation on home engagement. Despite these disadvantages, NLAAS provides enough information to test this paper's hypotheses regarding immigrants' continued transnational engagement.

Measurement

Dependent variable. My dependent variables, immigrants' return visits and remittances to a country of origin, are operationalized as the following three measures: the overall frequency of return visits; the number of visits within the previous year; and whether or not the respondent had sent remittances to the country of origin.

Previous literature has also used remittances and return visits to capture immigrants' involvement with their country of origin. Rumbaut (2002) for example used frequency of visits and remittances as measures of transnational behaviors among children of Latino and Asian immigrants in San Diego. Kasinitz et al. (2002) used return visits and remittances as measurements of transnational ties among the children of immigrants in New York. Waldinger's analysis on Latino transnationalism also used remittances and travels to the native country as indicators of transnationalism (Waldinger 2007).

Table 3 shows the distribution of the first dependent variable, the overall frequency of visits to the country of origin. The questionnaire asked "How often have you returned to your country of origin (the country of origin of your parents, if respondent was born in the US) – often, sometimes, rarely, or never?" The variable was

recoded as either 0=rarely/never or 1=sometimes/often. There are two reasons for this: the wording of the question suggests that "rarely" and "never" imply negative assessment, while "sometimes" and "often" imply positive assessment of overall frequency of visits; also this coding ensures that each cell contains enough samples to conduct statistical analyses.

[Table 3]

Table 4 shows the distribution of the actual number of visits to the home country within the previous one year. Respondents were asked "How many times have you returned to your country of origin (the country of origin of your parents, if respondent was born in the US) in the last year?" Since the distribution is highly skewed, with 57% of respondents who did not visit their country of origin at all within a year, it was recoded into a binary variable where 0 means no visits and 1 means once or more visits in a year.

[Table 4]

With respect to remittances, the following question was asked to only those who were born abroad. "Do you send money to relatives in your country of origin?" Table 5 shows that 45% of the first generation respondents answered that they send money to their country of origin.

[Table 5]

Data show that these three measures of transnational engagement are empirically related to each other. Tables 6 and 7 show associations between overall return visits and the number of visits within a year, and between return visits and remittances. The first bivariate table (Table 6) shows that overall return visits and the number of visits within a year are closely related, and both measures represent the degree of contact to the country of origin. Those who visit their country of origin often or sometimes are much more likely to visit their country in the previous year. The difference is 45 percentage points. Table 7 shows that return visits and remittances are also related at a moderate level, indicating that both return visits and remittances represent the theoretical concept of transnational engagement. Those who answer that they often or sometimes visit their country of origin are slightly more likely to send remittances. At the same time, the remittances and return visits seem to capture somewhat different aspects of transnationalism. As discussed before, remittances may be dictated by the financial needs of those left behind in the country of origin, while return visits are influenced by the desire of immigrants to maintain connection to family in the country of origin.

Despite the slight difference, both return visits and remittances seem to be empirically related and both represent the concept of transnationalism.

[Table 6]

[Table 7]

Independent Variables. One of my key independent variables, exposure to the US is measured as the duration of residence and age of arrival in the US. Duration of residence was measured as the number of years immigrants spent in the US. The longer immigrants reside in the US, the more chances they have to interact with the native-born and adapt to the culture and custom of the US. Six categories were created: 5 years or less; between 6 and 10 years; between 11 and 15 years; between 16 and 20 years; between 21 and 25 years; and 26 years and longer. This variable also serves as a measurement of immigrant's current age when the age of arrival is included in multivariate models. The age of arrival was collapsed into 4 binary categories: arrival before age 13, between 13 and 19; between 20 and 24; and after 25. Those who arrived in the US before age 13 are treated as a referent group. The younger the immigrants were when they arrived in the US, the easier it is for them to be exposed to the American society and adapt to new culture.

Intervening Variables. Two components of assimilation are measured as follow. Socioeconomic resources are analyzed as the level of educational attainment and household income controlling for the household size. Educational attainment is measured as the number of years of schooling. Dummy variables were created to represent: less than a high school education (less than 12 years); high school graduate (12 years); some college education (13-15 years); college graduate (16 years); and postgraduate (more than 16 years). Household income was divided by the size of the household and collapsed into 4 categories: less than $10,000; between $25,000 and $24,999; between $25,000 and $49,999; and $50,000 and above. The referent group is less than $10,000.

The degree of attachment to the US is measured as acquisition of citizenship, location of primary residence, perceived sense of discrimination, and English proficiency. All of the variables are dichotomous variables: naturalized or not naturalized; primary residence in the US or abroad; high or low level of perceived discrimination; and fair/poor or good/excellent level of English proficiency.

Another key independent variable is the respondents' country of origin. Respondents were asked about their country of birth, from which dichotomous variables were created for Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan combined, Vietnam, India, the

Philippines, East Asia (Japan and Korea combined), and Other Asia. Mainland China is treated as a reference group because, as seen in the previous section (Table 1), immigrants from Mainland China are a mixture of highly educated professionals and rural peasants, and thus the demographic profiles of individuals from Mainland Chinese are likely to be the average of other nationalities.

Following previous literature on transnationalism, my model also includes demographic variables such as family status, and gender. Family status was created by combining marital status (married, and not married) and the presence of dependents aged under 18 (with children, and without children). As a result, four categories of family status were created: single without children; single with children; married without children; and married with children. The location of their families is, however, unknown.

Analytic Methods

Because of the dichotomous nature of my dependent variables, binary logistic regression was used to analyze the multivariate relationships between the exposure to the US, countries of origin, various and home engagement. For each dependent variable, four logistic regressions were created to explore the relationships among variables. The first model includes the country of origin as a predictor of home visits, with Mainland China as the reference category. Model 2 introduces respondents' exposure to the US, measured as duration of residence and age of arrival in the US. Model 3 adds one of the intervening variables, socioeconomic resources, along with demographic controls. Model 4 adds another set of key intervening variables which measure the level of attachment to the US - the acquisition of citizenship, primary residence in the US, a low sense of discrimination, and better English proficiency.

All the logistic regressions adjust for the hierarchical nature of the multistage survey data. The NLAAS sampling procedures required the construction of weighting corrections to take into account joint probabilities of selection under the three components of the sampling design. The SAS 9.1 PROC SURVEYLOGISTIC procedure was used to estimate coefficients and standard errors while incorporating the NLAAS sampling designs with stratification, clustering, and unequal weighting.

Results

Bivariate Results

Table 8 shows the bivariate descriptive statistics by country of origin. It includes the unweighted frequencies of each country of origin and weighted percentages of all the variables. It shows several distinct profiles for certain nationalities. For example, Asian Indians tend to have a high educational attainment (beyond college), high income, and tend to be young and recent immigrants. This suggests that they may have come to the US to pursue a graduate degree or to work as professional workers. In terms of transnational engagement, Asian Indians are the most likely to visit their country of origin among all nationalities.

By contrast, Vietnamese immigrants are most likely to have low educational attainment and low income, but at the same time most likely to be integrated to the US in terms of citizenship and the low perception of discrimination. These characteristics suggest that many of them came as refugees with little human capital. Their involvement with the country of origin is also unique: they are least likely to engage in return visits to their country of origin, but more likely to send remittances than other nationalities. The restriction on travel between the US and Vietnam may limit their capability to visit home.

Immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, and other Asia show two distinctive characteristics. First, many are young, single individuals who probably came to the US when they were children. It is likely that they came to the US with other family members. Second, there is a disproportionate share of high educational attainments. This group of individuals may have come to the US as students. Their financial involvement with the country of origin is very low. They are least likely to send remittances to their relatives back home. This may be due to the fact that their countries of origins are economically developed and their relatives may not need financial support.

Judging from the bivariate results, it looks that factors in the country of origin influence the type of migrants who come to the US, especially in terms of socioeconomic status, and to some extent, their nature of attachment to the US. Table 8 also indicates that Chinese immigrants appear to have average characteristics of all immigrants.

[Table 8]

Multivariate Results

1. Return Visits

    a. Overall frequency of visits

Country of origin. Table 9 shows the results of four logistic regression models on the overall frequency of visits. Those who answered that they often or sometimes return to their country of origin were coded as 1. The series of models show strong, gross and net effects of countries of origin. The first model shows that compared to those who came from Mainland China, immigrants of Hong Kong and Taiwanese origin are 2.7 times as likely to answer that they visit their country of origin often or sometimes. Similarly, those from India and the Philippines are 3.7 times and 1.6 times as likely as Chinese immigrants to visit their home countries. Vietnamese immigrants, on the other hand, are much less likely to answer that they often or sometimes visit their home country. In fact, they are half as likely to do so compared to Chinese immigrants. The difference between Mainland China and East Asia (Japan and Korea) is not significant. Model 2 shows that the relationships between the country of origin and return visits continue to hold when the age of arrival and respondent's current age are controlled. For individuals from Hong Kong and Taiwan, the relationship becomes even stronger, which suggests that the effect of being from Hong Kong and Taiwan was suppressed by respondent's age and age of arrival. The high propensity of return visits among immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan is somewhat offset by the fact that Hong Kong/Taiwanese immigrants are more likely to have come to the US before age 13, which is associated with the low propensity of visiting the country of origin. The direct effect of country of origin on return visits is significant and stable even after controlling for individual characteristics such as socioeconomic resources (education, and income), demographic characteristics (gender and family status), and the degree of attachment to the US.

The negative relationship between being of Vietnamese origin and the odds of visiting the country of origin is consistent with the two hypotheses: the context of exit hypothesis which predicted that emigrating as a refugee reduces the likelihood of being able to visit their home country; and the structural hypothesis which predicted that the governmental restriction on visiting the country would limit their return visits. Additionally, the positive effect of coming from Hong Kong/Taiwan as opposed to Mainland China net of individual characteristics, may suggest that the current political regime of the sending country/region has a direct effect on the immigrants' return visits. In addition, my empirical results show a strong, positive relationship between coming from India and home visits. Although this relationship was not hypothesized, it helps us speculate other factors, such as the presence of immediate family members in the home

country that were not accounted for in my heuristic model. I will flesh out this point in the following section.

Exposure. Model 2 through 4 reveal several characteristics of the relationship between exposure to the US and return visits. First, Model 2 shows that the duration of residence does not affect the likelihood of visiting home. It also shows that arriving in the US before age 13 has a significant and net effect on reducing the likelihood of visiting their home country compared to those who arrived later. Second, the effect of exposure does not seem to be mediated by resources or attachment to the US. Adding resources and attachment in models 3 and 4 slightly changes the coefficients for the age of arrival, but most of the effects remain unchanged. Third, there is little variation in effects of age of arrival above age 13. The difference between coefficients is most pronounced among individuals who came to the US before age 13, indicating that those who came as children have a much lower propensity of return visits than the rest of respondents. In sum, these findings show that arrival to the US as a child (before age 13), rather than the degree of exposure, has the strongest net effect on the propensity of return visits.

What, then, explains the low propensity of visiting home among those who came to the US before age 13? One possible factor is the presence of their immediate family in the US. It is likely that those who came to the US as children were accompanying their parents and siblings. If immigrants have immediate family members in the US, they may not feel the need to return to their country of origin to see relatives. The presence of family members in the US could reduce the incentive to visit the country of origin and lead to the low propensity of return visits regardless of their level of resources and attachment to the US. By contrast, having immediate family members in the home country may explain the relatively high propensity of home visits especially among Indian immigrants. Bivariate statistics (Table 8) showed that migrants from India tend to be young immigrants who recently came to the US as adults. These individuals may still have parents and siblings left in India, and this may create a strong motive to go back to their country of origin. A similar mechanism could apply to those from Hong Kong and Taiwan, although the relationship is complicated by a relatively large (25%) group of individuals who came to the US before age 13. Future studies may need to distinguish the geographical location of their immediate family members with particular attention to immigrants from India as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Resources. Model 3 added one of the intervening variables, socioeconomic resources, along with demographic controls to predict the frequency of return visits. It

was hypothesized hat socioeconomic resources would have a positive effect on return visits, and filter the effect of exposure and the country of origin. The results partially support these arguments. Consistent with my hypothesis, the household income controlling for the family size was found to be positively associated with the overall frequency of return visits. This suggests that the financial resource may allow Asian immigrants to purchase tickets and increases the chance to return home for a visit, which may positively influence the overall assessment of return visits. It also appears that the effect of income increases but at a decreasing rate, which may be due to declining marginal returns.

Socioeconomic resources, however, do not appear to mediate the effect of exposure and the country of origin. Introduction of measures of socioeconomic resources in Model 3, along with demographic controls slightly reduces the effects of exposure (especially the age of arrival) and some of the effects of the country of origin on return visits. This indicates that the effects of exposure and countries of origin are partially filtered through socioeconomic assimilation, but exposure and the country of origin still have a significant amount of independent effect on return visits. Since the socioeconomic resource also has a direct influence on return visits, the three variables, i.e. the age of arrival, the country of origin, and the resource, appear to work independently to affect return visits.

Attachment. Model 4 added variables that measure the level of attachment to the US, i.e. the acquisition of citizenship, primary residence in the US, a low sense of discrimination, and better English proficiency. It shows that these variables are not associated with the level of return visits. Odds ratios indicate that those who are attached to the US, in terms of citizenship, the low level of perceived discrimination, and better control of English language, are slightly more likely to visit the country of origin, but these patterns are not statistically significant.

Model 4 also shows that the introduction of attachment variables does not change the coefficients of other background variables. The odds ratios of household income, age of arrival, and country of origin remain unchanged after the introduction of the attachment to the US. This suggests that the impact of income is not mediated by attachment. Again, country of origin, exposure to the US, and resources have independent influences on return visits, and attachment to the US is not a mediating factor.

Recall our discussion on the classical assimilation and transnational perspectives (Figure 2). The assimilation perspective claimed that attachment to the country of origin

will decline as immigrants settle into a new country and grow attached to the new society. The transnational perspective alternatively posited that immigrants will remain attached to the country of origin regardless of their levels of attachment to their new society.

This study's results render some support for the transnational perspective since the relationship between the attachment to the US and the incidence of home visits was found to be insignificant. This may be due to the imperfect measurement of attachment to the US, but it is possible that for immigrants, the level of home attachment is fixed regardless of the level of attachment to the US. As suggested by one group of transnational scholars (Glick Schiller et al. 1995) immigrants may not lose their attachment to their home country even after their settlement in destination society. If attachment to the US and attachment to the country of origin are not competing concepts, the frequency of return visits can be determined partly by the amount of resources immigrants have.

In summary, the full model indicates that much of return visits among immigrants can be attributed to the characteristics of their country of origin and whether or not they came as a child to the US. It was speculated that migrating to the US with immediate family members influences the frequency of return visits. This also suggested that the location of the immediate family members, instead of exposure or duration of residence, might be what needs to be considered in transnational engagement. Income was found to have a direct effect on return visits, which indicated that resources enable immigrants to engage in return visits. By contrast, attachment to the US was not found to be significantly related to the propensity of return visits. The result is consistent with the idea that immigrants may have continued attachment to the country of origin regardless of their level of attachment to the US, and therefore the likelihood of returning home for visits is influenced by their ability (i.e. income) to purchase tickets and visit home. It was also found that attachment to the US and attachment to the country of origin are not necessarily competing concepts.

[Table 9]

b. The number of return visits within a previous year

Table 10 shows logistic regressions on the number of visits to the country of origin in the previous year. Those who answered that they returned once or more to the country of origin in the previous year were coded as 1. Since the results replicate the findings in the previous section, I will focus on new findings that extend the previous section's conclusions.

The country of origin. The country-level characteristics of Vietnam, and Hong Kong and Taiwan, relative to Mainland China were found to have a significant influence on return visits even when we restrict our measure of return visits to the number of actual visits within a previous year. Those from Hong Kong or Taiwan are about 2.8 times as likely as Mainland Chinese to have visited their countries of origin within the previous year. Immigrants from Vietnam are about a half as likely as the Mainland Chinese to have visited the homeland within the previous year. The country-level effects for these two groups continue to hold even after controlling for individual levels of exposure, demographic characteristics, resources and attachment to the US. For other countries, however, the country-level characteristics do not have much impact on the number of visits within the previous year.

The result for Vietnamese immigrants is consistent with the context of exit hypothesis, which predicted that emigrating as a refugee reduces the likelihood of engaging in the lives of the home country. Since the question asked about the respondents' return visits between 2001 and 2002 (the survey was administered in 2002 and 2003), the governmental restriction on traveling to Vietnam should not affect the return frequency at this moment. Instead, the low propensity of return frequency among immigrants from Vietnam may be best explained by the fact that Vietnamese immigrants are more likely to have come to the US as refugees, which is associated with the low propensity of visiting the country of origin.

Family Status. The significant effect of family status on the number of return visits also suggests the potential importance of having family members, especially spouses and children, in the US. Models 3 and 4 indicate that being single and without children increases the odds of visiting the country of origin. Since the relationship is significant even after controlling for other factors, it suggests that having spouses or children in the US constrains the immigrants' capacity to visit the home country, net of their monetary ability to visit the country of origin. As mentioned in the previous section, this result also suggests that having immediate family members, i.e. a spouse and children in addition to parents and siblings in the US, seems to limit immigrants' return visits. The relationship may have become significant because of a close temporal link between the timing of return visits and immigrants' current life stage.

In summary, the country of origin, arriving in the US before age 13, and economic resources were found to have significant and net effects on the number of return visits within a previous year. It was also speculated that the presence of family members such

as spouses and children in addition to parents and siblings, in the US may be the underlying factor that reduces the propensity of the number of return visits. These findings strengthen the previous section's conclusions. This may be due to a close temporal link between the independent variables and return visits.

[Table 10]

2. Remittances

Table 11 shows 4 logistic regressions on the propensity of sending remittances to the country of origin. Those who answered that they send money to relatives in the home country were coded as 1.

Country of origin. Models 1 through 4 show that the country of origin has significant gross effect on odds of sending remittances net of individual characteristics. As hypothesized, those from economically developed countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea are much less likely to send money than those from Mainland China. They are about 70% to 85% less likely to send remittances to their countries of origin compared to Mainland Chinese immigrants. By contrast, Vietnamese and Filipino immigrants are about 2.3 to 3 times as likely as Mainland Chinese immigrants to send money. The effect of country of origin is significant and directly associated with remittances even after controlling for individual-level characteristics such as exposure to the US, socioeconomic resources, and attachment to the US. It seems that the need of those left in the country of origin accounts for the propensity of sending money home net of other background characteristics. The difference between India and Mainland China is not significant. This may be due to the fact that Indian immigrants are relatively wealthy immigrants (Table 8), and their families may not represent the national average of India, which may have diminished the difference between China and India.

Exposure. Models 2 through 4 indicate that arriving in the US before age 13 has a strong, negative relationship with sending remittances. Again, the important distinction seems to be whether the immigrant came as a child or not since the effect is increasing at a decreasing rate. Immigrants who came to the US with their parents and siblings may have tenuous ties with other relatives and may feel less compelled to send money to them.

The absence of family ties in the country of origin also seems to play an important role in determining the likelihood of sending remittances. More than 25 years of residence in the US reduces the likelihood of sending remittances to relatives back home by about 60%. Replacing the duration of residence in the US with respondent's current

age also showed that respondents' current age has a negative and independent effect on sending remittances (results not shown). Although the results are inconclusive because some of the coefficients are not significant, the duration of residence and respondent's current age appear to capture immigrants' waning ties with family members in the home country. As immigrants grow old, they may experience the loss of relatives and this may reduce the likelihood of sending money to them net of other factors.

Resources. Although socioeconomic resources were hypothesized to facilitate the propensity of sending remittances, the effect of income on sending remittances was found to be limited. Models 4 shows that two categories of household income, i.e. earning $25,000 to $49,999 year and earning $50,000 or more, significantly increase the chance of sending remittances when compared to the income of less than $10,000. The magnitude of the effect of income is greatest at the $25,000-$49,999 category. These results indicate that the financial ability to send money does not fully explain the act of sending remittances to their country of origin. Having a certain amount of income (more than $25,000 a year) does help immigrants to send remittances, but higher levels of income do no necessarily result in the higher odds of sending remittances.

Attachment. Model 4 shows that variables that measure the level of attachment to the US are not significantly associated with the likelihood of sending remittances. Odds ratios indicate that those who are not attached to the US, in terms of citizenship, primary location, perceived discrimination, and the control of the English language, are slightly more likely to send money to the country of origin, but this result needs further investigation since the coefficients are not significant. Model 4 also shows that the effects of the country of origin, having come to the US as children, more than 20 years of residence in the US and the household income of more than $25,000, remain unchanged after the introduction of the attachment to the US. The level of attachment to the US does not seem to mediate any of the other factors.

My heuristic model (Figure 2) provided 3 hypotheses that predicted a negative and a non-significant relationships between attachment and remittances, and a positive association between resources and remittances. Since the effects of attachment and resources on remittances are limited, it may be that immigrants maintain a certain level of attachment to the country of origin regardless of their levels of attachment to the host society and that the presence or absence of ties with their family members in the home country determines their decision to send money home. Attachment to the US and financial home engagement, again, do not seem to be competing with each other.

In summary, the economic need of those left behind in the country of origin, and the presence of family members in the home country were speculated to affect the likelihood of immigrants' sending remittances. My results suggest that exposure to American society is important not because it indicates the level of immigrants' adaptation and attachment to the US, but because it indexes the presence of ties they have with their family in the country of origin.

A few differences between remittances and return visits were found. While the presence of immediate family members in the US was suggested to be an important factor for visiting home, it looks that the presence of family in the original country is also important in predicting the propensity of sending remittances. Also, it was found that having resources (i.e. higher income levels) does not necessarily lead to higher propensity of remittances. When it comes to the decision of sending remittances, family obligation may be more important than the level of resources. If needed, immigrants seem to send money for family left behind if they have a certain amount of income in the destination country.

[Table 11]

Conclusion

Previous literature tended to posit the assimilation and transnationalism perspectives at opposite extremes. An assimilation perspective, for example, drew an image of immigrants' transnational engagement declining as they became assimilated to the US. Portes' studies, on the other hand, claimed that the more assimilated immigrants are, the more likely they are to engage in transnational activities (Portes 2003; Portes et al. 2002). Still others argued that assimilation and transnationalism are not necessarily related to each other (Glick Schiller et al. 1995; Levitt 2001). Because these perspectives did not engage much with each other, they were often treated as competing paradigms.

This study analytically synthesized the two perspectives by distinguishing resources from attachment, instead of treating them as the same concept, i.e. assimilation. By acknowledging the two mediating paths between exposure to the US and transnational engagement (i.e. return visits and remittances), the model incorporated the three types of relationships between assimilation and transnationalism: 1) having socioeconomic resources (such as education and income) increases the chance of home engagement; 2) attachment to the US decreases the level of home engagement; and 3) immigrants continue to have home engagement regardless of the level of attachment to the US.

Empirical tests using the nationally representative sample of Asian Americans found some support for the third and a part of the first hypotheses. In support of hypothesis 3, attachment to the US was not found to be significantly related to the level of home engagement whether it is financial engagement or social engagement. The result is consistent with the view that immigrants maintain a certain level of emotional attachment to the country of origin regardless of their level of attachment to the US. Additionally, a part of hypothesis 1 was supported in a sense that the economic resource (i.e. income) was found to influence the frequency of return visits. However, this was not a result of greater exposure to the US as previous literature assumed. Multiple regression models showed that the effect of exposure was not mediated by income, or attachment. The income level was found to influence the return visits net of other predictors.

Beyond the debates between assimilation and transnationalism, this study highlighted several of the factors that may influence immigrants' return visits and remittances: characteristics of country of origin and familial ties with their country of origin. The country of origin, a variable argued to be comprised of the economic needs of families in the home country, governmental policies, and context of exit, was found to have a gross and net effect on home engagement. This result points to the need to specify

which aspect of these country-level characteristics is more important than the others in determining the levels of transnational activities. It was also indirectly suggested that the location of immediate family members influences the level of home engagement. The presence of immediate family in the US and the absence of relatives in the country of origin appear to reduce the likelihood of transnational engagement. The family obligation may be an important predictor of immigrant transnationalism.

This study has several implications for the literature of immigrant transnationalism. First, it suggests that immigrants are capable of maintaining multiple loyalties and attachments. This view is different from the image portrayed by the classical assimilation perspective. The classical assimilation perspective assumed that immigrants' ties with the country of origin are incompatible with their new ties with the destination country (Gordon 1964). My study suggests that family obligation and engagement can be fulfilled beyond national borders without compromising loyalty to destination society. Yet, my analysis also suggests that the patterns of transnational engagement are influenced by national contexts. Although immigrants maintain attachment across borders, this does not mean that the nation-state is irrelevant. Immigrants' home engagement is influenced by political and economic contexts of the country of origin and the destination country. Capturing immigrant experiences through a transnational lens is important, but it may still require a careful attention to the national-level contexts.

Second, determinants of transnationalism are more complicated than previous literature (Portes 2003, Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995) suggested. Analyses of transnationalism tended to oversimplify the relationship between immigrants' level of assimilation to the US and their level of transnationalism. Some argued that immigrants who are assimilated to the US are more likely to engage in cross-national activities (Portes 2003), while others suggested that transnationalism is not associated with particular types of immigrant individuals (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995). My study suggests more detailed understanding of the relationship. It shows that it is not the exposure to American society, but economic resources and the presence of family members in the country of origin that increase the likelihood of transnational engagement. Nuanced framework may be necessary to recognize the various relationships between immigrant adaptation and transnationalism.

Third, this study points out the importance of including immigrants from Asian countries in the study of transnationalism. Previous studies of transnationalism have focused primarily on Latino immigrants and did not consider larger trends of the

experience of Asian immigrants (Portes, Haller and Guarnizo 2002). The current study shows that there is a certain level of home visits and remittances among Asian immigrants and that they are patterned by resources, family status, and the country of origin. A systematic comparison between Asian immigrants and Latino immigrants would allow us to test whether or not these findings would hold true for Latino immigrants. For instance, would an income level have a similar effect on Latino transnationalism when the geographical distance between the US and many of the Latin countries is relatively small? Would the same relationship between assimilation and transnationalism found in this study hold true for immigrants from different countries of origin? Such inquiries may provide an insight for building new hypotheses regarding immigrant transnationalism and their adaptation to the US.

Figures

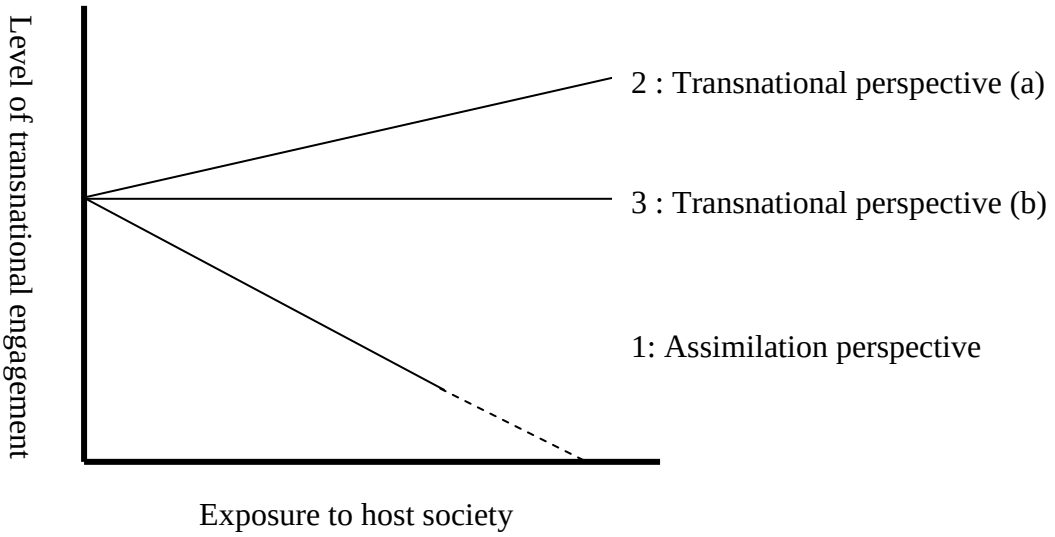

Figure1. Conceptual relationships between transnational engagement and exposure to the US

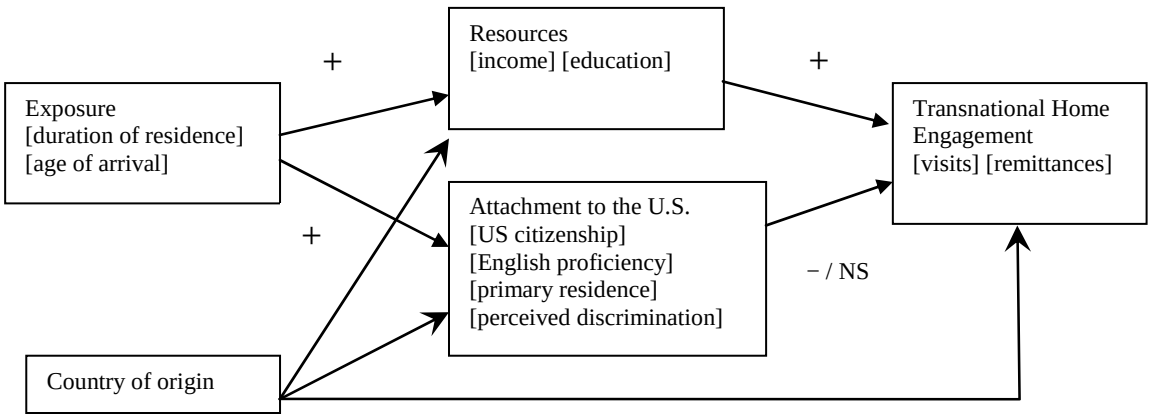

Figure 2. Conceptual model

Tables

Table 1. Types of immigrants and characteristics of Asian countries and regions

	Types of immigrants	Life expectancy (year)	GDP per capita (US$)	Political regime as of 2002
India	Professionals	63	$480	Democracy
Vietnam	Students, Refugees	70	$444	Communism/Socialism, No diplomatic relations with the US until 1997
The Phillipines	Nurses, Doctors	70	$1,018	Democracy
China	Students, Rural peasants	71	$1,106	Communism/Socialism
Taiwan	Professionals, Students	76	$14,572	Democracy under China's "one country, two systems" policy
Hong Kong	Professionals, Students	81	$25,483	Democracy under China's "one country, two systems" policy, Democray under British rule until 1997
Korea	Students, Small business owners	77	$11,936	Democracy
Japan		82	$37,216	Democracy

Sources: Portes and Rumbaut (2006), Levitt and Waters (2002), Liang and Morooka (2004), Alba and Nee (2003), Min (2006), World Bank (2005) for Taiwan's life expectancy, World Bank (2002)

Table 2. Comparison of Asian Americans in Census 2000, the National Latino and Asian American Survey (NLAAS), and NLAAS first generation sample

	Census (2000)	NLAAS (2002-2003)	*NLAAS-Census difference*	NLAAS first generation
Unweighted N	10.2 mil	2095	-	1639
Ethnic Composition (weighted %)				
Chinese	23.8	27.3	*3.5*	30.9
Filipino	18.3	20.0	*1.7*	19.6
Asian Indian	16.2	9.1	*-7.1*	10.8
Vietnamese	10.9	12.1	*1.2*	15.3
Korean	10.5	7.0	*-3.5*	7.5
Japanese	7.8	7.9	*0.1*	2.5
Other	12.4	16.6	*4.2*	13.5
Age (weighted %)				
<18	23.9	-	-	-
18-64	68.4	89.7	*21.3*	89.7
>65	7.7	10.3	*2.6*	10.3
Median Age	33.0	39.0	*6.0*	41.0
Nativity (weighted %)				
Native-born	31.1	23.1	*-8.0*	0.0
Foreign-born	68.9	76.9	*8.0*	100.0
Educational Attainment (weighted % on 25 and older)				
Less than highschool	19.6	16.2	*-3.4*	19.4
Highschool graduate	15.8	15.6	*-0.2*	15.0
Some college	20.5	23.4	*2.9*	20.7
College graduate or more	44.1	44.8	*0.7*	44.8
Median Family Income ($)	59,324	65,000	*5,676*	62,500

Sources: Reeves et al. (2004), NLAAS 2002-2003

Table 3. Univariate statistics of the overall frequency of visits to the country of origin (NLAAS 2002-2003)

	unweighted n	weighted %	s.e.
"How often have you returned to your country of origin?"			
1=often	170	11.8	1.0
2=sometimes	444	27.1	1.4
3=rarely	532	32.2	2.2
4=never	489	29.0	1.9
missing	4		
"How often have you returned to your country of origin?"			
0=rarely/never	1021	61.2	1.6
1=often/sometimes	614	38.8	1.6
missing	4		

Table 4. Univariate statistics of the number of visits to the country of origin within the previous year (NLAAS 2002-2003)

	unweighted n	weighted %	s.e.
"How many times have you returned to your country of origin?"			
0	1192	57.2	1.9
1	379	37.1	2.0
2	46	4.1	0.9
3	8	0.8	0.3
4	5	0.4	0.1
5	2	0.2	0.2
6	1	0.0	0.0
8	1	0.1	0.1
10	1	0.0	0.0
missing	4		
"How many times have you returned to your country of origin?"			
0=did not return	1192	57.2	1.9
1=once or more	443	42.8	1.9
missing	4		

Table 5. Univariate statistics of sending remittances to the country of origin (NLAAS 2002-2003)

	unweighted n	weighted %	s.e.
"Do you send money to relatives in your country of origin?"			
0=no	841	54.5	2.0
1=yes	784	45.5	2.0
missing	14		

Table 6. Bivariate relationship between the overall frequency of return visits and the number of visits last year (NLAAS 2002-2003)

		The number of visits last year		
		0	more than once	All
Overall frequency of return				
Rarely	N (weighted)	870	129	999
Never	row %	87	13	100
Sometimes	N (weighted)	268	367	635
Often	row %	42	58	100
All	N (weighted)	1138	496	1634
	row %	70	30	100

Table 7. Bivariate relationship between the overall frequency of return visits and remittances (NLAAS 2002-2003)

		Do you send money?		
		No	Yes	All
Overall frequency of return				
Rarely	N (weighted)	590	403	992
Never	row %	59	41	100
Sometimes	N (weighted)	296	336	632
Often	row %	47	53	100
All	N (weighted)	885	739	1624
	row %	55	45	100

Table 8. Background characteristics and home engagement by country of origin (unweighted N and weighted %) NLAAS 2002-2003

Country of Origin	Total		India	Vietnam	Philippines	China	Hong Kong Taiwan	Korea Japan	Other Asia
	N	wtd %	N=128	N=525	N=345	N=245	N=159	N=93	N=143
Age									
< 35 years old	547	35.1	54.0	28.2	23.0	27.3	36.6	43.9	47.1
35-49 yrs old	608	34.7	31.2	37.4	37.6	37.6	38.7	29.2	26.4
50-64 yrs old	350	19.9	10.2	22.9	24.0	18.2	21.2	16.0	24.6
> 65 yrs old	134	10.3	4.6	11.6	15.4	16.9	3.5	11.0	1.8
Age of arrival in US									
< 13 years old	237	16.5	7.7	11.1	15.4	7.1	24.8	27.8	33.9
13-19 yrs old	208	11.2	2.7	14.2	11.6	7.8	15.4	12.3	14.8
20-24 yrs old	315	20.2	35.5	18.3	18.6	12.6	18.3	25.6	17.5
> 25 yrs old	878	52.1	54.0	56.3	54.3	72.4	41.5	34.4	33.9
Year in US									
< 8 years	411	24.4	50.9	20.6	19.1	29.6	13.9	17.1	16.2
8-14	434	25.0	18.1	35.9	21.0	32.6	22.3	16.2	22.4
15-22	398	25.7	18.7	24.3	25.1	20.7	36.0	31.2	27.1
> 23	396	24.9	12.2	19.2	34.9	17.1	27.7	35.6	34.3
Gender									
Female	868	53.5	44.4	54.4	57.9	54.8	51.2	55.1	52.4
Male	771	46.5	55.6	45.6	42.1	45.2	48.8	44.9	47.6
Family status									
single no children	349	23.0	15.9	19.0	20.1	17.8	31.4	45.4	23.2
single with children	93	4.5	0.0	6.7	6.0	4.3	3.2	5.7	3.8
married no children	670	42.8	47.2	38.4	44.0	53.6	36.7	32.4	38.1
married with children	525	29.7	36.9	35.9	29.9	24.3	28.8	16.6	34.9
Education									
less than highschool (<12yrs)	300	18.7	3.5	35.6	14.8	29.4	9.4	6.1	19.2
highschool graduate (12yrs)	273	16.1	9.2	20.7	14.4	17.5	12.2	17.4	20.0
some college (13-15yrs)	369	22.0	19.7	21.4	32.2	14.7	17.8	21.9	21.8
college graduate (16yrs)	380	22.0	20.8	13.2	28.6	14.9	28.4	32.9	19.6
postgraduate (>16yrs)	316	21.1	46.9	9.2	10.0	23.5	32.1	21.8	19.5
Household income (controlled for the family size)									
< $10,000	428	25.3	15.2	40.2	16.9	32.9	20.9	29.0	17.9
$10,000-$24,999	417	25.2	23.6	28.4	29.7	22.3	12.4	22.3	32.3
$25,000-$49,999	417	27.0	31.7	16.6	29.3	21.7	34.9	37.1	25.9
> $49,999	377	22.5	29.4	14.9	24.1	23.1	31.8	11.6	24.0
Citizenship									
not naturalized	625	40.7	65.0	27.1	34.3	49.9	29.7	44.4	39.3
naturalized	1014	59.3	35.0	72.9	65.7	50.1	70.3	55.6	60.7
Primary Residence									
other	173	11.7	25.5	4.5	16.1	7.1	5.4	13.6	10.0
U.S.	1460	88.3	74.5	95.5	83.9	92.9	94.6	86.4	90.0
Sense of Discrimination									
low	920	53.8	55.1	75.5	44.4	66.1	36.5	46.5	39.2
high	713	46.2	44.9	24.5	55.6	33.9	63.5	53.5	60.8
English Proficiency									
fair/poor	831	46.6	11.8	77.2	23.2	74.4	45.3	42.7	39.4
good/excellent	804	53.4	88.2	22.8	76.8	25.6	54.7	57.3	60.6
Overall frequency of visits ("How often have you returned to your country of origin?")									
rarely/never	1021	61.2	35.2	79.8	56.0	67.0	43.1	68.1	71.0
sometimes/often	614	38.8	64.8	20.2	44.0	33.0	56.9	31.9	29.0
Number of visits in a previous year ("How many times have you returned to your country of origin in the last year?")									
0	1192	57.2	58.1	84.6	70.4	68.2	51.2	72.7	70.5
once or more	443	42.8	41.9	15.4	29.6	31.8	48.8	27.3	29.5
Remittance ("Do you send money to relatives in your country of origin?")									
no	841	54.5	46.0	38.9	35.2	54.6	83.6	91.8	66.4
yes	784	45.5	54.0	61.1	64.8	45.4	16.4	8.2	33.6

Table 9. Logistic regression odds ratios on overall frequency of visits (1=often/sometime, 0=rarely/never) NLAAS 2002-2003

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	OR	p	OR	p	OR	p	OR	p
Country of Origin								
Mainland China	Referent		Referent		Referent		Referent	
Hong Kong + Taiwan	2.68	***	3.92	***	3.62	***	3.50	***
Vietnam	0.51	***	0.55	**	0.63	*	0.63	*
India	3.74	***	4.00	***	3.62	***	3.04	***
Philippines	1.60	**	1.83	**	2.01	***	1.72	**
East Asia (Korea + Japan)	0.95		1.21		1.23		1.18	
Other Asia	1.13		1.57		1.56		1.42	
Duration of residence in the US								
< 5 years			Referent		Referent		Referent	
6-10 yrs			1.31		1.35		1.36	
11-15 yrs			1.35		1.48	+	1.42	
16-20 yrs			1.04		1.09		1.04	
21-25 yrs			0.71		0.69		0.66	
> 25 yrs			1.31		1.29		1.23	
Age of arrival in US								
< 13 years old			Referent		Referent		Referent	
13-19 yrs old			4.88	***	4.81	***	4.86	***
20-24 yrs old			5.97	***	5.69	***	6.00	***
> 25 yrs old			4.93	***	4.88	***	5.25	***
Gender								
Female					Referent		Referent	
Male					0.88		0.88	
Family status								
single no children					Referent		Referent	
single with children					0.93		0.93	
married no children					0.93		0.93	
married with children					0.89		0.90	
Education								
less than highschool (<12yrs)					Referent		Referent	
highschool graduate (12yrs)					1.19		1.18	
some college (13-15yrs)					0.74		0.69	+
college graduate (16yrs)					0.95		0.87	
postgraduate (>16yrs)					1.60	*	1.40	
Household income (controlled for family size)								
< $10,000					Referent		Referent	
$10,000-$24,999					1.32		1.34	
$25,000-$49,999					1.77	*	1.82	*
> $49,999					1.79	**	1.83	**
Citizenship								
not naturalized							Referent	
naturalized							1.08	
Primary residence								
other country							Referent	
U.S.							0.81	
Sense of Discrimination								
high							Referent	
low							1.03	
English Proficiency								
fair/poor							Referent	
good/excellent							1.32	+
-2Log L	7,486,140		7,066,265		6,899,005		6,872,156	
Change in -2Log Likelihood			419,875		167,260		26,849	
AIC	7,486,154		7,066,295		6,899,057		6,872,216	
n	1,634		1,633		1,630		1,625	

+p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 10. Logistic regression odds ratios on the number of visits within the previous year (1=returned once or more, 0=did not return) NLAAS 2002-2003

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	OR	p	OR	p	OR	p	OR	p
Country of Origin								
Mainland China	Referent		Referent		Referent		Referent	
Hong Kong + Taiwan	2.04	*	2.91	***	2.68	**	2.80	**
Vietnam	0.39	***	0.40	***	0.45	**	0.44	**
India	1.55	+	1.40		1.28		1.22	
Philippines	0.90		1.08		1.12		1.12	
East Asia (Japan + Korea)	0.80		1.07		1.03		1.03	
Other Asia	0.90		1.20		1.17		1.19	
Duration of residence in the US								
< 5 years			Referent		Referent		Referent	
6-10 yrs			1.06		1.09		1.12	
11-15 yrs			0.88		0.95		0.99	
16-20 yrs			0.73		0.76		0.82	
21-25 yrs			0.61	+	0.63	+	0.70	
> 25 yrs			0.58	*	0.59	*	0.65	
Age of Arrival in US								
< 13 years old			Referent		Referent		Referent	
13-19 yrs old			2.67	**	2.95	**	2.99	**
20-24 yrs old			4.69	***	5.28	***	5.43	***
> 25 yrs old			3.33	***	4.03	***	4.09	***
Gender								
Female					Referent		Referent	
Male					0.91		0.93	
Family Status								
single no children					Referent		Referent	
single with children					0.55	+	0.55	+
married no children					0.61	*	0.60	*
married with children					0.59	**	0.60	*
Education								
less than highschool (<12yrs)					Referent		Referent	
highschool graduate (12yrs)					1.01		1.02	
some college (13-15yrs)					0.86		0.86	
college graduate (16yrs)					0.84		0.85	
postgraduate (>16yrs)					1.27		1.26	
Household Income (controlled for family size)								
< $10,000					Referent		Referent	
$10,000-$24,999					1.44	+	1.43	+
$25,000-$49,999					1.53	*	1.56	*
> $49,999					1.75	*	1.76	*
Citizenship								
not naturalized							Referent	
naturalized							0.87	
Primary Residence								
other country							Referent	
U.S.							1.06	
Sense of Discrimination								
high							Referent	
low							1.29	*
English Proficiency								
fair/poor							Referent	
good/excellent							1.11	
-2LogL	7,057,405		6,745,128		6,626,708		6,600,971	
Change in -2LogL			312,277		118,420		25,737	
AIC	7,057,419		6,745,158		6,626,760		6,601,031	
n	1,634		1,633		1,630		1,625	

+p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 11. Logistic regression odds ratios on sending remittances (1=send money, 0=do not send money) NLAAS 2002-2003

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	OR	p	OR	p	OR	p	OR	p
Country of Origin								
Mainland China	Referent		Referent		Referent		Referent	
Hong Kong + Taiwan	0.24	***	0.31	***	0.30	***	0.29	***
Vietnam	1.88	***	2.14	***	2.37	***	2.34	***
India	1.41		1.34		1.21		1.19	
Philippines	2.21	***	3.08	***	3.25	***	3.13	***
East Asia (Japan + Korea)	0.11	***	0.14	***	0.16	***	0.15	***
Other Asia	0.76		1.10		1.07		1.03	
Duration of residence in US								
< 5 years			Referent		Referent		Referent	
6-10 yrs			1.05		1.02		1.00	
11-15 yrs			0.71		0.67	+	0.67	
16-20 yrs			0.74		0.68		0.65	
21-25 yrs			0.62	*	0.51	*	0.49	*
> 25 yrs			0.44	**	0.39	***	0.37	**
Age of Arrival in US								
< 13 years old			Referent		Referent		Referent	
13-19 yrs old			2.71	**	2.42	**	2.29	**
20-24 yrs old			3.85	***	3.09	***	2.90	***
> 25 yrs old			3.60	***	2.93	***	2.80	***
Gender								
Female					Referent		Referent	
Male					0.96		0.95	
Family Status								
single no children					Referent		Referent	
single with children					0.72		0.68	
married no children					1.33		1.33	
married with children					1.50	*	1.50	*
Education								
less than highschool (<12yrs)					Referent		Referent	
highschool graduate (12yrs)					0.88		0.91	
some college (13-15yrs)					0.77		0.80	
college graduate (16yrs)					0.74		0.75	
postgraduate (>16yrs)					0.98		1.01	
Household Income (controlled for family size)								
< $10,000					Referent		Referent	
$10,000-$24,999					1.23		1.26	
$25,000-$49,999					1.83	**	1.91	**
> $49,999					1.56		1.66	*
Citizenship								
not naturalized							Referent	
naturalized							1.11	
Primary Residence								
other country							Referent	
U.S.							0.75	
Sense of Discrimination								
high							Referent	
low							0.92	
English Proficiency								
fair/poor							Referent	
good/excellent							0.90	
-2LogL	7,235,177		6,851,847		6,726,502		6,692,490	
Change in -2LogL			383,330		125,345		34,012	
AIC	7,235,191		6,851,877		6,726,554		6,692,550	
n	1,624		1,623		1,620		1,614	

+p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

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