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Between "here" and "there": Immigrant cross-border activities and loyalties

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Abstract

This paper provides an empirical assessment of the prevalence and determinants of cross-state social exchanges and attachments among Latin American immigrants living in the United States. As we shall show, using data from a recent survey of Latin American migrants living in the United States, migrant cross-state social action comes in a variety of types, with the direction of conditioning factors differing from one type to another. Moreover, social and political incorporation in the United States, reduces affective ties and provision of material support, all the while facilitating other forms of cross-state social action. Consequently, while international migrants regularly engage in trans-state social action, the paper shows that neither transnational*ism* as condition of being, nor *transmigrants*, as distinctive class of people, is commonly found.

At the turn of the 21st century, "globalization" is the order of the day. With international migration bringing the alien "other" from third world to first, and worldwide trade and communications amplifying the feedbacks traveling in the opposite direction, the view that nation-state and society normally converge has waned. Instead, social scientists are looking for new ways to think about the connections between "here" and "there," as evidenced by the interest in the many things called "transnational". Those studying international migration evince particular excitement. Observing that migration produces a plethora of connections spanning "home" and "host" societies, these scholars proclaim the emergence of "transnational communities" (see Glick Schiller, et. al., 1992; Smith and Guarnizo, 1998, Portes et. al., 1999, Dewind and Levitt, 2003, and accompanying articles in *International Migration Review*, V. 37, 3).

This paper casts a skeptical view on this new scholarly consensus. Agreeing that international migrants regularly engage in trans-state social action, the paper contends that neither transnational*ism* as condition of being, nor *transmigrants*, as distinctive class of people, is commonly found. As we shall show, using data from a recent survey of Latin American migrants living in the United States, migrant cross-state social action comes in a variety of types, with the direction of conditioning factors differing from one type to another. Moreover, social and political incorporation in the United States, reduces affective ties and provision of material support, all the while facilitating other forms of cross-state social action.

The paper will first outline two broad perspectives on immigrant "homeland" and "homestate" ties. The paper will then assess these perspectives in light of data from the

2002 Pew Hispanic Survey, a large-scale, representative, telephone survey of Latinos in the United States, containing a large foreign-born oversample.

Immigrant transnationalism: the play of the debate

Evidence of ties that the scholars call "transnational" abounds. To begin with, the reality of "immigration" diverges from the definition employed by dictionaries and social scientists alike, namely, migration for settlement. While some migrants do move to settle and others settle despite initial plans to the contrary, today's mass international migrations entail movements of other type, including return migration, repeat migration, and circular migration, as well as migration for settlement. Such flows leave large numbers of persons moving back and forth, not certain where to settle, let alone how much importance to place on the connections between "here" and "there". The passage of so many people moving across borders generates a huge, subsequent flow of information, goods, and perhaps, most importantly, money, moving back and forth across borders.

A variety of factors amplifies the impact of these exchanges. The literature tells us that changes in technology are crucial: though the simple letter did a remarkably good job of knitting together distant trans-oceanic contacts during the migrations of the last turn of the century, today's migrants can communicate with the stay-at-homes in any number of ways, doing so with a speed and immediacy that, in the view of many experts, keeps migrants and stayers firmly connected. Likewise, shifts in receiving societies also facilitate the expression of home-place attachments. Whereas ties to home and host country were previously seen as mutually exclusive, today's appears to many scholars as a more relaxed political and ideological environment: in particular, the shift from melting

pot to multiculturalism has legitimated the expression of and organization around home country loyalties.

Defining the phenomenon As the literature noted right from the outset, not all international migrants exemplify the new form: some are simply sojourners, for whom the displacement is experienced as temporary and hence never put down roots; others are "immigrants" in precisely the sense defined by the dictionary, in that they have left home in order to settle down in a new place (Glick Schiller et al, 1995; Glick Schiller, 1999). Those who keep up the here-there connections, by contrast, can be identified as migrants of a particular type: "those who retain ties to their homeland (Mahler, 1998: 72)." In the words of anthropologist, Nina Glick-Schiller, these are the *transmigrants*: "persons who, having migrated from one nation-state to another, live their lives across borders, participating simultaneously in social relations that embed them in more than one nation-state" (2003). While contending that this latter definition lacks conceptual clarity, Portes and his collaborators are no less insistent on the bounded nature of the group involved in host-home interactions: for these authors, "it is the rise of *a new class* (emphasis added) of immigrants, economic entrepreneurs or political activists who conduct cross-border activities on a *regular* basis, that lies at the core of the phenomenon (Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller, 2003: 1213)." From this perspective, transnational*ism* is the "condition of being" of the transmigrants, engaged in a complex but fundamentally closed set of relationships, so encompassing as to virtually erase the distinction between "here" and "there."[1]

Delimiting the phenomenon does have its advantages; but as various authors note, the hardness of the conceptual boundaries asserted by the scholars may be at variance

with a migrant reality that takes a more diffuse form. As suggested by Levitt (2001) and Itzigsohn et al. (1999), "transmigrants" are but one set of actors in the broader, transnational social field, where transnational practices vary greatly in frequency and intensity. Transnational practices may be constant, periodic, or just occasional; likewise, they may occur consistently across multiple social domains – politics, economics, or culture – or may be limited to just one.

Incidence and prevalence: Whether defined in broad or narrow terms, the incidence of immigrant cross-state exchanges and loyalties has been established beyond doubt; still up for debate, however, are questions related to the prevalence of migrant cross-state social action and to the conditions and characteristics that either facilitate or hinder sustained home-host ties. As Mahler noted almost a decade ago, the early ethnographic work published in Basch et al's *Nation Unbound* provided "detailed information on a limited set of activities and practices, [but] not a clear picture of the breadth of the social field, nor of the demography or intensity of players' participation in the activities people engage in (Mahler, 1998: 82)." Although Glick Schiller and associates had actually contended that "settlement often fostered transnationalism (1995: 54)," a statement so broad is not very helpful, as one still doesn't know whom, among the settled immigrants, maintain here-there ties, nor why. And in any case, settlement would unlikely be the only relevant factor, as made clear by Mahler's review of the ethnographic literature, which pointed to the role of gender, class, generation, and region, among other factors.

Survey data on Colombian, Dominican, and Salvadoran immigrants in the United States, generated through the Comparative Entrepreneurship and Immigration Project,

has begun to fill in some of these holes. As summarized by Portes, transnationalism is not the normative pattern, but rather the activity of a distinctive immigrant minority:

> ...mainly the pursuit of solid, family men – educated, well-connected and firmly established in the host country. They, rather than the recently arrived and the downwardly mobile, organize cross-border enterprises; support political parties and civic committees in their countries; and lead the cultural festivities, sports and religious events linking each migrant diaspora with its respective nation (Portes, 2003).

Though tantalizing, these conclusions are from definitive. Caution is warranted, before generalizing beyond the three relatively small, sociologically distinctive populations in question. Not only are these particular groups unlikely to be representative of the Latin American origin population living in the United States; the samples, themselves, are unlikely to be representative of the three specific populations in question, as the survey conducted by the CEIP entailed a significant referral element. As shown by Itzigsohn and Saucedo (2002), levels of transnationalism are generally much higher among the sample's referral component, as compared to those randomly surveyed.[2] The interview questions were also heavily geared toward the investigators' interest in entrepreneurial activity, a minoritarian affair as authors themselves show; data on other likely influences (e.g., language) were not collected; data on legal status (differentiating citizens from legal residents from other residents) were collected, but curiously, not used in the analysis. Substantively, moreover, knowing about home society-oriented activists tells us but half the tale: to understand just how important "transnationalism" – of whatever form -- may be, we need to assess the relative salience of home society ties relative to those that

connect immigrants to the societies in which they have settled. In seeking to capture the boundedness of the phenomenon, the Portes and his collaborators seem to have neglected the analysis of those aspects of immigrant "here-there" ties and exchanges that are clearly most prevalent, and possibly most important: namely, remittances and travel. As Portes himself has argued that "comparative quantitative studies are necessary to test hypotheses about determinants, forms, and consequences of transnationalism," there is all the more reason to give these conclusions another look – especially as there is an alternative perspective, generating very distinctive views of the factors that both facilitate and hinder immigrant "here-there" interactions.

An alternative perspective "Immigrant transnationalism," as described above, enjoys widespread scholarly support. This paper, however, departs from the consensus, building instead on the framework developed by Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004).[3] Following these authors, networks of people, information, and goods *regularly* span the boundaries of the state; consequently, we see international migration as a *normally* recurring phenomenon. Since migration is a transitional process, in which only some of the movers settle and many move back and forth, ongoing connections between "home" and "host" countries are a *recurring* feature. Put somewhat differently, large flows of remittances, migrant associations raising funds to help hometowns left behind, trains or airplanes filled with immigrants returning home for visits to kin and friends, are features encountered wherever large numbers of international migrants are found throughout the contemporary world.

However, international migration is a not just a social, but a *political* phenomenon: internal as well as external boundaries are subject to political control by

states, which seek to regulate movement across territorial borders and access to membership in the national collectivity. Consequently, defining "transnationalism" in terms of migrants' "regular and sustained" cross-border activities, as do Portes and his collaborators, gets the cart before the horse, confusing cause with effect. In today's world, international migrants don't come and go as they please. Rather, they do what states and their peoples (explicitly or implicitly) allow: consequently, migration and citizenship politics and policies, largely affected by conditions *internal* to receiving states, exercise the crucial influence on the "here"-"there" activities of international migrants.

The preferences of nationals, who believe in the *idea* of national community, also matter. While accepting international migration, nationals want it controlled, making sure that membership is only available to some, and signaling to the newcomers that acceptance is contingent on a transfer of loyalties from home to host state, even though residual ethnic attachments are generally allowed (see Alba and Nee, 2003: 145-53). In general, the ex-foreigners respond positively to this message, concluding that one does better, if one can present oneself just like everyone else. Thus, what the literature calls assimilation is better understood as political re-socialization, in which the foreigners discard one political identity for another, all the while attaching a hyphenated, cultural modifier (of Mexican-, Chinese- Italian-, etc) to the newly acquired national identity (of – American).

The conditions affecting the cross-state activities of international migrants are influenced by this complex of conflicting social, as well as political, processes. Among the social factors, settlement is crucial. Over the long term, ties to the home environment

wither: the locus of significant social relationships shifts to the host environment as settlement occurs. However, the impact of settlement does not take a linear form: while remittance activity may decline as nuclear family members move from here to there, settlement often yields material gains that facilitate other forms of involvement or connection in home country affairs.

On the other hand, politics and policies are equally powerful conditioning factors. Given the rise of massive state apparatuses *controlling* population movements between states (e.g., Torpey, 2001; Ngai, 2004), not everyone can move from "host" to 'home" country and back with equal ease, which is why an emphasis on purely social factors does not suffice. Restriction of movement across national borders is an aspect of social closure (Brubaker, 1993), requiring coercive measures deeply at variance with liberalism, as is demonstrated everyday at the U.S.-Mexico border (Cornelius, 2001; Singer and Massey, 1998). While legal status is the crucial ingredient allowing migrants to freely travel home, access to the full panoply of rights entailed in citizenship, is carefully rationed, unavailable to many long-term foreign-born residents, and far more so than liberal political theory would allow (Walzer, 1983).

Put somewhat differently, states "cage" the populations residing on their territory, constraining social ties beyond the territorial divide, while reorienting activities toward the interior (Mann, 1993). Paradoxically, therefore, the acquisition of legal residency or better yet, citizenship, does more than yield unconstrained movement across borders. It also generates engagements with the "host" country's new political system, from which deeper attachments to the new national people are likely to be made.

Given these myriad, contradictory pressures, many international migrants *may* engage in trans-state social action of one form or another, but "transnational*ism*" is a relatively rare condition of being. The complex of possible trans-state activities is also unlikely to come together in a single, coherent cluster, but rather to vary, depending on where a migrant stands on the trajectory of political or social incorporation. Likewise, "transmigrants", understood as a "class of persons," generally do not exist. Furthermore, the types of migrants likely to engage in trans-state social action differ from one from one dimension to one another, with the factors influencing trans-state social action yielding positive effects on some dimensions, and negative effects on others.

Data, Variables, Analysis

This section of the paper relies on the 2002 Pew Hispanic Survey, a nationally representative telephone survey of 4,213 adults, 18 years and older, who were selected at random. The design employed a highly stratified, RDD sample, including oversamples of Salvadorans, Dominicans, Colombians, and Cubans; results of the Latino sample were weighted to reflect the actual distribution among Latino adults of country of origin, age, sex, and region. Of those interviewed, 2,929 identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic; of these roughly 3,000 Latino respondents, 1838 were born outside the United States and its territories (e.g. Puerto Rico). The data reported in this paper pertain exclusively to these foreign-born respondents. The unweighted count of foreign-born respondents, focusing on the majority nationality groups, is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 about here

Dependent Variables: The 2002 Pew Hispanic Survey focused on a broad range of issues: among others, how members of the Hispanic community identify themselves, their views of the United States, their experiences with discrimination both within the Latino community itself and from non-Hispanic groups, their language abilities and preferences, their economic and financial situations and their experiences within the health care system.[4] Most importantly, the Survey included a large number of standard control variables, as well as items on topics of direct relevance to the question at hand. These items fall into the following categories:

- **Cross-border exchanges and activities**:
  - sending of remittances: respondent regularly sends back money to country of origin (yes/no)
  - travel to home country:
    - respondent has returned to country of birth for a visit at least once since coming to the United States (yes/no);
    - frequency of return travel to home country (at least once a year; once every couple of years; once in five years; less often than that; never)
    - date of last trip home (six months ago; a year ago; two to five years ago; six to ten years ago; before that; never)
  - home country voting: respondent has voted in the home country since moving to the United States (yes/no);
- **Home country attachments and loyalties**

- settlement plans: respondent plans to someday move back to the home country (yes/no);
- self-identified "real homeland": respondent's country of birth or U.S.?
- self-described identity: respondent identifies as a home country national (e.g. Salvadoran) or other?

- **Participation in U.S. politics (among naturalized citizens only)**
  - Respondent is currently registered to vote (yes/no)
  - Voting in U.S.: respondent ever voted in U.S. elections (yes/no)

Independent variables This paper uses a set of standard controls, as well as a set of items reflecting the social and political factors emphasized in the introductory discussion. Means and standard deviations are shown in the appendix.

- *National-origin differences*: We focus attention on the five largest nationality groups represented in the 2002 Pew Hispanic Survey: Mexicans, Cubans, Dominicans, Colombians, Salvadorans (listed in order of their size in the sample). Not only do these comprise the major streams of Latin American migration to the United States, each is distinct, both with respect to history, and to organization of the migration stream. Migration from Mexico is the largest, and longest-standing; it is also largely a labor migration, with a significant undocumented component. The migrations from Cuba and the Dominican Republic are relatively contemporaneous; both emerged almost half a century ago in response to political unrest in the home country, but only the Cubans were recognized as refugees, enjoying a status (and benefits) unparalleled by any other group. Colombian

migration has a strong middle-class component and has largely converged around the greater New York region. Though with roots going back to mid-century, Salvadoran migration accelerated rapidly in the late 1970s, in response to political unrest and then civil war. Scholars view the migration of the 1970s and 1980s as a refugee phenomenon; Salvadoran migration has continued uninterrupted since the advent of the peace accords, having now evolved into a largely economically-motivated phenomenon, propelled in part, by the networks and contacts established by the arrivals of the 1970s and 1980s.

Given the social, political, and historical differences among these different migration streams, one would expect each nationality group to display a distinctive pattern of cross-border exchanges and home/hostland ties. On the other hand, as suggested below, settlement, legal status, and economic status are cross-cutting factors, possibly mitigating the impact of national origin as such. A central question for this paper is whether national origin differences persist, after controlling for the relevant background factors.

In the multivariate analysis, we have constructed dummy variables for Colombians, Cubans, Dominicans, and Salvadorans, as well as a fifth dummy for respondents from all other countries. We entered these dummy variables in the regressions, leaving Mexicans as the omitted category.

- *Settlement*: As argued earlier, social and affective attachments change with settlement. We measure the impact of settlement with two continuous variables: numbers of years that the respondent has lived in the United States; and years squared. As settlement's impact is likely to take a different form among child

immigrants, whose experience in many ways is more like that of the second, than the first, generation, we add a dummy variable for persons who came to the United States at the age of 12 or younger. As years of residence generally facilitate host country language acquisition, we used responses from four questions regarding reading and speaking ability in Spanish and English to classify respondents by language ability, distinguishing bilinguals (1 if yes, 0 other) from English dominants (1 if yes, 0 other), from Spanish dominants (the omitted category). Theory is unclear as to the impact of language: to the extent that bilingualism is a mechanism of ethnic retention (as argued by Portes and Rumbaut, 2001), one would expect bilinguals to engage in home country ties or home country attachments in ways similar to foreign-language dominants. By contrast, English dominants, unlikely to possess either the capacity to interact with home country nationals and institutions or the affective ties (produced, in part, by mother country proficiency) that would motivate such interaction, are expected to have greatly attenuated home country attachments and interactions.

- *Legal status*: While unauthorized ("undocumented) migrants represent a large proportion of the foreign-born population, the Pew Hispanic survey (like most other such instruments) did not inquire into legal status. However, the survey did ask both about citizenship and about efforts to apply for citizenship, among foreign-born respondents. Consequently, the regressions include dummy variables for citizenship (1=citizen, 0=other) and for non-citizens currently applying for citizenship (1=apply, 0=other). Persons not applying for citizenship or not planning to become citizens comprise the omitted category

- *Social and economic resources*: In general, higher levels of education and income are associated with higher levels of knowledge of and participation in politics, as well as greater access to bureaucratically controlled resources, such as citizenship. The regressions enter education as a set of dummy variables (primary, some high school, some college, college degree and higher; high school is the omitted category). Data on income were collected in categorical form, with an initial query to identify broad income categories, followed by more specific prompts. However, data were missing for 16.5 percent of the sample; in addition, 3.3 percent of the respondents answering the initial income queries did not respond to the requests for more detailed information, and we recoded these responses as missing. Using the UVIS procedure (Royston, 2004) to impute missing values, we were able to reduce the number of weighted cases missing income data from 394 to 63. Because preliminary analyses showed income to have a generally non-linear impact, we created four dummy variables of low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and upper income, omitting low income (the modal category) from the regressions.
- *Controls*: The regressions also included dummy variables for sex (1 if male), marital status (1 if married), and employment status (1 if employed). In addition, two dummy variables were entered for children in the household: one child; two children or more. Zero children in the household comprises the omitted category The presence of children could be treated as an indicator of settlement. We note that the survey identifies children living in the respondent's household, without

indicating whether the respondent is actually the parent of the children residing there.

Analysis: Since the 2002 Pew Hispanic Survey employed a multi-stage clustered sampling, we used regression procedures specifically designed for complex survey data available from Stata (StataCorp 2003). These regression procedures use pseudo-maximum likelihood methods that compute proper standard errors for estimated coefficients. Where the dependent variable is a dichotomy, we use survey regression analogs of logistic regression; when the dependent variable is a polytomous variable, we use survey regression analogs of multinomial regression. To facilitate interpretation, coefficients are shown as odds ratios. While the regressions only indicate the statistical significance of the difference for the national origin coefficients relative to the omitted category (Mexicans), we are interested in the full array of cross-country differences; consequently, we tested the coefficient for each country against the other, using the Wald statistics (Stata 2003). Given our interest in the influence of specifically political variables, we also tested the significance of the two legal status variables (citizenship and applying for citizenship) as a block, again using the Wald statistic. Results are reported along with regression results.

Findings

Cross-border exchanges and ties: Of the three types of cross-border exchanges identifiable through the Pew Hispanic Survey, travel home is the most common: two-thirds of all respondents report having taken at least one trip to the home country.[5] While a large proportion of the sample also sends remittances, most do not: only 47 percent report sending money home regularly. Though many scholars and policymakers

are intensely interested in immigrant home-country political participation, the data suggest that this is at best an incipient development, undertaken by a small minority – less than one sixth -- of all sample members.

Table 2 about here

Although the overall pattern holds for all groups – with travel home the most common among all groups, and home country voting the least – the inter-group comparison highlights differences of both substantive and statistical significance. Dominicans show consistently high, though not necessarily, highest levels of cross-border exchanges, both before and after controls: they are the most likely to send remittances, the most likely to have traveled home at least once, and have a sizeable minority that reports having voted in a home country election. Cubans illustrate the opposite pattern, with (not surprisingly) low levels of home country voting and low levels of home country voting, which, reflecting the settled nature and high naturalization pattern of this group, fall further after controlling for background characteristics. While Salvadorans remit at high rates, the distinctive circumstances, both under which they left their home country and have been incorporated into the United States, appear reflected in low rates of home voting and return travel.

Table 3 and Figures 1-2 about here

While country of origin has a strong effect on all types of cross-border exchanges, both before and after controls, many of the other factors highlighted also come into play. All three types of cross-border exchange are affected by settlement, although in quite different ways. Remittance behavior is the most stable over time, as can be seen in Figure 1, which shows the predicted probabilities for 5 year intervals of settlement in the United States.[6] Although neither years nor years squared yielded significant effects, the migrant life cycle did: setting all other values at the mean, the predicted probability that child migrants would remit was .31 as opposed to .49 for all other foreign-born respondents. Like remittances, home voting also declines over time, though the rate is more rapid, reflecting the strong and statistically significant of years spent in the United States. By contrast, years spent in the United States *increase* the likelihood of having traveled home at least once, although the threshold is high (predicted probability of .45 for those with five years of residence in the United States, controlling for all other factors). The negative coefficient for child migrants, however, again shows that settlement's impact is mediated by the migrant life cycle: controlling for all other factors, the probability that a child migrant would travel home was .48, as opposed to .65 for all other respondents. In general, English-language acquisition depresses the likelihood of cross-border social exchanges, as best illustrated by the regression on remittances. Moreover, not only do English dominants differ from other respondents in their tendency to disengage from this otherwise prevalent behavior, so too do bilinguals, indicating that continued mother tongue is simply not enough to maintain this particular type of cross-border exchange..

Figure 3 about here

At the zero-order level, citizens are less likely than non-citizens to engage in any of the three cross-border activities on which we focus. While legal status coefficients lose significance once controls for settlement are added to the regressions on home voting and remittances, citizenship continues to exercise a very powerful effect on the probability of travel home. That finding is of substantive significance for proponents of both assimilation and transnationalism, testifying to the distinctively political barriers to cross-border mobility.

Figures 4 & 5 about here

As to social resources, they have little effect on home country voting, but influence other cross-border exchanges. Travel home is most likely to take place among the better educated members of the sample; as income has a non-linear effect, higher middle (24 percent of the weighted sample), but *not* high (12 percent of the weighted sample), income respondents are the most likely to report having taken a trip home. As both low incomes and higher levels of education have negative effects on the sending of remittances, remittance behavior would appear to be most common among the less educated, but economically more successful respondents. Not surprisingly, employment increases the probability of remittance sending.

Home travel: further refinements: As time spent in the United States increases the opportunity to travel, finding that the great majority of long-settled immigrants have returned home at least once yields no surprise. But as much of the literature has stressed the importance of "regular and recurrent" cross-border exchanges, further exploration of the regularity and recency of home country travel is in order. As the survey shows, travel to the home country is generally not a one time event nor a long-ago occurrence. 35 percent of the weighted sample reports having taken a trip within the year prior to the survey; of those who have taken at least one trip since coming to the United States, the proportion of recent travelers is close to forty percent. Moreover, many respondents go back home frequently: 30 percent of the total sample reports traveling home at least once a year, a group that accounts for almost half of those who have taken at least one trip home.

As shown by results of a multinomial logistic regression,[7] years in the U.S. and citizenship have positive (and statistically significant at the .01 level) effects on recency as well as frequency of travel, relative to the odds of not having taken any trip at all. However, as illustrated in Figure 6, the probability of regular travel increases during the first fifteen years of settlement and then levels off; by contrast, the probability of traveling less frequently than once in five years rises almost monotonically over time. Quite a similar pattern can be seen in Figure 7, showing predicted probabilities for recency of the last trip: although some well-settled immigrants continue to be likely to have made a recent trip, long-established immigrants show a clear propensity for travel home of a much more occasional nature. Citizens are also likely to have taken a recent trip, with predicted probabilities of having taken a trip within the past six months at .19 as

opposed to .15 for non-citizens. More relevant, perhaps, are the predictions for frequency of travel, showing that citizenship is closely associated with regular travel: for citizens, the predicted probability of taking a trip at least every year is .29 and every other year is .19

Figures 6 & 7 about here

Home/host county attachments and loyalties: In contrast to the first set of indicators, which asked respondents about behavior, this set principally concerns their subjective identification with home and host place. We note two distinctions within the set. The first contrasts the purely subjective items with a possible future behavior – namely, plans to move back to the home country. The second involves the two subjective questions, one relating to a sense of home and the second to self-identity.

In general, the survey reveals that, for the majority of respondents, subjective attachment to the country of birth and its people remains strong. 68 percent of all respondents claim to think of themselves as a national first (e.g., Salvadoran first, as opposed to Hispanic or American first) and 61 percent maintain that the country of origin is their "real home." However, this sense of home country loyalty appears to have an abstract, or perhaps symbolic quality, as only 34 percent of the sample plans to actually move back home.

Once again, the Dominican pattern appears quite distinct. Though not necessarily the highest on either indicator of subjective identification, the Dominicans reveal consistently strong home-country identities, whether measured before or after controls.

More importantly, perhaps, they are the most likely to report plans to move back to the home country, differing, in this respect, at statistically significant levels from all other groups, both before as well as after controls. Once again, the Cubans present the contrasting case, as they are the least likely to express intentions of returning home, all the while retaining a relatively strong subjective home country connection. The impact of controls on the probability of identifying the home country as the "real home" is indicative, in this respect: for Cubans probabilities rise, reflecting the retention of home country ties among the more settled members of this group.

Once again, other factors are influential, yielding effects that generally track the predictions developed above, though with several exceptions. In their home country attachments, child migrants turn out to be no different from other respondents. By contrast, years of residence in the United States have a powerful effect on all three indicators, although baselines differ. After five years of settlement, the probability that a respondent will report a plan to move home is already below.5; at the same point in time, however, the probability of identifying the home country as the "real home" is just above 8. That view then changes dramatically with time: at 25 years of residence, the probability of identifying the home country as the "real home" is barely 2 in 5. Note the much lesser impact of settlement on self-identity, as well as the flattening of the curve after ten years of settlement in the United States, suggesting that self-definition can persist, even when home (whether real and imagined) has changed. That interpretation is underscored by the coefficients for language, which show that bilinguals and, especially English dominants, neither plan to move home nor think of the country of birth as their

"real home." On the other hand, neither language coefficient has any impact on self-identity.

Legal status is also influential. As compared to non-citizens who are not applying for citizens, applicants are less likely to plan a move home or to identify as nationals. While citizenship has no impact on any of the three attachment indicators, as a block, the legal status variables do have a significant, negative effect (at the .1 level) on self-identity. While social resources seem to have no patterned effect on plans to move home or sense of home, income has a strong, positive impact on the retention of identity, consistent with theories of symbolic ethnicity (Gans, 1979), which would suggest that ethnic options are a leisure time activity, most easily retained among those with the greatest resources.

Participation in U.S. politics: The last two indicators concern participation in U.S. politics, responses only come from persons who have become naturalized citizens during their stay in the United States, a group that comprises 30 percent of the weighted sample. At 6 percent, citizenship levels are very low among persons who arrived after 1990, rising steadily with years spent in the United States; of those who came in the sixties or earlier, 80 percent are now U.S. citizens. Overall, a relatively high proportion (82 percent) of the naturalized respondents report that they have registered to vote; while a lower proportion, just under three quarters, reporting having ever voted, both indicators show that participation in U.S. politics greatly exceeds self-reported levels of home country voting.

Given the selective pressures produced by U.S. naturalization requirements (both formal and informal), inter-group differences are relatively slight, both as regards

registration and voting. Cubans, not surprisingly, show the highest levels of both registration and voting. Mexicans, by contrast, have relatively low levels of both registration and voting, lagging (at statistically significant levels) behind Cubans with respect to registration and behind both Cubans and Dominicans with respect to voting.

Settlement proves to be a powerful factor, notwithstanding the selective pressures exercised by the naturalization process. Among citizens, registration and voting both rise sharply with years spent in the United States: after ten years of residence, the predicted probability of registration is .24 and of voting .2; after 25 years of residence, the predicted probability of registration and voting are .93 and .87, respectively. The impact of social resources is less clear cut, though, as compared to respondents with a high school degree, persons with some college are more likely to be registered, and those with a college degree are more likely to vote than those with either a high school degree or primary schooling.

Conclusion

Like the turn of the 20th, the turn of the 21st century is an age of mass migration, with large numbers of people seeking to move from poor to richer countries. To get from one place to another, the migrants make use of the one resource on which they can almost always count – namely, support from one another, which is why social connections between veterans and prospective movers lubricate the migration process.

In the mythology of the classic countries of immigration, the newcomers are arriving in order to build a life in the new land. In reality, it is often not the case, as the migrants instead want to take advantage of the gap between rich and poorer places in order to accumulate resources designed to be used upon return back home. Although

some migrants eventually act on their plans, for others return turns out to be a myth, as roots get established in the country of arrival, whether wanted or not.

Given the centrality of migrant networks, the myriad of migration strategies, and the uncertain, transitional nature of the migration process, connections linking origin and destination places are ubiquitous, no less characteristic of today's age of mass migration than that of the past. But if the ongoing advent of new arrivals keeps here-there connections refreshed, the long-term tendency involves the attenuation of those contacts, as relevant social ties and loyalties get transplanted from old to new homes. Moreover, the potential to maintain contacts to the home country (and hometown) is impeded by states' ever more vigorous efforts at control migratory movements, putting up barriers at the territorial frontier, and creating blockages for those migrants who have crossed into the state's territory but have not yet managed to become a member of the state's people. In effect, receiving states engage in a two-fold capture, taking hold of the loyalties of those settled immigrants who enjoy secure legal status, while placing unauthorized immigrants, afraid of the risks of another illegal border crossing, in a sort of territorial confinement. States' continued success at caging is shown by the results for citizens, who are at once the immigrants most likely to engage in the sort of regular and recurrent cross-border activities supposedly characteristic of "transnationalism," and yet otherwise the most detached from home country loyalties and affairs.

Consequently, while trans-state social action is a pervasive feature of any international migration, transnationalism is a rare condition of being and transmigrants an uncommon class of persons. International migrants from Latin America to the United States do maintain a broad range of "here-there" connections; however, they do so in a

variety of ways, as we have shown in this paper. As a rule, cross-border activities and exchanges do *not* cluster together. Thus, the sending of remittances is most extensively undertaken by new arrivals, with frequency diminishing as settlement in the United States grows. By contrast, better settled migrants, possessing secure legal status are more likely to engage in those cross-border activities involving physical presence in the home country. However, the same factors that facilitate the easy back and forth movements on which a transnational condition of being might depend also produce deeper engagements with the destination country. Though movement to the United States has given migrants the leverage to open up home country elections to non-resident voting, relatively few show much interest. Notwithstanding all the factors impeding participation in U.S. politics – most notably recency of arrival and the barriers to the acquisition of citizenship – respondents' self-reports indicate that voting in U.S. elections exceeds voting in home country elections.

In the end, few of the Latin American newcomers to the United States end up as "transmigrants." While symbolic ethnicity remains strong – as evidenced by respondents' persistent propensity to identify themselves in home, rather than, host country terms – the newcomers are no less aware of the fact that the future is to be found in the United States. Of course, it is no surprise to discover that the immigrants are realists. The only question is why the professional students of immigration refuse to see it their way.

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Notes

[1] The suffix, *ism*, means condition of being in Latin.

[2] Itzigsohn and Saucedo explain that "about a third of the sample (37.7 percent) was selected through referrals and snowball chains with differents points of entry. The reason for the purpose selection of one third of the sample ws that the principle focus of the survey was to study transnational practices. The referral section of the sample attempted to reach people who engage in transnational practices to insure that there were enough cases of transnational migrants in the sample (Itzigsohn and Saucedo, 2002: 769)." As they show in the appendix to the article, the level of transnational practices was consistently higher within the referral than within the block sample: for example, 46 percent of the referral sample participated occasionally or regularly in a hometown association, versus 14 percent of the random sample; 45 percent of the referral sample sent money for projects in a hometown versus 14 percent of the random sample; 31 percent of the random sample participated in local sports clubs linked to the home country versus 10 percent of the random sample; and 60 percent of the referral sample participated in charity organizations linked to the home country versus 15 percent of the random sample. The two samples also differed along other variables, likely to influence the outcomes: e.g., citizens comprised 50 percent of the referral sample but only 24 percent of the random sample; highly educated persons (with 13 or more years of schooling) made up 63 percent of the referral sample but only 26 percent of the block sample; and men were 70 percent of the referral sample but only 45 percent of the random sample. Thus, Portes' description of the traits of the "transnationals" (as quoted in the previous paragraph) seems to largely reflect the characteristics of the members of the referral sample.

[3] To which Glick-Schiller and Levitt (2006) provide a response.

[4] A full report on the survey, describing methodology, can be found at: http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/15.pdf. The public use data set is available from the Pew Hispanic Center's website: http://pewhispanic.org/datasets/

[5] All data reported in this paper have been weighted.

[6] Calculated at the mean value of all controls, and the corresponding value of the squared term for years (e.g., 25, 100, 225, etc)

[7] Detailed table available on request from the authors.

Table 1: Country of origin of respondents: 2002 Pew Hispanic Survey

	Frequency	Percent
Mexico	636	35%
Cuba	271	15%
Dominican Republic	203	11%
Colombia	186	10%
El Salvador	185	10%
All other countries	357	19%
Total	1,838	100%

Source: 2002 Pew Hispanic Survey; unweighted count

Table 2: Logistic regression results

	All respondents						U.S. citizens only	
	votes in home countr elections	sends remittances	has made at least one trip home	plans to move back to home	real home is home country	Identifies as national first	registered to vote	ever voted in US electio
Country of Origin								
El Salvador	0.6285823	**2.07457**	**0.4155706**	0.8357267	0.6479437	0.6483842	1.898219	1.19868
Dominican Republic	1.609084	**2.579456**	**2.147495**	**2.668449**	**1.80979**	0.7394469	**3.510962**	**3.593236**
Other	0.7241568	1.295082	**0.3921259**	0.8599921	0.7151476	*0.6027838*	1.90467	1.652822
Colombia	1.759113	1.187036	0.5990467	0.5891517	1.740446	1.168412	2.842262	1.661617
Cuba	**0.1868693**	**1.637032**	**0.0669935**	*0.5902897*	0.8252554	1.272118	1.916489	**3.486434**
Settlement								
Years in US	**0.9154122**	0.9744372	**1.15111**	**0.8685621**	**0.8576769**	**0.9442151**	**1.277141**	**1.242317**
Years in US squared	*1.001553*	0.9997675	**0.9978824**	**1.001974**	**1.001861**	**1.001067**	**0.9964732**	**0.9971133**
Child migrant	0.980794	**0.4667763**	*0.4967098*	0.9249205	0.8001239	0.902745	0.4682052	0.5902666
Bilingual	**0.4688021**	**0.5245722**	1.1387	*0.5590274*	*0.603488*	1.202586	0.888737	1.13954
English dominant	0.6913479	**0.2959989**	*0.4129048*	**0.228133**	*0.4338566*	0.7595386	1.530803	0.7954853
Legal status								
U.S. citizen	0.7465718	0.8661429	**2.000723**	0.9783738	0.7384782	0.7985566		
Applying for citizenship	0.959043	0.8232317	0.8945062	*0.6794095*	0.7001036	*0.6548603*		
Social resources - education								
Primary	0.7229463	0.960279	1.289658	1.325895	0.6858387	1.143812	0.8257828	0.5733305
Some high school	*0.5934485*	1.25829	1.424321	1.112841	0.7331574	1.392771	0.8605265	0.8159462
Some college	0.923452	0.711525	*1.580464*	*1.541224*	0.8364554	1.11031	**3.053704**	1.649532
College or more	1.218882	0.7033069	**2.129032**	1.283052	**0.5687138**	0.8185394	2.523893	**3.877975**
Employed	0.9057345	**1.639643**	1.218245	1.138735	0.8821222	0.8031661	0.8334419	0.5802414
Social resources - income								
Lower middle	0.9615698	1.317063	1.36365	1.033327	*1.549399*	*1.592656*	0.7860512	0.9884359
Higher middle	1.028893	*1.701855*	**1.790423**	0.9590002	1.286438	1.460835	2.318876	2.091452
High	1.141136	1.177493	1.381038	0.7758035	1.176983	**2.10452**	0.6156267	1.193168
Demographic controls								
Male	**1.583484**	**1.893403**	1.024365	**1.501271**	1.182215	0.8996818	0.7459698	0.585192
Married	1.010681	0.8682674	1.319079	1.092295	1.171283	0.96931	1.739514	1.650883
One child	0.9626712	0.6893917	0.8694835	0.7449964	0.9705994	0.9244342	0.8177462	1.060355
Two children or more	0.7423255	0.8301491	**0.632683**	*0.7059113*	0.9869578	0.7296893	0.9158013	0.6752802

Note: Bold= p < .01; italics=p < .05; underline= p < .1

Table 3:
Significance of differences: Colombians, Cubans, Dominicans, Salvadorans compared

Votes in home election

	ES	DR	Col
Dr	0.04		
Col	0.04	0.82	
Cuba	0.03	0	0.00

Sends remittances

	ES	DR	Col
Dr	0.45		
Col	0.10	0.01	
Cuba	0.43	0.08	0.30

Made at least one trip to home country

	ES	DR	Col
Dr	0.00		
Col	0.35	0.00	
Cuba	0.00	0.00	0.00

Plans to move back to home country

	ES	DR	Col
Dr	0.00		
Col	0.37	0.00	
Cuba	0.30	0.00	0.99

Real home is home country

	ES	DR	Col
Dr	0.00		
Col	0.01	0.91	
Cuba	0.47	0.01	0.03

Is home country national first

	ES	DR	Col
Dr	0.65		
Col	0.09	0.14	
Cuba	0.02	0.03	0.79

Table 4: Test for significance of block of citizenship variables: US citizen and applying for citizenship jointly

Votes in home country elections	0.66
Sends remittances	0.56
Made at least one trip to home country	0.00
Plans to move back to home country	0.17
Real home is home country	0.14
Is home country national first	0.10

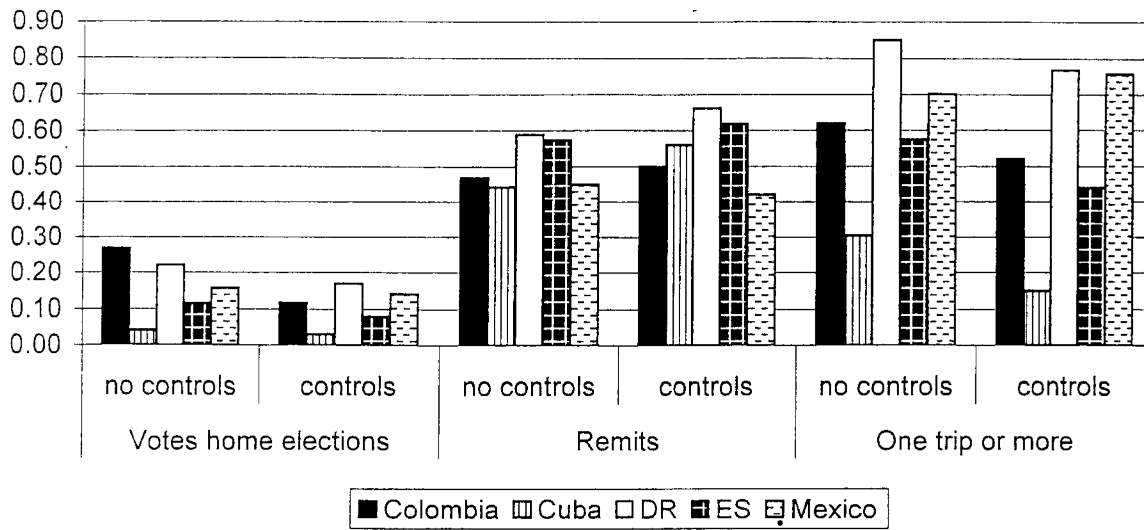
Figure 1: Cross-border exchanges: national origins differences - predicted probabilities
0.90
0.80
0.70
0.60
0.50
0.40
0.30
0.20
0.10
0.00
no controls
controls
no controls
controls
no controls
controls
Votes home elections
Remits
One trip or more
Colombia
Cuba
DR
ES
Mexico

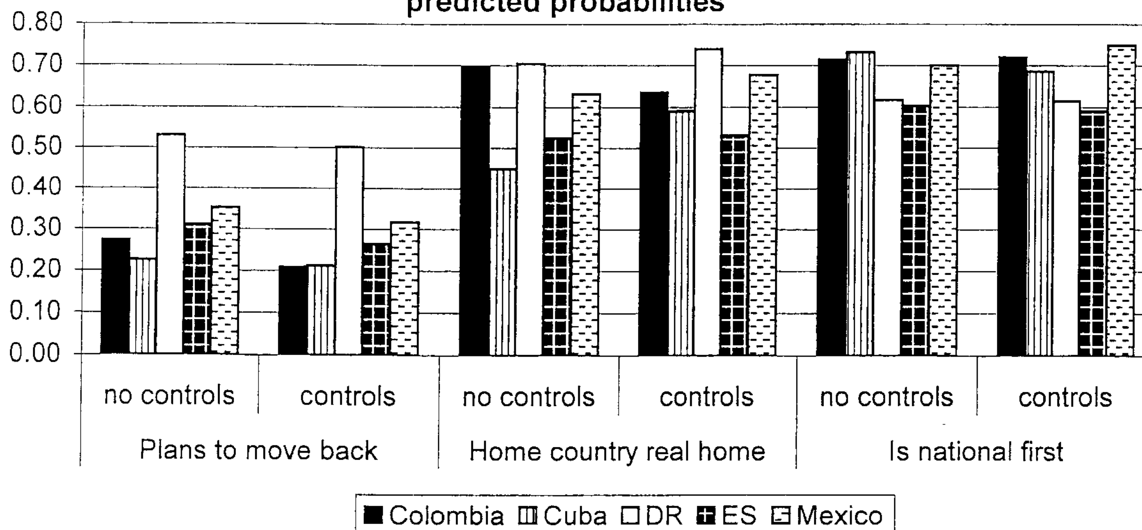
Figure 2: Home-host country attachments: national origins differences - predicted probabilities
0.80
0.70
0.60
0.50
0.40
0.30
0.20
0.10
0.00
no controls
controls
no controls
controls
no controls
controls
Plans to move back
Home country real home
Is national first
Colombia
Cuba
DR
ES
Mexico

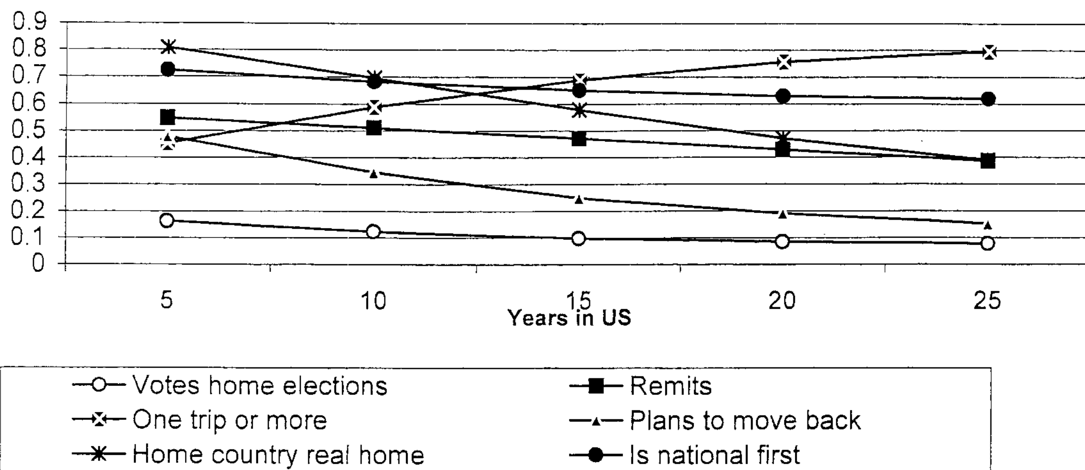
Figure 3: Impact of settlement: predicted probabilities
0.9
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0
5
10
15
20
25
Years in US
Votes home elections
Remits
One trip or more
Plans to move back
Home country real home
Is national first

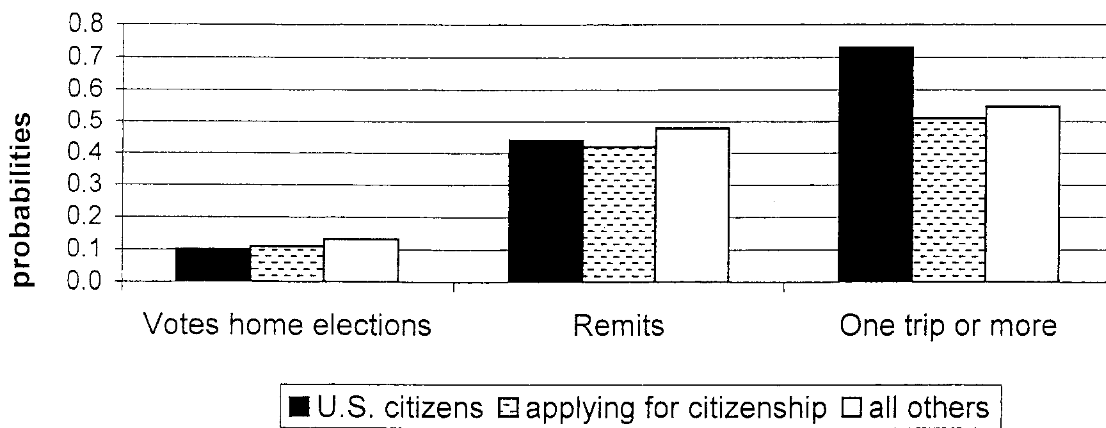
Figure 4: Impact of legal status: cross-border exchanges
probabilities
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0.0
Votes home elections
Remits
One trip or more
U.S. citizens
applying for citizenship
all others

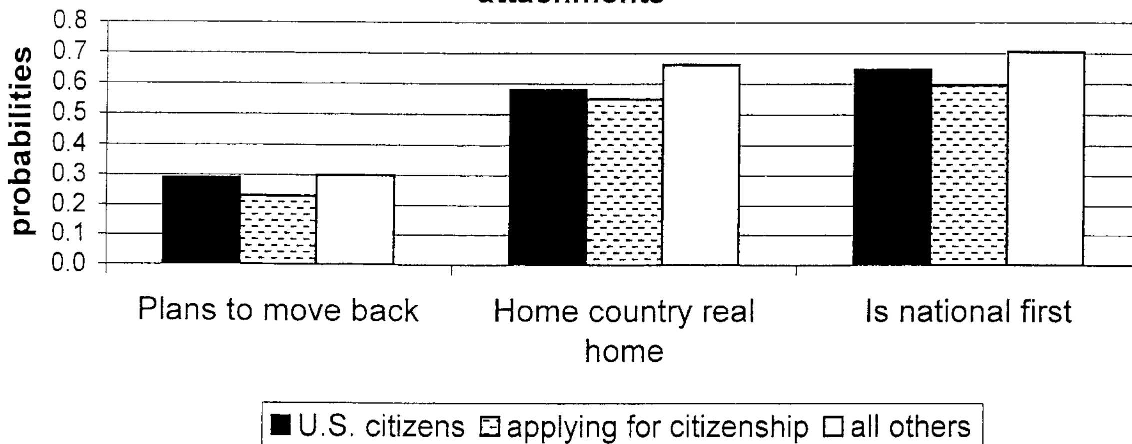
Figure 5: Impact of legal status: home-host country attachments
probabilities
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0.0
Plans to move back
Home country real home
Is national first
U.S. citizens
applying for citizenship
all others

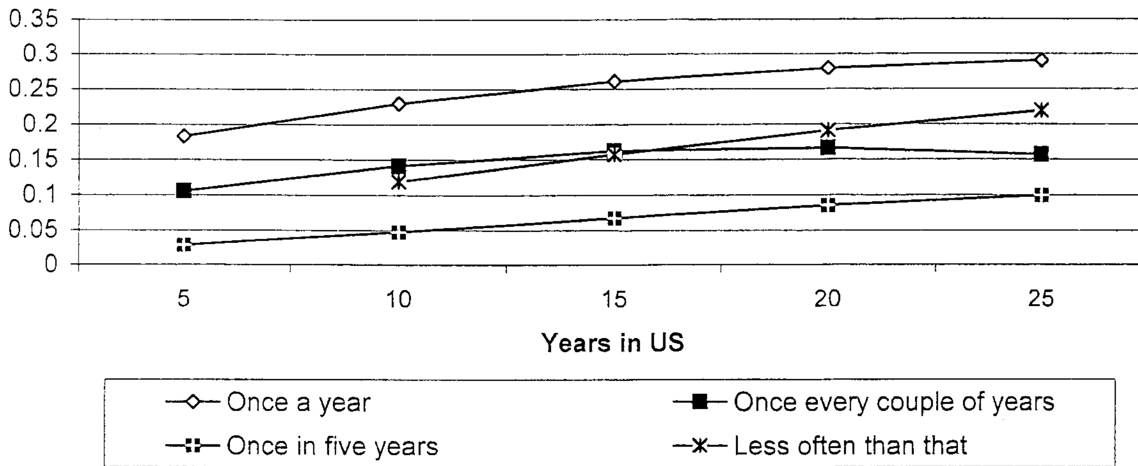
Figure 6: Frequency of travel: predicted probabilities
0.35
0.3
0.25
0.2
0.15
0.1
0.05
0
5
10
15
20
25
Years in US
Once a year
Once every couple of years
Once in five years
Less often than that

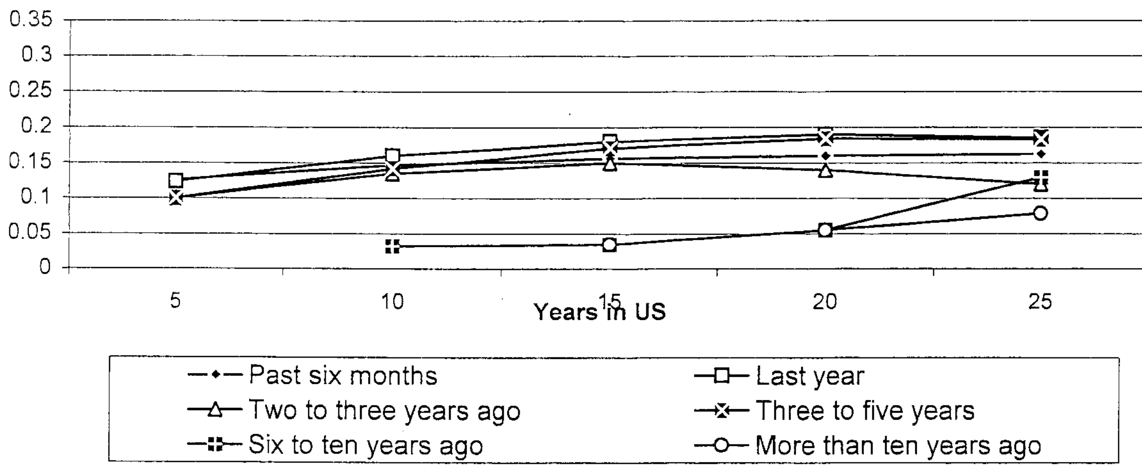
Figure 7: Recency of last trip: predicted probabilities
0.35
0.3
0.25
0.2
0.15
0.1
0.05
0
5
10
15
20
25
Years in US
Past six months
Last year
Two to three years ago
Three to five years
Six to ten years ago
More than ten years ago