

The Panic to Leave: Economic Crisis and the “New Emigration” from Ecuador

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ABSTRACT

Prior to the late 1990s, Ecuadorian international migration was directed primarily toward the United States. Of the estimated 400,000 Ecuadorians living in the United States, most are concentrated in metropolitan New York and many hail from the south-central highlands of Cañar and Azuay Provinces. In the mid- to late-1990s, Ecuador entered a political and economic crisis just as clandestine transportation to the United States became increasingly expensive and dangerous. Within two years Ecuadorian migration diversified radically and a “new emigration” formed. Many thousands of Ecuadorians from throughout the country migrated to Europe, mostly Spain, but also to France, Italy, and The Netherlands. Prior to 1998, few Ecuadorians lived in Europe, but now, Ecuadorians are the largest immigrant group in Madrid and one of the largest in Spain. The migrant stream was led by women and composed of people from a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Ecuadorians find themselves working in a variety of services (especially women) and negotiating a volatile, even hostile, social, and political environment.

This “new emigration” has numerous implications for Ecuadorian families, the economy, and the nation-state. Understanding the implications requires a comparative approach that examines at least three aspects of the new emigration: the role of gender, the importance of transnational ties and connections, and the emerging roles of state and non-state actors in the formalization of migration.

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INTRODUCTION

In the late 1990s, Ecuador experienced its worst economic crisis in more than a century, weathering political chaos and social upheaval that threatened this small Andean Republic's already tenuous stability. While in many respects Ecuador never recovered from the "lost decade" of the 1980s that brought export revenue declines, increased debt, and painful austerity measures, its most immediate economic and political problems can be traced to the mid-1990s (Larrea, 1998). After fighting a short-lived, but costly border war with Peru in 1995, Ecuadorians removed President Abdalá Bucaram in 1997 and endured El Niño floods during 1997-1998 that crippled banana exports and infrastructure, causing more than \$US 2 billion in economic damage (IMF, 2000: 8). These economic setbacks were compounded when prices for oil, Ecuador's most lucrative export, fell to a near record low. By early 1999 the government of President Jamil Mahuad consolidated, closed, or bailed out 16 financial institutions at a cost of nearly \$2.6 billion (IMF, 2000: 23). As the economy contracted and inflation increased to 60 per cent President Mahuad froze the majority of bank accounts in an effort to stop capital flight and attempted to pass numerous neoliberal reform measures in order to secure badly needed International Monetary Fund (IMF) funding to ease the economic crisis. In September 1999 Ecuador defaulted on Brady Bonds and by the start of 2000, the unpopular President tried to salvage the economy by announcing a plan to dollarize the economy. Protests mounted and President Mahuad was forced to resign. He was replaced briefly by a three-member junta and finally by Vice-President Gustavo Noboa. Upon assuming the presidency, Noboa continued the dollarization plan and other neoliberal austerity measures. Of three consecutive years in a row, 1999 was the worst economically. The economy contracted an estimated 7.3 per cent, suffered 60 per cent inflation, and the soon to be replaced currency devalued 66 per cent (Bolsa de Valores Guayaquil, 2001). GDP fell to nearly equal the country's \$13.75 billion debt load (World Bank, 2000), and the poverty rate jumped to 40 per cent, up from 33 per cent in 1995 (IMF, 2000: 9). Nationwide unemployment increased to 15 per cent (Bolsa de Valores Guayaquil, 2001).

An equally impressive sequence of migration coincided with this political-economic history. In just two years (1999 and 2000) more than 267,000 Ecuadorians emigrated (net) and remittances increased to more than \$1.41 billion in 2001 from an estimated \$643 million in 1997 (Central Bank of Ecuador, 2002). Much of this new emigration has been directed toward Europe and Spain in particular. Departures to Spain escalated sharply from an estimated 5,000 people in all of 1994 to more than 7,000 per month in 2000 (Dirección Nacional de Migración, 2000). What is most remarkable about this situation is not simply that Ecuador is joining other Latin American countries as an exporter of people and importer of capital (remittances), but rather that within a very short amount of time (two years), Ecuadorian migration has diversified radically. Prior to 1998, Ecuadorian emigration was overwhelmingly directed at the United

States, where an estimated 400,000 Ecuadorians live (Logan, 2001: 3). Few Ecuadorians lived in Europe, with the exception of a few thousand itinerant Otavaleños, members of an indigenous group located in Imbabura Province (Meisch, 1997). The “new migration” has also diversified from the sending region. While emigration to United States has been largely a phenomenon concentrated in the country’s south-central highlands (and to a lesser extent Otavalo) now almost every Ecuadorian province has a considerable population living overseas. An equally significant demographic feature of the new emigration is that, as opposed to the US-bound stream, most migrants leaving for Spain and other European destinations have been women. Moreover, with the promise of higher-paying jobs overseas, emigration to Europe has captured the dreams of Ecuadorians from all socio-economic backgrounds, including professional classes. Historically, US-bound migration has been primarily a peasant phenomenon, draining rural villages of labour and altering agricultural livelihoods.

By contrasting what we call Ecuador’s “new emigration” with the long-standing flows of migration to the United States, this paper argues that Ecuadorian migration has entered a new and increasingly complex stage. The character and scale of the new emigration raises a series of questions about the nature of the linkages between Europe and Ecuador, the formal institutionalization of Ecuadorian emigration, including the emergence of the banking sector and the Ecuadorian state as actors structuring current and future migration flows, and the long-term implications of the new emigration. This research report sketches out the broad processes of Ecuador’s “new emigration” and suggests areas of future research, both of the new patterns themselves and comparatively with US-bound migration. We argue understanding the implications of this “new emigration” for Ecuadorian families, the economy, and the nation-state requires a comparative approach that looks at these new migration patterns vis-à-vis the long-standing processes of transnational migration linking the United States and Ecuador. A comparative approach, in particular, raises questions about three central aspects of the new emigration: the role of gender, the importance of transnational ties and connections, and the emerging roles of state and non-state actors in the formalization of migration. Our data are drawn from interview and survey research conducted in Ecuador since 1994; Queens/Brooklyn in 1996, 1998, and 2001; and Spain in 2000, 2002; on numerous secondary sources, primarily government migration data from Ecuador, the United States, and Spain; and on published studies and reports on the matter.

AN ANTECEDENT TO MASS MIGRATION: A BRIEF HISTORY OF ECUADORIAN EMIGRATION

Prior to the late 1990s, Ecuadorian migration was almost exclusively directed toward the United States; Colombia was a distant second choice and few immigrated to Europe. The US Census Bureau reports that the number of people

with Ecuadorian ancestry living in the United States increased from 191,198 in 1990 to 257,760 in 2000 (US Census, 2000), although this figure is likely a significant undercount. Many Ecuadorians living in the United States lack legal residency and status, and some negotiate complicated and volatile living arrangements, travelling back and forth from Ecuador and moving among various “households” of family and friends (Pribilsky, 2003). The most significant way in which Ecuadorians (and other Latin American nationalities) were undercounted in the Census stems from the Census Bureau’s inadequate method for recording Hispanic/Latino populations, which recorded 6.2 million Hispanics/Latinos who did not list their nationality. Using the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey 2000, Logan (2001) adjusted census figures for Hispanics/Latino groups throughout the country and revised the Ecuadorian population upward 53.7 per cent to 396,400, making Ecuadorians the eighth largest Hispanic/Latino group living in the United States, and second largest South American nationality after Colombia. This figure is considerably lower than the 750,000 to 1 million commonly reported in Ecuador, including by the country’s leading newspapers, but is consistent with estimates published by researchers (Kyle, 2000; Jokisch, 1998).

Researchers noted in the early 1970s (e.g., Preston, 1974) that men from rural communities in the highland provinces of Azuay and Cañar were migrating to Chicago and New York (Figure 1).¹ By the 1980s these provinces formed the “core” sending zone of Ecuadorian migration (Carpio, 1992; Borrero, 1995; Kyle, 1996; Jokisch, 1997). Since then, upwards of 150,000 people from Cuenca (the population and economic centre) and the surrounding countryside have emigrated to metropolitan New York and a smaller number to Chicago, California, Minneapolis, and Florida.² Researchers do not clearly understand why Ecuadorians have so consistently settled in the New York metropolitan area. According to Zambrano (1999: 52) many early immigrants to New York came from Guayaquil and relied upon contacts within Standard Fruit and other banana corporations to secure tourist visas, which later were converted to work visas as a precursor to permanent settlement. By contrast, Kyle (2000) speculates that migration followed upon the collapse of the “Panama hat” trade in the 1950s, and likely built upon the commercial networks linking New York and rural Ecuador. Other research has shown that mestizo communities in southern Cañar Province with a history of land concentration, subsistence agriculture, temporary domestic migration to coastal enterprises, and hat weaving first sent migrants to the United States in the early to mid-1970s (Preston, 1974; Jokisch, 1998; Pribilsky, 2003). Still, little is known about how these networks became the primary conduit for poor rural households to migrate to the United States.

Early (pre-1985) undocumented emigrants commonly made their way to the United States by flying legally to Mexico and crossing the US-Mexico border, before flying to New York. By the late 1990s, however, Ecuadorian emigrants were either purchasing falsified US visas or taking US\$7,000-\$9,000 loans from

quasi-illegal usurious lenders (*chulqueros*) to pay “coyotes” or *tramitadores* (literally, facilitators), who would arrange for their trip from Ecuador to New York.³ Some migrants escape *chulqueros* by borrowing money from relatives in the United States. The trip, which is dangerous and commonly takes a month, usually begins with a flight to a Central American republic where migrants, accompanied by coyotes, “border-hop” to the US-Mexico border where they cross and eventually join family and friends in the United States. When Ecuador entered an economic crisis in the early 1980s, wages declined and the real minimum income fell an average of 7.6 per cent annually from 1982-1991 (de Janvry et al., 1994: 30). As the cost of basic necessities increased and the economic welfare of most Ecuadorians declined, the networks established by pioneer emigrants paved the way for thousands of people to emigrate to metropolitan New York. By the 1990s, migrant numbers had become noticeably larger, and the demographic profile of migrants diversified to include many indigenous communities (in northern Cañar), an increasing number of women, and, at times, entire families.

Perhaps most significant is that in more than two decades of formation, Ecuadorian migration has taken on many of the characteristics identified with transnational migration (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Blanc, 1994; Mahler, 1998). In order to keep open economic opportunities in both sending and receiving locations, Ecuadorians have developed a number of linkages and networks connecting home and host communities. Traffic in remittances (as evidenced by the proliferation of courier services in New York and Ecuador), letters, audio, and (to a lesser extent) videotapes, as well as community-wide directives that link Ecuadorian sending villages with their migrant community members abroad⁴ are central features facilitating this migration. The most important courier service, Delgado Travel, has more than 20 branches in metropolitan New York and even more in south-central Ecuador. Delgado Travel’s services include a news service whose signal can only be decoded with a radio purchased at a Delgado Travel store. The owner of Delgado Travel also owns radio stations in Ecuador. Twice a day, news from Ecuador and New York is exchanged, and a weekly programme allows Ecuadorians to exchange messages with family and friends.

Despite the community-wide efforts, migration remains a household phenomenon, directed around the reproduction of new, autonomous households. Pribilsky (2001a) has looked at how the preferred model of migration includes young males recently married (and sometimes with small children) who funnel remittances into domestic development projects (e.g., house-building, purchasing land) through their wives in Ecuador. This male-dominated emigration pattern presents women with increased autonomy, but also causes economic and emotional desperation for some (Miles, 1997). Compelled by numerous reasons and conflicted about the value and appropriateness of their own emigration, thousands of women joined male relatives in the United States (Kyle, 2000; Jokisch, 1998).⁵

FIGURE 1
MAP OF ECUADOR



The displays of the material rewards of migration by those who have returned equally offer an incentive for new people to leave. South-central Ecuador is now littered with large homes based on North American styles, newly purchased trucks, and other displays of wealth that result from remittances. Numerous migrants have sunk deeper into poverty from failed migration attempts and some families have been abandoned by migrant fathers, yet thousands of previously disenfranchised people who have either emigrated or have a close family member in the United States are now considerably wealthier than non-migrants, and the resultant gap motivates non-migrants to become migrants themselves. As some long-term migrants gained US citizenship, they have sponsored their family's legal immigration, further depopulating rural communities and leaving a landscape of large houses and cultivated fields managed by extended family members or neighbours (Jokisch, 2002).

Corrected US census data indicate that the majority of Ecuadorian immigrants in the United States, documented and undocumented, have settled in metropolitan New York, where they demonstrate a remarkable concentration. In 2000, 64.3 per cent of all Ecuadorians in the United States lived in metropolitan New York, predominantly in the Queens neighbourhoods of Corona, Woodside, Jackson Heights, and Elmhurst. Florida, California, and Illinois have sizable Ecuadorian populations, but a relatively small percentage (less than 10% each) of the total. Census data also reveal that the concentration in Queens has intensified and a new pattern of suburban migration has developed. Small Ecuadorian populations have formed in suburban Westchester (northern), Rockland (western), and Suffolk (Long Island) counties.⁶

Little sustained research has been carried out among Ecuadorians in New York to give us a full picture of immigration experience of this group. It appears that most male immigrants work as day labourers or in service-sector jobs (restaurants and hotels in particular) while women commonly work in the garment industry or restaurants (Borrero, 1995; New York City Department of City Planning, 1999:148-149; Chin, 2001; Pribilsky, 2003). Current Population Surveys conducted in 1998 and 2000 indicate that, nationally, employed Ecuadorians fared better than most Hispanic immigrants in the United States, earning an average of \$11,848 per year while approximately 19 per cent lived below the poverty line, and 5.8 per cent were unemployed (Logan, 2001: 3). Recent arrivals are desperate to find employment because loans taken from *chulqueros* to arrive in New York usually carry a 5-8 per cent interest rate, compounded monthly.

RESPONDING TO CRISIS: ECUADOR'S "NEW EMIGRATION"

While the factors that precipitate and accelerate outmigration cannot be reduced to unfavourable economic conditions alone that "push" migrants toward

profitable receiving areas, the role of increased poverty in the most recent outflow of Ecuadorians should not be underestimated. As real incomes (and wages) declined and unemployment increased in the country's recent economic crisis, the extreme poverty rate in rural areas leapt from 20 per cent in 1997 to 30 per cent in 1999. Moreover, in Ecuador's largest cities the effect was to push many households already living close to the poverty line into poverty, to move many workers from the formal to the informal sector, and to force many seniors back into the workforce to counter the decline in value of their pensions (IMF, 2000: 67-68). For rural people, however, for whom poverty and migration have long been coupled, already existing migration networks intensified under increased impoverishment.

Emigration from Azuay and Cañar to the United States in particular increased during the crisis. However, at the same time, the United States, Mexico, and various Central American republics began tightening their borders and increasing surveillance and deportation.⁷ In response, Ecuadorian *tramitadores* have come to offer more clandestine, and consequently more dangerous, passage north, complementing and in some cases replacing the established overland route with ocean travel. Since 1998, thousands of Ecuadorians have paid between \$2,500 and \$7,000 to board overcrowded fishing trawlers destined for Mexico or Guatemala en route to the United States. This clandestine route became public record in March 1999 when a US Coast Guard cutter intercepted a fishing trawler with 44 Ecuadorians aboard. In the subsequent 17 months Coast Guard cutters intercepted 11 more Ecuadorian vessels with 1,452 Ecuadorians aboard. During its fiscal year 2000 (October-September) the US Coast Guard intercepted 1,244 Ecuadorians at sea, more than any other nationality. In the following year, 1,021 Ecuadorians were apprehended (US Coast Guard, 2002). The demographic profile of the apprehended passengers is nearly identical to the profile of overland migrants – 70 per cent male, mostly young, and predominantly from Azuay, Cañar, and Chimborazo (El Mercurio, 2000b), providing evidence that migrant networks linking south-central Ecuador with the United States persist despite the increased obstacles to emigrate.

THE NEW PROMISED LAND? THE MASS EXODUS TO SPAIN

While emigration from Ecuador's established sending regions has diversified with respect to route and method of migration, the most significant change has been the mass emigration to Spain and secondarily to Italy, France, and The Netherlands. Few Ecuadorians resided in Spain in 1998, but by mid-2002 as many as 200,000 Ecuadorians had emigrated to Spain, making Ecuadorians the largest Latin American immigrant group in Spain and the largest overall immigrant group in Madrid, outpacing the traditionally large Moroccan and other North African populations.⁸ Ecuadorian departures directly to Spain ballooned from just over 5,000 in all of 1994 to more than 7,000 *per month* in 2000 (Dirección Nacional

de Migración, 2000). Spain recorded nearly 125,000 Ecuadorian arrivals in 2000, an increase from just 10,301 in 1997 (Dirección General de la Policía, 1999). The number of Ecuadorians with residency increased similarly, from fewer than 2,000 in 1995 to nearly 31,000 in 2000, and 84,699 in January, 2002, which is more than any other Latin American immigrant group and the sixth largest overall (Ministerio del Interior, 2001; Efe, 2002). The Madrid municipal government (*ayuntamiento*) reports that the number of Ecuadorians living in Madrid Municipality increased 18-fold in three years – from 4,915 in 1999 to 92,690 in January 2002 (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2002; Lora-Tamayo D’Ocón, 1999).

The mass immigration to Spain was facilitated by the 1963 Hispano-Ecuadorian Agreement, an accord which allows Ecuadorians to enter Spain as tourists for 90 days without a visa. The relative ease of entry, however, must be understood in the larger context of Ecuador’s economic collapse, Spain’s demand for menial and gendered labour, and networks established by pioneer migrants in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The lack of a visa requirement has permitted Ecuadorians who can raise between \$3,500 and \$4,000 to enter Spain as “tourists” and subsequently look for work and/or a sponsor to offer a work contract, which is the first step toward obtaining a work permit. Spanish migration authorities subject Ecuadorians arriving as “tourists” to questions about their travel plans, their intentions, and their financial resources. If an Ecuadorian cannot present approximately \$2,000 (“*la bolsa*”), a credit card, tourist plan, hotel reservations, confirmed return flight, and justification for being in Spain, then he or she may be denied entrance (excluded) and forced to return immediately.⁹ Some migrants raise the money for these expenses by “recycling” the *bolsa*, whereby a migrant who has arrived in Spain safely sends the required money through a wire service to a family member or friend in Ecuador. Otherwise, many migrants have had to rely on loans with usurious rates to get the necessary money.¹⁰ To avoid the watch of migration officials thousands of Ecuadorians are taking advantage of the Schengen Agreement by flying to Amsterdam, where migration officials, apparently, do not scrutinize Ecuadorians as rigorously (Alou, 1999). Under the Schengen Agreement, Ecuadorians are entitled to enter any Schengen Agreement country as tourists for 90 days and travel to any other member country.¹¹ The increase in Ecuadorian departures to The Netherlands – from fewer than 3,000 in 1995 to nearly 17,000 in 1999 – combined with anecdotal evidence, reveals that The Netherlands is a gateway for Ecuadorians who continue their journey to Spain (Dirección Nacional de Migración, 2001; Vidal and Moreno, 2000; Alou, 2000). While Spain serves as a gateway for undocumented North Africans going to Northern Europe (Cornelius, 1994; Huntoon, 1998), Ecuadorians have used northern Europe, especially The Netherlands, as a gateway to make their way to Spain and Italy.

Although the migration to Spain is too recent to have produced any in-depth studies, several notable features of this mass migration can be outlined. First, the mass migration was preceded by at least two groups of migrants, Otavaleños and

Lojanos. Otavaleños are a renowned indigenous group known for performing folk music and selling their woven goods around the world. Several authors document an Otavalan presence in Europe as early as the 1940s (Meisch, 1997; Kyle, 1999; Colloredo-Mansfield, 1999), and by the 1980s, an enclave of Otavalan musicians had developed in Barcelona (Meisch, 1997). It remains unanswered whether the networks established by members of this ethnic group facilitated later emigration by non-Otavaleños.

The second group, Lojanos, are predominately mestizo farmers from Ecuador's southernmost province (although members of the Saraguro indigenous group may have migrated as well). They began migrating to Spain for work in the early 1990s and appear to be pioneer migrants who paved the way for family and friends to follow once the Ecuadorian economy soured (Abbott, 2000; Gómez, 1998; Vidal and Moreno, 2000).¹² Other highland regions, (including Quito), appear to have sent more migrants to Spain than coastal provinces, as Figure 1 shows (Gómez, 1998; Vidal and Moreno, 2000). But, there is one important exception. Migrants from the traditional "core" of Azuay and Cañar Provinces have joined the migrant stream, but relatively late, and not in large numbers. Of the nearly 37,000 Ecuadorians recorded to have entered Spain in 1999 (Dirección General de la Policía, 1999), only 2,000 appear to have originated in Azuay or Cañar Province (Dirección Nacional de Migración, 2000).¹³ This pattern is explained by two factors: 1) south-central Ecuador has already sent thousands of migrants to the United States and therefore the potential migrant pool is depleted compared to other regions, and 2) most households in south-central Ecuador, even those which were excluded from the initial phases of emigration, have immediate or extended family members in the United States, and therefore access to networks linking the two places. Since the transnational networks to the United States are dependent on social and economic connections and are geographically concentrated in Azuay and Cañar Provinces, most Ecuadorians lack access to the networks that perpetuate the New York/US connections. The lack of visa requirement and relatively low cost of immigrating to Spain, however, poses fewer obstacles to emigrating and apparently more employment opportunities for women. Preliminary research indicates that networks linking Ecuador and Spain are based on the household, but the rapidity of emigration and the national scale of emigration, as well as interviews with Ecuadorians in Spain in 2000, suggest that having family established in Spain with knowledge about migrating, housing, and job opportunities facilitates emigration, but has not been a prerequisite. Some emigrants have departed without family or friends waiting for them; others have gone with only loose connections in Spain (Lincango, 2001).

A second notable feature regarding Ecuadorian migration to Spain is that Ecuadorians are fitting into a Spanish economy that continues to demand low-wage, semi-skilled, and gendered labour for agricultural and domestic service jobs. Spain may appear to be a logical destination for Ecuadorian migrants given

cultural and language similarities, but until the mid-1980s Spain was an emigrant country with a consistent unemployment rate between 15 and 20 per cent (Lieberman, 1995; Arnago, 2000; Martín, 2000). Since the mid-1980s, however, Spain has become an important destination for documented and undocumented migrants. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the Spanish economy was booming, many native-Spanish agricultural workers (mostly men) were able to find better jobs, thus creating an employment vacuum (Buechler, 1987). Similarly, as middle-class incomes increased, the demand for live-in domestic service followed, but the traditional female sources for this labour were able to find other employment and shunned the work (Cornelius, 1994). As such, both agricultural and domestic service jobs were increasingly filled by immigrants from North Africa, Latin America, and Asia, many of whom had obtained short-term work permits. A strong gender asymmetry developed as domestic service positions were filled mostly by women, primarily from the Dominican Republic, Peru, and the Philippines and agricultural jobs were filled mostly by men from North Africa and to a lesser extent Latin America and Asia (Cornelius, 1994; Huntoon, 1998; Arango, 2000; King, 2000). The demand for domestic service and agricultural labour persists and the Spanish Government has sought to meet this demand by granting between 86,000 and 126,000 work permits per year during the 1990s (Ministerio del Interior, 1999).

Ecuadorian migrants fit the gendered occupational clustering and geographic concentration of Latin American, especially Dominican (and to a lesser extent Asian) immigrants who arrived before them. Although most Ecuadorian press reports emphasize the number of men working in agriculture (especially in Murcia) and construction, the initial migrant stream to Spain was led by women, and the majority of Ecuadorians living in Spain continue to be women.¹⁴ In 1997 more than 58 per cent of Spain-bound migrants (Simica, 1999), some 62.3 per cent of Ecuadorians registered with Madrid Community authorities in 1999 (Lora-Tamayo D'Ocón, 1999), and 67 per cent of Ecuadorians with residency and with valid work visas were women (Ministerio del Interior, 1999). This female-dominant migration pattern reflects the increased demand for female-dominant occupations – live-in domestic service for cleaning, childcare, and care of the elderly – and Spanish labour policy that has granted between two-thirds and three-quarters of the Ecuadorian work permits to women. As the number of Spanish permits quadrupled from fewer than 2,000 in 1995 to more than 8,000 in 1999, more than 66 per cent of the work permits were granted to women (down from 74% in 1998), nearly all of which were for domestic service; only 8.5 per cent for agriculture, most of which were granted to men (Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, 2000, 2001).

Preliminary data and anecdotal information indicate that women are migrating from a variety of family situations (Gómez, 1998; Vidal and Moreno, 2000; Estupiñan de Burbano, 2000). The Spanish Permanent Immigrant Observatory (OPI), an office within the Ministry of Interior, conducted a survey of 215

Ecuadorians in Murcia Province during 1998 and 1999. Of the 103 Ecuadorian women surveyed, 47 women (45.6%) migrated single, separated/divorced, or as a widow (Nieto Gómez-Guillamón, 2001). Twenty-four women reported that their spouse and/or children remained in Ecuador while 34 women reported that their family had regrouped in Spain. Gómez (2001) similarly reports that from a sample of Ecuadorians registered with the Ecuadorian consulate in Spain, about 57 per cent of women are single, divorced, or widowed. This situation differs from the US migrant stream where it is uncommon for married women to emigrate before their husband's departure, and many migrate after their husband sponsors them (Jokisch, 1998). This pattern of women leading the emigration stream to work largely in domestic service in Madrid and Barcelona fits the pattern established by Peruvian and other Latin American migrants (Escrivá, 2000). If Ecuadorian women's experiences are similar to what Escrivá reports of the Peruvian experience in Barcelona, then it can be expected that women are following female family and friends to Spain and that their initial motives for migrating are intimately involved with the careers and survival of immediate family members, but autonomy and escape from a patriarchal home society are also important factors (Escrivá, 2000: 215). Also, many relatively well-educated women may gain autonomy, but experience downward economic status compared to the positions they held in Ecuador.

The majority of Ecuadorians now arriving in Spain do so without a work permit and immediately must rely on friends and family to secure work and/or a sponsor with whom they can make a formal contract offer. Immigrants use public meeting places such as the parks *El Retiro* and *El Oeste* in Madrid, where thousands socialize every Sunday, to learn about job opportunities. Those lucky enough to obtain a work permit are usually restricted to short-term employment and relatively low wages. In 1998, 56.6 per cent of the work permits were valid for one year or less and 76 per cent for two years or less (Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, 2000). Immigrants consistently earn less than Spanish natives, even for similar work (Calavita, 1998). Live-in domestics earn between US\$400 and \$600 per month, plus food and housing (Calavita, 1998; Vidal and Moreno, 2000; Lincango, 2001); agricultural workers in Murcia Province earn approximately \$3.75 - \$4.50 per hour; and construction workers can make up to \$6.75 per hour.

A third notable feature of this new emigration pattern is the diversity – both economically and ethnically – of Ecuadorians in Spain. Immigrants are drawn from a variety of backgrounds ranging from the rural and urban working poor to relatively well-off Quiteños and from indigenous, mestizo, and white populations. Vidal and Moreno (2000) distinguish three economic groups among Ecuadorian migrants – those who cannot cover daily expenses in Ecuador, those who can meet daily needs, but cannot attain a higher standard of living in Ecuador; and middle to upper middle class folks whose economic well-being fell considerably as a result of the economic crisis. The economically better off, who also tend to

be either mestizo or white, report being humiliated working at jobs only indigenous and/or poor people would perform in Ecuador. Some Ecuadorians, currently working as live-in domestics in Spain, only a few years ago hired domestics in Ecuador. The OPI survey in Murcia indicates that early migrants (both men and women) were relatively well-educated compared to other immigrants in Murcia, mostly Moroccans. Forty-one per cent of Ecuadorians had a high school education or higher, and nearly 17 per cent reported that their occupational “level” had declined in Spain, indicating that many Ecuadorians are taking jobs in Spain that were beneath them in Ecuador (Nieto Gómez-Guillamón, 2001).

A fourth notable characteristic of Ecuador’s mass migration to Spain is that it occurred as Spain rapidly reversed itself on immigrant policy and therefore caught Ecuadorians in a “legal experiment”. Legislation passed in January 2000 gave “illegal” immigrants extensive rights including a guarantee to education, medical care, the right to free assembly and protest, family reunification, and to join unions; illegal immigrants could be fined, but deportation was unlikely. It also provided residency for illegal immigrants who could prove among other things that they had been in Spain before 1 June 1999. Most of the legislation was undone, however, when conservative Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar’s Popular Party won a majority in the legislature in March 2000 and passed legislation reminiscent of the Immigration and Reform Control Act (IRCA) enacted in the United States in 1986. The new law continued the amnesty for immigrants living in Spain prior to 1 June 1999, but sought to reduce illegal immigration by eliminating many of the rights granted in the previous year’s legislation, tightening Spain’s borders, and increasing pressure and fines on employers who hire immigrants without work permits. Most controversially, the legislation provides for immediate expulsion of illegal immigrants and extends the length of time immigrants would have to stay in Spain to be eligible for residency from two to five years. It also obligated the Government to make bilateral agreements with the source countries of Spain’s illegal immigrant population. Spain’s agreement with Ecuador was expedited when, on 3 January 2001, a train-truck accident killed 12 undocumented Ecuadorians while in route to work in the agricultural fields near Lorca, in Murcia Province. Ecuadorians organized a “March for life” (*Marcha por la vida*) from Lorca to Murcia. More than 2,000 Ecuadorians marched 70 kilometers to demand legalization. Less than one month after the accident, on 31 January 2001, Ecuador and Spain signed the first of five bilateral agreements that Spain would sign with partner nations in the next ten months.

The agreements are intended to reduce trafficking of immigrants and give preferential treatment to workers from the source countries. The programme, “Operation Ecuador”, offered work permits and/or residency for an unspecified number of Ecuadorians illegally living in Spain prior to 22 January 2001 who agreed to return voluntarily to Quito. The Spanish Government agreed to pay for the flights to Quito and the return to Madrid. Despite scepticism among

Ecuadorian immigrants themselves, Spain's underestimation of how many Ecuadorians would enrol in the programme, and the chaos it caused with contradictory public statements, 24,884 Ecuadorians applied for amnesty by the end of February, even though Spain only returned 4,069 to Ecuador for "regularization". The other 20,789 received work permits and/or residency without returning to Ecuador (*El País*, 2001). Legalizing nearly 25,000 Ecuadorians increases the number of Ecuadorians with residency as of January 2002 to 84,699, but undoubtedly leaves tens of thousands without legal status.

The last notable feature about the Ecuadorian migration to Spain is the rapid formation of an incipient transnational community. Ecuadorians maintain social and economic connections with their home communities, continue to practice Ecuadorian cultural traditions, and most plan to return within a few years. The OPI survey showed that 71.5 per cent of Ecuadorians engage in "very regular" contact with family members in Ecuador while only 8 per cent had only minimal contact (Nieto Gómez-Guillamón, 2001:122). The evidence of Ecuadorian communication with family members can be seen by the arrival of courier services, such as Delgado Travel, and *locutorios* (phone offices)¹⁵ that advertise to Ecuadorians. Delgado Travel recently expanded its operations to European cities including Madrid and Barcelona. More important than Delgado Travel, however, are the *locutorios*, and to a lesser extent cyber cafes that have become centres of transnational communication, offering fax, telephone, and email services for Ecuadorians throughout Spain (Gómez, 2000). Migrants usually convert their Euros (previously pesetas) into US dollars before remitting the money. Ecuadorians use several mechanisms to remit money; wiring money from a *locutorio* was at first the most popular method, but recently, at least two Ecuadorian banks have developed agreements with Spanish banks whereby deposits in Spain are transferred to the migrant's account in Ecuador.

Another important communication is a series of transnational radio programmes broadcast simultaneously in Ecuador and Spain. For example, the programme *Añoranzas* (nostalgic longings) is broadcast each Friday night simultaneously in Madrid (Radio Intercontinental) and in Quito (Radio Sonorama). Ecuadorian music is played, *locutorios* advertise their services, and migrants and family members exchange messages (Gómez, 2000).

Most Ecuadorians in Spain look forward to returning to Ecuador within a few years. The OPI survey indicates that more than 70 per cent planned to stay five years or less, depending on their fortunes in Spain and the economic situation in Ecuador. Only 7.1 per cent planned to stay ten years (Nieto Gómez-Guillamón, 2001). Yet, many Ecuadorians are likely to stay in Spain longer than they planned. When one of the authors asked a 48-year-old Ecuadorian woman if she planned to stay in Spain, she laughed at the absurdity of the question and said that she would never "belong" in Spain, even though she had never been mistreated and had a relatively well-paying job cleaning offices in Madrid. As

such, her situation highlights a conundrum many immigrants face – she arrived without any family and with plans to stay temporarily in Spain, but realized that if she returned to Ecuador she would face economic hardship and lose her ability to gain residency from any future amnesty programmes that Spain might offer. She had delayed returning to Ecuador and instead contemplated bringing her daughter to Spain. Her situation is not unique. More than 60 per cent of Ecuadorians (58.1% of women) do not plan to bring other family members to Spain, but nearly 11 per cent had already done so, and another 28.6 per cent are unable to reunify the family because they lacked the resources or they did not meet the requirements for entry.

Another important element of Ecuadorian transnationalism is the emergence of the *Asociación Hispano-Ecuatoriana Rumiñahui*. Started in 1997, this organization has become an important advocacy group for Ecuadorians in Spain. They have organized to increase awareness of the plight of Ecuadorians, improve work opportunities and conditions, and encourage family reunification in Spain. Their popularity grew when they played a lead role in organizing the “March for life” described earlier and staging protests in various Spanish cities. The organization is strongest in Spain, but is also beginning to organize transnationally. For example, Rumiñahui representatives are lobbying the Ecuadorian Congress for the right for Ecuadorians to vote in Ecuadorian elections while residing abroad. The association also signed an agreement with the municipal government of Quito (May 2002) to open a *Casa del Inmigrante* (Migrant House), which will provide information and social services for would-be migrants and to design programmes for “productive” investment of remittances.

By contrast, in almost 30 years of international and transnational migration between the provinces of south-central Ecuador and the United States, relatively few institutional structures have been put in place. Rumiñahui, for instance, has not seen a comparable movement in US-bound migration to protect and safeguard the rights of migrants. In Cuenca, a small organization, *MODEMI* (*Movimiento de Defensa de Los Migrantes – Azuay*) serves as a clearinghouse for information on legal and money sending services from Ecuador, but altogether lacks financial resources and representation in government and to date has not made significant inroads with the Ecuadorian population abroad.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The mass migration experienced by Ecuador in the late 1990s has made emigration a national issue with important economic and social consequences. Approximately 400,000 Ecuadorians live in the United States, but it is no longer the disproportionately favoured destination. Spain and other European countries are now targeted by Ecuadorians and remittances have become the second

largest source of foreign revenue (US\$1.41 billion) second only to petroleum exports. As emigration has changed from a predominantly regional phenomenon to a national phenomenon, households throughout Ecuador are entering a migrant economy and a dependence on remittances that households in Azuay and Cañar Provinces have experienced for more than a decade.

The consequences of this new phase of migration may mimic the effects felt in south-central Ecuador, but the magnitude of the migration, the socio-political context in which it is occurring, and the demographics of the migrant flows are sufficiently different that we should not uncritically expect the pattern to repeat itself. Research has shown that who migrates and the cultural and economic “context of reception” influences the trajectory and nature of the impacts (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996). A larger and more detailed comparison of the two major migration patterns is necessary, but before that can happen, more research is needed on each of the migration patterns. Research should focus in particular on the role of gender, the importance of transnational connections, and the emerging roles of state and non-state actors in the formalization of Ecuadorian migration. We consider these issues for each migration pattern.

First, in order to understand the transnational connections between New York and Ecuador, a better understanding of Ecuadorian integration into New York is required. Migration has been on-going for nearly 30 years, yet little is known about their economic activities, residential patterns, how their homeland is “imagined”, or even their relationships with fellow immigrant groups in Corona, Elmhurst, and Jackson Heights – especially Colombians and Peruvians. Are long-term immigrants established enough in New York to lose connections with Ecuador, or, are they working to re-unify their family and/or planning to return to Ecuador? Another unexamined aspect of Ecuadorian transnationalism is the lack of Ecuadorian village associations in the United States. The two most important forms of institutionalization of transnational migration between Ecuador and United States continue to be the Catholic Church by way of local migrant sending community priests and small projects coordinated by migrants and their hometown villages (see endnote 7). Anecdotally, it appears that soccer clubs are performing many of the functions that village associations perform for other immigrant groups, but, again, this question and others about the nature of the transnationalism have not been addressed.

More research is also needed to examine the role of the Ecuadorian Government as an actor in Ecuadorian migration. Although the state has done little to deter *tramitadores*, protect would-be migrants, or actively intervene on migrants’ behalf in the United States, they inadvertently “institutionalize” transnational migration through efforts to capture some of the remittance pie coming into the country.¹⁶ Indeed, under Ecuador’s shift to dollarize the national economy, there has been renewed attention to the millions of dollars that have entered households in Ecuador. In particular, Pribilsky (2001b) has reported that parts of the banking

system (Mutualista Azuay specifically) have initiated plans to attract away some of the estimated \$235 million dollars annually that goes to *tramitadores* and *chulqueros* for their services (Líderes, 2001: 9) by buying up the quasi-illegal loans with the promise of lower interest rates and “safety” from unscrupulous operatives. Offering convenient ways for migrants to then make easy payments from abroad, banks also seek to siphon off some of the estimated \$600 million that migrants pay to courier and money-wiring services (Líderes, 2001: 9). The degree to which these manoeuvres by the state signal the beginning of a significant role for the Ecuadorian Government and banking system to facilitate transnational migration (comparable to the Mexican case) will be a prominent research question for the future.

For the new emigration, many of the same questions that need to be asked about Ecuadorians in New York also need to be asked for Ecuadorians in Spain. In particular, greater attention needs to be given to the gendered and class dimensions of the new emigration. As discussed above, women generally have begun to migrate internationally in the past decade, both from the historically important sending communities in Ecuador’s Azuay and Cañar Provinces and now in astronomic numbers from all over the country to Spain. Preliminary research in New York (Pribilsky, 2003) and other cases of Hispanic migration to the United States in recent years (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994) suggest that the numbers of permanent settlement may increase slightly. In Spain, however, the fact that women are such a large part of the migrant stream and are working in specific low-wage economic spheres – away from the strong patriarchal context in Ecuador – will likely alter Ecuadorian settlement patterns in Spain and cultural norms in both Ecuador and Spain (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Lawson, 1998; Pessar, 1999). More research is needed to determine the demographic backgrounds of the women migrating, the exact labour niches they are filling in Spain, and to what extent these new job opportunities these are creating a “feminization” of labour migration. Is it the case, for instance, that women working as domestic servants are becoming part of larger transnational labour networks that facilitate the recruitment and movement of domestics around the world? (Parreñas, 2001). Another direction of research should consider the kinds of transnational family arrangements that arise from mothers working overseas with fathers and children back in Ecuador.

With respect to class dimensions, again the most significant variability concerns migration to Spain. All evidence suggests that the increased numbers of peoples leaving the Azuay and Cañar provinces for the United States continue to be poor *campesinos* from the countryside. By contrast, migration to Spain is a phenomenon capturing the imagination of Ecuadorians of all classes. Again, fundamental demographic data on who is leaving for Spain is needed. For instance, to what degree is Ecuador losing (either temporarily or permanently) its already diminished professional and educated class? If so, would this constitute a significant “brain drain” for the country?¹⁷ It also has yet to be seen

if the Ecuadorians with greater resources than the *campesinos* who have gone to the United States will forge new kinds of transnational links with Ecuador. Will we, for instance, see a different kind of transnationalism appear – a truly cross-border nationalism whereby migrants from abroad remain instrumental in Ecuadorian governance and policy? Additionally, more comparative data is needed regarding wages earned by Ecuadorians in Spain and the United States respectively and accompanying remittance behaviour. As we have noted, remittances sent to households in south-central Azuay have not as yet led to sustained development of peasant communities. By and large, this may be less a function of the size of remittances and more the lack of viable development options for the largely rural population unaccustomed to banking and investment opportunities. Now that the emigration is national and involves a more diverse population, what will the development consequences be? Will these migrants have greater knowledge of, and access to, development and investment opportunities? Will their remittances be dedicated to productive ventures, or will they be limited to everyday needs and conspicuous consumption? Rumiñahui is showing signs of becoming a potent transnational lobby; the question remains, however, what will they be able to accomplish and how will their efforts affect the transnational livelihoods of Ecuadorians? Finally, there is an increasing need for ethnographic work that explores the experiences of Ecuadorians in Spain. Anecdotally, we have heard reports from our informants and read newspaper accounts about the racist climate in Spain. Spain has simultaneously welcomed Ecuadorians with two amnesties, but has also increased surveillance of employers who hire illegal immigrants and implemented “Operación Ludeco”, a police crack down on crime committed by Colombians and Ecuadorians.¹⁸ The operation was implemented after more than ten Colombians were assassinated in Madrid during the fall of 2001. Ecuadorians, through the Rumiñahui Association and other outlets, have let it be known that they feel unfairly targeted. To what degree will this aspect of the “context of reception” contribute to Ecuadorians seeking to settle or not settle in the country?

NOTES

1. During the twentieth century this region experienced numerous patterns of domestic migration, especially to the coast (Borrero, 1995; Kyle, 2000; Jokisch, 1998; Preston, 1974).
2. Determining the number of emigrants is complicated by the fact that many migrants have returned and re-emigrated, giving rise to double-counting. A census conducted by the Universidad de Cuenca in 1995 yielded little reliable data because it produced a high non-response rate (15-35%).
3. The terms *coyote* and *pasador* refer to someone who arranges the clandestine trip and sometimes accompanies the migrants. Coyotes usually arrange with other coyotes in Central America or Mexico to take the migrants to the United States. A *tramitador* is someone who arranges documentation to emigrate.

4. In Cañar, both authors have documented transnational projects and other development activities that include concerted efforts to direct remittances from abroad.
5. Women who plan to migrate commonly rely on male relatives for a loan; some women migrate when they were “called” by their husband or wait until he has residency or citizenship when he can sponsor her legal departure. The journey poses more risks for women than men; many women are charged more than men and they face threats of rape and assault, sometimes by coyotes (Guayasamin and Moya, 2000).
6. Direct migration to suburban areas from Latin America is one of most significant developments of new immigration to the United States. The determinants that lead migrants to a suburban region first, sidestepping an initial settlement in the urban core, are complex and multiple. From interviews in Rockland County, Pribilsky has noted that hourly rates are higher than in Queens and Brooklyn. Moreover, migrants express a greater sense of comfort (less noise and crime) in suburban areas. Consult Mahler (1995, 2001) for comparative findings regarding new Hispanic migration to suburban Long Island.
7. In the first six months of 2001, Mexico deported more than 100,000 illegal immigrants, 788 of whom were Ecuadorian (Efe, 2001). From 1997-1999 the United States INS apprehended 3,539 Ecuadorians, mostly at the US-Mexico border (INS, 1999, 2000, 2002). Reports of fatalities in Mexico and Guatemala increased during 2000 (Tello, 2000; *El Mercurio*, 2000a).
8. Migration data from Ecuadorian and Spanish sources should be seen as approximate (Arango, 2000). Spanish residency figures only record the number of Ecuadorians who have been granted residency by the Spanish Ministry of Interior. Ecuadorian migration data records where Ecuadorians say they plan to go when they obtain permission to leave the country, although they may not go to or stay in the designated country. Spanish data do not reflect those who entered or exited Spain undocumented and cannot indicate how many Ecuadorians have overstayed their visas.
9. Spanish migration law requires that tourists from non-EU countries must have a return ticket and a minimum of 50,000 pesetas (\$277) and 5,000 pesetas (\$28) for each day they plan to stay in Spain.
10. The “*bolsa*” requirement has created a new avenue for an old institution in Ecuador – *chulco*, or usurious money lending. Migrants procure a loan of between \$2,000 and \$2,500 in Ecuador and upon passing through migration at the Barajas airport in Madrid, pay the principal plus 10-14 per cent interest on the loan to the lender’s business partner.
11. Spain signed the Schengen Agreement in 1991, joining Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, and Portugal (Bodega et al., 1995).
12. Two publications on Ecuadorians in Spain assert that Loja Province may be the single largest migrant sending zone due in part to its long-standing connections to Spain (Vidal and Moreno, 2000; Gómez, 1998). Abbott (2001) conducted field work from 1998-2000 in Loja Province and recorded the existence of migrant networks from Loja to Spain prior to the massive emigration of the late 1990s.
13. The Migration Police do not record the home province of migrants. However, data provided by the Office of Migration within the National Police headquarters in Azuay and Cañar, reveal that combined, they received fewer than 2,000 applications to migrate to Spain.

14. Men joined the migrant stream in 2000, reducing the gender imbalance. The percentage of female Ecuadorians in Madrid fell to 53.9 per cent by 2000 (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2001).
15. A *locutorio* is a phone office, but many now have fax service, email, video-conferencing, and money transfer services (e.g., Moneygram).
16. In 2001 Ecuador passed its first law to prosecute *tramitadores* and *pasadaores* who take advantage of migrants. MODEMI criticized it as weak and insufficient.
17. Castles and Miller (1998: 147-148) suggest that “brain drains” can, in some cases, literally pay off. Professional migrants will remit more and those who return may come back with additional skills which can facilitate a technology transfer. In the Ecuadorian case, this does not portend to be the case as many professional Ecuadorians in Spain are taking work in the limited agriculture and service sectors which still pay better than professional positions in Ecuador.
18. LUDECO is an acronym for the Dispositivo especial contra la delincuencia perpetrada por nacionales colombianos y ecuatorianos, or the Special programme against crime committed by Colombian and Ecuadorian nationals.

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LA PANIQUE DU DÉPART: CRISE ÉCONOMIQUE ET « NOUVELLE ÉMIGRATION » DEPUIS L'ÉQUATEUR

Avant la fin des années quatre-vingt-dix, la migration internationale équatorienne partait principalement en direction des États-Unis. Sur les quelque 400 000 Équatoriens habitant ce pays, la plupart résident dans la zone métropolitaine de New York et un grand nombre d'entre eux viennent des hautes terres des provinces de Cañar et d'Azuay, dans l'Équateur central et méridional. Au milieu et à la fin des années quatre-vingt-dix, l'Équateur a traversé une crise politique et économique, précisément au moment où les voyages clandestins vers les États-Unis étaient devenus de plus en plus chers et de plus en plus dangereux. En l'espace de deux ans, la migration équatorienne s'est radicalement transformée pour donner lieu à une « nouvelle émigration ». Des milliers d'Équatoriens de toutes les régions du pays ont émigré vers l'Europe, principalement l'Espagne, mais aussi vers la France, l'Italie et les Pays-Bas. Avant 1998, peu d'Équatoriens habitaient l'Europe alors qu'aujourd'hui ils constituent le groupe immigré le plus nombreux à Madrid et un des plus importants d'Espagne. Le courant migratoire a été composé surtout de femmes et comprend des personnes appartenant à des milieux ethniques et socio-économiques variés. Les Équatoriens trouvent différents emplois dans le secteur des services (notamment les femmes) et apprennent à vivre dans un contexte social et politique instable et même hostile.

Cette « nouvelle émigration » se répercute de bien des façons sur les familles équatoriennes, l'économie et l'État-nation. Pour en comprendre les implications il faut une méthode d'analyse comparative qui examine trois aspects au moins de cette émigration nouvelle: le rôle particulier de chacun des sexes, l'importance des liens et connexions transnationaux et le rôle des acteurs étatiques et non-étatiques dans la formalisation de la migration.

EL PÁNICO POR SALIR DEL PAÍS: CRISIS ECONÓMICA Y LA “NUEVA EMIGRACIÓN” DESDE ECUADOR

Antes de los años noventa, la migración internacional ecuatoriana estaba encaminada principalmente hacia los Estados Unidos. De los 400.000 ecuatorianos que se estima residen en los Estados Unidos, la mayoría se encuentra en la zona metropolitana de Nueva York y muchos provienen del altiplano sur y central de las provincias de Cañar y Azuay. Entre mediados y finales de los años noventa, Ecuador ingresó en una crisis política y económica que coincidió con que el transporte clandestino hacia los Estados Unidos se hizo más oneroso y peligroso. En los últimos dos años la migración ecuatoriana se ha diversificado radicalmente y ha surgido una “nueva emigración”. Miles de ecuatorianos de todas partes del país emigran hacia Europa, principalmente

hacia España, pero también hacia Francia, Italia y los Países Bajos. Antes de 1998, eran pocos los ecuatorianos que residían en Europa, pero ahora los ecuatorianos son el grupo inmigrante más importante en Madrid y uno de los principales en España. La corriente de migrantes está presidida por mujeres e integrada por personas con diversos antecedentes étnicos y socioeconómicos. Los ecuatorianos trabajan en toda una serie de servicios (especialmente las mujeres), y se enfrentan a un entorno volátil, incluso hostil a nivel social y político.

Esta “nueva emigración” tiene considerables repercusiones en las familias ecuatorianas, su economía y en toda la nación. Para comprender las implicaciones que ello trae consigo es preciso realizar una comparación que examine por lo menos tres aspectos de esta nueva emigración: el papel del género, la importancia de los vínculos y conexiones transnacionales, y las funciones emergentes de los interlocutores estatales y no estatales en la oficialización de la migración.

