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WHAT EMIGRATION LEAVES BEHIND: THE SITUATION OF EMIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN ECUADOR

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Abstract*

This study seeks to identify, measure and analyze possible discriminatory behaviors in southern Ecuador. There are three main findings. First, emigration is perceived as a social problem. Second, emigrant families are seen as economically “irrational” because they are not perceived to be investing remittances in productive and sustainable activities; emigrants are additionally portrayed as “irresponsible” because they leave their families in search of better living conditions. Third, emigrants’ children are perceived as doing worse in school than their peers and as living outside the society at large. Observed discrimination follows a cultural pattern: persons closer to the dominant culture are proportionately more to discriminate against emigrants and their families, and women show more discriminatory attitudes than men.

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1. Introduction

The goal of this study is to identify, analyze and measure discrimination against international emigrants and their families in the southern area of Ecuador (the city of Cuenca and the rural canton of San Fernando) and its potential social costs. Up to now, the literature has primarily focused on the analysis of migrants' situation in the receiving countries (mainly the United States and Spain), and less effort has been made in to produce scientific knowledge on the effects of the phenomenon in their home country. Moreover, those studies addressing local effects of international emigration have emphasized its causes, development and consequences for the national economy, but discrimination against emigrants (in their home country and not abroad) is absent from the academic and public discussion, at least in Ecuador.

The impacts of emigration income in Ecuador is tremendous: since 1999 the “diaspora” has represented the country’s second most important source of income, after oil. Despite the economic relevance of this activity, emigrants and their families are frequently discriminated against. The recently coined term “resident” addresses the sons, daughters and parents of emigrants. They are often portrayed as “problematic people,” likely to be engaged in criminal activities, with a low educational profile and no future expectations other than leaving the country.

This paper seeks to open up the discussion on discrimination against emigrants and their families in Ecuador, which is seen in both the media and in public opinion, and also to prevent policymakers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from discriminating against this population.. The paper also aims to address a social and cultural approach to discrimination that we hope could contribute to a deeper understanding of discrimination in Latin America.

Due to the complexity of the questions that this project aims to answer, we propose to combine methods from different approaches to try to elicit new insights into this type of discrimination in Ecuadorian society. We will focus on three specific types of data collection methods: in-depth interviews, media analysis and two population surveys. The benefit of using this mixed methodology is the possibility of targeting a variety of social actors that have different roles in the phenomenon.

The main result of this study is that discrimination against emigrants is based on the following social representations: a) Emigration is a problem; b) Emigration is bad for the region (Cuenca and the nation), for the emigrants themselves, and especially for the families of

emigrants; c) Emigrants are irrational, failing to use their remittances in productive and sustainable activities and therefore failing to contribute to the national economy; d) Emigrants are irresponsible because they abandon their families and thus deserve moral condemnation; and e) Emigrants' children do worse in school than non-emigrant children, they are not integrated into society (i.e., they are marginalized and self-excluded) and they will probably try to leave the country as their parents did.

Finally, a pattern of discrimination against emigrants has been established. The closer the person surveyed is to the dominant culture (i.e., urban, high-income, well-educated, married, and older), the more likely he/she will be to have discriminatory perceptions of emigrants. Women display more discriminatory behaviors toward emigrants than men, apparently because the moral condemnation of emigrants is based on concerns with child-rearing and the integrity of family structure.

2. Theoretical Framework

The Ecuadorian people have a long history of spatial displacement when their way of life is challenged by economic and political crisis or when it is necessary to search for better economic opportunities. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries we observe important human mobility, such as temporary or permanent migration from the highlands to Guayaquil (the country's main port and most industrialized city) to work on the quinine and banana harvests or to work in Quito, Ecuador's capital city.

International migration, however, is a relatively new phenomenon that started in the south (the region addressed in this paper) in the 1970s. Since that time social networks have been created between Cuenca and the United States as well as between the United States and Spain, with an increase in Ecuadorian emigration. Only in 1999, though, did emigration become a nationwide phenomenon, increasing by 250 percent and becoming a matter of public opinion. The main cause of this rise was the financial crisis that led to the bankruptcy of the bank system and the dollarization of the national economy in 2000 (Ramírez and Ramírez, 2005: 70).

This recent emigration, which is mainly illegal, creates a completely new setting for Ecuadorians. Emigrants from Ecuador have to face (or evade) host country immigration laws. Since most rural emigrants will have an illegal status in the host countries, they will not be able to return until they change their migratory status and have accumulated enough capital to start a

business or take their family to the host country. International emigration leaves emigrants' family members by themselves for a long period of time.

In Ecuador it is common knowledge that an emigrant needs to pay between US\$10,000 and US\$14,000 dollars to a “coyote” (organizer of the illegal entrance to the United States) for the trip. If he/she succeeds in entering the host country, he/she will need at least two years of hard work in the host country to pay back his/her debt and release his land mortgage. Once this amount is paid, the emigrant will save money to send to his/her family. Thus, for two years the new head of the house (usually the wife and mother) has to support the family.

But the effects of migration do not end there. In Ecuador, migration has revived an old pattern of discrimination based on racial categories. In fact, any approach to discriminatory practices in the Andean region, including Ecuador, must take into account the three categories that define the social hierarchy of this highly indigenous society: class, ethnicity and gender, as Rivera argues:

The superposition of the criteria of caste and class stratification had such a “constitutive” influence, that even today it continues to structure relationships and perceptions among the different groups (1998: 68).

In this context, Ecuador inherited the dominance of a “white,” Western-oriented elite from the colonial era. The impossibility of overcoming racial discrimination left indigenous people (the majority of the rural population) in a precarious condition, confined to the rural areas with minimum incomes or stigmatized in the cities as inferior because of their ethnicity.

International migration offers indigenous emigrants the opportunity to increase their families' income. Nevertheless, this financial improvement does not grant them channels of social mobility, because the emigrant's family members are stigmatized as “residents”—*nouveaux riches* or a potential middle class that, in spite of its money, lack “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1999) or the education, taste, and Western values that would place them on an equal footing with “whites.” Therefore, in this study we argue that this new phenomenon reproduces old racist exclusions in order to prevent the social and economic rise of “residents” and thereby perpetuates the status quo; however, we also propose that discrimination against residents cannot be reduced to an approach of postcolonial continuity (the updating of race or ethnicity as criteria

for social hierarchy) because it is constituted in a new setting: a closer insertion into the global market through the displacement of labor.

At times of profound world market integration, postcolonial societies intensify their non-modern forms of distinction (mainly race) to avoid becoming meritocratic and fully modern societies in which individual merit serves as the basis for social mobility). Paradoxically, this always incomplete modernity is convenient to the market economy's expansion because it produces a cheap labor source that is accessible on a worldwide basis. Consequently, discrimination against emigrants in their home countries and abroad represents a highly capitalist and modern phenomenon rather than a vestige of the colonial and pre-modern past.

As Balibar and Wallenstein (1992) have pointed out, race and gender are central categories in the world division of labor, because they increase the surplus obtained. Discrimination against international emigrants, as in the case we present here, must be contextualized in the current geopolitical division of labor.

Given the context described, we would like to contribute to the theoretical debate on discrimination by analyzing this practice as a social and cultural construction that not only represents visible and measurable behaviors (face-to-face or institutional discrimination), but also affects the society as a whole. Areas of particular importance include social hierarchy, channels of mobility, collective social imagery, individual and group identities, and long-term expectations. In more practical terms, such discrimination would encompass, among other areas, social investment (e.g., education, health, rural and agricultural development) and incentives to production (e.g., agroindustrial business instead of small-scale peasant production). These outcomes represent "the social cost of discrimination" that, in spite of not being measured in this work, can be reasonably deduced.

In fact, as international emigration has increased, Ecuador's public social investment has decreased proportionally. In 1991 remittances totaled \$109 million, while social spending reached \$513 million. By 2001 these figures had moved in opposite directions: while social investment totaled \$685 millions (only somewhat higher than a decade ago), remittances reached \$1.415 billion (Ramírez and Ramírez, 2005: 77), or more than double the amount of social spending. Given this disparity, an Inter-American Development Bank communication stated

“the most efficient mean to combat poverty in Latin America does not come from governments or international cooperation but from emigrants’ remittances.”¹

Stagnation in social spending can occur for many reasons, but the data collected for this paper suggest that policymakers generally have a low opinion of emigrants and their families. Although emigrants’ incomes are sufficient to meet the basic expenses of food, education and health, this population is portrayed as highly problematic and willing to abandon the country as their parents did. In addition, emigrants and their families are viewed as marginal because of familiar disintegration, crime and acculturation. Moreover, emigrants and their families are viewed as economically irrational because they are seen as spending their incomes on conspicuous consumption (e.g., houses, automobiles and clothing) rather than investing in productive activities such as agriculture; from this perspective it seems meaningless for the state to support rural development.

Despite emigrants’ contribution to the national economy, their role in alleviating poverty, and their support of the costs of dollarization (Ramírez and Ramírez, 2005), public opinion considers them a national problem. This image is constructed mainly from the effects of migration on the nuclear family. The discourse of family abandonment, the psychological consequences for emigrants’ offspring, and effects on children’s school performance constitutes the visible face of this stigmatization. Emphasizing family disequilibrium represents a powerful mechanism of discrimination because it appeals to the nation as a family, a frequently used metaphor of constructing patriotism and a collective feeling of belonging (Sommers, 2001). In this interpretation, international emigration challenges the nation-family as a whole by threatening its unity. Emigrants are not only abandoning their children, but also their nation, and by doing so they are betraying this national family. Their support of their “private family” and the national economy is overshadowed by the “sin” of leaving.

What insights can this discourse of moral condemnation offer our analysis? We started our field research with an analysis of the media, and of the public discourse on emigrants, to contextualize a more factual measurement of discriminatory perceptions. In the following pages we present the interpretation of both types of data, which investigate our initial hypothesis: in the urban context (Cuenca) there are discriminatory perceptions and attitudes toward emigrants and their families. Moreover, we evidence that this discrimination follows a socio-cultural pattern.

¹ Ramírez and Ramírez (2005), translated by the authors of this paper.

The closer a person is to the dominant pole of the society (white/mestizo, westernized, urban, highly educated, married, fully employed) the more likely he/she is to have negative perceptions of emigrants. The exception to this model occurs in gender, where females (and not males in a patriarchal society) are more discriminatory. Nonetheless, this exception can be explained by the moral condemnation discussed above. Women, who in this social context are particularly associated with the private sphere of the family and its values, are more likely than men to see emigration as a “sin” against the family.

The main drawback of these results and the methodology used is that they do not measure discriminatory behaviors per se, only perceptions or attitudes that do not prove an actual discriminatory interaction. While this represents a weakness in terms of observable and individual behaviors, our social and cultural emphasis on discrimination may provide this paper’s most important contribution on the subject.

We understand discrimination as a “social construction,” a product of human practices that is not innate. This approach developed by the school of sociological phenomenology (Berger and Luckmann, 2001), privileges “common sense,” because in this sphere people constitutes worlds of meaning. Perception, therefore, is the first constitutive moment of reality, and of the social.

Nevertheless, this common sense becomes materialized or institutionalized over time, acquiring a structure independent of individual perceptions. Social constructions are thus not only subjective perceptions but also objective social conditions, cultural values or concrete historical contexts. By this we mean “social dispositions” that are internalized and therefore condition practices, one of which is discrimination.

We do not want to say, however, that social dispositions determine individual behaviors; the social is not a world of fixed and immutable laws, but a space of interactions between subjects (intersubjectivity), the specific situation of the action, and the subjects’ context (structures, social representations, history). As Bourdieu (1999) states, there is a “conditioned freedom.”

Social interactions, conducted in a setting of social dispositions and individual freedom, are also based on power relationships. This point of view allows us to consider conflict at the level of face-to-face interactions:

“In human relationships, being whatever they might be—verbal communication, loving, institutional, economic relationships—power is always present. I mean, any relationship where one tries to direct somebody else’s behavior (...). These power relationships are mobile, they can be modified, they are not determined once and for all” (Foucault, 1994: 125-126; our translation).

This exposition leads us to the conceptualization of discrimination as a social interaction that depends on actors’ perceptions about emigrants, based on common sense. However, these perceptions are not “transparent” or natural. Instead, they are conditioned by actors’ social dispositions or what they have learned (internalized structure) about emigrants, and how this new category (resident, illegal) is related to old meanings (non-white, uneducated, rural, etc.). As noted above, these dispositions condition but do not determine the (discriminatory) interaction. Individual freedom and the specificity of the situation (where it takes places, between whom and in which power balance, the purpose, etc.) materialize the interaction.

These (inter) subjective and objective aspects configure the discriminatory interaction. To undertake the analysis of discrimination as a pure matter of individual choice, guided by rational actions, denies its social and cultural dimensions or at least reduces it to a homogenous and universal social scenario.

Therefore, we consider that the approach taken by mainstream economics should be complemented. Phenomena such as “statistical discrimination” (defined as a result of an information problem on the basis of appearance), discrimination based only on individuals’ preferences (taste), and self-exclusion (self-imposed discrimination), although they are manifested by individual behaviors, preferences, and rationalities, are also socially and culturally conditioned.

Liberal economics presupposes that human behavior is guided by rational intentions. By nature, humans are seen as acting according to a rational calculus of means and ends, in a normal pattern or in case of social exclusion (discrimination). Human actions are thus defined as the result of rational decisions based on the knowledge and resources available, and on selfish or altruistic motivations. History, as the accumulation of internalized representations in the subject and the situation of the interaction (power relationships, intersubjectivity, social meanings), are

excluded from the analysis and with them the possibility of understanding social settings that promote or restrain potential discriminatory behaviors.

The application of the liberal economic framework to the social or cultural realm thus tends to homogenize it. “Homo economicus,” the individual acting on means-ends rationality, is not a natural entity, but rather the product of the specific historical context of modernity and capitalism. The disciplines of anthropology and history have shown that, in other cultural settings, human beings act according to other rationalities (social prestige, symbolic interchange, the community over the individual, etc). If we undertake the analysis of discrimination in Latin America, we need to consider that modernity and capitalism are not completed processes. Different cultural and social patrons coexist with modern values and the means-ends rationality.

Due to the complexity of the questions addressed in this study, we crafted a qualitative and quantitative mixed-mode design in an attempt to elicit new insights into this new type of discrimination in Ecuadorian society. The specific objectives were to obtain the necessary quantitative and qualitative information to identify, characterize, measure and recommend possible actions to overcome this negative phenomenon. We conducted in-depth interviews in San Fernando (the rural area), and collected migratory news from the most important newspapers, one local and the other national. Finally, we conducted a survey in Cuenca and San Fernando to measure perceptions and behaviors toward international emigrants (see Annex 1 for methodological details). In the following pages the main results of this research are described and analyzed.

3. Results and Analyses

3.1 Qualitative Methods

3.1.1 In-Depth Interviews and Secondary Sources of Information

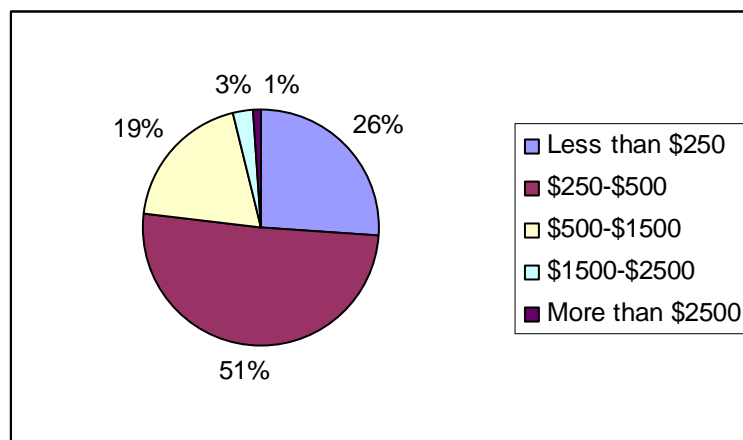
We conducted in-depth interviews in the rural town of San Fernando to initially approach discrimination against emigrants. According to the last census, 434 people (305 men and 129 women) had emigrated from San Fernando at the date of the interview; most of them between the ages of 17 and 27 years old (Censo Nacional VI, 2001). If we consider the population of San Fernando in 2001, this means that 11 percent of the total population left their hometown in search of better conditions in other cities of the country or abroad.

In the last decade, San Fernando's main productive activity has shifted from agriculture to stockbreeding, which requires fewer workers than traditional agriculture, and because it offers daily income to peasants who sell milk to local traders. A migratory context of emigration, remittances, and new cultural patterns, along with stockbreeding activity, has generated a tendency toward the individualization of the peasant community. This shift is reflected in, among other things, the preference for paid employment instead of using any of the communitarian traditional sources available, as well as an increase in commerce. The question nonetheless remains of how emigration affects San Fernando's economy?

According to the study "Receptores de remesas en el Ecuador: Una investigación de mercado" (Bendicen and Associates 2003), Ecuadorian emigrants working abroad send about US\$ 1.5 billion monthly, or approximately to US\$176 per household, as shown in Figure 1.

According to our research, 46 percent of those who receive emigration income do so on a monthly basis, and another 27 percent receive such income every two or three months. When asked about the destination of this money, 61 percent of the respondents said they use it to pay for living expenses, 8 percent said to invest in business, 8 percent for savings, 4 percent to invest in real estate, 2 percent for education expenses and 17 percent for some kind of luxury good or activity .

Figure 1. Percentage of Monthly Emigration Income ("Remesas")



Source: Bendicen and Associates (2003).

There is no doubt that emigration income has a great impact at the national, regional and local level. In 2001, for instance, it was nearly equivalent to 10 times the amount of international economic aid and five times the International Monetary Fund's credit for that year. It also

exceeds government's social investment in health and education. This situation is highly visible in San Fernando, where interviewees agree that the local economy has improved significantly in recent years, following the economic crisis of 2000 and the change in currency from *suces* to dollars.

Perception of the Economic Situation. When discussing San Fernando's economic situation, interviewees frequently mention two key elements: (i) the dollarization of the economy in 2000, and (ii) the international emigration.

After dollarization, real estate prices rose significantly, while prices of cattle and farm products decreased. Some interviewees remember that before the dollarization, it was possible to buy a ranch with the money obtained by selling a few head of cattle. They could also sell small animals (chickens, pigs, guinea pigs) to buy daily supplies like food and clothing. "...*Today nothing has price*" says one of the interviewee, meaning that with the dollarization of the economy, people have lost purchasing power, which is especially true for emigrants' families.

Before the dollarization process, emigration income allowed recipients to significantly increase their purchase power once the incoming dollars were exchanged for *suces*, the national currency. For example, emigrants could quickly pay their debts due to the illegal emigration to local usurers ("chulqueros"), as well as buy lands and build new dwellings for their families. Nowadays, it seems that the number of families who lose their lands because they are not able to pay the loans to usurers is rapidly growing. As one interviewee stated,

"When I was single, I had quite a lot of cattle, thanks to my parent's inheritance. After I got married, I also had enough cattle, but my children grew up and they decided to emigrate, that was when I lost everything I had to the chulqueros."

As a consequence, emigrants are left with few incentives to invest in their hometowns and prefer to invest in activities in their host country.

Despite the consensus on the negative effects of the economic crisis and the dollarization of the economy, the huge impact of emigration income on San Fernando's development is widely acknowledged. In 1990 San Fernando, formerly a parish, became a canton; since then, the town's infrastructure development has been remarkable. The national government is responsible for much of this improvement, but emigrants' contributions were critical as well. In fact, it is

common practice for emigrants to donate money to build or repair churches and sporting facilities, and for community religious celebrations.

At the same time, a new socioeconomic hierarchy is produced by emigration. Although almost everyone in San Fernando has at least one emigrant relative, noticeable differences exist between households that directly receive emigration income (immediate relatives) and those that do not. Consequently, having an emigrant parent, sibling or child places a household in a favorable socioeconomic situation relative to others. The amount of time since emigration and emigrants' status in the receiving country (illegal vs. legal) are also important variables to be considered.

People who have emigrated more than five years ago usually enjoy resident status in their host countries, or at least have been able to pay their travel debts, and have generally built a house in San Fernando or Cuenca. After these two expenses are covered, the emigrant's family is free to invest in land, cattle and other economic activities (public transportation, grocery stores, clothing stores, restaurants, usury, etc), and sometimes they also invest in the emigration of another family member. If the emigrant has the status of resident or citizen of the receptor country, he/she can also visit his/her family in Ecuador and use his/her accumulated "cultural capital" accumulated to open a business or move his family to the nearest big city (Cuenca). This group constitutes the *nouveaux riches*, who enjoy a relatively good economic situation and can even compete with the local traditional elite.

A second group is made up of families in which a member has emigrated less than two years ago. These families are not only in less favorable conditions than families in the first group, but also more vulnerable than families with no immediate emigrant members. In order to undertake the "migratory adventure," the potential emigrant asks his/her family for support. According to interviewees, once contacts are made, the potential emigrant will need between US\$10,000 and US\$14,000, an amount that is increasing due to additional border controls and tougher immigration regulations in the United States and Europe. To obtain that sum of money, the families ask loans to usurers, mortgaging their lands and paying high interest of approximately 6.5 percent monthly.

Once the emigrant obtains a loan, he/she begins the long trip that, if successful, could take up to two months. But many emigrants are caught and therefore deported; they still need to

pay half of the received loan to the usurers and coyotes, leaving the family to face the debt and interests generated by the unsuccessful adventure.

If the emigrant manages to reach his/her final destination (sometimes after one or more unsuccessful attempts), it will take him/her one or two years to save enough to pay the debt and ensure the family's lands. Once this step is completed, the family members ("residents") living in San Fernando (and other parts of the country as well) will start receiving incomes from the emigrant member.

With many households receiving incomes from emigration, San Fernando's inhabitants evaluate their local economy in a positive way. We find testimonies that generalize the economic improvement, usually from people with an emigrant relative, but there are also interviewees who emphasize the distinction between those families and the rest of the population. In the first group, we find statements such as:

"Everybody has enough money; because relatives send money from abroad (...) there is almost no poverty here. Everybody has lands, cattle and a place to sow. We are all more or less well-off," or "many people have become rich because of emigration."

Families who do not receive money from emigrants offer a contrasting point of view: o make their voice heard:

"Here, people believe that because some have immigrated to the U.S., we all are wealthy. That is why local traders and merchants ask the highest prices, but we do not have money (and we buy in Cuenca)".

According to our observations, interviews and qualitative data (VI Censo Nacional, 2001, III Censo Agropecuario, 1997, and Catastro Rural 2005, Municipio de San Fernando), San Fernando is far from a region of wealthy farmers. The economic crisis of 2000 and the negative impact of dollarization on farming and livestock production could not be balanced by migratory incomes. What this income has done, however, is a) alleviate poverty by supporting families' expenses in food, housing, health and education; and b) deepen the social hierarchy, as few people are able to accumulate capital, buy land and expand their cattle and/or farming business.

Investment sources for emigration incomes. What are the main destinations of the money received by “residents” in San Fernando? We suggest a typology of four categories: (i) housing and daily goods, (ii) investment in production, (iii) new migratory endeavors for other family members and (iv) education. This classification assumes that the family has managed to repay its debt to usurers.

Housing and daily goods

After paying the migratory trip loan, the first investment is generally to build a new dwelling that would be, in theory, used as a place to live by the emigrant upon his/her return. While at first glance it may seem strange that someone who does not live in the place—and probably will not live there for many years to come—would want to invest in building a house there, emigrants do so to affirm their desire to return to their homeland.

Building a new dwelling seems to be a common practice in southern Ecuador. Driving along the road in rural areas, one can easily see many new houses built in non-traditional styles. Moreover, Cuenca’s elites have constructed a discourse of discrimination against emigrants’ new houses and their “aesthetic.” Those elites are concerned that the once-idyllic rural landscape (the place of their *haciendas*, or estates and *huasipungos*, their peasant servants) is taking on urban characteristics (Ordóñez, 2005).

When planning for the construction of the new house, emigrants usually send a picture of an American or European house they would like to have reproduced. Nonetheless, these pictures are mixed with local architectural elements to give birth to a new style, the product of this blending. Cuenca’s elite deems these buildings an “irrational,” arguing that, because no one lives in those houses, they represent an irrational investment that dulls productive investments, as will be shown below in the media content analysis section.

In spite of elite objections to this emerging architectural style, new construction is significantly increasing. We hypothesize that emigrants are thereby able to keep alive the hope of going back home (the “utopia of return”). Such construction also serves practical purposes; since emigrants usually leave their family behind (wife, husband, children, or parents), building a house for them constitutes an initial show of support.

“The Canton of San Fernando and its surrounding area have gotten better, compared to some years ago. Before, there were no people or houses, but currently the number of inhabitants has increased and people have good houses.”

The apparent illogic of these new constructions (“ghost dwellings”) is not only criticized by the speech of the elites in Cuenca, but also by peasants in San Fernando.

“...emigrants invest in cars, lands, cattle and they build enormous and luxurious houses that are always abandoned. They want to show their economic power and compete with the rest to gain prestige.”

This statement points to a key element in understand emigrant families’ motivations. If the hypothesis that we are witnessing the emergence of a new social stratum can not be rejected, then the high level of perishable and non-perishable goods consumption and investment in luxury would be rational. Such consumptions and investment reflects an economic strategy of becoming part of the locally dominant class and from there establish social relationships to obtain privileges such as favorable treatment by the municipal government.

At the same time, it is necessary to consider that this new spending behavior is part of the new cultural values that the emigrants have assimilated in their new settings. Most emigrants have settled in consumer societies, and they seek the same level of consumptions for relatives back home. One can easily see signs of this “transculturation”² in San Fernando, for example: groceries with canned food, urban-style clothing stores, restaurants, electronic supply stores, etc. Some residents, however, see the need to support their traditional values in response to consumerism.

“When a single son sends money, it is necessary to save. If possible, one has to buy a piece of land for him. We cannot waste their money (...). Some emigrants come with money, they also return with a business, a car, for example (public transportation business). My son came back, bought cattle, land and now he has a clothing store downtown.”

² We use “transculturation” instead of the more common term “acculturation” to avoid one-sided approaches to cultural change. Acculturation reflects only one-way change, from one culture to the other. Instead, transculturation implies cultural changes are always two-way transformation; a person mixes his/her own culture with the new one and does not abandon his/her culture (Ortiz, 1999).

Investing in Production

Unfortunately, we could not identify any additional source of information about San Fernando's dairy production, number of head cattle any land register, that would allow us to compare possible changes in the last years. The 2005 Land Property Register (Catastro) is the only known information source, but it nonetheless leaves questions unanswered. For instance, compared to the highland national average (8.39he.), and to the province's average (Azuay, 6.14he.), San Fernando's ranch average size is considerable smaller (2.89 he.). How it is possible to talk about emigrants' economic accumulation with ranches of such a small average size?

As stated above, Andean land ownership system is characterized by the possession of small pieces of land in different areas (usually in a variety of ecological areas). In San Fernando the ecological level ownership has been lost, but we can still see the tendency to own many small pieces rather than a single large ranch. The table below illustrates one typical case where different family members (identified by the common Last Name and mother's maiden name) have multiple land properties.

Table 1. Typical Case of Multiple Land Property, Chumblín 2005

Name	No. of properties	Size (he.)
Adolfo	5	2.40
José María	3	2.00
Manuel Adolfo	4	2.00
Mariana	6	1.81
Mercedes	8	3.20
Rosendo	1	1.00
Total	27	12.41

Source: Authors' calculations based on Catastro Rural de San Fernando (2005).

With the exception of Rosendo's single holding of one hectare holding, the table above shows that even when these siblings own more than one piece of land, each piece is on average approximately 0.46 he. (4,600 cubic meters), quite conspicuously below San Fernando's average of 2.89he.. If we analyze these siblings individually, we would conclude that they are poor because they cannot feed even a single head of cattle, which requires 1 he. However, a knowledge of traditional family arrangements and networks suggests that family members in fact have access to all 12.41 he.

Another interesting finding in the Catastro's analysis is a general tendency in San Fernando area to own two very different sized pieces of land, such as one of 0.5 he and another of 35 he. Although we are unable to tell if this tendency in land tenant was always the case in the region, based on the in-depth interviewees we hypothesize that it has to do with the migratory phenomenon. It could be possible, that emigrants are sending money to invest in real estate and in the main local activity of cattle farming. As one interviewee notes, "...emigrants have been able to buy land, cattle and build houses."

Based on the analysis of the in-depth interviews and the secondary Catastro data, we can say that there are certainly cases of successful residents becoming landowners and cattle farming businessmen. These families, moreover, are also starting to compete for privileges with Cuenca's elites, who still own lands in San Fernando.

"(Emigrants invest in) buying lands, houses, cattle and in improving grain crops. They also can compete with the estates, getting more profits with cattle farming."

But this is not always the case. The time of emigration, working conditions and legal status in the receptor country, as well as personal skills of the emigrants and their families, are key determinants of residents' current economic situation.

Even when we cannot quantify these two groups (which is not the aim of this study), it seems that there is a group of "successful" residents (defined by ranch size). They have considerable impact on the local economy (in trade in goods, real estate and construction, etc.) and on the social hierarchy as well. Residents and their emigrant family members have imposed new values in the community, including individualism, consumerism, and changes in traditional diet, clothing and music. These new practices impact the youngest generations most and represent an important role model, which constitutes a third kind of emigrant income investment in the region.

Investing in More Emigration

After the first emigrant family member has become established in the receptor country, and after he/she has repaid travel debts and built a new dwelling, the next step is most often to finance a new emigrant, usually a spouse or child. Unlike the first emigrant's trip, however, subsequent expenses are paid by the emigrant rather than a usurer.

In addition, residents who have accumulated a decent sum (more than \$10,000) can also lend money to indirect relatives, perhaps charging them a lower interest rate than usurers. Lending to indirect family members, though, is the first step toward becoming a *chulquero* (the Ecuadorian term for moneylender).

The term *chulquero* is a very sensitive topic in San Fernando. It has negative connotations of both usury and the illegality associated with *coyotes*. In the words of one interviewee:

“Here in San Fernando is the reign of a network of corruption among the City Hall, the Property Registry, the City Court, and *chulqueros*. A part of my land, obtained by inheritance, was stolen by a *chulquero*. This *chulquero* is my own brother, and today he is San Fernando’s richest man. Everything started when his offspring emigrated and started sending money. This money was invested in high-interest loans to the rest of the people who wanted to emigrate. In San Fernando there are other well-know *chulqueros* who live in Cuenca, but do their business here.”

Investing in Education

There are three schools in San Fernando, two public and one private, and only one high school center. Some parents send their teenagers to the high school in the nearby Canton of Girón, which they believe offers a better curriculum and also allows students to acquire a more urbanized cultural background (social relationships, music, clothing, language) that will provide them a sense of urban belonging and improved future prospects. A larger town, Girón additionally has greater economic activity due to its strategic connection to the costal region. However, the cost of sending children to study in Girón significantly increases the cost of education. In addition to the direct expense of bus transportation, families also experience a significant opportunity cost in student’s reduced time and ability to help their families in farm or other work.

There is no university, however, in either San Fernando or Girón. Students who complete high school may also obtain a technical certificate in agronomy or veterinarian, but pursuing a university degree means moving to Cuenca. Once university students settle in Cuenca, however, they are unlikely to they come back to San Fernando after obtaining a degree; working and

living conditions are generally considered better in Cuenca, Ecuador's third largest city. Under these circumstances, as shown in Table 2, only 14.7 percent of San Fernando's population over the age of five years has a completed high school education, while 70.6 percent of the population has only elementary school education. Moreover, San Fernando's urban population has on average 5.1 years of formal education, while the rural population has on average only 4.6 years, less than the six years needed to complete elementary school.

Table 2. Percentage of the Population, Aged Five Years and Older, by Highest Level of Education Attained and Urban/Rural Area

Education level reached	Urban	%	Rural	%	Total	%
TOTAL	1,255	100.00	2,275	100.00	3,530	100.00
None	69	5.50	194	8.53	263	7.45
Adults literacy instruction	8	0.64	4	0.18	12	0.34
Elementary school	761	60.64	1733	76.18	2,494	70.65
High school	289	23.03	229	10.07	518	14.67
Post high school	6	0.48	1	0.04	7	0.20
Undergraduate	47	3.75	15	0.66	62	1.76
Graduate	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Not stated	75	5.98	99	4.35	174	4.93

Source: Authors' calculations based on *VI Censo Nacional*, 2001.

Education carries high opportunity costs in peasant families, where children's work is needed in the fields and at home. In the words of one interviewee, "As parents, we must send our children to elementary school, but then they have to help us in the fields." Another subject notes:

"Education is very important for our children. Unfortunately, money scarcity did not allow us to send our children to high school, or maybe to study in another region. That is why in these *recintos* [outlying areas] there are no professionals, and because there is neither work nor land to produce, [many] have decided to emigrate. But our main responsibility is to send our children to elementary school. Later they make their future."

San Fernando additionally suffers from a shortage of jobs for educated persons. This may further explain why parents do not make a greater effort to send children to high school once they have completed elementary education.

The following statements are representative:

“Many students complete high school, but there are no jobs and they end up being farmers. How does studying help them then?”

“...high school education is for people with money, not for poor ones.”

“Going to high school or university takes a long time. I prefer to work”.

Nonetheless, there are signs that the educational situation has begun to change, at least for some. San Fernando’s first and only private school opened very recently (2006), and teachers acknowledge that their students are primarily emigrants’ children. As one notes, “Emigrants’ children study here, then they go to the university in Cuenca.”

Nonetheless, emigration can have negative as well as positive effects on emigration. According to one high school principal in San Fernando, emigration is the most important cause of school early desertion.

“Many teenagers drop out of high school because they are planning to make the trip to the U.S. or Spain. If they do not leave immediately, they drop out of school because they want to work to save some money for the trip They also think education will not make any difference when they work abroad.”

After considering these different factors, we hypothesize that remittances from emigrants have a positive impact on elementary school education but a negative effect on high school and university education. Since many emigrants’ offspring hope to join their parent(s) abroad, and because they implicitly accept they will be working in unskilled positions, there is no apparent utility in investing in middle and higher education.

Perception of the Emigration Phenomenon and Discrimination in San Fernando

As we have seen, the migratory phenomena is very complex because it embodies opposite situations: emigrants who can accumulate enough capital to become the local *nouveau riche* and deeper social differences at one extreme, and at the other suffering, bankruptcy, and death for those who have tried to emigrate in recent years. As noted above, emigration improves access to elementary education but increases high school desertion and reproduction of low skill levels.

San Fernando's inhabitants acknowledge this complexity. They believe that poverty has diminished because of emigration, and that many people have been able to buy land and cattle, fertilize their fodder farms, and build new houses, all of which is bringing prosperity to San Fernando. On the other hand, they know emigration is a big risk because of the increasing difficulty of entering the United States or the European Community. The inhabitants of San Fernando have also seen how neighbors and relatives have lost their lands because of loans from *chulqueros*.

Putting these negative individual consequences aside, none of our interviewees consider emigration something negative to the region, except one statement that requires a further analysis. According to Manuel, a taxi driver who works in Cuenca,

“Emigration brings regrettable things to emigrants' children. They stay with their uncles or grandparents, but they suffer because they do not have the love of their parents. Unaffectionate grandparents mistreat children, although there are laws against it. Unfortunately there are not authorities who can punish this situation. Children are psychologically ill-treated and battered.”

Of the 20 interviews conducted, only individual quoted above makes such an explicit argument against emigration, presenting mistreatment of emigrants' children by their own families in a highly paternalistic and urban discourse. Since the interviewee works in Cuenca, his statement calls attention to his context, the city of Cuenca and public opinion there in regard to emigration, since it is in that setting where discrimination against emigrants and residents is constructed.

As a preliminary conclusion of in-depth interview analysis, however, we did not find generalized practices of discrimination against emigrants or their families in San Fernando, or signs of residents' discrimination against non-emigrants in this region. This does not mean there

are no social conflicts between San Fernando's inhabitants, but those conflicts cannot be analyzed under the category of discrimination, because there is a sense of equality among them. What we could find is the rise of socioeconomic hierarchy within this peasant society, which could bring more division and conflict in the medium term.

Such conflict could stem from experiences such as those of a peasant interviewee who believes she was discriminated against by the public apparatus (city hall, notary, court) because of a lawsuit against a *chulquero*; she lost her property as a result on an illegal (usurious) debt, and she felt public authorities "were on the side of wealthy, because they have more money." Although this is a perception related to emigration (the loan was made for a trip abroad), it can be explained by the social context of the region as well. The interviewee is a peasant, and the Ecuadorian colonial social structure creates an authoritarian (and paternalistic) culture unfavorable to the indigenous and rural population. Government corruption could also be involved in the instance cited above, but it does not represent a case of discrimination against emigrants as such.

What could be more related to discrimination against emigrants are the following perceptions:

"[Residents] change physically and economically, they feel arrogant, and different from the rest, and they do not want to work."

"Emigrants are more arrogant and in any social event or meeting they exhibit their money, buying things or helping."

As we can see, San Fernando's inhabitants consider emigrants and their families to be arrogant because of their money, but their "sense of superiority" appears to help rather than harm the community. Emigrants support construction and repair of churches, assembly halls and sports facilities, and they definitely contribute to religious celebrations:

"[Emigrants] participate as local celebrations' *priostes* (hosts) to show their economic power. They make enormous investments in art and fireworks."

Juan, the father of an emigrant, explains this participation:

“Last year I hosted the celebration with my [emigrant] son’s support. He supported the mass [and the celebrations that follow] to Saint Isidro, because he helped him on his way to the United States. We paid for 40 horses for the *escaramuzas* (an equestrian performance) and prepared three head of cattle for the guests.”

It seems that San Fernando emigrants maintain some kind of reciprocity that protects their public reputation. Emigrants are not discriminated against in this region; on the contrary, they are presented as role models for youth because of their success. Nonetheless, social differences can create a hostile environment where neighbors and relatives in formerly equal situations perceive the emergence of a hierarchy in their society. At the same time, however, this does not mean that there is explicit discrimination.

A different situation prevails in Cuenca. As the media content analysis shows, urban inhabitants have developed a very well-defined discourse against rural inhabitants who emigrate abroad and their families who stay in the country. This discourse is characterized by a stigmatization that reinforces their exclusion despite emigrants’ economic improvement. In fact, this seems to be the cause of such discrimination: urban elites are constructing a discourse to legitimize (peasant) emigrants’ differentiation, because emigrant incomes can compete with their interests and place emigrants (and their families) in the same social spaces (schools, universities, neighborhoods, enterprises, etc).

In this sense, Cuenca-San Fernando discrimination represents a very interesting case to analyze, because a condition (emigration) valuable in one context (the homeland of emigrants, San Fernando) implies discrimination in the other (the city, Cuenca).

How do we approach this apparently paradoxical phenomenon? Our qualitative data have been useful in identifying San Fernando’s emigration perceptions, which suggest emigration is not a discriminatory category, although it creates differences between emigrant and non-emigrant families in regard to economic income, access to education and health care, and cultural capital (goods, music, food, etc). Media analysis provides another perspective on this phenomenon, showing how emigration has become a category of discrimination against rural emigrants and their families in Cuenca.

3.1.2 Media Content Analysis

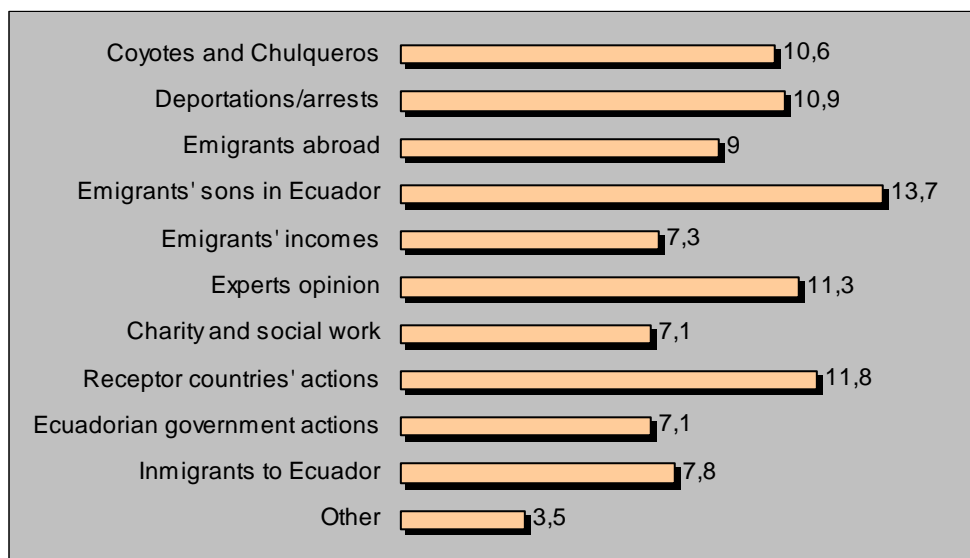
The previous in-depth interviews analysis showed that discrimination against emigrants and their families involves a larger phenomenon, which involves more generalized discrimination by the urban and Westernized (“white”) population against peasants and the indigenous. At the same time, however, this form of discrimination contains a new element, taking emigrants’ recently acquired Western values, their incomes and their potential social mobility as stigmatizing symbols. Therefore, we find that the traditional discrimination against peasants and indigenous population is being (re)created in this new migratory context in Ecuador.

The media content analysis undertaken for Cuenca, the large city closest to San Fernando, builds on this finding. The discourse in the media contains explicit elements of discrimination against emigrants and their families in different dimensions, including family makeup and social, economic and cultural spheres. This discourse portrayed in the media both reflects and influences the collective imagination of the population.

Moreover, the Thursday issue of the newspaper *El Mercurio* includes a supplement of approximately one page on emigration issues, and Cuenca seems to play a critical role in the creation of a national discourse on emigration. Even in national newspapers like *El Comercio*, one finds that an overwhelming majority of the “migration experts” come from Cuenca. In this way the local discourse generated in Cuenca is spread to the entire country through the mass media communication.

Emigration in the News. All news dealing with emigration was coded using the following 10 categories displayed in the figure below.

Figure 2. Percentage of News on Emigration by Theme/Issue Typology



Source: Authors' calculations based on media content analysis, September 2005-February 2006.

We now turn to analysis of the news in each category.

1) Coyotes and Chulqueros (10.6 percent)

As noted above before, *coyotes* are smugglers of emigrants, said to receive about \$14,000 per illegal immigrant crossing the U.S. border, and *chulqueros* are the local usurers who lend the required money to potential emigrants. Stories dealing with these two critical figures in the emigration phenomenon narrate unfortunate experiences of people who failed to cross the border and, if fortunate, were sent back home, where they had to face the loss of their properties because they were not able to pay their debts to *chulqueros*. These stories include a variety of complaints about mistreatment by *coyotes* and *chulqueros*, as well as the dangers of the migratory journey, which in many cases has a fatal outcome.

It is not surprising, at this point, that there are no stories of successful cases in which emigrants cross the border, find a job in the recipient country and start sending money to pay their *chulquero* debt and then send money to their families.

2) Arrest and Deportation (10.9 percent)

Detailed descriptions of experiences of deportation and arrest complement the stories related to *coyotes* and *chulqueros*. In these accounts, unsuccessful emigrants narrate the violence they

suffered when they were captured by immigration authorities, placed under arrest and deported. These emotionally charged testimonies aim to discourage the Ecuadorian population from even considering emigration as a possible future endeavor.

3) The Life of Emigrants (9%)

This more general category does not concern the illegal and violent face of emigration, as in the two previous categories, but the life that awaits emigrants abroad. Here we find news about emigrants' social networks, job markets in receptor countries, the discrimination that they have to face in the receptor countries and their process of constructing a new identity in the new context. In regard to the latter, for example, one can find articles dealing with religious pilgrimages organized by Ecuadorian emigrants.

An interesting issue that appears in this section is the analysis of cultural transformation caused by emigration. With the suggestive title of "A Dichotomy of Evolution," one expert's comment reads:

"Ecuadorian women (living in Spain) are apparently trapped in a dichotomy of evolution, between a western society related to an image of liberty and the Ecuadorian culture, associated with tradition. Therefore, they live on a thin line between modernity's liberties and the threat of libertinage (*El Mercurio*, Thursday October 20, 2005).

According to our interpretation, the author identifies evolution with Western modernity and considers that emigrant women find it difficult to articulate the freedom they find in the new culture with their Ecuadorian heritage. As a consequence, they are exposed to the risk of misunderstanding the modern concept of liberty and mistaking it with "libertinage." A closer view of this statement could imply that the journalist is implicitly discussing the risks of prostitution that emigrant women face in the recipient countries. In this instance two components of discrimination are evident, gender discrimination and discrimination against emigrants, and they appear to reinforce one another.

Though not all articles dealing with cultural change in emigrant populations are as dichotomist as the example above, they all appear to acknowledge the abandonment of Ecuadorian traditional culture to embrace the values of the new culture. Elements of this

discourse of “acculturation” are also present in the media’s approach to the life of emigrants’ children, which is discussed next.

4) *Emigrants’ Children in Ecuador (“Residents,” 13.7 percent)*

This is one of the most important categories in our analysis, usually involving the most negative consequences of emigration as identified by the media and emigration “experts.” Stated in many different manners, the issues addressed fearfully raise the question “what will happen to your children if you decide to emigrate?”

There are two approaches to this topic. One is to let the experts talk; professionals in social science, like social work, and psychology are frequently quoted. In addition, Catholic Church representatives, both clergy and laity, analyze the devastating consequences of emigration for the nuclear family. The second approach, sometimes in combination with the first, is to present the voice of emigrants’ children as testimonies. Their voices are heard in various seminars and workshops organized by NGOs, the Catholic Church and local authorities.

In short, the main point of articles on the life of emigrants’ children, the main point appears to be that emigration represents abandonment of children. Emigrant parents are repeatedly portrayed as irresponsible people who abandon their children, causing them psychological damage, low self-esteem, low educational performance, and social and cultural problems. It is also possible to find discourses associating emigrants’ children with dropping out of school, criminal activity, gang involvement, drug use, and suicide.

This portrayal of emigrants’ children transcends national borders and can also be found in international news communication. As stated on a National Public Radio (NPR) story reported by Lourdes García-Novarro

“When Mexicans migrate to the United States, many leave their children in the care of extended families. That’s causing problems back in their home communities, with children doing poorly in school, dropping out or turning to crime.”³

Although no conclusive evidence is presented, such statements serve to construct a social image of of emigrants’ children as being different (in a negative sense) from their counterparts. Although evaluating the validity of such statements lies beyond the scope of this paper, we

³ “Mexican Migrants Leave Kids, Problems Back Home,” NPR News, *Morning Edition*, May 8, 2006.

should nonetheless note that no scientific study is presented to support those assertions. In addition, this discourse addresses only one side of the phenomenon, the impact of emigration on the family, without taking into account its structural sides: lack of jobs, poverty, and emigrants' contribution to national income. We propose that, by emphasizing only some of the multiple dimensions of this complex phenomenon, the media are (re)creating the traditional discriminatory behaviors against indigenous population in Ecuador.

The following examples tend to illustrate this idea. Some journalists refer to emigrants' children as a "social problem" and, in the quotation below, an emigrant expert who runs a Program for Youth in Cuenca calls emigrants' sons (and daughters) "marginals":

"Marginality does not only refer to poverty: there are many emigrants' children who have money but are isolated. Schools have closed their doors to them because they do not live with their parents; that is marginalization and that generates low self-esteem" (*El Mercurio*, Thursday, September 1, 2005: 6B).

This passage introduces a new meaning of "marginal," involving "isolation" and "low self-esteem" rather than economic situation. In this discourse, emigrants' children are called "marginal" because—although they have money—they do not have their parents (i.e., are isolated) or support from their schools. This statement, though, is contradicted by our preliminary findings that emigrants' families in San Fernando invest in education comparatively more than their counterparts; we have identified various private schools in Cuenca and San Fernando that target this "new market."

Even when there are reactions against this discrimination and "marginalization" of emigrants' children, those reactions are filtered according to the media dominant discourse.

"I don't think we are a problem, but society has stigmatized us like that" (*El Mercurio*, Thursday, November 17, 2005: 6B).

"I think they want to have their houses, but they also hurt their families. They [emigrants] think it is all about money, but no money can buy happiness" (*El Mercurio*, Thursday, December 8, 2005: 6B).

We do not know whether the child quoted below is an emigrant's daughter, but she reconstructs the dominant discourse in which emigrant parents are seen as preferring money to their families' well-being.

"I think that some schoolmates fight against each other, they do not get along well. They are rejected because their parents are poor or rich and because they come from a different social class (*El Mercurio*, Thursday, December 8, 2005: 6B).

In the case above, the quote raises a topic that we have not previously identified in the media: emigrants' children are also discriminated against by their classmates. "*Although they have money*" (in reference to their well-off parents) they are "*not the same class as the rest.*" This child is very likely to be reproducing his/her parents' and close adults' opinion regarding the issue.

The construction of the social discourse goes on, adding new elements to the emigrants' children media portrayal.

"...In this testimony we see how they [emigrant's children] assume roles that do not correspond to their ages. He [an emigrant's child] was forced to grow up, he was left on his own very young and he had to become an adult. His father left when he was 9, and his mother also left when he was 13. He has a hard life." (*El Mercurio*, Thursday, November 17, 2005: 6B).

"Emigration is and will be a problem for all of our rural towns and regions Fathers who live far away in different realities. Mothers, who face new circumstances, feel alone and unprotected because their husbands have forgotten about them. Children without their parents' love, who grow up without (moral) values. Now many young people meet to drink, have sex and use drugs. This is caused by parents who thought emigration was going to resolve their economic problems, but I think their absence is much worse" (Speech by Catholic priest in *El Mercurio*, Thursday, November 24, 2005).

Nonetheless, none of these discursive elements arose in the in-depth interviews conducted in San Fernando. The terms “marginalization,” “perversion,” and “criminal behavior” (drinking and/or drug problems) were not among the interviewees’ concerns. They did mention that as grandparents it was hard to take complete responsibility for a child, but this is a situation that they experienced themselves, having been brought up by their own grandparents. Emigration is not a new phenomenon in Cuenca’s rural areas, but an old survival strategy. In addition, in the countryside it is a common practice to send their children to live with relatives in order to be able to continue their education after elementary school.

The image of emigrants’ children as marginalized appears to be a urban creation, and we argue, tends to displace rural and peasant role model of emigration for its exclusion and discrimination. The popularity of successful emigrants in rural areas (their “reciprocity” in religious celebration and public works) tends to be inverted in the urban context: “...they are no longer the ‘best’ godfathers a child can have (because of the loans or networks for a migratory endeavor) “...but loveless, irresponsible and ambitious parents, who can impact negatively Ecuadorian society as a whole”.

This kind of discourse is also present in very well intentioned social workers and religious people, who have a vertical, racist and paternalist conception of the problematic. We propose that under this charitable giving, there is urban elite who see that their spatial hegemony is being threatened by emigrants and their families (residents). The ‘new rich’ (residents) can, for the first time, pay the same private schools that the elite pays; become their neighbors and probably their partners in business. Therefore, the elites feel the need to re-invent new elements to differentiate from this group. A new conceptualization of the peasant indigenous is created: they are still rural, primitive, they are irresponsible and abandoner, they let their children marginalized.

5) *Emigrants’ Income (7.3%)*

Another important approach to emigrants’ negative stereotype is the criticism about their investments. Despite the governmental and international institutions reports on that the critical impact of emigration incomes (“*remesas*”) on the alleviation of poverty in the receptor countries like Ecuador (CEPAL), there are still many emigration experts and journalists who continue referring to those incomes as “unproductive”.

“Migradollars” do not reduce poverty. Those who receive that money consume them all, and what it is worse, they end up being dependent on them (...) Migratory incomes are invested in everything except for productive projects. That money is spent as soon as it comes (*El Mercurio*, Wednesday, September 21, 2005).

“...este dinero no tiene que caer en saco roto” (“...this income should not be misspent”) (*El Comercio*, Tuesday, November 11, 2005).

Emigrants’ investments in building new dwellings have become another area of emphasis. Although the media acknowledge the importance of the area’s growing real estate business, in the area, they refer to these constructions with derogatory comments. They are seen as “ugly,” “inappropriate for the rural context,” “dysfunctional,” etc. The following comment on the case of a peasant family, who has an emigrant son, provides a good illustration. “... They have a house with a dancing hall and garage, but because the road does not get to the house, they have to keep the car in their neighbor’s garage. But they buy electronic supplies for the house and the latest technological stuff” (*El Comercio*, Monday, December 19, 2005).

The stereotype of emigrants and their families as persons who “misspend” their money adds on the social construction of this negative image of emigration. Emigrants and their families are not only irresponsible and careless of their offspring, but also unproductive, superficial, wasteful, and dysfunctional for the national economy. Only in some cases does this kind of attribution value model coexist with a presentation of data on the contribution of emigrants’ income to the national economy. Even in those cases, however, there is no recognition of emigrants’ support to the national economy, aspect that could counteract the negativity of the displayed stereotype.

6) Experts’ Opinion (11.3%)

In this space the academy presents its views about the migratory phenomenon. Because of its importance, there are many seminars, conferences and meetings about emigration, where Ecuadorian and international experts deliberate about its consequences and characteristics. Despite the participation of international researches and policy makers, these events (usually carried out in Cuenca) tend to portray the emigration phenomenon with the same characteristics

as discussed in the media. In this sense, the influence of the Catholic Church is critical in articulating the migratory national discourse.

7) *Charity and Social Work (7.1%)*

There is a high level of similarity between local experts' and charitable organization officials' opinions about the emigration phenomenon, as these groups largely overlap. The extent that they are usually intermixed. The Catholic Church and many NGOs that participate as experts also conduct social campaigns on behalf of deported emigrant and of families cheated by “*coyotes*” and “*chulqueros*.”

8) *Receptor Countries and Governmental Actions (11.8%)*

The voice of the receptor countries is also made heard in the media. These news items tend to deal with new international and national regulations against illegal migration, the living situation of migrants in the receptor countries (primarily Spain and United States), and public policies that can help the emigrant population. The official voice tends to be very bureaucratic and informative, and no discriminatory element was found in articles of this type.

9) *Immigration in Ecuador (7.8%)*

Finally, we identify a topic that, even though not part of our initial proposal, provides an interesting perspective on the emigration phenomenon: illegal migration to Ecuador. A significant percentage of news about emigration (7.8 percent) is dedicated to discussing the illegal migration of Peruvians and Colombians to Ecuador. This other side of emigration is also part of the public image of migration both in Cuenca and throughout Ecuador. Moreover, this type of discrimination is present not only in the urban context, but also in rural spaces such as San Fernando.

The topics covered are very similar to the ones found in the Ecuadorian emigration phenomenon: illegality, “*coyotes*,” deportation, violence, etc. But, in contrast to the discussion of Ecuadorian emigrants, the media do not devote space to everyday life of immigrants in Ecuador.

3.2 Quantitative Methods

3.2.1 Results of the Population Surveys

The first part of the project consisted of the application of qualitative methods (in-depth interviews and media analysis) that helped us comprehend the social phenomenon of international emigration. We subsequently conducted two population surveys (one in the city of Cuenca and the other one in the rural area of San Fernando) to test and quantify some of the qualitative findings in order to gain quantitative meaning. The following tables and charts provide a general description of the main results of the surveys.

The surveys results indicate that the migration phenomenon is a relevant issue in respondents' everyday life. "Migration" was listed as the most important problem currently facing their cities by 21.3 percent of respondents in Cuenca and 21.6 percent of respondents in San Fernando.

Table 3. What Do You Think are the Two Main Problems Currently Facing the Population of [Cuenca/San Fernando]?

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
Poverty	36.5	50.8
Education	9.2	6.5
Health care/Insurance	3.1	9.7
Migration	21.3	21.6
Lack of Jobs	16.0	3.2
Delinquency	13.1	2.2
Corruption	0.8	0.5
Don't know/No answer	0.0	5.4
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

Migration: Some Attitudes

The second set of questions tried to gain insight on respondent's attitudes and opinions on migration from three different perspectives: overall, for migrants themselves and for their family members who stay in Ecuador.

Table 4. Overall, Do You Think that International migration is a...

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
Good thing for [Cuenca/San Fernando]	37.5	47.0
Bad thing for [Cuenca/San Fernando]	52.7	40.0
Depends	9.0	11.9
No answer	0.8	1.1
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

Table 5. And for the Migrants Themselves, Do You Think that International Migration is a...

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
Good thing for migrants	40.2	48.1
Bad thing for migrants	51.0	40.0
Depends	7.1	7.6
No answer	1.7	4.3
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

Table 6. And for their Immediate Family Members who Stay in Ecuador, Do you think that international migration is a...

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
Good thing for [Cuenca/San Fernando]	14.8	25.4
Bad thing for [Cuenca/San Fernando]	77.9	63.8
Depends	5.6	8.6
No answer	1.7	2.2
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 provide a glimpse of current attitudes on migration in Cuenca and San Fernando. The survey data find the same results as the in-depth interviews: the population of Cuenca appears more critical of migration (53 percent say it is a “bad thing for Cuenca”) while the percentage drops to 40 percent in San Fernando. The same difference is found when respondents were asked about their opinions on migration from the migrant’s perspective: 51 percent of the population of Cuenca think that migration is also negative for the migrants themselves, while in San Fernando a plurality (48.1 percent) considers it positive. Finally, when asked their opinions on migration from the migrants’ family members point of view, respondents

in Cuenca and San Fernando agree that is a “bad thing” for them (77.9 percent in Cuenca and 63.8 percent in San Fernando).

Table 7. Do You Think a Child of an Emigrant Will Have the Same Performance at School as a Child of a Non-Migrant, a Poorer Performance or a Better Performance?

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
Same performance	4.8	6.5
Poorer performance	83.3	71.4
Better performance	1.5	2.2
Depends	8.8	14.6
DK/NA	1.7	5.4
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

The table above shows that the media discourse against migrants and their family members who stay in the country is also found at the individual level: 83 percent of respondents in Cuenca and 71.4 percent of respondents in San Fernando said that a child of an emigrant will “do worse in school than a child of a non emigrant”.

Migration: Some Facts

Table 8. Is Any Member of Your of Family Currently Living and Working in a Foreign Country?

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
Yes	76.0	79.5
No	23.5	20.5
No answer	0.4	0.0
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

Table 9. Is your [Family Member] Currently Living and Working Abroad?

	Cuenca (% Yes)	San Fernando (% Yes)
Father	3.5	3.8
Mother	3.3	0.5
Son	7.5	24.9
Daughter	2.9	8.1
Grandson	1.5	3.2
Granddaughter	0.8	1.1
Sister/Brother	28.5	30.8
Brother in Law/Son in Law	10.4	11.9
Sister in Law/Daughter in Law	5.0	8.1
Another family member (Grandparent/Uncle/Aunt/Nephew/Niece)	36.9	30.8
Total	(n=480)	(n=185)

The vast majority of the populations of Cuenca and San Fernando have at least one family member currently living and working in a foreign country (76.0 percent in Cuenca and 79.5 percent in San Fernando). In Table 9 we can observe that the population of San Fernando is relatively more affected by the migration phenomenon in quantitative terms. Almost a quarter of the population in San Fernando have at least one son outside the country. San Fernando's estimated migration figures surpass Cuenca's in all family member categories, except for mothers. This could be a hint of different migration patterns between the two populations that we will further analyze.

Table 10. Do You (or Other Family Members) Receive Remittances from Relatives who Live in a Foreign Country?

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
Yes	27.7	44.3
No	48.1	35.1
Don't know/ No answer	0.2	0.0
Does not apply	24.0	20.5
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

As many other studies have found, remittances from migrants have become common in Ecuador. Among respondents, 44.3 percent of the population of San Fernando and 27.7 percent of the population of Cuenca receive remittances from relatives who live in a foreign country.

Table 11. How Frequently Do You (or Other Family Members) Receive Remittances?

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
Once a month	13.5	19.5
Every 2 to 3 months	4.6	5.9
Every 4 to 6 months	4.6	9.7
Once a year	4.0	8.6
Less than once a year	1.0	0.5
Don't know/No answer	0.0	0.0
Does not apply	72.3	55.7
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

Due to the fact that migration and remittances reception are closely related in Ecuador, it is critical to understand the characteristics of the remittance flow: who receives the money, how often money is received, and how that money is spent. As Table 11 shows, most recipients obtain remittances on a monthly basis, while a small percentage receive remittances less than once a

year. In Table 12 we can see the population's perceptions about how migrants families spend the money they receive from abroad, and in Table 13 we see migrants' responses to the question "How do you spend the money you receive from your family members working abroad?"

Table 12. How Do You Think Migrants' Family Members Spend the Money They Receive from Abroad?

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
Open businesses	1.5	0.0
Build or buy a house	45.0	38.9
Buy luxury products	17.9	11.4
Daily consumption products	2.5	1.1
Buy lands	5.8	20.5
Education for their children	2.9	2.2
Savings	1.0	1.1
Don't Know/No Answer	22.5	24.9
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

The survey finds evidence suggesting the existence of a generalized image among the population that migrants' families misuse the money they receive by building houses and buying luxury products. As shown in Table 13, however, at when the survey asks migrants family members how do they spend the money they receive from abroad, a plurality of migrants' family members in both Cuenca and San Fernando report living expenses as the first destiny of the money and education as the second one.

Table 13. How is the Money Spent?

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
Regular expenditures (daily goods and clothing)	19.4	34.1
Business investments	0.4	0.5
Savings	0.4	1.6
Building/buying house/properties	0.6	0.0
Education	5.2	3.2
Buying luxury goods	0.4	0.0
Paying debts	1.3	4.9
Does not apply	72.3	55.7
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

As Bendicen and Associates (2003) indicate, remittances in Ecuador are not primarily a means of improving a family's economic status, but they are a matter of economic survival. A

clear plurality of respondents (19.4 percent in Cuenca and 34.1 percent in San Fernando) indicated that funds from their migrant relatives go for basic expenditures such as food, rent and utilities. Secondly, remittances are used to pay debts, presumably money owed to “*chulqueros*” for migration expenses.

Table 14. How Much Discrimination Is There Against Family Members of People from [Cuenca/San Fernando] Who Go to Live and Work in Another Country? Would You Say There is a Lot of Discrimination, Some, Only a Little, or None at All?

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
A lot	19.6	5.9
Some	15.5	9.2
Only a little	30.4	18.9
No discrimination at all	33.5	62.2
Don't know	0.6	3.8
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

The table above shows that the contradictory elements in the migration discourse found in the qualitative stage of this study can be generalized to the urban populations of Cuenca and San Fernando. With the qualitative study we learned that there were different evaluations about the same phenomenon of migration in the rural (town) and urban areas. More than one third of the household survey respondents in Cuenca said that there is “a lot” and “some” discrimination against family members of migrants (35.4 percent), a figure that drops to 15.1% in San Fernando. More analytical work is needed to try to characterize and understand this difference in perception.

Table 15. What Is a Migrant's Child Most Likely to Do as an Adult?

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
Finish university	10.8	12.4
Work as an employee	3.3	11.9
Join a gang	24.2	15.1
Open his/her own business	4.8	6.5
Migrate (leave the country)	50.2	43.2
Don't Know/No Answer	6.7	10.8
Total	100 (n=480)	100 (n=185)

Table 16. Agreement with the Following Statements...

	Cuenca (%)	San Fernando (%)
<i>“People who leave their children behind to migrate are irresponsible”</i>	54.2	43.2
<i>“Migrants’ children are not good students”</i>	60.2	38.9
<i>“Migrants’ children are frequently involved in illicit activities”</i>	45.6	28.6
<i>“Migrants’ children spend their money on luxury products”</i>	91.4	82.7
<i>“Migrants’ children are losing their cultural identity”</i>	89.6	77.8

3.2.2 Population Surveys (Estimation Models)

Using the different questions from the survey questionnaire, three blocks of probit models were estimated. First estimated were general models corresponding to the perception of discrimination against emigrants’ relatives. A second group evaluates the degree of social integration of those relatives. A final group, making use of the question about contentment/satisfaction with life, attempts to model the impact on happiness levels of having relatives that have emigrated from the city. Those models were estimated separately, if necessary, for Cuenca and San Fernando.

Four models were estimated within the first group taking as dependent variable:

- 1) *Discrimination1*: A binary variable that takes value 1 when the respondent perceives there is much discrimination and takes value 0 when he/she perceives there is some discrimination, little discrimination and no discrimination at all against migrants’ family members.
- 2) *Discrimination2*: A binary variable that takes value 1 when respondent thinks of emigration as something positive/beneficial for the city and takes value 0 when he/she thinks of emigration as negative for the city.
- 3) *Califica*: A binary variable that takes value 1 when the respondent thinks that the sons and daughters of emigrants would get lower grades than those with non-emigrant parents and value 0 when the respondent thinks the sons and daughters of emigrants would get equal or higher grades than those with non-emigrant parents.

4) *Emigrate*: A binary variable that takes value of 1 when the respondent thinks that emigrating is the most probable thing that an emigrant's son/daughter would do and value 0 when the respondent chooses any other option.

In general terms, a high perception of discrimination was not found in San Fernando, which eventually determined that some models would not be estimated.

The dependent variables chosen for the social integration block were the following:

1) *No-participation*: A binary variable that takes the value 1 when the respondent answers that he/she would never take part in any form of political demonstration and value 0 when respondent chooses any other provided option.

2) *Social-participation*: Binary variable that takes value 1 when the respondent belongs to a political party/labor union, professional, commercial, sport or cultural association or any kind of voluntary organization.

For the last block the dependent variable was:

1) *Happy*: A binary variable that takes value 1 when the respondent answers he/she is satisfied or very satisfied with his/her life and value 0 when respondent chooses any other option.

The following independent variables were taken into account: age, sex, marital status, education, race, having relatives abroad, religion, number of home members, job characteristics, if the respondent receives money from relatives abroad (remittance), home income and deprivation level.

Table 17 shows the marginal effects of the discrimination models in Cuenca, Table 18 presents the marginal effects of the models of social integration, and Table 19 shows the marginal effects of happiness models for the same population.

Perception of Discrimination

As noted above, no important levels of perception of discrimination were found in San Fernando, so in one case no interesting results were obtained.

Citizens' Perception of the Existence of Discrimination in Cuenca:

The signs of the significant variables show that women, older citizens, the more educated and citizens that receive remittances from abroad on a monthly basis perceive lower (higher)

discrimination in Cuenca. On the other hand, the level of discrimination perceived is less for married individuals than for other marital status, and the perception of discrimination lessens as the amount of the remittance received as a portion of household income increases. home income. The most important marginal effects correspond to women (-), married (+), individuals with university studies (-) and receipt of a monthly remittance (-).

Perception of Emigration as Beneficial for Cuenca

This model shows that women and men in Cuenca have different perceptions on the impact of emigration. For men emigration is beneficial and the marginal effect is of 19 percentage points. Individuals with high school education and full-time jobs have a negative perception of emigration.

Perception that Sons and Daughters of Emigrants Would Earn Lower Grades than Children of Non-Emigrant Parents

Variables representing women and divorced have a negative sign, which means that they do not have that perception. Meanwhile, the opinion on this statement becomes affirmative with age and university education, and among self-identified persons of mixed race, full-time employees, and those who are not affiliated with a political party. The most important marginal effects are sex (-), divorced (-), university (+), and political party (+).

Perception of Emigrating as the Most Probable Activity for an Emigrant's Son/Daughter

Marginal effects are positive and important for individuals with higher education levels (high school and university) and of mixed race. Being deprived of the goods that the survey took into account, on the other hand, has a negative impact.

General Considerations Regarding Discrimination Models

Women have mixed attitudes towards different aspects of discrimination related to emigrants. They perceive higher levels of discrimination in Cuenca but consider emigration beneficial for the city and do not find problems with the school grades of the children of the emigrants. In the case of people with university studies, they do not find high levels of discrimination but think that the children of emigrants have problems with school grades and that emigrating is their most probable outcome. Among individuals who identify themselves as “mestizo” there is a strong

perception that children of emigrants have problems with school grades and that they are likely to emigrate. With respect to income, it is interesting to point that the opinion that there is a high level of discrimination rises with the amount of the remittance received from abroad and with home income, while diminishes among those who receive remittances once a month.

Table 17. Marginal Effects, Discrimination in Cuenca

	Discr1a	Discr5	Califica	Emigrar
	0.1823	0.3707	0.8668	0.4970
Sexo	-0.0895	0.1871	-0.1163	0.0725
Edad	-0.0023	-0.0025	0.0024	-0.0009
Casado	0.0810	0.0109	-0.0448	0.0628
Divor	0.1257	0.0503	-0.1261	0.0344
sec	-0.0517	-0.1334	0.0245	0.1302
univer	-0.1113	-0.1126	0.1110	0.1289
mestizo	-0.0068	0.0500	0.0766	0.1278
famexter	0.0417	0.0894	0.0053	0.0189
integrantes	-0.0033	-0.0079	-0.0093	0.0086
attend1	-0.0235	0.0276	0.0322	-0.0299
fulltime	0.0393	-0.1072	0.0881	0.0502
partime	-0.0095	0.0076	0.0599	0.0720
publico	-0.0608	0.0448	0.0559	-0.0637
partpol	0.0398	-0.0030	0.1161	-0.0652
montoremesa	0.0002	0.0002	0.0000	-0.0001
unmes	-0.0962	-0.0810	-0.0785	0.0598
incomefam	0.0001	-0.0000	0.0000	-0.0000
depriva	-0.0001	-0.0656	0.0310	-0.1106

Social Integration in Cuenca

Table 18 shows the results of the model and the marginal effects of the models related to social integration in Cuenca: nopart and partsoci.

Would Never Take Part in a Political Demonstration

Marginal effects show that there is an attitude against the statement of the question of women and those not currently involved in a political party. Meanwhile, agreeing with the statement rises with age, meaning that older people are more reluctant to take part in this kind of activity, as are persons who report deprivation.

Belongs to or Takes an Active Part in Any of the Institutions Mentioned Above

Marginal effects suggest that people who take part in such institutions are more likely to be: women, divorced, people with high school education, with relatives abroad, and with full or part-time jobs. More deprived and older individuals tend not to participate. In regard to the women of Cuenca, it is additionally interesting to note, along with their perception of discrimination, that also that they tend to be more active in community activities and appear to have a greater awareness of social issues. On the other hand, people with relatives abroad (10 percentage points marginal effect) and more deprived individuals do not appear to participate or to be interested in community institutions.

Table 18. Marginal Effects of Social integration in Cuenca

	Nopart	Partsoci
	0.3639	0.2763
Sexo	-0.1013	0.1739
Edad	0.0075	-0.0047
Casado	0.0696	0.0552
Divor	-0.0540	0.1559
Sec	-0.0334	0.1016
Univer	-0.0464	0.1114
Mestizo	0.0241	-0.0489
Famexter	-0.0879	0.1071
Integrantes	0.0165	-0.0111
attend1	0.0220	0.0350
Fulltime	-0.0150	0.1615
Partime	0.0433	0.1548
Publico	-0.0906	0.1256
Partpol	-0.1162	--

Table 18., continued

	Nopart	Partsoci
Montoremesa	0.0001	-0.0002
Unmes	-0.0129	0.0708
Incomefam		0.0001
Depriva	0.1292	-0.1080
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%		

Happiness in Cuenca: Rather Satisfied or Very Satisfied with Life

Happiness models show some interesting results. Marginal effects suggest that happiness levels rise with university education, with being “mestizo” or white (in comparison to other racial/ethnic identifications), with religiosity, part-time jobs and family income. These results coincide in general terms with the literature on these topics. Compared to other races. The negative effects on happiness of having relatives abroad, and of deprivation and age, appear as the most interesting results.

Table 19. Marginal Effects, Happiness in Cuenca

	Happy
	0.7071
Sexo	0.0207
Edad	-0.0028
Casado	0.0296
Divor	0.0775
Sec	-0.0002
Univer	0.1283
Mestizo	0.1745
Blanco	0.2117
Famexter	-0.1213
attend1	0.1143
Integrantes	0.0025
Fulltime	0.0705
Partime	0.1057
Publico	0.0886
Montoremesa	-0.0002
Unmes	0.0388
Incomefam	0.0001
Depriva	-0.1261
* significant at 10%;	
** significant at 5%;	
*** significant at 1%	

Perception of Discrimination in San Fernando

As discussed above, no high levels of perception of discrimination were found in San Fernando, so the model with *discrila* as dependent variable was not estimated. In this case, estimations gave *depriva* as the only significant variable with a positive sign, meaning that more deprived people find higher levels of discrimination.

Perception of Emigration as Beneficial for San Fernando

Although there were not good results in general for this model, there are significant results for the variable “mestizo” and the one for relatives abroad. People who identify themselves as “mestizo” think of emigration as beneficial for San Fernando, while people with relatives abroad have the opposite opinion. The marginal effects are very important for both variables: +19 percentage points for “mestizo” and -24 for emigrants’ relatives. For the first group, emigration represents an opportunity, while for others it represents a high cost for society.

Perception of Emigrants’ Sons and Daughters as Having a Lower School Achievement

Variables that correspond to sex and the amount of the remittance have a negative sign meaning that they are against the statement of the question. At the same time, it is affirmative for “mestizo” and political party. The marginal effects of being “mestizo” are the greatest (25 percentage points) in agreeing with the statement.

Perception of Emigration as the Most Probable Future for an Emigrant’s Son/Daughter

In this model, three significant variables with large marginal effects were found. Married citizens, persons with high school education, and public sector workers tend to agree with this statement (marginal effects of +20, +24 and +31 percentage points respectively).

General Considerations about Discrimination Models

Table 20 presents the estimated marginal effects of the discrimination models for the population of San Fernando. As it was mentioned, no high levels of perception of discrimination were found in San Fernando. Despite that, some interesting results were found concerning other aspects of discrimination. One is that while the “mestizo” population (which represents a high proportion of the population) does not consider emigration as negative for the population as a whole, this

group at the same time perceives emigrants' sons and daughters as having lower grades. On the other hand, people with relatives abroad view emigration as having a negative effect on the city.

Table 20. Marginal Effects Discrimination in San Fernando

	discri5	califica	emigrar
sexo	-0.0143	-0.1913	0.1338
edad	0.0015	-0.0045	-0.0012
casado	0.1188	0.0759	0.2084
divor	0.1103	-0.0971	0.1899
mestizo	0.1899	0.2506	0.0229
integrantes	-0.0000	-0.0009	-0.0282
attend1	0.02245	0.1976	-0.2674
fulltime	0.0725	0.0592	-0.1188
partime	0.0641	-0.0184	-0.0633
partpol	0.0596	0.1774	-0.2704
montoremesa	0.0004	-0.0005	-0.0003
unmes	0.1460	0.0400	-0.0035
incomefam	0.0000	0.0001	0.0000
noseguro	--	--	--
depriva	0.0259	0.0032	-0.1030
sec	-0.1232	0.0581	0.2426
univer	-0.1245	0.1449	0.1658
famexter	-0.2382	0.0451	0.0278
publico	--	0.0193	0.3101

Social Integration in San Fernando

Table 21 presents the results and the marginal effects of the models related to social integration in San Fernando: nopart and partsoci. Interesting results were found in the first case.

Would Never Take Part in a Demonstration or Political Meeting

Marginal effects show that women, persons of mixed race, public sector workers and those not actively involved in a political party have a contrary position to that of taking part in a demonstration or political meeting. Meanwhile it becomes affirmative with age and for religious people. Again, women's attitude in both cities is interesting, as being very active in the community. The highest effect (+46 percent) is for the religious, so the probability that a very religiously observant individual took part in the activities of the community is very low.

Table 21. Marginal Effects, Social Integration in San Fernando

	Nopart	partsoci
Sexo	-0.1642	0.1750
Edad	0.0053	-0.0019
Casado	-0.0051	-0.0058
Divor	-0.0181	-0.0247
Sec	-0.0502	0.2181
Mestizo	-0.1915	0.1272
Famexter	-0.1587	0.1005
Integrantes	-0.0310	-0.0159
attend1	0.4614	--
Fulltime	0.1056	0.0987
Partime	0.0792	0.1093
Publico	-0.2489	0.1208
Partpol	-0.3058	--
Montoremesa	-0.0003	0.0001
Unmes	0.0813	0.0878
Incomefam	-0.0000	0.0001
Depriva	0.0256	-0.0317
Univer	--	0.2680

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

The use of a mixed-mode methodology has furthered our understanding of the emigration phenomenon in Cuenca and San Fernando. First of all, the hypothesis proposed in this study, the existence of discrimination against residents, has been proved. Moreover, the observation made during the in-depth interviews was confirmed by: discrimination is deeper in the city of Cuenca than in the rural area of San Fernando.

Public discourse about emigrants (in the media, migratory policies and social relief interventions) is similar to Cuencans' perceptions about international emigration:

- Emigration is perceived as a problem by different social actors.
- It is perceived to be a “bad thing for the region” (Cuenca and the nation), emigrants themselves, and especially for their families.
- Emigrants are seen as “irrational” by others. In the popular imagination emigrants' families are seen as not using their remittances in productive and sustainable activities; therefore, they do not contribute to the national economy.

- Emigrants are also portrayed as “irresponsible” because they abandon their families in search of better living conditions.
- Emigrants’ children are perceived as doing worse in school than non-emigrant children. They are seen as “not integrated into society” (marginalized and self-excluded) and there is a general idea that these children will probably (try to) leave the country as their parents did.

This social representation of emigrants has its logical conclusion in the idea that emigrants do not contribute to national development, but threaten the country’s symbolic unity (the discourse of the national family).

However, this image about emigrants cannot be generalized, as we have learned in this study. There are significant differences between urban and rural contexts. Although San Fernando’s inhabitants perceive emigration is negative for the town because of its social consequences (abandonment of children, risks to emigrants’ lives during the trip, debts), emigrants represent the prime example of success. They have made a new life in the United States or Europe, and they can support their family’s social rise in Ecuador and probably take them abroad.

In Cuenca, and probably in other Ecuadorian cities, this perception changes deeply. Emigrants are seen as irresponsible toward their families, as well as unproductive, and their offspring are seen as likely to become marginalized and self-excluded from the society (gangs, school desertion, illegal emigrants, etc.) As it can be seen, the popular imagination presented in the local newspaper (*El Mercurio*) and in national newspapers such as *El Comercio* coincides with Cuencanos perception about emigrants.

But, beyond this coincidence, what the quantitative results offer is information on the profile of those who express negative views of emigrants. Therefore, not only have we analyzed not only the social characteristics (social dispositions) of potential and actual “discriminators,” but we can also extend these interpretation to explanations of discriminatory behavior.

According to the data, it is possible to find a pattern of discrimination against emigrants. The closer the surveyed is to the dominant culture, the more probable he/she will have a discriminatory perception about emigrants, as follows:

Table 22. Pattern of Discrimination against Emigrants

Variables	+ Dominant pole (more integrated)	Discrimination Subaltern pole (less integrated)	-
Residence	Urban		Rural
Gender	Male		Female
Civil status	Married		Single, divorced
Age	Adult		Young, elderly
Ethnicity	Mestizo		Indigenous/peasant
Employment	Full- time job		Unemployed
Wage	High		Low
Remittances	None		High/monthly
Education	University		Basic

This table shows that socioeconomic groups that are more integrated into society and closer to its dominant pole is potentially more discriminator against emigrants, and vice versa. This model functions for all the variables except gender. In Cuenca, women have more discriminatory perceptions about emigrants than men. This is related to the image of emigrants as morally suspect for abandoning their (national and private) family—a discourse that is more likely to appeal than women than men in the traditionally gendered segments of Ecuadorian society.

What are the implications of this pattern of discriminations? Ecuador's national project is based on the idea of an egalitarian (modern) society in which inhabitants are recognized as citizens with the same political (democracy), economic (meritocratic model, income and education), and cultural (mestizaje) rights. However, the country's actual social hierarchy articulates modern categories of status (income, education, cultural capital) with race. The richest and more educated are usually mestizos, while the poorest are indigenous and peasants, the latter being rural mestizos.

Emigration thus threatens Cuenca's social hierarchy because of the incomes and cultural capital it offers to residents, and discrimination against emigrants is a social mechanism that controls this "disturbance" in two ways. First, discrimination reduces residents' social mobility. Second, it affects emigrants' incomes and investment in the economic sphere (commerce, service, real state), which is controlled by the elites.

What are the costs of discrimination? Discrimination against residents could increase school desertion or affect their educational performance; it undoubtedly reduces resident's social mobility and their integration into society. It is therefore not surprising that residents are unsatisfied with their lives in Ecuador and willing to emigrate abroad. Finally, public discourse on emigrants as economically irrational justifies the government's lack of rural development policies and agricultural production incentives.

On the basis of these conclusions, we offer the following recommendations:

- More research to analyze the economic consequences of international emigration, and the reconstitution of racial categories in Ecuador.
- Diffusion of this study's results to the government and to NGOs working on international migration to combat stereotypes against residents.
- Public campaigns to acknowledge emigrants' contribution to the national economy.
- Laws prohibiting discrimination against emigrants (e.g., in schools and in the media).
- Land and agriculture policies to improve rural development and provide alternatives to international emigration.

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Annexes

1. Methodological Approach

The first stage of the project consisted of the application of qualitative methods (Historical/Archival research, in-depth interviews, media analysis, and participant observation) in order to apprehend the social phenomenon of international emigration. Following, we tested and quantified some of these qualitative findings, using two population representative surveys.

1.1 Historical/Archival Research

Secondary sources of information (published documents; newspapers; magazines; written records and previous studies) were used to analyze the public opinion state regarding the emigration phenomenon in Ecuador.

Data from the VI Population Census in Ecuador (2001) also proved to be very useful in the initial stage of the research to gain a better understanding of specific demographic characteristics of the population of Ecuador and San Fernando.

1.2 In-Depth Interviews

Given the subjective aspects involved in the discrimination phenomena is in the form of verbal and symbolic behavior, we conducted in-depth interviews of a convenient sample of the population of San Fernando.

1.3 Media Analysis

In modern societies the formation and transmission of values is carried out primarily by the available means of communication. In recent decades the role of mass media has become so relevant that some theories have proposed that social problems are not an entity themselves but are instead defined by what people think and say about them. They see the emergence of social problems through a process of public definitions (Blumer 1971, Kitsuse and Spencer, 1973). In this approach, the media are considered to be at the same time a “product” of the society and a technology to produce social images and stereotypes.

For example, Becker (1966) indicates that in an early stage of the social problem, some person or group perceives a condition as a potential threat to their values. Widespread concern develops gradually after that person or group points out the condition to others and convinces them that it is a problem. When enough people become concerned with this problematic condition or characteristic, institutions are established and charged with the responsibility of monitoring, controlling, and eradicating the problem. These institutions are in charge of generating cases, information and data to support their claims; a process of validation and public definition of the problem has then been established (Hubbard, DeFleur and DeFleur, 1975).

The signs and symbols were the units of analysis, rather than the intentions or aim of the communicators or the effects produced in the interpreter. It has been argued that the mass media may reinforce certain belief of specific groups in the society. In this sense, our objective was to

study “what was said” in the printed press about migrants and their families in order to understand the stereotypes and fantasies associated with that condition in San Fernando and Cuenca.

In general terms, the qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis. This technique does not aim to quantify the media content, but rather to approach it as a “text”/discourse, a dominant imagery that constitutes stereotypes about residents and the migratory phenomenon in the society (the upper and middle classes as well as emigrants’ families, who impose discriminatory criteria upon themselves). This technique, developed in the humanities, complements quantitative data by focusing on the hegemonic discourse and cultural features on which discriminatory practices are based.

1.4 Population Survey

Once the qualitative stage was finalized, we were able to proceed to pretty good shape to go on to the next methodological step: the quantitative method. We implemented two population representative surveys (Cuenca and San Fernando) to try to test the statistical significance of the qualitative findings. The survey was designed to optimize costs and time constraints and maximize response rate and data quality.

The population surveys gathered quantitative data that was used in the estimation of ordered probit models to analyze the effect of the different dependent (explicatory) variables on the marginal effects of the levels of discrimination and/or on the attitudes and opinions towards discrimination and exclusion. The target of the models is to determine how different individual characteristics affect the formation of favorable opinions/attitudes towards migrants and their families or opinion about the existence of discrimination. This analysis was critical in the identification of the key variables related to discrimination, needed to design and recommend palliative policies.

2. Data

2.1 Qualitative Methods

2.1.1 In-Depth Interviews

During March and April 2006 twenty in-depth interviews were conducted with peasants living in the rural area of San Fernando. The selection criteria used were being over 20 years old and living in the rural area of San Fernando. Another four interviews were conducted with “key informants” in the urban area of San Fernando: San Fernando’s mayor, a member of the city council, a teacher at the local secondary school and the vice-principal of San Fernando’s only high school.

An open-ended questionnaire (guide) was used, which allowed for the questions to be tailored to different interviewees’ profiles. The interviews were recorded (with prior consent by the interviewee) and then transcribed and analyzed by members of the team.

2.1.2 Media Analysis

The two city newspapers with the highest readership were monitored during a six-month period from September 2005 to February 2006: *Mercurio*, the newspaper with the highest readership in Cuenca, and *El Comercio*, the leading national newspaper. Our team identified, coded and analyzed all news discussing any issue related to international emigration. In total, 424 articles were collected, of which 70 percent appeared in *Mercurio* and the remaining 30 percent were published in *El Comercio*.

2.2 Quantitative Methods

2.2.1 Population Surveys

Sample Design

The sample design used for the Migration Household Survey was a random sample of the urban populations of Cuenca and San Fernando. The first stage of selection was the census block, the second was the dwelling and the third stage consisted of the selection of the respondent among household members. This sample design is self-weighted, what means that all the households have the same probability of being selected for the interview.

The reference frame for the sample was based on the list of blocks produced by the Ecuador 2001 Population and Dwellings Census. This list contains information about the geographical identification of each block and the number of dwellings occupied at the time of the census. Each block is identified with its province, canton, census zone, census sector and census block.

The canton is the second-largest administrative and political division (after the province) of the national territory of Ecuador. Census zones are subdivisions of the cantons and correspond to the legal sections existing in Ecuador. Census sectors are an intermediate geographical unit, a subdivision of the census zone; in urban areas sectors consist of a group of blocks. The census block is the smallest geographical unit. In urban areas this is a city block, and in rural areas it is a clearly defined area of land that can be covered by a single enumerator during the population census.

Once blocks were selected in the first stage, a random selection of the dwelling was done by the interviewer with the following procedure. Once the interviewer arrives at the selected block, he/she will make a list of the private and occupied dwellings and then they will draw four titular and two alternate dwellings for the purpose of.

The following sample sizes were determined to guarantee a (plus/minus) 5 percent true value of the parameters to be estimated, with a 95 percent confidence level.

Table 23. Sample Design

	Cuenca	San Fernando
Target population size	67,709 occupied dwellings	361 occupied dwellings
Confidence Interval	95%	95%
Confidence Level	5%	5%
Sample Size	480 respondents	185 respondents

Given the fact that the urban area of the Canton San Fernando has only one Census Zone, four sectors and 73 blocks, the survey was applied in at least three households per selected block. In the case of Cuenca, the random sample drew the Census Sectors indicated in Table 24.

Table 24. Sample Design

Number	Zone	Parish	Sector
1	1	San Sebastián	6
2	1	San Sebastián	7
3	3	San Sebastián	1
4	3	San Sebastián	9
5	5	Bellavista	3
6	6	El Vecino	2
7	8	Hno. Miguel	8
8	9	Hno. Miguel	2
9	10	Machángara	7
10	10	Machángara	9
11	11	Machángara	2
12	12	Machángara	1
13	14	El Vecino	7
14	14	El Vecino	8
15	16	El Vecino	2
16	16	El Vecino	11
17	18	Bellavista	7
18	19	Bellavista	4
19	20	Bellavista	7
20	21	San Sebastián	11
21	22	El Batán	7
22	23	El Batán	5
23	23	El Batán	11
24	24	El Batán	1
25	24	El Batán	3
26	24	El Batán	5
27	26	Sucre	1
28	26	Sucre	3
29	26	Sucre	9
30	26	Sucre	11
31	28	Gil Ramirez Dávalos	1
32	28	Gil Ramirez Dávalos	10
33	29	El Sagrario	2
34	29	El Sagrario	6
35	29	El Sagrario	10
36	29	El Sagrario	12
37	30	San Blas	9

Table 28., continued

Number	Zone	Parish	Sector
38	31	Totoracocha	1
39	31	Totoracocha	4
40	33	Totoracocha	3
41	34	Monay	2
42	34	Monay	6
43	37	Cañaribamba	7
44	38	Cañaribamba	12
45	39	San Blas	1
46	39	San Blas	10
47	40	El Sagrario	1
48	40	El Sagrario	3
49	41	Gil Ramirez Dávalos	6
50	41	Gil Ramirez Dávalos	9
51	43	Sucre	1
52	43	Sucre	5
53	44	Yanuncay	6
54	44	Yanuncay	9
55	48	Yanuncay	4
56	48	Yanuncay	5
57	48	Yanuncay	10
58	48	Yanuncay	11
59	53	Huayna Capac	8
60	53	Huayna Capac	9

Given the fact that the urban area of the Canton Cuenca has 53 Census Zones and 552 Censal Sectors, the survey questionnaire was applied to 60 Censal Sectors with eight surveys each.

Once the interviewer randomly selected the target dwelling, he/she made the first attempt to contact the household and to obtain a list of household members by name and date of birth. In order to select a random respondent, the interviewers applied the “Next Birthday” selection method, which consists of selecting the individual who is closest to an upcoming birthday.

Survey Questionnaire

The survey instrument was applied using a face-to-face, paper-and-pencil mode. The implementation took an average of 25 minutes in Cuenca and 30 minutes in San Fernando. The questionnaire contains six thematic chapters:

1. Introduction: General questions to “break the ice.” Likes and dislikes in regarding to living in that city, main problems of the city, etc.
2. Migration: Attitudes and opinions about the migration phenomenon.
3. Discrimination: Set of questions aiming to identify any possible discriminatory behavior in relation to the migration phenomenon.

4. Satisfaction with life: This set of questions intends to measure happiness and is used to model the social and economic costs of discrimination against migrants' families in Cuenca and San Fernando.
5. Citizenship: These questions measure the level of civic participation and community action and also serve to model the costs of discrimination.
6. Socio-demographic: A final chapter containing the standard characterization of respondents.