

Transnational Belonging among Second Generation Youth: Identity in a Globalized World

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INTRODUCTION

The world in which migrants live has changed dramatically. At the same time that globalization has facilitated the dispersion of families around the world, communication has become cheaper and more accessible. Long-distance phone calls, international airfare, internet, and cell phones have facilitated migrant ties to the homeland. In recent years, studies on transnationalism have emerged to describe the ties and relationships that span across sending and receiving societies (for example, Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Levitt, 2001; Portes, 1997; Vertovec, 2001a). Since migrants are shaped by complex relationships that are forged within and across more than one country, their lives cannot be understood strictly within the borders of the receiving society. The lives of their children however, are less directly tied to a homeland, which raises questions about the transnational involvement of second generation youth. Empirical studies leave researchers divided in their conclusions about the transnational trends of the second-generation. Some predict that transnationalism may be important for the first generation, but not for their children (Kasinitz et al., 2002; Portes, 2001; Rumbaut, 2002). Others argue that the second generation maintain some knowledge of their parents' native language and do some traveling back and forth to their parents' country of origin, so ties may continue; but the magnitude and frequency is unclear (Basch et al., 2000; Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004; Purkayastha, 2005; Wolf, 1997).

Based on a sample of eighteen second generation migrants from Karnataka, India, findings from this article engage in this debate by discerning the importance of transnational connections among the children of migrants in Canada. International migration at a time of globalization has altered the experiences of youth in Canada. Despite their Canadian citizenship and sense of inclusion within Canadian society Indo-Canadian youth feel a connection to India and are sustaining transnational networks. Migrant youth who were born in India and

migrated to Canada as young children, as well as those who were born in Canada to immigrant parents, have a link to their parents' homeland that is more than just symbolic. It is real in the sense that these individuals maintain communication across national borders, and they identify with their parents' homeland and express this identification in their daily lives. Second generation migrants from India are embedded within a social field created by cross-border connections between Canada and India, and their identity is constructed through a series of material and symbolic flows across the borders of these countries. Second generation Indo-Canadians are engaged in frequent phone calls, email correspondence and annual visits to India, and this transnational communication activates the transnational social field and shapes their identification processes.

Instead of focusing on identity outcomes, this article emphasizes identity processes. The findings explain the ways the second generation are transnationally "doing ethnicity" and less about the actual ethnicities that they do. Identity labels such as Canadian, South-Asian, or Kannadiga, are given less emphasis than the processes through which the second generation constructs a sense of self. Subsequently the focus is on the process of identity construction within a transnational social field.

The significance of the transnational social field in the construction of their identities is demonstrated at three levels: 1) at the level of emotions: they feel Indian, yet also Canadian; 2) at the level of appearance: they express their transnational belonging through fashion styles and clothing; and 3) at the level of allegiance: they feel a sense of loyalty to India at the same time that they feel a sense of loyalty to Canada. This article outlines how each of the three levels of identity expression is being used by second generation migrants in the process of identity formation. The implication is that the second generation negotiates identities within a social space that includes flows from their parents' country of origin and country of settlement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transnationalism: A One Generation Phenomenon?

Generational research on transnationalism is still in its infancy and as a result there are many, essentially unexplored, possibilities. Empirical studies leave researchers divided in their conclusions about the transnational trends of the second-generation. On one side of the debate are scholars who predict that transnationalism may be important for the first generation, but not for their children. Portes (2001: 190) argues that transnational activities are a “one-generation phenomenon”, but that the involvement of the immigrant generation can have resilient effects on the second generation. Rumbaut (2002: 89) finds overall, that despite variability among different national-origin groups, the level of transnational attachments among the second generation is quite small. Similarly, Kasinitz et al. (2002: 119) find low levels of second-generation transnationalism among individuals in New York City, however they emphasize that in each ethnic group there is a minority for whom transnational ties continue to play a “regular, sustained, integral role in their lives”, and therefore research must continue to search for answers to questions of transnationality.

In contrast, other scholars argue that the second generation maintain some knowledge of their parents’ native language and do some traveling back and forth to their parents’ country of origin, so ties may continue, but the magnitude and frequency is unclear. Smith (2002) finds that rather than low or diminishing levels of transnationalism among the second generation, there is actually a cultivation of these practices as they attempt to redefine their identities and social locations; and Basch et al. (2000) argue that it is “likely” that transnational relations will continue among the second generation. Research has also commented on the ways transnational engagement among the second generation may ebb and flow according to life-cycle stages (Somerville, 2007) or in response to particular incidents or crises (Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004). Levitt and Waters (2002) point out that transnational practices amongst the second generation might be sporadic or selective, but they “add up”, so research needs to examine if they are cumulatively significant.

Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004) point out that we need to consider the extent to which the new second generation is reared in a transnational social field, which refers to sets of multiple interconnected networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are exchanged, and transformed (Basch et al., 2000; Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004). Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004) suggest that we can do this by differentiating between ‘ways of being’ and ‘ways of belonging’ in a transnational space. ‘Ways of being’ refer to the actual social relations and practices in which individuals engage, whereas ‘ways of belonging’ refer to a connection to a homeland through memory, nostalgia or imagination. Similarly, Wolf (1997) argues that Filipino second generation youth are engaged in what she calls “transnational struggles” at the emotional level. She found that the children of immigrants maintain ties to their parents’ homeland and their own homeland. She concludes that immigrant parents are more actively engaged in maintaining relationships with the Philippines than their children, but their children are maintaining ties “at the level of emotions, ideologies and conflicting cultural codes” (Wolf, 1997: 458).

Research on second-generation transnationalism is gaining prominence in the United States, where scholars such as Fournon and Glick-Schiller (2002), Haller and Landolt (2005), Levitt and Waters (2002) Portes (2001), and Rumbaut (2002, 2003), are making substantial progress in our understanding of this phenomenon. Unlike the small, but growing, interest in studying second generation transnationalism in the U.S., existing research in Canada still mainly explores second-generation Canadian immigrants’ adaptation in terms of psychological adjustment, educational and occupational achievement, emotional and behavioural adjustment, earnings, poverty levels, and health status (Boyd, 2002; Reitz and Somerville, 2004). There is an identifiable gap in research with few empirical studies on Canadian second-generation transmigrants.

Nevertheless, there is an impressive array of information about the new second generation. Researchers interested in the children of migrants are asking some key questions: the kinds of attachments the children of immigrants maintain with their parents’ homeland; the role of language retention or loss in the transnational engagement of the second generation; how changes in the

host-society economy influence the transnational trends of the second generation; how the attachments and incorporation patterns of the first generation influence their children; how changes in the racial and ethnic profile, as well as multiculturalism, in the host society affect the second generation and their ties to a parental homeland; and what resources the second generation can muster to confront segmented labour markets, racism, marginalization, and other obstacles in the host countries (for a review of research see Haller and Landolt, 2005; and Levitt and Waters, 2002). In light of existing research and the work that remains to be done on the children of immigrants, this article addresses the extent to which the second generation expresses transnational connections in their self-identification.

Second Generation Identity

Findings on identity formation among members of the visible minority second generation are limited because the new second generation in Canada is still quite young (see Reitz and Somerville, 2004). It is generally assumed that as immigrants are incorporated into the mainstream population, ethnic identities become less salient, yet little research has explored whether this is true among second generation racial minority migrants who have, for all intensive purposes, incorporated into Canadian society. Research has documented how identities are constructed through a combination of processes based on external labels, social constructions, and ethnic options (Waters, 1990; 1999), and that many of the conditions used to specify these labels and constructions are specific to the social worlds in which migrants are embedded (Vertovec, 2001b). However, we have a limited understanding of how transnational social worlds impact upon this process.

Immigrants are no longer limited to the structural conditions in the host country but are in fact building their lives by moving back and forth between one or more countries of origin and settlement (Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Levitt, 2001; Portes, 1997). However, the extent to which their children are building their identities between one or more countries is less well known. Several recent works have explored the ways that second generation migrants self-identify with regard to national, racial and ethnic identities. Scholars have described how migrant groups assert their transnational connection and identification to

avoid negative racialized identities (Fernandez-Kelly and Schauffler, 1996; Foner, 2001; Levitt, 2001) and to compensate for their lack of inclusion in the mainstream. According to Portes (1999: 470), based on his research in the United States, a survey of over 5,000 second-generation youths found that, by age fourteen, the majority identified themselves as hyphenated Americans¹, plain Americans² or members of the pan-ethnic identities³ defined by mainstream American culture.

In a study of second generation South Asians in the US, Purkayastha (2005: 59) found that the children of affluent South Asian migrants choose bicultural identities by forging their lives through encounters in India and America. She further argues that the intersection of global and local forces lead South Asian Americans to select a hyphenated identity label; use transnational family networks to help mitigate structural constraints; negotiate ethnic boundaries through transnational networks; and develop a transnational form of racialized identities. Her work is pertinent to identity studies and makes an important contribution to our understanding of the ways the second generation “traverse a transnational world” (Purkayastha, 2005).

This article builds off Purkayastha’s analysis by studying one South Asian group in more detail: South Indians from Karnataka. All of the above studies, except for Purkayastha (2005), focus on second-generation identity outcomes, without paying much attention to the process through which various identities are constructed. Studies suggest second generations adopt transnational identities (Fernandez-Kelly and Schauffler, 1996; Foner, 2001), hyphenated identities (Portes, 1999), pan-ethnic identities (Portes, 1999), or hyphenated bicultural identities (Purkayastha, 2005). In this article, I focus on processes, not outcomes. The emphasis is on how identities are constructed and expressed by second generation Indo-Canadians. In other words, the current findings relate to the ways the second generation are ‘doing ethnicity’, and less about the actual ethnicity that they do⁴.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes in-depth, face-to-face interviews with eighteen second-generation⁵ Indo-Canadian youth between the ages of twelve and twenty-five; the average age of participants

is twenty-two years. All participants were living in the Greater Toronto Area⁶ at the time of the interview, and are Canadian citizens. Eligible participants included anyone whose parents were born in Karnataka, India and migrated to Canada either before the participant (their child) was born or when the participant was pre-school aged. Thus, the sample encompasses individuals who are second-generation migrants from Karnataka, South India. Firstly, this group was chosen because of their relatively high socio-economic status in both India and Canada. The parents of these individuals are migrating from the city of Bangalore, which is a thriving IT capital in India. By selecting a group with a relatively high socio-economic status, it lessens the likelihood that the second generation is maintaining transnational linkages out of economic necessity, or a sense of financial obligation to kin in India. The research does not attempt to measure transnational ties as a survival strategy to disperse resources globally, but instead explores the extent to which transnational practices are a voluntary activity among second-generation youth.

Secondly, migrants from Karnataka were selected because at the time of writing the Hindu religion accounted for 84 percent of the population in Karnataka. Levitt (2003, 2004) has pointed out how religion exercises significant influence over the ways in which migrants are incorporated into host societies and stay attached to their homelands. Therefore selecting a state with a significant majority religion, simplifies the sample. All participants identified their religion as Hindu. Participants were recruited through a variety of methods, including ads in newspapers, signs in Toronto neighbourhoods and Universities, announcements made at cultural and religious associations, and snowball sampling. The participants all speak English in addition to one or more Indian languages. The most common languages spoken by participants are Kannada and Hindi. There is a relatively equal gender distribution with eight males and ten females. Interviews lasted an average of two hours, and were all conducted in English by the author. Data collection took place between January and April 2005.

FINDINGS: CONCEPTUALIZING INDIAN IDENTITY IN CANADA

Understanding that transnational networks

are important in the construction of identity necessitates attention to the communications occurring across borders. Second generation migrants keep in touch transnationally; they travel as visitors, phone friends and relatives, and discuss their daily lives through communication in Canada and India. These flows are multi-directional in the sense that the people, information, and ideas that flow through them are initiated and received in each of the sending and receiving societies. It is through these personal, cross-border networks that the second generation is able to mobilize the resources which allow them to express feelings of multiple attachments and multi-belonging. Seventy-two percent of the participants make yearly visits to India, ninety-four percent phone India on a weekly basis, and ninety-four percent email family and friends in India on a weekly basis. These second-generation migrants are therefore actively engaged in cross-border communications which keep them connected to people in their parents' country of origin. It is within the social environment created by these cross-border connections that the second generation goes through processes of identity formation, which they express through emotions, appearances and allegiances.

These second-generation migrants experience shifting identities that are actualized through their transnational relations with friends and family members in two countries. Due to their connections to both India and Canada, these youth share unique experiences as the children of immigrants in Canada. Their identities cannot be specified based on existing identity categories, such as Indian, South Asian or Canadian, among others, so they feel an increased need to manage their identities and the processes through which they express these identities. As a result of ongoing cross-border communications, the second generation comes to realize they are different from their parents: they have not had an immigration journey; are different from native-born whites in Canada: they are non-white; and different from other racial minority Canadians: they have meaningful connections to a homeland. The features that make these youth unique also facilitate their transnational communication - they embed themselves in networks of personal relationships that span two countries. These communications influence the ways the second generation identifies their sense of self. By using

social networks in both Canada and India as benchmarks, against which to define their level of belonging, the second generation is growing up in a transnational social field.

Transnational Identity Formation Expressed Through Emotions

One way in which second generation Indo-Canadians describe their emotional connection to India and to Canada is by describing themselves as being a blend of different ethnic and national identities. A Canadian born male, with two foreign-born parents describes himself in the following way. *“I don’t want to typecast myself as one, so I’d say I’m a mix of Indian and Canadian. East Indian sorry. Or actually South Indian. I would not say East Indian, I’d say South Indian. I guess it kind of depends where I am and who I’m with”*. Through this “mix” of identities, he is demonstrating the fluidity of national and regional boundaries, and his reluctance to select one identity marker. A seventeen-year old male, who immigrated to Canada as a child, also describes the fusion of identities. *“As of right now I consider myself an Indo-Canadian because I am a mixture of everything; but when I’m with other Indians I feel more Indian, unless I’m in India then I feel more Canadian because I am different”*. Interestingly, he points out that this is how he feels “right now”, which acknowledges that identities shift, and he may identify differently in one week, one month or one year from now. Two of the factors that influence these shifts are the changing social contexts and social networks. Both of these hinge on the national borders within which the participant and the social contacts are located.

For example, a second generation female who was born in Canada and is currently in her twenties, identifies at various times as Indian, South Indian, East Indian, Kannadiga, South Asian, Indo-Canadian, and Canadian. She describes her experience of having her social network and social context influence her self-identification.

“Anything that makes me feel more Canadian is kind of Canadian cultural things like there is a surface level culture like hockey and watching hockey with other Canadians always makes me feel more Canadian...But there are definitely times I feel more Indian; like I guess

if I am in a place that is more, like if I am in a temple I would absolutely feel more Indian. I guess any place that is culturally Indian, and I am with other Indians. But there are times I feel a blend [of Indian and Canadian], like when I am at home with my family I feel a blend because at the end of the day I am both, and I don’t think you have to be one or the other”

It is this reluctance to choose a single ethnic or nationally based identity that leads these second generation migrants to engage in processes of identification which incorporate both countries of origin and settlement, and which allow them to express transnational belonging. A second generation female who was born and raised in Canada identifies as Indian, South Indian, Kannadiga, South Asian, Indo-Canadian and Canadian:

“I am Indian, but I’m not totally like my parents. I’m a mix of the East and the West in the way I think and even the way I dress. So I guess I’m Indo-Canadian because I feel I have roots here, but the Indian part [of me] is still very large. It’s a struggle because my parents are so Indian. But I am definitely more Canadian than my cousins in India... People put a lot of emphasis on the external you know, they judge you, and family in India always accused me of not being Indian enough”.

This difficulty to self-identify and the subsequent rationalizations for chosen identities are a way for the second generation to come to terms with transnational belonging. They feel one identity, by itself, does not fully capture the essence of who they are or what they believe. The process of defining the self in such a way that accurately reflects emotional connection and symbolic belonging is influenced by external social factors; the process of self representation varies according to individuals and groups in two countries. Through processes of self-inclusion and exclusion, second generation Indo-Canadians use cross-national social contexts in their self-identification as both Indian and Canadian.

These second generation youth maintain several identities that link them simultaneously to two countries. They feel emotional attachment and belonging to their Indian families in India and promote their ties to their parents’ country of origin as a way to express these connections. Simultaneously, these second generation youth feel an emotional connection to Canada and promote their belonging within Canada. These

transnational connections represent an effort to articulate a social identity that is forged between the borders of Canada and India, and which express inclusion within both simultaneously. In deciphering their individual and collective belonging, these second-generation migrants sift through and merge multiple affiliations and emotional attachments to people, places and traditions in two countries. The following sections further demonstrate this transnational belonging by exploring how these emotions of multi-inclusion are expressed through fashion and allegiances.

Transnational Identity Formation Expressed Through Fashion and Clothing

Selecting of ethnic clothes is an important way in which second generation Indo-Canadians express their transnational belonging. Dress is an ethnic symbol that distinguishes one group from another. This form of ethnic expression is used by the second generation in this study. The children of migrants create their own fashion styles that reflect their connection to their parents' birthplace, and their own country of citizenship. In this way, fashion serves as a cultural tool for building bridges across national boundaries and enables these youth to situate themselves between these boundaries. Among transnational youth, facets of multiple cultures and identities are selected, syncretized and modified, so migrants can allow their consumption and fashion trends to be an expression of this multi-belonging.

By creating Indian inspired Western clothing, and Western inspired Indian clothing, second-generation migrants symbolically position themselves as Indian but, at the same time, clearly differentiate themselves from their Indian parents by expressing their 'Canadianness'. Their choice in ethnic fashion is not a strict adherence to tradition, which they associate with their parents; rather it is a way to construct an identity that reflects their Indian heritage and belonging in India, yet at the same time represents their belonging in Canada. A second-generation woman, born in Canada to two foreign-born parents, said she did not know if she formally expressed her ethnicity – she “just felt it”, however her clothing preferences serve as expressions of her transnational belonging. She wore both Indian and Western clothes, depending on the event, and who would be in attendance.

More importantly the clothes she chose for various occasions were different from the ones her Indian mother or mother-in-law would choose, and therefore they reflect her unique position as a second generation migrant with attachments to two countries.

“When there is an Indian party to go to I wear the clothes...I do everything I can to be involved in like the clothing and stuff when we go out...but I feel it's hard when I am with Indians who are very cultured, or if I'm too much on the Canadian side. Like even when I choose an Indian outfit to wear, I will choose something that is kind of a mix [of Canadian and Indian]. Like it will be more subtle, like it won't be as loud and it won't have all those jewels and beads, like it won't be tacky it will be more simple. I think I just choose a mix more...My cousins and people of the same age as me, friends and stuff, they are all on the same level as me – we all grew up here and all like the same clothes and stuff, even with the traditional Indian clothes, we all kind of have the same tastes”.

Through her less “tacky” clothes, she creates a way to be Indian that is different from her parents, yet also different from native-Canadians. She feels a connection with other second-generation Indians who are in Canada, and who are using clothes to similarly represent themselves within the transnational world in which they are living.⁷

Another participant explains how she selects and modifies symbolic parts of herself through her use of fashion:

“[My Indian ethnicity's] embedded in all aspects of my life. I definitely look Indian and some of my wardrobe, my clothes, reflect that as well. I definitely have a lot of Indian clothes and I have a lot of so called Western clothes that have been Indianized. Every time I go to India I acquire new things or new ideas. So for instance it's quite typical in India to wear what is called a Salwar Kameez, which is a long tunic sort of thing, so I wear the top, but with jeans on the bottom. And the top has gotten shorter and shorter, it is still longer than a t-shirt, but it is still Indian looking”

She is using a combination of Indian clothes and Western clothes, and then further altering them to express her sense of belonging to both India and Canada. Through her fashion choices, this second-generation woman is revealing how her non-traditional choices maintain an important

Indian quality, while at the same time conforming, in some respects, to the Canadian expectation of contemporary fashion. These second generation Indo-Canadians are able to feel Indian at certain events and at certain functions, while simultaneously maintaining their 'Canadianness'. While attending events with their non-ethnic Canadian peers these migrants conform to Canadian fashion trends while preserving their Indian ethnicity, by altering styles to reflect their identity border-crossings. Consumer and fashion choices allow second-generation Indo-Canadians to negotiate and express the meanings of their multilayered identities, and this is facilitated through frequent flows of people, clothing and style advice across national borders.

The second generation share conversations about fashion with their same-age cousins in India, which help shape their preferences for South Indian styles or fabrics. What is important is not the actual clothing selected or how the clothes are worn but that the second generation use fashion as a way of defining themselves as belonging to two cultures and two countries. Their clothing serves as a cultural tool that they acquire transnationally through phone calls and emails about fashion, and during shopping trips in India and Canada.

The second generation comes to terms with their identity through self-expression and by constructing a fashion that is different from their parents, but also different from typical styles worn by Kannadigas, Indians, Canadians, and all other recognizable identities. These youth actively construct a unique style that captures elements of each of these cultural identities with which they identify. In order to acquire these cultural tools, the second generation needs to remain informed about changing fashion trends in India. These young people communicate with cousins in India to ensure they are aware of how Indians in India are wearing the contemporary Indian styles. One female participant describes how her frequent transnational communications provide the mechanisms through which she acquires information about contemporary Indian fashions. "I talk to [my cousin in India] and she tells me what they're wearing and if I think it sounds nice I'll try to sort of copy it, or adapt it to suit me". These cross-border communications facilitate participation within a transnational social field that keeps the second generation cognizant of current fashion trends in more than one country.

A female participant describes this process: "I have a cousin who is the same age as me and when I go [to India] I'd take clothes to wear and we'd compare and sometimes I'd borrow some things or go with her to buy them". Having family in India provides the second generation with a kind of ethnic fashion specialist that is unavailable to them in Canada. By relying on their own notions of Canadian fashion and their families' notions of Indian fashion, the second generation is able to construct a transnational style that reflects their social world. Through these cross-border fashion talks, the second generation learns the latest styles in India, which they can then modify to reflect the modern Canadian styles of their non-ethnic peers, providing self-expression of transnational belonging.

This section has demonstrated the various ways that migrants express their transnational belonging through clothing. There are variations in the ways the second generation use clothes to signify their connection to India and Canada but the common thread is that despite these variances, second generation Indo-Canadians are using fashion to express their simultaneous belonging and unbelonging to two countries and two cultures. Through their transnational mixing of ethnic styles, second generation Indo-Canadians negotiate the meanings associated with fashions. Fashion serves as a conduit for self-expression in a way that pays tribute to the transnational flows in which it is situated.

Transnational Identity Formation Expressed Through Multiple Allegiances

Second generation Indo-Canadians feel a sense of loyalty to both Canada and India, which they express through verbal statements, arguments and politicized discussions. In this way, the second generation converts their emotional connection to both Canada and India into a vocal expression of loyalty. Their sense of connection to, and belonging in, India is strong and this coexists with their sense of connection to, and belonging in, Canada. "At times I feel loyal to India because that's where I'm from. I have my roots back there and this is reinforced every time I go back there. But at the same time I'm loyal to Canada because it has been good to me", said a sixteen year old male. This sense of lineage was strong and being born or raised in

Canada does not obliterate their individual or family connection to India. Another participant, who describes himself as Indian, South Indian, and Canadian, explains: *"I am loyal to Canada because I am Canadian, but I am loyal to India because it is my background and I am absolutely proud of my background. Every year I go back and I'm proud to go back"*. Connection to, association with, and belonging to, multi-local groups leads to various allegiances with which the second-generation feel confronted.

Being loyal to and proud of both Canada and India, leads the second generation to fervently defend both countries to critical outsiders. A male participant, who immigrated to Canada as a child, expresses his attempts to defend Canada *"I feel I owe both countries. Whenever I go to India like, my cousins they tease me about Canada, and they mock me, and I try to defend Canada; and when I am in Canada I tell all the good things about India. They are both a part of me and I feel the need to defend them"*. A Canadian-born female participant describes her repeated attempts to defend her two countries: *"I definitely feel loyal to each [country] in a different way. I have emailed the CNN many times to complain about their coverage of India, and I'm always teaching my family in India about what Canada is about"*.

Whether amongst their friends in India and Canada or to formal institutions in India and Canada, the second generation voices their loyalty to both countries in their daily lives. A Canadian born female explains how she expresses dual-loyalty by correcting Canadians' misperceptions of Indians, and vice versa. *"I think that when people knock Indian culture or say something that I think is not true – like a lot of people have the perception that Indians are villagers, they come from the villages and they bathe in the river water and, to me I know that is not true, because I have been there, and I know a lot of the poor that may be how they live, but that is not how everybody lives, so, like I think I try to educate them in a way, that there is more to India, and Indian people are not all like that, just like in Canada you can't say all Canadians live on Yonge street and are panhandlers. How can you say that? There's a few of them yeah, but that's not all we're about. It's the same idea. So I do the same for Canada when I am in India"*. Defending both countries is a natural strategy for these youth because having to take sides would require reshuffling their ethnic belonging, and symbolically

choosing one part of themselves over the other.

For these children of migrants their deep sense of loyalty to India and Canada is acted upon in a way that makes emotional attachment an observable expression. Defending Canada while speaking to Indian nationals and defending India while speaking to non-Indian Canadians becomes a regular part of their lives as second-generation migrants. They defend both countries vigorously trying to point out the favorable features of both, simultaneously trying to educate others about the virtues of each country. In this way, migrants informally create a political arena in which their allegiance to two countries can be articulated in such a way as to become an expression of who they are.

CONCLUSION

Exploring identity construction among second-generation migrants from India illustrates the importance they place on ties to their parents' homeland in their construction of identity and belonging in Canada. The second generation still feels a personal connection to India, and they express this connection through their identity options, their clothing choices and their dual allegiances. The children of migrants are able to stay connected to their parents' birthplace at the same time that they build a strong connection to their own country of citizenship. It is through frequent transnational communication and information flows that the second generation is able to remain embedded in both India and Canada, and which facilitates their process of identity formation within this active transnational social field.

Findings from this paper can be summarized into four main conclusions and contributions to contemporary literature. Firstly, this article has contributed to the debate over whether transnational engagement is a first generation phenomenon. The answer is a resounding no; transnationalism is not a one-generation phenomenon. Although the second generation is being raised in Canada and are incorporated into Canada in terms of their education, employment and social activities, they are nevertheless growing up in a transnational social field. The second generation is maintaining cross-border communication through internet, phone calls and visits. Through regular contact with friends and family in India, the second-generation are connected physically and

emotionally to more than one country. These findings suggest that researchers should be more aware of the need to trace the transnational connections and meanings associated with cross-border ties among not only immigrants, but also their children.

Secondly, regular and sustained transnational communication activates the transnational social field and shapes identity processes. Frequent cross-border communication with family in India provides the necessary context and contacts with which to develop and express identities transnationally. A series of informal family networks are developed between second-generation Indo-Canadians and kin in the country of origin, which act as conduits for identity construction. It is because of ongoing emails, phone calls, and other forms of communication that the second generation has the desire and ability to formulate transnational sentiments and express these in their processes of identity construction. Without these contacts, their identity construction would be limited to the host society context with imagined links to India. Since however, they are part of established transnational networks, they can obtain consumption products, advice and information directly from both Canada and India. Second generation Indo-Canadians consequently use their transnational communications to sift through a repertoire of identity tools, in order to construct an identity that symbolizes their connection to their families in India and their families in Canada. Through their use of fashion, negotiation of symbolic meanings, and emotional connections and allegiances, the second generation helps us to understand how transnational flows are deeply involved in their process of self-identification.

Thirdly, identities emerge and are modified, based on cross-border flows. Transnational communication not only facilitates the construction of identities but also their reconstruction. The identity expressions of these second-generation migrants reflect the transnational connections that make them possible; they are fluid and malleable, taking on new forms depending on the location of the migrants and their social network and the composition of these social networks in terms of issues such as nationality, ethnicity, and background. Second-generation migrants describe a fluidity of identities, and a myriad of ways in which their identities are expressed as a direct result of shifting ethnic and national contexts. Furthermore, the second-generation

modifies their identities and the ways in which they express their belonging through changing fashions, parallel loyalties and a new way of answering the question 'Who am I'? Just as goods and people come to circulate in new ways, so too identities emerge and are modified based on cross-border flows.

Finally, throughout this article I have argued that instead of simply looking at identity outcomes, research needs to look at the process of identification. Existing literature primarily focuses on identity outcomes and neglects to examine, in any sufficient detail, emotional attachments, and the ways these attachments are expressed. Static identity markers do not capture embeddedness in transnational social fields. Instead of focusing on whether someone identifies as Canadian, Indian, Indo-Canadian or South Asian, research needs to understand that the processes of identity construction provide an opportunity to examine the expression of identities, and the meanings migrants attach to those identities. By paying attention to processes, we see how they take place within a transnational social field. Converting identity construction of the second generation into a model of identity outcomes disempowers second generation migrants. It removes their agency to engage in processes of formulating and expressing fluctuating emotional attachments. Fundamentally, the transnational social world is inherently implicated in processes of self-identification among these youth, and there is a need to better understand the processes of formulating and expressing oscillating transnational attachments.

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NOTES

- 1 Hyphenated Americans refer to individuals who

- consider themselves to be both American and another distinct ethnic identity, such as Haitian-American or Vietnamese-American.
- 2 Plain Americans refer to people who simply identify as American
 - 3 Pan-ethnic identities refer to a collective identity that encompasses a number of national-origin groups, such as Asian.
 - 4 Although this article does not focus on identity outcomes, participants were asked about their identity outcomes (or labels). Everybody in the sample identified with multiple ethnic identity categories. Although the second generation will select a primary identity if asked to do so, their narratives reveal how these labels are incomplete. Focusing on the processes involved in constructing these multiple identities is where the truly sociological queries lay. For simplification of reporting results, this article refers to the second-generation participants as Indo-Canadians which is the most frequent self-identification label reported by participants.
 - 5 According to Fournon and Glick-Schiller (2002: 195) a transnational second generation is defined as “all persons born into the generation after emigrants have established transnational social fields who live within or are socialized by these fields, regardless of whether they were born or are currently living in the country of emigration or abroad”. I find this definition too universal, as does Jones-Correa (2002), and argue that it downplays the importance of contextual differences between individuals in the sending and receiving societies. I assert that to be considered a second-generation immigrant, the individual must be born in Canada and have parents who were born in a foreign country, or individuals who were born in a foreign country but immigrated to Canada at a young age. This is consistent with many immigrant scholars who posit that anyone who migrates before adolescence can be categorized as second-generation (see Rumbaut (2003) for a discussion of the methodological problems of researching the second generation).
 - 6 The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is the largest metropolitan area in Canada. The GTA has a population of over 5.5 million people (2006 Canadian Census).
 - 7 This sense of connection to other second generation youth was described by one female as a central part of her identity. “I think something does have to be said for being, not even breaking it down by the country your parents immigrated from, but just even being part of a second generation. Like I find I have connected in ways to friends who are also second generation but from a different country. Like I’m think of a friend of mine, and we were always able to relate, like she always called it the parent immigrant experience and what they learned from that and how that in turn played out in the way you view things and in the way you are raised”.

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ABSTRACT Based on interviews with second-generation Indo-Canadians, this paper argues that communication with family in the homeland leads the second generation to construct their identities through a series of material and symbolic flows across the borders of India and Canada. Through the consumption of cross-border shopping, fashion, advice, and interactions, the children of migrants develop identities within a transnational social field that includes people, information and goods in both Canada and India. For the second generation, their sense of self is inherently located within and between national borders, and they express this multi-belonging through emotions, appearances and allegiances. This paper concludes that transnationalism is not a one generation phenomenon. A series of informal family networks are developed between second generation Indo-Canadians and kin in the country of origin, which act as conduits for identity construction. These identities are malleable and further modified through ongoing transnational interactions. Findings provide insights into the self-expression of migrant youth in today's globalized world.

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