

WHO GOES HOME: RETURN MIGRANT DECISION-MAKING AND THE IMPACTS OF  
ECUADOR'S *PLAN BIENVENID@S A CASA*

By

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To my parents, Allen and Samantha Brewer

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EAFF	Encuesta Activos Florida-FLACSO
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEC	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos
MIDUVI	Ministerio de Desarrollo Urbano y Vivienda
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SENAMI	Secretaría Nacional del Migrante
SIISE	Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador
UF	University of Florida
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

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In January 2008, Ecuador launched *Plan Bienvenid@S a Casa*, a program which provides an incentive package to entice the return of migrants back home to Ecuador. It includes, among other benefits, funds to build a new home or repair an existing home, and the seed money to start a new business. Despite these seemingly attractive benefits, the Plan has met with relatively little success in terms of the absolute number of migrants taking part in the program.

In an effort to better understand the migrant decision-making process, this study employs qualitative research to analyze the experiences of return migrants to Ecuador who have utilized the program and assess the potential for the return of migrants who remain abroad. My investigation shows that integration, language, legal status, and financial situation in the destination country; opinions toward the home government; and a migrant's family situation affect the decision to stay or return much more strongly than the government program. There are a number of ways in which the government could increase the appeal of the program, but this may not be economically feasible or desirable in the long term.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In an effort to address Ecuador's relatively high rate of emigration and to take advantage of reduced opportunities for migrants abroad during the current economic crisis, President Rafael Correa launched *Plan Bienvenid@s a Casa* in January 2008. This Plan provides an incentive package to entice the return of migrants back home to Ecuador and includes, among other benefits, *El Bono de la Vivienda*, consisting of a subsidy to build a new home or repair an existing home, and *El Cucayo*, consisting of the seed money to start a new business.

Despite these seemingly attractive benefits, in its initial four years the Plan has met with relatively little success in terms of the absolute number of migrants taking part in the program. In this study, I use qualitative interviews to analyze the experiences of return migrants who have come home to Ecuador utilizing the program and potential return migrants who remain abroad. The goal of this research is to empirically document the decision-making process of migrants and the factors they take into consideration when contemplating return, and to answer the question of why this program has been utilized by some migrants and not others.

### **Objectives**

Understanding the decision-making process regarding return migration constitutes the first part of my project. How does a migrant approach, conceptualize, and assess the disincentives and incentives for returning home, and what factors go in to deciding whether and when to return home? It is clear that an abundance of elements play into this decision, and that the majority of migrants abroad are choosing to stay, while others are choosing to come home. Why is this? How do these two sets

of migrants differ? What do each consider to be the most important decision-making factors, and how did these factors impact their decision to return or not return to Ecuador?

Following this, the focus will shift to Plan Bienvenid@s a Casa. The Plan is attempting to impact the migrant decision-making process with its incentive package, but is it enough? Is it true as one writer asserts that “the plan will appeal primarily to those already planning to move” (Reddy 2009) and that essentially the Plan has not influenced migrant decision-making at all? Or have the incentives created in the Plan been able to tip the balance and bring Ecuadorians home who otherwise wouldn’t have considered it?

### **The Historical Context of Migration in Ecuador**

First, it is important to understand the historical significance of emigration from Ecuador. Kyle (2000) provides a review of Ecuadorian migration history, in which he emphasizes “historical or social forces at play that transcended individual migrant decisions” (2) and have led to mass emigration. In recent history, there have been three distinct ‘waves’ of migration; one in the 1950s, one in the 1980s, and the largest wave in the late 1990s to early 2000s. Kyle gives us an understanding of the first two waves.

According to Kyle, the first group of migrants left in the 1950s, and their departure was instigated by the collapse of the Panama hat industry. After World War II, the demand for these hats fell dramatically, leading to massive unemployment among shop owners and workers. The unemployed had direct ties to the United States and especially to New York City, as companies there had been the premiere hat buyers before the collapse of the industry. Because of these ties and due to increased flight

options, many Ecuadorians began to immigrate, mostly legally, to New York in an effort to capitalize on these former relationships and renew their financial success. The majority of these migrants belonged to the middle class and came from the coastal region of Ecuador, which constituted the main financial sector at the time.

After this initial wave, international migration began to subside. However, internal migration grew rapidly during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s due to modernization projects which resulted in greater land inequality and poor returns for farmers. This led to rapid rural-to-urban migration, particularly in the Sierra region. Then, in the 1980s, the Ecuadorian economy was faced with the coinciding of “market and climatological crises” (*ibid.* 24). As the resulting economic crisis was national and not regional, rural-to-urban migration was no longer a valid option. The crisis, combined with increasing disillusionment with the government for its failure to enact the social reforms it promised in the 1960s and 70s, and greater exposure to U.S. culture, led to the second wave of mass emigration. This wave of migration was mostly clandestine and involved migrants from the Sierra region. The majority of these migrants also made their way to the U.S. due to connections with migrants who had settled there in previous decades.

Ramírez Gallegos and Paul Ramírez (2005) pick up where Kyle left off, focusing on the nexus of political and economic issues which instigated the third and most massive wave of migration. In the mid-90s, then-President Sixto Durán Ballén began a number of austerity measures to appease the IMF in negotiations of external debt, leading to a surge in neoliberal modernization projects. The first results of these projects were positive, but corruption scandals began to severely discredit the government and its modernization plans. The resulting political instability led to an

increase in inequality and poverty throughout the country, which were exacerbated by the armed conflict with Peru in 1995, the El Niño phenomenon of 1997-8, and the low petroleum prices that resulted from the Asian financial crisis of 1997.

When President Jamil Mahuad took power in 1998, he attempted to deal with Ecuador's financial woes by indebting the country even more, which only worsened the situation. In March of 1999, in a purported effort to stabilize the banking system, he declared a *feriado bancario* and the freezing of assets of all bank customers. This led to millions of Ecuadorians losing their savings and to the worst socioeconomic crisis in the country in 50 years. The crisis instigated the third wave of emigration, which was the most numerous to date. A greater proportion of this wave of emigrants made their way to Spain due to less stringent visa requirements and the abundance of work in low-skilled sectors resulting from Spain's vibrant economy during the period.

In 2000, Ecuador's economy was dollarized in a last-ditch effort to avoid complete collapse. The economy somewhat recovered between 2001 and 2004, and the rate of migration decreased each year, but still remained higher than in any previous decade. The last few years of migration have seen a 'feminization' of migration toward Spain, due to the abundance of a number of 'feminine' occupations such as domestic service, care-taking, and the hotel sector (Camacho Z. 2009). It is difficult to say what the effects of the current world economic crisis have had on Ecuadorian migration, but as mentioned previously, current President Rafael Correa is attempting to capitalize on this crisis in an effort to bring migrants home.

It is now estimated that ten to fifteen percent of the population, or around 1.5 million Ecuadorians, live abroad (Jokisch 2007). Ecuador is the most significant

migrant-sending country in the Andean region (FLACSO-UNFPA 2008). According to one source, “la migración internacional se ha convertido en uno de los fenómenos más importantes para el Ecuador en el cambio del siglo. El éxodo de cerca de un millón de ecuatorianos en un período menor a diez años ha significado cambios sociales, económicos, y culturales cuyos impactos a nivel local, nacional, y regional no han sido todavía lo suficientemente evaluados en el país” (FLACSO-UNFPA 2008: 9).

### **Empirical Data**

To understand the impacts of this historic migration, it is important to delve into the empirical data regarding emigration from Ecuador. Migration is a phenomenon for which it is often difficult to obtain empirical data. As one study asserts, “una de las dificultades que caracteriza a las migraciones, aquí y en otros países del continente, es no contar con estadísticas específicas que den cuenta de la verdadera magnitud del fenómeno” (FLACSO-UNFPA 2008: 9). Outmigration is especially difficult to track in Ecuador as the recent “salida de personas por vía marítima... no se registra en ninguna cifra oficial, lo que implica una importante subestimación del flujo migratorio, especialmente dirigida hacia Estados Unidos” (ibid. 11). Although migration is tough to capture completely, various data sources are available, which are reviewed below.

There is no one source of information which can give the entire empirical picture of migration, but several groups have attempted to contribute to a fuller understanding of migration by pulling from multiple data sources. The FLACSO-UN Population Fund (FLACSO-UNFPA) project draws upon the results of the 2001 Census, the data from the *Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador* (SIISE), and the information from multiple smaller studies. Unfortunately, many of the sources they use do not take into account migrants who leave via irregular channels, and this is indeed a drawback.

Another source compiles information from the 2001 Census along with the more recent sources of the 2005-6 *Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida*, and the 2006 and 2007 rounds of the *Encuesta de Empleo, Desempleo, y Subempleo* and gives a general view of emigration from Ecuador (INEC 2008). However, it reflects the difficulties of gathering information about emigrants, as the results they cite vary significantly by source. Neither the FLACSO-UNFPA nor the INEC study takes into account return migration.

According to the FLACSO-UNFPA report, between 1976 and 1990, around 20,000 Ecuadorians migrated annually (FLACSO-UNFPA 2008: 15). Emigration began to increase in 1993 and reached over 40,000 migrants per year by 1998 (*ibid.*). Between 1999 and 2007, nearly one million people left Ecuador, comprising a total of 7% of the population, or 14% of the economically active population (*ibid.*). Jokisch's (2007) estimate of 10-15% of Ecuadorians now living abroad takes into account those who left during any period, so his estimate is potentially accurate when considering that 7% left during the largest wave of emigration.

The INEC study does not tell us raw numbers and simply provides incidences of those who have left – it reports that of all those who have migrated since 1960, 4% left between 1980 and 1989, 6% left between 1990 and 1994, 17% left between 1995 and 1999, 60% left between 2000 and 2004, and 12% left between 2005 and 2008 (INEC 2008: 37). Regarding the waves of emigration, the INEC study shows a slight increase of emigration in the 1980s, while the FLACSO-UNFPA report shows little to no increase. Thus, the second 'wave' of emigration during the 1980s described by Kyle may not be supported by the data. Unfortunately, neither source has information dating back to the

1950s, or to the first wave of migration. However, both strongly support the historical descriptions of the third and final wave. Detailed tables can be found in Appendix D.

The sizable and comprehensive Ecuador 2010 Household Asset Survey (EAFF, *Encuesta Activos Florida-FLACSO*),<sup>1</sup> is a third option for understanding the empirical picture of migration. It includes information for those who left over any time period, not just between Censuses as represented in the FLACSO-UNFPA and INEC studies. It is also more recent. But most importantly, the EAFF survey takes into account return migration and the length of stay of the migrants abroad. It is for these reasons that I use this data below.

### **Migrants Abroad**

Regarding migrants who are currently living abroad, in the EAFF survey 12% of Ecuadorian households reported having a family member living in another country. This number seems quite small, as according to INEC, anywhere from 70% to 80% of Ecuadorian households have at least one family member living abroad (INEC 2008: 46). However, the EAFF only refers to family members who contribute economically to the household, providing a more precise measure of those households in Ecuador which potentially benefit from economic ties to migrants abroad. The information regarding this subset of migrants can be quite useful.

As shown in Table 1-1, there are more female family members currently living abroad than males, at 57% versus 43% of total migrants. This differs from the information found in the FLACSO-UNFPA study which estimates the sex composition of migrants abroad at 53% versus 47% (FLACSO-UNFPA 2008: 19). It is also different

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<sup>1</sup> This household survey of 2,892 households is nationally representative and was carried out from April to June 2010. See Deere and Contreras (2011) for methodology.

from the INEC report which states that the number of male and female migrants abroad is equal (INEC 2008: 52). The number of female migrants abroad is thus potentially overrepresented in the EAFF data of those who contribute economically to households in Ecuador, and this could prove for interesting future research.

As seen in Table 1-1, in the EAFF data the largest singular group of migrants abroad, representing 35% of the total, consisted of children of the respondents. This phenomenon is quite remarkable, and unfortunately underrepresented in my qualitative data below. The second largest category as a whole, 22% of the total, consisted of siblings, which is more fairly represented in my research.

**Table 1-1. Current migrants abroad by relationship to respondent.**

Relationship to Respondent	Men	Women	Total
Spouse	6.7%	2.6%	4.6%
Child	35.2%	34.8%	35.0%
Stepchild	5.3%	5.6%	5.4%
Child-in-law	2.1%	2.9%	2.5%
Grandchild	0.5%	0.0%	0.2%
Parent	5.1%	6.5%	5.8%
Parent-in-law	0.8%	1.8%	1.3%
Sibling	24.9%	18.8%	21.7%
Sibling-in-law	5.3%	8.6%	7.0%
Other relative	14.0%	18.5%	16.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Distribution by sex	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
n	221	294	515

Source: Ecuador 2010 Household Asset Survey (EAFF)

Note: percentages are weighted according to sample expansion factors

Shown in Table 1-2, according to the EAFF close to 50% of migrant family members currently live in Spain, while only 31.5% live in the U.S. These figures correspond closely with the results reported in both the FLACSO-UNFPA and INEC studies, which stated that 46.9% or 49.4% of migrants since the last Census had left for Spain, while only 33.1% or 26.7% had gone to the U.S. (FLACSO-UNFPA 2008: 33 and

INEC 2008: 38). In the EAFF data, migrant women are much more likely to live in Spain, while men are more likely to live in the United States. This confirms the 2001 Census data (FLACSO-UNFPA 2008), as well as the historical data presented above.

**Table 1-2. Current migrants abroad by destination country.**

Destination Country	Men	Women	Total
United States	39.5%	25.6%	31.5%
Spain	43.5%	54.4%	49.8%
Italy	7.0%	9.5%	8.4%
Latin America	3.9%	6.2%	5.2%
Other	6.0%	4.3%	5.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Distribution by sex	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
n	221	294	515

Source: Ecuador 2010 Household Asset Survey (EAFF)

Note: percentages are weighted according to sample expansion factors.

## **Return Migrants**

Turning now to return migration, the focus of my research, in the EAFF survey 2.47% of Ecuadorians over 18 reported having left the country at some point exclusively to work, while less than one percent reported having left to study and work. This gives us a total of 2.76% of Ecuadorians who have gone abroad to work and have returned home. This seems to be a small share compared to the ten to fifteen percent of Ecuadorians estimated to live abroad (Jokisch 2007), indicating that at this point not many migrants have chosen to return.

Although respondents reported that they had more female family members living abroad than males, among the return migrant respondents themselves the inverse was true; more men had gone abroad to work and returned than women, constituting 58% versus 42% of the total. As seen in Table 1-3, 86% of return migrants currently reside in urban areas, which is high compared to the FLACSO-UNFPA results which state that 78% of migrants come from urban areas (FLACSO-UNFPA 2008: 29), and the INEC

results stating 70% to 74% (INEC 2008: 15). Also in Table 1-3, in the EAFF data 60% of return migrants currently reside in the Sierra region of Ecuador. This is comparable to the FLACSO-UNFPA results reporting that 58% of migrants come from the Sierra region (FLACSO-UNFPA 2008: 23) and the INEC results stating 52% to 63% (INEC 2008: 17).

Married individuals represent a higher proportion of those who have gone abroad and returned, followed by those in a consensual union. Unfortunately, the questions asked in the survey and the structure of the data did not allow me to check whether these migrants went abroad with their partners or spouses or whether they had children and brought them with them or left them behind, factors which will be shown to be incredibly important in the discussion below of return migrant decision-making.

**Table 1-3. Return migrants.**

	Men	Women	Totals
Civil Status			
Single	4.9%	6.8%	5.7%
Married	60.6%	49.9%	56.0%
Consensual Union	20.0%	10.6%	16.0%
Widow/er	4.4%	6.5%	5.3%
Divorced	2.9%	8.8%	5.4%
Separated	7.2%	17.4%	11.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Urban/Rural			
Urban	86.6%	84.7%	85.8%
Rural	13.4%	15.3%	14.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sierra/Costa			
Sierra	59.6%	61.2%	60.3%
Costa	40.4%	38.8%	39.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Distribution by sex	57.7%	42.3%	100.0%
n	113	83	196

Source: Ecuador 2010 Household Asset Survey (EAFF)

Note: percentages are weighted according to sample expansion factors.

Seen in Table 1-4, the average length of stay abroad for all return migrants was slightly less than four years, with men and women staying abroad for about the same length of time. Migrants currently residing in rural areas stayed longer, as did migrants from the Sierra region. Those who were separated, widows/widowers, or divorced stayed the longest amount of time. Migrants in consensual unions stayed the least amount of time, followed by those who were single, and those who were married. Again, it is unfortunate that we cannot extract family migration information from this data, as we will find that the presence or absence of family most certainly affects length of stay abroad and desire to return.

Table 1-4. Average length of stay abroad of return migrants (years).

	Men	Women	Total
Civil Status			
Single	3.4	2.7	3.0
Married	3.8	3.9	3.8
Consensual Union	1.7	1.4	1.6
Widow/er	8.8	3.3	5.9
Divorced	6.1	5.2	5.5
Separated	8.0	5.7	6.5
	Total	4.0	3.9
			3.9
Urban/Rural			
Urban	3.5	4.0	3.7
Rural	7.1	3.4	5.4
	Total	4.0	3.9
			3.9
Sierra/Costa			
Sierra	4.2	4.2	4.2
Costa	3.6	3.5	3.5
	Total	4.0	3.9
			3.9
	n	113	83
			196

Source: Ecuador 2010 Household Asset Survey (EAFF)

Note: means are weighted according to sample expansion factors.

Shown in Table 1-5, the average age of return migrants on initial departure was slightly over 30 years old, with a slender difference between men at just under 30 years old, and women at just over 31 years old. This is somewhat older than the numbers

reported in the 2001 Census, which stated that the greatest majority of migrants are those between the ages of 20 and 24, followed by those who are 25 to 29 years old (INEC 2008: 25). Return migrants currently residing in urban areas left slightly later than rural migrants, and there was almost no difference between migrants from the Sierra and Costa regions. Widows and widowers left much later in life, followed by those who were divorced, separated, married, in a consensual union, and finally single.

Table 1-5. Average age upon emigration of return migrants.

	Men	Women	Total
Civil Status			
Single	26.8	23.8	25.2
Married	29.6	30.1	29.7
Consensual Union	28.1	29.8	28.6
Widow	44.4	48.5	46.6
Divorced	31.0	32.2	31.8
Separated	28.6	30.4	29.8
	Total	29.8	31.1
			30.3
Urban/Rural			
Urban	29.6	32.0	30.6
Rural	30.9	25.7	28.5
	Total	29.8	31.1
			30.3
Sierra/Costa			
Sierra	29.4	30.8	30.0
Costa	30.3	31.4	30.8
	Total	29.8	31.1
	n	113	196

Source: Ecuador 2010 Household Asset Survey (EAFF)

Note: means are weighted according to sample expansion factors

As we can see, marital status makes a significant difference regarding the percentage of migrants who return, their length of stay abroad, and the age of migrants upon leaving. This data suggest that family ties may be incredibly important in the migrant decision-making process, an assertion that my qualitative research will support in Chapter Two. But what other factors come into play that might explain the

differences between those migrants who decide to return home and those who stay abroad indefinitely?

### **Literature Review**

While many authors have studied the phenomenon of out-migration from Ecuador, the decision to return has received less attention. In this investigation, I argue that while it is clear that financial motivations played a large role in the decision-making process of migrants upon leaving Ecuador during the economic crises described above, it is questionable whether economic factors continue to play a large part in the decision to return. Other factors deserve greater attention, as we will see below.

It is important to note that multiple studies have shown that migrants do not migrate with the intention of settling abroad forever (Moran-Taylor and Menjívar 2005, Conway 2005). According to one author, for Latin American migrants “their return migration from the United States is not a matter concerning whether they would return but when they would return” (Poitras 1982: 119). And according to others, return migration is “a notion that nearly every migrant expresses” (Moran-Taylor and Menjívar 2005: 95). So what makes the difference between migrants who act on this desire and those who don’t? What are the factors that affect whether a migrant chooses to return home or not?

Cassarino (2004) gives us a broad conceptual understanding of return migration and how it has been understood in various disciplines. In his theoretical overview, he defines five different points of view regarding migrants’ motives for returning home. The first, based on neoclassical economics, argues that migrants return home because they have failed economically and their experience abroad “did not yield the expected benefits” (*ibid.* 254). The second approach, the new economics of labor migration,

proposes that migrants decide to go back because they were able to achieve a financial goal they set before leaving; return is then the logical outcome. These theories are quite contradictory, and as Cassarino notes, they are inadequate, as they take into account economic or financial factors only and avoid “contextual factors” entirely (*ibid.* 257).

Another approach to return migration is the structural approach, which has been developed mainly by anthropologists, sociologists, and social geographers. It takes into account context and social and institutional factors in the home country. In this approach, migrants may return because they have not integrated into the host society as a result of discrimination, because they have acquired a small sum of money and hope to buy land, because they are about to retire, or because they want to capitalize on their skills acquired abroad to become innovators in the country of origin. In any case, their decision is grounded in the context of their situation, rather than simply economics.

The transnationalism approach maintains that “the migrants’ subjective perceptions of homeland and their self-identification have a bearing on their decision to return” (*ibid.* 262). Here migrants are seen as maintaining strong attachments to home at the social, political, and economic level, and these attachments influence their decision to return. The fifth approach explained by Cassarino, the social network theory approach, proposes that migrants return as a result of their “cross-border social and economic networks” (*ibid.* 266). Migrants are believed to have ties both abroad and back home, and these influence their decision to return in different ways.

Here I focus on six case studies which address return migrant decision-making in Latin America and the Caribbean and which come closest to approximating my research. I will use Cassarino's typology to classify each study and evaluate its contributions, in order to better explore my research topic. In the first study, Dustmann (2001), an economist, presents a mathematical 'life-cycle model,' in which a return is motivated by "locational preferences," "higher purchasing power in the home country of assets accumulated in the host country," and "higher returns in the home economy on human capital, acquired in the host country" (Dustmann 2001: 230).

His model partially supports what Cassarino classifies as the new economics of labor migration approach regarding saving money to use back home, as well as the structural approach regarding capitalizing on skills acquired abroad. However, because Dustmann does not fully explain his 'locational preferences' regarding why a migrant might subjectively prefer one location over another, he focuses almost exclusively on economic motives for return, which fails to look at the picture of return migration factors as a whole. The authors below focus on additional factors which may be equally or more important in the decision to return.

Conway (2005), a geographer, uses academic research on Caribbean migrants and his own field work with Caribbean culture to argue that the actual traits of the migrants themselves and their relationships to family and friends explain whether a migrant returns home or not. As he states, "the family can be seen to play a significant role" both in deciding to stay abroad and to return back home (Conway 2005: 267). He also argues that emotions related to the home country are important, such as "the memories of childhood, the mythical-to-real importance of family 'homes,' the lasting

power of attachments to birth-places and the emotional ties that bind people to home-places, land, territories and localities in their peripheral societies" (ibid. 265).

Conway falls most closely under Cassarino's transnationalism approach regarding attachments to home, but even as he stresses the importance of familial ties and relationships, Conway characterizes Caribbean migrants as "opportunistic and individualistic" (ibid. 270), which seems to contradict his argument. And as it can be assumed that nearly all migrants carry some sort of emotional ties to their homeland, Conway fails to explain why not all migrants return home. Again, there must be additional factors at play.

Sociologists Ugalde and Langham (1982) use responses from household survey data collected in 1974 to address the determinants of return migration to the Dominican Republic. Regarding their motives for return, migrants in their study could choose from 'studies ended,' 'saved money,' 'didn't like way of life,' and 'other.' Migrants were not allowed to insert their own motives for returning home. Twenty percent of the migrants chose 'studies ended,' 19% chose 'didn't like way of life,' and 7% chose 'saved money.' This only represents 46% of respondents, while the other 54% wrote 'other.' The authors "suspect that here are included deportable aliens and many who return for family reasons and/or accompanying spouses or parents" (Ugalde and Langham 1982: 81).

Their work highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches Cassarino (2004) describes. Here, failure to integrate, an aspect of the structuralism approach that is captured by the 'didn't like way of life' response, seems to be quite important. Unfortunately, as migrants could not insert their own responses, we are not

able to understand what would lead them to list ‘didn’t like way of life’ as a motive for returning, and these issues need to be explored in depth. Their work does tell us that saving a specific amount of money, as in the new economics of labor migration approach, was not a significant reason for return, so other factors must be important.

St. Bernard (2005), a social demographer, analyzes the quantitative data from the 1988 Survey of Return Migration in Trinidad and Tobago. The survey he uses is similar to that of Ugalde and Langham (1982), with migrants only being able to select the top reason they chose to return. He divides the results into three motivational categories: “the encouragement from friends and relatives, inducements and arrangements that are likely to guarantee their return sooner or later, and the systematic accumulation of physical and human capital” (St. Bernard 2005: 166).

St. Bernard’s work seems to support the social network theory approach, related to cross-border networks of social and economic relationships. But again, in his study migrants could not insert their own answers or fully explain their decision-making, which limits the explanatory usefulness of his results. Thus, while St. Bernard’s combination of familial, structural, and economic factors comes close to a holistic approach which acknowledges that there are multiple reasons for return, he fails to acknowledge that these motivations coexist for the same migrant.

Poitras, a political scientist, also uses quantitative household survey data to understand return migration (1982). He conducted surveys with return migrants in Costa Rica and El Salvador in 1979 and argues that “return migration was motivated, although not overwhelmingly, by social and psychological attachments. The family, and the strains of separation in that unit, is a significant factor in return migration” (Poitras

1982: 120). In Poitras' study, "the principal reason for returning home cited by both groups of migrants was family reasons," as they were "motivated by a need or a wish to be reunited with their families in the sending countries" (*ibid.* 120).

This would seem to support the transnationalism approach explained by Cassarino (2004). However, for Salvadorans, legal status and migration policy were listed as nearly equally important as family networks. Here Poitras includes those migrants who were forcibly deported, and as these migrants did not choose to return home, their motivations do not seem applicable to the rest of his study. While Poitras' survey instrument did give return migrants a choice in expressing their own particular and multiple motives, his results may overemphasize the importance of legal status and migration policy, since he included migrants who were forcibly deported. His data is thus useful in understanding the two subgroups, particularly Salvadorans, but his results may not be easily extrapolated to other groups.

The final study, regarding Guatemalans and Salvadorans in Phoenix, Arizona, is qualitative and was undertaken by a geographer and a sociologist, Moran-Taylor and Menjívar (2005). It involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews exploring migrants' desire to return, rather than the actual return process itself. Although this return may simply be a dream which never comes true for these migrants (and thus they don't fit the true demographic of my research), their motivations and the factors that affect their desire to return are significant and relevant.

The authors set out three different types of factors which may influence motivations to return home: host country, home country, and local level factors. Host country factors include "immigration policies, xenophobic sentiments among natives,

labour-market conditions, and employment opportunities" (Moran-Taylor and Menjívar 2005: 102). Home country factors include "economic and political developments" (*ibid.* 102). Local level factors include "the presence or absence of family and/or feelings migrants may hold toward their native land" (*ibid.* 102).

These authors' findings draw from multiple approaches explored by Cassarino (2004), including structuralism and transnationalism. However, though comprehensive, one of the drawbacks to Moran-Taylor and Menjívar's study is that, as they note, Guatemalans and Salvadorans are migrants "who left highly conflictive environments, [and] this in turn may influence their particular views and notions about return" (*ibid.* 93). Nonetheless, although they address the desire to return rather than the actual return, the authors' focus on such a wide variety of motivational factors makes their study by far the most inclusive.

All of the above articles contribute to the study of return migration through their exploration of how the accumulation of financial and human capital (related to the neoclassical economics and the new economics of labor migration approaches); feelings of belonging, family relationships, and home country politics (related to the transnationalism and social network theory approaches); and immigration policies and discriminatory treatment (related to the structuralism approach), play into the decision to return home. These elements taken together provided me with the point of departure for my own research, presented here. However, none of the authors explored all of the issues simultaneously, and I hope to address this flaw in my study.

This flaw is partly related to the fact that all of these authors represent very specific disciplines, such as economics, sociology, demography, and geography. The

motives for return migration are multiple and varied, so a multidisciplinary viewpoint is much more suited to addressing and understanding the whole picture. A grounded theory approach, which I undertake in this study, allows return migrants to fully explore all of the factors which lead to the decision to return home. This represents a better option for understanding the complex experience of return migration, and could provide a truer picture of migrants' motives along with potential universal themes which could be explored with other groups of return migrants.

### **Design and Methods**

For this project, I chose to compare two groups: return migrants and potential return migrants. In the first group, I interviewed migrants who had returned from abroad utilizing the government's Plan Bienvenid@s a Casa, described in the introduction to this chapter. For the second group, I chose to interview family members of migrants still living abroad as a proxy for the actual migrants themselves, primarily due to ease of access. The shortcomings of this approach will be discussed in the 'limitations' section of Chapter Four. I then analyzed and compared responses from each group.

I conducted my field research in Quito and Tena, Ecuador for six weeks during the summer of 2011. Prior to arriving in the field, I established contact with a government worker at the *Ministerio de Desarrollo Urbano y Vivienda* (MIDUVI), and I met with this contact on the first business day after I arrived in Quito. She provided me with published materials and up-to-date data about the Plan, such as current utilization and program requirements and benefits. She also connected me to an employee who worked directly at the *Secretaría Nacional del Migrante* (SENAMI), the government agency in charge of the Plan, who gave me the information of beneficiaries of the two aspects of the program, El Cucayo and El Bono.

I began by emailing a number of the recipients of funds from El Cucayo and all of the recipients of El Bono who lived in Quito (for ease of access and simplicity) and for whom there were email addresses. I received a few responses and began interviewing right away. I attempted to implement the ‘snowball’ method, using these interviewees as sources to connect me with informants for the second group of interviewees, but many of the returning migrants were unable to help me as they had not maintained many personal contacts outside of their own family while they were away.

After I had depleted my email resources, I began cold calling the beneficiaries on the lists for El Cucayo and El Bono. I was able to establish contacts with a few more beneficiaries and I had all fifteen interviews with this group either completed or scheduled early on in my field research. However, I was still having a hard time connecting with Ecuadorians who currently had family members living abroad. This might seem strange as a large number of Ecuadorians fit this category. However, I had only been relying on my interviewees as sources, so at that point I contacted all of my friends, acquaintances, and government contacts asking for assistance.

Through this process I made contact with seven interviewees, but I still needed more. One of the returning migrants invited me to come and stay at her hostel (funded by El Cucayo) in the city of Tena in Eastern Ecuador, where she was able to introduce me to another four interviewees. The consequences of utilizing interviews outside of the focus area of Quito will be discussed in the ‘limitations’ section of Chapter Four. I finished my final interview on my last night in Quito and reached my goal of fifteen in-depth interviews with returning migrants and fifteen interviews with family members of Ecuadorian migrants still living abroad.

I did not go into the field with a standard questionnaire designed completely *a priori* as in a traditional social science approach. Rather, I prepared a short list of possible questions in advance, some related to the literature discussed in the review above, and then worked inductively and qualitatively, using the grounded theory method to adjust my questions as I felt necessary throughout the process. The resulting interviews were semi-structured, and I employed a directed but open-ended approach in order to allow interviewees to express the information that they felt was most relevant to the project. A complete list of the final interview questions can be found in the appendices.

In the next three chapters, I explore the questions outlined in the introduction at the beginning of this chapter. In Chapter Two, I discuss migrant motives for emigrating and for choosing a specific destination country, and most importantly, aspects which seem to strongly affect why some migrants stay abroad and others return home. In Chapter Three, I explain the benefits included in the government's Plan Bienvenid@s a Casa, analyze whether or not this Plan has an effect on migrant decision-making, and discuss how the government could improve this Plan in order to have a greater impact. In Chapter Four, I summarize my findings, discuss the limitations of my research, provide suggestions for future research, and speculate on what the future of migration may hold for Ecuador.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE MIGRANT DECISION-MAKING PROCESS REGARDING RETURN

In this chapter, I explore the results of the interviews I conducted with return migrants and family members of potential return migrants regarding the decision-making process of return. I explain the data that I collected, and then I discuss why migrants chose to leave and why they chose their particular destinations. Then I lay out the importance of host-country factors including integration, language, discrimination, legal status, and financial status; the home-country factor of opinions toward the current government; and the personal factor of family, which contribute to our understand of when or if a migrant will return home.

#### **Description of Data**

I interviewed a total of 30 people, fifteen of whom are return migrants, and fifteen of whom are close family members of potential return migrants still living abroad. The interviewees from Tena did not differ from the interviewees from Quito in any significant way. In the return migrant category, I interviewed eight women and seven men, ranging in age from 32 to 59. Six had returned from the United States, five from Spain, one from Italy, one from France, one from Germany, and one from Bolivia. Compared to the EAFF data (2010), my sample shows a bias toward migrants returning from the U.S., which will be discussed in the ‘limitations’ section.

These return migrants left Ecuador between the years of 1989 and 2006, with the average year of departure being 1999, corresponding with the largest wave of emigration. Upon leaving Ecuador, they ranged in age from seventeen to fifty, with the average age upon leaving being 34, similar to the national survey data (EAFF 2010) but older than the Census data (FLACSO-UNFPA 2008). Their length of stay abroad varied

between four and 20 years, with the average length of stay being slightly less than ten years. This is much longer than what is represented in the survey data (EAFF 2010).

All of the migrants have returned since 2007, when the Plan was put in place, with one returning in 2007, four in 2008, eight in 2009, and two in 2010.

In the second category, family members of potential return migrants, I again interviewed eight women and seven men. Their family members who live abroad include four brothers, three sisters, three mothers, two sons, one daughter, one wife (now ex-wife), and one uncle. The majority of interviewees had a number of extended family members living abroad as well, but we attempted to focus our attention on just one close family member for the sake of simplicity and ease of comparison with the group of return migrants. Seven of these family members currently live in Spain, three in Italy, two in the U.S., one in England, one in Canada, and one in Germany. This group is underrepresentative of the U.S., as compared to the national survey results (EAFF 2010).

These potential return migrants left between the years of 1981 and 2008, with the average year of departure being 1998, slightly earlier than the group of return migrants. Their age upon leaving seemed to be similar to the group of return migrants, but this was less exact as some of the family members were not sure of the migrants' ages. This group of migrants has lived abroad between three and 30 years, with the average amount of time abroad being slightly less than 13 years, three years longer than the return migrants interviewed.

The length of the return migrant interviews ranged from 24 to 87 minutes, with the average length being a little less than 58 minutes. After transcription, the interviews

ranged from six to 13 typed pages, with the average length being about ten and a half pages. The second group of interviews was shorter, ranging from 15 minutes (an interview which got cut short due to a work obligation) to 87 minutes, with an average length of a little over 38 minutes. After transcription, the interviews ranged from four to 12 pages, with an average length of eight pages. The information that these interviewees provided me, whose names have been changed to maintain confidentiality, provides the basis for this chapter.

### **Leaving Ecuador**

#### **Motives for Leaving**

To understand the migrant experience of return, it is vital to understand the migrant experience of departure. Why migrants choose to leave their home country can tell us about their motivations and what they deem important, which may influence when, why, or if they return. Here I will discuss the main theories which purport to explain out-migration. Two of these occur at the macro level, including the macro theory of neoclassical economics, which focuses on the whole economic system and the supply of and demand for labor, and the dual labor market theory, which focuses more on pull factors in the receiving country (Massey et al. 1993). Either way, in these theories international economic factors induce migrants to move abroad.

At the micro level, there is the neoclassical microeconomic theory, which argues that the decision to migrate is a result of an individual cost-benefit analysis, and the theory of the new economics of migration, which focuses on migration as a familial income-diversification strategy (*ibid.* 1993). Regardless of whether these four theories focus on migrants as agentless beings drawn abroad by international forces or as

agents of their own decisions, they focus heavily or exclusively on economic motivations.

All of the migrants in my interview groups belonged before leaving to the lower-middle class or to the middle class, corresponding to the 2001 Census which reports that these groups constitute the majority of Ecuadorians who migrate (FLACSO-UNFPA 2008). Although they did not belong to the poorest groups, most of the return migrants I interviewed left Ecuador initially for personal financial reasons. This corresponds with the INEC results which show that 74.8% of migrants leave the country with the motive of finding work (INEC 2008). It also confirms the economic focus of the macro and micro theories above.

The historical economic crises were mentioned specifically numerous times as motivations for leaving Ecuador. One interviewee, Charlie, stated that he left “en la crisis del año 95 cuando quebraron los bancos aquí, quebraron un montón de compañías como la de mi papá, es una razón por la que me fui, por oportunidades financieras.” Jorge brought up the same motivations of escaping the financial crisis and finding better wages abroad. He reported that “hace años cuando hubo la crisis económica, empezó a faltar la parte de ingresos, entonces pensé en cambiar de trabajo y para eso conseguí un contrato en una empresa que me llevaba a hacer un trabajo afuera con mejor ingreso.”

Susana said she left “cuando hubo la dolarización y yo tenía un negocio de autos y perdí prácticamente el dinero.” Though previously a teacher, she said “no quise volver al maestrearía porque antes los sueldos eran bajos, y decidí viajar.” These economic crises were specifically seen as a result of government actions which forced

migrants to turn their sights abroad. As Charlie argued, “lo que hizo en el tiempo de Sixto, de Jamil, son unas sinvergüenzas, son unos ladrones, se fueron robando, y tocó ir, obviamente, obviamente cuando hubo la oportunidad de trabajar se hizo.” Lorena agreed, stating that she left “cuando se presentó la época del gobierno de Sixto Duran Ballén… puse el dinero en El Banco de Progreso y lo perdí todo.”

Other migrants decided to leave Ecuador not specifically because of the economic crisis, but because they simply felt they could do better elsewhere. Gabriela didn’t feel she was reaching her full employment potential. She said that prior to leaving Ecuador “no tenía maquinaria, porque yo soy modista entonces yo siempre he trabajado en eso en casa pero yo necesitaba maquinaria, necesitaba emplearme, tener materia prima para poder trabajar y no tenía.” Like Gabriela, Rosalba and her husband left in search of better opportunities. She said that “no es que él perdió su trabajo, solo que no estaba ganando lo que podía y se decidió irse.” Low wages in Ecuador contributed to Elsa’s decision to leave. She stated that “lo que se ganaba en el sector público era poco, tenía un poco de deudas, entonces fue una decisión de última hora, de que necesitaba pagar cuentas y no tenía dinero.”

There were, of course, exceptions to strictly economic motivations, particularly among those who were already more well-off. For example, María left Ecuador for educational purposes at the age of 17. As she stated, “fue un propósito de mi padre y de mi madre para que yo fuera a estudiar.” Gina’s situation was similar, as she said that “mi caso es atípico porque yo fui por estudios, no fui por migración, por necesidad económica, mis padres me pagaron para irme a estudiar y por eso me quedé diez años allá estudiando.” These migrants’ decision to leave was not based on pressing

economic needs, but it can still be seen to fit somewhat into the economic motivation category as the migrants and their families believed they would have better long-term economic prospects as a result of their studies abroad.

Other migrants provided less tangible reasons for leaving. While Marcelo echoed similar reasons as those listed above, he also added a more philosophical dimension when he told me that “también fue el propósito de dar un paso más grande, un paso adelante, de cambiar.” Similarly, Fernando wanted to achieve economic success, but he also alluded to the more romantic aspects of migration: “es la única manera de que tú llegas a tener algo, o sea hacerlo más rápido las metas de tu vida, los logros, las ambiciones, las fantasías, los sueños.”

José and William disregarded financial motivations entirely. José stated that “eso fue una aventura, no fue planificado,” while William said that “fue un momento de vida cuando quería conocer, me fui sólo, yo me fui a conocer, a viajar, como tú viajar a conocer a otro país, igual, me fui a conocer.” This seems to partially confirm what Pribilsky found in his 2009 study of Ecuadorian migration; that migration “represented a welcomed and exciting destiny to fulfill dreams” (Poitras 2009: 274).

Magdalena is an entirely different case, stating that she left “cuando vino mi novio, me propuso matrimonio, y me fui a casar allá.” Migration for marriage is a common theme among Ecuadorian women (Camacho Z. 2009), and represents a gendered aspect of migration which I unfortunately was not able to fully explore in my research, as will be discussed in the ‘limitations’ section. Although these final three migrants do not represent the ‘typical’ financially-motivated migrant cases discussed in the general migration literature, they were not excluded from receiving funds from Ecuador’s return

migration program, so their experiences are significant. Nonetheless, their different motives for leaving do affect their motives for return, which we will see later.

The migrants who have not returned do not differ much from the return migrants with respect to their motivations for leaving Ecuador, although the economic crises were not mentioned by their family members as frequently. Only two interviewees mentioned the latest crisis specifically: Lenin and Cecilia. Lenin stated that his mother left because “con eso de la dolarización y todo eso, entonces en esas épocas el país estaba muy complicado con respecto al trabajo.” Cecilia’s mother left because “en ‘99 empezó la feria bancaria y más que nunca la gente empezó, qué bestia, eran cientos, miles por día, la gente huía del país, por allí le mencionaron a mi mamá la posibilidad de migrar.”

Looking for a better way of life, rather than responding to a crisis situation, seemed to be more important to this second group of migrants. Daniela’s brother left “por falta de recursos económicos.” Miguel’s sister went because “no tenía oportunidades de trabajar.” Ana’s son left “por cuestiones de lo económico, porque nosotros no tenemos posibilidades grandes.” Paulina’s sister went because “en esa época era mejor la circunstancia de trabajo y la economía allá.” Karina’s mother left because “las ventas estaban bajas... entonces mi madre pensó que irse sería la solución.” Francisco’s ex-wife went “para poder variar la situación económica y vivir una vida más tranquila.”

In this group, a third of the migrants were purported to have left for non-financial reasons. Similar to José and William above, Luis’ brother left to “coger en las dos manos el horizonte y aprender muchas cosas de la cultura.” Consuelo’s brother left partially due to “la aventura que tiene...como jóven.” Jonathan’s brother went “por

paseo, por pasar un año allá, conocer y de allí regresar pero ya no regresó.” For the women, significant others also played a role. Like Magdalena, Marcos’ sister went “cuando decidió casarse,” and Lucía’s daughter went “a raíz de que se había enamorado.”

While some of the migrants had non-financial motivations for leaving Ecuador, the majority, which would be considered ‘traditional’ migrants, do fit into the explanations provided by the macro and micro theories discussed above. Although migrants potentially had a multitude of reasons for leaving, just as they did for return, this was not the primary focus of my research, and we simply discussed their main motivation. How they chose their destinations was another important issue we discussed. The theories of the perpetuation of migration are useful in understanding why migrants chose to go to the countries they did.

### **Why Particular Destinations**

One of the most important perpetuation theories is the network theory, which argues that migrant networks, which are “sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin,” actually “increase the likelihood of international movement because they lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration” (Massey et al. 1993: 448).

These networks were evident in many of the return migrant responses regarding why they chose to migrate to specific destinations. This was particularly true for the United States: Charlie chose the U.S. because his parents had already lived there for a few years, and they had gone there because his father’s brother had moved there earlier. Susana went to the U.S. because she had a sister who had been living there for

years. William chose the U.S. because some friends, his mother, and his cousins were already living there. Magdalena moved easily to the U.S. because her mother had been living there for five years. María chose Germany for studies because her father studied there in his youth, and he had gone there because his cousin had moved there years earlier. José went to Spain because his cousin had already been there for a few years.

Familial and friendship ties were not the only factors however; the migration policies of destination countries were also incredibly important. This was especially true for Spain. Gabriela stated that she went to Spain instead of the United States not because of prior connections there but because “por ejemplo Estados Unidos, no tenemos visa, en cambio España podíamos no más entrar. Ahora es que hay visa, hoy hay visa, antes no.” Roberto also chose Spain “por la facilidad que en ese tiempo había de documentos.” Lorena chose Spain because of ease of entry and because she felt that it was a tourist destination where her knowledge of Spanish would be helpful in getting work.

Marcelo had always wanted to go to the U.S., but ended up going to Spain both because he had family there already and because of the ease of legal entry. An additional important factor for him was that of not having to learn a new language. Language affected Fernando’s choice as well, but in a different way. He went to Italy “porque me puse una meta, una meta difícil, si voy a España ya hablo español, no tiene sentido, me voy a Italia, allí se ve no lo fácil.” A couple of the migrants did not have control over which destination to choose. José’s job chose for him when they transferred him to Bolivia. Rosalba did not necessarily have a choice either – her

husband had lived in the U.S. while he was growing up, and he brought her there with him after they were married.

The reasons that the potential return migrants chose their destinations were reportedly similar. Marlena's son chose England because she herself was already there, along with almost their entire family. Daniela's brother went to Spain because two of his cousins and a number of his friends were already there. Marco's sister chose the U.S. because a friend of hers was already there, and Jonathan's brother chose Belgium for the same reason. Francisco's wife chose Italy because she had family and friends there.

While Lenin's mother chose Spain mainly because of the language, more interviewees in this group identified multiple motivations for their family member's chosen destination, particularly when it came to Spain. Karina's mother chose Spain because she had a friend there, and because of the language. Luis' brother chose Spain because of the legal entry and the language. Paulina's sister went to Spain because of the lack of visa requirements and because her brother-in-law was already there. Ana's son had always wanted to go to the United States, but since he wasn't able to get a visa and because his father-in-law was already in Spain, he went there instead.

Similar to Rosalba in the first group, Victor's uncle's relationship to his significant other was the reason he chose to migrate to Canada; she had grown up there and brought him with her. However, a number of this second group of interviewees identified financial motivations not present in the group of return migrants. Miguel's sister chose Italy because her work field was thriving there, as did Cecilia's mother.

Consuelo's brother chose the U.S. because the exchange rate when he left (in 1981) was beneficial to him, and because he felt pulled by the 'American dream.'

The majority of migrants chose their destination due to the presence of family or friends, legal migratory requirements, language, or a combination of the three factors. The destinations that they chose, particularly Spain and the U.S., will prove to strongly impact the decision-making process regarding return or non-return, often in very different ways. We will see how this plays out further on.

### **Planned Length of Stay**

Another important factor to consider before examining the decision to return is the migrants' planned length of stay in their destination countries. Clearly, the majority of migrants did not plan on staying abroad forever when they initially left Ecuador. Rather, the goal they set for themselves changed over time due to the circumstances they encountered in their destinations. For many of the return migrants, this meant staying longer than they had anticipated. Susana only planned on staying between two weeks and a month, but stayed for six years. Elsa planned on staying for two months, and then for two years, but came back after nine years. William planned on six months, but stayed for twelve years.

Gabriela planned on staying for a year, but ended up staying for six. José planned on staying abroad for a year, and stayed for twelve. Roberto and Fernando each planned on staying for two years, but stayed seven and thirteen years respectively. Marcelo, Lorena and Rosalba planned on staying for five years but ended up staying eight, ten, and twenty years respectively. Jorge is the only one who stayed for less time than he had planned, staying four years instead of five. María and Gina planned to stay just until they finished their studies, which they did.

Regardless of how long they ended up staying, all thirteen of these migrants stressed that their plan was always to return home to Ecuador at some point. One migrant said “eso fue constante, desde que me fui siempre quería volver,” while another said “siempre decidimos regresar, creo que cada quien debe estar en su lugar.” Only two migrants left with the intention of staying abroad permanently: Charlie and Magdalena. Magdalena stated “nunca fui con una mente de que me voy dos, tres años y regreso, no, al contrario, fui con la mente de quedarme.”

The majority of the potential return migrants also left with the intention of someday returning. Marlena’s son planned on staying for two months, as did Karina’s mother. Jonathan’s brother planned on staying for one year, and Francisco’s ex-wife planned on staying for two years. Daniela’s brother planned on staying for six years, and Lenin’s mother planned on staying for five. Luis’ brother, Ana’s son, and Cecilia’s mother planned on staying ‘a few years.’ Miguel’s sister planned on staying for four to five years, as did Paulina’s sister. Consuelo said her brother had no idea how long he was going to stay. Lucía was not sure how long her daughter had planned on staying, and neither was Marco about his sister. According to this group of interviewees, only one potential return migrant left with the intention of staying permanently.

And what about their current planned length of stay? How has it changed? For some of these migrants their goal seems to be simply prolonging itself as it did for the return migrants. But for others, the idea of return no longer exists at all. Marlena predicted that her son would return within two years. Jonathan predicted that his brother will return, but that it won’t be permanent: “como está difícil la situación... está pensando en trabajar dos, tres años aquí y allá tres años.”

Other family members were less sure. About her brother, Daniela said “tiene la intención de regresar otra vez,” but she wasn’t sure when. Karina said her mother “sí quiere venir,” but she did not know when or if she actually would. Victor said about his uncle “tiene la idea de algún día volver.” Asked when, he said “no tengo idea, entiendo que cuando uno se va siempre tiene la idea de volver... es muy difícil decir si va a volver o no.”

A couple of the potential return migrants will most likely return when they retire. Consuelo said “mi hermano, la idea de él es regresar acá cuando no pueda trabajar y esté jubilado... como toda persona quiere aquí o allá jubilarse después de trabajar y tener su vida tranquila, entonces él piensa regresar acá para ya estar tranquilo.” About his mother, Lenin said “ella quiere cumplir algunos años, creo que es unos años de base para que le den la jubilación, entonces una vez que le dan esos años base, se viene acá... Ya quiere venir acá, máximo unos dos años creo y viene.” The same was true for Francisco’s ex-wife.

The family members of almost half of the potential return migrants now believe that these migrants’ stays abroad will be permanent. Luis said about his brother “mi hermano pues pienso que no regresaría.” About his sister returning, Miguel said “yo lo veo imposible,” while Marco said about his sister “ahora allá no piensa volver acá, ni en la vejez ni nada.” About her sister and brother-in-law, Paulina said “ahora no quieren regresar.” Lucía said about her daughter “pienso que finalmente a lo mejor mi hija se va a quedar allá.” About her mother, Cecilia said “ya no vuelve más, permanece allá.” Ana said about her son “no tiene mucho pensado en volver.”

Taking this information into account, it is important to adjust my research question. It is no longer a simple matter of why some migrants return home and others do not, but rather of why migrants return home *when they do* while others do not return home at all. Now that this is clarified, we can look into the particular aspects which the return migrants and the family members of potential return migrants identified as affecting when or if migrants returns home. Some of these motivations were noted as important to almost all of the migrants, while others were important to only a few, as some interviewees identified a large number of these motivations, and others identified less.

### **Factors Affecting the Decision to Return**

I divide these motivations into three different categories: host country, home country, and personal factors. The host country factors consist of level of integration into the host society, treatment by members of the host country, language, legal status, and finances. Opinions toward the current government constitute the home country factor, while family-related issues constitute the personal factor.

### **Integration into the Host Society**

Integration is one important aspect of the structural approach to return migration discussed by Cassarino (2004) and confirmed by Ugalde and Langham in their study (1982). It is difficult to say whether a migrant's planned length of stay, discussed above, affects their degree of integration into their host society, or if it is vice versa. In some ways, it would make sense that if a migrant plans on staying a shorter amount of time, he or she will not put in the effort to integrate. At the same time, it makes sense that if a migrant does not successfully integrate into their host society, he or she may be motivated to return home earlier than planned.

Either way, the degree of integration into the host society and when or if a migrant returns home are interrelated issues. The return migrants interviewed generally fell into three different categories of integration: four indicated that they had fully integrated to life in their host country, six indicated they had never integrated and always felt like outsiders, and five fell somewhere in between. These experiences will be compared to those of migrants still living abroad to see how or if they might differ.

Elsa considered herself fully adapted to life in the U.S. She noted “yo me acoplé fácilmente, porque yo fácilmente en culturas desarrolladas me acoplo mucho mejor.” She integrated to life in the U.S. because she saw the country as more developed than Ecuador, and this suited her. Lorena indicated that she had fully integrated to her life in Spain when she said that “yo me sentía como en mi casa, siempre que voy siento como en mi casa.” She had also put in effort to fit in to her host country, even making friends with the mayor of her small town. This helped her to feel more at home, which facilitated her high degree of integration. The migrants in this category are marked by a strong desire and effort to integrate.

Some migrants did not integrate at all either because they felt others saw them as outsiders or because they saw themselves as outsiders. About living in Bolivia, Jorge said “no conoces las costumbres, no conoces, entonces aunque hablas el mismo idioma con el fenotipo parecido, siempre eres un extraño, siempre eres el extranjero.” His failure to integrate seems to be based more on how he believed he was viewed by those in his host country, rather than how he viewed himself. José was the opposite, stating about Spain that “uno siempre tiene en el subconsciente, sabes que eres extranjero, por más acoplado sabes que eres extranjero.”

William simply did not feel the need to integrate to his host country, the U.S., because he lived in a predominantly Latino neighborhood. He stated that “para decirte la verdad nunca me sentí inmigrante porque la comunidad misma latina que estaba allí no te da esa chance.” Marcelo did not integrate to his host country either, but for different reasons. Regarding his time in Spain, he said that he and his family felt “como forasteros mismos, siempre no estoy en mi tierra… las costumbres de allá son pero muy, muy propias de allá, que no podemos coger.” Although at times he noted similarities between Ecuador and Spain, some of the customs of Spain were too idiosyncratic for he and his family to fully adapt to. Regarding her integration in France, Gina simply said “nunca me sentí bien allá.” Even though she held a well-respected job and had many close friends, she never felt like she truly belonged.

Charlie is a good example of someone who falls in between integration and non-integration. When asked if he felt like a stranger in the U.S., he replied “claro, al principio como todos lados, no conoces nada, el cambio de vida fue terrible. Después era mi casa.” He had a difficult time adjusting at first, but eventually integrated to the point where the U.S. felt like another home to him. Rosalba felt the same way. She stated about the U.S. that “en los cinco primeros años era un ente extraño, pero después formaba parte de la cultura y de la gente.” She adjusted to the U.S. after a certain period, and was eventually able to navigate her identity between the two countries by saying that “soy mitad americana y mitad ecuatoriana.”

María didn’t feel the same. Rather than being part of both places, she stated that “estuve una fase terrible de identidad porque no sabía si era de aquí o de allá.” She didn’t feel like she belonged in Germany, but she also didn’t feel that she belonged back

home in Ecuador. She felt lost in between, and this led her to neither fully integrate nor avoid integration.

Other migrants spoke of the inevitable need to ‘adapt,’ rather than fully integrate. When asked how she felt about living in Spain, Gabriela replied “extraña. No es mi país. Pero es que tengo que adaptarme a ellos, no pueden adaptarse a mí. Hay que adaptarse, no hay más.” Integration for her was not a desire or even a choice, just something she had to do to get by. Susana echoed this when she said about the U.S. that “tiene que adaptarse a lo que en este momento tiene que vivir.” This group of migrants neither embraced nor avoided integration; rather, they fell somewhere in between out of necessity.

The potential return migrants seemed to fall into the same general categories, but with a greater number of them having reportedly higher levels of integration. About six interviewees reported high degrees of integration for their family members abroad, three reported low integration, and six reported somewhere in between. Paulina’s sister and brother-in-law seemed to have integrated the most. She said that “los dos son ya apurados a la bandera, son ya ciudadanos españoles los dos.”

Karina said about her mother that “ella sí está bien, le gusta...para ella su casa es España... está acostumbrada a esa vida.” About her mother in Italy, Cecilia said “se siente bien, está más feliz, más tranquila... aquí todo el mundo pretende decirle lo que tiene que hacer... allá entonces ella ya puede dedicarse a lo que le dé las ganas que nadie le va a decir nada.” Through integration, these migrants may now feel more at home abroad than in Ecuador.

A few of the migrants who remain abroad fit into the category of having a low level of integration. Regarding her son in Spain, Ana said that “se siente ecuatoriano, él dice ‘no hay como mi país.’” Similarly, Daniela had this to say about her brother: “de acostumbrarse allá dijo que no, que nada es lo mismo que aquí.” These migrants’ lack of integration is noted in contrast to their feelings about Ecuador. They have not integrated to life in their host countries because they still feel attached to life in their home country.

Other migrants’ experiences were mixed. Jonathan said about his brother “ya 11 años de estar allá se ha acostumbrado.” However, “él se cree más ecuatoriano que español.” He is stuck between identifying with his host and home countries, neither fully integrating nor avoiding integration. Consuelo’s brother also fell in between, regarding adaption as a tool to survive. About his experience the U.S., she said that “se ha adaptado. Es normal porque las personas tenemos que hacer lo posible por incluirnos al país a donde vayamos, si no tenemos buena adaptación nos va mal.”

Is integration into one’s host country a good indication of when or if a migrant returns home? Potentially, but not necessarily. All of the migrants shared the same mix of experiences; they had integrated, not integrated, or had fallen somewhere in between. However, more migrants who remain abroad are believed to have integrated; six versus five. Similarly, more migrants who had returned home expressed non-integration; six versus four. Although these categories are somewhat subjective, and although without a greater number of subjects the effect of integration would be impossible to quantify, degree of integration should still be considered an important factor which may affect why some migrants have returned home and others have not.

## **Language**

One barrier which may prevent migrants from fully integrating and which is not discussed in any of the literature reviewed in Chapter One is language. In some cases, how comfortable migrants felt with the language in their host country affected their desire to return or not return. This was especially true for the U.S. In the return migrant category, more migrants reported struggling with the host country's language. Charlie had studied English in high school, but said "lo que te enseñan aquí no es el inglés como allá." He noted that "tenía que aprender porque hay los trabajos donde trabaja de lo hispano, si sabe decir las palabras en inglés ya es tu jefe." Still, he never felt fully confident with his English. He said "me defiendo en inglés, no es que hable perfectamente."

Susana was the same way. When asked how she felt about her English skills, Susana said "no, no manejo todavía, ni antes ni después. Poco, allá para el trabajo sí tuve que aprender pero lo básico." Magdalena's experience in the U.S. was similar; she said it was "muy difícil, al principio difícil porque no sabía inglés, fue muy difícil, después poco a poco ya mejoró." When asked if she felt confident with her English now, she said "hasta ahora no, pero sí me defiendo bastante bien."

Elsa eventually came to speak English quite well, but she emphasized how much she had had to struggle to attain her level of fluency. She had also studied English in school, but she said "cuando ya me fui a la realidad del inglés me di cuenta de que mi pronunciación, de todo, no sabía nada, entonces... eso me tocó empezar de cero." She told herself "es mi única manera de salir adelante, entonces yo cogía, leía, estudiaba, las noches practicaba ... sin embargo tarda, no es rápido, no te puedo decir que un año, dos años, a veces tarda más de eso."

William's experience with English in the U.S. was unique. He was the only migrant who said that knowing English wasn't very important where he lived, as he was the only one who lived in a predominantly Latino community: "yo sí imaginé que el inglés iba a ser importantísimo, pero no, al menos donde yo iba todo el mundo hablaba español...no tuve problemas, en el trabajo donde yo comencé a trabajar, todo el mundo no hablaba inglés, quien habla inglés es el dueño no más, todos hablan español." He learned English just to get by, learning terms for the buses and taxis and how to get to the bathroom.

Other migrants had a somewhat easier time. Rosalba said that learning English in the U.S. "sí es un problema, porque si no lo hablas bien, un americano no te ayuda, como yo veía que los demás los frenaban, practicaba más mi inglés para no tener un problem." However, she was the most comfortable with her English, alternating back and forth in English and Spanish throughout the interview, stating "nunca me fue difícil, me encantan los idiomas." María said it took her about a year and a half to fully grasp the German language. After that, she said "algún rato pasó que comenzaba con gente nueva y ya no notaban mi acento." Gina had no problems with French, stating "no me costó mucho aprender francés, en tres meses ya hablaba yo el francés." Likewise, Fernando was determined to learn Italian. He said "por 6 meses estudié italiano... si no habla el idioma no puede hacer nada."

However, even in Spain, some migrants reported difficulties. Lorena had some issues, but this was because in her destination Valencian was the main language. But even with Castellano, Gabriela says that with the differences in vocabulary, "uno no se sabe ni dónde ni qué cosa, así diferentes cosas, entonces uno hasta aprender lo pasa

fatal.” Jorge, Marcelo, and Roberto had more positive experiences. Jorge said “el idioma no es problema,” while Marcelo said “al final el idioma nos apoyó.” Roberto had an easy time in Spain, saying “fue fácil, fue una razón por lo que decías por qué España, por la facilidad del idioma.”

The potential return migrants reportedly had similar experiences, though their family members did not emphasize language as an issue in many cases. Nonetheless, some migrants did seem to have had a difficult time. Victor’s uncle had troubles with English in Canada. Victor said “es por eso que no puede encontrar un buen trabajo, eso es...si tú no sabes bien el inglés, tú tienes un empleo que no es bien pagado, aprendes para tener mejor empleos.” Miguel says that learning Italian has been difficult for his sister and her family, and that “unas veces dicen palabras en italiano, otras en castellano” by mistake.

Other migrants purportedly struggled at first, but quickly learned their country’s host language out of necessity. Marlena said about her son in England “cuando llegó se decepcionó porque no sabía qué contestar porque no sabía inglés, no sabía qué decir hasta después.” Consuelo’s brother had a hard time with English at first, but he was forced to learn. She said “al principio no manejaba muy bien el inglés, sea la necesidad y la sobrevivencia y la necesidad que tenía que irse a aprender a la fuerza.” Francisco said that his ex-wife had a hard time learning Italian at first, but that now “se puede defenderse.”

None of the migrants in Spain reportedly had any difficulties. Although in Spain Karina’s mother had to learn Valencian, Karina said that “el lenguaje era mucho más fácil que ir a otro país.” Jonathan’s brother had a similar experience: “es medio

parecido al español...quieras o no te toca aprender, si no te pierdes, entonces sí sabe hablar catalán." Luis' brother and Lenin's mother have had no problems in Spain with Castellano. When asked if her sister had had a hard time in Spain, Paulina said "no porque es español, son ciertas palabras que cambian pero de allí, no."

In other countries, some of the migrants reportedly had no issues at all. Marco's sister had no problems with English as she had been an English teacher before she left Ecuador. This made her transition into life in the U.S. much easier. Lucía's daughter hasn't had a difficult time learning German. Lucía said "no creo que haya sido tan difícil porque igual sabe un poco de inglés, uno siempre se trata de aprender, y la juventud aprenda mucho más que otros." Cecilia said that in Italy "mi mamá aprendió rápido el idioma."

A greater proportion of the potential return migrants live in Spain, which may explain why language was a more important issue to the actual return migrants, many of whom lived in the U.S. With this issue it is also difficult to determine causality, as perhaps migrants who knew they would be staying abroad longer chose destinations where they would have an easier time with the language. Or perhaps migrants who had a tougher experience learning the language abroad were more inclined to return home at an earlier time. Either way, it is clear that language was reported to be more of an issue among the migrants who had already returned, and for some of them language did factor in to the decision to return.

## **Discrimination**

Discrimination was an issue related to integration described in the structuralism approach of Cassarino's article (2004) and confirmed by Moran-Taylor and Menjívar's study (2005). However, there was not a clear relationship between discrimination and

return migration in my study. Poor treatment or discrimination by members of a migrant's host country, or the threat of this treatment, came up as an issue among both sets of migrants. Most often, return migrants reported that they themselves were not victims, but that they were aware of discrimination against their compatriots, and that this made them uncomfortable.

This was especially true for the U.S. Rosalba recognized that in the U.S. "ahora el clima para los migrantes es tough, es más, yo vi frente a mí cuando estuve en Florida muy malos tratos para otra gente." Still, when asked how she was treated, she said "excelente, one more time I've been very lucky." Similarly, Susana said "hay casos en lo que sí tienen experiencias malas, pero no fue mi caso, tuve suerte." In Italy, Fernando said that he himself wasn't treated poorly, while admitting that "lo que pasa es que allá la gente es un poco racista."

In Spain, Lorena never encountered discrimination, but she acknowledged that this lack of poor treatment was due to her lighter skin. She said "yo para mí fue tan extraña que otras personas hayan tenido problemas... nunca tuve problema... es que ellos se fijan mucho en los rasgos, el español es muy racista y el ecuatoriano autóctono tiene los rasgos marcados... la mayoría de gente que vaya es clase indígena, tienen los rasgos muy acentuados...me decían que debo tener una descendencia española directa."

Also in Spain, Roberto said that although he and his wife did not experience racism directly, "con la mayor cantidad de la gente hay mucho racismo, te tienen en un sentido de los ecuatorianos como indígenas, entonces sí existe el racismo...yo realmente vine enojado con los españoles por lo que... con mis compatriotas había

gente más humilde que han ido que les trataban mal, les ponían cierto despotismo, prohibiciones, con los ecuatorianos. Entonces sí en ese sentido es horrible España.”

Three of the return migrants reported having excellent experiences and not noting discrimination or poor treatment in any way. About his time in the U.S., William said “donde yo llegué, honestamente no hubo discriminación.” However, he had settled in a predominantly Latino neighborhood, which may have affected his viewpoint. Also about the U.S., Magdalena said “realmente nunca sentí la diferencia, nunca me trajeron mal, al contrario les amo.” When asked how she was treated in France, Gina said “muy bien, muy bien, era exótica entre todos los profesionales allá, entonces ellos eran como admirativos.”

The potential return migrants reportedly had similar experiences. Only one migrant, Daniela’s brother in Spain, had seemingly not encountered any type of mistreatment against immigrants. Other migrants, like the return migrants, had not experienced it themselves but knew it existed. Marlena said about her son in England “nunca se le han hecho cosas de racismo...nunca ha encontrado problemas pero hay gente así racista.” About her sister in Spain, Paulina said “no ha pasado por la suerte de otras personas que han sido tratado malo, pues no. Mi hermana y mi cuñado nunca han sentido este efecto de la discriminación allá, debe ser por eso que se han acostumbrado.” Lenin said his mother recognizes that discrimination exists in Spain, but she has avoided it: “dice que se les conoce cuáles son las gente racista, simplemente evita. No ha habido mucho problema por ese lado.”

For the migrants who had not experienced discrimination, this was attributed to various mitigating circumstances. Ana’s son in Spain has not been a victim of

discrimination, but Ana attributed this to his location: “bueno yo por mi hijo le digo que no se ha quejado de que haya discriminación...Sí, hay mucha gente que da pena escuchar en las noticias, que sufren mucho, no sé, serán para los lugares, pero mi hijo no ha ido muy lejos de Madrid.”

Jonathan’s brother has not encountered discrimination in Spain, reportedly because he is not considered a ‘typical’ migrant: “tiene bastantes amigos españoles que se llevan muy bien, nunca ha tenido problemas de que le vean mal o le traten mal...le tratan bien porque no es como los migrantes que van a restar trabajos y vivir como migrantes.” Marco stated that his sister in the U.S. has not been a victim of discrimination either, but only because she has money: “ella me dice que no hay racismo, pero mis tíos que ellos no tienen una posición muy buena, ellos siempre hablan del racismo. Mi hermana nunca dice que le tratan mal pero pienso que es porque tiene bastante dinero.”

More of this group of migrants had purportedly experienced discrimination in their own lives. About his uncle in Canada, Victor said “me cuenta que sí existe cierta discriminación a pesar de que es un país abierto, sí hay discriminación, y sí hay el hecho de que los amigos son latinos, no se llevan con los canadienses, eso ya es discriminación, son en grupos allí separados.” Francisco’s ex-wife has also experienced some discrimination in Italy. He said “hay un poco de racismo, entonces allí es duro, ella es la pobre ecuatoriana, la suero del zapato.” Luis said his brother has been a victim and “ha sufrido allí la humillación todo hacía forastero.” Cecilia’s mother has had the most serious experience. Cecilia said “sufría maltrato de una anciana que

cuidaba...le gustaba humillar de mi mamá, le humillaba a mi mama," purportedly for being a migrant.

Almost all of the respondents in both groups identified discrimination, while more of the return migrants had seen it personally and more of the potential return migrants, according to their family members, had been direct victims. It is difficult to say how much of an impact discrimination truly had on the decision on when or if to return as none of the migrants identified it as their primary motivation for returning and as discrimination affected roughly the same amount of migrants in each group, just in different ways. However, one caveat to this is that a greater proportion of the return migrants had been in the U.S., and they may not have felt comfortable addressing discrimination with an American researcher, whereas more of the family members of potential return migrants were addressing issues in Spain and relating occurrences second-hand, leading them to be more open. More investigation would be needed to assess this potential bias.

### **Legal Status**

Legal status also fits in to the structural approach described by Cassarino (2004) and confirmed by Moran-Taylor and Menjívar (2005). In my study, legal status affected some migrants' decision to return home more than others. Many of the migrants in the return migrant group who had gone to the U.S. came from the middle class and had received tourist visas and then overstayed them, meaning they were not 'illegal' at the time of entry but became 'illegal' after a certain period.

Charlie is one example. After presenting himself three times at the U.S. embassy, he was awarded a tourist visa, which he and his family overstayed by eight years. Living as an undocumented migrant was stressful for him. At one point, a friend

offered to connect him to a woman in the U.S. whom he could marry to obtain citizenship, but he refused, saying “¿qué imagen va a dar al hijo si me divorcio de la mamá y me caso con otra?... Que me boten del país pero no me caso.”

Being undocumented was particularly important for some migrants as it meant that they were not able to visit their families back in Ecuador for the entire time they were away, due to the fear of not being allowed back in to their host country. Susana, who also overstayed her tourist visa, was not able to return to Ecuador to see her husband and son for over six years. This was incredibly difficult for her, and absolutely influenced her decision to return home. She said that if she had had legal status, she may have stayed for a longer period.

William’s family also went to the U.S. with tourist visas which they overstayed. They were in the process of receiving legal residency when William had a stroke. As they could not come back to Ecuador temporarily to see the rest of his family, they were forced to abandon their residency process in the U.S. and return to Ecuador permanently. Two other U.S. migrants, Rosalba and Magdalena, were married to American citizens, so they had an easier path to follow to gain documentation and were able to go and return as much as they wanted. However, after Rosalba and her husband divorced, she married another migrant who was not yet documented. This situation gave her anxiety as “se había puesto el clima bastante tenso” regarding undocumented migrants in the U.S.

Elsa had the most difficult and dramatic experience as an undocumented migrant in the U.S., which directly led to her first return to Ecuador. She had overstayed her tourist visa and wanted to become fully ‘legal,’ but said that everything became more

difficult after September 11th. She also was unable to visit her family, including her two children, for a number of years. She said “cuando uno no tiene papeles en el extranjero es tratado muy mal, es perseguido, entonces no tiene estabilidad.” When one of the women she worked for began exploiting her, Elsa threatened to report her, and in response the woman reported Elsa to immigration. Elsa was held in a detention center for 90 days and was then deported. She felt like a failure and wanted to go back, so she paid a *coyote* to take her across Mexico. But back in the U.S., she told herself “como ilegal no quiero más, no quiero vivir a la sombra ni escondida, quiero regresar a mi país antes de que me vengan más años encima,” so she returned home.

Most of the return migrants had an easier time in Spain, although certain complications still existed. Lorena and her family went to Spain before a visa was required and were able to obtain visas legally when there was an amnesty or regularization offered. They were able to leave and return as they wished. Gabriela, who went with her sister, and José, who went with his wife, had the same experience.

Roberto entered Spain before there was a visa requirement and received official residency three years later, but his wife who came later is still in the process, as “ahora está mucho más complicado, están tratando de poner trabas en todo lo posible para que no te den residencia.” Marcelo went to Spain after a visa was required, but was eventually able to gain documentation through an amnesty law. Prior to that however, he had to miss his own brother’s funeral: “imagínese no poder asistir ni siquiera el funeral porque si venía no podía regresar.”

In other countries, migrants had mixed experiences. In Bolivia, Jorge did not have to acquire a visa, stating “no hay control migratorio” due to the Andean Pact. Gina

did not have any issues obtaining residency in France. She said this was because she had a student visa and she was “económicamente activa en Francia y eso lo que les interesa al gobierno francés, a todos gobiernos, yo pagaba impuestos y por eso era bienvenida.”

María had legal status as a student in Germany, but once she couldn’t afford to attend school anymore she was officially deemed ‘illegal.’ This played a part in her decision to return, as she told herself “antes de que me boten del país me regrese.” Fernando did not have any issues gaining documentation in Italy, and stated that he can travel freely through any country in the European Union. However, he stopped short of obtaining citizenship, as he was concerned that he may have had to “elegir cualquiera de los dos, no puedo elegir entre las dos.”

More of the potential return migrants seem to have had an easier time with documentation in their host countries, which partially explains why they have chosen to stay. This is particularly true for Spain. Karina’s mother received her residency after only two months, and citizenship after five years. Daniela’s brother received residency easily with a friend’s help. Luis’ brother went “cuando estaba abierto la frontera,” and did not have difficulties receiving residency. Ana’s son has achieved dual citizenship and can come and go as he pleases. Paulina’s sister and brother-in-law went to Spain before the visa requirement and now both are citizens. Lenin’s mother also went before the visa, and just received dual citizenship a couple of years ago.

For those who arrived after the visa requirement was put in place, the experience has been a bit tougher. Jonathan’s brother received his residency after five years, but before this, he could not visit his family at all. He recently married a Spanish woman

and is now in the process of obtaining citizenship. Jonathan said that “ahora es más difícil porque para irte a Europa necesitas visa y te la niegan fácilmente, por eso es que ahora ha disminuido un poco la migración, porque la gente se piensa dos veces sobre la visa y estas cosas.” Cecilia’s mother went to Spain after the visa was required and has not yet received her residency. She was not able to return to Ecuador for her daughter’s wedding.

In other countries, migrants again had mixed experiences. Lucía’s daughter married a German citizen and was able to easily achieve residency through her husband. When Marlena’s son went to England, he was undocumented. He was not able to return to Ecuador for seven years, until he received residency under an amnesty law. He can now come and go as he pleases, but Marlena considered him lucky, as now “la gente que no tiene papeles no puede trabajar porque en seguida la cogen, le reportan.” In Italy, Miguel’s sister and her family have achieved dual citizenship, although it took them almost ten years. Francisco’s ex-wife had a very difficult time obtaining residency in Italy, and just received it after almost fifteen years there.

The group of potential return migrants in North America had a much easier time than the return migrants who had lived there. Victor’s uncle did not have a problem nationalizing in Canada as his wife was already a resident there. As Consuelo’s brother left in 1981, he received citizenship in the U.S. after just five years with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Marco’s sister was able to gain citizenship in the U.S. as her husband is an American citizen. Because of this, Marco said his sister would not return to Ecuador.

Legal status is a nuanced issue which can affect migrant decision-making in many ways. Again, as a larger number of return migrants had been in the U.S., more of them had difficulties with their legal status as compared to the potential return migrants. Most of the return migrants never gained legal status, which impacted their decision to return in that they could no longer stand being barred from visiting their family back home, and they were tired of living in fear of immigration authorities.

In contrast, most of the potential return migrants did gain some type of legal status. One might assume that this would encourage return as migrants now had the option to go back and forth as they pleased, but in my study to those who had waited for many years to achieve legal status, it sometimes seemed like a waste not to take advantage of it now. This may partially explain the difference between the decision-making processes of the two groups.

### **Financial Situation**

Financial situation falls under the neoclassical and new economics of labor migration approaches discussed by Cassarino (2004) and supported by Dustmann (2001). Following traditional theories of migration, it would make sense for a migrant to return home only if his or her potential financial situation at home were thought to be better than the current situation abroad. And for some of the return migrants, their financial situation abroad had deteriorated so much since the recession that they did feel they had better options back home.

This was especially true for those in Spain, which has been hit particularly hard by the financial crisis. Gabriela returned to Ecuador “cuando la situación ya estaba mala, porque yo ya tenía dos, tres trabajos. Después me quedé con dos, después ya me quedé con uno, y entonces ya con uno no se hace nada.” Lorena came back

because “vino la crisis, cerraron las puertas, los bancos, y me quedé otra vez sin trabajo... el hecho de volver más fue por el tema económico, que no había trabajo, pensaba si tengo aquí mi casa no voy a pagar 1500 Euros al mes allá.” Roberto came back because “mi trabajo no dio éxito, hubo el mismo problema en España que tuvo los EEUU con la hipoteca, la vivienda se fue al suelo, entonces ya vine y no tuve otra alternativa.”

This was true for other countries as well. Jorge left Bolivia when “al final de los cuatro años la crisis económica mundial hizo que la empresa cierre y yo quedé ya desempleado, entonces empecé a pensar en retornar.” Coming back from the U.S., Rosalba said “en el 2007 empezó otro problema grande porque un trabajo igual no iba a conseguir, la crisis se vino, cerraron muchas empresas importantes, los trabajos que habían disponibles eran de muy bajo recursos, sueldos muy malos. ¿Cómo podía yo sobrevivir allá? Realmente imposible.”

Aside from Rosalba, almost all of the migrants in the U.S. followed the ‘typical’ migrant story of working low-paying, low-skilled jobs. Though they were not hit as hard by the economic crisis as those in Spain, the hardships they encountered in their work did influence their decision to return home. Susana worked seven days a week at a catering company without being able to put anything into savings. Magdalena worked low-skilled jobs in a mortgage office, making hamburgers, as a cleaner, in FedEx, and as a department store salesperson. As she said, “muy duro el trabajo, súper duro, entonces sí me afectó bastante la parte del trabajo.”

Elsa had been a government professional in Ecuador for twenty years, and she was shocked when she moved to the U.S. and had to work as a babysitter or maid to

get by. She said that “mi vida me fue muy difícil, el cambio fue totalmente brusco, porque de tener un trabajo de casi como ejecutivo, luego ir a trabajar de eso fue fatal, pero ya no tuve alternativa.” Charlie worked multiple jobs seven days a week at a parking garage, a cleaning company, and a printing shop in the U.S. trying to keep afloat.

William found work at a factory in the U.S., and worked his way up from the bottom to a management position. Still, he had to work seven days a week from eight in the morning until six at night. He may have kept working unless he had had a stroke. William and almost all of the migrants in this group noted that although they knew their financial situation in the U.S. was better than it would otherwise be at home, the harsh and stressful work conditions they encountered were not worth it for them to stay abroad.

Sometimes, a poor financial situation abroad can affect the decision to return in the opposite way. Gabriela was disappointed with how her situation in Spain turned out. As she said, “yo dije en un año voy a conseguir todo. Pero es mentira y no fue así la realidad, fue otra situación.” Her poor financial situation actually encouraged her not to return home, as she said that “luego no puedes regresar porque vas a regresar peor que antes, sin dinero ni nada.” Eventually, however, she couldn’t take her harsh working conditions any longer, and her son managed to get a loan to help her come back to Ecuador. José’s financial situation in Spain gave him conflicted feelings about returning home. Like Gabriela, he thought “¿Cómo voy a volver con esta cara? Me fui a buscar supuestamente el mundo y vengo con la cola entre las piernas.” However, he said that “no veía un plan de futuro para siempre ser la mano de obra barata allá.”

For migrants who left Ecuador for reasons that were not primarily financial, their financial situation abroad wasn't quite as important. Because María left Ecuador for studies and to better her general prospects in life, rather than to obtain immediate economic benefits, she was not motivated to return home even as she struggled to pay her rent. Since Gina also left to attend school, her financial situation was different from other migrants. She said that "teníamos dinero pero el dinero no era nada, teníamos dinero, salíamos y compramos pero era como con corazón vacío." As Fernando decided to leave Ecuador to challenge himself and experience something new, the financial success of owning his own business in Italy did not entice him to stay. One would have expected these last two migrants, both financially successful, to stay abroad, but as their primary motivation for leaving was not financial, they still chose to return.

Among the potential return migrants, some have reached a certain level of financial success, particularly in the U.S., and their family members partially attribute this to why they have not returned. Marco's sister in the U.S. does not want to return because she is an assistant manager of a bank and "ella está súper bien allá." Consuelo said about her brother in the U.S. "trabaja porque tiene que pagar sus impuestos ... porque regresarse sin jubilarse sería error."

However, many of the potential return migrants also work in low-skilled, low-paying jobs. In England, Marlena's son has worked in cleaning, but his hours were recently cut and he is in search of work. His entire family shares the same bedroom. Although Lucía's daughter was trained as an artist, she has had a very difficult time finding employment in Germany. She told her mother that "todos los trabajos que

quiere hacer son sumamente fuertes para ella, entonces que son trabajos de hombre como para hombre.” It wasn’t until about four months ago that Lucía’s daughter was able to find steady work in a car factory, and she is still struggling.

When Cecilia’s mother first went to Italy, she had to sleep in shelters or rent a bed in a boarding house full of other migrants. Since then her financial situation has somewhat stabilized, but still “ella vive para cubrir sus propios gastos y eso pero no más.” Miguel’s sister in Italy, though highly educated, still works as a babysitter and caretaker of the elderly.

Regardless of poor finances, however, remittances appeared to be much more important to this group of migrants. Remittances are an extremely significant source of income to Ecuador, and over one million Ecuadorians depend on remittances to survive (Kyle and Jokisch 2008). Remittances were not brought up in any of the interviews with the return migrants (unless it was by the interviewer), and then only three return migrants reported that they had been sending remittances. According to family members in the potential return migrant group however, remittances seem to be a much more important factor, particularly for those migrants in Spain.

Karina’s mother in Spain works two jobs taking care of the elderly and cleaning houses. Although she struggles financially and has had to take out more and more loans, getting into a significant amount of debt, she has consistently sent back remittances. Daniela said that for her brother, “es mucho trabajo, hay que dedicarse el tiempo completo al trabajo.” Still, he sends his parents remittances, and has told his family “que está bien, que está trabajando bien, que sí le pagan bien, y que no nos

preocupemos.” Lenin said that although “es muy fuerte el trabajo, muy muy fuerte,” his mother has sent back money to help him pay for veterinary school.

Ana’s son works in construction, and Ana told me that although he hasn’t been able to save much money, “más bien ha ayudado a nosotros porque somos adultos ya viejitos.” Paulina’s sister has had a difficult time surviving financially, but she has still been able to send money back: “ganan y gastan porque como tienen cuatro hijos aquí en Ecuador, a todos están educando entonces es un poquito bastante difícil porque tienen el costo de comida, educación, y todo eso, y aparte los gastos de ellos.” In Italy, although she has often had to work every day from five in the morning until eleven at night, Francisco’s ex-wife has been able to send money back for their son.

Most of the potential return migrants had encountered just as many crisis-related difficulties and hardships in their work as the migrants who had already returned, and it seems then that they would have just as many motivations to come back to Ecuador as those in the other group. However, even though they often live in very tough conditions with no time or money to spend on themselves, remittances were more of a source of concern for the potential return migrants. It makes sense that these migrants would prefer to stay abroad in order to continue providing help, as small as it might be, to their families back home rather than return to an uncertain situation.

### **Opinions toward the Current Government**

In addition to the host country aspects which affect the decision to return, home country aspects are also important. The home country factor which I focused on in my study has to do with migrants’ opinions toward the current government, which relates to the transnationalism approach discussed by Cassarino (2004) and which is emphasized by Moran-Taylor and Menjívar (2005). While the economic situation at home can be

seen as an important ‘home country’ motivator as well, the majority of interviewees I spoke with intertwined Ecuador’s economy with its political stability, which is why I chose to focus more heavily on political opinions.

A large number of the return migrants felt that Ecuador was currently on a more positive track than it has been in the past. As María said, “Ecuador está bajo un cambio increíble, positivo.” William agreed that “el gobierno ha hecho mucho cambio,” especially with education, highways, and city planning. About current President Rafael Correa, Charlie said “obviamente como todo el mundo hay cosas que hace bien y cosas mal, pero el país está surgiendo.” Marcelo was also very positive, stating “mientras yo empezaba a venir entró Correa a la presidencia, me gustaba la forma, la política de él, entonces quería participar en cuanto lo que era lo mejor para mi país.” Rosalba said “siempre quise regresar porque aparte me llamó mucha atención el nuevo presidente, las políticas que estaba tomando en el país, un auge de verdad.”

Elsa was very positive as well, stating “Ecuador está dando buenos pasos.” About Correa, she said “estoy contenta con lo que hace, he sido una de las más admiradores de él en su labor...está haciendo un labor que jamás otro presidente ha hecho. Estoy muy feliz con él y las políticas, todo lo que hace, son muy buenas.” Susana was also very enthusiastic, stating that Correa “es uno de los mejores presidentes que hemos tenido en toda la historia.”

Fernando said about Correa “tengo fe, yo veo los hechos, veo que están allí y están dados, o sea no hay ni cómo darle vuelto ni discutir ni decir no, porque allí están los hechos.” Gabriela was the most vocal about her support for Correa and the current government. At first she was worried that her government benefits would not come

through, as “tantos presidentes que nos han engañado, ofrecen al final nada,” but she said “con este presidente que estamos ahora, hay que poner el hombro y juntos salir adelante, porque antes no hemos tenido un presidente así que nos ayude tanto, ahora toca ayudarle a él.”

Other migrants were still positive, but somewhat less enthusiastic. Roberto said “no soy partidario de ningún partido político, pero me parece a mí al menos el gobierno actual que ha hecho muchas cosas que no se ha dado en muchos tiempos, a pesar de la oposición que tiene.” Although Gina felt that Correa had good ideas which she wanted to support, she was somewhat pessimistic about what he could do, stating “cualquier cosa que haga bien o mal Correa va a estar mal porque no estamos listos para una administración de gobierno como Europa.”

Other migrants had mixed reviews. Lorena said “el presidente me parece una persona muy educada, muy preparada, con mucha capacidad.” However, she said “no me gusta el grupo de colaboradores de la Costa” and “lo que no me gusta del gobierno es la relación de dependencia de Chávez.” José also had mixed reviews, stating “hay cosas que sí ha mejorado bastante, pero hay cosas que no me agradan mucho.” Still, he placed most of the blame on the cabinet and assembleists, rather than the President himself. Only two of the return migrants were outright negative about the current government. José stated that in Ecuador, “el problema es político,” and Magdalena stated “el país como gobierno no te da oportunidades de nada.”

Regarding the potential return migrants, a couple of them purportedly had positive things to say about Correa. Marlena said her son thinks that Correa “está muy bien, tantas cosas que ha recortado, tantas cosas que ha pasado.” Karina said that she

and her mother “somos Correístas porque damos nuestra fe al presidente y al gobierno como ayuda.” However, some of the family members were certain that the potential return migrants abroad didn’t care about the government at all. About his uncle, Victor said “mi tío y yo conversábamos de qué opinaba del gobierno, ni siquiera sabía quién era el presidente aquí, no le interesa, está metido en su vida allá. La gente que entera algo de allá es que les contamos de aquí.” Lenin said about his mother “no le interesa. Si se va Correa ¿quién viene? De allí de hablar de político no le gusta, venga quien venga igual toca trabajar, no hay más.”

The majority of the family members of the potential return migrants were not sure how these migrants felt about the President or about the current government. Still, their own opinions might provide some sort of insight. On the positive side, Lucía said that “uno comienza a tener confianza o desconfianza en el presidente cuando hay promesas que son cumplidas... creo que sí comenzamos a tener confianza porque es palpable.” She admired that “el presidente está dando importancia al valor humano.” Paulina herself had mixed reviews about Correa. She said “tiene sus cosas buenas, ha hecho cosas buenas, pero hay cosas que él se contradice él mismo.” However, she didn’t think this was Correa’s fault, saying “la oposición no lo deja, deberían dejarlo trabajar y no estar en la pelea diaria de que si dijo eso o si no dijo esto... y todavía no encuentra las personas adecuadas para que le ayuden.”

Others were more decidedly negative. Luis said “no hay credibilidad, todo lo ofrecen oro y moro pero a la realidad no es así... falta la madurez política... hablamos y nos decimos y nos contradecimos... este gobierno se hace la foto, la figura, pero no hay nada... no le gusta que les diga las verdades este gobierno.” Miguel did not

approve of Correa, saying “quiere hacer lo que quiera.” Consuelo said that “nuestro país habla mucho y hace poco, entonces el problema que tenemos con el gobierno es que no hay coherencia.” Jonathan said “yo no soy partidario del presidente actual, hay mucha gente que está en contra también.” He said Correa “es muy prepotente.” Cecilia said that in general there exists a great deal of “desconfianza en el gobierno.” Marco simply said “no voy a hablar mal del gobierno, pero no me gusta el gobierno.”

It is impossible to take the opinions of the potential return migrants’ family members as a direct proxy for these migrants’ own opinions, but it is still interesting to note that the majority of them reported negative thoughts on the current government. Likewise, it is important that the majority of return migrants reported positive opinions of the current government and that some of them noted emphatically the role Correa played in their decision to return.

That said, a few of the return migrants did initially think I was contacting them on the part of SENAMI, and although I did my best to convince them otherwise, it could be possible that they did not feel comfortable expressing negative opinions about the government for fear that they would be reported. More likely, however, is the fact that they were direct recipients of government assistance, which could have influenced their opinions positively. While potentially true, many of the return migrants adamantly expressed that they had positive opinions of the government before returning, so the relationship between political opinion and return still seems to hold some validity.

## **Family**

The most important factor of all those discussed here, the presence or absence of family, ultimately played the largest role for the majority of migrants in their decision on when or if to return. This relates to the transnationalism and social network theory

approaches discussed by Cassarino (2004) and the results of the studies by Conway (2005), Poitras (1982), St. Bernard (2005), and Moran-Taylor and Menjívar (2005). The effects of family on the decision to return varied among migrants depending on which if any type of family they had with them in their destination and which type of family they had left behind.

Some migrants returned to Ecuador as they had absolutely no family with them in their destination. Magdalena went to the U.S. with her husband and came home because after her divorce, she wanted to be close to her parents and siblings. María said that her main motivation to return was “por la soledad.” She had no family in Germany and also missed her parents and siblings. She said “sicológicamente por lo que estuve sola y todo eso me afectó.”

Other migrants took their nuclear family abroad with them, but wanted to be with their parents back in Ecuador as they got older. Charlie’s parents already lived in the U.S., and Charlie took his wife and daughter with him, where they gave birth to a son. However, Charlie said “mi esposa es hija única, esa fue la razón por regresar, mi suegra sola. Mi suegra conocía a mi hija pero no a mi otro hijo que nació allá, dijo me voy a morir, entonces mi esposa adelantó. Ya cuando se adelantó pues ya teníamos que irnos todos.” Coming home from Spain, Marcelo said “mi propósito era venir y estar los últimos al final con papá y mamá.” His father died a year and a half after he returned to Ecuador.

Other migrants created families while abroad but still missed their parents and siblings back home. Fernando met and married an Italian woman in Italy, and they had a child there together. Still, he said “cualquier persona necesita familia, mi mamá,

papá,” and he and his family returned “por la cuestión de la soledad.” Gina felt the same way. She said that while she was in France “me hacía falta la familia, mis padres, mis hermanos.” She married an Argentinian abroad and they had children together, but she said “los chicos no sabían qué era un primo, era tenaz, era horrible.” José met his Ecuadorian wife in Spain and they had a child together. But he wanted his son to know his family and said “el niño influyó bastante.”

Rosalba went with her husband and their young son to the U.S. She missed her parents and siblings a great deal, but her son actually prevented her from coming home sooner: “no me interesaba a mí más que regresar acá, pero no podía, mi hijo me decía que no quería volver, y para mí él era todo.” Rosalba returned “cuando vi que mi hijo ya se alejó de mi, dije ya no hay razón para estar, voy a volver donde está mi madre y tal vez tener más afecto.”

William went to the U.S. with his wife and daughters. Although his daughters “pensaban que era solamente un paseo” and wanted desperately to return, they did not come back until William had a stroke. While his motivation to return was not simply to reunite with his family, it was to be with his family during a difficult time. William said “regresamos porque a mí me dio un derrame, un stroke... Estuve mal y quería volver porque aquí estaba mi familia, mis hermanos, mis sobrinos.”

Leaving children behind was another important factor. Although she had her sister with her in the U.S., Susana left her son and husband behind in Ecuador, and she said “extrañaba a mi hijo, era el único problema que yo tenía allí... separarse de la familia es la parte más difícil.” Gabriela’s husband and son followed her to Spain, but her other son and daughter were not able to come, and she missed them terribly,

leading to her return. Jorge's wife and daughters joined him in Bolivia after two years, but they ended up not liking it and they returned to Ecuador without him. Although his primary reason to return was that he was laid off, he also said "no se puede estar tan lejos de la familia mucho tiempo."

Elsa had to leave her two children behind in Ecuador. Her husband had recently passed away, and she said "para ellos era una cuestión difícil porque quedaron sin padre ni madre y estaban jóvenes... quizás fue muy drástico de mi parte tomar esta decisión pero no tenía otra alternativa." Lorena and her husband went to Spain without their daughters for the first three years, and she said "creo que es una etapa de mi vida que creo que es lo peor que me pudo pasar."

In contrast, for many potential return migrants, their family situation abroad was indicated to be their primary motivation for staying in their destination country. This was particularly true when children were involved and these children grew up in the destination. Ana's son had a daughter in Spain who does not want to move back to Ecuador as she has grown up in Spain. Ana said "la madre le pregunta ¿quieres estudiar acá? 'No' dice, no quiere... tiene sus amigos, tiene su familia, la familia de la esposa de mi hijo." Lucía's daughter was married to a German man and they had a child together in Germany. Although they are divorced, her daughter does not want to come live in Ecuador. Lucía said "supongo que también ella tiene su papá, sus abuelitos y toda la familia paterna allá, si ella nace allí se siente alemana y entonces ella nunca quiere regresar."

Victor said "mi tío quiere volver pero es complicado porque sus hijos son canadienses, no hablan español, nacieron allá en Canadá... mi primo se casó allá, con

una canadiense igual, entonces cada vez van haciendo familia allá y no vuelven."

Consuelo's brother in the U.S. has divorced from his wife, but he has two children who were born in the U.S. and who now attend university there. Marco's sister lives with her American husband in the U.S. and they have had children there. Marlena's son met his Ecuadorian wife in England and they have had children as well.

Miguel's sister went with her husband and two daughters to Italy and now has grandchildren who have been born there and who keep her from returning to Ecuador. Significant others can also play an important role. Karina said that even though her mother would like to return to Ecuador to be with her grandchildren, she does not want to leave her partner in Spain. Jonathan's brother likewise wants to stay in Spain with his Spanish wife.

For a few of the potential return migrants, their family situation would actually seem to be a good reason to return home. Daniela's brother has no family in Spain and is unmarried, and his extended family continually pleads with him to come home. Luis' brother has no family in Spain and left his ex-wife and child behind in Ecuador. Paulina's sister and husband live in Spain and left their four children behind in Ecuador. Cecilia's mother lives alone in Spain while her children and grandchildren live in Ecuador. Francisco's ex-wife lives in Italy with their daughter, while he lives in Ecuador with their son. Yet these migrants still haven't returned, meaning that for them other motivations are more important.

In sum, more of the return migrants had left children behind in Ecuador, while more of the potential return migrants brought their children with them or had children while in their destination. Thus, return migrants wanted to be reunited with their

children, while potential return migrants do not want to take their children away from the place they now call home. Also, more of the potential return migrants married partners in their destination countries. These issues create a major distinction between the two different types of migrants in their decision on when or if to return.

### **Conclusions**

While family may have played a very significant role for the majority of migrants, all of the above factors are interrelated and played at least some part for at least some of the migrants in the decision on when or if to return. My results support many of those found by Moran-Taylor and Menjívar, Conway, Poitras, St. Bernard, and Ugalde and Langham, whose findings are discussed in Chapter One, while providing a more nuanced understanding of each issue.

Regarding the host country, those who were more integrated into the host society, had better language skills, who had achieved some sort of legal status, and who were involved in sending remittances home were more apt to stay abroad rather than return home. The effect of poor treatment or discrimination was unclear. Regarding the home country, return migrants generally had a very positive opinion of the current government; and regarding family, those who brought children with them, had children abroad, or found partners abroad were more likely to stay abroad.

Now we shall turn to SENAMI's Plan Bienvenid@s a Casa. For return migrants, did the Plan play as important of a role as the previous factors in the decision to return? Did it 'tip the scale' for any migrants who had not completely made up their mind about returning? Would it entice any of the potential return migrants to come back? What if there were even more benefits offered? These are issues which I explore in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### SENAMI'S PLAN BIENVENID@S A CASA

#### **General Information**

In examining the creation of SENAMI and the establishment of Plan Bienvenid@s a Casa, it is clear that emigration from Ecuador became a distinctly political issue during the elections of 2006, when then-candidate Rafael Correa “courted the diaspora during the electoral campaign, promised that his administration would be the ‘migrants’ government,’ and held several meetings with associations when campaigning abroad” (Margheritis 2011: 206). As Margheritis (2011) notes in regard to Correa, “the references to the migration problem are a constant in his political discourses” (198). In fact, Correa has had some very strong words to say about the great deal of out-migration from Ecuador, calling it “una vergüenza nacional,” and emphasizing that “el objetivo y aspiración del Gobierno...es construir una patria donde nadie más tenga que salir y los que salieron puedan volver” (Tamariz 2009).

Over the past few years, Correa has attempted to put his words into action and follow through with these promises. SENAMI was created in 2007 as the overseeing agency of Plan Bienvenid@s a Casa, which is a part of this attempt. According to Margheritis (2011), “top-ranking officials in this office argue that this institution represents a more modern, progressive, and inclusive approach in comparison with traditional migration policies that fall within the sphere of foreign affairs ministries” (211). We will examine these traditional policies below and see how Ecuador’s Plan may be more unique.

The Plan’s slogan is ‘voluntario, digno, y sostenible,’ and it involves a three-pronged approach to facilitate the ‘return’ of Ecuadorians abroad. Two of these ‘returns’

– political and economic – are metaphorical, providing the right to vote and congressional representation, along with easier paths for cash flows. The third is a physical return and constitutes the subject of this investigation.

### **State-Led Transnationalism**

Correa's Plan is part of a larger international trend with respect to states and their citizens abroad towards the comprehensive inclusion of emigrants into state policies, a phenomenon which can best be understood as 'state-led transnationalism.' According to this concept, there is a current tendency of nation-states to relabel emigrants as 'diasporas' or 'global nations' and involve them in "all aspects of social, economic, and political life" (Ragazzi 2009: 381). This trend is also known as 'transnationalism from above,' an idea which serves as an alternative or complement to 'transnationalism from below,' in which migrants are seen to be the main agents who maintain ties to their homeland.

In the case of Ecuador, the Plan can be seen as an interchange between both parties – the state and the diaspora. The relationship between the Ecuadorian government and its people is important in understanding why this Plan came about when it did. While some authors argue that these transnational practices are solely of a top-down nature, according to Margheritis (2011), "the Ecuadorian case contributes to the existing literature on sending states' transnational policies by first confirming the importance of the role of the state in shaping social involvement in transnational policies and, second, supporting and at the same time expanding some of the arguments based on the importance of the size, economic impact, and level of mobilization of the emigrant community" (214).

On the state's end, there are many types of practices used to increase states' relationships with their diasporas, but most fit into a few specific categories: economic policies, symbolic rhetoric, bureaucratic reforms, and political rights. Economic policies include actively encouraging or facilitating remittances, which Correa has done with the economic prong of his Plan. Symbolic rhetoric includes "measures aimed at reinforcing emigrants' sense of long-term membership" (Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003: 598), which Correa has accomplished through his many speeches addressing migrants abroad. Bureaucratic reforms include "the creation of institutions designed to deal with the migrant communities abroad," (Itzigsohn 2000: 1141), which Correa has put in place through the establishment of SENAMI. Political rights include the ability to vote from abroad, which again has been accomplished through the political prong of Correa's Plan.

Correa has thus engaged in all aspects of the heavily-studied traditional modes of state-led transnationalism, but there are many aspects of his campaign that are also unique in comparison to other countries. According to Margheritis (2011), these are: "the personal involvement of the president, the high status acquired by migrants' institutions, the interbureaucratic politics of migration policy, the relationship between the content of the migration discourse and broader issues within domestic politics, and the attempt to export a model of state-led transnationalism" (203).

Most significant to my research, he has encouraged return migration, another unique and innovative aspect of the Plan. According to one source, "Ecuador may well be the only Latin American country trying to lure its citizens home during the global economic crisis" (Kopanja 2009). Although other countries have historically provided

small incentives for returning migrants, such as Mexico waiving duties on household goods or Guatemala providing bus tickets home from California (Kopanja 2009), Ecuador's Plan appears to be the most comprehensive.

Aside from simply bringing migrants back, the Plan's "approach is unique because beyond offering support services, it is luring its nationals back as part of a development strategy" (Silverstein 2009). Added to the rhetoric of reuniting the broken family of Ecuador and Correa's desire to solidify support both at home and abroad, the Plan ultimately aims to "support small business ideas that might generate employment in a stagnated economy" (Kopanja 2009). Thus, the government sees its migrants abroad as a resource to be utilized and, potentially, exploited. We will see how this plays out below.

### **El Cucayo and El Bono**

The two largest incentives of the Plan are programs known as El Cucayo and El Bono. El Cucayo consists of government funding which provides 25% of the necessary seed money to start a new business. To qualify, migrants must have Ecuadorian nationality, have lived abroad for at least one year without returning for more than 60 days, have returned since February 2007 with the intention of staying, and have no legal impediments. Group projects are possible, but individual projects are most common.

Funds cannot be used to purchase vehicles, construct houses, pay debt, pay salaries, or for administrative costs. They also cannot be used to create businesses which promote liquor consumption; conflict with public morals (e.g. a brothel or motel); involve labor exploitation, violence, or discrimination; or which harm the environment. As of September 2010, 381 migrant-proposed businesses have received funds, and

these businesses have purportedly created 1,507 new jobs. The state has provided almost \$3.5 million in El Cucayo funds, which have been met by \$13.6 million in migrant funds (Gobierno Nacional 2010).

El Bono de la Vivienda consists of government subsidies for housing. To qualify for El Bono, a migrant must be over the age of 18 with dependents or over the age of 30 with no dependents and have lived outside of Ecuador for at least one year without returning for more than 60 days. Funds can be used to buy a new home or construct one on a lot which the migrant already owns, in which case the migrant would receive \$5,000. Funds can also be used to improve, enlarge, or finish a home which is already owned, in which case the migrant would receive \$1,500.

In all cases, the migrant must prove that they currently have at least 15% of the value of the home in savings (Gobierno Nacional 2010). Statistics for how many migrants have benefited from this aspect of the Plan were not available online, but when I met with a MIDUVI employee in person in June 2011, I was told that about 27 families had been approved, that about ten had actually received the funds, and that there would be no more funds available until 2012.

Thirteen of the migrants in my study received benefits from El Cucayo, while two received benefits from El Bono. The businesses which were initiated using funds from El Cucayo were two hostels, two printing businesses, an herbal fragrance business, a seamstress business, a solar energy consulting business, a doctor's office, a cleaning business, an electrician business, a farm, a café, and a construction business. The funds from El Bono were used to purchase new homes in both cases.

According to SENAMI's September 2010 report, 11,672 citizens have returned to Ecuador with SENAMI's assistance (Gobierno Nacional 2010). However, this number includes all returners who have simply received information from SENAMI, as well as a number of people who were deported against their will or who have returned involuntarily. Even if one accepts this optimistic figure, the migrants in my study constitute part of the only three fourths of one percent of the estimated 1.5 million Ecuadorians living abroad who have returned. Why haven't more chosen to do so? What could compel more migrants to return? These are issues which we will explore in the next section.

### **The Plan and Return Migrant Decision-Making**

#### **Awareness of the Plan**

The first goal of the program is, of course, to bring migrants home. When trying to understand whether Plan Bienvenid@s is a strong enough incentive to actually do this, I felt it necessary to know how the migrants in my study found out about the program and what they knew about it before they made the decision to return. This is important as the success of the program hinges upon whether the government is able to reach migrants in the first place.

The majority of the return migrants I interviewed found out about the program while they were still living abroad. Charlie saw an interview with President Correa on a Miami TV station while he was living in the U.S. Lorena attended a news conference in Spain where Correa was discussing the program. José and Roberto found out about the program on the news in Spain, while William found out on the news in the U.S. All of these migrants applied online before returning to Ecuador.

Other migrants also found out about the program while they were still abroad, but the discovery came out of their own initiative, not out of active recruitment by the government. Gabriela's sister found out about the program from a friend, who had found out from another friend, and so on. Since her sister knew Gabriela had been interested in leaving Spain, she told her to go to the Ecuadorian embassy in Madrid, which she did, where she received further information. Marcelo in Spain, Elsa in the U.S., and Rosalba in the U.S. all found out while doing their own research online about returning to Ecuador. Jorge found out from a friend while still in Bolivia and then researched it himself via the internet. Susana in the U.S. and Fernando in Italy both found out while visiting their respective consulates for non-migration related issues.

Two migrants did not know about the program at all before returning to Ecuador. This means that their decision to return was not impacted by the program in any way. Magdalena was told about the program by friends after returning to Ecuador. María found out about the Plan after she had already returned while she was awake late at night looking up information for migrants on the internet. She said if she had known about the program beforehand, she could have come back earlier: “si yo hubiera sabido esto en Alemania hubiera podido quizás acabar de estudiar. ¿Por qué no supe entonces?” Aside from Magdalena and María, the majority of the return migrants did know about the program before returning, so we will be analyzing the effects of this knowledge below.

By discussing awareness of the program with the other group of interviewees, the family members of potential return migrants, I was able to get an idea of whether the Ecuadorian population in general and migrants who are still living abroad are

knowledgeable about the Plan. Almost all of the family members of potential return migrants did not know that the program existed until I interviewed them about it, and thus they did not know if their family members abroad were aware of it either.

When I explained some of the aspects of the program to Marlena, whose son lives in England, she said “no hemos sabido, hoy me entero. Me voy para allá y puedo conversar con la gente, pero esto debe hacer el gobierno porque nadie allá tampoco sabe.” Although Karina’s father-in-law had participated in the program, her mother, who still lived abroad in Spain, was not aware of it. Karina said “mi mamá nunca se ha informado de eso, nunca, nunca ha estado interesada en eso, si ella regresa, regresa con su dinero.”

According to both interview groups, the government needs to improve the visibility of the program. Lorena said SENAMI’s biggest problem was “falta de información. Falta de información, el cónsul se pensará que todos los ecuatorianos vamos al consulado cada semana, pero no es así.” Gina said “eso sería lo mejor, promocionar justamente en los consulados que están afuera.” Magdalena agreed that lack of information was the biggest barrier to participation, and said “para mejorar, ¿sabes qué? Más información en el exterior, en las embajadas, los consulados, afuera no se sabe lo que está haciendo. Eso sí lo recomendaría, ellos pueden mejorar la información afuera.”

Lenin also said the best way to make the program better would be “que den más información... que haya más comunicación, a lo menos en la nivel de las cancillerías, que ayuden un poquito más, ya te digo mi madre no sabe nada, entonces no sé, hacerles llevar un boleto de que saben que existen los beneficios que está el gobierno

dándolos, ocupar más en eso, mas comunicación.” Undoubtedly, greater awareness of the program would most likely lead to greater utilization, and the government should focus more efforts on getting the word out.

### **Effectiveness of the Plan**

Even if they did get the word out, how much would the Plan influence migrant decision-making? Seemingly not much. Surprisingly, eight of the 13 return migrants who knew about the program before returning said that it did not influence their decision to return in any way, noting that they had already made the decision before finding out about the program. Rather, their decision to return was entirely based on the factors discussed in Chapter Two and not on the government incentives.

Marcelo said “si no había apoyo, no importa, me venía de todos modos.” Elsa said “eso no tiene nada que ver, mi idea de volver fue por mí, no por nada que me han dado, lo del Bono vino después. Dije si están dando, bueno, yo puedo calificar, pero no fue por eso que vine.” When asked if it had affected his decisión, José said “no, ya tenía planteado volver… se aprovechó nada más, siempre teníamos planeado volver.”

Lorena was the same way. She responded that “no afectó nada, había tomado mi decisión, menos mal que vine y hubo esa oportunidad pero no.” When asked if he would have returned without SENAMI, Fernando said “sí porque en el 2008 tenía ya proyectado la empresa que tenía allá, traerla para acá, ya estaba en el proyecto.” Roberto said about the program “afectar no, porque la decisión era retornar.” All of these migrants had already decided to return, and the Plan was simply seen as a bonus upon arrival.

Three of the migrants, however, stated that although it did not heavily impact their decision to return, the program had at least some sort of influence in the form of

encouragement or facilitation. It partially affected Susana's decision, as she said "sí tuvo la decisión algo que ver allí no, que dije bueno hay una oportunidad de volver aquí y hacer algo... yo ya pensaba regresar pero eso fue un apoyo grande." When asked if it affected his decision, William said "sí afectó, porque cuando tú piensas en regresar dices si puedo armar un proyecto y puedes volver ya no es que comienzas de cero, ya tienes una esperanza de comenzar algo así, que es bueno, así que regresas, se decides y como que le da un aliento más, le ayuda esta decisión." Jorge had already made the decision to return, but the Plan sped up the process. When asked if he would have returned without the program, he said "posiblemente, con mayor dificultad, o se hubiera demorado un año más, tal vez un poco más, pero con SENAMI regresé más pronto."

Only two of the thirteen migrants who knew of the program beforehand stated that their decision was strongly and primarily influenced by the program. Gabriela said that without it "no hubiera vuelto porque todo fue un esfuerzo grande por la que ya me grabé al gobierno... a través de mi presidente hubo la ayuda porque si no, no hubiera regresado, no sé qué hubiera pasado." Rosalba's decisión was also highly affected. She said "encontré en el internet el Plan que el presidente le invitaba a los migrantes a venir acá, dije my god, empecé a leer y decía que te iba a ayudar en esto, en el otro, dije o dios mío creo que es el momento, dios me puso en el camino poder regresar... me dije con esta apertura I may have some posibilidades de poder salir... me incitaron a venir, los programas estaban buenos."

With the exception of these last two interviewees, the program did not influence the decision of the return migrants as much as one might expect, if at all. But does it or

would it appeal to the migrants who are still living abroad? Probably not. In fact, almost all of the family members of the potential return migrants felt that their family members abroad would not be interested in participating in the Plan.

Lenin was the only exception. When asked if his mother would be interested, Lenin said “claro que nos interesa... sí queríamos ponernos, entonces no sabíamos con quién contactar, algo sé de las noticias pero en sí ir a averiguar a ver dónde tengo que ir, qué papeles necesito.” He asked me for any information about the program that I could provide, which I gave him. However, none of the other family members showed any interest whatsoever.

Most family members felt that the Plan wouldn't appeal to migrants at all, let alone their own family members, for a variety of reasons related to those discussed in Chapter Two. Luis said “es sólo una estrategia para engañarnos aquí.” Francisco said “no es para vivir una vida tranquila, es solamente para gente bien pobre, es convencer, consolar en algo.” Ana said that the benefits, specifically El Bono, were not enough: “no alcanza para nada, para cemento, ¿y lo demás?” Paulina said she didn't think El Bono was enough money to be useful and that “son tantas trabas que ponen, te dan beneficios pero te ponen más trabas que no puedes hacer nada.”

Consuelo was quite pessimistic about the program, stating “no me parece a mí que sea una solución... porque si soy inmigrante y me tento lo que están ofreciendo, vengo y pongo una panadería, no me va a ir bien el negocio, voy a arrepentirme de haber venido... si no vendo el pan ¿de qué vivo? Entonces es difícil, no sé hasta qué punto el inmigrante se arriesgue a dejar lo que tiene y venir.” These interviewees felt that the program, as it stands, does not provide a very strong incentive to return, as the

benefits are too small, there are no guarantees for success, and there is limited trust in the government.

### **Suggestions for Greater Effectiveness**

Clearly, the Plan did not affect the returning migrants' decision as much as the government might have anticipated, and it would not seem to appeal to many migrants still living abroad. What could the Plan do then, if anything, in order to attract migrants who have not considered return and 'tip the scales' for migrants who are contemplating the decision? According to the family members of the potential return migrants, the program would need to offer more incentives to attract more migrants, particularly when it comes to employment.

Daniela said the program would appeal to migrants if it offered "tal vez un trabajo seguro y estable también, con un sueldo que sí se merece, tal vez, que den trabajo aquí en Ecuador para que nadie más pueda migrar." Ana agreed that in order to make the program better, they would need to offer "por lo menos un trabajo estable, porque allá si quedan sin trabajo pues hay otro... aquí comienza un negocio y si el negocio no le va bien ¿qué hace? Hay veces que es bueno los negocios, hay veces que falla." Miguel also said "quisiera que ellos le abran las puertas de trabajo... hay varios aquí que no han conseguido trabajo." Paulina stressed the need to "buscar más fuentes de empleo, porque dicen estamos dando empleo y eso es mentira." On a related note, Jonathan said they would need to "subir los sueldos."

While complete control of the job market is obviously an impossibility for Ecuador's government, it would indeed be possible to offer some type of job assistance to returning migrants who are not necessarily business-minded entrepreneurs, including migrants who participated in low-wage, low-skilled labor abroad and who were not able

to acquire business-specific skills. Assistance could include keeping a running list of available employment opportunities specifically reserved for migrants or offering assistance for job placement in a ‘temp’-like fashion. Programs such as these could possibly lead to a higher degree of utilization of the Plan.

However, this type of assistance would potentially bring much smaller returns than that provided by assistance to entrepreneurs, and it would most likely reduce total remittances to the country. It could also lead to competition from returning migrants with the unemployed already in Ecuador. These complications would detract from the government’s goal of using return migrants to improve Ecuador’s economy, which we will explore now.

### **The Plan and the Economy**

The other goal of the program, aside from direct utilization, is to impact Ecuador’s economy in a positive way by bringing entrepreneurs and skilled professionals home to create jobs, initiate growth, and apply skills learned abroad in the local job market. This impact, however, is reliant on the economic success of returning migrants, which has unfortunately been elusive, as we will see below. Why have these migrants not found a greater degree of success? What could SENAMI do to ensure a more prosperous experience for the return migrants? And what barriers stand in the way?

### **Financial Results**

Most of the recipients of El Cucayo have had a difficult time achieving results in the one to three years since their businesses have been up and running. José, who owns a hostel, simply said “aquí es más duro, la vida es más duro.” Jorge said about his solar energy business “bueno la empresa está lenta... Mientras tanto mis ahorros se terminaron, tenía que empezar a buscar cómo trabajar... no he logrado vender porque

me faltaron fondos para el estudio del mercado.” Lorena said about her cleaning business “no me está funcionando, no está funcionando... tengo la empresa de mantenimiento de jardines, piscinas, casas, y edificios, sí sale algo pero no es lo que me esperaba, o sea en otras palabras la gente de aquí no limpia mucho.”

As his business is farming, Roberto has had difficulties achieving success due to the weather: “es que no nos va bien, por el clima... tuvimos pérdidas en las primera dos siembras.” Marcelo said about his printing business “traje el material pero no he tenido acogida, no ha habido, la gente es muy, no, no quiere gastarse, este tipo de material es más caro... sigo luchando para poder poner en el mercado, pero es muy difícil, muy complicado... no he tenido éxito, no ha habido esta apertura.” He said “trabajo más aquí, más horas que en España y gano menos... ganaba 1200 Euros, aquí voy a ganar \$600.”

Some of the migrants have had mixed results. When asked if her economic situation had improved since returning to Ecuador, María, the owner of the herbal fragrance company, said “no lo sé aun... Tenemos que ver. Estamos positivos por cuestiones de que es una innovación para el país. La cosa es que hay que educar a la gente... Con esta producción que tendríamos daríamos trabajo a un montón de gente.” However, her company can't afford the high cost of putting their product in stores, so she may continue to find success elusive.

Susana used the funds to build a parking lot at her hostel/restaurant business, but has not been able to continue the process due to bureaucratic issues. Nonetheless, when asked if her financial situation had improved, she said “se ha mejorado, claro, ha mejorado bastante... ha habido otras oportunidades, bastantes, y apoyo porque si

tenemos un apoyo para iniciar el negocio eso es bastante. Hay que dar el primer paso mas difícil.”

Only a few of the migrants reported considerable success, and for two of them, this came only after a period of struggle. Charlie, who owns another printing business, said he made absolutely nothing during 2009, but that now “tengo un estatus medio y que subo... mi hijos están en la escuela privada, comen, no en un barrio popular pero comen. Mis hijos se fueron a Argentina de paseo, se van a Galápagos en agosto, mi hijo el anterior pasó todito el verano en EEUU.”

Fernando has had a similar experience, unsuccessful at first but now on the upswing. He said about his electrician business “he pasado aquí dos años que sólo han sido egresos, nada de ingresos... es duro hacer un mercado aquí en Ecuador, recién estoy en eso... este es el primer trabajo de nivel institucional de gobierno que tengo, aquí llevo 3 meses.” He said “les gusta lo que hago, el precio, la calidad,” and he is optimistic about his future prospects.

Gabriela, with her sewing company, has had the most positive experience since return. She said “gracias al presidente que me ha ayudado he podido ampliarme... Todo el mundo me conoce, cualquier cosa que les haga, me ven aquí, me traen a hacer cualquier cosa... esto va a ser mi futuro y el de mis hijos porque yo pienso agrandarme... Estoy pensando formar una escuela de aprendices.” Not only had her business been successful, but she was already planning an expansion.

On a more negative note, however, neither recipient of El Bono reported having been at all successful. Elsa and Rosalba had both applied for El Cucayo and been denied, and thus chose to apply for El Bono. Elsa said “ahora mismo no tengo ni

trabajo y estoy más de un año... tengo las posibilidades, capacidades, pero no hay quién te recomienda, no hay quién te ayude... Estoy ahorita sin trabajar... estoy ¿para dónde camino? ¿Para dónde voy? ¿Qué hago? ¿Para qué lado voy?" Rosalba finds herself in the same boat. She said "ahora estoy 5, 6 meses en junio sin trabajo... todos los días llamo a amigos para un trabajo pero no importa. Yo aceptaría cualquier cosa pero no hay trabajo... por último no tengo cómo pagar mi mortgage... sin income es desesperante."

Thus, most of the recipients of El Cucayo, or the returning entrepreneurs, have found success elusive, while the recipients of El Bono who returned without a business enterprise have not been able to enter into the job market at all. The financial difficulties of these returning migrants may prevent potential return migrants from considering taking part in the program. In order to improve their chances of financial success, the migrants were able to identify a number of barriers which need to be addressed and removed.

### **Barriers to Success**

Regarding El Bono, lack of transparency and clear communication about how the program works are clear barriers to migrant success. Both Elsa and Rosalba had difficult experiences. Elsa was told that the seller of the apartment would receive the funds and so she paid the price of her apartment minus the \$5,000 of El Bono. However, the seller reportedly never received the money and has now been harassing Elsa for it. Rosalba had been under the mistaken impression that she herself would receive the Bono, so she paid for her apartment in full. The seller now refuses to give her the money from El Bono. This reflects poorly on the program and could negatively impact its appeal, as Rosalba said that she would tell migrants that might be

considering coming home “que por favor no vengan porque se van a encontrar con una piedra más dura de lo que están viviendo.”

Another barrier to success which affected both groups of returnees had to do with a lack of organization at SENAMI, which was often attributed to SENAMI being such a young agency. Both Charlie and Lorena were denied the first time they applied for El Cucayo funds, and when they tried to find out what happened, they were told their folders had been lost. Lorena said this was because “allí estaban esta gente de la SENAMI en pañales.” Fortunately, this aspect was believed to already be improving. Magdalena stated “al principio hubieron problemas pero después conmigo fue muy bueno.”

Roberto agreed, stating “creo que eso ya ha superado, esta situación de inexperiencia del inicio.” He continued: “claro que ha tenido sus fallas la SENAMI pero es que al inicio es así. Es un programa nuevo que por más que pongas técnicos en ciertas áreas hasta que empieza siempre hay fallas. Ahora todos estos han tratado de rectificar, de corregir, entonces poco a poco de estos últimos proyectos deben estar corregidos los errores para que no fracase.” Seemingly, this issue of disorganization may work itself out in time.

One barrier almost all of the migrants mentioned which had impeded their success had to do with bureaucracy. Some returning migrants argued that this problem arose from the very beginning of the process, while getting information at the consulates. Lorena said “el cónsul sólo se dedica a calentar al asiento.” Gina felt the same way, stating “parece que la gente no está tan abierta tal vez a ayudar. Realmente, ¿qué es lo que tiene que ver un consulado? No es sólo un buen puesto

para ganar bien, sino realmente para ayudar a nuestra gente... el trato es terrible, es así como si estamos pidiendo un favor."

Elsa was disappointed during the process of El Bono with "la gente burócrata... Es terrible la burocracia." Others who dealt with El Cucayo were frustrated with the lack of concern on the part of bureaucrats. Jorge said "si yo iba a socializer, la gente estaba muy ocupada, no tenía tiempo." José stated "la gente debe estar desarrollando el país pero está perdiendo tiempo en estupideces." According to these migrants, SENAMI must address the issue of bureaucracy in order to better promote migrants' success.

Some of the migrants argued that another large barrier to success was the difficulty they had in accessing credit. Elsa stated "somos los que queremos el apoyo, los que venimos un poco perdidos, no sabemos ni sacar un crédito, o sea después de tanto tiempo fuera no sabes ni cómo calificar para un crédito." The *Banco del Migrante* was proposed in 2007 to meet this purpose, but although Correa vowed that the Bank would be underway in 2010, it is still not functional.

Without it, many migrants found they did not qualify for a loan or that interest rates were too high. Marcelo stated "los fondos no alcanzan... no tengo acceso a un crédito... hace falta el apoyo." José's top recommendation for SENAMI to improve the Plan was that it should be directly connected to the bank and that each beneficiary of El Cucayo or El Bono should simultaneously be awarded a line of credit.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

Clearly, the first way to achieve success would be to address all of the barriers discussed above. Namely, this would include improved transparency and clearer communication with El Bono; and better organization, a reduction in bureaucracy, and greater access to credit with El Cucayo. In addition, a few returnees offered various

other suggestions. Fernando said that more migrants needed to be involved in administration, stating “las únicas personas que pueden hablar y estar sentado detrás de un escritorio en una institución pública como la SENAMI son los migrantes... Están haciendo cosas que ni siquiera tienen idea... la migración sabemos nosotros, no ellos.”

Gina argued that the program would be better if SENAMI helped migrants before their actual return, rather than upon their return. Marcelo said that if the beneficiaries' businesses, such as his printing company, provided work that the government needed, then the government should contract with them for that work. Lorena also mentioned this, stating that the government should contract her cleaning company for work cleaning government offices. This would seem to make a lot of sense, and taking these suggestions into account could provide for better financial results for returning migrants.

### **Conclusions**

Regardless of its success in actually bringing migrants home or in improving Ecuador's economy, the Plan has succeeded in at least one aspect which may be considered priceless: the emotional impact. Gina said that the Plan “me ayudó psicológicamente más que nada... el momento en que el Cucayo me recibió en el Plan Bienvenid@s fue tan bonito psicológicamente... fue psicológicamente bueno porque creo que si no pasaba lo del Cucayo me hubiera regresado a Francia.” Lorena agreed that when she returned it was “un lindo retorno, bienvenido a casa, cuando apenas abrieron la puerta del avión dijo ‘bienvenido a casa.’”

José further argued that the best aspect of the Plan was that “hubo un apoyo, cómo decir, humano ¿no? Darnos la bienvenida, de encaminarnos correctamente, ser amables, respetuosos, hacernos sentir bienvenidos.” Gabriela summed this up well, stating: “uno se llora de alegría, que estoy en mi país y alguien me tome en cuenta,

haciendo la buena llegada. O sea, le da la autoestima a una, le levanta no, y eso le da fuerzas para salir adelante.” This success may create greater ‘buzz’ about the Plan abroad and help to garner support for the current government.

Although it is possible that no government program, no matter how big its incentives, could influence migrant decision-making to the same degree as the factors discussed in Chapter Two, the Plan has the potential to increase its appeal and impact in various ways. By improving awareness and adding incentives such as employment services to non-entrepreneurs, the government could attract a larger number of migrants. Whether the government is interested in attracting all types of migrants rather than just entrepreneurs is something that is up for discussion.

However, by addressing the barriers discussed above and taking into account the suggestions of the return migrants in my investigation, the government could improve the possibilities for these migrants’ success. If these migrants are able to achieve financial success upon return, then the government will have succeeded in its effort toward an improved economy, and it will also incite a larger return from migrants abroad who view this success as an indication that return may be a viable option.

## CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSIONS

To revisit my research questions, I set out to understand which factors most significantly influence the decision-making process of return migrants to Ecuador in an effort to understand why some migrants return when they do while others do not return at all. In addition, I set out to investigate how or if Ecuador's Plan Bienvenid@s a Casa impacts this decision-making process. In this chapter, I summarize the implications of my research, the limitations of my research, and suggestions for future research. Then I discuss what may be the future of migration in Ecuador, as deduced from comments by the return migrants and family members of potential return migrants.

### **Analysis of Research**

#### **Implications of the Research**

My research provides insight into the Ecuadorian migrant experience, and suggests potentially universal themes in return migration. Regarding motives for migration, most migrants identified financial reasons. Regarding the choice of destination, migrants took into account legal status, language, and social connections. The majority of migrants do not leave with the intention of staying forever. Yet some stay longer than they plan, and others end up never returning. My research suggests some preliminary factors which seem to affect the decision of how long to stay or whether to return.

Regarding host country factors, level of integration into the host society was somewhat important, with those with a lower level of integration returning home and those with a higher level of integration staying abroad. Language was also an important factor, with those having purportedly better host-country language skills staying abroad

and those having less developed language skills returning home. Legal status played a role as well, with those having some type of legal status staying abroad and those without legal documentation returning home. Financial status was also important, as those who were responsible for providing remittances to family back home were more likely to stay abroad. There was no clear trend regarding discrimination or poor treatment in the host society.

Regarding home country factors, there was a clear trend of positive opinions toward the current government among returning migrants. However, as similar information was not known for the potential return migrants, it is difficult to make a clear comparison. Nonetheless, political opinions do seem significant. For both sets of migrants, it was undeniable that the type and presence or absence of family played the most important role in the decision-making process. As emphasized in Chapter Two, my findings support those of other researchers, particularly those found in the literature review section in Chapter One, but they also provide a more nuanced understanding of each issue.

My study thus shows that migrants take into account either a combination or all of the above factors (aside from discrimination, where the relationship was unclear) when deciding when or if to return to Ecuador. Although qualitative data is not usually generalizable, common sense tells us that these aspects are potentially universal themes related to the decision-making process of return migration, particularly among similar migrant-sending countries.

Although I went into the field with the assumption that the effect of Plan Bienvenid@s a Casa on the return decision-making process would be greater, my

research shows that for most return migrants, the decision to return was not affected by the Plan. Also, the decision of the potential return migrants would most likely not be affected either. Most felt that the benefits offered were simply not enough to make an impact, as the decision-making factors listed above were much more important to the return process.

My conclusions are therefore that the Plan is not cost-effective as the government would most likely need to provide much greater incentives to impact the decision to return. The costs of this would be prohibitive, so the viability of building a developing strategy around encouraging return migration is questionable. As Margheritis (2011) states, “the reliance of the Ecuadorian economy on remittances as a second source of foreign exchange, and the limited capacity to offer jobs and good wages to potential returnees, cast doubts on the viability and desirability of such a plan” (213).

The government should focus its efforts on aiding all returning migrants to be more successful upon return, rather than simply offering incentives which, no matter how large, may never actually work. So why have the Plan at all? As the Plan has not been effective in impacting migrant decision-making, and as it may not achieve its aim of improving the economy and could actually cause economic harm, it would seem that it would be in the government’s best interest to discontinue it.

However, effective or not, the Plan will most likely stay in place. This is due to Correa’s goal of “linking migration to national problems and a human rights-centered discourse as a way of strengthening the identity of his political coalition” (Margheritis 2011: 207). Because the Plan plays into the Correa’s larger desire to solidify support

both at home and abroad, it may stick around for quite some time. So if the Plan is going to remain in place, improvements should be made.

Efforts are needed to increase the visibility and awareness of the Plan, and this may help to increase the number of returners. One suggestion on how to improve the attractiveness of the Plan would involve offering employment assistance for migrants who are not entrepreneurs. Another would be to ensure the financial success of the returning migrants in order to appeal to potential return migrants. To achieve this financial success with recipients of El Bono, the government would need to improve transparency and communication regarding how the program works. To achieve success with El Cucayo, the government would need to improve program organization, decrease bureaucracy, increase access to credit, and promote the involvement of migrants within the ministry. These strategies could make the Plan more effective.

### **Limitations of the Research**

The clearest and most significant limitation of my research is the use of family members as a proxy for the migrants who continue to live abroad. I could potentially have interviewed the migrants themselves over the phone, but this would have been a very impersonal interaction where it would have been difficult to establish rapport. I also could have interviewed migrants in person who were still living abroad, but this would have been limited to the U.S. due to ease of access. That would have detracted from the international orientation of my research, and it could also have introduced more confidentiality issues regarding legal documentation.

It is for these reasons that I chose to use family members instead. However, this meant that all of the information I received regarding migrants abroad was second-hand, which could have reduced its validity; family members could have introduced their

own opinions instead of the actual migrants' opinions. Also, some family members had limited information about the migrants' experiences and opinions, which limited the scope of my research. Nonetheless, the information which they provided me still offers certain insights into migrant behavior, as outlined above.

Another limitation is the lack of controls. I did not control for age, sex, income, or occupation of the migrants, nor for year of departure, destination country, motives for leaving, or amount of time spent abroad. I did not control for the relationship between the family members and the migrants abroad, and I did not control for involvement in El Bono or El Cucayo among the return migrants. All of these factors could have led to the interviewees having very different experiences and motivations for return, and perhaps by controlling for specific traits I could have come up with clearer results.

I attempted to control for location by interviewing only those migrants who were from the capitol city of Quito. However, due to the difficulties I encountered in finding informants, I had to rely on subjects with whom contact was easier to establish in the eastern city of Tena. Also, although the family members of the migrants abroad were from Quito, not all of the actual migrants were originally from Quito. Migrant populations are mobile, and some had lived in Quito only temporarily. Of course, migrants from urban Quito and rural Tena, along with migrants from other towns and cities, could have very different motivations for return, and this could have skewed my results as well.

A significant limitation of my research is my lack of analysis of the implications of gender and migration. Gender impacts the experience of migration in various ways. Women are more likely to send remittances home (Ehrenreich 2007) and to be more emotionally affected by leaving children behind (*ibid.*). Women's orientation towards the

home and host country can also differ from that of men: women can often feel more liberated in the host country through increased employment and financial control, and thus they may shift their allegiance from the home country to the host country (Vertovec 2009, Herrera 2005). Or, particularly in the case of Ecuador, the opposite may be true: women may feel degraded by the type of work they are relegated to, which may negatively affect their self-esteem and shift their allegiance back home (Camacho Z. 2009, Herrera 2005).

All of these differences may impact the decision to return in different ways. I did not encounter any significant differences between the women and men in my study, but in any case, it would have added to the strength of my work had I taken into account what Herrera described in her work as “una serie de entretelones a través de los cuales las mujeres dan sentido a su experiencia migratoria: la compra de tierra, la vivienda, el rol de proovedora frente a los hijos; y tambien a través de lo cual se explican muchas de las percepciones acerca de su actual inserción laboral (Herrera 2005: 299).

Other limitations arise from the nature of collecting qualitative data both in general and as a foreign researcher. As an American graduate student who is not a member of the local community, it is possible that interviewees did not feel comfortable expressing their true ideas and opinions with me. Also, although I tried to allow for a great deal of flexibility in order to allow interviewees to express what they felt was most important, there were certain themes which I may have emphasized more heavily according to my own interests, and my results may therefore be subjective.

Additionally, while 30 interviews are substantial, having the time to interview a great deal more people could have provided clearer results. Unfortunately, qualitative

data is not normally generalizable, so my research cannot be extensively applied to the migrant experience as a whole. These are all limitations which could be addressed in future research.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

One suggestion for future research would involve using quantitative data by surveying a large amount of return migrants from Ecuador. The survey could involve a number of potential factors which may be taken into account when contemplating return, and migrants could label them on a scale of ‘most important’ to ‘least important.’ Of course, this would involve *a priori* assumptions about what factors are important to migrants, but my research could serve as a jumping off point of potential themes to investigate. A quantitative survey such as this could rank factors in importance of impact on return migrant decision-making.

Ecuador’s incentive program is unique and innovative, so it would be difficult to compare programs from different countries to see which ones are more successful than others. For this reason, it would be helpful to conduct the same type of study for migrants who are still abroad, ranking the factors which have played into the decision not to return (or to not yet return). Although many of these factors might be outside the government’s immediate control, understanding their importance could give the government insight into developing a program which would deal with the main constraints on returning. This would help them to streamline the program and focus on the most important aspects which might tip the balance of decision-making in favor of return.

Additionally, a qualitative study could be undertaken among migrants abroad to give their own suggestions of what type of incentives they would find most appealing,

rather than letting the government come up with incentives through an interpretation of the reasons migrants have not returned. Although there are constraints which might prevent these migrants from returning no matter the circumstances, understanding exactly what the migrants themselves would want in a program might increase the government's possibilities of bringing them home. However, it is also possible that Ecuador may eventually find that bringing migrants home has poor economic consequences in the long run, and they may decide to abandon the Plan altogether.

A final suggestion for building upon my research would involve a cross-country comparison. It would be interesting to undertake qualitative research in other countries involving in-depth interviews of return migrants and migrants who continue to live abroad in order to understand why some return and others don't. The factors involved in the decision-making process regarding return could be very different for migrants from Europe or Africa, for example. The factors could also be different for migrants in specific destination countries. In addition, they could be different for migrants whose initial decision to leave was involuntary (such as political refugees or migrants fleeing conflict or natural disaster). Comparing the experiences of differing types of migrants across many different borders could provide insight into universal themes of return migration.

### **The Future of Migration in Ecuador**

What is going to happen to migration in Ecuador now that the government has made it clear that it hopes potential migrants will decide to stay rather than go abroad? Is the culture of migration changing? Do Ecuadorians still see migrating abroad as their best option for getting ahead in life? While the streams of migration will most likely be much smaller than those resulting from the economic crisis of the late 1990s and early

2000s, migration is still seen as a possibility for many Ecuadorians, as evidenced by my groups of interviewees.

### **Return Migrants**

Slightly more than half of the return migrants stated that they would not consider migrating again, no matter what. Tellingly, the majority of these migrants were the same ones who had achieved some type of positive financial results since returning. Charlie said “sí pienso salir pero de paseo, ya irme no, ya nos compramos una casa, mi hijo está en la escuela pública... ya no me regresaría. En vez de adelantar, sería retroceder.” Gabriela said “de aquí no me devolviera a ningún país, ya me quedará aquí.”

When asked if she would leave, Susana said “no, porque si tengo mi negocio, tengo que estar, no puedo abandonar. Para el negocio tiene que estar el dueño, si no, no funciona... Algun momento voy a salir pero de turista, a regresar, pero ya quedarme en otro país no.” Gina said “estoy contentísima, jamás me volvería... Yo me quedo aquí, volví para quedarme.” Fernando felt strongly about staying in Ecuador, stating “yo aquí me muero ya, aquí no salgo nunca.”

About a third of the migrants stated emphatically that their desire is to stay in Ecuador, but that due to circumstances they cannot rule out leaving again. Jorge said “quiero quedarme en Ecuador pero hay que ver cómo están las circunstancias económicas. Tengo dos hijas, quieren ir a la universidad. Si es que no alcanza hay que buscar trabajo, si hay que hacerlo afuera del Ecuador voy.”

Elsa said “vine a quedarme, de aquí no me quiero ir nunca... quiero luchar hasta el final. Pero no se descarta la idea de irme, digo si al final no puedo conseguir, hay que hacerlo lamentablemente.” Marcelo argued that “no podemos decir no, no

podemos decir ya no, nadie sabe lo que pasará en el futuro, no sabemos, pero mi propósito es darle aquí.” José echoed this, stating “eso tengo planteado quedarme aquí ahora, mi prioridad es establecerme aquí. Pero uno no se puede decir nunca.”

Two of the return migrants expressed some sense of regret about their return to Ecuador, and although they had no direct plans to leave again, they seemed to be fairly open to it. Rosalba felt stronger about potentially leaving. She has had difficulties with El Bono and has achieved limited financial success since returning. She said “si sabía que iba a tener tanta traba tal vez me quedaba en EEUU... Si sabía que iba a estar así parada, probablemente no hubiera venido, no... si otra oportunidad tengo de irme... no puedo quedarme, 5 meses sin ingresos.”

Magdalena, whose financial success was in the ‘mixed’ category, said “creo que me quedo aquí ya por mi familia, voy a tratar, tengo un negocio, es muy difícil botar un negocio y ya salir... si no tuviera mi negocio, me fuera otra vez por oportunidades... tal vez la única cosa que me mantiene aquí es mi familia y el plan de seguir con mi empresa.” Given the right circumstances, these migrants would no doubt migrate again.

Two of the migrants stated that although they would not consider leaving Ecuador again, they could imagine their children doing so. Lorena said “las que saldrán me imagino que serán mis hijas, nosotros no.” Roberto said “creo que nos quedamos aquí en Ecuador, no se ha pensado de ninguna manera regresar, si a lo mejor qué sé yo, mis hijas por hacer un posgrado, algo, pero de allí no, más por estudio podría salir allí pero no por otra cosa, otro motivo no.” These migrants felt that they had already ‘done their time’ abroad, and did not want to start over again.

It appears that the majority of return migrants strongly desire to stay in Ecuador and will purportedly not choose to re-migrate. However, the cycle of migration may continue through the return migrants' children and perhaps even through those migrants themselves who see re-migration as a viable option under specific circumstances. Now we will look at those who have been impacted second-hand by migration. Having seen their family members leave home for long periods of time to potentially never return, would these interviewees consider leaving as well?

### **Family Members of Potential Return Migrants**

Only six of these interviewees stated that they would not consider migration as a possibility for themselves in the future. Karina said she would not think about leaving: "si voy es por paseo, no voy a trabajar, sino más a pasear." Miguel said he wouldn't leave because "nunca podría dejarles a mis papás, aunque me esté muriendo de hambre, nunca, acá vivimos muy humildemente pero a base del trabajo conseguimos."

When asked if she would leave, Consuelo said "no... Porque cada vez que salgo de mi país, cada vez quiero más a mi país." Paulina said "de vacaciones sí pero irme para allá no, he visto y he escuchado a personas que han sido tratados mal, que no han conseguido trabajo, han pasado una situación bastante difícil." Lucía said "no, jamás, a visitarle a mi hija sí, pero yo salir de mi país no." Francisco said "no, yo no salgo de mi país ni por nada, porque mi país es mi país."

A few of the family members, like the return migrants, said that it would depend on the circumstances. Jonathan said he would leave, but not permanently: "no a quedarme, sino que allá en España, bueno en Europa hay muchos posgrados excelentes para lo que yo estudio... no tengo en la cabeza ir a quedarme... extrañaría mi ciudad, mi país, todo, mis costumbres."

Cecilia said “de hecho por la experiencia de mi mamá no... no quiero irme a tener maltratada por ejemplo, cosas así... Ahorita te digo no lo haría, es que yo estoy segura de lo que digo en este momento, si en el futuro presenta una crisis como la que se presentó que fueron situaciones extremas no sé, lo pensaría.” Lenin said he had thought about it previously but had changed his mind after meeting his girlfriend: “antes de conocerle a ella sí tenía planteado irme allá con ellos, pero ya le conocí, ahora sí ha cambiado.” Perhaps if his girlfriend were able to go as well, he would reconsider the decision to leave.

A few of the family members of potential return migrants were openly enthusiastic about the idea of leaving. Luis said that he would absolutely leave if it weren’t for his elderly parents. When asked if he would leave, Victor said “sí, definitivamente sí, estoy a punto, a punto de irme porque en verdad es por 2 razones, porque sí creo que encuentras mejores cosas allá, mejores empleos, y porque me encanta la idea de aprender otro idioma... me quedaría por siempre y volvería al Ecuador de vacaciones.”

For now at least, Ecuadorians will continue to leave their country, for better or worse. In fact, the 2006 INEC study reported that throughout Ecuador, over 15% of households had at least one member who was currently considering migration (INEC 2008: 46). This problem is not going away, and the government will continue to face the decision of what to do about it.

### **Conclusion**

Although there exists a large amount of literature regarding the decision-making process of migrants who have left their home countries, there is decidedly less published information about the decision to return. My research has attempted to

address this shortage by answering the question of why certain Ecuadorian migrants go home when they do and why others continue to live abroad. It has also attempted to answer the question of whether a government incentive program, in this case Ecuador's Plan Bienvenid@s a Casa, can influence this decision-making process.

I have shown that integration, language, legal status, and financial situation in the destination country; opinions toward the home government; and a migrant's family situation affect the decision to stay or return much more strongly than the government program. The Plan had little to no impact on the decision-making process of the majority of return migrants, which leads me to conclude that the Plan as it stands is not cost-effective.

I have offered suggestions of how this program could be more successful as well as suggestions for future research which could build upon this investigation in order to better understand the phenomenon of return migration. As incentives to migrate are likely to remain strong; as transnational ties to home continue to grow; and as the mobility of migrants is likely to only increase over time, the study of return migration is an important field of research which deserves greater attention. Hopefully this investigation, and the migrant experiences it shares, have succeeded in demonstrating that importance.

## APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

Estimado/a participante,

Soy estudiante de maestría en el programa de Estudios Latinoamericanos en la Universidad de Florida. Como parte de la investigación de mi tesis me gustaría entrevistarle para aprender cómo los migrantes de retorno y los migrantes de retorno potenciales conceptualizan los costos y beneficios de la migración de retorno, específicamente a través del *Plan Bienvenid@S a Casa* de Ecuador. Le estoy pidiendo su participación porque Usted ha sido identificado/a como fuente de información valiosa.

La entrevista no durará más que una hora. Usted no tendrá que dar respuestas a ninguna pregunta si no se siente cómodo/a. La entrevista será conducida en privado. Con su permiso, la entrevista será grabada para facilitar la colección de los datos. Sólo yo tendré acceso a la grabación, la cual yo personalmente transcribiré, eliminando todos los identificadores. Después, la grabación será borrada. Su identidad se quedará confidencial en todos momentos según las leyes de los EE.UU., y no será relevada en mi proyecto final.

No hay riesgos anticipados ni compensación ni beneficios que Usted recibirá como participante en la entrevista. Usted puede retirar su consentimiento o terminar su participación en cualquier momento sin consecuencias.

Si Usted tiene preguntas sobre este proceso, por favor contácteme por email a krystalanderson@ufl.edu o a mi asesor la Dra. Carmen Diana Deere a deere@ufl.edu. Se puede dirigir preguntas o preocupaciones sobre sus derechos como participante a la oficina de IRB02, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611; (352) 392-0433.

Atentamente,

Krystal Anderson

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – RETURN MIGRANTS

### Datos Generales

1. ¿Me podría decir su nombre? ¿Y su fecha de nacimiento?
2. ¿Hace cuánto tiempo que se volvió al Ecuador? ¿Dónde vivía antes? ¿Cuándo se fue para allá? ¿Cuánto tiempo vivió allá?

### Decisión de Irse

3. ¿Qué estaba haciendo aquí en Ecuador antes de irse?
4. ¿Cuándo empezó a pensar en irse del país?
5. ¿Cuáles fueron algunas de las razones por las cuales decidió irse?
6. ¿Con quién habló de su decisión?
7. ¿Por qué el país que escogió y no otros?

### Experiencia Afuera

8. ¿Tenía familia/amigos allá?
9. ¿Con quién vivía?
10. ¿Qué estaba haciendo allá? ¿Escuela? ¿Trabajo? ¿Qué tipo de trabajo?
11. ¿Cómo fue su situación financiera antes de dejar al Ecuador? ¿Cambió mientras vivía afuera?
12. ¿Estaba involucrado en mandar remesas?
13. ¿Se sentía como forastero/desconocido en el país anfitrión? ¿Por qué sí o no?  
¿Se asimiló?
14. ¿Cómo manejaba el lenguaje?
15. ¿Cómo le trataban los que vivían en el país?
16. ¿Fue fácil hacerse amigos con la gente de allá? ¿Encontró a una comunidad ecuatoriana?
17. ¿Había algunas costumbres de allá que no le gustaban? ¿Y otras que sí le gustaban?
18. ¿Cuáles fueron algunas de las cosas que extrañaba del Ecuador mientras que estaba afuera?
19. ¿Cuáles fueron algunas de las cosas que no extrañaba? O sea, ¿que estaba contento/a de dejar atrás?

### Decisión de Regresar

20. Cuando se fue, ¿planeaba quedarse afuera para siempre? ¿Se quedó el tiempo que planeaba? ¿O más? ¿Menos? ¿Por qué?
21. ¿Cuándo empezó a pensar en regresar al Ecuador?
22. ¿Cuáles fueron algunas de las razones por las cuales consideraba volver?
23. ¿Con quién habló de su decisión?
24. ¿Había algunas razones por las cuales no quería volver? ¿Como qué?

### Los Beneficios

25. ¿Cómo se enteró del Plan Bienvenidos a Casa?
26. ¿Cómo afectó su decisión de volver?
27. ¿Cuáles fueron algunos de los beneficios que utilizó?
28. ¿Cómo fueron sus interacciones con SENAMI?
29. ¿Tenía fe que el gobierno iba a cumplir con lo prometido?
30. ¿Cree que se hubiera vuelto sin los beneficios de la SENAMI?

### **Situación Actual**

31. ¿Qué hace en el Ecuador ahora? ¿Qué tipo de trabajo? ¿Son esquiles que aprendió afuera?
32. ¿Cómo ha cambiado su situación financiera desde que se volvió al Ecuador?
33. ¿Cómo ha sido su reinserción en la vida de aquí?
34. ¿Cuál tipo de reacción ha recibido después de volverse al Ecuador?
35. ¿Cree que su decisión de regresar fue buena? ¿Por qué sí o no?
36. ¿Cuánto tiempo piensa quedarse en el Ecuador ahora?
37. ¿Se ve volviendo afuera otra vez? ¿Si sí, cuáles serían algunas de las razones?
38. ¿Hay algunas cosas que extraña de donde vivía afuera?
39. ¿Hay algunas cosas que no extraña?

### **Preguntas Generales**

40. ¿Tiene algunos pensamientos generales sobre la emigración hacia afuera?
41. ¿Qué cree que son los beneficios de emigrar? ¿Y los costos?
42. Para mi proyecto estoy entrevistando a migrantes de retorno y migrantes de retorno potenciales. ¿Tendría Usted información de contacto para otros migrantes que han vuelto al Ecuador o para las familias de algunos migrantes que siguen afuera?

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – POTENTIAL RETURN MIGRANTS

### Datos Generales

1. ¿Me podría decir su nombre? ¿Y su fecha de nacimiento?
2. ¿Qué hace usted aquí en Ecuador?
3. ¿Quién en la familia está viviendo fuera?
4. ¿En qué lugar?
5. ¿Cuándo se fue para allá?
6. ¿Qué estaba haciendo aquí en Ecuador antes de irse?

### Decisión de Irse

7. ¿Cuándo empezó a pensar en irse del país?
8. ¿Cuáles fueron algunas de las razones por las cuales decidió irse?
9. ¿Con quién habló sobre su decisión?
10. ¿Por qué el país que escogió y no otros?

### Experiencia Afuera

11. ¿Tiene familia/amigos allá?
12. ¿Con quién vive?
13. ¿Qué está haciendo allá? ¿Escuela? ¿Trabajo? ¿Qué tipo de trabajo?
14. ¿Cómo fue su situación financiera antes de dejar al Ecuador? ¿Se ha cambiado?
15. ¿Manda remesas?
16. ¿Conoce mucho sobre su experiencia de vivir afuera? ¿Se ha asimilado?
17. ¿Cómo maneja el lenguaje?
18. ¿Cómo le tratan los que viven en el país?

### Experiencia Aquí

19. ¿Qué pensó de su decisión de irse?
20. ¿Cómo ha afectado a la familia?
21. ¿Otros se han ido?
22. ¿Usted ha pensado en irse del país? ¿Por qué sí o no?

### Decisión de Regresar

23. ¿Planea quedarse afuera para siempre? ¿Se ha quedado más tiempo que esperaba? ¿Por qué?
24. ¿Ha pensado en regresar al Ecuador?
25. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las razones por las cuales ha considerado volverse?
26. ¿Por qué todavía no se ha vuelto?

### Los Beneficios

27. ¿Conoce mucho sobre el Plan Bienvenidos a Casa?

28. ¿Cree que ha afectado la decisión de otros migrantes de volver? ¿Qué podrían hacer para afectar la decisión?
29. ¿La gente tiene fe que el gobierno pueda cumplir con lo prometido?

#### **Preguntas Generales**

30. ¿Tiene algunos pensamientos generales sobre la emigración hacia afuera?
31. ¿Qué cree que son los beneficios de emigrar? ¿Y los costos?
32. Para mi proyecto estoy entrevistando a migrantes de retorno y migrantes de retorno potenciales. ¿Tendría Usted información de contacto para otros migrantes que han vuelto al ecuador o para las familias de algunos migrantes que siguen afuera?

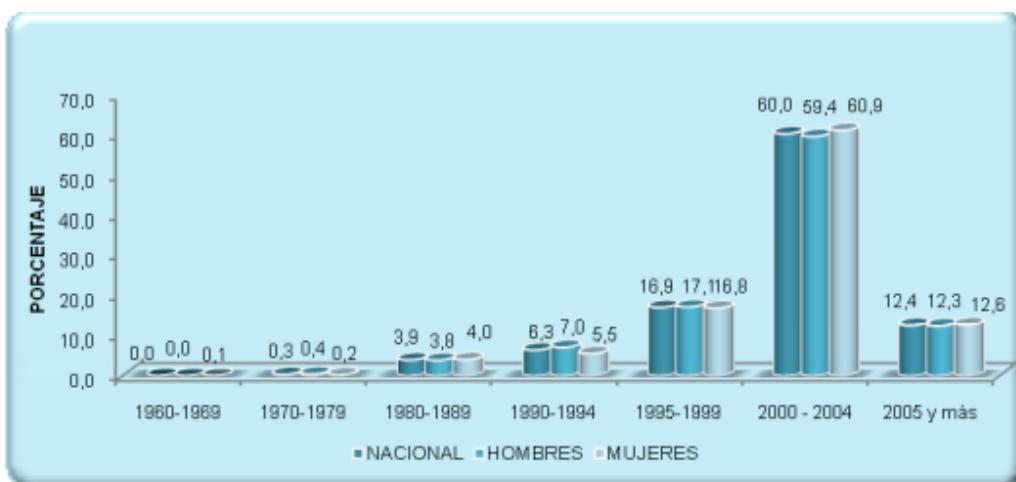
## APPENDIX D: ESTIMATES OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION FROM ECUADOR

Table A-1. International migration from Ecuador, 1976-2007.

Año	Entrada		Salida		Saldo migratorio	
	Hombre	Mujer	Hombre	Mujer	Hombre	Mujer
1976	48.608	43.410	61.968	55.424	13.360	12.014
1977	55.695	53.024	68.363	62.058	12.668	9.034
1978	63.378	61.627	76.480	71.381	13.102	9.754
1979	68.773	65.755	82.028	73.502	13.255	7.747
1980	74.954	71.246	81.562	79.038	6.608	7.792
1981	72.334	71.541	77.430	76.300	5.096	4.759
1982	57.755	55.168	61.345	58.135	3.590	2.967
1983	47.164	41.998	54.390	46.320	7.226	4.322
1984	53.702	46.792	61.009	54.253	7.307	7.461
1985	58.867	53.224	71.429	62.820	12.562	9.596
1986	68.520	62.474	81.524	71.465	13.004	8.991
1987	75.223	68.362	84.561	75.964	9.338	7.602
1988	68.719	60.028	86.232	69.604	17.513	9.576
1989	79.387	66.683	95.196	77.084	15.809	10.401
1990	85.966	71.701	98.396	82.810	12.430	11.109
1991	94.559	77.693	109.057	89.075	14.498	11.382
1992	103.575	86.795	118.189	98.081	14.614	11.286
1993	111.144	93.565	131.203	104.189	20.059	10.624
1994	127.257	105.089	149.116	120.579	21.859	15.490
1995	127.755	109.611	144.764	125.748	17.009	16.137
1996	131.453	113.303	146.564	127.972	15.111	14.669
1997	155.283	134.409	168.270	152.353	12.987	17.944
1998	127.775	106.485	146.281	128.714	18.506	22.229
1999	158.693	135.854	203.870	181.785	45.177	45.931
2000	187.616	156.436	279.639	240.335	92.023	83.899
2001	229.481	194.256	297.775	264.292	68.294	70.036
2002	239.988	221.408	322.087	304.524	82.099	83.116
2003	250.078	235.893	316.104	297.002	66.026	61.109
2004	272.764	256.148	316.909	286.410	44.145	30.262
2005	317.898	280.824	355.618	305.181	37.720	24.357
2006	331.140	325.169	381.586	359.247	50.446	34.078
2007	373.897	378.787	397.718	397.365	23.819	18.576

Source: FLACSO-UNFPA 2008.

Table A-2. International migration from Ecuador by periods.



Source: INEC 2008.

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