

'Rethinking return migration': its implication with social and economic remittances - the Ecuadorian case in Spain

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Abstract

This study aims at contributing to the discourse of migration by examining the determinants of rethinking return migration and analyzing its effects on social and economic remittances. Hence, this research is on 'rethinking' return migration. In arguing that the desire to return home diminishes with time, this research uses household data. The argument holds at the medium socioeconomic level with the category of low socioeconomic level still having desires to return. When people migrate their remittances are not only economic but also social. These remittances are to a large extent determined by the host country's dynamism in its social, economic, political and cultural context. It is these determinants that this study attempts to illuminate.

Key words: return migration, NELM, transnationalism, social ties, social and economic remittances, Ecuadorian case.

1.1 Theme

'Rethinking return migration': its implication with social and economic remittances
- the Ecuadorian case in Spain

1.2. State of art

Several studies show that the idea of return home drops markedly over time along with social and economic remittances. Jones and De la Torre, (2011) reveal that time abroad reduces ties in the origin country through the mediating forces of family members abroad, legal status, and home ownership abroad. Likewise, Berninghaus and Gunther (1989), argues that migrants postpone the date of return such that return becomes less probable after some time due to economic conditions in the host country. Emphasizing the remittances effect Amuedo and Pozo (2006) mention that after some time money remitted back home was significant and later on decline after some years of US experience.

Of importance to mention is that migration has been for a long time a core subject of research; however it is only recently that the issue of return migration has received increased attention in the migration literature. Much of the focus has been on the contribution return migrants can make to economic development in countries of origin. There has been comparatively little research on the individual and contextual factors which determine return migration (De Haas et al., 2009: 3).

Different theoretical perspectives have emerged trying to explain different effects and phenomenon within the migration situation. In the one hand, in the early 50's and 60's return migrants were seen as important agents of change and innovation (De Haas, 2010:231). In the 70's a new theoretical approach came into the debate of return migration; the growing skepticism and the perception of the deprivation of poor countries of their scarce skilled and professional labor resources in which states have invested many years of education (De Haas,

2010: 233; Baldwin, 1970). Later on, most empirical work increasingly acknowledged the heterogeneous migration impact on development recognizing the relevance of agency and structure.

On the other hand, remittances cannot be separated from migration, and migration entails both benefits and costs. (Ghosh, 2006: 8). Despite migrant remittances being an old issue in the migration debate. It has become a focus of heightened attention in recent years. Migration is not only related to economic but social remittances as well (Levitt and Lamba - Nieves, 2011). In addition to money, people transmit ideas and behaviors back to their origin countries.

During the 1990s, Ecuador was struck by one of the harshest economic crises of the twentieth century, with major social and political effects (World Bank, 2004). International emigration from Ecuador was a relatively isolated phenomenon, mostly involving lower rural classes in a few Southern Andean provinces. Since the late 1990s, it has turned into a phenomenon, occurring throughout all geographic areas and social classes of the country (Boccagni and Lagomarsino, 2011: 5). Thus, Ecuadorian migration diversified radically, with thousands of Ecuadorians migrating to Europe mostly Spain (Jokisch and Pribilsky: 2002: 75). Having settled in the host countries for a considerable time period the Ecuadorian emigrants have rethought the idea of return migration.

Boccagni and Lagomarsino (2009:10; Rogers, 2009) argue that "Return migration is more closely related with conditions in the country of return than the country of residence, and particularly with the ease of circulation between the two, this assertion is in line with the current return program of the Secretaria Nacional del Migrante (SENAMI) advocating for return in a broad sense.

Though the phenomenon of migration is one of the areas that have been vastly studied, it is worth to assess its heterogeneous implications and effects related to social and economic remittances. When people migrate their remittances are not

only economic but also social. These remittances are to a large extent determined by the host country's dynamism in its social, economic, political and cultural context. It is these determinants that this study attempts to illuminate.

With the above foregoing, this research focuses on the determinants of rethinking return migration idea and the effects of the idea on social and economic remittances over time, through the use of a qualitative study research. As a contribution to this analysis, several indices were constructed using composite indicators.

1.3. Objectives of the study

This research had the following as its objectives:

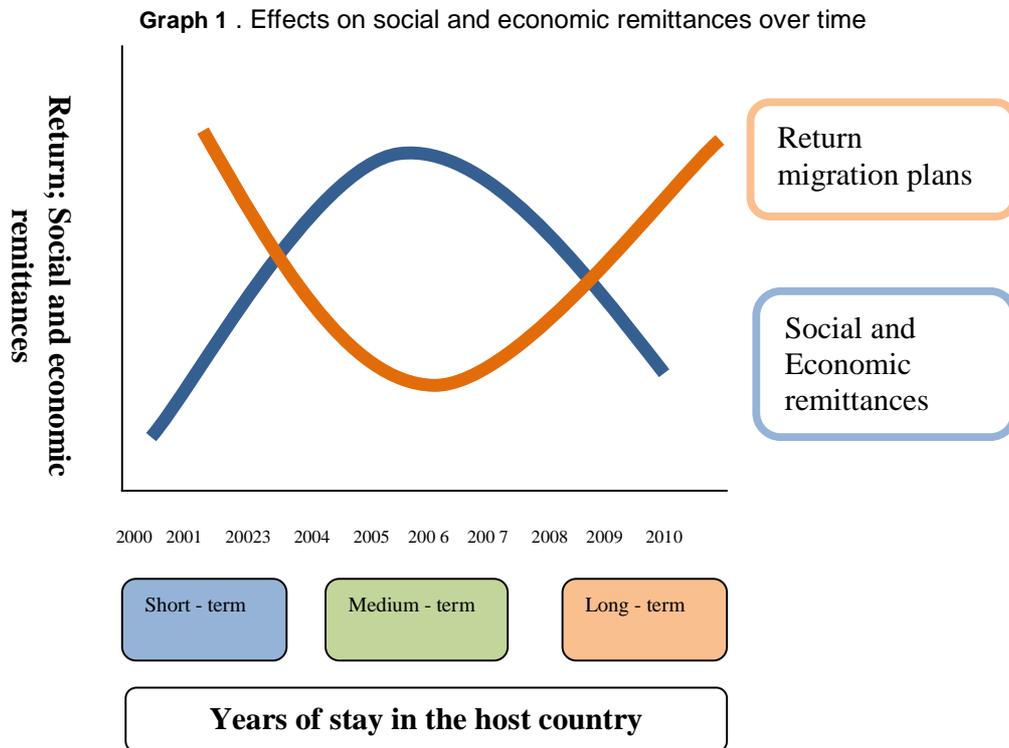
- Examine the factors that tend to increase or decrease the durability of social and economic remittances over time and,
- Examine the determinants of rethinking return migration.

1.4. Hypothesis

Using the specific case of Ecuadorians in Spain this paper tries to test the idea that: *the longer the migrant is abroad, social ties and distant perceptions of needs and desires are likely to decline thus decreasing social and economic remittances over time* .

In this study the degree of migration permanency is defined as the number of years that the person has been living in the host country.

The assumption of this study is represented in the Graph 1 below:



In this graph it can be seen that in the “U” curve, at the beginning the desire to return is high but as time goes by this intention decreases due to different factors; and it might be the case that it will increase again or not. In the opposite direction, the inverted “U” explains that at the beginning remittances are low while the migrant settle down, they gradually increase and decline over time. The rationale behind the selection of years is mainly because in 2000 the migratory flows from Ecuador to Spain started due to the economic crisis. The peak of the inverted U reaches its maximum in the medium term and the U curve its low point at the same term. This rationale is given by the fact that “remittances reach a peak soon after arrival in the host country then gradually declining” (Brown, 1998:112) and as defined by Berninghaus and Gunther’s (1989: 196) “a migrant typically is planning only a temporary stay in the host country (3 -6 years). But actually he postpones the date of return such that return migration becomes less probable after that time”.

1.5. Research questions (let them come immediately after your objectives)

- Is there a diminishing or increasing trend in social and economic remittances over time due to changes in return migration?
- Does the idea of returning home changes over time?

1.6. Methodology

This was a mainly qualitative research study which made use of primary data sources from interviews and participant observation in the fieldwork, and secondary data sources, i.e. journals, books, articles, international regulations, and statistic data from official sites. Given that the idea was also to measure different variables, for this purpose it was necessary to build indices with composite indicators¹.

- The *Standardized Interview* schedule was applied to the eleven households of Ecuadorian migrants in Granada Spain with an approximate time of two hours each. The interview schedule was designed in late May 2011 and contained several sections on the following topics: basic information, life story², economic remittances, social and economic ties, socio cultural integration, return plans, practices and family reunification.
- Participant Observation as a tool of data collection in this study was undertaken through a living experience of one month in an Ecuadorian migrant family setting where this researcher took part in the daily activities, interaction, events in order to gather explicit and implicit facts. According to DeWalt and DeWalt (2002:1; Schensul, 1999) this perspective is an

¹ Though the sample is not representative, the idea was to synthesized broad information in order to identify patterns herein this study.

² I decided to add in my interview this part of a life story because the results of this interview could help me to become aware of the range of possible roles and standards that exist within a specif setting. (Gubrim, Holstein, 2001:128)

accurate ethnographic technique for fieldwork because “participant observation covers the term for all of the observation and formal and informal interviewing in which anthropologists engage”. Furthermore, Martinez Chicon (2004: 86; Anguera Argilaga, 1995) explains that participant observation allows the information to be collected in natural situations, so, in the context which it is produced, under “its space – time references”.

The study’s fieldwork was undertaken in Granada- Spain during the month of June 2011. The findings presented in this paper are a result of data collected using the non-probability sampling technique (The snowball effect).

This study relied on two main tools of data collection: 1) interviews and 2) observation making used of a standard interview schedule for all interviewees however, another section included semi structured³ questions for all respondents and the Participant Observation undertaken through a living experience of one month in an Ecuadorian migrant family setting where this researcher took part in the daily activities, interaction, events in order to gather explicit and implicit facts.

1.7 Primarily findings

Targeted families

In an attempt to meet the research objectives of this study this chapter analyses the data collected from the fieldwork undertaken in Spain – Andalusia more specifically Granada. The research targeted Ecuadorian migrants⁴ in Granada who were categorized into two socioeconomic levels: as shown in the table

³ The interviews were made in Spanish because the targeted families are from a Spanish speaking country, I’ve tried to capture as much as possible in my translation for the findings from Spanish to English to express what was said, e.g. feelings, connotations.

⁴ For the purpose of this study the basic requirement was to choose Ecuadorian migrants living in Spain at least 10 years or more.

below⁵. Initially, the interviews were to include children but due to time constraints, only adult members of 11 the interviewed households and who were physically present at the moment of the research were interviewed.

Table 1. Number of families and location of the household in Granada

Categories	Household	No of members	Place
Medium level	Family 1*	4	Las Gabias
	Family 8	2	Vegas del Genil
	Family 9	2	Santa Fe
	Family 10	2	Castell del Ferro
Low level	Family 2	2	Zaidin
	Family 3	2	Zaidin
	Family 4	2	Zaidin
	Family 5	2	Zaidin
	Family 6	1	Zaidin
	Family 7	1	Zaidin
	Family 11	2	Padul
Total	11	28	

*observation method

Source: Author elaboration based on data collected on June 2011

This research was undertaken in the province of Andalucía which stands out mainly for the separation of the Gibraltar Strait. From this basic fact, related to the economic and geographical location, the Strait has become a border zone in demographic terms as well. (Perez and Rincken, 2005:34). As Perez Yruela and Rincken (2005: 183) in their study of the migrants integration in the Andalusian society, explain in the labor area, the province is characterized by the concentration in five sectors of economic activity (i.e. production, agriculture, tourism services, commerce, construction and domestic service). This information coincides with the main sector where most Ecuadorian migrants in Andalucía, Granada work in i.e. construction and domestic service. The economic and social development of Andalucía makes it a preferable migrant

⁵ Households were categorized in two socioeconomic groups 'low level and medium level' depending on the places they live. This division was made taking into account: type of house: e.g.: residential, apartment; the area, floor levels e.g. number of floors, amenities within the house e.g. number of bedroom, toilets, type of occupancy e.g. renting or owning.

destination, due to its high levels of well-being as opposed to the migrants origin country (Bellido, 2008; 17).

Though Granada is not the city with the highest number of Ecuadorian migrants in Spain, for purposes of this research it was chosen due to a number of reasons. 1) It has experienced a considerable rise of Ecuadorian migrants in the recent past. In addition, 2) the foreign population rate has been increasing over time as shown in the table below where from 1996 to 2003 there was a rise in the foreign population rate from 0.7 to 2.4 % thus implying that the rate of migration to Granada is on the rise.

Table 2. Spain, Andalusia and provinces, 1996 – 2002. Foreign population rate

PROVINCIAS	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2002/ 1996
ALMERIA	1,9	2,6	3,3	3,7	6,7	8,3	6,6	4,7
CÁDIZ	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,7
CÓRDOBA	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,5	0,6	2
GRANADA	0,7	0,8	1,0	1,1	1,3	1,5	1,7	2,4
HUELVA	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,8	1,2	1,4	1,2	2
JAEN	0,2	0,3	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,9	1,0	5
MÁLAGA	3,2	3,4	3,8	4,3	4,3	4,8	5,6	1,7
SEVILLA	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	1,7
ANDALUCÍA	1,0	1,2	1,3	1,5	1,8	2,2	2,2	2,2
ESPAÑA	1,4	1,5	1,8	2,0	2,2	2,7	3,2	2,3

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Foreigners, Andalusia - Spain

Of the considerable number of migrants in the city of Granada Africans comprise the largest proportion. Amongst the significant number of Iberoamericans are the Ecuadorians who are the main target of this study.

Towards the core of the research

Out of the eleven households in this study: two come from the Coast region, one from the eastern low lands region, and the rest from three provinces of the Highland region of the country (see Table No 4). The average age of the household members (male and female) and the approximate residency period is, 46 and 10⁶ years respectively.

⁶ Ten years of living in Spain was the basic requirement for the purpose of the study. I chose ten years as minimum because The first big waves of immigrants from Ecuador started arriving in the early 1990s, not long after the

Table 3. General Information of the interview families

HH	Age	Gender	Years		Civil status	Employment		Origin (province/ capital)	Level of Education
			Arrival	# Spain		Ecuador	Granada		
Family 1	51	Male	2000	11	Married	Locksmith	Consulate	<u>Cayambe</u> - Quito	Secondary
	48	Female	2001	10	Married	Floriculture	Nursery	<u>Cayambe</u> - Quito	Secondary
Family 8	53	Male	2000	11	Married	Seller	Seller	Tungurahua - <u>Ambato</u>	Secondary
	52	Female	2001	10	Married	Teacher	Unemployed	Tungurahua - <u>Ambato</u>	Secondary
Family 9	44	Male	1999	12	Married	Teacher	Decoration	Tungurahua - <u>Ambato</u>	Secondary
	50	Female	2000	11	Married	Teacher	Unemployed	Morona Santiago - <u>Macas</u>	Tertiary
Family 10	52	Male	2001	10	Married	Driver	Farmer	Chimborazo - <u>Riobamba</u>	Secondary
	36	Female	2000	11	Married	Freelance	Food Handler	<u>Manabí</u> - Portoviejo	Secondary
Family 2	32	Male	2001	10	Married	Bricklayer	Unemployed	<u>Cayambe</u> - Quito	Secondary
	36	Female	2001	10	Married	Student	Nursery	Sto Dom.Tsachilas - <u>Sto Dom</u>	Secondary
Family 3	35	Male	2001	10	Married	Bricklayer	Unemployed	Pichincha - <u>Quito</u>	Secondary
	34	Female	2001	10	Married	Freelance	Domestic S.	Imbabura – Ibarra (<u>Otavalo</u>)	Secondary
Family 4	57	Male	2001	10	Married	Bricklayer	Upholstery	Chimborazo - <u>Riobamba</u>	Secondary
	50	Female	2000	11	Married	Student	Cleaning	Chimborazo - <u>Riobamba</u>	Secondary
Family 5	47	Male	2001	10	Married	Bricklayer	Bricklayer	Tungurahua - <u>Ambato</u>	Secondary
	36	Female	2001	10	Married	Bricklayer	Domestic S.	Chimborazo - <u>Riobamba</u>	Secondary
Family 6	48	Female	2001	10	Single	Seller	Domestic S.	Pichincha - <u>Quito</u>	Secondary
Family 7	40	Female	2001	10	Single	Seller	Nursery	Guayas - <u>Guayaquil</u>	Secondary
Family 11	56	Male	2000	11	Married	Policeman retired	Unemployed	Pichincha - <u>Quito</u>	Secondary
	57	Female	2001	10	Married	Freelance	Gardening work	Pichincha - <u>Quito</u>	Secondary
Average	46								

Source: Author Elaboration based on the interviews carried out on June 2011

(1) Highlighted names mean where they come from I added the capital or the province in some cases just to have a general overview of the region they come from

As noted in table No3 above there is a considerable number of unemployed people. Thus, questions related to the job experience were solved by asking about for the former job. What can also be inferred from the table above is the *occupational change* after migration for the majority of the sample. While in Ecuador they performed one occupation in the host society they perform another. In some cases, members of the families had had high level skill jobs in Ecuador but after migration to Spain they changed to low skilled jobs.

Operationalization of the variables: “distant perceptions of need and wants”

government decided to abandon the sucre currency in favour of the American dollar. Due to the high inflation rise middle-class professionals such as engineers and medical staff started moving overseas in search of a better life.

Determinants of return	
Start up a new life	“I am living here ten years and I met my wife here. She is from Ecuador. We got married 4 years ago. I used to send money home but now I have the responsibility to bring the food to the family. So, I send money back home but not much” (Segundo ⁷ , 35 years old, Quito – Ecuador, interview June 2011).
Residence status acquisition	“when we got the nationality we felt part of this society and was better for the future of our children. I remember my daughter wanted to go to the Manchester University and applied as an Ecuadorian citizen and her admission was rejected. After a year when she got the nationality applied to the same University but this time as Spaniard citizen and they do accepted the admission” (Isolina, 44 years old, Macas – Ecuador, interview June 2011)
Spanish property bubble: double sword for migrants	“I am unemployed and my husband was reduced half of his monthly salary. Even if this happened we overcame this situation and I started sewing shoes to sell them because I love making craft activities. Actually that was distressing for me. Even if we knew we had to tied our pockets we did think in the easy solution of going back.” (Grace, 52 years old, Ambato – Ecuador, interview June 2011)

⁷ Names of the interviewees are pseudonym

	<p>I am without a job since 2010 I just receive the allowance from the Social Security but even that will be cut out in a few months, the situation here is not good. I really want to go back home, only my wife is working now”(Galo, 32 years old, Cayambe – Ecuador, Interview June 2011)</p>
<p>Cultural changes</p>	<p>“If you want to make a party celebrating ...I do not know the Baptism or Confirmation as it is usual in Ecuador you are allowed to make noise only till midnight or even less depending on the building regulations. Life in Ecuador is really different” (Manuel, 51 years old, Cayambe – Ecuador, interview June 2011)</p>
<p>Settling down vs “No soy ni de aquí ni de allá”</p>	<p>“If they do not make to the system in Spain it is impossible for Ecuadorians to be happy here, if they keep their minds as things work as in Ecuador, they are not going to enjoy their lives here [emphasis] it is necessary to adapt to what the country offers us that is why we are incorporated here” (Grace, 52 years old, Ambato – Ecuador, interview June 2011)</p>

Bunle (1950: 6) explains that “a immigrant is assimilated only when he speaks the language of his new country by preference, has adopted its customs, and

when his general conduct and way of life become those of his new compatriots and his original outlook gives way to that of his new surrounding” . Hence, when interviews took place I observed the language they used. Most slangs and phrases were from Spanish language. Even if both countries have Spanish as a official language, they differ between each other in regional variants some of which are quite divergent from one another, especially in pronunciation and vocabulary, and less so in grammar. Herein below are shown some of the common words used in the Spanish context by Ecuadorians:

Table 4. Differences in Language

Spain	Ecuador	English (what is meant)
Joder	Que tontera, que mal	shit!!!
Venga tío	Bueno, esta bien	OK, it is ok
Tío	Pana	Buddy (USA)
Eres la hostia tío	Eres lo maximo	You are the shit man!!! (USA), you rock!!
Esta guay	Esta chevere	cool, super, great, nice
¡este tío es la hostia!	Este man es lo maximo!!	this guy is too much!
qué hostias ...!	Es una bestia!!! Es lo maximo!!	what the hell ...!
The use of present perfect tense: <i>Has comido</i>	It is mostly used the past tense: <i>comiste?</i>	Have you eated (Present Perfect tense) Did you eat (Past tense)
Piso	Departamento	Apartment, flat

Source: Author's Elaboration based on data collected on June 2011

Though not a conclusive assertion that owning a bank account signifies a certain level of assimilation for purposes of this study a difference in the two socioeconomic levels ownership of bank accounts was noted where people in the medium level owned one, while the people within low category save their money in their homes or in a bank with association to Ecuador

After living for more than a decade in Granada, in this research the host family identity could at best be described as multifaceted since on one end their Ecuadorian heritage is still dominant, while on the other end, their growing

connection with the Spanish culture have become a major source of pride for them. For example, they now cheer for Spanish soccer teams as they compete on a national and international level. As was observed, after Granada’s victory in the 2011 League A soccer match that promoted it to La Liga, the family wandered to one of Granada’s many plazas that doubled as celebration grounds that afternoon. They joined a group of Spanish men, cheering and waving their arms to commemorate the achievement among people with whom they had come to identify with.

In this study for some respondents, identification to either host or origin country was not as clear as it is usually assumed as evidenced by their answer to the question: Which country do you feel you belong to Spain, Ecuador, both or none. The answer of the household No 5 best illuminates this point: *“No soy ni de aquí ni de allá”* (I am not neither from here nor from there).

Table 5 below summarizes some of the above arguments by providing research findings of socio – cultural integration in Spain – Granada.

Table 5. Socio – cultural integration into the Spanish society (Household level)

Socio cultural integration				
LEVEL	LOW		MEDIUM	
CATEGORY	HH	Share	HH	Share
WEAK	4	57%	0	0%
RELATIVELY WEAK	2	29%	0	0%
STRONG	1	14%	4	100%

Source: interviews Spain – Granada, June 2011

63.63% of the household sample is categorized as low level with the remaining 36.37% being categorized as medium level. From the above it can be seen that 57% and 29% of the low level households have weak and relatively weak social cultural integration to Spain respectively. While 100% of the medium level households have strong socio cultural integration to the host country.

Table 6 below also shows the feeling of belonging to Spain. The majority i.e. 71.4% and 75% of low and medium level households respectively are at the passing through stage as it concerns the belonging feeling to Spain.

Table 6. Feeling of belonging to origin and receiving country

Feeling of Belonging to Spain				
LEVEL	LOW		MEDIUM	
CATEGORY	HH	Share	HH	Share
PASSING THROUGH	5	71.4%	3	75%
PARTIALLY ATTACHED TO RECEIVING COUNTRY	1	14.3%	1	25%
STILL ATTACHED TO ORIGIN COUNTRY	1	14.3%	0	0%

Source: interviews Spain – Granada, June 2011

Operationalization of social and economic remittances, and return migration plans

Table 7 below presents the analysis showing the amount and frequency of remittances sent to Ecuador in the last two years⁸. It is worth to remark that my main objective here is not to quantify the volume of remittances or its impact on development but to prove the durability of the transnational practices in the economic sense.

Table 7. Volume of Remittances

Remittances	Amount sent in euros in the year 2010				Frequency
	from 50 to 140	Greater than 140 to 230	Greater than 230 to 320	greater than 320 to 410	
Medium Level					
Family 1					
Female	X				Biannual
Male					Nothing
Family 8					
Female	X				Biannual
Male					Nothing
Family 9					
Female					Nothing
Male					Nothing
Family 10					
Female	X				Quartely
Male	X				Quartely
Low level					

⁸ The categories shown in the table were made according to certain formula of descriptive statistics

Family 2					
Female		X			Montly
Male			X		Montly
Family 3					
Female			X		Montly
Male				X	Quartely
Family 4					
Female		X			Quartely
Male	X				Quartely
Family 5					
Female				X	Montly
Male			X		Quartely
Family 6					
Female	X				Quartely
Family 7					
Female				X	Montly
Family 11					
Female	X				Quartely
Male					Nothing

Source: Author's Elaboration based on data collected on June 2011

At the beginning of their stay in Spain the low socioeconomic level migrants families did not send much money but as soon as they found a job the situation changed. They used to sent a considerable amount of money as stated in the citation below:

“before I used to sent more because the situation was good. Working here in Spain was really good. I used to sent a lot of money like 450 Euros a month and I could also live here without problems of money. Nowadays due to the situation I do not sent anything, [small pause] I just have the enough money to survive here” (Byron, 47 years old, Ambato – Ecuador, interview June 2011)

It can be also noticed that families grouped in the medium socioeconomic level send less money as compared to families in the low socioeconomic level, this could perhaps be explained by the fact that the medium level households level are settled and have most of their close family members in the host country. Though the amount of money sent might have been affected by the Spanish crisis this reason alone does not adequately explain the cause of the decrease. Important to notice from table N° 7 is the fact that in the first category i.e. ‘medium level’, the amount of remittances is not high as compared to the ‘low

level' category. In some cases, some families do not send remittances to Ecuador at all as shown below:

“No tenemos la necesidad de enviar dinero a Ecuador, gracias a Dios tenemos a nuestra familia aquí con nosotros y tenemos que ver por ellos. No le voy a mentir que al inicio si enviaba dinero para mis hijos porque aún no los tenía aquí conmigo, cuando ya vinieron deje de enviar dinero. Solo envió en ocasiones especialcuando mi padre murió envié un poco de dinero”

“we do not have the need to send money to Ecuador, thanks to God that our family is here and we need to look after for them. I am not going to lie that at the beginning I used to sent money but for my children as soon as they came here I stopped sending money, just for special occasions I might sent...[small pause] when my father died I sent some” (Carlos, 53 years old, Ambato – Ecuador, interview June 2011)

Social remittances

This subsection will be based on the three categories of social remittances as explained by Levitt (Jones and De la Torre, 2011:189; Levitt, 2001) namely: Normative Structure, Systems of practices, Social capital applied to the findings of the specific case of Ecuadorians in Granada-Spain. Though most studies trying to study social remittances are premised on both sending and receiving societies, this research was based on the sending society as thus it endeavours to make clear the practices migrants are used to.

Normative structures being the ideas, values and beliefs and including norms of behavior, notions about family responsibility, principles of neighborliness and community participation and aspiration of social mobility in the fieldwork undertaken in Granada the following results were observed:

The transfer of values and norms by migrants to those in Ecuador was mainly through phone calls, technological means e.g. skype or during their trips to Ecuador:

“Cuando regrese a Ecuador por primera vez, después de nueve años. En realidad vi la diferencia de vivir aquí y allá y comentaba esto con mi familia. Recuerdo que cuando estaba haciendo unos trámites en el Ministerio de Educación, cogí un taxi y mientras iba en taxi puede creer que una persona lanzo basura del bus. Le explique a mi mamá q estaba sentada a mi lado q esto no pasa en España y que cada uno es consciente de la limpieza de la ciudad. El caso del irrespeto a las señales de tránsito, terrible, los carros tienen que estar toreado para saber cuándo detenerse o acelerar”

“When I went there for the first time , after nine years. I saw the difference and commented it to my family. I was going to arrange some document in the Ministry of Education and took a taxi, while I was in the taxi I saw a person throwing gargabe from the bus. I told this to my Mom who was sitting next to me. In Spain this things does not happen. Everyone is conciuous where to throw the garbage. Even when they do no respect traffic light and cars on the streets have to be guessing when to stopped and when to speed up” (Isolina, 44 years old, Macas – Ecuador, Interview June 2011)

Systems of practice are the actions shaped by normative structures (Levitt, 1998). These include how individual delegate household tasks the kinds of religious rituals they engage in, and how much they participate in political and civic groups.

For the case of Granada these types of social remittances had far-reaching effects. Ecuadorians spent much of their time at work. And the little time they have for leisure they employ it to household tasks and activities. Nevertheless, the host family I lived with were deeply engaged into politics in Granadian elections as well as in Ecuadorian coming elections at that time. The examples below, show both sides of the systems of practices:

“trabajo todo el día de Lunes a Domingo en la tarde. Tengo que mantener mi familia porque mi esposo está en el desempleo. Lo poco que queda del domingo me dedico a quehaceres de la casa. Gracias a Dios mi esposo y mis hijos me ayudan con algunas de ellas”

“I work the whole day from Monday to Sunday afternoon. I have to maintain my kids and my husband because he is unemployed. The rest of the Sunday afternoon I dedicate it for household things, hopefully my husband and my children do really help me with some of the tasks” (Fabiola, 48 years old, Cayambe – Ecuador, Observation June, 2011)

“Me gusta mucho estar en la política, el próximo mes viajo a Ecuador durante un mes para reunirme con nuestro presidente para determinar las acciones a tomar para su campaña electoral. Yo soy la persona encargada de promover su voz en la mayoría de regiones en España”

“I like politics, next month I will go back to Ecuador for a month to hold a meeting with our President [Ecuadorian President] to determine actions to be taken for his reelection campaign. I am in charge to promote his commitments in most of the regions here in Spain”

As it concerns communication with the origin country the low level households were found to be the most active, however, this study deems it important to contextualize the form in which this transfer of knowledge takes place. Given that majority of the low level households working force participate in the low level sector⁹ of Granada economy, the knowledge that they disseminate to their fellows is within these areas of knowledge.

“He aprendido nuevas destrezas en mi trabajo. Por ejemplo antes no sabía cómo mantener limpia y organizada una casa y ahora q trabajo en la limpieza se cómo desempeñarme”

“I have learned new skills here in my work. For example, before I didn't know how to keep a house properly clean and organized now as I work in the cleaning sector I am

⁹ Agriculture, Domestic Service, cleaning, Construction

aware how to perform that task”. (Veronica, 32 years old, Otavalo – Ecuador, Interview June 2011)

Another dimension of Social Remittances is *Social capital* understood as what migrants acquire abroad and transmit back to the members of their families. The citation below is an example of the above:

“Cuando regresamos a Ecuador me recuerdo que preparamos una cena para pasarla guay con nuestros amigos más cercanos. La cena fue a las 8. Ya teníamos todo listo a las 19.30 así nos daba tiempo para alistarnos. Ya era las 21.00 y nadie llegaba. Nos sorprendimos, pensamos que entendieron mal la hora de la cena, nos sentimos tristes pero de repente empezaron a llegar a eso de las 22.00. Nos olvidamos de la famosísima hora ecuatoriana”

“when we went to Ecuador we prepared a special dinner to have a good time with our close friends, the time for the it was at 20.00. We had everything prepared by 19.30 and we had enough time to prepare ourselves. When it was 21.00 and nobody arrived. Oh my God we thought they wrongly understood the day we were sad when suddenly they started arriving at 22.00. we forgot the so called ‘Ecuadorian time’” (Grace, 52 years old, Ambato – Ecuador, Interview June 2011)

Return intentions

This section illustrates the intentions to return home as well as the social and economic ties of Ecuadorians migrants in Spain.

Table 8. Intentions to return home (Household level)

Intentions to return home				
LEVEL	LOW		MEDIUM	
CATEGORY	HH	Share	HH	Share
No intention	0	0%	2	50%
Doubt return	1	14%	1	25%
Intention to return temporarily	3	43%	1	25%
Intention to return permanently	3	43%	0	0%

Source: interviews Spain – Granada, June 2011

The majority i.e. 86% of low level households have intention to return home either temporarily or permanently. With respect to medium level households 50%

and 25% have no intentions of going back or are doubtful about the return respectively.

Table below shows social ties in Spain both groups of categories indicating that they have strong ties in Spain

Table 9. Social Ties Spain (household level)

COUNTRY	SPAIN			
	LOW		MEDIUM	
LEVEL CATEGORY	HH	Share	HH	Share
Weak	1	14%	1	25%
Strong	6	86%	3	75%

Source: interviews Spain – Granada, June 2011

86% and 75% of the low and medium level households respectively have strong social ties in Spain.

In the case of economic ties, table below deepens the analysis in rating economic ties to Ecuador and Spain.

Table 10. Economic Ties to Ecuador and Spain (household level)¹⁰

COUNTRY	Spain				Ecuador			
	Low		Medium		Low		Medium	
LEVEL CATEGORY	HH	Share	HH	Share	HH	share	HH	Share
None	7	100%	0	0%	0	0%	2	50%
Weak	0	0%	2	50%	6	86%	1	25%
Strong	0	0%	2	50%	1	14%	1	25%

Source: interviews Spain – Granada, June 2011

100% of the low level households do not have economic ties to Spain. In contrast the medium level households economic ties lie between weak and strong. As it concerns economic ties to Ecuador 86% of the low level households have weak ties while 14% have strong ties. In the case of medium level households 50% do not have ties at all. Of the remaining share, weak and strong ties account for

¹⁰ For clarification of index construction See Appendix 2

25% each. Those who invest and have properties are significantly inclined to return.

As a concluding remark: graphical reconfiguration

This section will emphasize the main findings that aid in the graphical reconfiguration of this study. At the beginning I stated that “*the longer the migrant is abroad, social ties and distant perceptions of needs and wants are likely to decline thus decreasing social and economic remittances over time*”. In the case of the medium socioeconomic level families the hypothesis held to a large extent. While in the case of low socioeconomic level families it did not.

For the former socioeconomic level group, ‘rethinking’ the idea of return’ was translated to ‘settling down’ in the host society. Distant perceptions make them feel part of a new society that offers them more opportunities. Evidently, this fact influences the variables of social and economic remittances. As evidenced by the fact that economic remittances decrease and social remittances remain constant over time. For the latter socioeconomic level group, going back home represents the anxious desire to return thus, as it concerns social remittances they slightly increase; and in the case of economic remittances the trend is an inverted U.

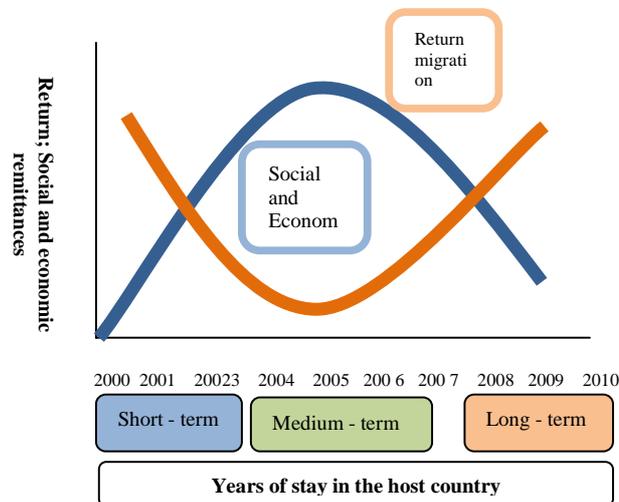
The desire to return once they get in the host society got a different answer between the two categories. As it concerns the medium socioeconomic level families, at the beginning they really want to go back but, as time goes by this desire vanishes, thus turning into either a *permanent* or *prolonged* stay. With respect to the low socioeconomic level families, the results are somewhat similar. At the beginning they want to go back, as time goes by this idea diminishes, but there is a moment during their stay in the host society that determines the ‘rethinking the idea’ which is translated into desire to go back again.

Rosenthal and Auerbach (1992: 3) based on Gordon's theory (1964), but more specifically on Weinstock's (1964) and Silver's (1964) state that “the higher the

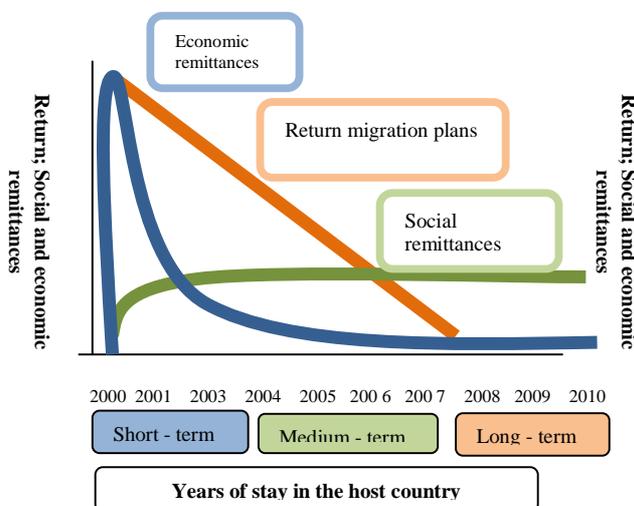
occupational status and the peripheral role elements the greater the opportunities for internalizing and displaying related social norms and beliefs of the host society". This empirical work better emphasis the concluding part of this study as it reveals that socioeconomic status may affect the 'rethinking idea of return' and the anxious desire of going back, thus as a consequence influencing social and economic remittances over time.

In short what can be concluded is illustrated in the two graphs below:

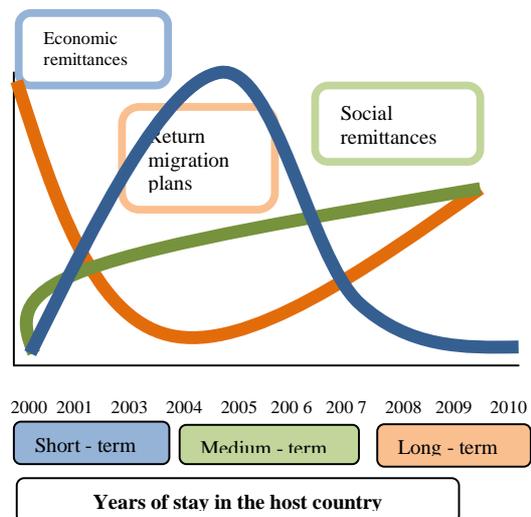
Initial hypothesis:



Restated graphical hypothesis:
(Medium level)



(Low level)



Finally, the results presented for the hypotheses stated in this study i.e. *“the longer the migrant is abroad, social ties and distant perceptions of needs and wants are likely to decline thus decreasing social and economic remittances over time”*, show that economic remittances diminish and increase over time depending on the analyzed group; and thus social remittances are an asset that needs to be emphasized in both groups so as to give a link between viability and rationale of return sought by the government.

General reflections

The main objective of this study was to examine the determinants of rethinking return migration and how it affects social and economic remittances. This objective was accomplished by undertaking fieldwork research which allowed identifying relevant aspects with respect to the hypothesis of the study.

First it reveals that from migrants' viewpoint grouped in the medium level, the potential opportunities inherent in staying overseas exceed the perceived benefits of return. In the case of migrants grouped in the low level, though not a real return at least the desire to go back remains. Added to that, as more immigrants are (provisionally) unemployed or underemployed, they can still rely, especially in Europe, on the basic social protection provided by the public welfare system, turning into a prolonged stay.(Boccagni and Lagomarsino, 2011: 13; Bommers and Geddes, 2000; Sainsbury, 2006) and 'pro-immigrant' civil society initiatives (Boccagni and Lagomarsino, 2011: 12; Piper, 2009).

Though, the second wave of migration is spread all over the country a majority of the interviewees (migrants) in this study come from the Highland region of Ecuador. In addition, in terms of employment almost everybody has changed occupation due to adaptation to available opportunities. Mainly people grouped in

the medium socioeconomic level have gotten their nationality as opposed to families grouped in the low level.

Return is managed as different livelihood strategies i.e. business strategy, the one which offers better opportunities, if readaptation fails they will return to the host society. Thus, if return is not convenient then, they do prefer to stay even if the economic and social situation in the host country is not going well. Besides, different factors are influencing the reconsideration of return among them; properties owning, residence status acquisition, family reunification, social ties, start up a new life, better facilities in the host country than back at home, offering of a more stable life, etc. and as explained by Brown (1998) “migrants permanently overseas acquire financial commitments in their host country thus making the flows of remittances decay for periods of time”. The aforementioned factors have an effect on social and economic remittances over time. In the Ecuadorian case, settling down in the Spanish country is slightly easy due to language similarities.

When people just migrated the desire of return is imminent, as time goes by this expectation diminishes due to some determinants (e.g. family reunification, start up a new life, financial commitments) in the case of medium level households. With regard to families grouped in the low level the story is different, at the beginning of the migration experience they want to go back home, as time goes by this idea vanishes, nevertheless, the idea of return after long periods of time comes back again to be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, in both cases when they migrated, families entered into a process of either settle down (medium level) or assimilation (low level), implying for both of them cultural changes as language change (regional variants), new practices are adopted and roles within the families have changed.

The data showed in this study attempted to test the hypothesis albeit the reduced sample size was not representative. In the case of families categorized in the medium level the hypothesis held to a large extent as opposed to those in the low level who reveals the desire to go back after a prolonged period of time. With regard to economic remittances on the side of medium level families there is a total decrease while on the side of low level there is a U curve effect. As it concerns social remittances, there is a considerable decrease over time. They remain weak for the group in the socioeconomic medium level, and they slightly increase for the socioeconomic low level group over time. If this is the case with social remittances, it concomitantly matches with the promoted current version of the Ecuadorian government, then further research with a representative sample will be needed to generalize the findings herein presented.

1.8. Gaps

There is still a need to deeply investigate about social remittances over time, as the limited time for fieldwork did not allow coming up with significant patterns in the mentioned area.

I consider important as well to focus on one aspect of transnationalism to get a deeper understanding instead of zooming on most of them, as this presented work.

1.9. Problems

Most of the studies about transnationalism are made in the host and origin country, this study does not measure results in the origin country (Ecuador). In order to conduct a research in the origin country the provenance of interviewed families in Granada is a bit dispersed as they are not only from one area but nationwide.

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