

Migration and Trends in the Field of Social Policies in Ecuador – 1990-2005

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Ricerca condotta nell'ambito del progetto
LAVORO DI CURA E INTERNAZIONALIZZAZIONE DEL WELFARE
SCENARI TRANSNAZIONALI DEL *WELFARE* DEL FUTURO

Realizzato con il sostegno di

Fondo mutualistico per la promozione e lo sviluppo della
cooperazione della Confederazione Cooperative Italiane

COMPAGNIA
di San Paolo



MAY 2008

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1. TENDENCIES IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL POLICIES IN ECUADOR

Social policies in Ecuador have depended on fluctuations in the economy. Their evolution is correlated with expansive and recessive economic cycles; as a result, their institutionalization has changed a great deal within a brief time-span, they are unstable and may demonstrate few results. In general, the various trials and strategies in the creation of social policies have been subject to economic policy rather than the other way around (León, 2003). While the origins of social legislation, especially labor laws, date from the 1930s, it is only in the 1970s, with oil income, that the Ecuadorian state has the financial resources to establish an institutional apparatus to oversee public social policy. In keeping with the import substitution development model, an interventionist focus reigns during this period, with a universal social welfare perspective. Specifically, health and education services are expanded, and a social safety net is institutionalized around the Ministry of Public Health, the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute (IESS) and the Ministry of Education. The result was an increase in basic coverage throughout the country, with urban areas benefiting more than their rural counterparts did. In education, for example, illiteracy rates dropped from 29% to 17% and the number of years of schooling rose, from 3.6 to 5.1 (León, 2003).

During the 1980s, social spending declines significantly, due to a fiscal crisis produced by a change in international economic conditions: volatile financial markets, falling oil prices and rising foreign debt (UNICEF, 2008: 38). Structural adjustment policies are applied and contradictions emerge between social policy paradigms: compensation, focalization and anti-poverty policies intended to mitigate adjustment policies versus models of the universalist type difficult to dismantle.

During the Febres Cordero administration (1984-1988), marking the beginning of structural adjustment policy, the market vision reigning in social policy regarded with suspicion the so-called corporative character of the institutionalization of the health and education sectors. Budgets were cut in an attempt to reduce and neutralize these sectors. Meanwhile, parallel entities were established, exempt, it was said, from the rigidities characteristic of conventional institutionalization, and these gradually undermined the foundations of the institutionalization that arose in the decade of the 1970s (UNICEF, 2008: 38). Executive Units, answering directly to international projects financed by multilateral loans (IDB, World Bank) implemented specific focalized social policies. In this context, the system of universal social services was weakened and new mechanisms for parallel institutionalization were reduced to isolated, focalized experiments and subsidiary loans.

From 1992 to 1996, there was talk of a second phase of structural adjustment policies, during a period of emphasis on state reform processes. On the one hand, institutionalized planning for the medium term was dismantled and the strategic projection of public policy was lost. This led to “a disconnect between the objectives of macroeconomic policy, social policy and policy to reactivate production” (UNICEF, 2008: 39). The tendency has been to implement focalized programs and to share responsibilities with civil society (León, 2003). As a result, there was progress in reducing extreme poverty between 1992 and 1997, but other social indicators stagnated or declined, including the coverage and quality of education and public health services.

By the end of the 1990s, Ecuador faced an unprecedented economic crisis. “In 1999, economic growth declined by more than 7% over the previous year, unemployment in cities practically doubled between 1998 and 1999, and inflation rose to more than 60%” (SIISE, 2002: 13). In that same year, the GNP fell by 7.3% relative to the previous year and the per capita GNP declined by 9.1% between 1998 and 1999 (Ibid., 15). Unemployment jumped from 8 to 17 per cent in the country’s three major cities, Quito, Guayaquil, and Cuenca, and urban poverty increased from 36 to 65%. These figures reflect an unprecedented decline in family income and an increase in poverty levels. By 2002, per capita GNP was equal to the 1980 figure, around \$1,800. As a result, social gains of the previous twenty years stagnated (SIISE, 2002).

According to SIISE, Ecuador's social crisis, while brought on by the economic crisis, is not a recent phenomenon: it goes back to the beginning of the decade and is apparent in an inability to reduce social inequality. In effect, the pronounced concentration of income in a few sectors and unequal distribution are factors that "make the country one of the most inequitable in Latin America and the world" (SIISE, 2002: 29).

In fact, Ecuador is in third place, after Brazil and Paraguay, in inequitable distribution of wealth (a Gini index of 0.57, IADB, 2002). In 2000, the richest 10% of the population possessed 46% of all income, an enormous increase over the 35.4% they controlled in 1990. Income distribution has become more unequal in recent years, especially since the economic crisis, which has meant "a process of wealth transfer to a small proportion of society" (SIISE, 2002: 29).

One factor perpetuating economic inequality is social inequality. The education gap between the richest and poorest members of the population continues to grow, as does the difference between urban and rural sectors. Another factor affecting the poor performance of social policies in the country is the lack of an employment policy and an adequate social security system to mitigate increasing unemployment and the resulting loss of income (SIISE, 2002: 35). Currently, the Social Security System covers only 20% of the population and is in constant financial crisis. Various attempts at reform have produced disappointing results, particularly due to resistance by labor unions.

Between 2000 and 2006, political instability weakened attempts to establish stable social policies. The results of social policy, according to a UNICEF report, are based on the consolidation of certain institutional structures that came into being tied to commitments to comply with Social Development summits, commitments assumed in regards to the United Nation's Millennium Objectives, commitments with social movements and conditions attached to multilateral credits to maintain programs and policies (UNICEF, 2006: 39). In terms of focuses, proposals, still limited, have been tested in line with diminishing direct intervention by the central government and transferring the implementation of programs traditionally managed by ministries to sectional governments or private entities. But these experiments have been very limited (León, 2003).

2. COMPOSITION OF SOCIAL SPENDING

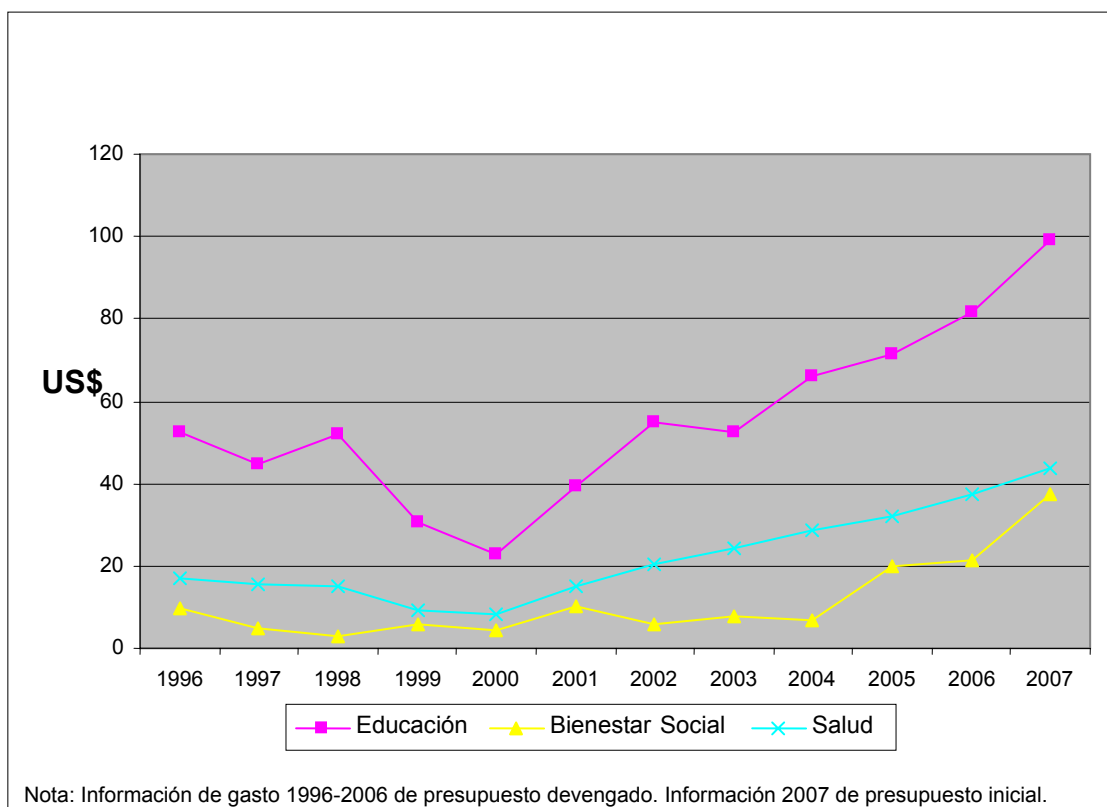
Ecuador's rate of social spending is one of the lowest in Latin America and has declined since 1982. Public spending on education fell from 4.8% in 1981 to 1.7% in 2000, and health spending dropped from 1.3% of the GNP in 1981 to 0.6% in 2000. State spending on education plunged from \$285 per student in 1996 to \$130 in 2000 (Rob Vos, 2003). Since 2001, there has been a gradual increase.

According to information from ECLAC, for the 2002-2003 period, Ecuador was second-to-last among 21 countries in the region, with per capita social spending at \$76, while a conservative estimate of the average for the region was \$610. Average spending as a percentage of GNP is 5.7%, while the average for the region is 15.1% for that period.

An important element explaining the difference with countries with greater social spending, such as Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil and Chile, is broader social security coverage and transfers related to said coverage; in Ecuador, less than 20% of the economically active population is covered by social security.

Between 1972 and 1995, per capita social spending increased by 50% in real terms, but declined as 1999 approached. Beginning in 1996, there was a decrease in social spending. Per capita spending decreased by 0.6%, especially in education, with a decline of 18%, and in health with an 11% drop.

Figure 1: Social expenditures per capita in Education, Social Welfare and Health 1996-2007



After the crisis, in 2001, there is greater emphasis on social spending in the state budget, with increases of 8.1% and, in 2002, 22.5%. Due to an increase in salaries in the public health sector, the proportion of social spending by the central government grew from 4.5% in 2000 to 6.4% in 2002.

The health and education sectors recover their significance and social welfare programs are expanded. These are focalized programs, intended to combat poverty. According to Rob Vos (2000), taken together, these programs cannot be characterized as a system of social protection. Although the existing programs provide social services to vulnerable groups, they are not based on a common vision. The programs fall into five groups: infant care and nutrition programs; programs intended to prevent school dropout among the poor; social infrastructure programs; and cash payments, such as the Human Development Bond.

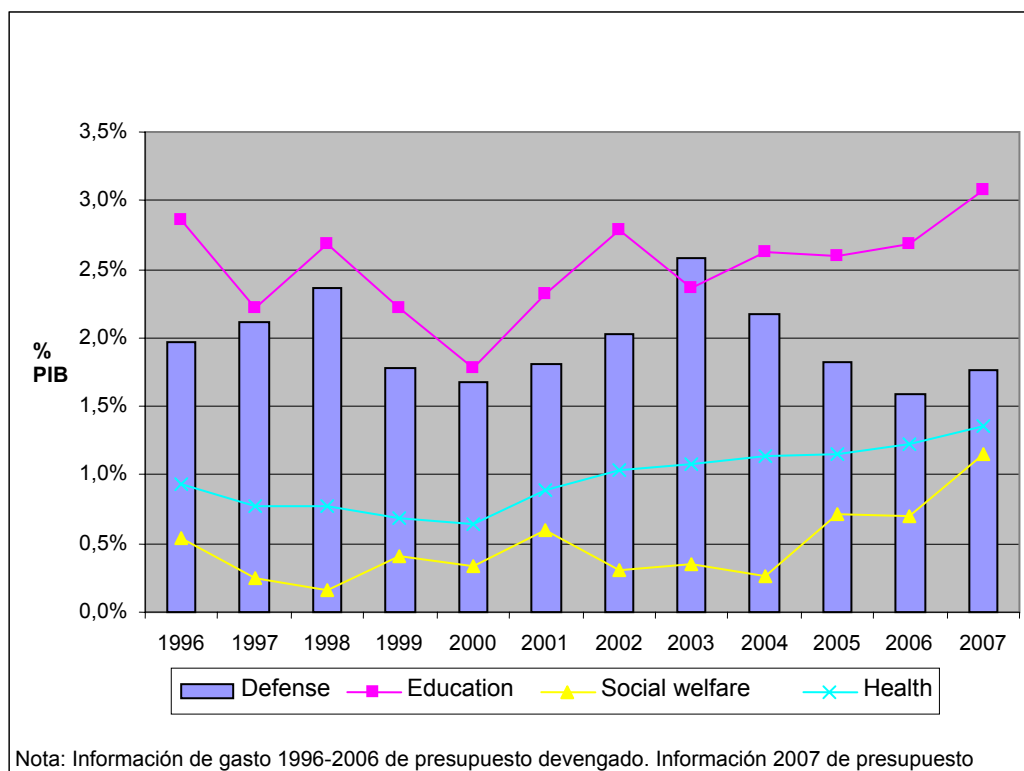
Insufficient emphasis is placed on components of social spending which offer the most hope for a counter-cyclical effect, such as social security, related to real salaries and the state of the economy. The absence of a counter-cyclical effect is also due to the absence of unemployment insurance. Social welfare programs are also rigid in times of crisis.

In 2007, a higher percentage of the budget is invested in social services, with an emphasis on focalized programs to the detriment of universal health and education programs. Overall, social spending was 32% greater than the 2006 figure, greater than the increase in the overall budget. In addition, the figure represents 5.7% of the GNP, compared to 4.7% for 2006. The composition of social spending has changed, with education, which accounted for 53% in 2006, representing 50% in the 2007 budget, while health spending decreases from 28% to 24%. At the same time, investment in focalized programs rises from 18 to 25%, due especially to a hike in the Human Development Bond.

According to the FARO Group (2007), resources earmarked for the provinces have increased by a 25% annual rate of growth, on average, between 2006 and 2007. However, this increase is not the same in all provinces and there is no clear logic underlying distribution. In the Sierra and on the

Coast, the increases demonstrate progressive effects while in the Amazon there is no clear tendency, in spite of the increase in per capita investment. Together, these situations reveal a poorly planned and, to date, ineffective distribution scheme.

Figure 2 – Social expenditures in Education, Social Welfare and Health to National Defense % GNP 1996-2007



Currently, education spending continues to be the most significant component in social spending undertaken by the central government, with a 24% annual growth rate and an increase in the GNP from 2.5% in 2006 to 3% in 2007. Differences between the urban and rural sectors still exist, with greater investment in the former. However, attempts are being made to mitigate these differences, and rural investment has increased over urban spending (54 million versus 40 million, respectively). Health spending, on the other hand, grew by 13.69% over the previous year, maintaining its weight as a percentage of the GNP but experiencing a decline vis-à-vis total social spending. For 2007, early attention to health problems has been prioritized, that is, with resources earmarked for health centers, sub-centers and basic hospitals. The impact of this measure is associated with localized attention, wider coverage and greater progressivity, as well as by a focus on preventive medicine, allowing for a more holistic, less costly approach to health care. The average per capita investment in health rose by \$6, from \$45 to \$51. This increase in investment trends holds for most provinces. However, the average per capita investment in health remains below that recorded for other economies in the region.

The so-called priority programs, that is, a set of focalized anti-poverty programs, have experienced the greatest increases between 2006 and 2007. Their weight in the GNP went from 0.8% in 2006 to 1.5% in 2007. The Human Development Bond, a program of cash payments to poor mothers, persons with handicaps and older adults, represents 72% of all resources (65% in 2006) while the other significant program is the Housing Incentive System, which accounts for 11% of resources (3% in 2006). Resources for all programs increased, except for “Feeding Ecuador,” where coverage and budget were reduced. In spite of the significant increase, larger than expected, in the number of

persons benefiting from these programs, their sources of funding are unstable (basically, oil income), and their budgets are thus highly vulnerable and dependent.

One of the bottlenecks in Ecuador's social policy, which clearly illustrates the spending analysis, is the issue of subsidies. The government maintains a set of subsidies on oil derivatives that benefit the entire population, regardless of economic status, and thus are defined as regressive as they end up benefiting most those with greater resources, persons who consume more fuel and electricity. The FARO Group estimates that more than half of what a family receives from the state, in transfers and services, comes in the form of subsidies (FARO-UNICEF, 2006). In effect, the total figure for subsidies is equal to the total invested in health, education and social welfare programs. Subsidies are regressive and have increased much faster than social investment. This explains why the demand for subsidies increases as the economy grows. They represent 44% of total state transfers to families.

Subsidies are divided among state contribution to pensions with the Social Security Institute (IESS), the Social Security Institute of the National Police Force (ISSPOL) and of the Armed Forces (ISSFA), and internal sale of oil derivatives (liquid gas, gasoline, diesel) to the electricity sector. The decision to maintain or to abolish subsidies, especially liquid gas and gasoline subsidies, is one that all administrations intend to make, but have been unable to implement.

According to the FARO Group (2006), two problems exist, beyond the low rate of social spending. The first is related to inequity in the distribution of resources to different territories and also to the fact that social programs have little or no relation to the specific needs of the population. For example, there is no clear relation between the resources assigned to each province and poverty levels. Fewer resources are invested in social spending in the province of Los Ríos, on the Ecuadorian coast, which has a higher rate of Unsatisfied Basic Needs than other provinces. There are also distortions in rural/urban spending: provinces with large rural populations, such as Esmeraldas, Napo and Cañar, receive more education resources for urban populations.

The second problem is the lack of quality in public spending performance. It should be pointed out that current programs, as they are planned and implemented, do not contribute substantially to reducing the gap between men and women. The Free Maternity and Newborn Care program, one of the most important for meeting the health care rights of women, does not have sufficient resources to provide the services stipulated by law. This program began in 1999. Its application implies that the Ministry of Public Health work together with county governments, and that mechanisms for citizen participation and oversight be incorporated into the program. The policy has contributed to growth in access to health services for women and children under five years of age, but it has not closed the gap in universal access nor has it had an impact in reducing maternal mortality (UNICEF, 2008: 44).

Decentralization has been another component in the debate over social policies for more than ten years. However, to date there are few decentralized experiences in the country in health and education, with the exception of a few country governments and the Free Maternity Program. One experience that merits mention is the Decentralized National System for the Holistic Protection of Children and Adolescents. This system arose after a process, in the course of more than ten years, of participation by civil society organizations and the search for agreements with the state. Of the 234 counties in Ecuador, 110 have created County Councils for Children and Adolescents.

At the end of 2002, a National Health System law was passed, defining a "plural, widely available, decentralized and participatory" health model, but resulting in limited progress. In the field of education, the institutional framework was seriously weakened in the 1996-2006 period. There is a high degree of dispersion, with 24 national offices and not a single effective decentralization experience (UNICEF, 2008).

3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In recent years, a substantial part of the country's budget is financed by loans from multilateral organisms, bilateral concessions and commercial banks (SIISE, 2002: 27). Traditionally, these financing and credit sources are tied to a series of requirements, such as, in agreements with the International Monetary Fund, "compliance with fiscal and economic adjustment measures" (SIISE, 2002: 27).

It is important to point out that only a small portion of the international debt has been earmarked for social spending. "For example, of the US\$700 million scheduled for release by the Andean Development Corporation, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, social projects were to receive less than US\$ 100 million, with the rest earmarked for stabilizing public finances, restructuring the financial sector, credits and infrastructure" (SIISE, 2002: 27).

In 2006 the total amount of international cooperation was 1,218,4 millions of USD; 76.2% correspond to external credit and 23,8% were non refundable funds.

From the total of refundable cooperation, 9% correspond to bilateral agreements and 81% to loans from multilateral organizations. Spain contributed with 27.4% of the total amount of bilateral refundable cooperation (after Brasil with 61.6% and before Denmark with 1.1 %).

3.1 No refundable Cooperation

The following Table shows the evolution of non refundable cooperation during the period 1997-2006:

Table 1 – Non refundable cooperation 1997-2006 (Millions of USD)

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Multilateral	18,08	36,00	15,30	17,65	16,27	25,60	26,08	39,30	60,89	64,30
Bilateral	70,80	72,20	75,00	87,05	174,60	159,52	103,04	101,08	141,22	166,50
ONG	7,48	5,10	3,10	15,28	32,15	42,72	38,08	49,66	57,09	58,94
Total no refundable	96,40	113,30	93,40	119,98	226,80	235,60	165,70	188,50	259,20	289,74

Source: INECI, 2005 and 2008

As we can see both bilateral and multilateral cooperation have increased steadily from 2002 on. The amount provided by NGS is not negligible either, accounting for 20 % of the total in 2006.

The major donors by countries in 2006 are the United States, followed by Japan and Spain. Note that Spain has increased its bilateral cooperation due to the Agreement signed between the two governments for an *External Debt Exchange*. Belgium is also an important donor.

In March 2005 the governments of Ecuador and Spain signed an Agreement *de Canje de Deuda* for an amount of 50 millions of USD. From this amount, 30 millions are directed to hydroenergetic projects and 20 millions to education projects. In 2006, Spain gave 12,5 millions. By the end of 2006 only, 0,6 % were directed to begin four educational projects:

1. Universalización del primer año de educación básica : Gobierno de la Provincia de Imbabura (208.000 USD)
2. Implementación de escuelas de calidad en centros educativos comunitarios: Fundación Tierra Viva (127.841 USD).
3. Mejoramiento de la calidad académica de maestros de educación básica: Fundación el Universo (159.360 USD)

4. Educación para Todos y Todas en Cayambe y Pedro Moncayo: Fundación Casa Cayambe (158.196).

This same Agreement was signed with the Italian government and, in March 2006, 28 projects of sustainable development were approved for an amount of 6.607.478 USD.

Table 2 – External Assistance by Donor 2003-2005 (Millions of USD)

Bilateral	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total de desembolsos
Alemania	8,31	15,14	12,97	17,68	16,58	15,26	85,94
Argentina			0,02	0,01	0,02		0,05
Bélgica	3,23	5,49	4,32	4	10,91	18,04	45,99
Canadá	4,4	0,12	4,52	1,39	1,83	1,72	13,98
Chile			0,1	0,11	0	0,06	0,27
China	5,81		4,13	0	0	2,6	12,54
Corea			0,53	0,2	0,26	1,43	2,42
España	13,49	14,49	3,82	4,45	5,51	28,25	70,01
Estados Unidos	83,91	67	43,27	40,73	35,65	46,74	317,3
Finlandia	0,01	0,3	0	0	0,58	2,06	2,95
Francia	3,73	8,73	0,42	0,32	0,46	0,62	14,28
Italia	3,21	1,4	0,73	0,8	2,38	2,13	10,65
Japón	32,19	30,88	15,33	19,4	26,92	36,47	161,19
Luxemburgo			1,96	1,55	0,27		3,79
México			0	0	0,61		0,61
Noruega	2,6	1,55	0	0	0,51	0,29	4,95
Países Bajos	4,77	6,51	3,65	4,37	5,55	0,4	25,25
Reino Unido	0,44	0,73	0	0,22	0,93	0,76	3,08
Rusia			0,8	0	0		0,8
Suecia	0,38	0,4	0,57	0,48	0		1,83
Suiza	7,31	4,81	5,91	5,39	6,77	9	39,19
Venezuela						0,7	0,7
Total	174,6	159,52	103,04	101,08	141,22	166,5	817,77

Source: INECI, 2005, 2008

With regards to the sectors where this money is invest, between 2003 and 2006 social welfare (which includes women and children's program of social protection, anti-drogues programs, social rehabilitation and public security) , local development and health were the best provided sectors.

Multilateral cooperation directed its major funds to the environment and natural resources, local development and health. The European Union, together with UNDP and GEF are the major donors in this sector. The EU is also the major donor in local development and health issues. . In terms of bilateral cooperation, the sectors which received the biggest amounts were education, science and technology, housing, local development and agriculture. Spain, Japan and Belgium are the major donors in the area of education and technology. Japan is also the major donor in housing and basic services. The United States and Belgium are the biggest donors in the area of local development. (INECI, 2007: 49-50).

Table 3 – International Assistance by Sector 2003-2006 (Millions of USD)

Sector	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Agriculture	12,9	21,04	14,29	25	73,24
Social Welfare	24,4	27,52	30,49	52,5	134,9
Development of Indigenous and Afroecuadorian	4,25	5,44	5,33	6,3	21,32
Local Development	23,8	27,09	40,08	48,1	139,04
Natural Disasters	1,34	1,43	3,74	7	13,51
Education, Science and Technology	17,9	19,71	15,8	34,1	87,51
Financial Management	10	6,31	9,04	4,2	29,56
Governance	18,4	17,51	23,38	17,4	76,64
Industries and Trade	3,35	4,13	7,79	11,4	26,67
Environment and Natural resources	25,3	33,63	37,44	33	129,33
Health	15,7	12,56	24,41	18,8	71,51
Transports and communications	0,49	0,99	0,67	0,2	2,35
Tourism	0,97	1,15	0,71	1,3	4,13
Housing and basic services	8,44	9,12	16,34	27,6	61,5
Others	0,1	0,26	1,11	2,84	4,31
Total	166	188,5	259,2	289,7	903,14

Source: INECI, 2005, 2008

Within Multilateral cooperation the European Union is the most important donor, followed by the United Nations.

Table 4 – Multilateral Assistance by Donor 2001-2006 (Millions of USD)

Multilateral	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados	0,68	1,47	1,11	1,84	2,16	2,55	9,81
Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo	4,54	6,54	3,94	3,67	1,77	3,2	23,66
Banco Mundial			0	6,04	2,29	1,34	9,67
Comisión Europea	3,14	6,26	8,55	12,24	35,39	33,76	99,34
Corporación Andina de Fomento			0,11	0,84	0,59	0,46	2
Fondo de Desarrollo de las Naciones Unidas para la Mujer	0,12	0,15	0,46	0,66	0,76	0,11	2,26
UNICEF	2,64	2,91	2,78	3,78	3,16	3,07	18,34
Fondo de Población de Naciones Unidas	0,86	1,55	1,21	0,86	0,85	0,55	5,88
Organización de Estados Americanos			0,21	0,23	0,03	0,78	1,24
Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación	0,33	0,33	0,3	0,53	0,43	0,61	2,53
Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación la Ciencia y la Cultura	0,03	0,55	0,12	0,23	0,01	0,16	1,1
Organización Latinoamericana de Energía			0,27	0,24	0,25		0,76
Organización Mundial de la Salud Organización Panamericana de Salud	0,77	1,48	0,44	0,44	2,89	2,54	8,56
Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo	0,99	3,32	4,33	4,66	4,73	9	27,03
Programa Mundial de Alimentos	2,17	1,04	1,84	0,12	0,52	1,03	6,72
Voluntarios Naciones Unidas			0,38	0,5	0,53	0,02	1,43
ONUSIDA						0,08	0,08
Global Found					0,16	0,87	1,03
GEF			0,68		4,37	4,12	9,17
IICA						0,04	0,04
OLADE			0,27	0,24	0,25	0,01	0,77
Total	16,27	25,6	26,08	39,3	60,89	64,3	232,44

Source: INECI, 2005, 2008

As for nonrefundable foreign aid, there are at least two problems: the lack of coordination in the definition of investment priorities and the limited spending capacity of national counterparts (SIISE, 2002: 27). It has also been pointed out that the international technical aid apparatus tends to duplicate activities and there is a lack of coordination among the various agencies (SIISE, 2002: 27).

The Ecuadorian state, according to research by SIISE, has made progress in recent years in defining a national structure to coordinate foreign aid, through an office in the Ministry of Foreign Relations. This office is now under the National Planning Secretariat, SENPLADES.

We do not have information on the relationship between international cooperation and the increasing migration flux. However, it is clear that the presence of Spain as the third major donors speaks for itself of the relevance that this country is assigning to Ecuador as an important recipient of its international cooperation.

4. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES

The characteristics of the most recent migratory flows in Ecuador are related to general worldwide tendencies (Castles and Miller, 1999). To begin with, Ecuador has gone from being, traditionally, a sending country to a receiving country as well as an important transit site. At the same time, while significant numbers of Ecuadorians left at the end of the 1990s, traveling especially to southern European countries and the United States, Colombians and Peruvians arrived in ever-increasing numbers. The new character of mobility has concrete implications for public policy design, as it requires that institutional and political actors create coherent policies for their own diasporas and for immigrants, where such policies exist.

In the second place, migratory profiles have diversified enormously in socioeconomic, spatial and gender terms and in terms of destination. While there are many reasons for emigration, related to socioeconomic factors, discrimination of various types – racial, ethnic, gender, sexual identity – also plays a role. It has been said that this heterogeneity tends to be hidden in policies, as these tend to be based on imaginary single causes and homogenize the profiles of migrants.

In the third place, the Ecuadorian case also illustrates the global tendency toward the feminization of migration, understood not only as an increase in the flow of women but also as the specific insertion of women into the global labor market in the care sector. The increase in the emigration of Ecuadorian women to Europe, the United States and a number of Latin American countries coincides with the consolidation of flexible labor niches, generally unregulated, where conditions are very precarious, such as domestic labor and the care of the elderly, children, and the ill.¹ The consequences of this migration, in terms of social vulnerability, have not been addressed in policies.

Finally, the centrality of migration to the Ecuadorian case is also due to the place it has held in political discourse and in policies. In effect, migration has moved from the margins, where it was treated as a local set of problems that affected only a specific area of the country, to the center of debate in political campaigns, appearing regularly in the media, and has become one of the central themes on the country's foreign policy agenda. For example, from 2003 one major newspaper, *El Universo*, includes a daily page on migration issues and the three major newspapers in the country, *El Comercio*, *El Universo* and *Diario HOY*, started an online daily edition directed to the Ecuadorian diaspora. Both *El Universo* and *El Comercio* have permanent correspondants in Spain ,

¹ There is an extensive literature on the feminization of migrations worldwide and the relation between this phenomenon and global chains of care, a subject that is beyond the scope of this article.

Italy and the United States. The presence of migration issues in the media has helped to create a public agenda.

As regarding the political centrality of migration, the PLANEX, which is the State Foreign Relations Plan 2005-2020, includes migration as one of the most important foreign policies of the Ecuadorian State. Its orientation is toward the protection of migrants human rights and a reinforcement of the ties between the State and its diaspora. From 2006 on the State has also approved the vote of Ecuadorians emigrants and the SENAMI (*Secretaria Nacional del Migrante*) was created in 2007 with the level of a Ministry which provides a concrete institutional body for the implementation of public policies related to migration. The impacts of these institutional changes on the lives of migrant and migrant families are yet to be evaluated since there are very recent.

However, though migration has become a highly visible issue on Ecuador's public agenda, the three related processes mentioned above are not addressed: Ecuador as a sending and receiving country, the diversification of migrants' profiles and the multidimensionality of its causes, and the feminization of migrant flows.

4.1 Ecuador, a sending and receiving country: the migration statistics²

International migration has been a constant in the life of the country for more than 50 years. Beginning in 1960, there were significant flows to Venezuela, the United States and Canada.³ Between 1976 and 1990, the migratory balance was around 20,000 persons per year, on average, and was composed of two types of flows: from rural sectors and small cities from two provinces in the south of Ecuador, Azuay and Cañar, and by temporary indigenous emigrants, especially Otavaleños⁴ (Herrera, Carrillo and Torres, 2005).

According to FLACSO-UNFPA (2006), "beginning in 1993, there is an increase in emigration that, by 1998, reaches 40,735 persons annually. However, the dizzying growth in the flight of Ecuadorians begins in 1999." In effect, between 1999 and August 2006, around 900,000 people left and have not returned (FLACSO-UNFPA, 2006). This represents around 8% of the total population of the country and 20% of its economically active population, which, according to the 2001 census, included 4,445,000 persons. The year 2000 is the peak year for emigration, with 175,000 persons leaving and not returning. While there has been a significant decrease beginning in 2004, a year after Spain required the Schengen visa, in 2005 flows again increased, due to processes of family reunification that have occurred in European countries and to the search for different ways to leave.

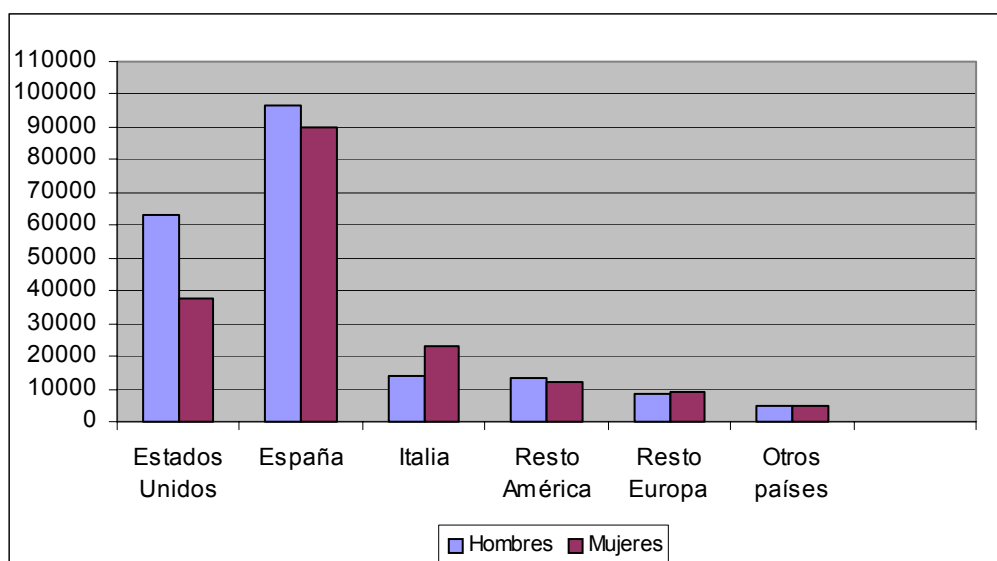
Currently, the major countries to which Ecuadorian travel are Spain, the United State and Italy. Until 1997, 63% of emigrants went to the United States. According to census figures, 49.40% of the population that left between 1996 and 2001 is in Spain, 26.70% is in the United States and 9.90% is in Italy. The SIEH survey (2005) provides similar figures. While census data offer very low figures for other European countries, it should be pointed out that there is a growing presence of Ecuadorians in England, Belgium and Switzerland. In Spain, there were 13,000 Ecuadorian registered in 1998, a figure that grew to around 500,000 by 2005.

² This section is based on the volume *Ecuador: las cifras de la migración internacional*. Quito: FLACSO-UNFPA, 2006, edited by the author.

³ For a characterization of the profile of emigrant flows in the 1960s and 1970s, see the introduction to Herrera, Carrillo and Torres (2005).

⁴ For an analysis of emigration from Ecuador's southern region, primarily in the 1980s and 1990s, see Astudillo and Cordero (1990), Carpio (1992), Herrera and Martínez (2002), Kyle (2000), Jokisch (1997), Pribilsky (2001), Wamsley (2001). For more on emigration of Kichwas from Otavalo in the 1990s, see Meisch (2001), Kyle (2000) and Maldonado (2004).

Figure 3 – Ecuadorian Migration by Sex and Destination



Source: IV Censo de Población y Vivienda

The new migratory wave is different from the previous one in a number of ways. In the first place, most emigrants come from urban rather than rural areas. The 2001 census data indicates that 73.16% of emigration is basically urban while 26.83% of emigrants come from rural areas. The cities with the greatest number of emigrants are Quito and Guayaquil.

In addition, emigrants come from provinces in all three regions of Ecuador. The profile of the emigrant is also diverse, men and, especially, women, leave; they are primarily young but older persons also emigrate, with educational levels above the national average. In effect, the flow is very heterogeneous in terms of class, regional origin, generation and gender, and thus cannot be classified according to homogenizing criteria.

The SIEH survey (2005) offers information on level of instruction of the emigrant population not found in the 2001 census. In general, the educational level is higher than the national average, as the majority of emigrants have at least some high school education. There are differences related to sex and destination that merit emphasis. In general, female emigrants have higher educational levels than males. Fifty-five per cent have high school and 18% have university education, while for men, the figures are 46% and 18%, respectively. While the majority of the emigrant population has high school education, there are significant percentages in the three receiving countries of populations with primary and with university education, indicating that the diverse educational profiles of men and women are not mirrored by their jobs, as most tend to work at the lowest levels of the job ladder.

One of the social costs of the recent migratory flow has been the transformation of family arrangements as a result of the emigration of fathers and mothers. The Emedhino Survey (2000) estimated that the number of children left behind grew from 17,000 in 1991 to 150,000 in 2000. Researchers are beginning to study these new forms of care, the involvement of older women and men in said care, and the processes of vulnerability that this situation creates for children and families (Herrera and Carrillo, 2005). The SIEH survey (2005) provides information on this situation. Thirty-six per cent of women and 39% of men have left at least one child in Ecuador. The emigrants in Spain have left the greatest number of children in their country of origin, 44% in the case of men and 43% for women.

Analysis of differences in the socioeconomic situation of female and male emigrants indicates that the origin of male migration is poorer than female, that more poor and indigent males travel than do females from these strata (Camacho, 2005).

Table 5 – Emigrant population by sex and socioeconomic condition (%)

	Indigent	Poor	Vulnerable	Solvent
Men	5.9	27.7	37.9	28.4
Women	4.3	24.1	38.8	32.8
Total	5.2	26.1	38.3	30.4

Source: Gloria Camacho (2005)

4.2 Impact of remittances on human development

In spite of the tendency in the literature of other countries to find significant impacts in poverty reduction related to remittances and migration, in the case of Ecuador, a number of studies have concluded that the impact on poverty reduction at the national level is weak for a number of reasons: first, because the poorest do not migrate; second, because those who receive remittances are concentrated in the quintiles with the highest incomes – 43% of monetary transfers are concentrated in the fourth and 34% in the fifth quintiles; third, there is no clear impact on human capital improvement. Olivie and Ponce (2008) came to these conclusions in a study based on a Quality of Life Survey in 2007. According to a number of studies based on partial samples, remittances seem to have a positive effect on school attendance, especially for girls in rural areas (Pacheco, 2007), but have no clear effect on health (Guerrero, 2007).

Of those receiving monthly remittances, close to 90% receive up to \$100, although, of these individuals, 60% receive less than \$100 while around 30% receive between \$100 and \$300. Larger remittances do not appear to be significant.

Table 6 – Amount received from abroad

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Up to 100 dollars	1617	58,1	58,1	58,1
	From 100 to 300	786	28,3	28,3	86,4
	From 300 to 500	167	6,0	6,0	92,4
	From 500 to 700	62	2,2	2,2	94,6
	From 700 to 1000	65	2,3	2,3	97,0
	From 1000 to 1500	30	1,1	1,1	98,1
	From 1500 to 2500	28	1,0	1,0	99,1
	More than 2500	26	,9	,9	100,0
	Total	2781	100,0	100,0	

Source: ECV 2007

Table 7 – Countries from which remittances are sent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Spain	1254	45,1	45,1	45,1
	United States	1113	40,0	40,0	85,1
	Italy	248	8,9	8,9	94,0
	Andean Community countries	37	1,3	1,3	95,4
	Other countries	129	4,6	4,6	100,0
	Total	2781	100,0	100,0	

Source: ECV 2007

In the majority of cases, this money comes from Spain (45.1%) and the United States (40.0%), which together account for 85.1% of all remittances. In addition, remittances are sent from Italy (8.9%), other countries (4.6%) and Andean Community countries (1.3%).

As for use, the ECV indicates that the money is spent primarily on goods and services related to social reproduction: food accounts for 44.41% of all spending, education for 18.50%, debt payments and health for 7.78%. Consumption of other kinds, including clothing, housing, cars and appliances, along with savings, account for only 21% of the total (Olivie and Ponce, 2008). According to the study mentioned, spending on education and health comes to 26%. For education, spending increases significantly in the second and third quintiles, compared to the first quintile (the poorest). However, it drops again in the fourth and fifth quintiles. The authors conclude that the more comfortable sectors of the population receiving remittances are not spending their money on medium and long-term investments, such as education. As for health, spending is greatest in the highest quintile, while savings is not a significant item in any quintile. On the other hand, the study found that the fourth quintile, the group that receives the most in remittances is the one that saves the least. These results do not agree with a 2003 BID study, in which savings and investments account for a larger proportion of remittances (Bendixen, 2003).

Most remittance recipients are women (65.8%), persons older than 45 years of age (52.7%), married (45.7%) and with primary school education (40.3%).

Up to now, researchers have not studied the impact of remittances on the informalization of care arrangements or on social welfare institutions, in light of the weakness of these. But it is evident that the increasing number of children left behind are a problem not addressed by public institutions though the relatives of emigrants increasingly demand services in this area. The situation of grandmothers, generally in charge of the minors, and of the children themselves, is very precarious and requires that the state develop child protection policies.

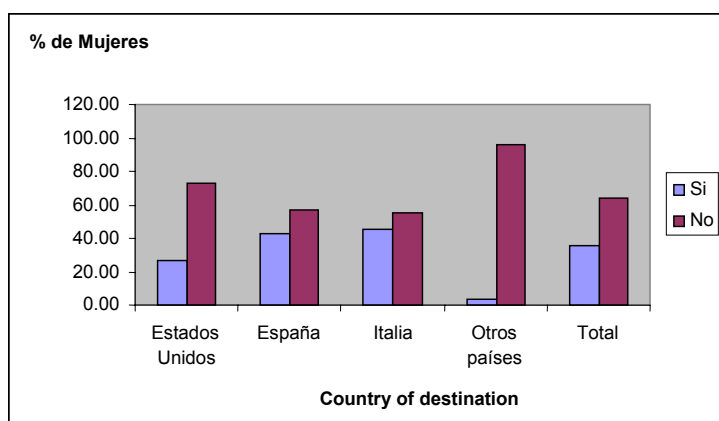
Currently, a number of municipalities, such as Quito and Cuenca, as well as the national government through the National Migrant Secretariat, are working on such a policy. However, existing programs have very low coverage, have been affected by institutional instability and have not managed to meet the needs of the majority of those requiring these services. We will see below, in greater detail, the diverse family arrangements that exist and the situation of children left behind.

4.3 The situation of children in Ecuador

One of the social impacts of the recent migratory flow has been a transformation in family arrangements due to the emigration of fathers and mothers. The Emedhino Survey (2000) estimates that the number of children left behind between 1991 and 2000 rose from 17,000 to 150,000. Researchers are beginning to study the new forms of childcare established, the involvement of elderly women and men in these arrangements, and the process of vulnerability that this situation has created for children and families (Herrera and Carrillo, 2005).

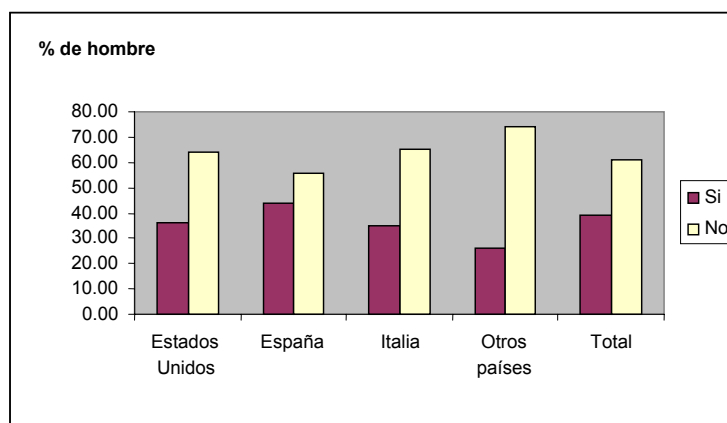
The SIEH-ENEMDHU 2005 survey provides information on the subject. Thirty-six per cent of women and 39% of men have left at least one child behind in Ecuador. Emigrants in Spain have the greatest number of children in their country of origin, this being the case for 44% of men and 43% of women. This situation, existing in December 2005, could change in coming years in light of the "regularization" process underway, through which some 130,000 Ecuadorians obtained permission to work in Spain, thus speeding the process of family reunification.

Figure 4 – Female Emigrant and Children left in Ecuador by Country of Destination



Source: Emendhu 2005

Figure 5 – Male Emigrant and Children left in Ecuador by Country of Destination



Source: Emendhu 2005 Chart by FLACSO-Unfpa 2006

In Italy, on the other hand, the country in which we found a majority of female migrants, more mothers than fathers have children in the country of origin: 45% of women have at least one child in Ecuador, compared with 35% of men. As indicated in studies by Luca Queirolo (2005), Francesca Lagomarsino (2005) and Ambrosini and Torre (2005), Ecuadorian immigration to Italy has been characterized by the arrival of women who, over time, bring the rest of the family with them.

This may have been the case up to 2005, given that, unlike the Spanish case, in the United States the regularization process took place in 2002, and thus, the percentage of migrants with children in Ecuador – 36% for men and 27% for women – is lower. However, we should note that studies by Herrera and Martínez (2002) and Herrera and Carrillo (2005) found that in the south of the country, the area with the longest history of migration, with people leaving for the United States, the separation of children and parents could have lasted for 10 to 15 years, due to the difficulty in obtaining legal residence in that country, a situation that impeded processes of family reunification through official channels. This situation seems to have been generalized among emigrants who left in the 1990s, when the United States' immigration policies became more rigid.

Table 8 – Emigrant population, by destination and children in Ecuador

Selected Characteristics		United States	%	Spain	%	Italy	%	Other Countries	%	Total	%		
Sex	Total		83.578	29,00	152.687	54,00	22.639	8,00	25.123	9,00	284.027	100,0	
	Men	Left children younger than 18 years of age	yes	18.903	36,00	35.429	44,00	3.677	35,00	3.446	26,00	61.454	39,00
			No	33.102	64,00	44.657	56,00	6.837	65,00	9.632	74,00	94.227	61,00
	Total		52.004	100,0	80.086	100,00	10.513	100,00	13.078	100,00	155.681	100,0	
	Women	Left children younger than 18 years of age	yes	8.493	27,00	31.474	43,00	5.407	45,00	499	4,00	45.873	36,00
			No	23.082	73,00	41.127	57,00	6.718	55,00	11.546	96,00	82.473	64,00
	Total		31.574	100,00	72.601	100,00	12.125	100,00	12.045	100,00	128.346	100,0	

Source: SIEH ENEMDHU Survey, 2006. Created by FLACSO

The profile of migrants and their families varies according to many factors: urban or rural origin, socioeconomic condition and level of education are only some of those. Destination and the sex of migrants are also related. Before 1990, migrants went primarily to the United States, and they were, in large part, male. During that decade, emigration became urban and increasingly female, while, at the same time, destinations diversified.

Thus, in 2000 in the south of the country, the area with the longest migratory tradition, it was common to find families with members in the United States, Spain and other European countries. In a survey carried out in a school in the city of Loja in late-2003, parents of students were in 12 different countries, among which were the well-known destinations – Spain, Italy, the United States – as well as Sweden, England, Belgium, Israel and Australia. In addition, researchers frequently found migratory trajectories combining internal and external migration repeated by members of at least two generations.

On the other hand, in areas of more recent migration, such as the cities of Quito and Guayaquil, destinations are less diversified, families seem less dispersed and the migratory experience is not yet intergenerational. At the same time, the repercussions that migration has on a person from an urban family, in which the extended family patterns more common in rural settings are not found, are going to be very different from the experience of a rural migrant whose family has probably experienced the internal migration of a family member and in which there are strong extended family ties. In these homes, the experience of separation from parents due to migration will be more natural than in homes in which the network of relations and the parental role are almost exclusively assumed by biological mothers, a more frequent reality in urban settings.

What is more, the migratory policies of countries chosen as destinations are also significant in creating the range of reunification possibilities open to families. For example, in the United States, the irregular and risky nature of migration, with clandestine journeys by sea from Ecuador to the coast of Guatemala, followed by long treks through the desert, combined with delays in obtaining work and residency permits, and the growing difficulties created by the hardening of migratory policies, mean that family reunification and definitive integration in that country are not necessarily the path chosen by the families of emigrants. Instead, we need to talk about a diverse set of family structures and arrangements, from a complete break with the family in the country of origin and the creation of new family ties in the new country, to the maintenance of family relations over distance and time, giving rise to a phenomenon referred to in the literature as the transnational family (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2001).

In the south of the country, while female emigration is not unknown, up to now the most common profile of the emigrant is male, and the prevailing logic is that of the male emigrant who exercises the paternal role from a distance, as analyzed by Pribilsky (2001). In our study, we found cases in which the paternal role at a distance is reproduced intergenerationally (Herrera and Martínez, 2002).⁵

This pattern, with its transnational aspects, is very different from that which predominates among urban migrants and those with post-secondary education who have traveled to Spain and Italy. The latter case includes more women than men and, in large part, women have led the migratory process (Lagomarsino, 2006). Other studies have emphasized the female character of the migratory chains leaving for Europe (Pedone, 2006); this process includes very different family arrangements in which family reunification tends to predominate in the destination country and, to a lesser degree, transnational families. We also find in this case what we can call families in transition, that is, families with children in Ecuador and in the new country, new couples and members in the country of origin defining their own migratory projects. While these are uncertain migratory projects, a number of factors come into play so that families tend to be reconfigured in a manner distinct from those mentioned above.

In the first place, migration generally has not been an intergenerational family strategy in these cases and, thus, ties at a distance and transnational relations do not necessarily form part of the repertory of family actions and strategies. At the same time, migratory policies and procedures related to family reunification in Spain and Italy, while creating a series of obstacles for migrant families, have been easier to overcome. Thus, family reunification has taken place on a large scale in these countries during the past three years.

Finally, a factor that affects the heterogeneity of exit contexts and the diversity of situations of families who remain is whether they receive remittances from relatives abroad. A number of surveys, both national and regional, have demonstrated that not all families with a migrant member receive money. Only 50% of emigrants send remittances to relatives and, in the case of spouses, 27% do not receive money (FLACSO-Central Bank of Ecuador, 2003). This has a direct repercussion on family arrangements created with emigration and, as we will see below, puts family members who remain behind, especially children, in a vulnerable situation.

During interviews with people who have assumed the care of minors and testimonies gathered from the young people in question, we discovered a wide variety of situations and family arrangements. Some young people have remained with their mothers or fathers, others with grandparents or aunts, there are children who are being taken care of by older siblings, and, finally, we have found cases of minors living alone.

While this classification corresponds to those who appear as the formal representatives of the children in question, in practice, care is shared among many persons: grandparents, aunts, older sisters, parents, maids, neighbors. In reality, this is the first change that young people and their families face: going from care assumed, for the most part, by both parents or their mothers, to more diffuse arrangements in which two, three, four or more persons intervene. As mentioned above, this varies, depending on whether we are dealing with a more rural or urban tradition.

If we analyze the reorganization of care in terms of who has migrated, we see that arrangements differ depending upon who emigrates – the father alone, the mother along, or both – and on whether the children are from single-parent homes. The axis that runs through this differentiation is the social construction of productive and reproductive spheres as sex-differentiated spheres in which the care and socialization of minors, regardless of cultural content, are, by norm, attributed to women.

⁵ David Kyle (2002), Jokisch (1998) and others have studied migration to the United States from this part of Ecuador and the creation of transnational networks.

Thus, when the father migrates, the organization of social reproduction is not significantly altered and the mother continues as the anchor around whom various care activities are arranged. This sexual division of productive and reproductive labor places males outside the domestic sphere and, thus, the emigration of the father tends not to be perceived by young people as an absence that alters their daily life, unless the normative paternal roles have changed. Negative effects and problematic situations arise when masculine identities and traditional patterns enter in crisis, i.e., their role as providers and authority figures. In the former case, when the emigrant father stops sending remittances or these are not adequate, the lack of reproduction material affects the social reproduction of the family. On the other hand, the absence of the father leads to gaps in the representation of authority and often pushes mothers to adopt strong measures to protect children.

By way of conclusion, in spite of the wide variety of situations, we can identify three common factors that characterize the reorganization of care. In the first place, this is an eminently feminine activity, regardless of who assumes the formal representation of minors. On rare occasions, migration changes the sexual division of labor within the home, although when mothers emigrate, they become the principle providers for their families' reproduction. Male figures generally intervene in activities related to entertainment (Sunday soccer, outings) as well as homework, but they have little to do with daily housekeeping and care. In the second place, with a mother's migration, there comes into being an organization of care concentrated on one or two persons within a more dispersed system of reproduction activities assumed by a variety of people. While young people have a single formal representative vis-à-vis the public world, in practice, care involves multiple individuals.

Thus, the greater or lesser density of the support network is a factor that will affect the well-being of young people. At the same time, this could lead to problems in the construction of authority figures by young people, as has been noted by a number of caregivers. In the third place, regardless of the family structure in which young people remain, they begin to assume many more tasks than those undertaken before their parents emigrated. These range from domestic chores and the care of siblings to public responsibilities, all of which significantly affect their own development.

Finally, we need to mention the role of communication in these family arrangements. This is frequent between children and their migrant parents, but tends to weaken over the years, and there are extreme cases in which parents no longer send letters or money to their families in Ecuador. When communication takes place on a regular basis, it plays an important role in reproducing and maintaining family relations. Thus, the contact made possible by new technologies, such as Internet, conference calls with cameras and video, is important. It is essential to consider here not only the frequency but the quality of communication, given that many calls are for the sole purpose of determining how money sent will be spent. When an effort is made to maintain interest in the details of daily life, the migrant parents have a greater presence in the lives of their children. Naturally, the quality of the relationship is reinforced with occasional visits by the parents to Ecuador or by the children to wherever their parents are living, and this allows for a reaffirmation and continued recognition of presence among parents and children.

Here, however, another phenomenon comes into play, one seldom taken into account in analysis of the young people of emigrant families, and this is the phenomenon of the reunion of parents and their children, whether in Ecuador or the destination country. Young people often describe the event as an estranging experience, marked by inevitable distance between themselves and their absent mothers or fathers. Some young people even mention that a visit with parents confirms the fact that the ties of affection and the channels of communication are difficult to establish, especially for adolescents.

Regarding the use of money and ties to certain objects sent by parents, it is important to point out that the majority of young people interviewed do not manage large sums. But displaying gifts is basic, as this is the way to relate to an absent father or mother, and if the gifts are ostentatious, that is because these young people need proof that their parents are still concerned about them from a

distance. Thus, the gifts that parents send to their children – play stations, brand name clothing, digital cameras and iPods – are strong symbolic points of reference that help these young people to affirm the presence of their parents.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Best practices, in terms of relating migration (remittances) with social development, have not been found. What we know about are financial initiatives related to savings cooperatives (Co Desarrollo, FEPP) that indirectly benefit the social reproduction of many families. These initiatives still have relatively limited coverage.

There are several co-development projects that are being implemented now. The *Proyecto co-desarrollo Cañar Murcia* is the most important initiative that involves AECI (Spanish International Cooperation Agency), the Ecuadorian government (SENAMI) and the municipalities of Cañar and Murcia. There are no visible outcomes yet.

Other experiences involve small NGOs with local associations around agricultural and commercial initiatives such as the ones implemented by Fundación Esquel with several Municipalities of the provinces of Chimborazo and Tungurahua, with funds from the *Comunidad de Madrid*. The Municipality of Quito is also building a set of policies directed to the families of emigrants and to the immigrant population with the funds of the Municipality of Madrid.

However, in both cases the relationship with the Spanish counterpart is conceived more as foreign assistance or funds from international cooperation rather than as a project that involves migrants associations in destination countries. The only project that maintains this figure is the *proyecto Murcia Cañar* which is still in the phase of diagnosis, organizations and training, so we cannot still measure economic or social impacts on migrant families. In general, the impacts and concrete outcomes of these initiatives will be more visible in the near future, for now it is too early to evaluate their actions.

At the national level, the state should tie migratory policies to development and social inclusion policies. It is necessary to *migratize* social policies rather than depending exclusively on special services for migrants. The social protection systems that are being developed by the current government should include policies and programs related to social support, organization and mental health services for older adults oriented to the relatives of migrants. At the same time, educational services should adopt a view of migration that is less victimizing and more normalizing. That is, migration should be treated as a part of daily life for many children and adolescents, thus familiarizing children with the phenomenon while avoiding stigmatization. Health services should include insurance and services oriented to the relatives of migrants.

At the local level, more studies are needed on the impact of remittances and of migration in general (businesses aimed at the nostalgia trade, telephone services, Internet cafes), on the local economy as well as on the health and education systems. Studies on the impact of remittances provide information about their macroeconomic effects and their effects on recipient families. But there are few studies on the impacts at the local level, in both economic and social terms. In addition, there is a need for longitudinal analyses in order to better understand social reproduction processes, that is, impacts on health, education and human capital in general.

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