

# MASTER THESIS

## LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STUDIES

How do remittances and gender constitute each other in the transnational circuits that connect Cuenca in Ecuador and New York City in the United States?

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the mutual constitution of gender and remittances throughout the transnational migration circuits between Cuenca, Ecuador and New York City, the US. The thesis aims to explicate how gender determines remittances and to what extent remittances challenge gender roles and relations in the sending society. It is based upon a multi-sited research carried out in Cuenca and New York. I argue that both approaches are demonstrated (Hondagneu- Sotelo, 1992). The gender patterns proved to affect significantly several aspects of remittance process (Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Orozco et al., 2006): gendered labor access (Hondagneu- Sotelo, 2003), parenthood (Pribilsky, 2012), gendered consumption preferences (Guzmán et al., 2006), source, propensity (Abrego, 2009), and sending and receiving patterns, which are also determined by trust in the relationships. Transnational migration proved to foment the potential to challenge gender relations (Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991). On the one hand, migration forces individuals affected by the migration process out of traditional roles: it provides female migrants with greater work prospects and non-migrants with an opportunity to increase their autonomy and emancipation (Ghosh, 2009), and confronts migrants with a society that displays general differences in cultural representations including gender patterns. On the other hand, the potential of change (Lopez-Ekra, 2011) may be deadened due to the traditional power asymmetries in individual relationships resisting change or upon arrival (De Haas, 2007) due to rigid homeland society.

**KEY WORDS:** transnational migration, remittances, gender patterns, Ecuador, New York City

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## OUTLINE

<b>ABSTRACT</b> -----	<b>2</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> -----	<b>3</b>
<b>OUTLINE</b> -----	<b>4</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> -----	<b>6</b>
<b>1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b> -----	<b>9</b>
1.1. TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION-----	9
1.2. TRANSNATIONALISM-----	10
1.3. GENDER-----	10
1.4. GENDER AND MIGRATION-----	11
1.5. REMITTANCES-----	13
1.6. GENDER AND REMITTANCES-----	14
<b>2. TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION PATTERNS</b> -----	<b>19</b>
2.1. THE PROFILE OF THE ECUADORIAN EMIGRANT TO NEW YORK-----	19
2.1.1. <i>MOTIVATIONS TO EMIGRATE</i> -----	19
2.1.2. <i>EXPECTATIONS OF MIGRATION</i> -----	20
2.1.3. <i>HOW MIGRANTS ASSES THE HOST COUNTRY ENVIRONMENT</i> -----	21
2.2. EMIGRATION FROM ECUADOR-----	21
2.3. ECUADORIAN COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK CITY-----	23
2.3.1. <i>COMMUNITY LIFE, INSTITUTIONALIZATION, AND LOCALIZATION</i> -----	23
2.3.2. <i>TRADITIONS</i> -----	24
<b>3. GENDER PATTERNS</b> -----	<b>25</b>
3.1. GENDER PATTERNS IN THE RESEARCHED AREA-----	25
3.2. RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS-----	26
3.3. CUENCA-----	27
3.4. OUTSKIRTS OF CUENCA-----	28
<b>4. HOW GENDER SHAPES REMITTANCES</b> -----	<b>31</b>
4.1. ACCESS TO REMITTANCES-----	32
4.2. SOURCE OF REMITTANCES-----	32
4.2.1. <i>WORK OPPORTUNITIES</i> -----	32
4.2.2. <i>LIVING RESTRICTIONS</i> -----	33
4.3. PROPENSITY TO REMIT-----	33
4.3.1. <i>PROPENSITY OF REMITTING MOTHERS</i> -----	34
4.3.2. <i>PROPENSITY OF REMITTING FATHERS</i> -----	34
4.3.3. <i>MALE MIGRANTS REMIT TO SHOW OFF</i> -----	36
4.3.4. <i>THE CONSEQUENCES OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP</i> -----	36
4.4. SENDING PATTERNS-----	37
4.4.1. <i>COUPLES REMIT TO PARENTS</i> -----	37
4.4.2. <i>MARRIED MALE MIGRANTS REMIT ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF TRUST</i> -----	38
4.4.3. <i>SINGLE MALE MIGRANTS REMIT TO FAMILY MEMBERS</i> -----	39
4.4.4. <i>SINGLE FEMALE MIGRANTS REMIT TO PARENTS</i> -----	39
4.5. RECEIVING PATTERNS-----	40
4.5.1. <i>WOMEN IN POSITION OF THE REMITTANCE MANAGERS</i> -----	40
4.5.2. <i>WOMEN IN POSITION OF THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD</i> -----	41
4.5.3. <i>IMPACTS OF REMITTANCES ON TRANSNATIONAL PARENTHOOD</i> -----	42
4.6. DESTINATION OF REMITTANCES-----	43
4.7. SUMMARY-----	44
<b>5. HOW REMITTANCES SHAPE GENDER</b> -----	<b>45</b>
5.1. WIVES WHO STAY BEHIND WHILE THEIR HUSBAND MIGRATES-----	46

5.1.1.	WOMEN GAIN GREATER AUTONOMY	46
5.2.	MALE MIGRANTS IN THE HOST SOCIETY	47
5.2.1.	MEN PERFORM DOMESTIC DUTIES	48
5.2.2.	MEN MANIPULATE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH REMITTANCES	48
5.2.3.	MEN DEEM ECUADORIAN WOMEN LOSE VALUES IN THE HOST SOCIETY	49
5.2.4.	U.S. LEGAL PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	50
5.2.5.	BEING A TRANSNATIONAL PROVIDER AWAKES ADMIRATION AND RESPECT	50
5.3.	MIGRANT COUPLES IN THE HOST SOCIETY	51
5.3.1.	COUPLES NEGOTIATE HOUSEHOLD ROLES	51
5.3.2.	THE IMPACT OF FEMALE FINANCIAL SUCCESS ON MANHOOD	52
5.3.3.	CO-LIVING	52
5.4.	PARALLEL RELATIONSHIPS	53
5.5.	RETURN	55
5.5.1.	MIGRATION CHANGES PARTNERS AND RETURN TO HOMELAND IMPLIES A CONFLICT IN THE COUPLE	55
5.5.2.	HOW THE MIGRATION EXPERIENCE CHANGES INDIVIDUALS	56
5.6.	SUMMARY	56
<b>6.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>ANNEXES</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>WEBSITES</b>	<b>70</b>

## INTRODUCTION

Ecuador is the smallest of the South American Andean countries, bordered by Peru in the south and Colombia in the north. In addition to the population slightly exceeding fifteen million people, many Ecuadorian citizens work abroad as immigrants in the United States, in Spain and in Italy. Ecuadorians living abroad represent ten to fifteen percent of the national population. Ecuadorian emigrants have become such a significant group that the current Ecuadorian President, Rafael Correa, addresses Ecuadorians living abroad as the nation's Fifth Region or *Quinta Región*. Since the 1960s, Ecuadorians have been going north towards better life, settling down in the United States and establishing a migration network. The emigration flow was accelerated in the 1990s due to economic and political shocks followed by the dollarization in 2000. Migrants settle down in the host society but at the same time tend to sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. The transnational ties connecting Cuenca and New York City provide the arena for the subject of this thesis.

The thesis analyzes the relationship between remittances and gender: how do the practice of remittances and the conceptualization of gender mutually constitute in transnational circuits that connect the two locations. Remittances refer to transactions of different character that are initiated by individuals living or working outside their countries of birth or origin and related to their migration. We can look on remittances from a broader perspective, from different disciplines or from different angles. It makes sense to study remittances from the perspective of gender since gender is pertinent to migration, conditioning the migration process and at the same time being shaped by it (Blue, 2004; De Haas, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2011; Mahler & Pessar, 2003). This is a current debate within transnational migration studies where consensus on this issue hasn't been reached so far. The scholarship furcates into two broader concepts, gender being the central organizing principle for the flows of remittances (Abrego, 2009; Ghosh, 2009; Guzmán et al., 2008; Orozco et al., 2006) or remittances being the transformative force of gender relations leading to a permanent shift in the gender patterns (Ghosh, 2009; Kunz, 2008; Lopez-Ekra, 2011). It is necessary to say that neither of the approaches is exclusive - in practice, one may prevail but both at the same time shape the reality (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). Moreover, literature on migration analyzing gender focuses mostly on Mexicans and Central Americans living in the US (Dreby, 2009), hence the scholarship on South Americans needs to be expanded. Both facts, the actuality of the topic and Ecuador being an underexplored region, justify my decision to investigate how remittances and gender constitute each other in the transnational circuits that connect Cuenca in Ecuador and New York City in the United States.

In order to find an answer to the research question, I conducted an ethnographical multi-sited qualitative research fieldwork, multi-sited ethnography being indispensable for studying transnational

migration where people's lives are conducted across borders. It is the only way in which a researcher may get to know properly, observe and assess both fields. Transnational scholars make increasing use of multi-sited ethnography, not only because it justifies simultaneous research in different geographic localities and social sites, but also because it provides insights into the complexity of transnational phenomena. Last but not least, multi-sited research also allowed me to properly develop personal relationships in both sites and hence obtain data of a more intimate and reliable character. The exceptionality of this thesis lies in the fact that it covers a wide spectrum of findings and relevant information. I deliberately composed the thesis in this manner with the aim to present all-embracing range of explorative data. Having accomplished the objective, I am aware of the fact that it was impossible to reach an ethnographic richness at the same time.

Firstly, I spent thirteen weeks in Cuenca, a city located in the province of Azuay in the southern Ecuadorian highlands and then I moved to New York where I stayed four weeks. I conducted formal and informal in-depth interviews, repetitive interviews, in couple and group interviews. I contacted and visited institutions related to migration, volunteered in an NGO that focuses on fighting poverty in Ecuador, visited migrant villages, participated in cultural events, frequented an organization that works with both documented and undocumented migrants in New York and participated in religious life. The activities I engaged in enabled me to establish a net of personal contacts in the area that helped me to contact local priests and to identify the initial informants, since hanging up posters in migration institutions inviting for an interview proved useless and then the following informants were recruited via a snowball effect. I stayed with an Ecuadorian family on the outskirts of Cuenca for a while and in New York City I lived the whole time with illegal migrants from Cuenca, a family and one man. The formal research instruments were supplemented by ethnographic observations in all research sites.

I accomplished 46 interviews with people involved in the migration process and 3 interviews with key informants. In the first research site, 29 in-depth interviews were carried out with remittance receptors, returnees and local key informants. In order to obtain a representative sample that comprises a wide spectrum of Azuay population, I investigated not only in the metropolitan area of Cuenca but also on the outskirts in Gualaceo and parish Checa. A further 17 interviews were conducted with remittance senders in the second research site. Interviews in Ecuador were realized both formally with key informants and informally in a comfortable atmosphere, usually a cafeteria or bar and more than ten respondents invited me to their homes. In New York the situations were different; at first I approached random people in the street, in laundromat, outside the church, or by the vending carts selling Ecuadorian empanadas. However, people distrusted me and had no spare time for a deeper conversation, thus I decided to approach them by presenting my research at the meetings of Make The Road organization with permission and backup of its workers who I previously had explained the research purpose and dynamics. In both sites I made an extra effort to interview

female migrants and female remittances managers however the sex of the respondents ended up being disproportional (34 male to 12 female).

My interview questionnaire contained many questions that were related to migration experience: motivation, expectations, accommodation, work, free time, what they value and disdain about their lives in New York and Ecuadorian community; to remittances: dyads, amounts, frequency, communication, management of remittance spending and the uses to which remittances were directed; and to gender: original gender patterns, gender labor division, gender patterns in New York City, newly acquired roles and skills, parenthood, parallel relationships, and the change of gender patterns before and after migration. Interviews were conducted mostly in Spanish and seldom in English. Where possible, interviews were recorded and transcribed otherwise ample notes were taken. Besides interviewing, I was able to live with Ecuadorian families in both research sites, observing how they interacted with their partners and children. Unfortunately I had no knowledge of their behavior prior to migration experience as a source for comparison.

The thesis is organized as follows. In the first chapter I review the theoretical framework of the relationship between transnational migration and gender, paying particular attention to the role of remittances in these phenomena as the core of the thesis; I draw the complexity of the subject in the two aforementioned broader approaches. Next comes the empirical part, beginning with the migratory settings of the researched area and of its original gender patterns in the next chapter. The following fourth chapter examines the first approach, how gender structures remittances: remittances access, source, propensity, destination, and sending and receiving patterns. The last chapter of the empirical part, the fifth, explains how remittances shape gender patterns in Azuay province, elaborating the situation of stayed-behind women, male migrants, couples who migrate, parallel relationship and migrants' return. In the final part I draw conclusions, evaluating how gender is reflected in remittances and the extent to which remittance dynamics has the potential to challenge gender norms in sending society of Azuay province. The chapters are divided into sections with verbatim narratives from the respondents in italics and factual vignettes serve to further illustrate the matter.

*“La vida es la guerra: peleando vivimos, peleando moriremos,  
y si fuera por nosotros, la tumba sería un campo de batalla.”*

Juan Montalvo (1832-1889)

Ecuadorian author and essayist



## 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To understand the core of the thesis it is important to purposefully introduce the theoretical background of gender and remittances phenomena in the field of transnational migration. The theoretical framework is one chapter divided into six sections. The first two explain transnational migration and transnationalism. The following two focus more narrowly on the gender system in the researched area and then on the articulation of gender and migration since gender is a critical force shaping migrations. In the fifth section I introduce remittance transfers as gendered processes and in the last section I delve deeper into the intertwinement of gender and remittances. The theoretical part culminates in debate on how gender and remittances determine each other thus this is where my research is located. Later, in the empirical part it will become clear that the theoretical concepts mentioned in this chapter are relevant to the investigation through their demonstration in the context of migration from Cuenca to New York City.

### 1.1. TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION

Migration has never been a one-way process of assimilation into a melting pot or a multicultural salad bowl but one in which migrants, to varying degrees, are simultaneously embedded in the multiple sites and layers of the transnational social fields in which they live. More and more aspects of social life take place across borders, even as the political and cultural salience of nation-state boundaries remains clear. Nevertheless, this view was reached throughout decades of researching the field of transnational studies. The earliest debates acknowledged two perspectives, both theorizing how to assimilate and acculturate new-coming migrants to the host society. Later on, in the 1990s abreast with the phenomenon of globalization, scholars showed deeper understanding and took another perspective into account. Schiller et al., 1992; Basch et al., 1994 argued that some migrants continued to be active in their homelands at the same time that they embed into the host society. Levitt (2001) and Portes et al. (1999) described how migrants and their descendants participate in familial, social, economic, religious, political, and cultural processes that extend across borders while they become part of the places where they settle. These allegiances are not antithetical to one another (Levitt, 2004) and are intermediated through new communication and transportation technologies that no matter what distance allow migrants to maintain more frequent, quicker and less expensive connections than before. The concept of multiple ties and interactions that link people or institutions across the borders of a nation-state is transnationalism (Vertovec 1999: 447).

## 1.2. TRANSNATIONALISM

Basch et al. (1994: 6) initially defined transnationalism as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. In the former years, scholars addressed transnationalism to approach migration, then in Portes et al. (1999) emphasized that it is the scale of intensity and simultaneity of current long-distance, cross-border activities which provide the recently emergent, distinctive and, in some contexts, now normative social structures and activities which should merit the term 'transnationalism' (Vertovec 1999: 448). Transnational studies represent a concerted effort to take a systematic and synthetic look at how governance, social movements, income-earning, and religious life change when enacted across borders and how we must rethink identity, belonging, and democracy in response (Khagram & Levitt, 2008). Another concept that needs to be studied within transnational contexts is gender, how gender relations are negotiated in transnational spaces and also how gender organizes them (Mahler & Pessar 2001: 441).

## 1.3. GENDER

In this section, I will shortly explain the term gender and provide insight into the gender patterns in Latin America and consequently in the researched area. This part is particularly important in order to further proceed to its articulation with other phenomena, migration, which is the main concern of this thesis.

Gender is an institutionalized system of social practices for constituting males and females as different in socially significant ways (Mahler & Pessar 2006: 29). Gender system is understood as an "ensemble of norms, values, customs and practices that are correlated with particular sex" (De Ferranti 2004: 82) is different in every culture. In Latin America, there is little consensus so far among anthropologists how to characterize gender systems or indeed whether this is possible (Toro-Morn, 2008). There has been a lot of literature dedicated to the topic I will not delve deeper into since it is not my particular focus. Generally, the literature suggests a strong cultural model concerning gender that, however, is not homogenous in different places in Latin America. Patterns usually tend to be patriarchal and in certain parts of the region we can observe the *marianismo-machismo* concept of gender roles as an outcome of many factors, historical, social, political, economic condition and traditionally deep-rooted Catholic religion. Derived from the model are traditional and commonly shared ideas that men entail to be economic providers for the family, authoritarian within the family, aggressive, promiscuous, virile, protective of women and children and agents for public affairs. By contrast, female role and behavior are expected to reach the model of The Virgin Mary; women should be sexually submissive to men, caregivers, moral authorities, and deal with private affairs at home (Torres, 1998). Researchers have labeled male gender identity *machismo* and female gender identity *marianismo* "when it conforms with adherence to rigid traditional roles" (Bull 1998: 2).

At the national level of Ecuador Meñaca (2005) analyzed patriarchal constraints and gender relations, he found that Ecuadorian families are generally nuclear; the woman usually cooks, takes care of children and maintains the house, while the man works away from home. There is a duality of public and private, productive and reproductive tasks that is classic of patriarchal society. Domestic violence is common and related to jealousy and alcoholism. Bull stated that gender patterns allow men “more freedom of movement, decision-making and power within the family, and the same one that places women in a position of subservience to male dominance with little opportunity for financial or emotional independence from men” (1998: 3). More specifically, in the researched Azuay province in the southern part of the country, the society is conservative in comparison to other parts of Ecuador and gender patterns tend to be traditional. Pribilsky, almost two decades afterwards, carried out research in Azuay and concluded, “women and children are to obey husbands and fathers, allowing them to rule as they wish as long as they provide for the household” (2004: 318). More evidence from southern Ecuador confirms among women “dependency within traditional patriarchal structures” (Gratton 2007: 584) and my findings paint a similar picture. In Azuay, patriarchal structures in urban parts are more pliant than in rural areas due to better access to education and paid work that permit women to be financially independent therefore to challenge the subordinate position. Ecuadorian village society reflects the kind of patriarchal and matriarchal values sanctioned by the Catholic Church: a system of fairly traditional gender roles but with women retaining some agency within the maternal and caring spheres and engaging in farm labor as childrearing and other responsibilities allow. The nuclear family predominates, although kinship links remain strong (Pribilsky, 2007).

#### 1.4. GENDER AND MIGRATION

I will first demonstrate why it is important to analyze gender within migration studies, secondly I will overview the transnational migration scholarship on gender, and then I will explore the findings in this area from migration studies perspective and finally justify the focus on remittances.

Gender is a very important social construct that cannot be viewed and analyzed in isolation (Mahler & Pessar 2006: 29) but rather in articulation with other phenomena, such as migration in our case. Gender is pertinent to migration and impacts thereof are unlikely to be gender neutral (De Haas 2007: 19). Gender is “one of the oldest, if not the oldest, forces shaping human life and, accordingly, it influences migration and migrants’ lives” (Mahler & Pessar 2003: 812). Gender demonstrates itself in many contexts that condition transnational migration; gender roles determine migration initiation, process and at the same time migration has the potential to challenge gender norms and practices. The actuality and importance of the interconnected subjects is evident due to a considerable amount of literature on gender and migration that has been published hitherto.

Ever since Annie Phizacklea’s publication of *One Way Ticket* in 1983, feminist researchers have highlighted the role of gender in migration, challenging and overturning previous studies which either ignored the ‘female side’ of the migration story, assuming somehow that all migrants were male, or

were 'gender-blind' in that males and females were included in the statistics and surveys but with no attempt made to separate out their highly differentiated roles and experiences. The retrospective reflection by Mahler and Pessar corroborates, "unfortunately, in the early years of the transnational perspective, gender was featured much less prominently than other socially stratifying forces such as race, ethnicity, and nation" (2006: 42). Seen that migration scholarship has been indifferent to gender Hondagneu-Sotelo, American sociologist and leading scholar in Latino migration and gender remarked, "the vast majority of immigration studies are still conducted as though gender relations are largely irrelevant to the way the world is organized" (1999: 566). Mahler and Pessar made an effort to push gender from the periphery to the core of migration studies (2006) giving it space for further elaboration and advancement of gender approach. Recently, the migration research is advancing in many directions, which includes "new and continuing research on global care chains, labor market processes and activism around sex work and antisex trafficking campaigns, women and borderland hybridity, continuing projects on the gendered and generational processes of transnational migration, gendered social constructions of childhood and sophisticated tabulations in demography" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2011: 228).

Regarding the research outcomes in this area, transnational migration scholarship has shed light on the analyses how the relationship between migration and gender is constituted through investigations worldwide. Hondagneu-Sotelo argues that gender relations shape immigration patterns, and in turn, migration experiences reshape gender relations (1994). For instance, the former determinates decision who and how migrates, parenting, work mobility and remittances patterns and the latter how gender roles change during and after migration experience and what is the potential of migration to challenge gender patterns in sending society. It is sometimes assumed that the migration of men encourages the emancipation of women who stay behind since in their husbands' absence, women's responsibilities, autonomy and power would increase (De Haas 2007: 20) On the other hand, study by Van Rooij in Morocco (2000) challenged the hypothesis that migration contributes to changing gender roles. The lives of migrants' wives remained largely confined to housekeeping, child rearing and agricultural work. Although they tended to have more control over the use of their husbands' earnings and in child rearing, this gain in authority was mainly temporary, since migrants resume their position of patriarchs as soon as they return. Furthermore, the emotional burden of the increased responsibilities can be high. He showed that women do not necessarily appreciate the sudden increase in responsibilities and tasks, which were not theirs within the normative context of traditional society and to which they do not always aspire. As this new role is generally not assumed out of free choice, it should not be equated with emancipation in the sense of making independent and conscious choices against prevailing norms of gender roles (de Haas, 2007). I assume that research findings vary according to used methods and the cultures research is conducted in, in case of Azuay region in Ecuador my findings stand in line with Hondagneu-Sotelo's.

Transnational migration scholarship has identified changes in social life caused by the impact of the

migration process. Migration and remittances play an accelerating or reinforcing role in social and cultural change affecting migrant-sending communities (De Haas, 2007). However, remittances are a very actual subject that requires concentrated focus and investigation, “transnational space where gender matters but which has not been so thoroughly explored to date is remittances” (Mahler & Pessar 2006: 44). It is also an area where my investigation is located. For deeper understanding, I will first introduce remittances within migration studies.

## 1.5. REMITTANCES

In this last but one section I will expound the term remittances, describe remittances scholarship and look closely on remittances in the case of Ecuador.

Remittances refer to transactions of different character that are initiated by individuals living or working outside their place of birth or origin and related to their migration. They are not a new phenomenon, being a normal concomitant to migration. They were brought into focus with the emergence of transnationalism scholarship and a lot has been already published. In spite of the fact that the complexity of the topic doesn't allow me to take a narrow approach, for the sake of the investigation I will use the purposeful distinction between economic and social remittances. The former refers to financial transfers and the latter is a concept used by Levitt to “call attention to the fact that, in addition to money, migrants export ideas and behaviors back to their sending communities” (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011: 3).

Recent research on remittances has taken a positive view of the overall volume of remittances celebrating migrants' role as agents of development (Fajnzylber & López, 2008; De Haas, 2010; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011) in connection with the formation of transnational communities. Social remittances connections occur through direct contact of sending and receiving culture, or through the exchange of letters, videos, photos, e-mails, blog posts and calls. The transnational network enables cultural reproduction of social remittances; the ideas and practices migrants bring with them actively shape who and what they encounter in the countries where they move, which then shapes what they send back. They are a venue for cultural reproduction and political engagement (Vertovec, 1999). However, the extent of this framework doesn't permit a deeper insight into the subject of social remittances.

Nevertheless, “the lion's share of the research on migration and development focuses on how economic remittances affect social outcomes” (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves 2011: 4). Recent empirical research regarding economic remittances supports the approach that labor migration is a “household livelihood strategy” (King et al. 2013: 73) in order to secure the living and future for oneself and their family. Moving to the national level, economic remittances affect macroeconomic and microeconomic variables (De Haas 2007: 7-9). In Ecuador, remittances are the second largest source of external financing after oil revenues; they are even larger than international development aid. In 2013, solely personal remittances reached 2,45 billion USD (Banco Central de Ecuador, 2013) and constituted 2,7%

of Ecuadorian GDP (World Bank, 2013). Contrasting with FDI and development aid, migrants' remittances are transferred straight to households and communities, and serve as redistributive mechanism acting from downside. They are spent directly by the families of migrants, so in many respects remittances are a very powerful tool of development and an efficient way to raise the incomes of people in poor countries (Acosta et al. 2008: 110). Towards the end of the decade a more critical perception of remittances appeared, "drawing attention to remittances' problematic relationship with social inequality, and to the need to open up the 'black box' of remittances to expose and critically analyze the individual-scale dynamics and power relationships involved." (King et al. 2013: 70).

In the case of Ecuador, Acosta et al. found a weak impact of remittances on poverty reduction at the national level, but a significant impact for individual receiving households (2008). Ecuadorian recipient households reported that they use most of the remittances for education, food, health, and rent. Only a small part is used for construction and property investments, settlement of debts, savings, business investments, household assets, acquisitions of vehicles and other forms of consumption (Calero 2009: 1146) in that order. The outcomes of my research, however, significantly differ: besides satisfying basic needs the main proportion of remittances is invested into long-term projects in order to comply with the migration objectives as soon as possible. The tensions in findings may be due to the fact that I conducted the research in a specific province, not nationwide and my qualitative research included 46 respondents meanwhile Calero's analysis used data from standard household survey for Ecuador that covers 55666 individuals (2009: 1144). Nevertheless, it is the focus on a particular region that may show specific patterns not only concerning remittances but also concerning gender.

## **1.6. GENDER AND REMITTANCES**

In the final section, I will substantiate the relevance of the subject and present two different approaches that may be taken to analyze it. Then I will endorse each approach with scholarly literature and finally I will explain the tensions in the published studies. At the end I will provide a short résumé.

The complexity and the intertwined impacts of economic and social remittances indicate the relevance of a comprehensive exploration rather than a narrow focus on economics alone. We can look on remittances from a broader perspective, from different disciplines, from different angles. Gender is also a site for an adequate investigation of remittances that merits closer attention since impacts of remittances are not gender-neutral. According to International Organization for Migration, gender influences who migrates, when, where, why, and how, amount, frequency or remittances, how is the money used and how the relationships within families are affected (Lopez-Ekra 2011: 69-70). At the same time, the migration experience impacts the social and economic well being and the ways that gender roles are conceptualized.

The complexity of the subject may be drawn into two broad approaches:

1. *Gender is the central organizing principle for the remittances flows*
2. *Remittances are the transforming force of gender relations leading to a permanent shift in the gender norms*

Up to this day, several studies have been conducted to answer the question; some corroborate the former approach, others the latter. Here we have just reached the turning point since my investigation is also aimed to answer this question. The following chapter of this thesis will describe the empirical evidence on *how gender and remittances constitute each other* in the transnational circuits between Cuenca and New York City that I have found in the research sites. My findings will be contrasted with these that have been reached in gender and remittances scholarship.

A study carried among Latinos in the United States supports the former approach concluding, “the propensity to remit, as well as the amounts sent, depend on various factors including gender” (Abrego 2009: 1071). Blue (2004) argues that female migrants show deeper commitment than male migrants in providing more economic support to households left behind. Orozco et al. found women remit more monies than men to other than their spouse, and women usually send money more regularly and for longer periods of time, both men and women remit more the longer they have been sending remittances, but women remit yet more than men over time (2006: 20). They also investigated gender determinants of the structure and motivation of remittances and observed, “women appear to remit lesser amounts of monies than men” (2006: 20) and they have to send a higher proportion of their income because they generally earn less than men (2006: 8) since female labor migrants are frequently confined to low-skilled jobs corresponding to female roles, “female migrants are usually forced to jobs that imprison them within the traditional roles: domestic and caretaking workers” (Herrera 2005: 286).

Gender also determines whom remittances are sent to. International Organization for Migration in Latin America proved that women represent only around 65% of main remittance recipients because “some migrant men opt to send remittances to others, this may be to protect their wives, for example from harassment by moneylenders, or to retain control over them” (Lopez-Ekra 2011: 72). A female migrant directs remittances to the person who takes care of her children or to her husband, depending on particular situation. The investigation also implies that women send money for basic needs satisfaction, buying food and clothes, meanwhile men are more likely to remit money for long-time investment, business or finances, and remittances for education and housing expenditures are gender neutral (Orozco et al. 2006: 15-19).

It is not only senders who play a role in deciding on the use of remittances. Concerning receptors, in general, remittances received and controlled by women are more likely to be spent on education, health, and nutrition meanwhile those controlled by men are more likely to be invested in businesses and property (Guzmán et al., 2008). Consequences and implications of migration reflect in traditional

gender roles of parenthood. It is evident that remittances help to improve living conditions and satisfy material needs; nevertheless growing up in the absence of one or both parents is complicated. On the one hand “receiving remittances undeniably opens new windows of opportunity for some children left behind, when it comes to access to education” (Jureidini, 2010) indeed providing kids with education is a strong motivation for parents to migrate, on the other hand children lack role models, parents’ care and control. Mothers hardly ever fail to send their children money; even if they earn meager wages, they deprive themselves and send higher percentages of their earnings. Such behavior corresponds to the social expectations that arise from female role of care provider. In contrast, it is noteworthy that not all the fathers who earn high wages remit high sums (Abrego 2009: 1075-1078). Further on, the same article describes the effect of a new relationship, when parents begin new relationships abroad or in home country, father-away families tend to suffer whereas immigrant mothers were consistent remitters, regardless of their own or their ex- partners’ relationship status.

Contrastingly, other studies sustain that remittances determine gender norms. An International Organization for Migration study in 2011 found that if migrant women financially contribute to the family budget it “can affect intra-household bargaining patterns and lead to women remitters having a greater say over the use given to the money sent home which may give them renewed self-confidence and self-esteem” (Lopez-Ekra 2011: 70). This in turn enables women to claim more independence and decision-making power within the relationship, and it challenges their role as subordinate to men (Ghosh, 2009). It also provides them with leverage in appeals for males helping out with domestic tasks. “This new role as an acknowledged and significant economic provider can act as a catalyst for change and challenges ideas about gender roles, within both the family and community” (Lopez-Ekra 2011: 71). Women in the position of remittance receptor in absence of husband are likely to adopt the role of the head of household, which may eventually lead to a real change in gender roles, “these women also transmit new images of women’s capabilities - social remittances - and can have a positive effect on gender roles in the community left behind” (Lopez-Ekra 2011: 71). Meanwhile the absence of husbands gives women opportunity to expand their gender roles, their return may lead to deadening of the potential of change. Some men may seek to return home in order to retake the status and privileges that the experience of living in another country has challenged. Local gender norms and stereotypes may impact migrants’ aspirations upon arrival, and for some migrants who acquired new roles and skills abroad returning home may be disempowering, “just as migrant women’s newly acquired autonomy does not always survive their return home, wives who are left behind may find newly acquired independence does not outlive their husbands’ return” (Lopez-Ekra 2011: 75). A research in Guatemala concluded, “migration and social remittances may permit a gradual erosion of traditional gender and ethnic roles, but that such changes are gradual because migrants, despite their increased earnings and awareness, run into a social structure that resists rapid change” (De Haas 2007: 28).

The tensions in the literature may be explained chiefly by the different cultures the researches were



conducted in, and different methodologies applied in each of the studies. In a lesser measure it may be due to the time gap between the studies, even though I cited the most recent studies ranging from 2005 to 2011. It is necessary to say that neither of the approaches is exclusive; in practice one may prevail but both at the same time shape the reality. Hondagneu-Sotelo confirms that patriarchal gender relations organize migration, and migration reorganizes gender relations (1992: 410). As we have seen, there is a vigorous debate on which approach is predominant in a specific group of migrants, however scholars haven't reached a consensus so far.

Since the 1960s, Ecuadorians have been going north towards better life. However, they have maintained strong homeland ties through communication and transportation technologies that enable them to "be present" in two places across the planet at the same time. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions and feel concerns within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously. One of the most important flows connecting transnational circuits is remittances flow. Remittances refer to transactions of different character that are initiated by individuals living or working outside their countries of origin and related to their migration. Remittances may be of economic (financial and material) and social (ideas, knowledge, skills, cultural norms) character. We can look on remittances from a broader perspective, from different disciplines, from different angles. It makes sense to study remittances from the perspective of gender since gender is pertinent to migration, gender patterns that are specific in each culture determine migration initiation, process and at the same time migration has the potential of challenging gender norms and practices. This is the current debate among scholars that divides the scholarship into two approaches: gender is the central organizing principle for the flows of remittances or remittances have the transforming force of gender relations leading to a permanent shift in the gender norms. It is necessary to say that neither of the approaches is exclusive; in practice one may prevail but both at the same time shape the reality.

## EMPIRICAL PART

### Oración por los migrantes

Virgen María, que, en compañía de tu hijo Jesús y de José,  
tu esposo, conociste las amarguras de la emigración en tu destierro de Egipto:  
Acompaña por los caminos del mundo a los hermanos e hijos tuyos que,  
fuera de su patria, luchan por superar las dificultades  
de una vida muchas veces angustiada y heroica.  
Vela por su Fe, alienta su esperanza,  
consérvalos firmes de su amor a Dios.  
Bendice, con la abundancia que necesitan,  
el merito de su partida y los esfuerzos de trabajo.

Amén.

### Prayer for the migrants

Virgin Mary, who, in the company of your son Jesus and Joseph  
your husband, knew the bitterness of emigration in your banishment from Egypt:  
Accompany on the paths around the world your brothers and children who,  
outside their homeland, struggle to overcome the difficulties  
of an often harrowing and heroic life.  
Look after their faith, cherish their hope,  
keep them steadfast in their love for God.  
Bless with the abundance they need  
the merit of their departure and hard work.

Amen.

Translated into English by the author.

## 2. TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION PATTERNS

Since the 1960s, Ecuadorians have been going north towards better life, settling down in the United States and establishing migration networks. Migration flow accelerated in the 1990s due to enacted neoliberal policies that led to economic crisis. At the turn of the century, in 2000, the US dollar replaced the Ecuadorian Sucre as the country's currency aiming to reduce hyperinflation. This monetary step caused deterioration of the financial situation of the poor. Facing meager economic conditions with no upturn at sight, many Ecuadorians emigrated towards better labor prospects to provide their families with better living conditions from abroad. The emigration flows diversified after the US Spain and Italy became popular destinations due to tightening immigration policies of the former. Ecuadorians living abroad represent 10-15% of the national population (Jokisch, 2007). The most common destination is the US, where the majority settles down in New York area. Migrants and their families whose lives are embedded more or less simultaneously in two societies at least create together a transnational migrant community.

This chapter aims to shed light on the emigration from Ecuador to New York; the first section analyzes who migrates, the second what the motivations and expectations are, and lastly how the Ecuadorian community is organized in New York City. Verbatim narratives from the respondents and factual vignettes serve to illustrate the themes and to contextualize informants' responses.

### 2.1. THE PROFILE OF THE ECUADORIAN EMIGRANT TO NEW YORK

During the fieldwork I completed 46 valid interviews with migrants and their families from Azuay province, 12 women and 34 men. Eight women traveled to the US and the other four stayed in Ecuador meanwhile their husband emigrated. All 34 men have been to New York; I interviewed fourteen men currently living in New York and twenty after their return to Cuenca. I interviewed three women currently living in New York and nine in Ecuador where four of them stayed back and five experienced migration. I made extra effort to find female respondents in order to compensate the prevalence of male migrants in the recollected data. The youngest emigrant was 15 and the oldest 59 years old. I didn't find any indications of age being an important variable; the decision to migrate derives from the living conditions. Considering former profession of the emigrants, most of them were students who had just finished high school and left the country (11 men, 4 women), shoemakers (4 men, 1 woman), housewives (5 women), agriculture workers (3 men and 1 woman), and construction workers, teachers, mechanic, carpenter, baker, policeman, lawyer, book vendors, security guards, hotel employees, salesmen, journalists, DJs and clowns.

#### 2.1.1. MOTIVATIONS TO EMIGRATE

Motivations for migration are mainly economic deficit in the homeland and prospect of monetary

reward abroad. Usually it is not exclusively one motivation the reasons rather blend. In the interviews I asked what the key reason to emigrate was, I assume migrants thought about it, they could express what their main motivation was and that they were willing to disclose it. Migrants endure the family separation and undesirable living conditions in order to provide better life for themselves, their family and children. In the second place it is family reunification, which is also the prevailing motive for women (King et al., 2013) who travel to join their husbands. In my research five women traveled in order to join their husbands, or family and three for labor reasons. Then my respondents stated studies or exploration, and to a minor extent the motivation is change of lifestyle, the last two motivations were unique for men.

According to the national Census carried out in 2010, the motivations in Azuay province, again, for Ecuadorians who legally enter the US, are work, family reunification, studies and others in this order (Annexes). Clearly, the main motivation is to find a job, given that a lot of workers in Ecuador gain the minimal salary 341 USD that doesn't always suffice to maintain a household. The motivation differs by gender, men usually travel as family pioneers to find a job thus the motivation is work, meanwhile wives travel for family reunification in the first place, and job is a secondary motivation.

#### 2.1.2. EXPECTATIONS OF MIGRATION

Regardless of sex, education and profession, all respondents expected to find a job as soon as possible in order to sustain themselves abroad and to solve debt bondage (especially for smugglers *coyote*), few of them expected to learn English and three to start a new life from scratch. Former migrants are authors of stories that "circulate back to their native communities and contribute to the construction of imagined worlds of potential migrants" (Sladkova 2007: 191). Those who have never been to the United States base their expectations on letters, phone calls, emails, blogs or embodied in remittances and other goods; they see a world that doesn't resemble Ecuador and are likely to expect a wealthy paradise full of opportunities waiting for them (Mahler, 1995; Pessar, 1995). As expectation meets reality, migrants confront "the limits of their knowledge of the local setting and way of life" (Benson & O'Reilly 2012: 8). When they arrive to New York, many individuals feel disenchanted to see how difficult making the living really is.

*L.S.: I don't know what they [friends and family in Ecuador] think. They think that when you get here [the US] you live in Empire State building, you have money, you have cars. The life here is, compared to what I thought it would be, the opposite. Sometimes they push on you, you are in New York! Send me 1000 USD. But they don't know that here you have to work very hard.*

*E: You imagine a marvelous life, you hear about it from others but you live a rat-life instead. People in Ecuador think, who lives in the US, must make a fortune, their image of New York is mismatched and confused, they think you find bills on the sidewalk.*

Other migrants-centered studies find out similar situation, they emigrated with lofty expectations: to obtain rewarding jobs, to work hard to support family members, to accrue capital and eventually to

return to establish a business or to construct a house, however, “the cultural expectations of remittances are often impractical” (Wong 2006: 366).

### 2.1.3. HOW MIGRANTS ASSES THE HOST COUNTRY ENVIRONMENT

Migrants in New York mainly value work opportunities, money, aspect of the city, easier and more sophisticated work processes, among other things. It is expectable, they chose particularly this destination because of monetary rewards, thus the easiness of gaining money, in comparison to their homeland, is a valuable asset that attracts and maintains them in New York. On the other hand, respondents disdain limiting life without documents, lack of free time, racism even among compatriots, climate, exploitation at work, and the omnipresent stress among other factors (Annexes). Only a minority of my interviewees was legally established in the United States, most of them arrived illegally or overstayed the visa. The undocumented have been denied fundamental human rights and many rudimentary social entitlements (De Genova, 2002) and thus their status limits their opportunities and makes them vulnerable to employer and landlords. Due to undocumented status and poor knowledge of English language migrants cannot fully integrate into the host society, there will always be legal limitations to a fully satisfying life. “The language barriers and lack of documentation may cause them to be intermittently or underemployed, incurring continued poverty and related risk factors. In addition, the daily torment of fear of apprehension by immigration authorities is a constant threat to their emotional health” (Zuniga 2002: 152).

*V: When we [her and her parents] almost paid off the debt, my mum was detained by migra [immigration authorities]. We didn't have documents. We overstayed our visas. They got her in the very same factory I worked too. They didn't catch me, the factory was pretty big, and they didn't catch everyone.... They called the employees for a supposed meeting and they got them there. Horrible. My mum was imprisoned for a week! We had to pay 6500 USD and guarantee a legal person to bail her out. It was difficult, we managed to gather the money and then we managed to convince one person too. She [mum] was free but all our plans were disconcerted...*

*C: I went to New York to make money and I came back to Ecuador to live.*

The last comment evidences the transnational state of mind divided into working and living that are incompatible in New York. C. emigrated to New York because of the monetary reward the place offers however was unable to enjoy the life roundly. In order to enjoy living, he returned back to Ecuador.

## 2.2. EMIGRATION FROM ECUADOR

Emigration from Azuay to New York is a male-led phenomenon (King et al. 2013: 82; Pribilsky 2004: 317); therefore remittance senders are mainly males. I investigated why; because of the US migration control regime the majority of migrants must opt for illegal boarder crossing. Both men and women told me the latter must count on getting hurt during the trip; it is due to demandingness and more due to sexual abuse by smugglers (*coyotes*), my interviewees admitted it is almost a rule that women

are raped and even men are abused. Hence women are afraid to travel alone; if they do their economic situation must be disconsolate and worth the risk. In my research only one out of eight women traveled alone and she was raped during the trip. Usually men determine and orchestrate female migration, women travel for family reunification; husbands, fathers or brothers brought the rest of my female interviewees. Five of my eight traveling female respondents came with visa and three crossed the border, Miranda, Iana and Daniela. Iana and Daniela crossed the border in company of their older brothers.

*L.T.: I would never have my daughters brought here; women are abused on their trip. Residents do bring their families with visa. But relatives of illegal immigrants are condemned to pass the border with coyotes.*

My findings coincide with the data provided by the Statistical Office, where men represent twice as much migrant as women (Annexes). We have to bear in mind, though, that the Office registers only legal entrances to the US. If we considered the other and prevailing type of migration, illegal, the proportion of male migrants would be even greater since men are more likely to undertake the risks and roughness of the trip with *coyote*. The fact that my interviewees mentioned only few cases of Ecuadorian women participating in the groups on the journey north corroborates the male-led character of migration.

The illegal journey from Ecuador to the United States is a subject that merits attention. Migrants also cross borders and obtain illegal entry into the United States by securing the expensive services of human smugglers *coyotes* who organize and carry out the illegal journey north. The price of the journey has been rising over the years (Annexes). "Most trips are funded through a long-standing network of loan sharks (*chulqueros*) who charge as high as 10 per cent interest compounded monthly" (Pribilsky 2004: 317) or through mortgage of all proprieties and land.

There was a particular case of casuistry in a small city of Azogues thirty kilometers from Cuenca, where a man claimed to be German doctor Daniel Rotemberg and eventually gained authority and trust among his potential patients and then tricked them to pay him vast amounts of money in order to process visa to the US and then disappeared (Recuenco Aguado, 2012). It was too easy to take advantage of people who were desperate to make living in the US. It is interesting to say, that even illegal migrants are returning back in the last years voluntarily although they will not be able to re-enter the US. Simply the flourishing economic, social and labor situation in Ecuador is worth it. Ecuadorian government launched a program called *Retorno Voluntario* that supports voluntary return but many interviewees complained about its uselessness and difficulty to fit within the criteria. Regarding involuntary return, there are usually two flights per month departing illegal Ecuadorians from New York to Guayaquil, according to Lic. Catalina Orellana who works in Migrant House (*La Casa del Migrante*) in Cuenca.

The most frequent reasons for return is that jobs in New York are no longer as abundant as before 09/11, Ecuadorian economy, infrastructure and legal system have improved significantly with

president Correa in office (2007 - present), sending US dollars to dollarized country is less profitable and because their illegal status disallows professional development and advancement. Legally established Ecuadorians usually prefer to stay for work, and return home is an option after a kid is born, to retire or to regularly visit families. They don't want their children to be raised in the US because they believe they will enjoy better their childhood in Ecuador, in the middle of nature instead of a busy city that leaves no space for family life. Moreover, children will be able to maintain a cultural tie with Ecuadorian culture. In addition, birth in the US means American citizenship.

## 2.3. ECUADORIAN COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK CITY

### 2.3.1. COMMUNITY LIFE, INSTITUTIONALIZATION, AND LOCALIZATION

According to US Census Bureau, in 2010 there were 564,631 Ecuadorians in the United States (US Census 2010: 3), and 169,622 thereof (with margin of error +/-8,727) live in New York City (New York City Census, 2008), however if we fully included undocumented population the official numbers would be higher. Ecuadorians live in different parts of the city, but the religious events such as Spanish speaking masses of Saint Brigit Church (*Santa Brígida*) and Our Lady of Sorrows (*La Dolorosa*), meetings with their homeland priests who maintain strong relationships with the community and visit New York City regularly, laundry points on Sunday morning, sport activities during week days after work, football and volleyball matches on Sunday afternoon bring them together. Jokisch and Pribilsky stated similarly, the two most important forms of institutionalization of transnational migration between Ecuador and United States continue to be the Catholic Church by way of local migrants sending community priests and small projects coordinated by migrants and hometown villages. Anecdotally, it appears that soccer clubs are performing many of the functions that village associations perform for other immigrant groups (2002: 90). Regarding the institutions, Ecuadorians are the most numerous members of Make The Road, organization that helps to solve legal issues for documented and undocumented immigrants. Ecuadorians also use social media as a tool to address national community; Facebook groups are a place for announcing cultural events, products, and properties for rent or sale in Ecuador. The most common living localities are Corona, Jackson Heights, Woodside, Ridgewood, Elmhurst in Queens, and Buschwick in Brooklyn due to lower rents and Ecuadorian facilities. When you walk into these areas, you feel like in Cuenca, only the noise of the subway reminds you that this is New York City. Some Ecuadorians live in New Jersey because of lower taxes and living expenses and commute to New York City for work. Gualaceo population has been concentrated since the 1970s in Patchogue, Long Island. In other cases Ecuadorians arrive to New York City, stay with their relatives or friends for a while and then move on to other destinations because of better labor prospects.

### 2.3.2. TRADITIONS

Regarding pursuit of Ecuadorian traditions, there are several cultural events organized by the Ecuadorian Civic Committee: The Queen of Ecuadorian Community, Music and Folklore Festival, Ecuadorian Defile. However, the community as a whole doesn't feel represented by this organization since it counts only with documented Ecuadorians. During Christmas time Ecuadorians in New York City celebrate Christian tradition Baby Jesus Show *El Pase del Niño* with participation of Ecuadorian musicians. In spring they celebrate carnival with music, dances, carioca sprays and flour, and these events are initiated by the actual interest of the community. Moreover, several shops sell Ecuadorian foodstuffs and enable immigrants to preserve their traditional cooking habits. With respect to the proudness of being Ecuadorian and to the status of illegal immigrants, they can't fly Ecuadorian flags in the street and I visited two households where they hang it inside the house because "even though we are here, we are still Ecuadorians" (*aunque estemos aquí, seguimos siendo Ecuatorianos*). Concerning my experience, Ecuadorians do not pay special attention to American festivities and if they do it is usually because of their children who learn about and celebrate them at school.

I remember my first Saturday morning in New York where I lived with illegal Ecuadorian family in a building with other 7 flats. My family had ongoing problems with the house-owner who was trying to make them leave. I was coming home from a supermarket pretty early and while climbing up the stairs I could hear very loud rhythms of *bachata* from our kitchen booming out in the stairway. When I arrived, there was no one in the kitchen so I, bearing in mind the serious housing situation, turned the volume down. When Fernanda arrived from grocery shop she told me to turn the volume up, it is weekend so loud music is permitted. She began to cook rice, bananas and meat for the late afternoon lunch when Floreano arrives from work. Other day I asked Fernanda if their [meaning her daughter, Floreano and herself] diet has changed anyhow since she is in the States: "not really, I buy the same food, even though much more expensive than home, and follow the traditional recipes, *las recetas de toda la vida*. I don't like American cuisine, it is too greasy, since I am with Floreano, he has lost some weight...When he was alone here, he would only eat junk food in the streets, he barely cooked, and got really fat. Now he has me and I cook the things he is used to for him." The family also watched TV programs in Spanish and Fernanda followed multiple telenovelas.

For Ecuadorian immigrants their life in New York City does not require cultural adjustment. The wide range and accessibility of Latino products in New York enable Ecuadorians to pursue their traditions regarding cooking, music, movies, and TV programs. They usually do not need to learn the language, only one of my respondents interviewed in New York speaks English properly and the rest knows expressions pertinent to their jobs and is able to handle a common situations in English, for instance order a meal or purchase groceries and. Ecuadorians are able to work in a satisfactory position only with their mother tongue and thus do not feel obliged to learn English.



### 3. GENDER PATTERNS

In this section, I will provide an insight into the research findings regarding the perception of the original gender patterns in researched area by my respondents. It is necessary in order to comprehend the original societal context migrants come from because this cultural equipage shapes their migration experience in contrast to the environment they arrive to. The original cultural characteristics of gender patterns that accompany individuals into the host society are especially important to examine to, later on, observe the impact of migration and remittances on them.

This chapter is organized as follows. First, I will describe the gender patterns in the Azuayan society and then I will analyze my findings from the city of Cuenca and from the outskirts of the city.

#### 3.1. GENDER PATTERNS IN THE RESEARCHED AREA

The researched area, Azuay province, is said to be yet conservative in comparison to other parts of Ecuador. Azuay society members are called *curuchupas*; a local terminus designating a person who feignedly leads an exemplary life respecting the Ten Commandments meanwhile under this presentable cover leads a dubious private life. The consequences of such behavior are multiplied by the fact that Cuenca is a city where everybody knows each other thus everyone is exposed to public, observed and talked about.

In order to unify the foreknowledge and swipe away doubts, machismo concept of gender roles has been defined to the interviewees as being authoritarian within the family, aggressive, promiscuous, virile, and protective of women and children. Components of machismo behavior include support of the traditional female role of sexual submissiveness, virginity until marriage, and female responsibility for child rearing and nonfinancial household maintenance. This cultural gender model is not uniform across different places. However, it is the very Azuay province where traditional patriarchal patterns are more resilient than in the rest of the country. Respondents differ in opinion whether machismo still exists; nearly every respondent interviewed in New York describes the society prior to migration through characteristics that tend to adhere to *machismo-marianismo* gender concept, meanwhile some returned migrants claim that machismo has been overcome and other returnees think that machismo is proper of Ecuadorians and is still perceptible. The fact that informants of a very similar background hold contradictory opinion complicates the interpretation of findings.

*G.U: The woman was a bit more affectionate, caring (cariñosa) and respectful. They [women] married one man and lived with him forever. Now the world changed, neither men respect women or women respect men anymore. You know how it works. Before, 90 % of woman coming to altar were virgins, they didn't know a man [sexually] (sin haber conocido hombre). Now the Internet, the information, kids eight years old know what sex is. We, in that time, didn't have a clue! There was upright respect. There is not much respect left anymore, there are more divorces than marriages*

*because of lack of respect. I am married to my wife ever since, for forty-five years, I respect her and she also does... The most important thing is that before the woman never worked. Then they began to work and suddenly had their own money and didn't expect anything from their husband. Therefore women became more rebellious (revoltosas) and more independent. Before women held out any punishment from her husband because they had to depend him. Now women no longer withstand the pressure and ask for divorce.*

*L.S.: My father had a bakery, and provided for the family. He was too machista; he battered my mum and insulted her verbally in front of my eyes and he insulted me too. I have a closer relationship with my mum. He was like that, when something was not done, he would beat everyone (a pegar la gente). My mum had also a strong character (carácter fuerte), when she didn't like my younger sister to go out with a boy, she would knock her down. My parents were too old fashioned. The majority of Latinos in Cuenca are machistas not because they want to be but because they learn to be, they see it all around during their life.*

The fashion in which parents educate their children leaves a deep print. L.S. experienced an education in a patriarchal fashion where his parents adhered to traditional gender roles; his father was the economic provider and his mother the care provider. L.S. now views the behavior of his parents and the gender patterns in his homeland critically. When he emigrated, he encountered a society that displays general differences in cultural representations including gender patterns, which provides him with a possibility to compare.

### 3.2. RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

Both male and female respondents label Azuay woman with adjectives submissive, home-like, private, tranquil, restrained, humble, silent, controlled by parents first and then by her husband. My respondents believe that woman should be a good housewife and a good mother, meanwhile husband should be the decision-maker, ultimate authority, income provider, often an alcoholic and prone to wife battering. Here we see the inequality of gender roles; man can displace certain practices of gender roles and it is still well understood and accepted. For example, man can philander or be a molester that is in theory a negative aspect of the model but accepted in practice. Eventually certain transgressions of *machismo-marianismo* concept of gender roles transform into a generally acknowledged double standard. Several informants told me that when man finds a woman in New York City is well accepted meanwhile if a woman in Azuay finds a new partner, she is judged through negative lenses. Many respondents corroborate transgression of gender roles such as domestic violence to be a common practice in Azuay, and even more frequently in the countryside than in the city of Cuenca. Although the law on domestic abuse in Ecuador entered in force in 1995 only now is being more known and respected. Few female informants confidentially told me that their husband beats them and they don't want to report it because "*es lo que hay*" (it is what it is.). They surrender to oppose it and accept the violence as a part of the relationship, as a part of female roles.

*L: Before 2000 women were house-slaves, wife-battering. Cuenca woman was a slave of the*

*house, man arrives home from work, and he expects a meal on the table and a cleaned house. But now, there is less domestic violence, in the past men beat their wives up for nothing and they kept quiet. Recently, there is law handling these situations but not every woman dares to call the police.*

### 3.3. CUENCA

It is important to say that in the researched area the traditional cultural gender model is resilient and at the same time its practice changes. The deep-rooted practice has been partially eradicated over the years through natural development, education, new technologies, improving economic, political and social situation and undoubtedly through contacts with other cultures. Although up to this day Azuay men perceive ideal woman compliant to men, a skillful housewife, and a caring mother respectful to her husband, today's women have abandoned the private sphere of house. Nowadays, women access better education and they are more represented in labor market.

*E: Formerly I respected women because they had values but they don't [have them] anymore. Cuenca woman is traditionally submissive, home-like, private, and silent. Nowadays, they are liberal and do what they want to. They don't show respect to men anymore. Women used to stay home and men took care of providing money. But now they want to work too.*

In Cuenca girls of my generation study or/and work, despite the fact that their mother has been a housewife her whole life, and project settling down and starting a family once they will have finished the studies and saved money. Therefore in urban areas women do not usually depend on men in the marriage anymore and this leads to a more balanced relationship.

*I: Before women in Cuenca were more cohibidas a word that means shy, timid, restrained and self-conscious. They studied, helped at home and didn't go out much. Nowadays there are more opportunities... The society progresses, slowly but it does.*

My friends from the city of Cuenca, a twenty-two years old couple that has been dating only for few months unexpectedly conceived a baby. It is more interesting due to the fact that when we were playing the game "I have never" both of them denied any sexual experience. Given the advanced stage of her pregnancy, their parents insisted on an immediate marriage in order to conserve a good image of the families. Even though the couple was not enthusiastic at all about the wedding, they realized both are still students and too young to lead family life, they got married in a church, as their parents wanted them to.

In some cases, the will to extricate from the traditional patterns is overpowered by pressure from parents and society, for instance in the case of my friends. Ecuadorian law doesn't permit abortions and the society in Cuenca dissents single mothers, re-married women and homosexuals. In the interviews nearly every respondent expressed belief that people in Azuay are still prejudiced and intolerant to homosexuals. Homosexuals consequently leave the country to lead a fulfilled and dignified life. My interviewees confirm to know personally some men who moved to New York and came out of the closet there because back home even their own family disdained them.

### 3.4. OUTSKIRTS OF CUENCA

In order to obtain a representative sample that comprises a wide spectrum of Azuay population, I investigated not only in the city of Cuenca but also on the outskirts in Gualaceo (21443 inhabitants) and parish Checa (2741 inhabitants)<sup>1</sup>. These are traditional, religious and conservative villages where machismo concept of gender roles is still present according to the interviewees. Ecuadorian village society reflects the kind of patriarchal and matriarchal values sanctioned by the Catholic Church: a system of fairly traditional gender roles but with women retaining some agency within the maternal and caring spheres and engaging in farm labor as child rearing and other responsibilities allow. The nuclear family predominates, although kinship links remain strong (Pribilsky, 2007).

Gualaceo is a little city where the busy life is concentrated at the main square in front and next to the church and in the church itself. Especially during the weekend this area becomes the heart of the city life; everyone remarks their presence by greeting and talking and attending one of the numerous masses from early morning hours to midday. The Church has a prominent role in the life of the city, the Church operates registry office and local priest *padre* is highly esteemed and ultimate authority. I remember when I was walking with Padre Julio on the street, local people stopped him at almost every step commenting on their family situation, complaining about health and asking him for advice. I attended a mass with the family I stayed with and our way there and back home took more than half an hour each even though they lived 200 meters from the church because we greeted everyone, everyone wanted to know where I was from, what I did there and whether I had a husband, that was a sure question to appear.

In the household the labor was genderly divided in the family. Even though Laura was working in the morning in the construction company of her husband, in the afternoon she was taking care of the household. She feels more realized in professional way now than when her husband Eduardo was abroad because at that time she had to dedicate herself to household completely but misses the autonomy she had. Eduardo's return was complicated but they used to get along and she says they learnt to form a family again. What I could observe is that Laura was the one who cooked and cleaned, her mum helped sometimes but she was quite old. Eduardo spontaneously showed me his meat *asador* (grill) and explained that he acquired the habit to grill meat in the US and when he returned back 5 years ago he went straight to buy a grill regardless of the price. Laura said he prepares the meat from time to time but otherwise never helps in the kitchen but when she asks him to. Laura confessed me that helping at home does not come from him naturally, and nether it did after the return from the US. Usually, he presided the table, waited until the meal was served while talking to me but I have never seen him helping out. In comparison to the man in the family I lived in New York, when he needed a spoon or salt he didn't ask for it he would stand up and fetch it himself.

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<sup>1</sup> INEC (National Institute of Statistics and Census), Censo 2010

Available at: [http://www.inec.gob.ec/tabulados\\_CPV/2\\_Densidad\\_Pobla\\_Nac\\_Prov\\_Cant\\_Parr.XLSX](http://www.inec.gob.ec/tabulados_CPV/2_Densidad_Pobla_Nac_Prov_Cant_Parr.XLSX)

The results of my research indicate that nowadays the *machismo-marianismo* gender model is more likely to be demonstrable in rural areas than in the city, even though in a lesser measure than it used to be, due to limited access to educational and work opportunities. Machismo does not necessarily mean domestic violence or alcoholism; it can be demonstrated moderately in everyday life like in the illustration above where man does not reckon domestic tasks as pertinent to male roles now he has his wife who can perform them instead. The village society is, due to deeper traditionalism than in urban society, more rigid and therefore better resists changes.

*R: My husband didn't let me make friends, he didn't like when I was having a conversation with other women in the street. I wanted to attend the mass here [in Gualaceo] every week but when he didn't feel like going, we didn't go. If I went alone it would be a big deal.*

Parents I spoke to brought up their kids in a rather strict manner, they inculcated them male and female values: girls were taught domestic tasks and to help out their mothers at home meanwhile to men the access to the kitchen was prohibited. Parents tend to protect daughters, girls are reined in until they leave parents' house. For example, I met a thirty-seven years old woman who lives with her mother who she had to ask permission to go to her boyfriend's cottage for a weekend. Nevertheless, the reality is different sometimes. I saw a lot of groups of the young in the streets after dusk during my stay in Gualaceo.

I recall when we were walking through the city of Gualaceo with Laura, mother of the family I lived with, to buy soda at around after dusk. We saw a group of teenage kids in the street and suddenly she expressed her disagreement with the actual youth in Gualaceo that there is too much drugs and alcohol among kids, mostly those whose parents are abroad and cannot control their children. The kids get money from abroad and buy bad things, alcohol, drugs; they waste the money and their lives. Present parents feel inefficacious and unable to control their children. Laura compared time when her children were young and now and she thinks kids do not respect their parents anymore, teenagers, both girls and boys, gather in groups and revolt against those who love them the most. I think it may have had a hidden reproach of Mike, her son, because she is unhappy about his disrespectful and uncommunicative behavior towards her and Eduardo.

I assume it is because the younger generations do not think within traditional mentality anymore. They do not necessarily need to rebel against their parents; the younger generations do not always welcome their parents' vigilance and many youngsters struggle to achieve as much autonomy from their extended families as possible, which is not entirely in accordance with their parents' expectations. The major of Checa confesses:

*There is too much machismo nowadays, you see it is a cultural backwardness, it is proper of human being; my husband hit me, that is nice of him (me pegó mi maridito, que lindo). That happens a lot here. Women accept it as a part of marriage; her husband is entitled to hit her.*

In the countryside there are less work opportunities and women financially depend on their husbands and therefore women have no recourses to quit a possibly abusive relationship and establish a new household by themselves. As a consequence, women have to put up with domestic violence that used

to be very common in the past but still exists, even though in a lesser extent than before.

*R. from Gualaceo: My husband was the authority [he is still in New York now]. He didn't give us, to my kids and me, any space to voice our opinions. He finished work on Friday and went straight to a bar where he spent the whole weekend, coming home at night yelling at and sometimes maltreating us. I think he is machista.*

*S. from Checa: Nowadays, machismo is still perceptible; especially here in Checa women depend on their husbands or other relatives. A woman cannot do things for herself easily.*

The illustrations and experiences paint a picture of current Azuay society where *machismo-marianismo* gender model organizes gender relations and gender roles. The migration to the US is also determined by gender, however, the view that men migrate to comply with the male role of breadwinners is overcome and the independent female migration to Spain (Gratton, 2007) corroborates it. The traditional social and cultural attitudes migrants bring to the respective destinations contrast with the different cultural representations in the host society.

#### 4. HOW GENDER SHAPES REMITTANCES

This chapter explicates how gender shapes remittances flows between Cuenca and New York City, building on the developed knowledge of the gender model in researched area. Gender is a crosscutting element throughout all stages of the migration process (Ramírez et al., 2005). According to International Organization for Migration, gender influences who migrates, when, where, why, and how, amount, frequency or remittances, how is the money used and how the relationships within families are affected (Lopez-Ekra 2011: 69-70). This chapter aims to explicate how gender structures remittances in the particular transnational diaspora through analysis of the outcomes of the field research. My findings will be contrasted with subject-related up-to date findings in transnational migration scholarship.

My findings stand in line with the recent research conducted by IOM (Lopez-Ekra, 2011). I argue that gender influences access to remittances and the source since migrants face gender stratified labor opportunities (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). Approaches to parental responsibilities are also gendered; mothers in this study never failed to send remittances, despite the meager wages mothers deprived themselves to remit, which corresponds to the social expectations that arise from female role of care provider. Men also deprive themselves to enact transnationally fatherhood, however some of them are prone to spend money on leisurely activities, e.g. drinking that is reflected into remitting lower amounts. Engaging in a new relationship also impacts remittances, male are prone to cease to remit after a while. The research outcomes do not entirely support the assumption that men mostly remit to their spouses (Orozco et al., 2006); the receptor in remittance dyad is mainly determined by trust. Women as remittances receptors and managers administrated finances mostly by themselves, beyond male expectations. In case of a transnational couple, mutual collaboration is crucial for productive use of remittances; all women were involved in decision-making over the use of remittances, in rare cases woman had the decision-making power unknown to her husband. The employment of remittances in Azuay doesn't coincide with findings at national level in Ecuador (Calero, 2009), the majority of my respondents directed monies to long-term investments, such as houses and business setup which, in a sense, also contradicts the notion that the use of remittances negatively creates dependence (Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991).

The chapter is divided into six sections that focus on the successive stages of the remitting process, how gender affects access to remittances, sources of remittances, its character, how gender determines sending and receiving patterns and lastly the destination of remittances. At the end of the chapter, there is a brief summary resuming the most important findings.

## 4.1. ACCESS TO REMITTANCES

Ecuadorians usually migrate to the United States in order to pull through miserable economic situation with no solution at sight. The condition of who migrates, from what conditions and what the marital status is sets out different situations that will be exposed and analyzed in the following sections.

Migration from Ecuador to the US is a male-led phenomenon due to the continued 'illegal' status of the migrants in the US, which makes family settlement very difficult. This, rather than patriarchal principles *per se*, has determined that remittance-senders are mainly males living abroad as single men, whether they are married or not (King et al. 2013: 82-83). My findings corroborate it; men usually make migration decisions and determine whether women should stay home or sum to the migration process them for family reunion. In addition, I haven't found any married woman who would emigrate and leave her husband behind. It may be unacceptable due to the gender patterns that rule in Azuay; female nature is generally described as home-like, and male nature is said to be protective, initiative and dominant.

*S: Given the case that women is a provider and man stays behind, which is a very rare case, man would feel insufficient, he wouldn't like to be dependent. The others will criticize him. And people will say what kind of filthy work is she doing? They will assume that she is a stripper.*

As a result of a solid contemplation, I believe that man wouldn't permit his wife to leave when he is conscious of the journey risks; it could be perceived as a failure in his role of protector when exposing his wife to a direct danger.

## 4.2. SOURCE OF REMITTANCES

When Ecuadorian men and women arrive to the US "they face the structural reality of gender-stratified opportunities", as it was also concluded in other studies focused on Latino migrants (Abrego 2009: 1072). Gender influences work opportunities, but doesn't play role in budgeting. No matter how financially rewarding migrant's employment is, both men and women restrict their living costs and sacrifice comfort, self-care and sometimes health.

### 4.2.1. WORK OPPORTUNITIES

Latina immigrant women in the United States are largely concentrated in menial, poorly paid jobs (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). These activities are intermediated through the established social net of kinship, do not consider educational attainment or experience, and tend to be exploitative and lead to few opportunities of advancement. Female respondents mostly work in low-wage occupations, in factories, restaurants or garment industries meanwhile men access more variable jobs in restaurants, construction, auto mechanic, cosmetic and carpenter industries, taxi drivers, metal foundry or day labor.



In the case of women, however, gender stereotypes of male breadwinners and other socio-cultural considerations may prevent them from engaging in paid work. Sometimes the husband insists on maintaining traditional gender roles, some male respondents admitted to fear other men out there and others possible consequences of their partner's financial independence. Woman, then, stays at home and man is the only provider, which leads to lower, or no remittances to Ecuador.

#### 4.2.2. LIVING RESTRICTIONS

Living costs are high in New York and migrants admit that it is necessary to impose living restrictions in order to remit highest possible amounts. There are several kinds of sacrifices requiring great self-deprivation to ensure larger remittance sums (Abrego, 2009) for their families and both men and women practise them. They say *hay que sacrificarse*, it means that you have to sacrifice something, the comfort of a car, proper housing, eating out, and buying clothes and technology. Some respondents stated to eat once a day, they didn't cut their hair or lived with the dilemma of do I eat today or do I afford a new t-shirt?

*A, male: I see the best shoes and I buy it for them [family in Ecuador]. I don't realize I walk in leaky shoes. I don't realize I use the same pants during 8 days.*

A worker in the organization Make The Road said:

*M, male: Imposed restrictions do not differ by gender because they are not a matter of choice.*

Ecuadorians share living with others in order to save money because the rents are costly and still rising. Overcrowded housing brings along consequences such as *cama caliente* (hot bed). It refers to households that are so overcrowded that people sleep in shifts, and the mattress never gets cold. Such living is a great sacrifice especially in case of families. The following experience depicts a case where the insisting on traditional gender roles by the male limits living comfort of the whole family.

I witnessed a noteworthy situation in the family I lived with in New York. Floreano sub rents one room in the flat to other man from Cuenca in order to save money on rent even though he doesn't feel comfortable when another man is being around his girlfriend Fernanda and her daughter. At the same time he is the only economic provider. Fernanda doesn't work because he prefers her to stay home do shopping, cook, clean and look after her daughter because "she is a woman and she is better at these things than me".

#### 4.3. PROPENSITY TO REMIT

The propensity to remit, as well as the amounts sent depend on various factors including migrants' marital status, length of stay (Orozco & Castillo, 2008), intra-familial relationships, and of course on the character of each person. A study carried among Latinos in the United States concluded that gender is also a factor influencing the propensity and remitted amounts (Abrego 2009: 1071). Interviews with immigrants reaffirmed gendered remitting patterns, no female respondent failed to remit to her children or/and family meanwhile some men remitted irregularly or ceased to remit at

some point. Some studies reached similar conclusions; women send smaller sums than men (United Nations Population Fund, 2006), and tend to remit money more regularly and for longer periods of time (Orozco et al., 2006).

#### 4.3.1. PROPENSITY OF REMITTING MOTHERS

Female migrants use remittances to comply with their role of mothers. In other words, regularly remitted sums confirm mother's care and interest in the children. Mothers in the study never failed to send their children money. However, the sex of the respondents was disproportional.

*S: Mothers' heart is tenderer, more responsible, we see for the children (ver por los hijos). Woman is always worried to provide for them [kids].*

Even when they earned meager wages, they took on multiple jobs or restricted themselves greatly and sent larger proportion of their earnings (Abrego, 2009). Such behavior corresponds to the social expectation of female role of care provider in the homeland. My sample confirmed that Azuayan female migrants are more altruistic in remitting behavior than male migrants, as concluded of Latino migrants in other studies (Orozco et al., 2006). Female respondents think that women in general are stronger and face better problems such as lack of work.

*M: If woman loses her job in New York, she will collect cans or sell ice cream. She will always try to find a solution because she feels obliged to remit meanwhile man would probably try to find a solution in alcohol.*

Mother's sense of obligation to sacrifice for children is especially visible in case of undocumented who faced the risks of crossing the border illegally. Among my respondents mothers showed deeper commitment to parental responsibilities than men, as similarly has been documented in case of other Latino countries (Blue, 2004; Abrego, 2009).

#### 4.3.2. PROPENSITY OF REMITTING FATHERS

Male migrants use remittances to comply with their role of fathers; they build and maintain affective relation with their children by sending gifts, clothes and electronics (Pribilsky, 2012). They also send money to their wives to finance important festivities from abroad, such as baptism party, *fiesta de quince años*, birthdays or the wedding for example, and to show their interest in the family and strengthen the position of provider in the eyes of the family and the community.

*G.U.: I didn't send gifts, I sent money to my wife and she organized the parties for them [children].*

Many male respondents despite the efforts they put in enacting parenthood do not feel like realized fathers. They were conscious that phone calls and gifts could never make up for their absence, even though they are the only manner to perform fathering from abroad. And so they did despite they feared ending up as pocket father (*papá de bolsillo*).

*J: I was buying their love with gifts, and it was a mistake. It will never correspond to present love. I bought their love with PlayStation and so on. But it is not real. The kids were not happy with the things.*

Ecuadorian male migrants tend to spend surplus money on leisurely activities such as drinking, other studies concluded similarly (Pribilsky, 2012). Besides working, they need to *live*. It would be misleading to suggest that all Ecuadorian migrants drink in their free time. However, nearly all my respondents know Ecuadorian migrants who drink and two admitted having problems with alcohol. They claimed drinking alcohol either as a solution to unemployment, depression, solitude and homesickness or as a leisure activity to distract oneself from work life since the options of free time activities are very limited. Alcohol consumption is reflected in the remittances that are diminished with the amount spent on a leisure activity that may eventually convert into addiction.

The father of the family I stayed in Gualaceo with, Eduardo, said that every migrant in New York drinks. Monday to Friday hard work, and Saturday and Sunday party, first Ecuadorians go to a pub but as drinks are too expensive, they then move to someone's place, order beer and as the party gradually grows they order prostitutes too. He said he never participated but he saw and heard about it from many friends.

In New York, I lived with a family who sub rented a room to a man from Cuenca and I spoke almost everyday with because every time he went to his room he had to pass through living room where I spent most of my time and I also slept there. At the beginning of my stay, he told me that *everyone* drinks alcohol but him, that he is different. What a surprise was to me when one night he arrived home with sunrise unable to unlock his room door and thus made his bed on the carpet in the living room. The next day he would apologize that his friends obliged him to drink (*tomarse algunos tragos*) so I dropped being critical. However, it happened several times more and when I confronted directly if he has any drinking issues, he would deny it and give reason that every time it was a special occasion and time with friends. It is an unexpected choice given that he practised false economy, he lived in very poor conditions in a room he would complain about: without a/c and without windows and at the same time he afforded costly nightlife.

The vignette illustrates migrant's consumption preferences, how migrant deprives himself from possible upward mobility in living conditions and lifestyle. Also in other studies men showed a propensity to cease sending remittances after a few months (IOM et al., 2007). William Murillo, Ecuadorian ex-minister for migration and lawyer who has dedicated his professional life to migration matters, comments:

*W.M.: Fathers at beginning send for instance 400 or 500 USD per month and then they start sending 300, 200, 100 and then only when they recall they have family in Ecuador.... Women have to sue their husbands for children maintenance alimonies.*

*A: Man says, if I am able to send, I will send. If I have, I will give you. Women do not need to feel obliged, they always send. Woman forsakes food for few days in order to send money to her family. Woman gives away, it is about love.*

#### 4.3.3. MALE MIGRANTS REMIT TO SHOW OFF

Gender also shapes male remitting patterns. Azuay male migrants are vainglorious, they want to have more than the neighbors, and they love to it show off. Therefore they send as much as they can in order to exhibit something more than neighbors, for instance a bigger house, a newer car. Remitting money and material items creates status and maintains a respectful in home communities, especially in smaller neighborhoods and villages. The fact that male respondents self-critically pointed out this characteristic makes it quite trustworthy.

*L.P.: When money arrives to Ecuador, people get crazy about it, both men and women and become vain, want to show off and possess more than the others.*

*F: People in Azuay are envious; if you have one house I want to have two. Men want to have more than the neighbor because they are envious and jealous. No matter if one gets indebted, they want to have more.*

#### 4.3.4. THE CONSEQUENCES OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP

When parents begin new relationships in New York or in Ecuador it reflects into remittances. Father-away families tend to suffer more than mother-away because mothers were consistent remitters regardless of relationship status whereas men tended to curb remittances flows. Some fathers migrate and forget about their wives and children, and on top of that when they begin new relationships in the United States (Dreby, 2009 for Mexico) they are very likely to stop sending remittances. Ecuadorian males search women in New York City because their sexually proactive gender role forces them to procreate. Interestingly, some Ecuadorians seek partner strategically; in the view of all possible nationalities they prefer to look for an Ecuadorian counterpart to prevent sending remittances to other country than Ecuador. Few male respondents also admitted it is impossible to maintain two families and they deem more important their actual relationship thus they cut the remittances. When I asked male respondents whether they would continue to remit if their left behind wife found a new couple, majority of them said yes if they had children together otherwise they wouldn't send money to a household where now is another provider (*a ella ya la mantiene otra persona*). However, when I asked women how her husband would behave if she found a new partner, they were sure he would stop remitting no matter they have children together.

*R, female: Some of my girl friends [when their husbands left] needed a companion to get ahead. The husbands find out and the relationship is damaged (se daña la relación). They [the husbands] abandon them [their wives], stop helping financially, turn their back on their kids too, and the kids are those who pay in the end.*

Interestingly, male immigrants' who stopped remitting to their families perceived their wives' new relationships more morally unacceptable than their own lack of financial support for their children.

## 4.4. SENDING PATTERNS

Sending patterns derive from financial, marital and familial situation of every migrant. Migrants whose left-behind families are self-sustaining remit when asked to, for example in emergency cases.

*D: He [her brother] called me to send him large amount of money because his house burnt down. I didn't have that much so I lent from my friends. He counted on my support and I don't mind getting indebted if I can help.*

Migrants whose families depend on them remit regularly; they usually save up and send accumulated amounts to avoid high fees (see Remittance Prices World Bank, 2014). Or, every now and then, send with a compatriot traveling to Ecuador who offers space in the luggage for a consideration. Besides money immigrants send also gifts, clothes and electronics. Remittances are not unidirectional; families from Ecuador send gifts and medications. Through remittances families exhibit strong transnational ties.

### 4.4.1. COUPLES REMIT TO PARENTS

When a couple lives in New York City, they try to fit into the lowest possible budget in order to put aside the maximum to remit. In the couples I studied, they either decide together or husband has decision-making power on what purposes remittances will be used for, no married woman in my research could decide on it by herself. They usually remit to their parents who are in charge of their children. When both parents migrate the most frequent caregivers are grandmothers, aunts or uncles (Lopez-Ekra, 2011). Another small part of money is designated to satisfy parents' basic needs. They communicate by phone and talk about the investment purposes for the money to be used meanwhile the petty expenditures are left up to parents' decision.

Receiving parents in rural areas have to catch on new things in order to manage remittances, they need to learn how to go to a bank, how to fill in forms, how to establish and maintain a bank account.

There was a campaign a couple of years ago promoting trust in banks among people especially from rural areas. Banks asked relatives abroad to record a message and attach it to the money sent to Azuay. These short messages were then projected in bank subsidiaries to the families in Azuay.

Anyhow, migrants who send remittances to parents value their parents for these newly developed skills.

*V: My mom, uneducated or so, only with the honesty to push ahead her children knew how to manage remittances. (Mi mamá, sin estudios sin nada, solo con la honradez de sacar adelante sus hijos supo administrar las remesas.)*

Seldom, the connection migrant-parents results in a strategic remitting dyad. In the following case, the husband places the relationship with his relatives over the spousal in terms of trust.

I was listening to I. in her dressmaking shop when she was narrating her story with sadness and resentment in her voice. We [I., her husband and their daughter] went together to New York City to find a solution to our miserable economic situation. In the bedroom [in New York] we had a drawer with a key where we kept all our money. As everybody, we were saving and sending it to his mother. To his mother because he had decisive voice and decided to send it to her to build us a house in Cuenca. Eventually, another woman in his life appeared and we got divorced. I returned back to Cuenca to live alone in the house with our little daughter. To my surprise, when I returned I found out that the house was built in his name! I almost had a heart attack! Suddenly I was a single mother with two kids [her second daughter was born in the US], two pieces of luggage, with no money left since I had spent all my money on it [the house] I couldn't access, with no place to go and with no possibilities to return back to New York because I didn't have documents. In our relationship he was the one who made fundamental decisions and never consulted my opinions. He managed all the construction documents and I was fine with that, I trusted him. But now I know I was too naïve. He showed me plans of our future house but never wanted to show me the documents. I even earned better and I gave him all my money! Well, we agreed on selling the house and he sent me a full powers. I made him believe I would sell the house and split the money, but I kept all the money. I bought a house where I live now with my kids. I mean, he kept the business we had in the States; he sold *our* terrains in Machala [a part of Ecuador] and kept all the money for himself. I arrived with nothing! With two children and two pieces of luggage. I think it was fair. I learnt my lesson. I am stronger now I think. And that is also the impression she made on me, she showed me around her workplace, a shop she built and equipped by herself, her employee and her kids. She is definitely a warrior.

#### 4.4.2. MARRIED MALE MIGRANTS REMIT ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF TRUST

My findings contradict that in general men mostly remit to their wives (Orozco et al., 2006; Pérez Orozco & Paiewonsky, 2007). Research other out-migration countries in Latin America found out that women represent between 63% and 70% of principal remittances receptors (IOM & UN-INSTRAW, 2007 for Guatemala; IOM et al., 2007 for Colombia). We can deduce that some male migrants prefer to send remittances to other family members. This may be to keep control over their wives, to protect them against casuistry or due to lack of trust.

The outcome of my research shows that in case of Azuayan married migrant men lack of trust the prevailing reason why they remit rather to a family member than to their wife. There are two most common scenarios, usually depending on the level of trust and comprehension in the couple. They either send the main amount to their wives and pocket money to their family or they remit all the money to their relatives, parents, brothers or cousins who transfer agreed part to the wife. Some men tend to feel insecure about their relationship because they have seen many cases of betrayal around them. Therefore they easily distrust their partner and thus remitting to a family member seems like a secure option. However, this is another coffin nail to a healthy relationship.

*M: My mother has always wanted the best for me. I can't trust my wife that much; you see divorces, cheating and money misuse around.*

*L: Men remit to their mothers, they trust them better because fathers tend to sink remittances in drinking and they trust them better than their own wives because mum always wants the best for her son.*

Lack of trust also leads to the situation when men remit to their wives but secretly keep savings and remit only a part of their wages. They give reasons that they gain less than they used to, for example.

*S: Most of the time men don't trust their women that they really are building a house, that they are buying a car. He feels like out of control. This creates conflicts over the phone. They don't trust. Maybe they trust the first year, but after the years they don't trust.*

#### 4.4.3. SINGLE MALE MIGRANTS REMIT TO FAMILY MEMBERS

Single men remit to the closest family members for example parents and brothers. Father is likely to be more active in remittance management because in the older generations it is the male who usually has the decision-making power and sometimes better educational attainment. However, in some cases gender also influences the relationship child-parents and determines remittance receptors. Traditional gender roles some male migrants grew up in implied that father is authoritative and economic provider meanwhile mother is care and emotion provider.

*M: My mum helps me [to manage remittances], my father was tough person, strict. I mean I trust him but with my mum we always had trust, a closer relationship. Mum always coddles (solapa) her son.*

Single migrant do not have any marital commitment, and they invest in long-term assets for own future, a house, a car, and studies.

#### 4.4.4. SINGLE FEMALE MIGRANTS REMIT TO PARENTS

Women migrate for family reunification and in fewer cases, one out of eight in my study, immigrated without a social network to find work. In this study, mothers who left children behind remit to their parents and insist on private education for the children.

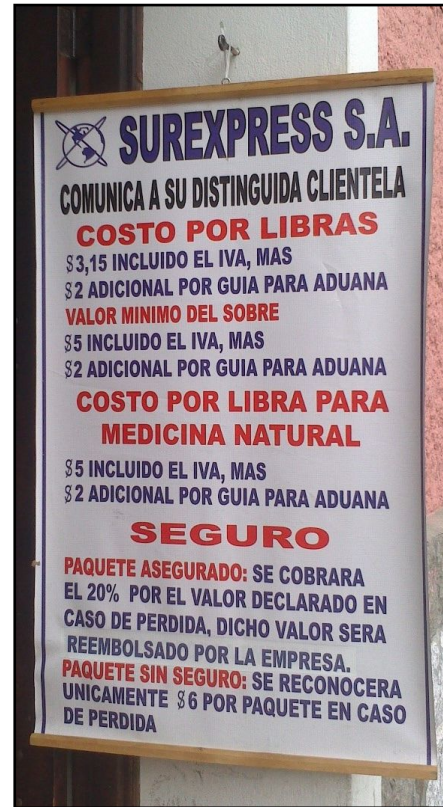
*S: I wanted to make the best from being torn apart from my kids, so I invested in their future. They are the reason I left, in order to give them the best, something I couldn't achieve if I stayed in Ecuador.*

In case female migrant doesn't have kids, she migrates to arrange a better life for her and her family, like Miranda in my research whose father died and her eight brothers, mother and her lived in palpable poverty. She remits to her brother because her mum is too old to deal with remittances. Among brothers who share the same living conditions there is an absolute trust, she leaves it up to him to distribute it because he sees the needs. In New York City she established a relationship with an Ecuadorian who doesn't have a say over her remitting decisions, however they plan on returning back and building a house with joint efforts and capital.

#### 4.5. RECEIVING PATTERNS



Women queuing money transfers in Custom Express.



Poster advertising of package and insurance costs.

Source: Author's photographs from Cuenca

##### 4.5.1. WOMEN IN POSITION OF THE REMITTANCE MANAGERS

In the absence of her husband, woman in position of remittance manager is likely to adopt the role of the head of household, which may eventually lead to a real change in gender roles (De Haas, 2007). These women also transmit new images of female capabilities and can have a positive effect on gender roles in the community left behind (Lopez-Ekra, 2011). In the research, I interviewed six female remittance managers, however I have not come across a man or parents who experienced the role.

Being a remittance manager was not a burden to majority of my respondents, as it may be in other cultures (Van Rooij, 2000). Female respondents admit discussing remittance destination with their husbands on phone. Half of my respondents claimed that they didn't observe an increase in decision-making power as remittance managers because there was nothing to decide on, remittances paid off the debt and the surplus only covered the basic needs.

*R: I couldn't decide there was nothing to decide on. He always sent only for food and education.*

Two said that it was not a complicated task, yet for one of them it was a burden at the beginning thus she consulted her husband.



*C: I had to learn basic accounting to administrate the remittances, it used to be a lot of money and we had Sucre [Ecuadorian currency until 2000]. Then I used to secretly lent money at interest, something I could never do if we were living together, plus it was not considered a job for women. But he was there [New York City], I was here [parish Checa] and I was free. Once I lent 5000 \$ that was a big money by that time and I have never seen the money again. I had to deal with it by myself, I never told him. I don't want to know what would happen if I did [laugh].*

Some male respondents consider women unable to manage monies by themselves due to lack of self-esteem and education.

*S: Most of the times, women do not know how to manage money, they feel inferior and they choose another man to help them, a brother, a relative or a lover.*

Nevertheless, it may be only an impression based on the traditional perception of Azuay women because the reality is different. Women I spoke to managed monies without intervention of another man in their propinquity, and only one sought help of her husband over phone. My findings indicate that women felt committed to a productive use of remittances and in majority of cases were able to manage them without previous education or instruction. In addition, women were always involved in the decision process and sometimes the transnational relationship permitted them to manage remittances in discordance with what they agreed with their husbands.

#### 4.5.2. WOMEN IN POSITION OF THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

In the absence of their husbands, women not only gained control over their husbands' earnings, but also over the household and children rearing. Two women told me that they believe to gain more voice in the relationship and another one admits gaining more power, freedom and control over the household that her husband was not conscious about. The rest confesses that even though they were autonomous they still depended on remittances and they think it was the husband who retained decisive position in the relationship.

Whether woman in position of remittances manager leads to more admiration in husband's eyes depends on level of education and smartness of the man, according to male respondents. Contrastingly, in some cases husband fears losing control over his wife and household thus he insists on his wife to stay confined to housekeeping and child rearing.

*D.E.: Why should my wife work? She should stay home and take care of our kids. I send her enough money. She ought to take care of them and the household; it is a tough female work.*

Some women do not take this anymore, they get used to be de facto head of household (Lopez-Ekra, 2011) and thus they become strong, self-reliant and self-sufficient and conscious about their autonomy. This is, however, discordant to the *marianismo* model where woman is expected to be submissive, obedient and dependent on her husband and also discordant to how husband recalls her.

*R: I am not happy [that her husband is gone] but I am más tranquila [more peaceful, tranquil, serene]. I always tell him, if you want to return, return as a changed man (si vuelves, vuelve cambiado). It won't be like living the same life as before.*

#### 4.5.3. IMPACTS OF REMITTANCES ON TRANSNATIONAL PARENTHOOD

The reception of remittances may lead to serious intra-familial problems. In case of parents-away families, family separation has emotional costs, not only for the parents but also for children who lack a mother and, or father figure in their everyday lives (King et al. 2013: 89).

In the interview with Mr. Murillo we were discussing the impact of remittances on parents and children in Gualaceo. He remarked, that left behind mothers whose husband stop sending remittances, even though they are entitled to them, do not usually take action until the last moment, until they have nothing to eat; then there is a call for help and lawsuit against the emigrated husband. According to Mr. Murillo it is due to idiosyncrasies, education, culture in Galaceo; mothers do not claim the money because what will people think and say. Murillo illustrates a situation how traditional gender patterns in Gualaceo affect remittances reception. Women do not claim remittances they are entitled to because of their traditional submissive and passive position, and also to maintain a good family image in the society. He complained that fathers do not want to deal with the mothers but directly want to communicate with children. There the mothers tell them no, until you send me some money. And then father argues if you do not let me talk to them, I will not send money. It is blackmail.

Another complicated situation arises when the relationship between parents is already broken and the husband wants to comply with the role of father. In the absence of fathers, women take over educating children. They may use their role of mother and control over the children in order to manipulate the income of remittances; they threaten their husband that if he doesn't remit, she will not let him talk to their kids or discredit his image. Unfortunately, in such situations those who pay the toll for unpleasant family situation are the children who originally were the motivation for decision to migrate.

Female respondents in role of the remittance managers do not often permit their husbands to send gifts to the children or deprive them of material items even though they can afford them. It is because mothers want to prevent their kids from appreciating their father only for the material. Fathers do not act in this way; they like to give the kids whatever they can afford even though they are conscious about a being pocket dad (papá de bolsillo). Materialism is often a problem in kids; everything that is new, modern, and American is cool. The ideas that children base their judgment on are transported to Ecuador through social remittances, that are sometimes held responsible for rising materialism (Levitt & Sørensen 2004: 8).

*A: In Cuenca, in high schools and universities children are becoming materialistic, they want clothes, caps, cellphones and for them only American is good. Parents go to a store in Jackson Height to buy clothes or sunglasses and they don't have a clue about the fashion they kids like. They purchase the clothing and send it. Children are unhappy about the model they sent and claim the money to buy it*

*here even though it is as twice as much here than in the US. Now Yankees T-shirt is fashionable in Cuenca. People want it, wear it despite the fact they have never heard about Yankees.*

#### 4.6. DESTINATION OF REMITTANCES

Studies have suggested that in general remittances that are received and controlled by women, are more likely to be spent on education, health, and nutrition (Guzman et al., 2008). In contrast, remittances controlled by men are more likely to be invested in businesses and property (Escrivá & Ribas, 2004; IOM & UN-INSTRAW, 2007). Other studies have shown that women migrants are less likely than men migrants to want to return home and, therefore, spend money in the US (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Ecuadorian recipient households reported that they use most of the remittances for education, food, health, and rent. Only small part is used for construction and property investments, settlement of debts, savings, business investments, household assets, acquisitions of vehicles and other forms of consumption (Calero 2009: 1146) in this order. Some studies have viewed how uses of remittances negatively create dependence (Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991).

However, my findings are contradictory. The outcomes of my research indicate that besides satisfying basic needs the main proportion of remittances is invested into long-term projects in order to comply with the migration objectives as soon as possible. For both male and female migrants the main purpose is to build a house (Annexes). All migrant women I spoke to either returned already to Ecuador or plan on doing so in the nearest future, they do not consider settling down in the US an option, and therefore they direct the remittances into building a house in the homeland. In case of illegal migration the initial earnings are directed to pay off the inherent debt and investment into own assets comes afterwards. Based on analysis of the data I obtained via interviews, more than a half of respondents invested remittances to a property acquisition, in second place they set up a business, purchased household assets and vehicles. My findings show incentives to set up a business that would generate a steady income and thus financial independence. Meanwhile the destination of main amounts is not affected by gender, gender may determine how spare amounts of money are spent.

*S: Even though they [the couple] agree on investing the money together, woman will have preferences to invest more in fashion, home decorations and man into a business or a car.*

It is plausible, I have visited eleven houses built with remittances and there was a big difference between house equipment and design of the earlier migrants and until forty years old couples. For the latter house design and decorations mattered and it was visible that they invested into it. When I asked about who was in charge of house decorations and furniture, women were no-fault. The earlier migrants materialized their success spaciousness; their houses exposed large living rooms, sometimes even two in one house.

The tensions in findings may be due to the fact that I conducted the research in a specific province, not nationwide and my qualitative research included 46 migrant respondents meanwhile Calero's

analysis used data from standard household survey for Ecuador that covers 55 666 individuals (2009: 1144).

#### **4.7. SUMMARY**

This chapter aimed to shed light on how original gender patterns influence transnational migration and the structure of remittances through analysis of the findings of the field research. According to them, the original gender patterns in home society play role throughout the whole migration process, at first it impacts the orchestration who migrates and why. Once in the destination, we have observed how the original cultural equipage migrant brings to the host society influences access to labor opportunities, in other words source of remittances, propensity to remit, sending patterns and the treatment of family relations. At the same time the original cultural equipage is eventually shaped by gender patterns in the receiving society and every migrant deals with it differently. Male out-migration also impacts female gender roles; left-behind women enact the role of head of household and are taken into account when deciding over the use of remittances. Women are capable of administrating remittances, beyond male expectations. Both male and female migrants direct the main sum of remittances into long-term investments.

## 5. HOW REMITTANCES SHAPE GENDER

Migration is not merely a process best understood in economic and /or political terms; it is also a sociocultural process mediated by gendered and kinship ideologies, institutions, and practices (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 1999). Migration serves to question taken-for-granted male and female gender roles “as they work to fit their daily routines into the new rules and priorities of maintaining a transnational livelihood”(Pribilsky 2007: 247). Transnational migration scholars examine whether the male out-migration leads to empowering and emancipating women who remain at home as they usually adopt the roles that were previously carried out by their spouses and they become autonomous not only in management of household matters but also in management of remittances (Hondagneu- Sotelo, 1994; Grasmuck & Pessar 1991; Mahler, 1999; Pribilsky, 2004). Thus migration experience brings along new opportunities for reconfiguration of the gender model we previously discussed. On the other hand, even though women gain autonomy and more decision-making power, they still depend on remittances sent by male counterpart (Debnath & Selim, 2009; Jacka, 2009). Plus, “just as migrant women’s newly acquired autonomy does not always survive their return home, wives who are left behind may find newly acquired independence does not outlive their husbands’ return” (Lopez-Ekra, 2011: 75; De Haas, 2007).

My findings do not fully support the emancipating view of transnational migration (Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991) and definite increase in female empowerment in Azuay related to migration experience in New York. Based on the empirical evidence I provide in this chapter I argue that the impact of migration and remittances on gender relations is variable. On one hand, migration experience undoubtedly contributes to more egalitarian gender relations by increasing the work opportunities for women and allowing them, by virtue of financial independence, to negotiate gender roles. In addition, women gain greater awareness of how to cope with domestic violence. On the other hand, male migrants do not always assume the disruption traditional gender patterns and strengthen their dominant position: to be authoritative, be controlling or philander. Also the return to homeland may result in reinforcement of traditional gender relations and deadening gender-equalizing potential. Last but not least, migration eventually leads to parallel relationships and disintegrated homes.

The chapter is organized as follows. The first section studies the impact of male outmigration on women who stay behind and their empowerment in the relationship, the second scrutinizes how migration experiences shape male roles in New York in different aspects, particularly their engagement in domestic tasks, how they use remittances to manipulate the relationship, how they asses the impact of the new cultural environment on Ecuadorian women, how their manhood is influenced by the US legal system and how men perceive their status changes due to remitting. The third section explores how gender roles are negotiated in couple and reconstituted in the host society and special attention is paid to financial independence of female migrants and how man deals with

this new situation in the relationship. In the fourth section how migrants' return to homeland influences gender roles and how migrants assess the contributions of the migration experience to their lives and in the last section relates parallel relationships as possible and common outcome of transnational migration. The segments paint together a picture to what extent and how migration experience through remittances influence the original gender patterns of migrants and those stay behind.

## 5.1. WIVES WHO STAY BEHIND WHILE THEIR HUSBAND MIGRATES

### 5.1.1. WOMEN GAIN GREATER AUTONOMY

Male-relative's absence provides woman with the possibility of leading a more independent, self-reliant and not-submissive life and also with the need to cope with male roles.

*R: I was trembling with fear when I had to change gas tank, I have never done it before. When we needed to have something done in the house, he would find workers in the street. Now I had to do it (me tocó hacerlo). At the beginning [I experienced] a lot of fear (miedo) but everyone learns.*

The flow of remittances sent by male relatives from abroad enables woman to have control over spending hence increases her decision-making power in the relationship. Taking on new tasks and responsibilities implies a burden to stay-behind women according to certain studies (Ghosh, 2009; Pessar, 2005). In our study women state that the most difficult aspect was being mother and father at the same time, which allows us to understand that parenthood roles are strictly defined according to gender. Women claim that it is harsh to explain sexual life to their kids that is perceived as father's duty, to guide them in relationships and to be authoritative and loving mother at the same time.

*E: The most difficult it was definitely being mother and [emphasis] father for them [the children]. To get up, prepare them for school, take them there, pick them up, study with them. To hear them talking when they knew their father was not there was very hard. My daughter would exclaim A plane! Is my daddy there? Or when she was talking to him on phone saying, dad when you come back I will be small again so that you can hug me. It was really hard to be loving mother and father for them. They didn't understand that.*

Accomplishing a fruitful employment of remittances requires a cooperation of both sending man and receiving woman. Thus for women being remittance manager is a strategic position, especially for married women, since men are forced to cede some of their decision-making power in order to see the productive use of remittances. Women consciously use their control over remittances in order to manipulate the relationship; sometimes they employ remittances in something else than agreed on. C. whose husband spent 10 years in New York City comments:

*C: I had to learn basic accounting to administrate the remittances, it used to be a lot of money and we had Sucre [Ecuadorian currency until 2000]. Then I used to secretly lend money at interest, something I could never do if we were living together, and it was not considered a task for women. But he was there [New York], I was here [parish Checa] and I was free. Once I lent 5000 \$ that was*

August, 2014

*a big money by that time and I have never seen the money again. I had to deal with it by myself, I never told him. I don't want to know what would happen if I did [laughs].*

On the other hand, there are some constraints in the gender-equalizing potential of migration and remittances; when man intends to maintain the position of head and sole provider of the household with regular remittances, when man becomes extremely controlling or transgresses the gender roles. In few cases, when husband remitted what he perceived enough to run the household he would thus demand his wife not to engage in paid work outside the house. His lever would be the control of sending remittances.

*F: I am the one who gives you money and you have to obey. If he [husband] says don't eat, she [wife] won't eat. Or simple if she doesn't obey, he stops sending money. I have seen it, it unfortunately happens a lot.*

In the absence of men, wives are likely to gather with other women, to exchange foodstuffs and to seek each other out for mutual support (Pribilsky 2004: 323). Some men then tend to behave extremely jealous (*celoso*) because they feel threatened when their wives are developing strong relationships not only with other men but also with other women.

*R: Since my husband left I feel free. I mean he would get mad (tener iras) if he found me chatting in the street with someone. He didn't tolerate it, he would get upset, didn't like it. So now I am free to hold conversations, he didn't permit me to have friends.*

Another constraint to the equalizing outcome of migration is when the need to receive remittances transforms certain transgression of gender model into a double standard. For instance, man can philander or be a molester, which is a negative aspect of the model in theory, but an accepted role in practice. "The resignation some migrant wives were able to achieve with respect to the reality of men's extramarital relations abroad was only so strong, however. Undercutting their abilities to 'accept' men's liaisons was a set of very real fears, including that of being abandoned by husbands" (Pribilsky 2004: 320). Male respondents are aware of it and one shared his opinion:

*I: Austro, region where Azuay is located, is well known for judging, observing and gossips. It is due to very conservative and closed Catholicism. Women know that their husbands have other women in New York City but they prefer not to think about it, maybe to keep a good image of the family, maybe because of their kids or maybe they just need the money. Wives in Ecuador let them cheat on them in New York City. If a man has another woman in New York City, he is still respected. If a woman has an affair, she is a whore. Woman is judged through negative lenses.*

## 5.2. MALE MIGRANTS IN THE HOST SOCIETY

When reached the destination, migrant encounters a society with general differences in cultural representations. The different representation of gender in receiving society may move migrant toward more egalitarian division of labor and authority (Foner, 1999). In other words, the egalitarianism that influences gender and labor division in the US would conflict with the Ecuadorian

importance of male authority and gendered labor division. These different gender ideologies lead to the fact that Ecuadorians in the receiving society “face a continuously changing milieu in which more traditional social and cultural attitudes are confronted by relatively unfamiliar liberal values” (Parrado & Flippen 2005: 607). In Azuay, usually men’s relationship to his spouse and children is “structured around the idiom of *respeto* (respect). Women and children are to obey husbands and fathers, allowing them to rule (*mandar*) as they wish as long as they provide for the household” (Pribilsky 2004: 318). Therefore, in homeland men are not expected to participate in domestic duties that could eventually damage their respected position. Nevertheless, in receiving society men inevitably have to learn to be self-sufficient in domestic sphere too.

### 5.2.1. MEN PERFORM DOMESTIC DUTIES

In case a man migrates alone, he inevitably has to learn how to be self-sufficient and perform household duties that tend to be associated with female roles back home. For almost a half of my respondents it is not a problem because they are used to it from home, most of them come from urban areas. However, some men deem domestic tasks difficult to deal with, they are not used to it. For few of them it is a burden, the rest accepts it as a part of their new life routine.

*D.E.: When I arrived to New York City, it was like learning to live again. I had to learn how to live with friends, not a family; it was difficult to put up with, especially with those who liked to drink. I had to learn household chores; I didn’t know how to cook. You create a schedule at home. This and that day it is your turn to cook, swipe, clean, and everyone respects it, if not, you get a fine.*

*F: Domestic tasks, I like cooking. Obviously not everyone is like that; a lot of them [other migrants] don’t like it. I was in charge of the flat, with a schedule. The one who didn’t follow had to pay 20 USD. Sometimes I didn’t, not because I would be lazy, but I finished working at midnight and I couldn’t do it, I was exhausted (ya no pude más).*

A question arises, whether the extension of male roles and abilities is a permanent change that leads to their cooperation with home tasks when they arrive back to home society, or whether it is the need that forces them to perform these tasks that they, however, never assume as a possible male role.

### 5.2.2. MEN MANIPULATE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH REMITTANCES

Male migrants may use the role of provider from abroad to retain the dominant position and restrict female power in the relationship. Man may condition sending remittances with requirements to keep woman from paid work, to let him communicate with the children, or simply as a technique to demonstrate his power. Findings among Ecuadorian migrants indicate that they occasionally skip sending remittances or drop communication to intimidate women in case they suspect or are upset that their wives do not behave properly (Pribilsky, 2004).

However almost everyone agrees, or complains, that the one who receives the monies controls it knows how to spend them. Consequently, as I previously explained, men are biased to distrust their



women because they think wives could misuse the money they worked hard for and complain about the fact that the receptor is the one who controls and they and they are powerless.

*L: I was so kind and so trusting, I did help. I wanted to buy land. I sent 4000 USD, she [his wife] got it and I never saw the money again. I lost it. The majority of men do not trust.... Women misuse money, my friends told me, the money man works himself to death for.... Men establish accounts or just keep the money in a box; they keep it secret and transfer only part of their wages there in case a similar situation happens to them. They remit less money and give reasons that they gain less than before for example.*

### 5.2.3. MEN DEEM ECUADORIAN WOMEN LOSE VALUES IN THE HOST SOCIETY

Incorporating what could be perceived as "American" patterns of sexual behavior might be associated with promiscuity and viewed as a threat to the group culture (Espín, 1999). What women perceive as no longer being dominated by men due to the financial independence, legal system and new cultural patterns, men tend to perceive as taking away the correct values from Ecuadorian women. Almost all male respondents believe that women in New York become besides more liberal also licentious (*libertinas*).

*J: Women in Azuay are conservative, she is aware everyone is watching and what others think is very important. Here [Azuay] the culture is going to church with your family. There [New York] she orders her husband to grab the kids and go, I'll take a nap. See, women are more powerful in the relationship, they know the taste of freedom and they think I can do whatever I want to. And from the freedom divorces derive. I mean for her the home occupies second place; she is in the first one.*

Men believe that women lose values (*dañarse*) when they arrive to the United States because the law protects them. Women don't feel threatened by their husbands and eventually start to disobey, which male interpret as losing values and becoming licentious.

*S: American women go out even though they are married. Latino women are more homelike, they respect their husbands, they cook for them, and they are more caring. If my wife went out with her friends I would feel bad. They think they gain money and they can do anything now, they go out alone, they do not respect the partner anymore. And you can't do anything about it; the society here doesn't permit to hit her.*

After a proper examination of the findings, I believe that men especially from the traditional areas like outskirts of Cuenca are oversensitive to female independence and label women licentious just when they go out alone with friends even though they are not sexually unrestrained and promiscuous. It makes men feel insecure about their dominant position in the relationship. For this reason, some men become more controlling, jealous, and more authoritative, and they claim that it is just a necessary reaction to their partner's behavior.

#### 5.2.4. U.S. LEGAL PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The US legal environment, particularly protection against domestic violence, makes women more aware of their rights and reduces men's capacity to control them (Hirsch, 2003). Male respondents have different attitudes to the legal protection of women. Few of them think that legal protection of women contributes to their emancipation and equality and deem it correct and desirable in Ecuador. Others who think that the US legal system doesn't allow men to fully exercise his manhood, however, outnumber them.

*F: Machismo cannot be practised here man would end up losing. Here you have to learn the rules. You can't do anything just watch and shut up, we are not in Ecuador. The difference is huge.*

There are well-known cases of Ecuadorian man beating woman and ending up serving a sentence, which shapes their conduct in law-respecting behavior. The experience with legal system protecting women in New York may be transferred to and eventually begin to influence the gender ideology in the homeland.

*M, female: Ecuadorian women become dissolute, they know their husbands can't do anything to them, they make friends, go to a party with them and leave their husbands at home. That happens a lot. They wear indecent clothes; they want to show off to pleasure others' eyes. Women want to be different; they feel more secure, protected.*

The legal protection of women may even lead to reversing the role of aggressor. C., who works in the organization Make The Road admits that the law in the United States may be counterproductive because it allows woman to become a molester. The fact that there are therapy sessions for men affected by domestic violence corroborates it.

*C: There are many men physically and psychologically abused by their partners. When an illegal Ecuadorian marries to a woman with documents, he is henpecked. She forces him to work, takes away his salary and uses him. In this situation man is impotent and unable to send remittances. He cannot hit her; he cannot yell at her, he is unarmed.*

#### 5.2.5. BEING A TRANSNATIONAL PROVIDER AWAKES ADMIRATION AND RESPECT

Most of my informants believe that the fact man provides for the family from abroad awakes rather admiration or proudness than respect among the stayed-behind. According to many, respect is a question of personal character and moral values. This is due to the traditional perception that man who is a breadwinner is respected, and therefore being a breadwinner abroad doesn't alter the perception of it. It raises admiration because of the sacrifice man made to be a successful provider in an unknown environment. All female respondents, instead, claim in their case providing for family from abroad awakes both admiration and respect because of challenging the traditional gender roles and successfully coping with male roles too.

*S: The fact that a woman works there [New York] and builds a house in Ecuador definitely awakes respect.*

### 5.3. MIGRANT COUPLES IN THE HOST SOCIETY

Couples who live together in New York City are exposed to and permeated by new views about traditional gender roles, relations and ideologies. Under these influences, they reconfigure the relationship and gender roles. Different situations may occur; some of them lead to female empowerment at expense of male authority (Ghosh, 2009), other result in loss of the potential to emancipate. For women, migration provides them with an alternative to abusive relationship and to financial dependence on their husband. That provides women with greater leverage for involving men in household chores (Pessar, 1999; Ghosh, 2009). Men conclude that the new environment has unpropitious impact on their partner. The fact that Ecuadorian women unshackle the traditional gender roles causes them resentment or fear, as it threatens male dominant position in the relationship.

*F: All women are free in New York City. Ecuadorian [woman] already arrive conscious about how free the new world is and changes immediately her behavior. She knows the power of money, buys expensive clothes, becomes superficial and wants to have more power in the relationship than man. Plus, she knows that law protects her. She becomes licentious, if she wants to go out and her couple doesn't want her to go, she insists and leaves. Man essentially feels cheated on (defraudado).*

#### 5.3.1. COUPLES NEGOTIATE HOUSEHOLD ROLES

Women obtain financial independence because New York City offers working opportunities for everyone and that is something respondents agree on and appreciate. However, sometimes the type of work may reinforce gender inequality because migrants are forced to jobs that imprison them within the traditional roles as we previously discussed. Nevertheless, it is true that the work options are wider and migrant usually tries out different jobs, a choice that wouldn't probably exist in Ecuador.

All but one woman I spoke to work out of home, gain salary and feel more self-sufficient and powerful than in Ecuador. All working women claimed that gaining money means gaining financial independence for them, they didn't have to ask their husband for money and give reasons why and what they need it for. Women may use the financial independence to challenge gender roles and to emancipate from the submissive role and fight out an equal or dominant position in the relationship.

Fernanda told me one day, let's go to the shops, I want to check out shorts and Floreano will not go with me because he doesn't want me to buy any. So we went to a clothes store in Brooklyn, and meanwhile Fernanda was strolling in the aisles, she commented: I want to buy something; I'll buy it despite the fact that he doesn't agree. He doesn't want the others to look at me [she giggles]. Come on! Summer gets really hot in here; at home I wore shorts and skirts when it was hot, until here [she points the length to middle thighs]. I go and I buy it, I don't have to ask him for money because I have my own income. I wear them and he can't do anything about it. Indeed, she

bought two pairs at that moment. Later on at home, they argued with Floreano, but she ended up wearing them.

Similarly, I. comments how she used her financial independence to exert power and manipulate the relationship with her husband. She made him realize she did no longer depend on him and he accepted the fact through his action of begging her pardon and changing his behavior.

*I: In Cuenca, he [her husband] provided the food, I couldn't go out, and I couldn't do anything. He wanted to do the same there [New York]. He didn't want me to make friends; he awaited me in front of my workplace. One day I couldn't take it anymore and I moved to Chicago for a month. Then he came to find me and begged pardon. He promised to change and he did, however not that much to let me make friends or go shopping. He was still afraid, as I had my money, he didn't give me that much liberty, he was still controlling me and made his brothers do the same, all of them were awaiting when I arrive home.*

In other cases, migration fosters more companionate spousal relations (Hirsch, 2003; Pribilsky, 2004).

*J: My father used to drink a lot back home; he sunk all the money he earned in alcohol. When he was coming home he used to hit both my mother and me. But we couldn't leave because my mum didn't work thus had no money to sustain ourselves. My father changed a lot under the experience of living in New York City. Now he works and lets my mum work too. He permits my mum to make friends, to go out and she is much happier, she feels fulfilled I see that. She contributes to the family budget and hence gains also more voice in the relationship with my father. I think my father respects and appreciates her more now.*

In this case man voluntarily suppressed his traditional dominant character, accepted his wife as economic provider and gave her more space in the relationship. J. narrated the observation of change in his parent's relationship.

### 5.3.2. THE IMPACT OF FEMALE FINANCIAL SUCCESS ON MANHOOD

Not only female respondents think that if woman gains more money than a man, he would feel impotent in his manhood. Some male informants claim they would feel 'psychologically depressed', jealous and tend to be more controlling and track and question every step of their wives.

*I: I had my own money and didn't depend on my husband. It was hard for him to accept that a woman can get ahead, he was furious when I lent him money. Something unimaginable for him!*

Only two male respondents out of thirty-four said they would feel happy if their woman earned more money than them. Male respondent commented,

*S: If a woman gains more money than her husband, it creates a conflict. Men want a submissive wife, he wants to control, and he needs to be the boss.*

### 5.3.3. CO-LIVING

Considering co-living aboard as a couple, usually both work out of home and share house chores at home, because maintaining women to stay at home as a housewife is not usually financially

sustainable. In only few cases man can afford to insist on his wife not to work out of home and thus reduces her possible empowerment. Female migration can challenge gendered labor division. If woman works out of home, it may result in men increasing work in the household. Among my respondents this situation, however, turned only one man into main household care provider due to the fact that he was on sick leave and dependent on his wife employment in a supermarket.

*A: Before if man cooked, he would be called mandarina [one who is controlled by another]. Now, it's getting more equal in the city above all. Here in New York City, I am on sick leave, my wife works and I manage the household. It's not about gender roles it's about necessity.*

When the woman is expected to work both out of home and at home, then there is a serious conflict and the women tries to impose equal house roles. This was I. situation,

*I: There [New York] we [her and her husband] lived with five his brothers. When we got there, he wanted me to cook for him. But it is different there, I worked, you know, there were rules. When we had lunch, he placed his dishes into the sink and wanted me to wash it. His brothers [emphasis] had to explain to him that it is not the way things work in there.*

#### 5.4. PARALLEL RELATIONSHIPS

Almost everyone involved in the migration process mentions stories on spousal abandonment or divorces and present them as consequences of male out-migration from Azuay. Both women who stay behind and husbands who remain abroad for years are likely to engage in a parallel relationship (*relaciones paralelas*) and thus join the realm of disorganized households (*hogares disorganizadas* or *desintegrados*) (Pribilsky, 2004). Numerous factors contribute: the duration of migration is not well planned, couples feel lonely in their relationship at distance, men need to procreate, and women seek financial security. In my study, more than fifty percent of spousal relationships broke during the migration process.

La Casa del Migrante sociologist C. Orellana worker explains:

*Ecuadorians do not plan properly migration, when they are a couple they do not talk about it, they do not take into account parenthood, they do not consider other options, they just decide to go and leave. Couples don't share their visions of migration; they don't set rules and at some point it leads to problems and higher probability of family disintegration.*

And that is also my experience; they mostly decided to emigrate and leave within days, maximum few weeks.

Migrants first settle the debt that is related to illegal migration (Annexes), and this is, according to my data, within the first two years. Then, they remit monies to buy land and build a house that usually takes another two years. And then there is a turning point and a discussion. If the couple stayed strong four years, now woman wants her husband to return and restore a home (*hogar*) together. Women convince husbands to return, they usually point to the fact they had accomplished all they

needed, mainly acquiring an own housing, and to the importance of family. P., after one year and half, couldn't take husband's absence anymore.

*P: I gave him a choice, come back or I'll walk away.*

Notwithstanding, for some male migrants the easiness of gaining extra money is a stronger motivation than preserving a family, and then they stay. Male migrants admitted that when one comes here, stays one year, stays two, stays more and ends up staying and forgetting the family. At that point wives lose faith in family restoration and seek a companion.

*E: Once the goal (of migration) is met, for example the house is built, woman persuades her husband to come back. But the United States is like a magnet and the power of money attracts him and makes him stay. Hence woman gets divorced.*

Sometimes women find a companion even earlier. Their motivation is to financially secure herself and her children because they perceive the future of the transnational relationship questionable.

*L, male: I didn't want to get divorced, she did [his wife convinced him to emigrate and then divorced in the first year]. I asked her what was wrong and she didn't tell me. I had to rent a lawyer in Ecuador to look it up in the registers and I found out that I was a divorced man... I went to pubs. I didn't drink and I didn't dance. I lost a year of my life. I didn't care. One day I bought a suit 100 USD, and went to Brooklyn Bridge. I wanted to give my best to my son; it was my dream to give him what I didn't have. I didn't have a wife, I didn't have my son [his wife wouldn't let him talk to their son], and I didn't have a job. It hurt so much.*

It depends on how strong the trust in the husband to comply with the role of provider is. R. narrates her experience with women who stayed behind in Gualaceo.

*R, female: Some of my girl friends [when their husbands left] needed a companion to get ahead. The husbands find out and the relationship is damaged (se daña la relación). They [the husbands] abandon them [their wives], stop helping financially, turn their back on their kids too, and the kids are those who pay in the end.*

*F, male: Nobody can bear solitude for a long time. Gossips fly around, this one has been with this one, and women feel bad and search for a couple too. They think, I am still young and I need to maintain my kids, I can't be alone in case he forgets us. But women are more secret about it, however from time to time someone finds out and the word spreads.*

However, it is not only left-behind women who seek a companion. A lot of my male respondents have explained that men have natural physical needs to be satisfied and the anonymous environment in New York makes extramarital adventures even easier. For male comprehension, man is expected to be unfaithful because men are dominant and active meanwhile women are more traditionalists and restrained. Other studies aimed on Ecuadorian migrants also found that "extramarital sexual adventures were at times welcomed distractions and diversions"(Pribilsky 2004: 320).

*A: Latino is affectionate (cariñoso) and seeks company. You need someone by your side, a friend, a support, a companion.*

August, 2014

*L: Unlike woman, man is not able to bear loneliness for a long time. Man needs to procreate (procrear), we are human.*

*J: We [men] need to let out steam (desfogar) and our women know it, they just don't want to admit it to themselves.*

Indeed, in case woman depends financially on her husband she may be aware of his extramarital adventures and she may accept it because she needs him to sustain the household in Ecuador. The worst storyline is if husband leaves to New York to provide better life for his family and eventually cuts all contact and economic help. This happens undesirably often and left-behind women remain married to someone who they don't know is alive or living a new family life.

On the way home from one of the research areas I was waiting for the bus to Cuenca with one woman. I was observing her, she was elder, dressed like *chola cuencana* and she was observing me too. I started talking to her at first about general topics and then I asked her cautiously about the topic of migration in order to find out if I could interview her. I explained her the research, and said that my next stop is New York. She told me that her husband immigrated to New York City twelve years ago and she never heard about him anymore. He abandoned her with two small kids, no income and uncertainty. She had to start keeping poultry and selling in order to provide for her two children. Sometimes the children had to skip school because they had to help her out at home. She doesn't know if her husband is dead, alive or has established another family abroad. She begged me to help her to locate her husband. I tried to explain to her that New York is a big city and the probability of finding him is extremely low. She didn't understand that and she insisted. I wrote down all the data she recalled, name, age, profession in Ecuador and village he lived in. She didn't even remember his date of birth. I just knew Luis Ramiro Cornejo Llescas is 33 years old, is from Santa Ana and he is originally a construction worker. I promised her I would ask in the Ecuadorian community when I get to New York. In New York I asked my friend who has contacts at the consulate to look up his name, unfortunately they didn't find any trace. It truly impacted me to see how deep the individual wound is.

## 5.5. RETURN

### 5.5.1. MIGRATION CHANGES PARTNERS AND RETURN TO HOMELAND IMPLIES A CONFLICT IN THE COUPLE

When male migrants return, we find both a wish to reclaim the dominant male role within the family, but also a greater involvement in household chores because of their "forced training in these tasks whilst abroad, living in a largely male-only domestic environment (King et al. 2013: 89). For some migrant women, reintegrating the family can be disappointing and disempowering, as their aspirations clash with local gender norms, stereotypes and discrimination, especially for those who had acquired new roles and been engaged in skilled jobs abroad (Ghosh, 2009). The question is to what extent the changes in gender roles during migration lead to permanent change in the power balance in the relationship back home. The possible outcomes are migration and remittances lead to

a permanent shift in the patriarchal family structure or the newly acquired female independence does not outlive theirs or their husbands' return home.

In a transnational couple, return implies a conflict because the migration experience has shaped both partners. After the years of running the household by herself, the wife is self-sufficient and took over both male and female gender roles. She finds it hard, or even unimaginable anymore, that her man returns and she would have to step down into submissive and obedient position again.

*R: I feel good because I decide [now] and he says it is nice. I mean since he is away I could become closer to the Church. Now I am alone (estoy solita) and I go to the mass. He plans on returning in December. It will be like starting again (empezar de nuevo). I mean, a relationship after such a long time separated, 16 years. I don't know [if he will help me] but changed in comparison to what he used to be before, he already got his punishment [she refers to his lost of authority in New York]. I mean I am not happy that he is there and I am alone, but I am more tranquil (tranquila). I always tell him, if you want to return, return as a changed man (si vuelves, vuelve cambiado). It won't be like living the same life as before.*

According to male respondents, there are women who think that male have done so much for the family and deserve to be taken care of upon return. As lot of cases around prove that when the husband returns he, again, expects his wife to be a "housemaid" even though he was the one taking care of himself and the household abroad for years. I talked about this to F. I lived with and he thinks:

*F: If you made money here [New York], there [Ecuador] you have your family to attend you. Here I made my effort and when I return it is their turn to take care of me, isn't it?*

### 5.5.2. HOW THE MIGRATION EXPERIENCE CHANGES INDIVIDUALS

Returnees claim that the American experience obliged them to well manage many aspect of life: to be more punctual, to drive more carefully, they learnt to be more aware and respectable of laws and to plan the future. In comparison to the American nuclear family, they start to appreciate more the Ecuadorian concept of wide and deeply united family. They become more autodidact and ambitious because many of migrants experienced either autodidact or collective English language education. Female returnees admit dressing better now; taking care of and having learnt to appreciate themselves. Some women say that men became tidier and organized, as the need to organize time around work forced them in New York.

## 5.6. SUMMARY

This chapter aspired to explicate how remittances shape gender particularly in the transnational circuits between Cuenca and New York. The confrontation of the original perception of gender patters with a more equalitarian culture does not lead to definite disruption with traditional gender roles and change to equal gender patterns. The outcomes of migration process are variable. While there are gains in some dominions, especially affecting female gender roles since migration increases



*August, 2014*

work opportunities for women, leading to their financial independence and moderates domestic violence, there are constraints that offset the equalizing potential. Male migrants do not always assume female emancipation and intensify their propensity to be authoritative, be controlling or philander. If the migrant or the left-behind family does not adhere to family responsibilities and engages in new relationship, it leads to divorces and/or home disintegration. The return to homeland may result in reinforcement of traditional gender relations and deadening gender-equalizing potential.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Migration is a complex process that affects the life of the migrants and their families left behind in wide-ranging and profound ways. It has an impact on social and economic well being, the ways that gender roles are conceptualized, and the ways in which different work is divided between women and men. In this research I have sought to explicate the social dynamics of remittances, revealing insights into the complex ways in which practices of gender roles and relations intersect with remittances. I investigated Ecuadorian families through a qualitative multi-sited research to reveal the different ways that participants of the transnational connections organize and negotiate their being throughout the migration experience. The multi-sited research justifies simultaneous research in different geographic localities and social sites and it also provides insights into the complexity of transnational phenomena. Through the experiences and opinions of Ecuadorians who participate in transnational migration flows between Cuenca and New York City, I have accumulated empirical evidence on gender and remittances that allowed me to develop a broad scope of examination. The exceptionality of this thesis lies in the fact that it covers a wide spectrum of findings and relevant information. I deliberately composed the thesis in this manner with the aim to present all-embracing range of explorative data. Having accomplished the objective, I am aware of the fact that it was impossible to reach an ethnographic richness at the same time.

In the theoretical framework I have mentioned a strong gender model that, according to the literature on gender and migration (Mahler & Pessar, 2006), influences the propensity to remit, the amounts, the structure and the motivations (Lopez-Ekra, 2011). My findings stand in line with this research and in addition, I have discovered other situations of how gender determines remittances. I argue that gender influences access to remittances and the source since migrants face gender stratified labor opportunities (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). Approaches to parental responsibilities are gendered; mothers in this study never failed to send remittances, despite the meager wages mothers deprived themselves to remit, which corresponds to female role of care provider. Men also deprive themselves to enact fatherhood transnationally, however some of them are prone to spend money on leisurely activities, e.g. drinking (Pribilsky, 2012) that is reflected into remitting lower amounts. Remittances are also lower when man in New York desires to maintain the traditional roles implying him being the sole provider while his wife is in charge of the household. Also, a part of male migrant's wages is directed to philandering in the host land because their sexually proactive gender role obligates them to procreate. The need for financial help from abroad may force some stay-behind women to tolerate husband's role of philander (Pribilsky, 2004). Engaging in a new relationship also impacts remittances; males are prone to cease to remit after a while (Dreby, 2009). Male migrants usually justify their tendency to drink and philander as their natural needs originating from their manhood. Gender also determines the destination of spare remittances where women invest into home decorations, fashion, and men into business or technology. Women in rural areas wait to claim

remittances until the last bearable moment because of traditional cultural gender patterns that position them in passive and private roles.

The research outcomes do not entirely support the assumption that men mostly remit to their wives (Orozco et al., 2009); the receptor in remittance dyad is determined mainly by trust. When a male migrant takes into account unsuccessful transnational relationship, he may be likely to distrust his wife and remit to his mother instead in order to secure the finances. Such decisions, however, usually escalate tension in the relationship and lead to conflict. Women as remittances receptors and managers administrated finances mostly without help of a man in their propinquity, which is beyond male expectations that portray Azuay women as lacking self-esteem due to their traditional submissive position and thus incapable of active management of remittances. In the case of a transnational couple, mutual collaboration is crucial for productive use of remittances; all women in this research were involved in decision-making over the use of remittances, in one case woman had the decision-making power, yet this was unknown to her husband. Total female involvement in decision-making process is a positive change in the relationships. The employment of remittances in Azuay doesn't fully coincide with findings at the national level in Ecuador (Calero, 2009). The majority of my respondents directed monies to long-term investments, such as building houses and setting up businesses to generate a steady income for the returnees, which also, in a sense, contradicts the notion that the use of remittances negatively creates dependence (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991).

Analyzing how the second approach is applicable to the researched area, my findings do not fully support the emancipating view of transnational migration (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991) and definite increase in female empowerment in Azuay related to migration experience in New York. I argue that in our case the impact of migration and remittances on gender relations is variable. On one hand, migration experience undoubtedly contributes to more egalitarian gender relations by increasing the work opportunities for women and allowing them, by virtue of financial independence, to negotiate gender roles. In addition, women gain greater awareness of how to cope with domestic violence. In some cases the new environment thus serves as a successful catalyst for a change towards gender equality. On the other, male migrants do not always assume the disruption traditional gender patterns and strengthen their propensity to be authoritative, be controlling or philander. After the male out-migration, women see themselves obliged to be self-sufficient and autonomous, therefore are not usually willing to accept the reinsertion of traditional gender roles when the husband is about to come. Upon arrival men may either accept the equalitarian gender patterns in New York (Pribilsky, 2004) or not adhere to them. Man who under migration experience has adopted what is traditionally perceived as female roles (Ghosh, 2009; Pessar, 1999) would then help in the household (King et al. 2013), and in the opposite case a serious conflict arises. Therefore, return to homeland may result in reinforcement of traditional gender relations and deadening gender-equalizing potential (De Haas, 2007; Ghosh, 2009). Last but not least, migration experience eventually leads to parallel relationships and disintegrated homes.

The social impact of transnational migration on the population of Azuay, a region where migration is a very important component of the society, needs to be further examined. The examination requires a more longitudinal and large-scaled studies that could register the alteration of the local gender model under the influence of the transnational migration. My thesis also serves to call attention to the lack of meticulous planning of the migration process among the Azuay population that could be solved by public events designed to raise informativeness about the real life migrants lead abroad and about the possible negative consequences of the migration process on families. It also points to the social and economic insecurity of the left-behind members of transnational migrant households, and to the phenomenon of parallel relationships that are likely to cause divorces and disorganized households. This needs a further investigation and assessment by social institutions such as Ministry for Economic and Social Inclusion, which is in charge of improvement and implementation of social policies.

To conclude, I have observed that in the researched field none of the approaches is exclusive (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992) but both at the same time shape the reality. Patriarchal gender relations organize migration and transnational migration reorganizes gender relations through both economic and social remittances. Migration implicates an encounter with a new environment and experience of new gender roles and thus brings along a dynamic potential to reshape gender roles. In every cultural environment, the real outcomes of this mutually constituting relationship will be obviously different. After the extensive examination of our case in particular I may anticipate that since gender shapes every human action, the original gender patterns will always be one of the determinants of the transnational migration and remittance process. In the long run, remittances from New York will undoubtedly contribute to gradual erosion of traditional patriarchal gender patterns in the Azuay society, and that will simultaneously change the way gender patterns shape, among other actions, the action of migration.

## 7. ANNEXES

### 1. LIST OF COMPLETED INTERVIEWS (Respondents are given pseudonyms)

	Name	Sex	Actual age	City of origin	Profession prior to migration	Migrated	Visa (V) Illegally (I)
1.	Miranda	F	56	C	Agricultural worker	2000- now	I
2.	Simona	F	43	C	Student high school	1995- now	V
3.	Daniela	F	23	C	Student high school	2006-now	I
4.	Iana	F	40	Ch	Dressmaker	1993-2004	I
5.	Victoria	F	35	C	Student, underwear sales assistant	1996-2009	V
6.	Sabina	F	28	Ch	Student high school	2006-2014	V
7.	María	F	67	Ch	Housewife	1981-2014	V
8.	Cynthia	F	70	Ch	Housewife	1999-2000	V
9.	Remedios	F	64	G	Shoemaker		
10.	Rosario	F	54	G	Housewife		
11.	Penelope	F		Ch	Housewife		
12.	Elena	F		G	Housewife		
13.	Romeo	M	41	G	Student high school	1988-1996, 1997-2001	I
14.	Renatho	M	49	Ch	Student high school	1983-2006	I
15.	Javier	M	46	Ch	Student high school	1985-now	V
16.	Fidel	M	43	G	?	1994-2002	I
17.	Eduardo	M	39	G	Shoemaker	2002-2004	I
18.	Felipe	M	38	C	Constructor	2002-2009	I
19.	Aurelio	M	44	Ch	Student high school, worked with his father in a workshop	1989-1993, 1994-1995, 1999-2005	I
20.	Cristóbal Z.	M	36	C	Shoemaker	1994-2003	I
21.	Crispín	M	24	G	Student high school	2007-2009	I
22.	Gabriel U.	M	65	G	Student high school	1970-1980, 1983-2013	V
23.	Don Eleudi	M	67	Ch	Shoemaker	1975-2007	I
24.	Isidoro	M	48	C	Baker	1991-2012	I
25.	Jeremy	M	28	C	Student high school	2004-2008	I
26.	Jesús	M	42	C	Teacher	2001-2009	I
27.	Leo	M	50	G	Shoemaker	1996-2002	I
28.	Leo T.	M	48	Ch	Constructor	1996-1997	I
29.	Pedro	M	44	C	Candy vendor	1991-1992	V
30.	Adán	M	28	G	Student high school	1999-2013	V
31.	Santiago	M	37	C	Student high school	2006-2014	V
32.	Alejo	M	28	C	Mechanic, artist	2010-now	V
33.	Ángel	M	46	C	Policeman	1991-now	I
34.	César	M	57	C	Book vendor	1990-now	V
35.	Enrique	M	46	C	University student	1991-now	I
36.	Floreano	M	39	C	Carpenter	2002-now	I
37.	Franky	M	33	G	Student high school	1998-now	V
38.	Lauro	M	46	C	Salesman, agriculture	1994-now	I
39.	Luis M.	M	33	C	Agriculture	2001-now	I
40.	Luis S.	M	36	C	Security guard	2003-now	I
41.	Luis T.	M	52	C	Hotel employee	2000-now	I
42.	Marco	M	40	C	Salesman	1994-now	I

43.	Mauricio	M	37	C	Journalist, university student	2003-now	V
44.	Luis P.	M	38	C	DJ, clown, book vendor	2003-now	I
45.	Sebastian	M	41	G	Agriculture	1990-now	I
46.	Jorge	M	45	Ch	Teacher, now mayor of Checa	1989-1991	I
47.	W. Murillo	M		G	Ex-minister, lawyer	For 14 years	V
48.	C. Orellana	F		C	La Casa de Migración worker		
49.	P.Carpio	M		C	Sociologist		

C – Cuenca city, G – Gualaceo town, Ch – Parish Checa

## 2. DATA PROVIDED BY THE STATISTICAL OFFICE

### NUMBER OF RESIDENTS

Origin	Azuay		Cuenca	
	M	F	M	F
<b>Number of residents outside Ecuador (2010)</b>	18391	9010	6449	3906
<b>Number of residents in the US (2010)</b>	15329	7064	4862	2735
<b>% of residents in the US of all outside residents</b>	83.4	78.4	75.4	70.0

Source: INEC, Statistical office (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censo)

### NUMBER OF LEGAL DEPARTURES FROM AZUAY PROVINCE OVER THE YEARS

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
<b>The US</b>	2467	2808	2192	2355	2681	2067	2365	2124	1053	1376	21488
<b>Total</b>	3166	3482	2659	2631	2980	2326	2763	2550	1324	1854	25735

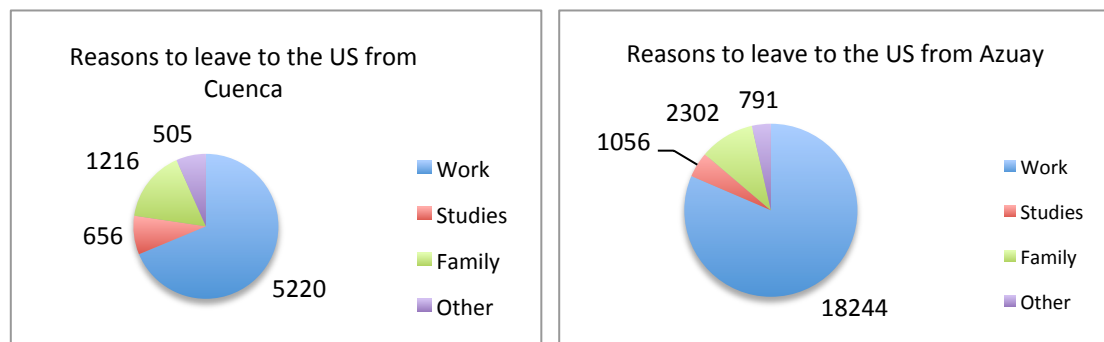
Source: INEC, Statistical office (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censo)

### NUMBER OF LEGAL DEPARTURES FROM CUENCA CANTON OVER THE YEARS

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
<b>The US</b>	1060	1005	684	719	839	615	723	626	400	648	7319
<b>Total</b>	1433	1343	919	864	1012	787	956	907	603	1021	9845

Source: INEC, Statistical office (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censo)

### REASONS TO LEAVE TO THE US



Source: INEC, Statistical office (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censo)

### 3. PRICE OF THE ILLEGAL JOURNEY FROM CUENCA TO NEW YORK

Year	Price + interest rate
1976	250 \$ (from Mexico)
1988	200 000 Sucre
1989	2700 \$
1991	5000 \$ fake passport
1994	6000 \$
1995	6000 \$
1999	7000 \$
2000	7500\$
2001	9000 \$ boat 12000 \$ plane to Mexico
2002	12000 \$
2008	15000 \$
2014	15000 \$ fake passport

Source: Author’s analysis based on data from the interviews

### 4. HOW MIGRANTS ASSESS THE HOST COUNTRY ENVIRONMENT

Value	M	F	Total
Work opportunities	11	2	13
Money	4	2	6
Nice city, clean, buildings	4	1	5
Everything	2	1	3
Work processes are easier, more sophisticated	2		2
Liberty	2		2
Justice	2		2
Punctuality	2		2
Infrastructure	1	1	2
Diversity in people	1		1
Comfort and ease of acquiring goods	1		1
People focus on their lives, do not gossip	1		1
Interesting people	1		1
Order and progress		1	1

Disdain	M	F	Total
Limiting life without documents	7	1	8
No life and free time, only work	6	2	8
Racism	7		7
Cold, climate	6		6
Exploitation and discrimination at work	5	1	6
Stress	5		5
Loneliness	4		4
No liberty	2	2	4
Homesick	3		3
No love	2		2
Only a nuclear family, no family life	2		2
Materialism	2		2
Work unfairness		2	2
Noise	1		1
Not speaking English	1		1
Food waste	1		1
Parents have no authority		1	1
No privacy	1		1
Little work in New York City	1		1
No fiesta	1		1
Attention to Hispanos	1		1

Source: Author’s analysis based on data from the interviews

## 5. HOUSES BUILT WITH REMITTANCES

First photo captures a traditional adobe house in Azuay province. The following are, contrastingly, newly built houses with remittances. They are often left uninhabited until the family returns to homeland.





August, 2014



Source: Author's photographs

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