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Contents

Acknowledgements	IV
Abbreviations	v
Abstract	VI
Introduction	1
1. Ecuadorian Migration: the Exodus and the Heroes	6
Mobile populations and the state: towards transnational state protection?	12
2. Theoretical Framework.....	20
Citizenship and Global inequalities.....	23
The welfare state.....	24
Social Protection and Care	26
Transnational Social Protections	30
3. Methodology	32
Connecting and relating	33
Sources.....	34
Limitations and thoughts on field experience.....	38
4. Case Study: Ecuadorian Migration And Social Protection.....	40
Ecuadorian migration	40
Health Care and Old Age in Ecuador	52
International agreements.....	56
Healthcare and Old Age in Vienna	61
5. Migrant Arrangements For Social Protection	64
Resource environments.....	74
A) Use of voluntary membership for themselves	78
B) Use of (inland) voluntary affiliation for others.....	80
C) Remuneration of reproductive work	81
D) Financial remittances for health expenses.....	84
6. Conclusions.....	91
References.....	98

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Abbreviations

DAPEE	Dirección de Atención y Protección a Ecuatorianos en el Exterior / Directorate for Services and Protection of Ecuadorians abroad
GAD	Gobiernos Autónomos Descentralizados / Autonomous Decentralized local Governments
IESS	Instituto Ecuatoriano de Seguridad Social/ Ecuadorian Institute for Social Security
MIES	Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social / Ministry for Social and Economic Inclusion
MSP	Ministerio de Salud Pública (Ecuador) / Ministry for Public Health
ÖSV	Österreichische Sozialversicherung / Austrian Social Security
SENAMI	Secretaria Nacional del Migrante/ National Secretariat for Migrants
TSP	Transnational Social Protection
VMH	Viceministerio de Movilidad Humana/ Viceministry for Human Mobility
WGKK	Wiener Gebietskrankenkasse / Viennese District Health Insurance Funds
WHO	World Health Organization

Abstract

English

Ecuadorian migrants in Austria negotiate with state and non-state actors to guarantee social protection for themselves and their families. Through qualitative interviews and non-local ethnography, the transformations in state attempts, new policies, protection gaps, and citizen strategies are identified and analyzed as a person's *resource environment* for *transnational social protection*. Although the shift in the Ecuadorian government's legal framework regarding social rights extension is significant and is related to international and supranational agreements, private individuals, and particularly women, are still rendered the main channels through which healthcare, care work and social security are guaranteed. The inability to transport rights in this sphere implies an unequal global share of workers' social reproduction.

Keywords: social protection, healthcare, migration, social security, ageing population, care work, social reproduction, transnational, migration policy, social policy.

Español

Migrantes ecuatorianos en Austria negocian con actores estatales y no estatales, para garantizar la protección social propia y de sus familias. A través de entrevistas cualitativas y etnografía no-local, se identifican y analizan las transformaciones en esfuerzos estatales, nuevas políticas públicas, brechas de protección y estrategias ciudadanas como el *entorno de recursos* de una persona para su *protección social transnacional*. Si bien el giro del marco legal ecuatoriano en cuanto a extensión de derechos sociales es importante y se articula con acuerdos internacionales y supranacionales, los individuos y particularmente las mujeres, continúan siendo los principales canales a través de los cual se garantizan la salud, los cuidados y la seguridad social. La incapacidad de transportar derechos en esta esfera implica una división global desigual de la reproducción social de los trabajadores.

Palabras clave: protección social, salud, migración, seguridad social, envejecimiento de la población, trabajo de cuidados, reproducción social, transnacional, política migratoria, política social.

Deutsch

Ecuadorianische MigrantInnen in Österreich bewegen sich zwischen staatlichen und nicht-staatlichen Akteuren um den Sozialschutz für sich und ihre Familien gewährleisten zu können. Durch die Anwendung qualitativer Interviews und der *non-local ethnography* werden staatliche Transformationsprozesse, nationale und transnationale Politiken sowie die sich ergebenden Schutzdefizite und Bürgerstrategien, als Ressourcenumgebung zum Zweck eines transnationalen Sozialschutzes identifiziert und analysiert. Obwohl die rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen Ecuadors signifikante Änderung hinsichtlich der Ausweitung von sozialen Rechten im Kontext internationaler und supranationaler Vereinbarungen aufweisen, verbleibt das Gesundheitswesen, die Pflegearbeit und der Komplex der sozialen Sicherheit hochgradig abhängig vom Einsatz privater Einzelpersonen, insbesondere von Frauen. Gleichzeitig führen fehlende Rahmenbedingungen für den Transfer sozialer Rechte zu einem ungleichen globalen Anteil an der sozialen Reproduktion von ArbeiterInnen.

Stichwort: Sozialschutz, Gesundheit, Migration, soziale Sicherheit, alternde Bevölkerung, Pflegearbeit, soziale Reproduktion, transnational, Migrationspolitik, Sozialpolitik.

Introduction

Natalia left Quito over 15 years ago. Now in Vienna and in her 50s, she wonders where she will be able to retire; she has paid into the social security systems of both countries.

Benjamin's parents have no pension in Quito. Instead, he sends money from Vienna to cover their maintenance and health expenses. And he has hired two women to take care of them.

Sara makes voluntary payments into the Ecuadorian social security institution and she also pays into the Viennese one. She does not know where she will fulfill all the requirements to be able to retire.

With an increasing number of people living across borders with multiple passports, belongings, and nationalities, whose responsibility is it to look after the well-being of these mobile citizens? The receiving or sending state? The state they hold citizenship from? Or should it be the citizens themselves? If so, which ones hold more responsibility? The head of a household? Women? And how can we tackle this issue in the context of ageing populations and a rate of ageing that is projected to accelerate in the next 15 years?

In order to address questions like these, this master thesis intends to contribute to current investigations about Transnational Social Protections. It will begin by exploring the actions that the Ecuadorian state has launched in a *transnational social field* (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004) to guarantee the social protection of its migrant citizens particularly with regard to healthcare and old age. Then it will contrast such actions with individual strategies that migrants employ to guarantee social protection with the resources available to them while living outside of Ecuador. In so doing, it will explore the interplay between individual agency and social structures.

This intersection of state and individual practices to secure social protection or care inevitably brings the issue of family to the table. How is family conceived in migration contexts? Despite some changes in the structure of the “nuclear family” due to displacements of its members, particularly mothers, it continues

to play a key role in guaranteeing the care of its members, revealing state limitations and gendered and classed divisions of labor. This occurs in spite of significant efforts from the Ecuadorian government to include Ecuadorians abroad in the making of a new motherland in discourse and policy.

This work analyses the governmental programs available to people in more than one location and under more than one national legislation, as well as the strategies they develop to use them, or alternative solutions they come up with. I have concentrated on the programs offered by the Ecuadorian State to its citizens abroad and their relatives in Ecuador, and to a lesser degree on the services available to migrants in Vienna.

The intention in using ethnographical research methods with Ecuadorian migrants is to listen to individual stories about how social protection, understood here mainly as social security and pensions, child, elder care and healthcare, is arranged by official state organizations and by non-state ones. How do state and non-state actors perceive social protection across borders? What is the responsibility of states (sending and receiving ones) and what is the responsibility of kin according to these actors? How is this arranged in concrete cases?

The period of analysis comprises a roughly ten-year period, from 2006 to early 2016, in which the influences of the Correa administration have been significant and, having included a constitutional reform, will surely have long-lasting impacts. In this sense a comprehensive contextualization of migratory policies and programs for Ecuadorian migrants prior to 2006 is not included in this work.

During Rafael Correa's first presidential campaign in 2006 he referred to migrants as the victims displaced by the irresponsible neoliberal fundamentalism of previous governments, who through financial remittances sustained the Ecuadorian economy since the 1999 crisis. He lauded them as heroes of the motherland whom the country will never be able to fully repay. During the campaign, migration was addressed as a "national tragedy" which broke up families, including the very family of the president (Correa 2006 in

Herrera 2013, 66). The accelerated migration of the late 1990s evidences not only an internal political and economic crisis, but a profound incompetence of the Ecuadorian State and corresponding public policies that would secure the social protection and well-being of its citizenry (Herrera 2009).

In the constituent assembly of 2008, however, a more progressive view was embodied that tended towards a vocabulary of human mobility, highlighting it as a right along the lines of universal citizenship, and abolishing the term ‘illegal’ for people with irregular documentation in Ecuadorian territory (Vice-Ministry for Human Mobility 2014). After being reelected and launching the first state institution for migration, the National Secretariat for Migration Affairs’ (SENAMI) campaign “Tod@s somos migrantes” (‘We’ marked for both genders, ‘are all migrants’) took off. It included handing out symbolic passports of universal citizenship but, more importantly, it boosted the visibility and importance given to migratory matters to a completely new level. A new organic law for migration is still in discussion, but the draft presented in June 2014 includes a section for “the returned and their families” and recognizes the “right to family reunification and protection of transnational families” (VMH 2014). Contradictions between inclusive discourses, innovative policies, and actual practices become evident when contrasted with one another.

Ethnographic studies of Ecuadorian migrants in Italy (Boccagni 2010, 2013, 2014) reveal bottom-up strategies of transnational social welfare by means of remittances sent back home and arrangements for care-giving practices in which women care-giving workers perceive their responsibilities as not corresponding with rights to state-provided social protection. The enhanced prominence of migrants in the contemporary official discourse is critically seen as an appeal for citizen loyalty underscored by the significance of financial remittances. Yet the welfare of nationals abroad and in Ecuador remains largely in the hands of individuals. It is important that Boccagni already frames these practices as a transnational social protection process and that it is understood as an interconnected process framed within global neoliberalism, where policies and individuals are analyzed as agents.

There is an explicit state effort to link migrants and their families to the social security system. This follows changes in the Constitution such as promoting voluntary membership to the social security system for nationals abroad and through it the inclusion of Ecuadorian migrants and their families (understood as the nuclear heterosexual bi-parental family) to the health care system (IESS 2014). Thus neighbors, grandparents, siblings, among others are still left without official social protection. Remittances, in this regard, continue to function as the primary social protection and at times as a form of remuneration for traditionally non-remunerated care-giving work. The definition of family in Spain and Ecuador, although with some recognition of alternatives (considering the inclusion of “transnational families” to the new migration law in discussion), still remains a means of excluding kin and non-kin who are effectively (and affectively) engaged in care provision, primarily a feminine task. Unofficial work forms are still not recognized, except maternity periods. This renders *women* the primary channels through which states provide social protection to minors, and this reinforces a gendered division of care labor (Herrera 2013, 147).

For Ecuadorian politics this becomes particularly relevant because the current president, Rafael Correa, based much of his presidential campaign and current nation-building discourse on the inclusion of the co-nationals abroad. He went so far as to declare a fifth national region comprised by Ecuadorians abroad. Ecuadorian institutions have been and continue to engage in policies that cross borders to attend to citizens in or outside Ecuadorian soil. High oil prices, increased tax revenue, debt and multinational restructuring allowed the economy to grow and the state to invest strongly in the social sector from 2006-2014. Furthermore, Ecuador is moving discursively towards “human mobility” and “universal citizenship” acknowledging not only Ecuadorian citizens’ rights abroad, but also those of foreign citizens within Ecuadorian territory. This discussion and position is related with Andean and South American regional integration and the political project of South American citizenship.

This brief introduction has served to set the stage and explore the topics touched on by this research project. Chapter 1 presents the Ecuadorian

migration case, its population, causes, and the shift in Ecuadorian migration politics. Chapter 2 will delineate theoretical stances most appropriate for describing the case of Ecuadorian migration and their social protection, emphasizing the transnational perspective and connecting social protection with the welfare state and global capitalism. Chapter 3 deals with issues of method and methodology, prioritizing non-local ethnography, and including some ethnographic reflections. Chapter 4 presents in more detail the case of Ecuadorian migrants and the transnational social space in which they arrange social protection. Chapter 5 will provide examples, using four selected cases, of how migrants arrange for care across distances with the resource environment tool. Chapter 6 will close the discussion with conclusions and certain implications.

1.Ecuadorian migration: the exodus and the heroes

In the 1950s the Otavalo ethno-regional group was the first large identifiable group of Ecuadorian migrants around the world; they experienced a boom period between the 1970s and 1990s when large numbers of artisans and traditional musicians migrated and established networks, primarily kinship ones, which in turn secured further migration. The population of the southern highlands region, the second identifiable group in Ecuadorian migration, also left the country around the 1950s due to the crisis of *paja toquilla*, which refers to the material for making the famous “Panama hats” which were exported to New York. This created a link that would delineate migrations to come. In the 1970s the oil boom in Venezuela that followed the nationalization of oil production also attracted high numbers of Ecuadorian migrants. (Herrera & Carrillo 2009; Arcentales & Garbay 2010).

The past few decades have meant significant social and economic changes for Ecuador which have resulted in an increase in migratory movements both within the country as well as outside of it. The high oil prices in the early 1970s allowed the economies of oil-exporting countries in Latin America to soar. Unfortunately, this was followed by dependency on exporting this sole product. When prices fell the entire country suffered the consequences, making it in turn dependent on international financing from institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. This meant the country had to play by their rules, namely: structural adjustment programs and neoliberal reforms to foster foreign investment and expand oil reserves. The terms of these loans included extremely high interest rates, and further sunk the Ecuadorian State into perpetual debt. By 1998 external debt comprised as much as 56% of GNI and by 1999 it had reached 87% (World Bank 2016). While multinationals enjoyed special protections, poverty and inequality increased in the period between 1987-2000 (World Bank 2016). Unemployment almost doubled from 1998 to 2003, reaching a peak of 9.3% (World Bank 2016).

The “liberalization of economies to create conditions hospitable to capitalist markets and the development of capitalism itself” is an important factor in explaining why large numbers of people leave their countries. (Harvey 2005 in Lem & Gardiner 2010, 3). Out migration of Ecuadorians was experienced in the entire country as a consequence of a series of events which included the plunge in oil prices, the Ecuador banking crisis of 1998-1999¹, freezing of saving accounts in 1999, and the consequent establishment of the dollar as the official currency. This change followed a mix of environmental, financial and political factors: the devaluation of the local currency, the sucre, the loss of agricultural production due to a strong el Niño phenomenon and White Spot on shrimp, political instability and reduced credibility of the Government's institutionalism (Camacho & Hernández 2005; Ramírez & Ramírez 2005; Hernández, Maldonado & Calderón 2010).

The economic, political and social crisis experienced towards the end of the 1990s resulted in a severe deterioration of the living conditions of Ecuadorians, thus motivating the accelerated exit of numerous people in a migratory pattern that was different than the one that was common up until then². There was a diversification of destinations: the US had previously been the dominant destination country, but Spain and Italy now became the principal ones. Colonial legacies, account in part for this important change in the migration patterns. In 1840, twenty-one years after declaring independence from Spain, and ten years after the Great Colombia split in the nation-states of Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador, Spain and Ecuador signed a peace treaty that established reciprocal migration policies for citizens of both countries. In 1985,

¹ The Ecuadorian banking crisis of 1998-1999 is also referred in Spanish as the “Feriado Bancario” or Bank Holiday referring to the fact that bank activities were initially suspended for an period of 24 hours, which in fact was extended to a week. Accounts above 2 million sucres were frozen for a year, and some were never recovered by clients. By the end of 1999, 70% of financial institutions had to close.

² The causes for migration and for Ecuadorian migration have also been dealt with extensively in other places and will not be covered here (See Herrera 2007; IOM 2011). Rather, when references to this are made, they will be in reference to emigration that is related to social protection or to particular cases.

The causes of

when joining the European Union, Latin American citizens could enter the EU without restrictions but required a visa if taking residence. Ecuadorians were exempted from needing visas to enter Spain until 2003 (Cortes & San Martin 2008, 130).

Whereas the previous migratory patterns were rather male-dominated, women joined this new wave as part of the group of young people in a massive and independent way, not as spouses of migrants but as migrants themselves. The migrant population of this time left from rural as well as urban areas from across the country and belonged to diverse socio-economic sectors (Camacho y Hernández 2005; Herrera 2005).

According to the 2010 census, which covers a 10-year period, 65% of Ecuadorian emigrants left the country between 2002 and 2007. In 2001, 40% of emigrants said their main reason to migrate was the search for employment. By 2006 this number increased to almost 75% (CEMLA et al. 2010). According to the Institute for Migration Policy, approximately 473,000 Ecuadorian migrants went to the U.S., 451,000 went to Spain, and 92,000 went to Italy (Migration Policy Institute 2014). In total, the SENAMI's latest figures bordered on 2.5 million (Juan 2014). The Ecuadorian president, members of the assembly, and other officials have stated that there could have been as many as 3 million Ecuadorian migrants during this time. However, the data collected by the then SENAMI resulted in the figure of roughly 2.5 million, and the National Institute for Statistics released the figure of 1.6 million (INEC in Herrera 2013).

In the new destinations, Ecuadorian male migrants generally found employment in agriculture or construction, and women found it easiest to procure jobs in domestic work, childcare, and care for elderly or the sick. A crisis in social care following budget cuts in destination countries became the labor niche in which Ecuadorian female migrants best fit. This demand side of the phenomenon, namely for a market for flexible labor force, is key to understanding the feminization of post-crisis Ecuadorian migration.

Financial Remittances

Financial remittances sent back to Ecuador surpassed the amount of development aid and direct foreign investment. By 2006 they reached 2.9 million dollars, second only to oil revenue (CEMLA et al. 2010). These high numbers, among other factors, contributed to the idea of a migrant collective rich in resources, some even with capital to invest. However, following the global financial crisis of 2008, particularly in main destination countries for Ecuadorians, financial remittances to Ecuador decreased significantly (Acosta, et al. 2008).

The loss of job opportunities in the sectors where Ecuadorians had the highest employability capacity in Spain, in combination with the mortgage crisis, was the trigger for many Ecuadorian families to reevaluate their migratory projects and make different choices.

One of them was to return to Ecuador, a choice that was encouraged by both the Ecuadorian and Spanish States. Ecuador made a plea for its *heroes* to return and be part of the political project of rebuilding the motherland while in Spain Ecuadorian migrants were encouraged to leave or to return to Ecuador. As more Ecuadorians made the trip back to Ecuador, 14,437³ by 2011, the Ecuadorian National Police for Immigration removed Spain from the top ten emigration countries for Ecuadorians (Arcentales & Garbay 2011).

Among the potential motivations for voluntary return lies economic hardship, particularly in the context of the European crisis and, to an even greater extent, the Spanish real estate bubble, and expectations of the Ecuadorian return plan. Soon after the crisis the Spanish government also launched a return migration program, “Plan Retorno”, forcing the Ecuadorian one to be renamed “Bienvenidos a casa” to avoid confusion.

Welcome [feminine], welcome [masculine]. It is a good moment to return. There are plenty of opportunities. The government can give opportunities, but it cannot guarantee the happiness of each one of you [...] and for those who prefer to continue living in countries that we hold so dear, count on the full support of the government of the revolution, the government of migrants. (Correa 2014)

³ This number includes over 2,000 deportations (Arcentales & Garbay 2011).

Initially the Ecuadorian efforts seemed to be directed towards solving and healing the national tragedy of migration by reunifying “broken” families, while at the same time attracting migrant capital for entrepreneurship initiatives in Ecuador. However, the global financial crisis, the interest of destination countries to relocate social burdens, and the return programs also played a role. Furthermore, migration can be understood as a personal strategy of Ecuadorians to deal with crises, here and there (Boccagni 2010).

It is important to note that under the Correa administration significant social rights were extended, for the first time it included collectives such as migrants as specific vulnerable groups needing targeted state attention, something that I will refer to as the rights-based approach (Section “Mobile Populations and the State,” will describe this in more depth). Currently, return migrants, in accordance with their diverse socio-economic backgrounds and destinations, represent a complex collective. High expectations, which are often distorted, and an increased empowerment of citizens via the rights-based approach could clash with the reality of limited resources and the existence of many differently, if not more severely, marginalized groups.

I realize that this rights talk is obviously positive as it produces more ownership and empowerment; people call for and demand certain things. But there is also a counterproductive side to it, and that is that such high expectations were raised... I remember that in the SENAMI people contacted me to ask me “Where do I go claim my house? (Juan 2014)

Not only unrealistic expectations but the lack of integral attention to families that experienced migration, especially those who stayed in Ecuador,⁴ is also a motivation for return for some. The way migrant women’s and their families’ reproduction is socially organized in relation to the state, which is what Herrera looks at, has to do not only with the policies that states establish, but

⁴ An interesting exception is the involvement of Ecuadorian consulates in promoting or facilitating the use of family reunification procedures (predominantly) to have children who were minors move abroad to be with their parent(s). (Gilberto 2015)

also with their absence (2011). Consequently, insufficient response from the Ecuadorian government to guarantee the wellbeing of elderly people, or the family nucleus from which migrants stem, has an impact on the decision to (temporarily) return, particularly for women (Redroban 2014).

As Hollifield (2004) argues, the interactions established within a state or between states and migrants, depend not only on the agency of the latter, but is also determined by the policies established by the former. Correspondingly, states have the power to enable or not enable specific practices among migrating people. For instance, they may facilitate or discourage their return to their country of origin. In this sense, although it is a personal or family decision, it is intersected by a series of policies made by at least two states, and could be an unexpected result not only of the migratory policies of Ecuador or destination countries, but the lack of social protection policies therein.

Remigration to other European destinations

To return to the topic of Ecuadorian migrants in Spain, many of those who did not stay or who returned had already acquired Spanish citizenship and were thus able to move to several European countries that were less effected by the crisis. England and Germany become top destinations for Ecuadorians remigrating from Spain. It is in this context that Austria becomes relevant to the analysis of contemporary Ecuadorian migration in Europe. Although Austria is not a top destination according to statistics, most interview partners in Vienna began their migratory projects by entering Europe via Madrid, making this trajectory relevant both in crisis and non-crisis settings.

Vienna

As is generally the case with data concerning mobile populations, official statistic instruments often obscure nuances or cannot account for overlapping categories. According to Statistik Austria there are 196 people who hold

Ecuadorian citizenship in 2016 in Vienna⁵. Based on their daily work and the registered number of voters, the Ecuadorian consulate in Vienna estimates a population of around 1,000 Ecuadorian citizens living in Vienna and its vicinities. Particularly when beginning my fieldwork in 2014, (when only an honorary consulate existed) many migrants who had Spanish passports stated that they had no interest in registering at the Ecuadorian consulate due to distrust in the Ecuadorian State. Some, in fact, actually mentioned registering at the Spanish consulate in Vienna, which, as they described it, offers them many more support services for starting their lives in the city and, as European citizens, they found that the Spanish consulate was the more appropriate choice for them.

In Vienna, Ecuadorian migrants work in areas such as gardening, childcare, elderly care, domestic work, food industry or sales, but also in areas such as advertisement or music. Clerical jobs and administrative positions are more common for children of migrants who master the German language. Small businesses providing services such as catering or home repair have been started by a smaller share of Ecuadorians and they rely frequently on predominantly Spanish-speaking migrant labor. Another identifiable grouping of Ecuadorians works for international organizations based in Vienna. International students are uncommon, as are *au pairs*.

Mobile populations and the state: towards transnational state protection?

From *los héroes de la patria* to the right to migrate

Let us begin in 2006 with Rafael Correa's first presidential campaign, where he referred to migrants as victims displaced by the irresponsible neoliberal fundamentalism of previous governments who through financial remittances sustained the Ecuadorian economy since the 1999 crisis. We will start with the campaign where he lauded them as heroes of the motherland whom the country

⁵ Upon acquiring Austrian citizenship, Ecuadorian citizenship must be renounced. However, the Ecuadorian constitution establishes an inalienable citizenship which effectively means that people naturalized as Austrian citizens, still can claim Ecuadorian citizenship in Ecuador.

will never be able to fully repay. Promising to care for them, he invited the migrants to come back to build “a new motherland for all”. Migrants had never had such a central role in presidential campaigns. Why did they have it now?

My family⁶, just like that of hundreds of thousands of Ecuadorians, has also been broken by migration... I share the pain... [we will take action against] those responsible for this national tragedy called migration. (Correa in Herrera 2013: 66)

At first glance the ethics, and biography, of Rafael Correa seem to be the fuel behind it all. However, Juan, an ex SENAMI official, currently engaged with return migrant associations, as well as other interview partners, situate its roots in a desire to gather voters. In fact, the first presidential election where migrants were allowed to vote was Correa’s first. The victimization of migrants (along with the demonization of previous governments) was a powerful force to legitimize Correa’s political project. What I refer to as victimization must be understood in view of subjective and maybe even culturalist perceptions of the Ecuadorian migrant experience (which may indeed include the perception of “broken” families) and in view of frequent discrimination in destination countries, among other elements. This, of course, without belittling the high personal and emotional costs that migration brings upon individuals and families. Additionally, we could also read the “tragedy” in terms of productive workforce loss, hence the invitation to come back to build *la nueva patria*. What is clear is that there is an ideal of a family and migration breaks it. Not only through Catholic values embodied in the president, but also through repeated references during the weekly televised presidential report to the people, a particular concept of family, namely the heterosexual bi-parental single-sited family is praised⁷.

Rafael Correa has proven to be an exceptionally charismatic leader and is the face of Alianza País, the party he founded in 2006. He has been very vocal about

⁶ When Correa was 5 years old his father went to the U.S. to work in drug trafficking.

⁷ See for example report 354 where Rafael Correa states that notions of gender variance and claims for same sex marriages are threatening the “traditional” family which should continue to be the basis of society. (Enlace Ciudadano 354, 2013).

what migration has meant for the country: broken families, pain, and heroic sacrifice. He has also been clear on its alleged causes (Moncayo 2011), namely the disastrous neoliberal economic model which persistently failed the Ecuadorian people, which his administration will combat. As he himself has stated repeatedly, he is progressive in economic and political matters, but conservative in moral matters (2013).

Porque desde el exterior también se hace la revolución

Because the revolution is also made from abroad
Although the right to vote for Ecuadorians living abroad, an early example of state-led transnational practices, was established in 2005 just in time for the next presidential elections, Rafael Correa was effectively the first and only presidential candidate to engage with the migrant vote. Appealing to voters abroad, who were addressed for the first time, and calling them heroes also meant appealing to their relatives in Ecuador. Promises of return programs, a better country, a constitutional assembly which would guarantee an extension of rights for citizens abroad, and an end to the scarring caused by families broken by migration were some of the key points in this campaign. In the second round of the 2006 presidential elections he received 33,410 votes from citizens abroad – roughly 46%. Though it was not the majority it was nonetheless a significant number of votes. It is especially interesting that he did get a clear majority, more than 70% of the votes, in each of the three provinces with the highest numbers of emigrants (CNE 2006). Having won the elections, it was time to get to work fulfilling one of the key campaign promises: constitutional reform.

The Constitution of 2008, also known as the Montecristi Constitution, is internationally acclaimed as one of the most progressive and humanist constitutions of its time, recognizing rights for mother nature for the very first time and framing its articles around an indigenous-inspired but intellectually crafted concept (mostly by mestizxs) of “Buen Vivir” (Sumak Kawsay in

Kichwa). Neo-constitutionalism is not a unique Ecuadorian, or even Latin American phenomenon – it is a global trend.

It resulted in the extension of many social rights and particularly significant changes in the conception of migration, moving towards a vocabulary of human mobility, and highlighting it as a right along the lines of universal citizenship thereby abolishing the term illegal for people with irregular documentation in the Ecuadorian territory⁸.

In a specific section dedicated to Freedom of Movement it explicitly recognizes migration as a right.

Article 40. The right to migrate of persons is recognized. No human being shall be identified or considered as illegal because of his/her migratory status.

The State, through the relevant entities, shall develop, among others, the following actions for the exercise of the rights of Ecuadorian persons abroad, regardless of their migratory status:

1. The State shall provide them and their families, whether they live abroad or in the country, with assistance.
2. The State shall provide care, advisory services and integral protection so that they can freely exercise their rights.
3. The State shall safeguard their rights when, for any reasons, they have been arrested and imprisoned abroad.
4. The State shall promote their ties with Ecuador, facilitate family reunification and encourage their voluntary return.
5. The State shall uphold the confidentiality of personal information located in the files of Ecuadorian institutions abroad.
6. The State shall protect transnational families and the rights of their members.

(Ecuadorian Constitution, III, Art. 40 2008)

In the Constitution, transnational families⁹ are mentioned as subjects of protection and the Social Security payment system is reformed. When Correa ran again for president in 2009 with this new constitutional framework, 63%

⁸ One of the communication campaigns included the free distribution of “Universal Passports” with no legal value, but symbolically charged.

⁹ By March 2016 a working draft of the Organic Human Mobility Law defines transnational families in its principles as follows: “The transnational family of an Ecuadorian person is recognized when they have up to a second degree of consanguinity and a first degree of affinity. This family group is characterized by the migration of one or more of its members who keep ties among themselves and a sense of rootedness with Ecuador. (Organic Human Mobility Law Draft 2016, III, Art. 4)

of votes casted abroad were in his favor (42,033 in absolute numbers) (CNE 2009). It was the first time Ecuadorian migrants were also allowed to run for office in the National Assembly and six out of one hundred and thirty seven seats are reserved for migrant representatives (*asambleistas por los migrantes*). Currently six representatives are migrants and they offer a real channel for migrants to challenge their limited bargaining power which traditionally puts “their transnational needs and demands out of the ordinary scale and reach of state-led policies” (Boccagni 2013).

This is one way that we can understand the promise made by the government to accompany its citizens abroad and extend its representation abroad, considering migrants as a collective at risk and in need of state protection. The same Constitution, in a section pertaining to investments, also includes regulations on how to direct financial remittances towards productive endeavors and this constitutes evidence that the financial power of migrants was also being considered.

[The State] shall also create incentives for the return of the savings and assets of emigrants, and [sic][it shall create incentives] so that the savings of persons and different economic units are directed towards quality productive investment. (Ecuadorian Constitution. VI. Art. 338)

Following the extension of rights for migrants and their families, measures such as the establishment of a representative of the Ombudsman’s Office (Defensoria del Pueblo) in consulates or embassies in places with high presence of Ecuadorians¹⁰ were taken. Another example is the creation of the National Migrant Secretariat (SENAMI in Spanish) in 2007 – one of the youngest institutions created by the Correa administration. This institution was meant to be the highest authority in assisting Ecuadorians abroad and would coordinate with any relevant national or international institutions when necessary. The first head of the SENAMI, Lorena Escudero, who holds rank of minister, stated that the sense of creating this institution was to provide “integral attention to the transnational family, to support in times of

¹⁰ By 2015 the Ombudsman’s Office had eight offices outside of Ecuador, two of which were in Spain.

vulnerability¹¹ and accompany in cases of return when people decide to do so" and she highlighted that these services are targeted towards "that part of the family that is in the country (Ecuador) and that part of the family that is abroad" (Revista Familia N.D).

The SENAMI's representation abroad, called *Casas ecuatorianas del migrante* – the Ecuadorian houses for migrants – were located in destinations with the highest number of Ecuadorians. By 2012 there were nine *casas* in six countries. There were three in Spain alone.

The SENAMI was the first of its kind in Ecuador, a country experimenting with several principles of its brand-new constitution. Ex-SENAMI officials highlight that there was a very strong political will to make migrants and their needs seen, which is why, despite lacking previous models or legal frameworks, much of their work and policy implementation was based on trial and error as well as on demand (Kevin 2016). As services were requested SENAMI developed instruments and mechanisms to respond, which in time were institutionalized. Key ones included locating missing relatives or parents avoiding child support payments. A system of clients' record files was established and shared at a national level to avoid the duplication of services.

Regardless of political will and actions, it was, as Boccagni had warned, "not evident which institutional actors should be involved" (2013). Additionally, the coordination with other state institutions was a serious complication. As a young institution it was often unclear what the proper procedures would be and how to enforce migrant protection outside of Ecuador if they were not accredited by the local government. Some of these practicalities, along with discussions of a larger scope on Ecuador's migratory politics, resulted in the establishment of a Vice Ministry for Human Mobility (VMH) within the Foreign Affairs Ministry in June 2013 (Decreto Oficial No. 20) and the absorption of the SENAMI into it, along with many of the services and instruments they had developed. Like Kevin who worked with SENAMI and

¹¹ For more on the concept of social and sociodemographic vulnerability which the now VMH works with see the CEPAL 2001.

now with the VMH as well, appointed and temporary staff from the SENAMI were transferred to the VMH as the presidential decree stipulates. In this sense, despite the institutional reorganization, the work and logistics of SENAMI could continue to operate to a certain degree. What was new was how consulates and embassies, some of which had already established a close working relation with SENAMI, took on the functions of the casas and began to play a more active role with Ecuadorian communities abroad. They no longer “helped the SENAMI” but were responsible for executing migratory policy abroad (Kevin 2016). Even the highest authorities held official visits to their fellow citizens abroad and intervened in their favor in destination countries, which contrasted with the previous agenda of only meeting local authorities for issues such as trade agreements or political alliances. This was a significant shift and a career diplomat with decades of experience puts it like this:

[This was] an approach in favor of its migrants when their rights have been violated abroad at its highest level. Then (destination) States realize that Ecuadorians are **protected** by their government, by their State, and by their country abroad because the highest authorities, including the president, work to represent, to care and look after migrants.” (Consul Flores 2015; emphasis in original)

The transfer of responsibilities to diplomats would apparently solve the problem of recognition that the SENAMI was confronted with. Ambassadors or Consuls were accredited in the country where they work and represent the official voice of Ecuador, in this case. However, it was a significant shift that not every diplomat was willing to make. There was some resistance from the more conservative diplomats who had invested years in their careers, often stemming from privileged positions in Ecuador, who had little to do with the migrants who lost everything during the economic crisis of the end of the 1990s (Consul Flores 2015). Many of the key embassies and consulates for migratory affairs were then put in the hands of people aligned with Alianza País, such as the case of Madrid, New York, Chicago, Milan and London.

Several programs and policies have been adopted in order to guarantee the provision of services to Ecuadorian migrants, regardless of their residence or migratory status. As mentioned earlier, a comprehensive Human Mobility Law is still in discussion. It is noteworthy that as part of the large-scale

restructuring of the state apparatus and how it articulates with civil society, the Montecristi Constitution established a Council for Citizens' Participation and National Councils for Equality. The latter institution is intended to promote equality for minority and priority groups along strategic issues (*ejes estratégicos*) established by the government. These include gender, inter-generational (different age groups), peoples and nationalities (referring to ethnic groups), and human mobility. This last figure is to include five representatives from the state and five from civil society as follows: one immigrant, one returned migrant, and one delegate for each circumscription: a) Europe, Asia and Oceania, b) North America, c) Latin-America and the Caribbean.

From the Ecuadorian State then, there is an effort to protect citizens even outside the sovereign territory. This phenomenon could be looked at with notions of *long-distance nationalism* (Anderson 1992) or *transnational nationalism* (Kastoryano 2005; 2016). However, despite the richness of material on the Ecuadorian case, I have chosen not to take this path.

Instead a transnational social protection and transnational social field perspective seems more appropriate. People who have lived in Quito, worked in Spain, and had children in Vienna engage with state institutions from more than one country. Furthermore, to guarantee the well-being of themselves and their relatives they also interact with non-state actors, including but not exclusively kin, in more than one place. If welfare is conceived primarily as the responsibility of one state, say only Ecuador or only Austria, how then can we conceptualize the social protection of people who live in more than one nation-state? Transnational perspectives in migration studies allow precisely this. Social life is increasingly taking place in more than one location, among more than one legal framework. Apparently distant points on the world map are, practically speaking, extremely close to those who live among them.

2.Theoretical Framework

Globalization

The shortening of distances or the technological advances facilitating interconnection among people and institutions across the world has been generally understood as globalization. Appadurai's (1996) idea of flows and scapes was extremely relevant and useful to comprehend the interactions of dislocated people, places, moneys, ideas, and technologies. Today a series of authors see the global-local divide as artificial and likewise conceptualize global capitalism as infusing social relations all over the world, albeit in unequal forms (Harvey 1982 in Ong 1999; Sassen 2001; Comaroff & Comaroff 2003, just to mention a few). Likewise, there are unequal and different ways in which people experience life across borders as a feature of globalizing forces. On another front, decolonial authors have highlighted the fact that migratory movements and the unequal distribution of power are intrinsically related to colonialism and the rise of capitalism at the expense of colonized peoples (Mignolo 2005; Quijano 2000; Walsh 2006).

As important as global structural forces are, and as unequally distributed as power and knowledge are, it is necessary to acknowledge that individuals can remake them, react to them, and in so doing structures can become either enabling and constraining (Giddens 1984).

The transnational perspective

The emergence of the use of the term *transnationalism* within migration scholarship has been attributed widely to the authors of *Nations Unbound*, Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc (1994). At the time it was a term predominantly used to refer to economic processes and large corporate structures that were located and had effects on more than one country. The social sciences then made use of the term to refer not only to the restructuring of capital but also to other aspects such as the flow of culture and population across national borders. The use of it to discuss nations outside their

sovereign territory, such as Haitian communities in the U.S., which the authors point to, is related to the Ecuadorian case of declaring a fifth region.

Transnational links, projects, and lives have been in place for well over a century. What was different was not the phenomena per se, but its conceptualization as a social field. Working against the assimilationist and linear perspectives, which expected migrants to lose ties with their sending countries in order to fully assimilate or integrate to their new land, this seminal text proposed looking at migration from a different angle. These authors defined transnationalism as “the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders” (Basch et al. 1994, 7).

Initially welcomed with enthusiasm, the concept of transnationalism also faced criticism. One such criticism points to the fact that methodologically, anthropologists were already biased towards so-called transnational migration phenomena and this represented a problem of sampling. It has been stated that transnational enthusiasts exaggerated and generalized from a small proportion of immigrants to all immigrants (Portes 2001).

Another heated debate concerned the novelty of “the transnational”. The argument of Glick Schiller and Wimmer (2002) is that it is not entirely new. In fact, this has been one of the frequent misinterpretations of the claims of the early transnational migration scholars. It was never claimed that transnationalism is a new idea. They argue more precisely that because of “methodological nationalism”, social scientists could not conceptualize transnationalism as such. Methodological nationalism is “the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002, 302), and transnational studies attempts to overcome this understanding.

The concept of the transnational social field (Glick Schiller & Caglar 2009) builds on the Manchester’s school concept of the social field understood as a

network of networks.¹² More discussion on this concept is provided in the Methodology section. Fundamental to the concept of the transnational social field is the notion of *simultaneity* (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004: 284), namely “living lives that incorporate daily activities, routines, and institutions located both in a destination country and transnationally” at the same time. Thus this notion goes against the belief that losing ties with “countries of origin” is the only way to real incorporation. A metaphor widely used is “both here and there”; it helps to understand how a person living in Vienna can at the same time be very connected and participate in what happens in Quito.

A note of caution is needed here, as it is not my intention to generalize and state that all migrants are living their lives transnationally and live a sense of simultaneity. Some do, and we will look at this in Section 5.

Transnationalism allows for the conceptual linking of what happens in Ecuador, Spain and Austria (and maybe even beyond) simultaneously. This perspective goes beyond questioning the naturalization of nation-states as containers and divisions of the world. Border Studies (Barth 1969; Cole & Wolf 1974; Alvarez 1995, and more) also questions the traditional lines dividing the world, looking at new borders (and new ways of conceiving them such as “tidemarks” (Green 2009). This body of literature also considers the intensification and diversification of migration understood as intrinsically linked with neoliberal globalization. Transnationalism however, goes beyond this since it invites us to think less in terms of ‘across’ or ‘between’ borders and more about the abandonment (to a certain degree) of bounded concepts and the re-conceptualization of categories; to acknowledge and utilize the connection between transnational migrants and changing conditions of global capitalism; and to consider how hegemonic contexts impact transnational migrants

¹² Although transnational social space often refers to the same, the term ‘transnational social field’ has been selected following not only the transnational migration scholars mentioned above, but also the methodological clarifications elaborated by Molina, Petermann & Herz (2012) where the authors connect the concept of transnational social field to an anthropological tradition of personal networks, whereas as transnational social space builds on the sociological tradition of the entirety of the network approach.

without losing sight of their agency to resist and (re)create them (Vertovec 2009; Ong 1999).

This distinction is useful in defining and directing the use of the term, however my intention here is to use transnationalism as a tool, an optic, or a lens (Levitt, & Khagram, 2008) rather than a discreet and closed-off category. This is why I will refer to relations across borders enacted by both states and non-state actors as transnational. Levitt and Khagram distinguish between methodological transnationalism (going beyond the nation-state as the natural container) and public transnationalism (opening up political positions and praxis assuming a world transnationally constituted). Following discussions about the field (see section 3), this perspective allows for a situation of my work across borders but still with connections to places. This body of literature also points to several intersections, particularly of different regimes of power at play in a transnational social field, transnational families, changing functions of the state, and questions of citizenship.

Citizenship and Global inequalities

Nation-states and their institutions regulate life within a prescribed territory and engage in bi- and multi-lateral affairs as a country. However, relations across and within borders invite us to think of different ways of (re)making citizenship across national borders. Arguing against claims that globalization will imply the loss of relevance of nation-states and of dichotomies of the global as macro political and economic and the local as situated, creative and resistant, Aihwa Ong (1999) draws our attention to transnational practices and imaginings. Taking on Harvey's establishment of flexibility as the *modus operandi* of late capitalism, she adds people's agency to the equation and conceptualizes "flexible citizenship" and "graduated sovereignty". Moreover, the allowance of dual citizenship is gaining supporters (although opponents persist) and fits much better to the life-worlds of migrants in two (or more) polities since it institutionalizes these ties (Caglar in Elkana et al. 2002). Similarly, Brodie (2008) brings attention to citizenship as a practice that exists

beyond the dichotomy of rights and responsibilities. Considering debates about the retreat and decline of the welfare state and tracing social citizenship in Canada, she claims that the “social” in citizenship is being relegated to “history’s dustbin” with the rise of material and individual logics, stressing economic goals over social ones. She identifies a shift in governance towards “social inclusion”, “social capital,” and “social economy” which turn out to also be buzz words and key axis in the Correa administration in Ecuador. Evidently Ecuador’s case is not unique¹³ and responds to a larger context – it is not alone in its attempts and failures to provide care across borders. A world review of the social protection of migrants finds that north-north migrants can count on rather good social security coverage, whereas south-south ones remain dependent on informal networks and self-insurance (Koettl & Sabates-Wheeler 2010), in accordance with what Boccagni and Herrera have also stated. Some scholars, such as Boccagni and Sabates Wheeler, at times conceptualize migration itself as a means of social protection. Migrating for work, in order to secure the well-being of your family left behind is in practice a strategy of social protection.

The agency of Ecuadorian migrants needs to be looked at to avoid rendering migrants as victims only. Simultaneously, we must not turn a blind eye to power structures in the context of global neoliberalism. Keeping in mind the reciprocal construction of subjects enmeshed in neoliberalism, and considering unequal power dynamics, looking at policies anthropologically not only takes into account an outside world but also considers created social and semantic spaces as well as new political subjects which will also be classified and seek governance (Shore & Wright 2011).

The welfare state

In the late 1940s the idea that the state has social responsibilities to its citizens became increasingly accepted not least due to the seminal essay of T.H.

¹³ Several countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Armenia, Mexico, Poland and others engage in efforts to link with diasporas, to extend their rights or jump in at crucial times to provide for their citizens abroad.

Marshall on Citizenship and Social Class (1950) and the coining of the term 'Social Citizenship.' Marshall identifies a development of access to economic, political and finally social rights (including welfare) in the 18th, 19th and 20th century England, and considers access to all three of them as ideal citizenship.

The welfare state notion has come under attack by the neoliberal understanding of the role of the state that seems current. It is debated whether welfare ought to be considered a competence of the state or an altogether private matter. In actual practice, the logics of a welfare state under neo-liberal governmentality imply that only fully active and participating citizens deserve social rights such as welfare.

On the one hand we have national borders and belongings fading and recasting themselves in new identities and memberships or cosmopolitan norms, while on the other nation-states are increasing regulations on migration and citizenship acquisition. Citizenship is increasingly a citizenship of residency, and the spread of cosmopolitanism, which can contribute to the "emergence of generalizable human interests and the articulation of public standards of norm justification" has a counterpoint in global capitalism, which "leads to the privatization and segmentation of interest communities and the weakening of standards of public justification" (Benhabib 2007, 22). In consequence, states' capacity to protect and provide for their citizens worsens in correspondence with the decrease in autonomy in immigration law in face of a globalized economy and international human rights discourses (Sassen in Joppke 1998). In response, state relations with communities abroad and state services abroad have seen changes. These include a reaching out to diasporas, with diverse motivations including economic, cultural, and political ones (Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003).

Before continuing to the following section some remarks must be made regarding how global capitalism takes gendered and racialized forms which in turn affect people's (in)mobility. "Capitalism in its formation and development has been constituted as a racial formation (...) The production of commodities on a world scale includes racialized and gendered labor power" (Winant 1995

in Westwood & Phizacklea 2000). As decolonial authors from Latin America have pointed out, migration and global inequalities are not something unique to the last two centuries. Furthermore, colonial entanglements continue to shape migration routes, policies and motivations, particularly in regard to reproductive gendered labor (Gutierrez 2007). Along similar lines, Lem and Gardiner Barber (2010,3) claim that

the development of capitalism in industry, in agriculture, and the crises intrinsic to capitalist accumulation, foster social and economic differentiation, class polarization, dispossession, and the extrication of people from livelihoods. These forces spur geographic mobility in the form of transregional and also transnational movement of people. (Lem & Gardiner Barber 2003, 3)

These authors point to class formation and social reproduction within capitalism and transnational migration, highlighting how, although women have increasingly joined the workforce, reproductive labor continues to be a disproportionately feminine task. And although these tasks are sometimes paid for, they are generally in precarious conditions and associated with low status. The following sections will build on notions of the welfare state, asking what are social protections, what are the state's responsibilities to provide them, and how are they changing.

Social Protection and Care

Social protection is generally understood as the responsibility of a state to provide protection to its citizens in adverse situations. According to the UN Center for Social Development research, it is

Concerned with preventing, managing, and overcoming situations that adversely affect people's well-being. Social protection consists of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labor markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to manage economic and social risks, such as unemployment, sickness, disability, and old age. (UN Center for Social Development 2010)

I concentrate on social security: providing health and care services. Care services include watching over children, the sick, elderly or the disabled. The "series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring" has been defined first as the international transfer of

caretaking and more recently as *global care chains* with a focus on the role of women (Parreñas 1998; Hochschild 2000). The rearrangements done in the sphere of “domestic” and reproductive work, still largely a feminine and often kinship domain, respond to larger global inequalities catalyzed by neoliberal capital flows.

In social security services, the distinction between formal and informal is decided by the structures and hierarchies of organizations. The informal sphere is then everything left out or not mentioned by state institutions and includes family and social networks. It may be useful to acknowledge this distinction. However, it is important to note that between these two there is a wide array of practices. Likewise, the use of a formal resource does not automatically translate into the exclusion of informal resources. A migrant using formal services in Austria and Ecuador, such as social security schemes, can at the same time rely on relatives in Austria to take care of her children and can rely on neighbors in Ecuador to take care of her elderly parents.

A particular area of concern for virtually all regions worldwide is ageing population and a rate of ageing that is projected to accelerate on a global level, despite regional differences. According to the United Nations World Ageing Report in 2015 one out of eight people was aged sixty or older, and by 2030 one out of six people are projected to be over sixty worldwide. These serious demographic changes have implications for every segment of society and will have a range of effects, including changes to the demand for goods and services, state expenditure, and family structures (UN 2015).

The pace at which populations are ageing is much faster in developing regions compared to the pace that developed countries are witnessing. This means that the former need to adapt much quicker and with significantly less financial resources compared to the latter. In the period from 2015-2030 the number of older persons will increase the fastest in Latin America and the Caribbean with a rate of 71% compared to other age groups, while the EU holds the slowest rate with 23%. Some states have approached the matter by expanding coverage, incentivizing contributory social security systems, increasing state

health expenditure, adapting pensions, or raising the statutory age for retirement, while others have not yet operationalized changes. For migrants, the varying schemes imply different contributions, retirement ages, procedures, and benefits. Even when people are able to access formal social security schemes, it is still often the case in Ecuador that pensions fail to provide adequate income. Globally, every second person who reaches pensionable age does not receive a pension (UN 2015). As a result, the family, and in particular women, step in to fill the gap with out-of-pocket expenditures or unpaid/underpaid care work.

The Family

The family then steps in. Parella (2012) proposes to analyze the family as an entity that is not uniform, in which unequal power relations intertwine, be they gender or intergenerational, and where members are assigned roles in order to secure the well-being of the family. Although it is often the case that migration modifies these roles and the ways they are assigned within the family, it does not necessarily mean that inequality disappears. In fact at times inequality is exported and exacerbated.

Migration and exposure to different social codes regulating family and gender roles can influence change, but this not necessarily the case. Hodagneu-Sotelo claims that patriarchal practices and rules within families “have persisted, though migrant women and men reinterpret normative standards and creatively manipulate the rules of gender” (1995 in Westwood & Phizacklea 2000, 128).

Social reproduction across borders

The aspirations of women have changed markedly in the past 50 years and continue to do so. They now include education and career development and for many these two are coupled with marriage and childrearing. Many women are now reluctant to accept the sole responsibility of caring for children and the elderly. In some cases, this means negotiations within the household with male

relatives, and in others this necessitates private market providers, or hiring someone to do this work who is most often a woman and frequently a migrant. The way in which care-giving work is distributed among caretakers in different parts of the world, or from different parts of the world has been called *Global Care Chains* (Parreñas 2001; Hochschild 2000). This theory is key in explaining the labor niches in receiving countries into which the majority of my female interview partners have incorporated themselves. Their formal education levels notwithstanding, they have all been employed, even if only at the beginning of their migratory experience, in domestic service, childcare, and care for the sick or elderly. This has also been related to the so-called feminization of migration. Other authors (Westwood & Phizacklea 2000) have argued that this increase in numbers and in scholarly attention is artificially inflating the proportion of women that migrate. The argument being made here is that women have migrated independently and as labor force, but only recently have their movements been registered and paid attention to (Phizacklea 1983 in Westwood & Phizacklea 2000). In any case, and with caution against over representing, the term feminization of migration also refers to the increase in women migrating to fill specific niches in care-giving work, which is why it will be used in this work in relation to the concept of global care chains.

Miraftab (2014; 2016) has built on Friedrich Engel's recognition of social reproduction work as a cost not assumed by capitalism yet vital for its existence. She argues that it is not only global production that is being restructured, as scholarship on this front claims, but that this also implies the *restructuring of global social reproduction*. This notion expands feminist scholarship on Global Care Chains by involving not only people in domestic care work (unpaid or underpaid) but also institutions across the globe. Workers' productive phase in host societies is bracketed by periods where they require reproductive work as children, sick or elderly in societies of origin — there is respatialization of life-cycle stages (Miraftab 2016: 140). Thus, grandmothers or state institutions in Mexico, for example, subsidize the wages

of U.S. companies by providing care services for their workers at a much lower cost and during specific stages.

Transnational Social Protections

To approach the social protection of people on the move the Transnational Studies Initiative, based in Boston defined Global (now Transnational) Social Protections in early 2015 as the public policies, programs, people, organizations and institutions that provide and protect individuals in a transnational way in the areas of old age, pensions (including widows and orphans) disability, health, family, active labor programs, unemployment, housing, and education. This includes actors that provide and protect people that move in a transnational way, transnational actors that provide and protect rooted individuals, and transnational actors that provide and protect transnational individuals (Levitt, Lloyd, Mueller, & Viterna 2015).

Migration implies movement between spaces where different states exercise their (sovereign) power, where the access to formal and informal institutions varies in origin, and where destination countries create different resource environments, but among which thousands of people live their lives.

A person's *resource environment* refers to the intersection of these various networks, public policies, and programs (Levitt et al. 2015: 8) and goes beyond the classical formal-informal binary. The concept of resource environment is a heuristical tool that allows for analyzing structures as dissimilar as the social security system of European countries, characterized by strong states, and the Ecuadorian social security system, where the individual practices of a family that lives among Ecuador and Europe is of the utmost importance. In this sense, the analysis transverses national borders and varying legal frameworks which interact among each other by being integrated to the lives of some Ecuadorian migrants. For the purposes of this thesis a person's resource environment might include the resources available from the Austrian State, the city of Vienna, of the Ecuadorian State, the city of Quito, from kin or non-kin in Quito, Vienna, or elsewhere, or market actors. Figure 1 taken from Levitt and colleagues (2015) exemplifies how a resource environment separated by

the four main sources of social protections might look like for a primary-educated Mexican migrant in California. The thickness or thinness of the arrows represents the relative proportion that each source plays in the piecing together of each resource environment.

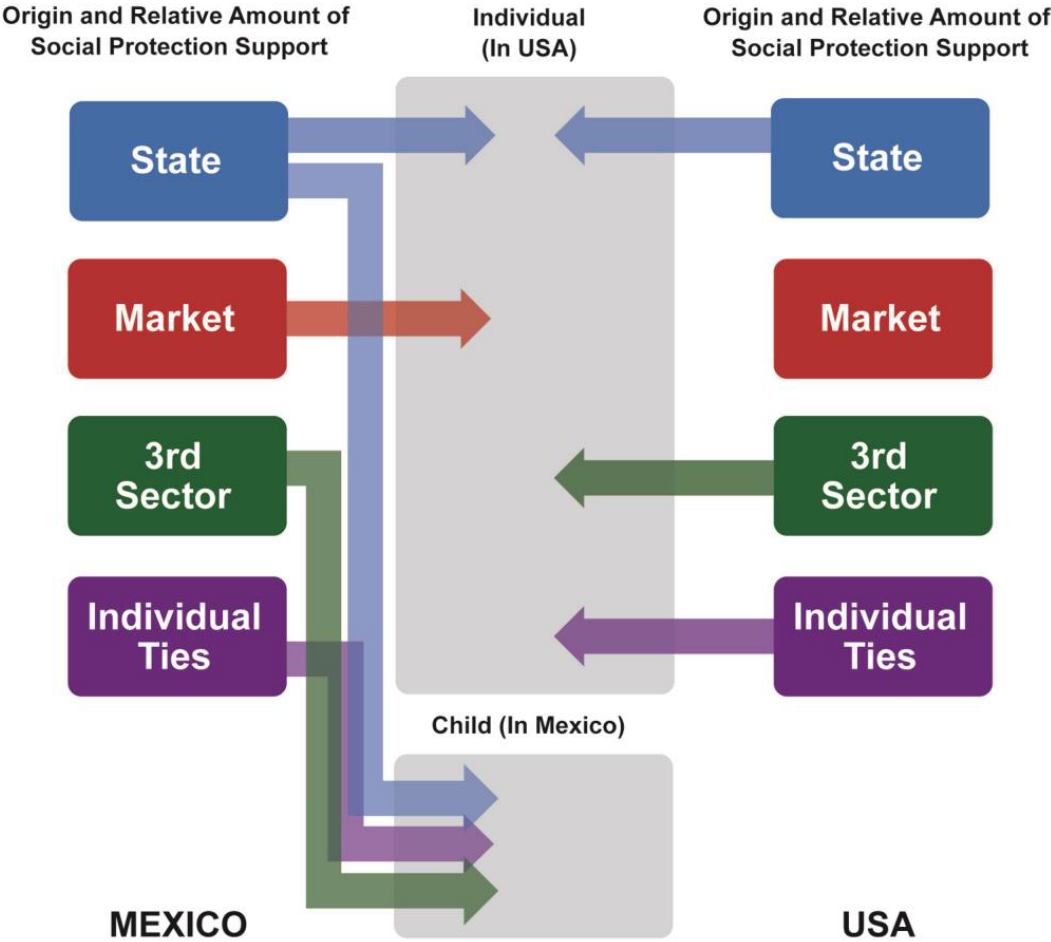


Figure 1

Source: Levitt et al 2015

3. Methodology

I conducted a comprehensive literature review of social science texts, looked at different types of policies and narratives, and collected data from interview partners, informal conversations and observations. The working languages were primarily Spanish with interview partners and English with literature. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and all references to them in this work have been translated by myself. German played a very marginal role for understanding some Austrian institutions. My familiarity with the Ecuadorian variety of Spanish was extremely useful in assessing collected material and communicating with interlocutors. This project has benefited from a long process (2014-2016) of engaging with the field, reflection and reformulation in conferences and congresses as well as collaboration with colleagues conducting research along similar lines.

Multi-sited, Multi-local, Global, Awkward?

Discussions held in human geography and social sciences about *the field*, *space* and *place* are plentiful. For this project, a clear sense of material place was present in the cities where I conducted research. For me place primarily meant Vienna, Quito, to a degree Azogues¹⁴, and a series of places which are related (using Feldman's distinction between relations and connections¹⁵) and in which people live their lives. A clear sense of place, namely the cities I was working with and in, guided my work. The particularities of these cities and lives lived in and across them were the object of my observations and analysis. In this sense I engaged in the stock of our field: participant-observation. I was *there*. And I was *here*. I physically moved locations and in these locations did some

¹⁴ Azogues, located in southern Ecuador, is the capital of Cañar, the province with the highest emigration rate in Ecuador. As a symbolic gesture of recognizing the moral (and financial) debt to migrants, as part of the decentralization rearrangements and out of practical reasons (high demand) the executive relocated the VMH to Azogues.

¹⁵ See Feldman 2011. In short, connections happen face to face, whereas relations do not require physical proximity. The idea is not that one has more weight than the other, but rather to make an analytical distinction about the nature of data in contemporary anthropology that employs a global scope.

participant-observation, but most certainly a lot more of participant-listening (Forsey 2010) among other ‘polymorphous engagements’¹⁶ (Gusterson 1997).

However, I switched modes frequently, and to a certain degree kept an open eye, ear and brain to the other mode: the awkward scale of non-local ethnography (Feldman 2011; Comaroff & Comaroff 2003). This meant at times relating agents, policies, forces, and abstract notions with each other, or with information that was retrieved from interviews or observations. Consequently, when I was not moving to these different places for a sensorial experience, I was engaging in displacement by “dislodging assumptions, discourses and rationales which the researcher would otherwise take for granted” (Feldman 2012, 195).

Precisely through relating these diverse actors and recognizing the relations among Ecuadorian migrants and their relatives as well as with institutional actors in embedded in more than one place, it became evident that just looking at distinct places wasn’t enough. In this case, the actors were connected and related in the transnational social field (Glick Schiller & Caglar 2009).

Connecting and relating

How can we not only collect data in more than one place, or related to more than one place, but make sense of it all? Feldman states this challenge as one of creating “an ethnographic account of empirical processes that cannot be fully apprehended through empiricist methods, or through direct sensory contact with the processes in question” (2012, 187). He argues that non local ethnography is a methodology for studying global regimes of governance or apparatuses (2012). He elaborates on Foucault’s concept of apparatus (*dispositif*) and presents it as a methodology to articulate the workings and relations of dislocated actors, which include knowledge practices, in what he

¹⁶. “Polymorphous engagement means interacting with informants across a number of dispersed sites, not just in local communities, and sometimes in virtual form; and it means collecting data eclectically from a disparate array of sources in many different ways” (Gusterson 1997, 116).

terms the *migration apparatus* (2011). Additionally, he points to the fact that such an apparatus is difficult to experience fully first hand and “observe” with participant-observation alone, not only because of its abstract and complex nature but also due to the frequent and fast crossings of actors across borders. My research allowed for some participant-observation but it relies more heavily on the apparatus notion to analyze the interplay of multiple actors, practices and discourses taking place simultaneously in different places. Some actors include:

- Ecuadorian, Austrian, Spanish and European migration policies and institutions.
- Ecuadorian migrants outside Ecuador and relatives in Ecuador.
- Schengen Visa regulations
- Ecuadorians nationalized as Europeans
- Ecuadorian government: Vice Ministry for Human Mobility
- Ecuadorian consulates and embassies, the state institution representatives outside Ecuador.
- The bilateral agreement on social security between Ecuador and Spain
- Madrid as a gateway city
- Quito as a place of origin of migrations and migratory regulations
- Quito sub-national level government and services
- Vienna as second destination.
- Vienna local government and services.
- Austrian and Viennese Social Security Institutions
- Financial crisis of 2008, re-articulations of capital and workforce

This work then looks at macro-structural forces whose power is mediated by a mezzo level of institutions to individuals. The apparatus logic allows us not only to understand how these different levels interact with each other, but also to move among different levels at particular moments of the analysis.

Sources

Many of my academic sources are anthropologists, yet sociologists and social workers with extensive experience in this field have also been key in guiding my research. I have also reviewed protocols and agreements among institutions and countries as well as informative pamphlets issued by some of these institutions. In line with approaching this research project with a notion of

apparatus, the importance of reviewing these kind of sources has to do with how “documents codify the technical and moral means through which an apparatus indirectly relates estranged individuals to each other” (Feldman 2012, 191).

I also reviewed plenty of material online such as migrant forums, counselling websites, and institutional material. The services offered by public institutions were of particular interest to me. I approached them in two ways. Firstly, I approached them as a regular curious user. I looked for requisites, forms, supporting documents, and the process of applying to a particular service. At times I made phone calls or visits to inquire about the process to access specific services as a user. Secondly, I looked at this information analytically. Whom do policies target? When did they become accessible to specific groups? How is that related to other events? This was at times even valuable for my private life and for my interview partners’ lives as well.

Interviews

A primary source of data was semi-structured interviews with migrants, transnational family members, and experts in Vienna and Quito, in line with keeping a scalar perspective of these cities. I also conducted several interviews at the VMH headquarters in Azogues, including one with the Vice Minister for Human Mobility. Interview partners in Vienna and their relatives belonged, in rough terms, to a lower-middle and middle class, of mixed ethnic heritage, often with post-secondary education who had experienced de-skilling in Europe. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and transcribed in Spanish. Extracts for this paper have been loosely translated by myself. Semi-structured qualitative narrative interviews allow for an understanding of the interplay of individuals, agencies and states across borders.

Interviews with migrants were done in-depth to foster the expression of participant’s interpretations and their connections of different phenomena (Mack et al., 2005).

To limit the scope of the research I decided to limit contributing participants to Ecuadorians who had lived in the country and continued to have ties. By

making this selection it is evident that the account of people who are not engaging in practices to secure their wellbeing or that of others across borders is missing. By no means do I tend to generalize that all Ecuadorian migrants in Vienna engage in such practices.

A narrative approach was in all cases my intention. I was interested in hearing the participant's voice, opinions, silences, and doubts. It was clear that speaking to migrants and their relatives had this quality, but that for officials, care needed to be taken in order to distinguish when, if possible, the voice coming through was that of the state or the party in power, and when a personal opinion.

Semi-structured interviews allowed me to address my agenda as a researcher with a clear topic, but also to leave enough space for individuals to shape their own narratives and therefore introduce elements that were new to me, or were addressed under a different perspective, in addition to allowing me to consider what might be shaping these narratives. This method was selected because it also allows the researcher to direct the conversation to topics of interest or relevance (Bernard 2006). Narratives of migration likely include observations made throughout longer periods of time in which the changes (or not) in social protection will become evident. A closed questionnaire or survey would not permit me to notice small changes in practices, or perception of the practices

A total of twenty-three qualitative interviews were conducted. They lasted anywhere from forty-five minutes to several hours. All names have been anonymized except for officials who explicitly preferred their real names to be used. In general, interviews with migrants took more time and more investment in getting to know each other. Migrants were eager to express how they arrived to Vienna and what the initial period was like. Being myself Ecuadorian and relatively new to Vienna, many interview partners from Vienna assumed much of what they were telling me was normal, evident, and already known to me. This was sometimes the case, but not always. My personal history of mobility has been an advantage in this sense. I am familiar with many of the legal processes, with the terminology of institutions, with

personal confrontation with civil servants and with the impotence in the face of insurmountable bureaucratic hurdles and de-skilling. Likewise, I am familiar with the realities of living life in Quito and in Vienna and of the sense of care for relatives in Quito that both the participants and myself experience.

Interviews with officials were in general more to the point and I attempted to understand what the discursive approaches to protection of migrants are in general as well as to concrete cases, and in the implementation of programs. With officials my approach was to understand how programs function; what do migrants or their relatives need to do, need to have, need to be? How does the specific agency then react, and what type of officials are in direct contact with users? What are the most common cases? What are the challenges? With what other agencies do they cooperate and how does this cooperation take shape?

I have also established a blog in cooperation with the Consular section of the Embassy to advise Ecuadorians looking for training and study opportunities in Vienna directed at incoming international students and migrants who are already in Vienna. My familiarity with the language and social codes allowed me to contact valuable interview partners as well as to participate and observe social gatherings and practices.

I also spoke with the representatives of the Ecuadorian State in Vienna in order to learn about contemporary official (and maybe unofficial) positions, and the changes experienced (or not) since the migration turn in Ecuadorian politics. A key official whom I will refer to as Consul Flores was able to exemplify some of the changes in discourse and policy in addition to particular information of the situation and demographics of Ecuadorians in Vienna. I am aware, as much as officials are, that primarily Ecuadorians with regular migratory status voluntarily register at the embassy, and this implies that there is an unknown number of undocumented migrants which don't appear in official numbers as well as documented migrants who do not seek affiliation with the embassy.

I traveled to Quito, Ecuador in summer 2015 and again in spring 2016 to interview family members of interview partners from Vienna, as well as

officials from the Vice Ministry for Human Mobility (VMH). Quito, the capital, is where many migration stories articulate and where the center of political power is located. Additionally, I travelled to Azogues, where the VMH's headquarters have recently been established.

It is significant that interviews were conducted both with migrants in Europe as well as their family members in Ecuador because social organization dynamics, explicit or not, might become more evident through this process. Additionally, being in Ecuador and interacting with members of transnational families in Ecuador exposed me to a variety of narratives circulating around the issue of migration, social protection, and return.

Access and participant-observation/listening

As a recent arrival to Vienna (2013), and Ecuadorian myself, it was frequently easy to relate with people and establish relations at social gatherings and unsought places such as bus stops. I frequent some celebrations and events that gather Latin Americans, many of them Ecuadorian. These places served as good entry points. I also met people who shared their stories with me at events organized by the Ecuadorian consulate and embassy. From these initial contacts I was frequently referred to two churches¹⁷ where Ecuadorians gather with other Latin Americans on a weekly basis and organize events. I then did some of my participant observation in one of these churches. I went to the Sunday mass, in Spanish, held by a Latin American priest, and then stayed for the social part of the day. In this Latin-American church Ecuadorians play a role in the social organization of religious as well as social matters.

Limitations and thoughts on field experience

Given the fact that my questions were directed towards understanding how individuals secure themselves social protection: health, old age and care for children and the elderly, many of the answers were more appropriate for

¹⁷ While a church was one of my main entry points, it is not necessarily a cohesive element, or the only or the automatic primordial way of social organization of Ecuadorian citizens in Vienna. As noted elsewhere, there is no single homogenous community of Ecuadorians, but rather gatherings along different lines: race, class, profession, ethnicity, gender or religion among others.

women since they tend to comprise the majority of responsible caretakers and workers. The role of women in Ecuador has progressed significantly, yet domestic violence, unequal pay, and lower rates of female formal employment continue to be serious social problems. Domestic violence and partner abuse were not key focus points of this work from its beginning. I do, however, want to dedicate some space to them as it became evident in interviews that this was a serious preoccupation and for many the decisive reason to migrate. This visibilized the gender division of reproductive labor, which is itself not a new fact. After the first three interviews it became evident that this was present in many life stories not only of Ecuadorian women — men referenced it as well. I never directly asked a question directed towards domestic violence or sexualized violence, yet time and again it came up.

I did ask questions related to gender division of labor in Ecuador and now in Vienna, particularly care-giving work. I asked the hypothetical questions of which child should step in in case a parent needed care, or which parent would stay at home to watch over a child.

As the child of colonialism, anthropological fieldwork has a bad habit of taking, using, and leaving. A bad habit of not giving much in return and of producing knowledge that not always connects back to research partners. My experiences with many of my migrant interview partners and their relatives involved some sort of information exchange. In some cases, I informed them about particular institutions and the access, rights, and benefits that my partners could (potentially) access. In others I advised family members on how to navigate visa and education procedures in Austria as part of a volunteer project I have started.

4. Case Study: Ecuadorian migration and social protection

Ecuadorian migration

The case of Ecuadorian migration evidences transnational ties, namely “sustained linkages and ongoing exchanges among non-state actors based across national borders” (Vertovec 2009, 3). The experiences of many Ecuadorians can be understood, to a greater or lesser degree, as transnational practices, navigating into and out of transnational social fields and living simultaneity (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004). The existing transnational ties among Ecuadorians “here and there” include indigenous celebrations to pay homage to the first emigrants, and displays of the complex multi-directional flow of cultural influences in the (re)making of ethnic identity (Ordoñez 2008), financial remittances, the arrangements for care of non-migrant kin that are made across continents (Boccagni 2010 & 2013; Herrera 2013), co-development practices (Redrobán Herrera 2010), intensified daily communication between migrants and non-migrants, among others. Ecuadorian migrants as a category is a construct that needs to be looked at in detail to account for the heterogeneity of its members considering the intersectionality of ethnicity, race, culture, gender and class (Herrera 2013; Herrera & Carrillo 2009). The scope of this research will not be able to fully address these diverse backgrounds and positions in relocation countries; however, I will point to some of them.

As stated in previous sections, Ecuadorians left in significant numbers in the early 2000s to Europe, as strengthening of the U.S.-Mexico border made it harder for them to cross a well-established migration pattern. In Spain, Ecuadorians found work in the care, agricultural and construction industries. As the real estate bubble popped and the effects of the economic crisis of 2008 were felt, Ecuadorian migrants with acquired Spanish citizenship relocated. Some came to Vienna while others had moved directly to Vienna from Ecuador.

The strongest identifiable factors of aggrupation are religion (two catholic groups meeting regularly for mass in Spanish), soccer games (one organized meeting generally once a week) and events organized by the Embassy and Consulate. The church where I conducted my fieldwork, like many other churches, has a well-equipped room for social events. Some of the administrative tasks such as preparing food for special celebrations, organizing singers for the choir, rehearsing and selecting songs, doing readings in mass, and decorating the church, among others, are carried out by key members of its religious community, many Ecuadorian.

Every Sunday after mass, a team of primarily women, organize some hot beverages and cakes. Meanwhile, tables and chairs are quickly set up by churchgoers and then the social gathering starts. People chat, drink and eat, help out with the dishes in the kitchen, swap tables, meet new people, catch up with old friends and have a good time. This goes on for several hours. I stayed an average of 3 and a half hours after mass. In these spaces, the first question addressed to me was always where I come from, and as soon my interlocutors knew I was from Ecuador, they would rush to introduce me to someone they knew who was also from Ecuador. In this way I met plenty of people and could hold some informal conversations and gain general insights. Some of them became interview partners and some even became friends.

The space of the church is also used for special religious celebrations, such as the procession and feast for the Virgen del Quinche, the patron saint of Ecuador and of migrants. Taking place after mass and a speech from the Ecuadorian authorities, the feast involves traditional Ecuadorian food, music, and dance. In large events like this one diplomatic staff and Ecuadorians working for international organizations also join in. There was a split between the two churches, which was due to some personal rivalries but also along class and

ethno-racial lines, and which was often bridged during special occasions.¹⁸ At multicultural events such as fairs and food festivals it was mostly people connected to the church with whom I did fieldwork who participated as exhibitors, sellers, or performers. It is important to note that many of these events were held in order to collect funds for someone in need, mostly in Ecuador.

Existing literature on social protection of Ecuadorian migrants and transnational families claim that despite some efforts, and much discourse, the responsibility to provide social protection for Ecuadorian citizens abroad actually remains in the hands of individual people and is organized mostly by kinship ties (Boccagni, 2010, 2013; Herrera, 2013). Listening to migrants' accounts now allowed me to see to what degree this continues to be true or not. This, consequently, contributed to my analysis of how much states such as Ecuador are engaging in policies of social protection that might be theorized as transnational, and gave me a glimpse into their reception by some Ecuadorian migrants.

Diplomacia Ciudadana

The new constitutional principles, backed by a strong political will, translated into a "*Diplomacia Ciudadana*" (citizen's diplomacy) approach in consular missions which boosted the services available for migrants particularly through technology linking up different public institutions and periodic meetings with Ecuadorian authorities in destination countries. Official presidential visits to Europe and the U.S. frequently include a meeting (*encuentro*) with migrant communities. In April 2013 Correa addressed thousands of Ecuadorians in Madrid in a packed sports venue: "Rest assured, this is the government of the migrants" (Correa 2013). Likewise, Ricardo Patiño, ex-Foreign Affairs Minister, who has also been a key political figure for the *Revolución Ciudadana* since its early days, continued to emphasize up to

¹⁸ It was explained to me more than once that the church I did my fieldwork in was "the one for the dark ones". Some members, however, frequent both churches, and when special celebrations occur, this is more often the case.

2015 the country's debt to migrants (Patiño in El Comercio 2015). The strength of this political will, however, was not perceived as reciprocal in terms of budget allocation for the SENAMI (Juan 2014).

It is indeed notable how consulates and embassies extended their traditional roles and services (Vienna Convention on Consular Services 1963; Consul Flores 2015 & 2016). These now include the follow-up of maintenance claims, mortgage assessment in Spain as a response to the real estate bubble popping, interventions in cases of undocumented minors and emission of IDs regardless of migratory status in the U.S., interventions in cases of minors taken by Italian social services and mobile consulates which do outreach work with Ecuadorian migrant communities. Likewise, online services have also been significantly extended. A new platform, the *Consulado Virtual*, allows for a series of processes that previously required physical presence in Ecuador, or complicated procedures in consulates, to be done digitally, quickly, and around the clock. Some services, such as the criminal record certificate are also now available online and for free. This is part of the initial wave of modernization of the *Revolución Ciudadana*. This engagement of the diplomatic staff with migrants, with common people, and this general opening up of doors and spaces has been branded by the administration as *Diplomacia Ciudadana*. It is related to the governing party's confrontation of oligarchies, privileged elites, and the so-called "long neoliberal eve" which the *Revolución Ciudadana* would put an end to. In fact, the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Affairs itself underwent a serious transformation when in 2011-2012 it applied an Affirmative Action program and effectively recruited peoples of the diverse ethnic groups and nations living within Ecuadorian territory. For the first time in history an indigenous person in full "traditional" attire was a member of a mission representing the country abroad.

Continuing the extension of services that Consulates and Embassies now provide to Ecuadorians abroad are a series of interinstitutional memorandums of understanding within Ecuador. Such is the case in agreements among the Vice Ministry for Human Mobility, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Housing, Secretariat for Customs, National Postal Service,

Secretariat for Science and Technology, Ministry for Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) and the Ecuadorian Institute for Social Security (IESS) whose intentions and degree of engagement vary significantly, but whose main purpose is to spell out procedures where preferential or special treatment is given to Ecuadorians abroad and/or their relatives in Ecuador. Additionally, agreements with other states and international institutions have also been reached as in the case of social security.

Much of the structure, tools, and logic of the SENAMI persist in the work of the current VMH. The Vice Ministry's competences include service to citizens, service to foreigners (Under-Secretariat for Immigrants), consular issues abroad (Under-Secretariat for Consular Affairs), and support to migrants abroad as well as return migrants (Under-Secretariat for the Ecuadorian Migrant Community), (VMH 2014) and it does so via the contemporary channels of social media, internet, an online radio program "La hora del Migrante", among others. We will return later to more specific examples of how precisely these instances articulate and provide services for migrants.

The dramatic rhetoric of victimhood is not so evident in the ministry's discourse; in fact, a slight shift to a broader understanding of mobility, away from migration as deviation, seems to be seeping through. Notice the incorporation of the making of the revolution from abroad project (a political project with a transnational edge?). Is the Ecuadorian state beginning to consider mobility of people (and with them their financial capital) as a potential resource? Or is the extension of rights across borders a categorical imperative of cosmopolitan norms? (Benhabib 2007)? Whilst highlighting the innovative nature of the institution, officials repeatedly referred to international agreements and human rights. Very likely, right-granting comes also with subjectification processes which cannot be fully explored here. Nevertheless, the idea of migrants as a group at risk and in need of protection remains. However nuanced comments such as the following colour the decision as a more of personal choice. "Migration is a brave expression of a person's will to overcome adversity and live a better life (...) Ecuador promotes respect to that freedom." (VMH 2014).

Some of the guidelines included in the National Plan for 2013-2017 are to:

Accompany the return processes of Ecuadorians who decide to do so and foster their economic and social inclusion. To promote the implementation of supranational mechanisms that ensure the protection of rights of people in human mobility situations. (VMH 2014)

Furthermore, Ecuador negotiates periodically with members of the Andean Community and Mercosur; one of the established goals in so doing is to eradicate undocumented people in South America, and an additional one is an agreement among member states and associated states similar to the European Union's scheme of portability of rights (and responsibilities), which is being termed South American Citizenship (VMH 2014). For its leading role in protecting the rights of working migrants and their families, Ecuador has been recognized internationally by the United Nations, which in April 2014 assigned the Ecuadorian Ambassador the position of the President for the International Committee for the Protection of Migrant Workers and their Families.

It is evident then that the current administration has already put into practice the principles and guidelines stipulated in the constitution. However, a comprehensive organic law of human mobility in congruence with the 2008 Constitution is still missing. To this effect, several discussion sessions have taken place and several drafts have been reviewed, the last one prior to this writing was in 2015.

The inclusion of transnational families in the 1 testifies to the slow and incomplete shift of Ecuadorian policy and discourse, which are at times contradictory, towards recognition of alternatives to the nuclear family. This recognition pushes against traditional gender roles, which are associated with ideas of the nuclear family and imply a heavier load of care on women, what Gioconda Herrera terms *alternative gender equity discourse* (2013). However, the rhetoric of broken families remains in the official discourse and permeates into policies which seek to attend to the victims of the national tragedy: migration. The exodus of the late 1990s reveals not only the financial crisis but

the lack of provision of welfare and social protection policies by the Ecuadorian State. For some women in Vienna, this was coupled with gender-based violence at home and outside of it.

Services

The VMH englobes diplomatic missions abroad as well as territorial representations in Ecuador. In a shift towards decentralization, the current government has divided the country into nine zones and each state agency or ministry has a representation in each zone which are called Coordinación Zonal, zone coordination. Likewise, the VMH has nine zone coordinators distributed across the country which can and do link with diplomatic and consular missions abroad when necessary. Likewise, consular missions use zone coordinators as their link with localities in Ecuador. Users then can approach officials for services either in consular missions abroad or in their corresponding zone coordinators of the VMH in Ecuador (it is also possible to start a case in a “citizen fair” or mobile consulate). Specific zone coordinators, take zone nine for example, which corresponds to the Quito metropolitan area, meet with certain regularity with zone coordinators of other ministries which are aligned with their affairs as part of a series of agreements and/or memorandums of understanding among state agencies and the VMH in order to guarantee special treatment for Ecuadorian migrants. One VMH zone coordinator emphasized that he meets regularly with zone coordinators of the Social Axis (*eje social*), namely the agencies and ministries in charge of health, social inclusion, education and citizen’s rights. A list of services offered to people in conditions of vulnerability by the Directorate of Services and Protection for Ecuadorians abroad includes the following:

1. Repatriation of the deceased and human remains
2. International restitution of children and teenagers
3. Support in cases of human trafficking and migrant smuggling
4. Cases of detainees, deported, expelled
5. Support to victims of internal conflicts
6. Assistance and protection in cases of natural disasters

7. Cases of violation of rights in general
8. Location of missing people and for the purposes of child support payments due
9. Assisting people with chronic and catastrophic diseases, and disabilities.
(Kevin 2016; DAPPE 2016)

In the case of chronic and catastrophic diseases they function in both directions: Ecuadorians returning to Ecuador, or Ecuadorians with a condition that cannot be treated inland and require treatment abroad. In these cases, there are agreements with hospitals abroad and costs are covered by the IESS or the MSP accordingly.

In early 2015 the VMH team in Azogues designed a digital system of case records, building on the one established by SENAMI in the past, in order to facilitate access to information to all nine zone coordinators and to avoid duplicating efforts for a single case (Pablo 2016; Kevin 2016). So if the responsibility of the Ecuadorian State is to provide healthcare and other social protections, and Ecuadorians living abroad are entitled to the portability of all their rights as Ecuadorian citizens, the question is how can the Ecuadorian State provide healthcare, for example? Well, it doesn't, really. This is not to say it is not possible or that it hasn't been done. Mexico for example implemented clinics in some of its consulates in the U.S. to directly provide for its citizens. Colombia has done something similar while Mexico established the *seguro popular*. Building on colonial ties, Mali and France have an agreement whereby payment of the social security in France grants access to healthcare in Mali as well. Similarly, Congo and Belgium have established transnational health insurances coordinating Belgian mutual funds with private clinics in Congo (Lafleur & Lizin 2015). Other countries have also had different types of arrangements where the state extended its reach beyond its sovereign territory to provide some sort of social protection to its citizens, for example Colombia's mobile clinics, Turkey and Germany's social security agreements, and Poland and Germany's health agreements, among others.

But back to Ecuadorian institutions. According to Pablo, a VMH zone coordinator, it is the responsibility of consulates to first know what local services Ecuadorians could make use of. The consulate then would need to link a migrant with no formal access to healthcare with local support services. These could be city services, national services, NGOs or others.

It is often the case that the VMH coordinates and leads actions for Ecuadorian migrants rather than executing them itself. Financial resources from the VMH are allocated as needs-based¹⁹ or means tested. In order to determine this social vulnerability, the VMH works in coordination with Consular teams abroad and local teams in the Ecuadorian location when the person abroad has family in Ecuador. For Consul Flores, zone coordinators exist to link the emigrant with her/his “origin”, notwithstanding the benefit of decentralization.

Take the case of Mario, who was undocumented in New York and suffered a cerebral infarction. He received healthcare from the state of New York and was under its custody due to his irregular migratory status. His family in Cañar, Ecuador, approached the relevant zone coordination and requested that he be transferred to his family home to be better taken care of. The consulate in New York did a social profile, which is basically a social work evaluation to determine the degree to which Mario could afford this transfer on his own, and understand his actual situation. At the same time in Ecuador, the zone coordination sent a team of social workers, psychologists among them, to determine the social profile of Mario’s family. Once the vulnerability was confirmed with VMH instruments, the VMH proceeded to take action. It took 2 years of coordinated work among the consulate, the embassy, the VMH, the hospital in New York, and in Ecuador with the Health Ministry, the MIES and the Housing Ministry, which adapted a housing unit appropriate for the healthcare requirements (limited mobility, assisted feeding, machines, etc) in order to return Mario to Ecuador. The costs of bringing Mario to Ecuador (close to 50,000 USD) were covered by the VMH from the specific budget allocation

¹⁹ VMH Officials mentioned both the inability of the Ecuadorian State to provide for all and the “cunning” (*viveza criolla*) of Ecuadorians who try to cheat the system.

for vulnerability. Once Mario was settled in Cañar, the VMH zone coordinator delegated the case to the MIES to assure that psychosocial support and monitoring for him and his family would continue.

Like this case, most of the cases handled by this zone coordinator that have to do with health involve the family in Ecuador. For Pablo, it is clear that the first and foremost provider of social provisions for Ecuadorian migrants should be the family.

We feed off from the vulnerability report from over there [the respective consulate], we do our own data collection here [in Ecuador]. We visit the family. We see if the family has the capacity... The first option is always that the family network takes over the protection of the rights of their relatives. This should always be the logic pertaining to protecting rights, that first the family has this capacity. Then we could support them with the resources that are possible in order to make their assistance effective. Most of the time this is not the case. Most of the families don't have the capacity to face this. (Pablo 2016)

Pablo also pointed out the limitations in executing programs, which reinforces and highlights the VMH's role as an articulator.

We don't have the technical capacities to provide health assistance, or education, or housing. But we do have the capacity to monitor these cases. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is an articulator and a monitoring organism. (Pablo 2016)

This articulating role functions better with some organizations than with others. In general, officials at the VMH expressed a well-functioning structure, especially in reference to the successes of the decentralized model with zone coordinators. There are, however, institutions with which it is not only pragmatically difficult to cooperate, but with whom elemental issues such as ideologies differ substantially.

Well, we have some issues with the way we see things and articulate with the Interior Ministry. [They] always have more of a security and protection vision. We have more of a rights-based and free human mobility approach. (Pablo 2016)

Health services

In specific terms the consulate cannot provide medical services. What it can do is provide support in cases of chronic diseases following international agreements. They generally apply to migrants who have acquired chronic diseases due to high-risk jobs and have no formal protection in destination countries. In such cases the consulate coordinates efforts with the VMH and other state institutions to plan the return of the migrant to Ecuador, making sure that health services will be provided (Kevin 2016). It is frequently the case that migrants seek financial support for airfare to take care of or visit ill relatives, or to attend funeral services. These cases are not under the responsibility of the VMH, but it has been explained that nonetheless an effort is taken from different consulates to at least show their presence and visit Ecuadorians.

The repatriation of mortal remains is regulated by international agreements, and the Ecuadorian consulates have a responsibility to facilitate paperwork and to provide financial support on a means-tested basis, only after it is evident that the family cannot cover the costs.

We need to understand that the State doesn't have enough resources to repatriate everyone who passes away abroad. It is based on needs and on the violation of rights. (Pablo 2014)

Services for the returned

As stated earlier, return migration to Ecuador has become significant following the European 2008 financial crisis. In response the VMH has established a Returned Migrant Directorate and entrusted it with specialized services for the returned. The Directorate has commissioned a study on returned migrants which evidenced that although economic adversity was a key factor in their decision-making process to return, familial ties played a more significant role (Mariela 2016).

Services include (reintegration) trainings, advisory for startups and startup credit, and psychosocial support during three phases stretching up to nine

months, and linking up with other institutions. All zone coordinators had trainings with psychologists and consular officials have access to recordings of these trainings via their intranet. The intention is to sensitize officials to the realities, needs and challenges faced by return migrants. This Directorate does not execute, but delineates policies to be agreed upon with local governments (GAD). Nineteen agreements have already been signed and they foster the training and recognition of qualifications, as well as taking advantage of the know-how return migrants have acquired abroad for the local development of that GAD (Mariela 2016; VMH 2016b). This follows the state-led efforts for decentralization. An interesting emerging form of transnational education provision by the Ecuadorian State is online vocational education (in Ecuador regulated by the *Ley del Artesano*) directed towards migrants who intend to return to Ecuador, and which facilitates their job-placement upon return to Ecuador.

Some of the success stories of the psychosocial services and trainings are of returned migrants landing a job at the VMH itself, a fact more than one official was proud to point out. Mariela, like other VMH officials, recognizes there are times when returned migrants claim excessively and rely paternalistically on the state.

The recognition of transnational families in the 2008 Constitution motivated some shifts in official discourse on the significance of migration for family structure and how gender roles are assigned. However, the dominant discourse continues to relate migration to family ruptures, which permeates public policies. This discourse departs from that of a national tragedy, thereby victimizing migrating peoples to categorize them as a group which requires priority attention by the state.

For Ecuador, the acknowledgment of transnational families surely implies a progressive stance in recognizing people's mobility. However, in what regards is the notion of family itself a matter of reflection?

According to views expressed in interviews, for most officials the family continues to have a nuclear structure, headed by a heterosexual couple with

children and whose members live in the same location. The emphasis laid by officials of the VMH on family reunification is a clear example of this. In so doing, they reinforce the presidential rhetoric of migration breaking up families and of a country that suffers because of it, and of neo-traditionalism that serves neoliberal restructuration, justifying the retreat of the state from social matters.

Other services include the monitoring of risky migration patterns. People, especially minors, considered at risk of undertaking risky migration are monitored by social workers and a note will be included in their case record which might set off alarms the moment the person leaves the country by a formal border. In theory Ecuadorian migration police at the border would advise this person once again of the risks of irregular migration routes.

While the SENAMI existed there were efforts to consolidate a Migrant Bank to support productive efforts of returning migrants. Plan Cucayo directed start-up funds to productive initiatives of returned migrants but has had limited impact (Juan 2014; Kevin 2016). Efforts to support returned migrants in starting small businesses has been entrusted to the state institution regulating the Social and Solidary Economy (CONAFIPS).

Health Care and Old Age in Ecuador

This section quickly sketches the state of affairs of health and old age, with a particular emphasis on the IESS²⁰.

Health care The maximum authority at the national level is the Ministry for Public Health (MPH), which has been configured following guidelines from supranational institutions such as the WHO and the Pan-American Health Organization. In general terms the public expenditure was insufficient resulting in poor infrastructure, low wages and limited capacities. In 1996 the General Government Health Expenditure was 59% of the Total Health Expenditure. Following the banking crisis of 1998-99 it halved and reached a

²⁰ For more comprehensive descriptions see WHO, (2015) Ecuador Country Profile. http://www.who.int/gho/indicator_registry/en/

record low of 24% in 2002. This meant the other 76% of health expenditure was taking place in the private sector. The Correa administration steadily funneled resources into the government sponsored health system both via the MPH and IESS reaching a 53% peak in 2013 (WHO 2016).

Ecuadorian citizens in Ecuador hold the right to universal healthcare by the simple fact of living in Ecuador. It is interesting to mention that the *Revolución Ciudadana* even advocates for equal access to healthcare for non-citizen residents (VMH 2016). Agreements signed with Colombia and Peru allow for citizens of these two countries living in border regions to be treated in Ecuadorian public hospitals if they are closer to reach than those in Peru or Colombia (VMH 2016). Public hospitals run by the MPH and the IESS²¹ provide most of the public health services at a national level.

In Ecuador, people with formal contracts are insured by the IESS via employee and employer payroll deductions and contribute to their pensions. People in the informal sector can access the same benefits by volunteer membership to the IESS via several schemes such as those for peasants, crafts people, domestic workers or Ecuadorians abroad. Although it has long been a principle in paper, free universal healthcare has effectively been extended in the past ten years.

OLD AGE The momentum of the new administration, with its absolute majority in the Assembly during its early years, strong political will, and high oil prices, restructured the state apparatus to provide more services throughout its public institutions. A series of institutions went through successful transformations and continue to be some of the hallmarks of the *Revolución Ciudadana*²².

²¹ Armed forces and Police special insurance regimes are excluded from this study. They account for less than 5% of the provision of government sponsored health services. Similar to IESS hospitals, they frequently can provide services of a higher quality than MPH hospitals.

²²It should also be noted that other reconfigurations of public institutions failed seriously and had to be re-designed, staff shifted several times, and some, such as the SENAMI, finally disappeared or were absorbed into other instances.

The IESS is perhaps one of the most ambivalent examples. Traditionally perceived as an ineffective bureaucratic dinosaur, as many public institutions were, the institution in charge of social security provisions and management had long been dysfunctional in providing health services and protection in old age via the pension system. Particularly after the dollarization process of the late 1990s, pensioners were dramatically affected; when their retirement pensions were converted from the inflated Sucre into dollars it resulted in meager amounts. Protests by retirees in front of the IESS were everyday scenes in the early 2000s. Hospitals had lines of people waiting for their turn since before sunrise and appointments given several months away. This contributed to a generalized sense of distrust in the public social security system. This is key in explaining why many care practices were distributed among the familial or market sphere as Herrera (2013) has stated and as empirical evidence from this research supports.

Under President Correa, the IESS was significantly modernized; hospitals were built and equipped like never before. In Ecuador, it is important to distinguish among the MSP hospitals (under the Ministry of Public Health's jurisdiction and open to Ecuadorian citizens and non-citizen residents) and IESS hospitals (access is exclusive to members, their registered spouses, and minor dependents). Pensions were revised and set to meet some minimum criteria in accordance with inflation and the value of the dollar. An electronic code was assigned to every user and a series of consultations could be done online. The pension funds were channeled into a new institution, the BIESS, the IESS Bank. Here, users could process mortgages or unsecured credits based on their contributions to the social security systems. With a booming national economy in the early years of the Correa administration responding not only to high oil prices but also to strong state investment, thousands took to the BIESS to make a down payment for a home, a car, a shop, etc. (El Telégrafo 2013). The significant transformations in the Ecuadorian state apparatus and public institutions have indeed improved and today represent a modernized and functioning social security system, evidently not without shortcomings. To date the minimum age for retirement is sixty-five years with

at least ten years of payments. Only people who have over forty years of payments can retire without a minimum age.

The degree to which Ecuadorians, particularly migrants, have recovered trust in the IESS remains to be determined. According to Herrera (2013), the higher share of care labor, especially in migrant families, continues to stay in the private sphere, and not in the public one. Currently the consulates with the largest migrant numbers hold in-person or Skype informative talks on the IESS (Efrain 2016). There is also a functioning online-platform for self-processing, a Skype line, and a telephone number with working hours in the central European time zone (IESS 2014), and an online forum for questions, among others.

Voluntary Membership

Voluntary membership in the mandatory social security system was already possible in the early 1990s, yet not widespread. In accordance with changes in the 2008 Constitution (promoting voluntary membership in the Social Security system) and the inclusion of Ecuadorian migrants and their families, the voluntary membership in the IESS was made possible for Ecuadorians living abroad, and therefore by extension also health care at the IESS hospitals was made available to their minor dependents, for an extra 3.14% of to the spouse or partner, and for an extra 1.32 % to children aged 18-25 (IESS 2014; El Comercio 2016). Perhaps because the constitutional principle to protect transnational families, and the definition of it, are not yet in place, the IESS implements this graduated exclusion of the partner for voluntary affiliates. Or perhaps it is because of financial reasons. Whatever the motivations, a single minimum fee is roughly \$70²³. Additionally, *afiliados voluntarios en el exterior*, members from abroad, have access, in Ecuadorian territory, to retirement funds, funeral support, work risks coverage, illness and maternity assistance,

²³ The minimum payment is approximately \$70,04, 20% of the minimum wage in Ecuador, set at \$340 for 2014.

unemployment funds, mortgages and unsecured (*quirografario*) credits²⁴ or loans from the IESS bank. According to the register of the last elections at least 382,000 people could have access to this right (Hoy 2013). In fact, discussing with an IESS official, the institution expected more voluntary members from the U.S., a country with a weak health coverage system. Indeed 3,500 self-insured reside in the U.S. making up 40% of affiliates from abroad (IESS 2016). IESS has even installed a U.S. free of charge emergency phone line for medical advice around the clock for members and a channel for arranging medical appointments before migrants travel to Ecuador. Affiliates from Europe as a region comprise 46% of the total affiliates from abroad.

Allowing migrants to access this existing channel brings about many advantages. First of all, it does not discriminate undocumented migrants since the only identification document needed is the Ecuadorian *cédula*. Additionally, the whole process can be done online, eliminating the problem and cost of distances. Individuals are free to contribute higher amounts than the minimum fee which will represent higher pensions. The expansion of beneficiaries which implies a response to the displacement of Ecuadorians, has however, not taken into account the existing and new arrangements of care distribution. These include kin and non-kin, more often women than men, which are excluded from the definition of the nuclear family. Thus neighbors, grand-parents, siblings, among others are still left without official social protection. Remittances, in this regard, continue to function as the primary social protection and at times as a form of remuneration for traditionally non-remunerated work.

International agreements

The Agreement Spain-Ecuador

Recognizing the elevated numbers of Ecuadorian migrants in Spain (over 400,000 from Spanish sources, and closer to half a million from estimates from the VMH) and of Spaniards working in Ecuador (around 10,000), that is to say

²⁴ Low interest loans based not on mortgage, but calculated on the basis of the pre-calculated pension funds of the applicant.

their lives not only outside but across nation-state borders, and also taking into account pre-existing agreements, the Ecuadorian and the Spanish states sat down for talks. In December 2009, after much negotiation, drafting and pressure from members of the assembly representing migrants, a bi-lateral agreement for Social Security was signed between Spain and Ecuador “considering the importance of better securing the protection workers’ rights” (Convenio de Seguridad Social 2009. Free translation.). Starting January 2011 the agreement has come into effect.

I have concentrated on what the Ecuadorian government is doing in response to its citizens’ dynamic lives. The focus then lies on how this agreement affects Ecuadorian citizens in a mobility situation. In so doing the Spanish side of the story is definitely missing, but by no means less important or interesting. It is also worth considering that the timing of this agreement coincides with the global financial crisis of 2008, which has implications for citizens of both countries.

Likewise, the Spanish state had no interest in sustaining elevated numbers of unemployed and also encouraged migrants to return to their countries. A key outcome of this was the signing in 2009 of the Bilateral Social Security Agreement between Ecuador and Spain. This Agreement had been on the table for a while but Spain had no particular interest in it (Consul Flores 2015). Eventually the social burden on the Spanish state became so large that it signed this agreement. Initially the numbers of Ecuadorian migrants and their families returning were the evident beneficiaries – by 2013, 24,320 Ecuadorians had returned from Spain according to the Spanish National Institute for Statics (INE, 2013), but not long after Spanish professionals also began moving to Ecuador to fill specialized niches in the booming economy of the *Revolución Ciudadana*. Correa’s large scale projects were financed by, among others, oil prices which after a serious drop in 2009, picked up steadily in 2010 and sustained four years of a price per barrel of over \$100 --a threefold increase of the average price of the last forty years (OPEC 2016).

By 2013, at the peak of oil prices and the Ecuadorian mega projects, including the construction of electric dams, social housing, thousands of kilometers of highways, schools and hospitals, 21,009 Spanish citizens were living in Ecuador – a five-time increase compared to 2006 (INE 2013). Two thirds of those who left in 2012 and 2013 were Spanish citizens and foreign born, which would indicate an elevated percentage of return migration.

The most noteworthy advance in this agreement is the portability of social security contributions (*totalización de períodos*), which means that years worked in one or the other country can be added up, so long as they don't overlap, at the time of applying for retirement. Age and minimum working years will be counted according to the laws of the country where the retirement is processed, since that is the competent institution at the time. This means that an Ecuadorian currently under the Spanish Social Security System who processes his retirement will do it under the mentioned institution, regardless of his future place of residence. This indeed allows for Ecuadorian migrants to return as retirees with a secured pension that will be transferred from Spain to an account in Ecuador²⁵.

Additionally, there has been an achievement in equal treatment. Article 4, *Igualdad de trato*, establishes that nationals of both countries and their family members shall be treated in the other country's territory "in the same conditions that [as] nationals of the country without prejudice" (Convenio de Seguridad Social 2009). This applies for working periods as well as for temporary stays, such as visits, thus recognizing the mobility of people between both countries. The crossing of national boundaries means in this case not a reduction of rights, but rather a guaranteeing of their compliance.

Differences in the calculation of the amounts do not appear as a self-evident conflict in the agreement. In fact, it is a win situation for the future retiree, since the competent institutions will calculate the theoretical pension (how much they would have a right to in their country of citizenship had they only

²⁵ Details of how the monies will be handled were not available and are not the key of our focus.

contributed there), and it will add a value proportional to the time contributions that were made in the other institution. This is the *prorrata temporis* principle, also in use in the European Union. The competent institution will recognize and pay the amount that is more favorable to the applicant (Convenio de Seguridad Social 2009).

These steps towards social protection across borders are not exclusive to a particular nationality and undoubtedly represent progress for the well-being of people embedded in transnational social fields. However, the agreement's shortcoming in securing rights for people without regular documents is evident. This agreement is official and recognizes official information managed by institutions. It cannot exercise authority over national migration laws and categories. It is of course not its official competence, and it is true that several regularization campaigns have taken place in Spain and Italy out of which many undocumented Ecuadorians gained the right to work or of residence and consequently gained access to other rights.

Furthermore, the definition of family in both countries, although with some recognition to alternatives, still remains a means of excluding kin and non-kin who are effectively (and affectively) engaged in care provision, which continues to be widely a feminine task. In Ecuador unofficial work forms are still not recognized, except maternity periods which have only begun to be more common and regulated in the recent decade. This renders women the primary channels through which states provide social protection to minors, and reinforces a gendered division of care labor (Herrera 2013).

In 2011 alone the Instituto Español de Seguridad Social informed that 146,000 Ecuadorians would benefit from the agreement. There seems to be a general knowledge that this agreement exists. Communication campaigns and media coverage were significant, particularly at the time of the signing. However, doubts about how exactly to go about it and benefit from it still remain, particularly in the return migrant group (Juan 2014). This, in combination with distrust in the state institutions, might motivate people to maintain informal social networks as a means of social insurance or networks of support.

The Agreement Italy-Ecuador

Spain and Italy are the countries with the highest numbers of Ecuadorian migrants in Europe. An agreement similar to that signed with Spain has not yet been signed with Italy. However, it is interesting to note that similar agreements have been signed within the region with Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Venezuela, and Colombia (IESS 2014). All six members of parliament representing migrants push for the signing of more agreements of this type, particularly Dora Aguirre, who is responsible for the European region. I was not able to determine yet what the reasons behind the lag are in this agreement, but it is certain that the smaller number of Ecuadorians could be one. Additionally, we could consider that Italy does not have a particular interest in a bi-lateral agreement with Ecuador in terms of protecting Italian citizens abroad. In fact, the historical ties between Italy and Ecuador are greatly different from those with Spain. More attention and research needs to be directed towards how negotiations, and motivations, are evolving around this potential agreement. By March 2016, it was clear for the IESS that Italy didn't see enough economic motivations to sign the agreement (Efrain 2016). The agreement with Spain does set an excellent precedent and it is to be expected that in the near future an agreement will be reached.

I did find it very interesting that migrant communities online are voicing their concern and support for the signing of this agreement. Madisson Godoy, a migrant in Italy, started an online petition for the signature of a bilateral social protection agreement between Italy and Ecuador. She closed her open letter by appealing to dislocated actors across the globe:

“Regardless of where they are, Ecuadorian migrants, their relatives or friends can support this initiative and show their solidarity (Godoy 2014)”.

Ibero-American Social Security Agreement

Bi-lateral agreements among ex-colonies and Spain are plenty. In an effort to unify these, a multi-lateral agreement was signed in 2005 by twenty-two countries. By 2016, it was enforced in nine of them, including Ecuador and Spain. The agreement allows for portability of pension rights throughout all

signatory countries. In this way a migrant worker who has contributed to social security systems in Ecuador, Venezuela, and Spain can use all of them at the time of retiring. There is sufficient flexibility for the states to determine which particular services are included.

It is estimated that around six million Ibero-American migrants benefit from this agreement, and around 611 million people in the entire twenty-two countries could indirectly benefit via widow or orphan pensions (Morales 2015). However, over half of the countries still need to ratify the agreement. Considering that the agreement entered into force only in 2011, it is too soon to evaluate its impact, particularly considering pensions are a long-term matter. Regardless, it is worth highlighting that such an agreement implies thoughts of an “Ibero-American” citizenship which guarantees some rights across its space. While individual Latin-American States are negotiating bilaterally with European countries, there is a strong interest from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to negotiate regional agreements as a block with, for example, the EU to guarantee migrant rights on a wider scale.

Healthcare and Old Age in Vienna

Healthcare

Similar to Ecuador, everyone in a formal employment relation needs to be insured with the Sozialversicherung in any of their specific Kassen such as the Viennese General Kassa (WGKK). People working freelance or independently need to affiliate themselves with a specific institution, the SVA, and cover the costs on their own, but have access to the same benefits. Documented residents and citizens outside this scheme, and who do not pay for private insurance, can be covered by the state social security under the *Mindestsicherung* scheme, or the AMS *Krankenversicherung* in case of unemployment provisions. Health services covered by the social security are excellent in comparison to Ecuador. Migrants report most of their dissatisfaction has to do with the time and quality of relations with health practitioners. Appointments, similarly to the IESS, might take weeks or months to get but on average they are given much

quicker. There are some services available in Vienna for people outside these schemes which are generally of the NGO and charitable character. In Vienna and Madrid organizations related to the Catholic Church have been very important to Ecuadorian migrants.

Old Age People under formal employment and fulfilling age and contribution requirements are entitled to their pensions that, if under the minimum salary, are compensated via the social support system under the social ministry. Even people with pensions are entitled to financial support by the state, in accordance to the amount they receive, to cover for additional care-giving work such as home visits by nurses, care-giving workers, retirement homes or even to remunerate a relative performing care work. Several city-sponsored centers are available in Vienna for gathering the elderly and organizing activities for their physical and emotional wellbeing. Likewise charitable organizations also take a share of the work performed in the city and function mostly to complement state programs.

Child Care ²⁶ People under formal employment have the right to paid paternity or maternity leave. One year is fully paid, and any additional year means the reduction of the monthly payments in order to have the same total disbursement. This period of time with young children is increasingly being taken by fathers as well (Arbeiterkammer Wien, 2016). The city of Vienna offers a limited number of spots for day cares, pre-schools, and kindergartens, which means they require signing up in advance and frequently involve long waiting lists. However, it does offer a subsidy for those who cannot secure a spot in the public system and have to provide care via private institutions. The institutions themselves also can apply for subsidies from the state as they are understood as filling in a gap in state provision which the state is currently unable to fulfill. As a final note, all residents are entitled to *Kindergeld*, an amount of roughly 111 Euros a month per child for expenses for the wellbeing of the child. There is no equivalent in Ecuador.

²⁶ As a note of interest, the income tax form has a section where money directed to the maintenance of minor dependents abroad can be reduced for income tax purposes.

Each national and subnational framework has its own characteristics, exceptions and differences. Below, a general and simplified table compares some of the differences between social security schemes.

SIMPLIFIED COMPARATIVE TABLE OF PENSION SYSTEMS

	<i>ECUADOR</i>	<i>SPAIN</i>	<i>AUSTRIA</i>
<i>Institutions</i>	IESS, MIES	INSS, State Secretariat for Social Security.	WGKK, Social Ministry, Caritas
<i>Min. Years of contributions</i>	10 years	16 years (25 years by 2027)	15 years
<i>Min. retirement age [Life expectancy m/f.]</i>	65 or no min. age if < 40 years of payments [74/79]	65 or 67 >38 years of payments. [80/86]	60 women, 65 men. (by 2033, 65 years) [79/84]
<i>Benefits</i>	Healthcare, Pension, survivor benefits, Unemployment (Mar.2016), Credits.	Healthcare, Pension, survivor benefits, Unemployment, Complementary amount to meet min. pension	Healthcare, Pension, survivor benefits, Unemployment. Social welfare if needed.

Source: Table own elaboration based on WHO, WGKK , and IESS .

5. Migrant arrangements for Social Protection

“Uno mismo toca ver, sino ¿quién pues?”—You have to look out for yourself, otherwise no one will do it for you

In this section four selected cases will be presented to exemplify how people make use of a resource environment which at times crisscrosses national circumscriptions. We will look at how people make use of formal channels, or fill in gaps left by states either by paying for services available on the market, or by utilizing family arrangements or other arrangements.

Before that, however, it is necessary to note that most interview partners had a strong sense of responsibility for relatives and referenced the often unspoken familial expectations of mentioned responsibility. For many this was precisely the cause to migrate, for others, it is a way in which they relate to their relatives.

Fieldwork in Vienna revealed that in general most people have incomplete information about social security agreements signed by Ecuador, either bilaterally with Spain and multilaterally with other Ibero-American countries. However, many more are informed on IESS' voluntary membership for Ecuadorians abroad. The majority of interview partners are connected to this scheme in at least one of the following ways: a) they are a voluntary member; b) they have relatives who are voluntary members; c) they are considering becoming a voluntary member her/himself.

Sara

On a weekday morning Sara has a few hours to spare; she will have a late shift in home care for the elderly today. I bring Viennese pastries to her apartment, on the inner side of the *Gürtel* in Vienna and we prepare breakfast together. We drink herbal tea she has brought from Quito. Teas she can get here just don't taste the same.

In Quito, Sara married at a young age and had two children. She worked for her home and had never been part of the IESS but was covered by the private insurance her husband's job provided. She remembers going to private doctors because public hospitals were unreliable and miserable. Their marriage wasn't going well. He was violent. In 1999 their savings were frozen and they could never access them again. *The dollar made us very poor, she says, but I felt really sorry for the people who died hearing the news.* ²⁷ *The crisis hit us, yes, but for me it was important to be as far away from my ex-husband as possible, and flee the country.*

Sara began selling clothes and jewelry made in Ecuador door-to-door and by installments. She managed to save enough for a ticket for herself and for her teenage son. Her daughter had started a family on her own and stayed in Quito, *although too young*, Sara tells me as she shakes her head. Sara's sister, who was already in Vienna, would help them.

I took the courage, because before, women in Ecuador lived under and lived off our husbands. And I felt as if I couldn't do anything, I couldn't stand up for myself. But being here, you end up doing things you never thought you would do. Immediately one ends up in cleaning jobs and looking for jobs like that. In my country I had people who did the cleaning and washing for me, you know? Well, it didn't matter because I had made my choice. The first night I slept here [in Vienna] I felt like a little bird, just freed from its cage who could finally fly. I was so happy, so happy. (...) Here I felt like I was really someone, like I could get ahead, that women can get ahead, fight, and do many things. We are very creative, very smart. (Sara 2015)

During her first years in Vienna Sara was undocumented and relied on jobs arranged by other Spanish speakers. For health emergencies she could use her sister's e-card — they look alike. After obtaining legal residence and a working contract in a cleaning company, the WGKK opened a file with her data and she got her own e-card. She re-married and after giving birth to another son she hurried to get back onto the job market. *You know, now I am old.* It wouldn't be easy, and after speaking with a friend who was already in the IESS under

²⁷ No official numbers are available, but narratives of heart attacks, chronic depression and deaths following the Ecuadorian financial crisis of 1998-99 are plenty.

the voluntary membership scheme she decided to join as well. *You never know and anything could happen.* Because of her age (early 50s), Sara tells me she could easily be discarded from the job market and not have enough contributions for her pension fund in Austria. The IESS voluntary membership scheme is a good back-up plan.

Would she really like to retire in Ecuador? She is not sure, Vienna is her *second motherland*, but it is a possibility, dependent on securities. She can't rely on her children alone. Next month, when she travels to Ecuador to take care of her ill father, she will find out in person what precisely her entitlements are, and what her IESS account looks like. She's had trouble accessing it online and is nervous they might not have her in the system. She's afraid that her years of payments may simply disappear. After 16 years of lost faith in Ecuador, Sara acknowledges many advances of the current administration, but remains wary. In the end, *It's not [President] Correa nor [President] Fischer who support me.*

Her mother has no pension after working a 7-day week in the informal sector. Her father has one, but it is miserable, Sara says, which is why she and her siblings have to help. Although their father has access to IESS healthcare, he is considered a lost cause – too old. *In Vienna people his age are alive and kicking.* His worsening health condition requires faster and more efficient care, which is why they faithfully (*sagradamente*) send monthly remittances to pay for private doctors, medicine, and other medical supplies. *He could die before he gets his next appointment with IESS.*

Her mother sometimes struggles to care for her father. She herself is not at her fittest and is elderly. They might need to hire someone because all of her sisters have migrated and the sisters-in-law work, Sara explains. *No, it couldn't possibly be a man* – they would hire a girl if need be. Sara can't be there for her own parents, but *I give love to my old ones (mis viejitos), an important job. My mother always taught us to be reciprocal in life. I hope that my daughter will also learn this and take care of me when I get old.* In the meanwhile, Sara asks me more about the inland voluntary membership, it might be something useful for her daughter.

Benjamin

It's a Sunday afternoon. I'm meeting Benjamin at a chain coffee shop underneath the Viennese U-Bahn. I've known Benjamin for three years now. In fact, he was the second Ecuadorian I met when I first moved to Vienna. We run into each other frequently, so I have heard pieces of his story already, but we've only managed to find time for a long talk today. He's busy with his day job which requires extra hours. He helps his brother with his own small business and on weekends he gets to see his kids. When he gets there he shows me his newly acquired Austrian passport, so we joke about who he will vote for in the upcoming presidential elections in Austria and in Ecuador.

Benjamin grew up in the agricultural belt surrounding Quito, an area where colonial production institutions such as the hacienda continue to provide the majority of (informal) jobs. His father worked in one so when Benjamin finished vocational school he did, too. For a while. *It was a bit of a sacrifice to lead that kind of life when you are so young.* He pursued studies in Quito but it was financially impossible while he worked for a *señor* as a live-in worker with a small salary and no employment benefits. Thanks to some contacts he secured a formal job in a private health institution and was therefore signed up for mandatory insurance with the IESS. Thanks to an acquaintance *there was the chance to go to Italy, and since there was already talk of putting up visas, I took the chance.* Before that, friends advised him not to lose his insurance in the IESS by switching to the voluntary scheme. By 1992 there was no distinction between inland and overseas voluntary insurance. After all, no one would notice he wasn't in Ecuador as long as the payments came on time. So he did pay and still does. *When I was in Ecuador I paid it myself, but otherwise I wire my brother money so when he goes to pay his own voluntary insurance he also pays mine.*

He lived undocumented in Italy for 6 years. There was no rush in regularizing his status since he planned to go back as soon as he had saved enough. When he got ill he used charity services — it wasn't hard to access them. Living that

way now is much more difficult, he tells me. *I was single then and only supported my parents together with my brother, so I could save a lot. I built a house in Ecuador like everyone did.* Once married he moved back to Ecuador as planned. He had brought enough savings to start two small shops. *By then, the shops were a novelty in that neighborhood. But three years later came the problem with the banks, you know, the dollarization.* They lost their money. *And from bank problems stem family problems, so I decided to leave again.* The houses and shops went to his ex-wife, the children, and his parents. The plan was to go to Italy again but having previously overstayed his visa he had to enter via a different country.

Once in Austria his language skills got him a job in domestic work. Since he only had irregular documentation his employers paid for private insurance for him. After a year and intense networking, he began doing some work for a diplomat who helped him regularize his situation and start contributing to the WGKK in the *Selbstversicherung* (voluntary membership) scheme. Benjamin, now in his mid-40s, notes how the Ecuadorian embassy at that time (early 2000s) was not doing Ecuadorian migrants any favors. Only once he obtained the proper residence permit could he establish a formal working contract with his main employer. Well, partly formal. As is common practice, Benjamin was signed up officially for less income than he actually earned in order to save costs. This is often explained in terms of a win-win situation. In strictly monetary terms both parties can keep more euros instead of paying them to the state institutions. However, this evidently means that Benjamin's social security contributions are of lesser value and will translate into a lower pension in Austria. From Vienna, he supported his parents and paid maintenance pensions for his children according to the law. He tells me that now parents who avoid this can even be traced abroad and put in jail.

With over 20 years of payments to IESS, Benjamin confesses he has actually never used it for health purposes. For him it serves as a protection for old age, *who knows what might happen in the future.* Benjamin thinks he might retire and go to Ecuador, combining a small Austrian pension and a small Ecuadorian pension.

Neither of his parents have a pension. Benjamin and his brother send monthly support for general expenses and faithfully (*sagradamente, again*) for medicines. For healthcare, especially primary healthcare, they use the MPH improved system. Otherwise, Benjamin is clear, it would be his brother's and his responsibility to cover private healthcare. Their younger brother *doesn't want to get married, so he practically takes care of them.... Well, we do have two women from the area to help us*. They aren't insured because it's not a full time contract. Benjamin explains to me that they are single mothers and need the money, *so giving them that job is the help my brother and I can give them*. Life in the countryside is easier, he tells me, there are neighbors and farmer's markets, so he doesn't worry too much about his parents.

Jorge

I met Jorge at a multicultural event where he was overtly proud to be Ecuadorian because of the country's natural beauty and because of its competent current government. I wait for him on a summer afternoon in a park in a diverse neighborhood in Vienna. He is still doing a delivery for some extra cash after his day job. When he gets there he offers an ice cream in compensation for my waiting and shows me a classic ice cream parlor I ought to know if living in Vienna.

In Ecuador, Jorge had vocational training and worked in a town with a strong textile industry. At a young age he managed to establish his own small business and even hired some employees. "Were you or your workers insured?", I ask him.

No! There was no social insurance in Ecuador back then. Well, ok, there was, but 20 years ago no one thought of it really. You just tried to make ends meet and had to be well-off to be able to afford it. People had businesses and didn't insure their employees; it was common practice. I know that now it is very different.

He tells me how he has come to understand and to appreciate social security since living in Europe. With a thriving small business, full of hopes and

dreams, Jorge got married and had two children. His wife worked in the same kind of business. Her parents helped with childcare.

Jorge was regularly on the road to buy supplies and make deliveries. Sometimes he made deals in dollars with international providers. In the late 1990s the blatant devaluation of the Sucre made it increasingly hard for him to keep up his payments. His father gave him a gift: a savings account with some money in it in a local co-op. And then when the banks closed, the co-op also fell.

His relationship wasn't going well either, so one day he hugged his children *extra tight* when saying goodbye before a usual business trip – except this time he wouldn't come back. He had heard of so many others leaving for the U.S., Spain, and Italy. *It was like a fever*, he tells me. *We came with sorrow and disappointment. We didn't come to enjoy life but to cry tears of blood. It was also because doors were opening up in Europe. Look*, he tells me, *in Spain they needed workers and if they were cheap, well even better. Women had it easier because jobs as domestics or care workers were plenty.*

Jorge entered Madrid on a tourist visa and overstayed. With an irregular migratory status and new to the city, he was confronted with hardship frequently. In the early months it was actually his parents who supported his basic needs by wiring him money. When he began earning some money he immediately sent it to his children. He did this for years via his brother, his sister, and, at times, his mother. Money was primarily destined for healthcare, education, and food. Slowly he worked his way up and ended up in charge of some machinery in a textile factory. When regularization campaigns allowed him to obtain his residence permit he got a contract and entered the Spanish Institute for Social Security for the first time. He knew this was key when applying for citizenship, which was something he could aspire to in two years.

By the time he had Spanish citizenship the Spanish real estate bubble had popped and Jorge re-migrated to Vienna, this time as a European. He remembers how help in the corrupt Ecuador of the past went straight to the banks. *What about the citizens? That's what's going on in Spain now.*

He laughs telling me about his first working contract in Austria. *It stated 200 euros! But that didn't matter; what mattered was being registered in the WGKK.* Jorge is informed about portability of rights within the EU. *I know I have some social security accumulated in Spain and some here. If I would go back to Ecuador, I have no clue how it would work out. I would like to know.* In his early 40s and with adult offspring, Jorge doesn't think starting to contribute to the IESS at this point would make too much sense.

Oh, but he loves his country. Jorge is a convinced *correista* and is touched by the first president's recognition of the hardships faced and the efforts made by migrants to keep the country afloat. *I think we are a little, well, heroes.*

He tells me that despite his absence he has done his best to be a responsible father. He insured his son in the voluntary membership scheme for inland Ecuadorians when he turned 18. It hadn't been two months since his daughter turned 18, and she needed an urgent surgery. Jorge hadn't insured her yet and she wasn't eligible as a dependent for the IESS with her mother anymore. MPH hospitals were booked so her mother paid \$3,000 out of pocket to cover it. Weeks after, the girl needed another surgery and this time Jorge paid \$3,000 and took out a loan with his bank in Vienna. It was clear: social security avoids unpleasant "surprises." In March 2015 he was sending money to pay for both his children's voluntary social security (inland) in IESS. By June 2015 his son got a job and is now insured via his employer. Jorge can take a small "break" from covering his son's insurance and can pay more into the mortgage.

My brothers have social security, my sister, my father, everyone has to be insured. Jorge and his family have saved and invested in a property where at least two family businesses operate. Besides being a joint venture with his siblings, it is also thought of as a means of social protection for his children.

Jorge doesn't have to worry much about his parents, he tells me, at least not now. His mother worked as a nurse for IESS. He can still remember being afraid of going into the hospital, all run-down and gray, rusted metals and dangerous sharp edges. She has a pension and can live well off it. His father is also entitled to a pension, two in fact: the IESS and the Armed Forces one.

Although Jorge doesn't plan on joining the formal Ecuadorian social security he does ponder on the idea of retiring in Ecuador. *Although maybe Spain... Well, close to the ocean in any case.*

Natalia

Natalia has moved her working hours and can meet me in the morning at her apartment in subsidized city housing in a very hip neighborhood of Vienna. She just got back from taking care of her ill father in Ecuador. We have some "old ladies' tea" (*agüita de viejas*) on her dinner table protected by a thick transparent plastic.

In Quito Natalia, a college graduate, worked for a state company securing a good income. She had two kids and refused to marry the father because of his temper. She expected him to contribute financially for the kids' maintenance, but that was not the case. She lived with her parents because she had to look after them, being the last daughter remaining in their household; her siblings had married out. *I was the woman of the house.* Her children went to a private school and she hired a woman full time for cooking, washing and watching over the kids during the week. On weekends it was Natalia's turn.

In the mid-1990s structural adjustment programs privatized the state company where she worked. Natalia and a group of coworkers sued the company but haven't received a cent of their severance payment. Most of her former colleagues are now in Italy or Spain.

I came to Vienna for a two-year master program. I had a bank account with a lot of money I had been saving for my children, for a home. I even had my parents' savings in the same account because they trusted me.

Then the banks closed.

For a while they told us we just had to wait a little longer before we could access it. I was already in Vienna when we found out we had lost it all, so I decided to stay and make it up to my parents. I started working the usual; cleaning, caring for kids or for the elderly.

Later Natalia secured a job in social work with a formal contract. She entered the WGKK as an employee and started contributing to her pension fund. The organization also had projects in Latin America which allowed her frequent travel to Ecuador. On one of those trips she decided to sign up for the voluntary insurance at the IESS and add to the years she had accumulated as a state employee. There was no record of her.

So it wasn't worth it for me, now I think of my retirement in the Austrian system but I would like to spend my last years in Ecuador. She tells me she is making preparations. *The situation is tough now with all the new migrants and refugees. And the war! God forbid it reaches [us]... We might have to migrate again.*

Meanwhile Natalia needs to quit a job each summer to be able to take care of her ill father in Quito for three months – it's her shift.

In Ecuador she sees changes; the hospitals look better and the streets are no longer full of potholes. *The IESS hospitals have great infrastructure and technology. It wasn't like that in my times. Of course it has its limitations, but I think despite that, it's worth having social security.*

Together with her relatives in Vienna she sells food at multicultural events and at her home with some frequency in order to gather money to send to her parents in Quito. They have bills to pay and her father's pension is significantly lower than their monthly expenses. *I send her [her mother] the money for health, but sometimes she invests in fixing the house we helped to build.* Recently her brother has hired a young woman to care for their parents on an hourly basis. She comes from another city in Ecuador and has no formal insurance.

When I spoke to Natalia's brother in Quito he told me he was trying to convince her to join voluntarily the new household workers' insurance, a new IESS scheme launched in September 2015 whereby people, de facto mostly women, engaged in traditionally non-remunerated work done in homes can contribute anywhere between \$2 and \$49 a month to gain access to a retirement pension after 20 years of contributions, but not access to IESS hospitals.

Natalia tells me she would like it if paperwork for social security in Ecuador could be done and paid for in Vienna. *Not all have Austrian citizenship, they pay an insurance here and you know, it's not our country; they might get tired of us and not grant us visas anymore. Then you lose all the money you paid into the system. That's very sad.* I ask her what she thinks about programs and channels the Ecuadorian government has established. *They aren't enough. We are distanced from our families, but we don't want to miss out on being part of the country as well. Don't forget us because we are abroad. Take into account our needs here [in Austria] because we could just as well need them there [in Ecuador].*

Resource environments

Applying the resource environment concept, these disparate actors are categorized in terms of the four sources of social protections.

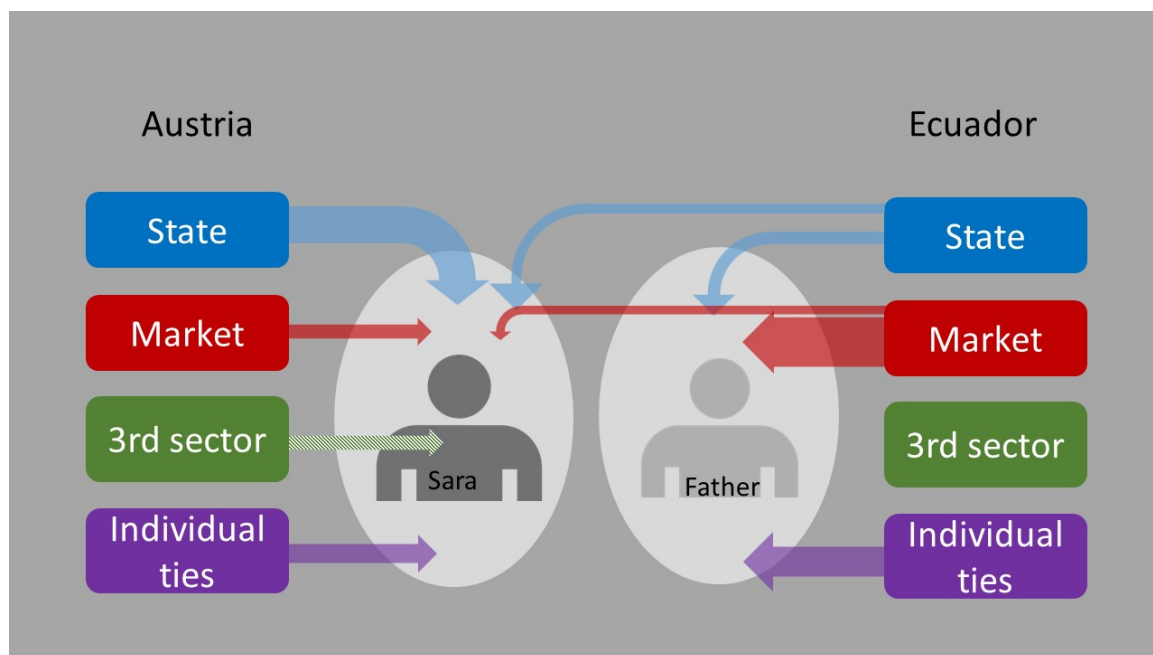


Figure 2

In Figure 2 the thin blue line from Ecuador connecting to Sara in Austria represents her voluntary affiliation to IESS. The house she has bought in the private market as an investment for old age, based on the uncertainty of her retirement situation, is represented by the thin red line stemming from Ecuador into Sara. This is a particular resource she is preparing and not using yet. What is evident from this resource environment is that the private market

makes up the largest share of her father's support for old age, followed only by individual ties, while the state comes in third place.

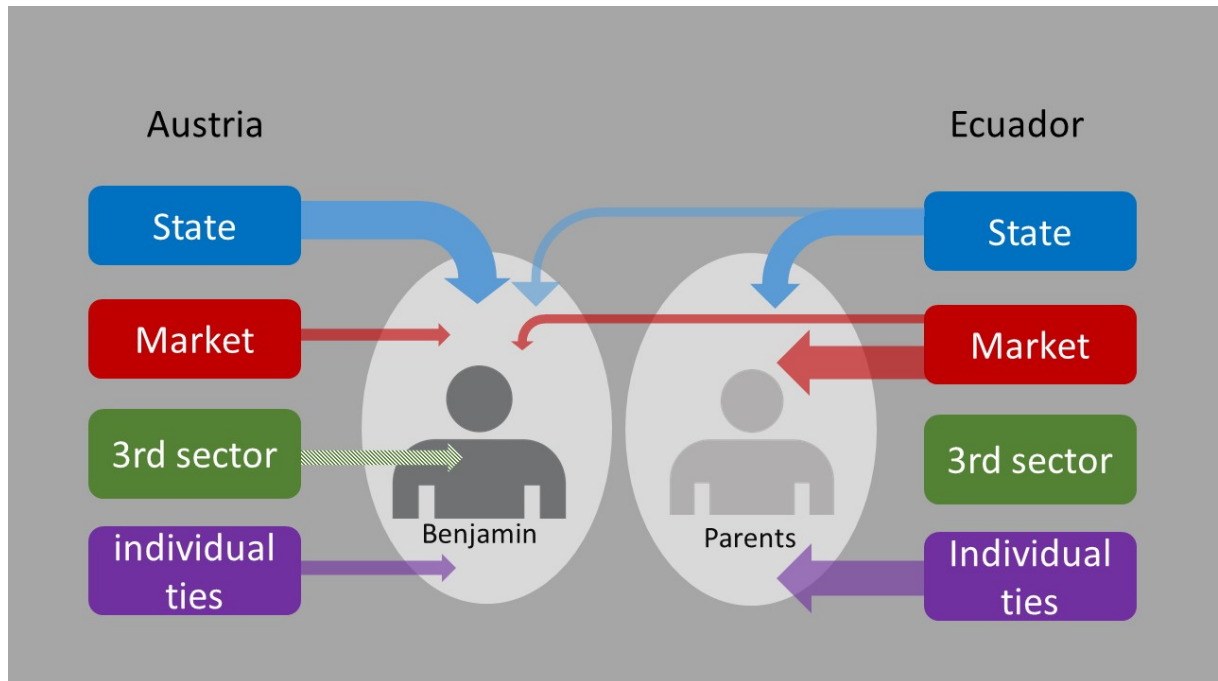


Figure 3

In Figure 3, the thin blue line stemming from Ecuador on to Benjamin in Austria also represents his voluntary affiliation to IESS, although his is not officially for Ecuadorians abroad. Like Sara, he has invested in property in Ecuador. The small shop he set up helped to reduce the monthly burden for a while. What is evident from this configuration is that the Market continues to lead, yet the state comes in second. This can be explained by the location of Benjamin's parents in the outskirts of Quito, where public health infrastructure has significantly improved and is therefore reliable. Remember how Benjamin even noted how remittances sent were spent differently after a health center began operations in the vicinity.

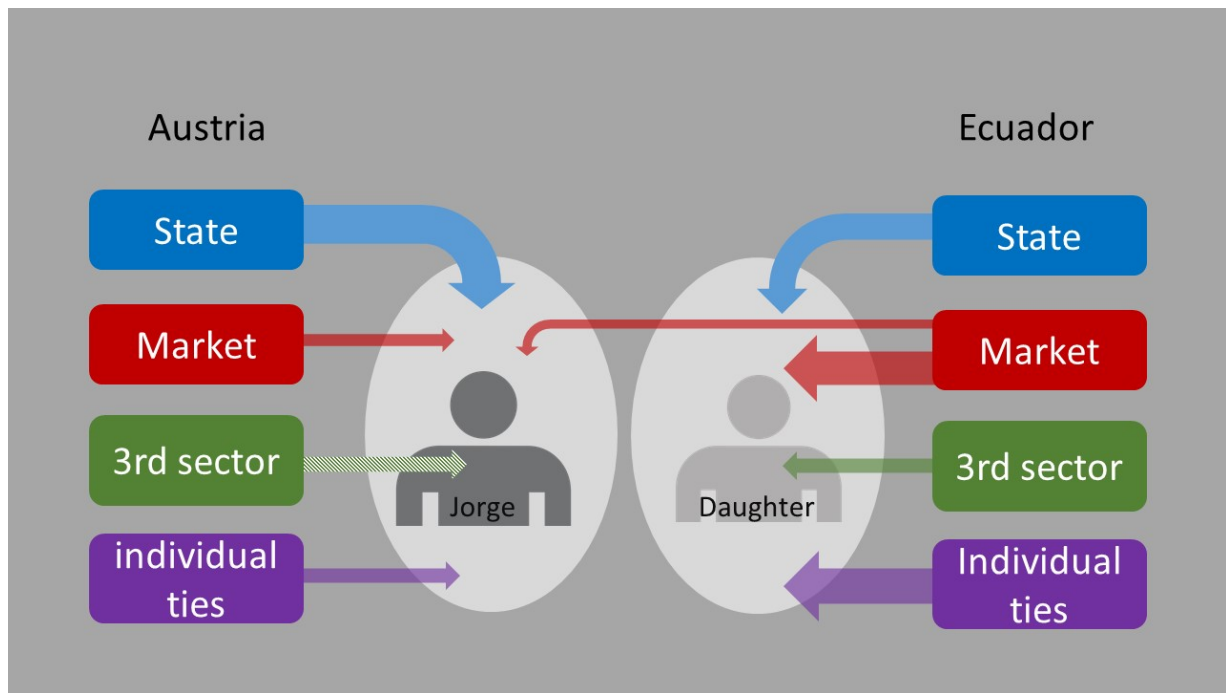


Figure 4

Jorge relies exclusively on the Austrian State for his social protection in Austria. The market plays a very marginal role for him in Austria, yet it plays a bigger role than the Ecuadorian State for his daughter in Ecuador. Individual ties in Ecuador supply significantly more social protections than individual ties in Austria. The green line from the 3rd sector for Jorge represents the charity institutions he made use, actually in Spain. The green line for his daughter represents mixed charity-private health centers she has used in the past. What we cannot see in this visual representation is the fact that it is actually Jorge who is financing his daughter's access to IESS.

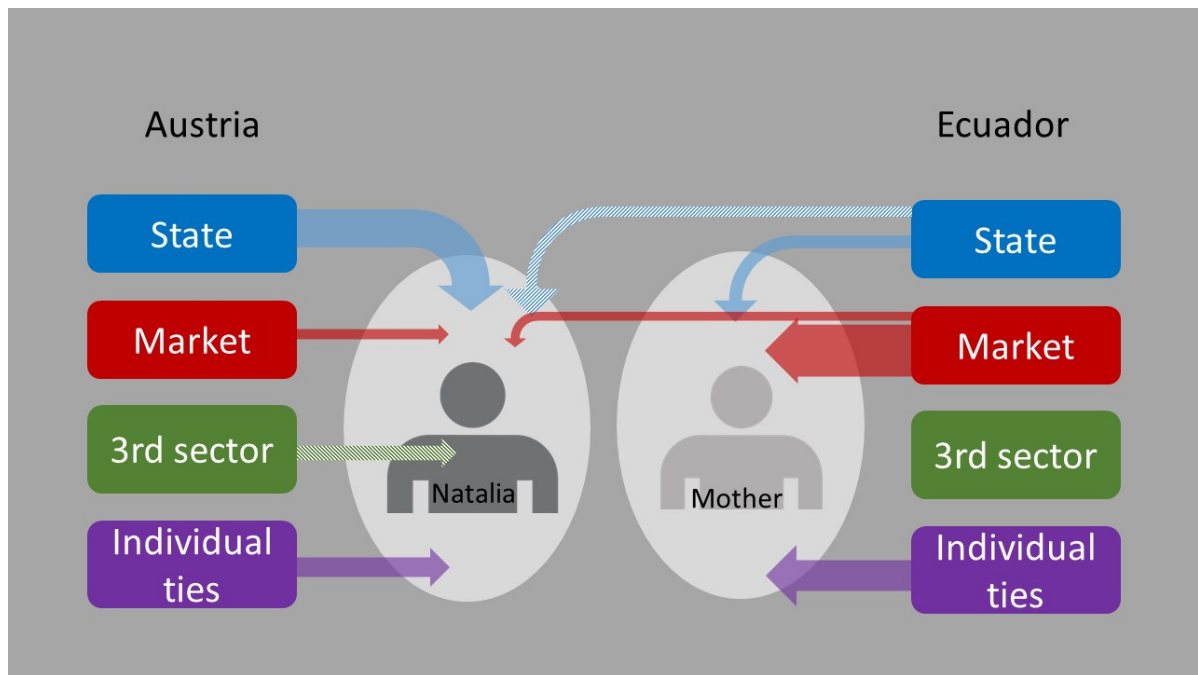


Figure 5

The light blue line in this resource environment represents Natalia's formal contributions to IESS, which there is no record of anymore. Her mother has no pension, but uses public hospitals, or IESS hospitals as a dependent. Her lack of pension is represented by the relatively thin blue line from the state to her mother. Notice how important the market becomes when the state provisions are inadequate or non-existent. This is the case because Natalia channels financial remittances attributable to the fund raising she organizes in Vienna to cover for private medical and survival expenses. The visual representation of the four sources erases this detail. Likewise, the care worker her brother has hired is an informal worker from the labor market, yet she is also a neighbor who does this based on individual ties.

The application of the resource environment concept is therefore successful in linking disparate, formal and informal transnational actors, yet borders become fuzzy among the four sources when confronted with social life. This model does not allow us to distinguish between who is financing and who is executing social protections. In all four cases, there is no visual possibility to show that migrants in Vienna are enabling access to either state or the market with their financial remittances. Therefore, although the state appears to have a large share in securing people's health and wellbeing, in reality it is provided

by migrant funding and active participation. It might also be important to distinguish more precisely between social protections for one self and for one's loved ones.

Strategies

The experiences and realities presented above are diverse, complex, and also respond to the variables of time and space; they have changed in the past and are expected to in the future. However, four main strategies can be identified. The importance of the not for profit sector was significant when migrants were new arrivals and had limited or no access to formal social protections based on their migratory status. These play almost no role in the interviewees' contemporary arrangements and are therefore not listed below.

- a) Use of voluntary affiliation (for Ecuadorians abroad) for themselves (self-insurance) when considering a potential retirement in Ecuador, or opening access to services for their dependents in Ecuador.
- b) Use of (inland) voluntary affiliation without an employer for relatives who don't count as dependents —namely anyone other than a spouse or children under 18.
- c) Remunerating reproductive or care-giving work done by a relative (or non-relative) through financial remittances.
- d) Sending financial remittances to cover for private health care services.

A) Use of voluntary membership for themselves

As Sara and Benjamin point out, the idea of a potential return to Ecuador is attractive enough to pay IESS contributions on a voluntary basis. The nostalgic idea of returning to the homeland is not all that is at stake here. Insecurities in Austria also play a role. "We might not get a visa, or they might get tired of us". Moreover, people who entered the Viennese social security system middle-aged are unsure about fulfilling the fifteen years of minimum contribution. In Ecuador, they could retire with ten years of contributions.

Others are considering this scheme. Andrea, a professional middle class woman, has lived in Vienna for over fifteen years and is insured in the WGKK

via her employer. Additionally, she has a private insurance with her husband. The WGKK system provides very good care; the idea behind getting private insurance is not a lack of quality in services, but rather an upgrade in comfort, such as bigger rooms in hospitals, etc. She has made ten years of contributions to IESS, and in mid-2015 she was considering voluntary membership as part of a yet uncertain retirement plan inspired by her brother living in the U.S.

Ignacio (26), who is considering joining the scheme, told me that this scheme obviously benefits Ecuador (IESS) as it cashes in on contributions while he in fact is covered in Vienna and would not use IESS services now. Austria covers his social protection “as a person” [in the universalist/cosmopolitan notion] and not as resident, denizen or EU citizen. He would make use of those monies if he returns to Ecuador.

Barbara (55) notes the same thing, yet precisely because she doesn’t require IESS health services now, she sees the premium as too costly. She quit the voluntary membership a couple months ago, and prefers to send that money directly to her parents who have no pension. “This idea of voluntary insurance is a good one, it’s just not the right time for me” (Barbara 2015).

Referencing time, some interview partners in Vienna (and elsewhere) have pointed to the fact that if this voluntary self-insurance scheme had been available to migrants in the early 2000s they would have had an added motivation to join. Back then, they had spouses and underage children in Ecuador who could have gained access to IESS health services. Now that many have European citizenship, children above 18, and formal employment, their only motivation for self-insurance might be a future retirement in Ecuador with IESS, or access to credit services such as mortgages.

Considering that the Austrian healthcare system has very good coverage, members of this scheme do not travel to Ecuador to use health services. However, when they do travel they often make use of formal healthcare because of the higher quality of the patient-doctor relation. Language and cultural barriers have been referenced as reasons for preferring medical

attention in Ecuador. De facto, however, it is very costly to travel and Viennese institutions also provide most health services.

A significant aspect of this strategy is that although membership is open to Ecuadorians abroad, users in Vienna are often misinformed. Although she has been paying her monthly contribution for over 5 years, Sara is still unclear on precisely what her rights are. The modernization of the state institution has left her with less access to information. When she traveled to Ecuador in 2013 she went personally to inquire and was referred to the website and online account, which unfortunately she cannot access due to technicalities. Some consular missions serving larger migrant groups than the one in Vienna generally have one staff member that has been trained by the IESS to bridge this gap.

B) Use of (inland) voluntary affiliation for others

Most interview partners currently have parents under their care in Ecuador. Those that have children are mostly living together with them in Vienna and are covered by the Viennese social security system. Of those who do have children in Ecuador, they are no longer minors. Jorge, for example, explained how he sent financial remittances from Spain to cover living expenses for his children when they were small. Later, he learned through experience the importance of social security contributions to access European citizenship. He also saw how it marked the shift from undocumented to resident status. These experiences, combined with his conviction that the positive changes in Ecuador that meant significant progress in the public and IESS hospitals, allowed him to trust the system and so he insured not only one, but both of his children. The elevated out-of-pocket payment for an emergency surgery for his daughter made it clear to Jorge that predictable and stable payments via a formal channel minimize risks. His brother in Ecuador told me how important Jorge's way of long-distance caring is for his children. His monthly remittances, which financially cover the cost of IESS and social security, is the way he engages in long-distance parenting.

Sara sends money to her daughter regularly but is at times wary of the meaningfulness of it. She is considering signing her up for this scheme. In these cases, the resource environment of non-migrant relatives includes the formal State channel of the IESS and the individual kinship connections that make payments for voluntary membership.

C) Remuneration of reproductive or care-giving work done by a relative (or non-relative) through financial remittances

In broad strokes, the way the family is structured in Ecuador, and beyond, makes it frequently the case that the responsibility for care and for reproductive work lies disproportionately in the hands of women and girls. This is in spite of the fact that many interview partners point to some changes in destination countries, namely male members learning and taking up more or all domestic tasks when no female relative is there to do it for them. Care responsibilities are not only attributed to the women of the family – sons and fathers appear to share moral responsibility in the accounts of interview partners. However, actual practices contrasted with this emerging discursive turn and reveal that indeed care work continues to belong to the family sphere, and within and outside familial life it is *de facto* more women who engage in this kind of work. Both Benjamin and Natalia send financial remittances to cover the salaries of women care workers.

Even in cases where men also see themselves as having a moral responsibility to take care of elderly parents, for example, a woman is seen as the evident choice to replace him when he can't fulfill said responsibilities. Andrea's parents did not have social security, but their family business had generated enough resources to guarantee that they could support themselves. However, when her father fell ill of a chronic disease, a care provider was needed. Her sister, divorced, with a full-time job and a son going to university, took over. In this case a relative is remunerated for reproductive work by financial

remittances from abroad, meaning the source of TSP remains within individual ties.

My sister took over because she was alone. Well, she had a divorce and I mean we [she and her siblings] agreed on taking care of my parents when they couldn't be on their own anymore. We arranged to take turns at it, so every night one of us would go. My brother and I, since we live abroad [U.S.], we don't have that, I mean, we couldn't. So we said 'Let's pay someone'. Then my sister offered to do it so we obviously gave her something, because it wouldn't be fair if she did it for free.

...Well, before they had a girl who came a couple of times a week to clean, but she stole things, you know how it is. So we thought it would be better if our own sister took over, since anyway she had to cook for her and her son. (Andrea 2015)

On weekends the other siblings took the parents out for the day to allow Andrea's sister some time off. Disproportionate, yet it is a care work shift all the same.²⁸

The remuneration of reproductive or domestic work done by a non-kin or a distant relative is more common. This distinction is not without its limitations, as social ties and social life include many more nuances, something that New Kinship Studies address. Thus, neighbors or work colleagues and their social networks can be the channels through which a care worker is found – women as usual. All such women were in a more disadvantaged socio-economical position than that of the migrant's family, reaffirming what the literature on Global Care Chains has stated (Parreñas 2001; Hochschild 2000). In this way, domestic and reproductive work continue to be stigmatized and underpaid, reproducing inequalities asymmetrically. A common characteristic of this group of care workers is that they are young and single mothers. As Benjamin explained, they [the women] need some help, and that is the help they [the

²⁸ Some women mentioned that the idea returning was a way of compensating for the lack of family care that could not be secured otherwise. Some women do this regularly; every year during the summer they return for one to three months. They see this as a family arrangement. This practice was not very prevalent in interview partners; however, I was referred to it frequently by others. Further research on this particular practice could be undertaken.

migrant brothers] can give. Both in Benjamin, Natalia and Barbara's cases, women care workers can bring their own young children to the workplace, something seen as a "help," something unacceptable at other workplaces. The Global Care Chain then, stops there. Otherwise, the women care workers in turn would leave their young children with their eldest sister or perhaps with grandmothers in even more dispossessed locations.

Both Natalia's brother and Benjamin explain to me that they have an informal by-the-hour agreement with their respective care workers and cannot pay for the care worker's insurance in the formal employer scheme. Thus the care provider's own work does not provide her access to formal social security. In Quito, Natalia's brother, a cunning man with a migratory experience of his own, is informed on the new voluntary scheme for domestic workers, which is part of the *Revolución Ciudadana's* steps towards inclusion of historically marginalized collectives and which is significantly less costly. If she agrees, he will pay for it. In this way, the state, informal labor market, and personal ties are so intertwined that distinctions among them becomes problematic. The series of conversations and discussions that this group of multi-sited siblings has had involve the issue of social security. Natalia has experience in social work, labor unions, and has herself been a care worker. Her brother in Quito knows how important it was for her to get social security and to access her rights as a worker. Translating these social remittances into practices in Quito, Natalia's brother makes arrangements according to the resources at his disposal: limited finances and simplified state channels.

Barbara is the only person who told me that the woman caring for her parents has a formal full time contract and gets all her benefits, not just because Barbara describes her own family as ethically correct, but also because Beatriz, the care worker, is extremely well informed of her labor rights and demands them. This shows that there indeed may be a progressive universalization of rights, a deepening of democracy, and iterations of acts of citizenship that, at least in this case, vertically extends social protections. It must not be forgotten that some interview partners view financial remittances sent for living costs and general expenses as a way of remunerating reproductive work. In this

section I have intentionally distinguished only cases when migrants clearly refer to a contractual relation which may be either formal or informal.

D) Financial remittances for health expenses

This is possibly one of the oldest and most well studied forms of transnational engagement, and in this study it is by far the most common form of securing health and old age care for kin in Ecuador. Only Andrea never sent remittances for this particular purpose. The motivations behind this particular strategy are related, on the one hand, with the absence or insufficiency of a pension, and on the other with deficiencies of the IESS or the MPH. Interview partners whose parents' have a pension from IESS, resorted to private health services when waiting periods for state services were too long. Indeed, waiting periods can at times be several months, and as Sara put it, her father might die before his next appointment.

Lately we've taken my father to private doctors more often than to the IESS ones. That is a shame! It's really sad to go to the IESS hospitals. (...) You get an appointment for three months later. That's just not possible! Here [Vienna] you can go anywhere with your social security card and a doctor will see you. But there? It's shameful! My father goes and they tell him the treatment is simply not worth it, he is too old. But he isn't, he is 76. I work with people in their 90's here and they get medical care and live relatively good lives. (...) That's why now we go more to private doctors [in Quito]. (Sara 2015)

Both Benjamin and Barbara's respective parents do not have a pension and so this strategy is not a complementary one but is in fact essential. Both live in rural and agricultural areas where emergency access to public services is at times limited. Benjamin, however, notes how the MPH hospital, a couple kilometers away, has been significantly upgraded. His mother recently had an accident and could access public secondary health care as an in-patient. Had the Correa administration not improved these systems, Benjamin tells me, it would have been a costly operation that he would have had to finance together with his brothers. Indeed, the restructuration of the public health system during the past ten years means that in some cases elders without a pension or access to the IESS are not left without coverage.

Sometimes, financial remittances come from an individual or a family monthly income. Sometimes they are from savings. Other times, collective effort is made by either the family or by community groups. They frequently involve cultural celebrations and gather funds from the profits generated by these events. Natalia does this on a regular basis for her parents and in emergencies she does this for other relatives or neighbors living in Quito. For most, collecting funds in this manner is not a regular activity, but all the interviewees had taken part in a solidarity event for someone in need in Ecuador at least once. Belen, in Quito, told me about something similar that her godmother in Vienna had organized for her mother's health.

Beto, now a small entrepreneur in his mid-30s, has organized a couple of these. But over 12 years ago his mother migrated to Vienna. He was still a child in Quito and Beto remembers, "it was forbidden to get sick" or you would drink herbal medicines. If you really did have a serious condition then they would go to the local doctor, which he remembers as being very expensive. Time, the development cycle of the household, and migrants' incorporation play a key role in influencing how much and how often financial remittances for different purposes can be sent.

Financial remittances sent by migrants to pay for private clinics, doctors, or to buy medicine at pharmacies means money from personal ties is channeled to the market to secure the health of relatives in Ecuador. In this regard, although the source providing the goods and services is the market, the financial resources paying for them originate from social ties. Although clearly two sources within the resource environment are active in this case, we can distinguish between who is doing it and who is paying for it.

In fact, in all four strategies migrants are paying for goods and services provided by the state, the market (both formal and informal) and social ties. In this study, the distinction between where resources come from and which sources are activated is an important one. Not doing so would obscure who is in fact financing health care, even if it is through a state channel. Only by

differentiating this can we really see what actors are involved and to what degree.

Before moving on to the conclusions, there are a couple of aspects that are worth mentioning. This thesis has fed off the perceptions and practices of people in their economically active age and how they provide for the wellbeing of their loved ones. In the future, however, other family members will be making decisions of their own. Benjamin is finding out what steps to take to be able to get Austrian citizenship for his daughter in Ecuador. He was too late for his son who is now over 18. It is still possible that they both might want to leave Ecuador, as Benjamin puts it, as any young person in Ecuador would. The children of his second marriage have European citizenship and, although at one point their mother considered making Ecuador their home, she now opposes the idea of registering them as Ecuadorians. Compared with having a European passport, an Ecuadorian one doesn't make much sense, he explains to me. This has to do with a generalized sense of distrust in Ecuadorian institutions and governments to be able to secure social protections and gainful employment. Global asymmetries in access to both of these, will continue to make migration an attractive option and social ties will consolidate migration flows in the future.

(Dis)Trust in Ecuadorian institutions

An ambivalent relation and perception of the current Ecuadorian State is evident. While all who left a weak and devastated country see positive changes and a strengthening of the state institutions during the past 10 years, many of them remain wary, and not without reason. Natalia for example was erased from the system. Can the system then really be trusted?

Who knows, at a given point they might just say I haven't been paying all this time. And what's with the money? I could end up with a heart attack just like people did with the banks [in Ecuador in 1999]. (Sara 2015)

Often, comparisons between Ecuadorian with European institutions point to the limitations still prevalent in reformed institutions like IESS. In this sense, the temporal factor is determining. During these ten years or more, the country that the migrants left behind has changed. But not only that, the expectations, aspirations, and standards of this group of people have also changed during these ten years of interactions with European institutions and strong states such as Austria and Spain.

There is a significant lack of (accurate) information on social security matters. Although most of my interview partners had heard or were using the IESS channels, few were clear on all the steps. However, informal conversations during this study point to generalized misinformation on the matter²⁹. For some, this is a matter of individuals who need to actively look out for themselves and get informed but others blame it on the foreign representation of the Ecuadorian state. Most interview partners referred to a lack of information and believed the Ecuadorian state institutions need to do more to communicate to citizens abroad their rights and the channels by which migrants can guarantee themselves or others social protection.

Many think it could be useful if the embassy had an advisory service for migrants in Vienna, not only on services available for migrants, or affairs with Ecuador, but also general advisory on social matters in Vienna for Ecuadorian migrants. This is however not the obligation of the consulate and in Vienna some third sector institutions that inform in Spanish, and a small amount of public information available in Spanish in relation to the work of migrant integration. A complete consulate in Vienna adhering to the new mission of reaching out to citizens abroad is only over a year old. It provides much more information than in the past, and is in general being very well received by Ecuadorians abroad, but it is not an all-encompassing advisory point as some migrants would wish. In the meanwhile, Beto (and others) act as informal

²⁹ This might change in the future as the consulate in Vienna has since late-2016 a booklet with information on the services available for migrants in Vienna and in Ecuador, including IESS voluntary membership.

brokers for recent arrivals,³⁰ or for longtime residents with a limited understanding of the system or with limited German language skills, to access state or city services.

All would have wished for more information, accompaniment, and services from the Ecuadorian authorities in Vienna when they arrived in there. Some recognize that the Ecuadorian authorities and the Ecuadorian law have limits in Austria and are not “almighty”.

A person that leaves Ecuador needs to be very well informed. She needs to understand all that Ecuador will do to protect her so that she is informed in every step she takes. Then she needs to understand how far the Austrian law will go for her. The State is not almighty. Ecuadorian laws are limited, just like the rules of any game. (Barbara 2015).

Aware of efforts of the Ecuadorian State to protect citizens abroad in special cases (especially in Spain and Italy), some migrants hope that the rules by which they have to play will eventually change. Interview partners with years of contributions to the IESS and WGKK hope that an agreement between Austria and Ecuador is reached before they retire. For some it is a matter of aspiring to a better pension, for others a matter of fulfilling the required number of years and a securing a pension.

When dealing with the future, uncertainty tinges all conversations. Doubts arise regarding where one will retire, and whether one will qualify for a pension at all. Although the vast majority of informants explicitly express the appeal of the idea of retiring in Ecuador, it is clear that for many it may only be a nostalgic dream.

Once my parents pass away I won't have anything left in Ecuador. I feel I'd like to go spend my last years there, but my kids and my grandchildren will certainly be living in Vienna, and I wouldn't want to miss on that either. I'm not sure. (Benjamin 2016).

For many women though, shifts and temporary relocations might be the way to negotiate life across generations. Xiomara gives up summers with her adult

³⁰ The third sector in Vienna is ample and several public and NFP organizations offer these services, some of them in Spanish.

kids in exchange for three months of taking dutiful care of her aged parents in Quito, something her sister does for the rest of the year. “When I’m here [Vienna], I’m here and there [Quito]. But when I’m there I know it’s only for three months and I put all my body and soul into it.” (Xiomara V11, 2014).

Every summer Natalia brings her children who are school-aged with her to Quito. It is her turn to take care of her ill father and the children’s chance to spend time with their cousins. Sara cannot do this, but she feels she compensates for this with her job in eldercare.

I’m really happy with my old people, because it is something wonderful to give a little love to people who don't have anyone any more or who are in their last phase. Sometimes I think of my parents; they are also old and sick now and it makes me upset. So I make an extra effort to give affection to somehow compensate the fact that I am not with them. (Sara 2015)

Aspirations and expectations

Sara hopes that public healthcare in Ecuador will become more reliable; that appointments are given faster and more attention is given to patients. In general, she, like many others, hope for more order in general, which they have come to experience firsthand in Europe. There are variations regarding the perception of Ecuadorian institutions inland and abroad. While most do recognize a strengthening of the state, many still see outreach programs to migrants as insufficient. Migrants who made IESS contributions in the past aspire to see an agreement similar to the bilateral one with Spain in order to make those years count. A significant number of research partners believe that there is much more that the consulate could do such as providing advice, serving as a job pool, informing them about Viennese social services, and intervening in defense of Ecuadorians in individual cases. Evidently, though the aspirations are valid, some of these go beyond the mandate, functions and capacities of the Consulate.

It is important to note that several migrants who had made contributions to the IESS before migrating are concerned about the loss of these monies. This is a point of concern by many who are curious to know if an agreement such as

that with Spain might be replicated with Austria, or with the EU. Speculations on how to navigate the system while holding European citizenship by working some years in Spain and making those years count are yet to be proven viable, but will certainly be explored by the most adventurous.

Violence against women

Empirical evidence from this research project points to not only to violence against women as a reason to migrate, but also to transformations of gender roles, which in some cases was significant. For women, migrating is not only a financial matter but also a matter of self-respect and a way to secure their well-being by distancing themselves (and sometimes their children) from violent male partners or relatives. Violence against anyone has implications for both physical and psychological health. This is something this thesis has not addressed but which surely demands more attention.

6. Conclusions

Empirical evidence from this study points to the fact that although the Ecuadorian state has made significant efforts to care for its population (inland and abroad), and the Spanish and Austrian welfare states have vast coverage, migrant financing is at the core of securing Transnational Social Protection.

Recapping, the significant emigration of Ecuadorians towards the end of the 1990s took place not only because of the financial crisis that the country was facing at the time, but also as a response to the gap in social protections provided by the Ecuadorian State. Violence against women and gender inequalities were also factors that shaped people's decisions to begin a migratory project.

Attempting to bridge this social protection gap, and with specific political interests at stake, the Constitution of 2008 recognizes the impact of migration on the national reality. Several policies and programs targeted at migrant populations, particularly Ecuadorians abroad and returned Ecuadorians have stemmed from it. Likewise, the term *transnational family* has been adopted by authorities, acknowledging results and choices of migratory processes. This indeed represents an interesting shift towards not only different ways of being (a citizen) but also different understandings of what family is, and what the state recognizes as family.

This shift gently challenges the “traditional” nuclear, single-sited and heterosexual family model with its clear-cut gender roles, a common implication of which is that the highest share of reproductive care falls on women. Recognizing the second degree of consanguinity in the definition of transnational families in the Migration Law Draft effectively includes grandparents and siblings of a migrant into the legal concept of family, members which are in many cases engaged in providing social protection and care on both sides of the Atlantic but excluded from formal social protection schemes such as social security. What exactly the approval of this definition of

transnational families would mean in terms of who is covered by social security, for example, and where, remains to be determined.

At the same time, the term transnational family seems to be negatively charged and used to refer to broken families. Presidential and official discourse maintain a rhetoric of migration as a national tragedy. This guides the design of protection and/or assistance policies that understand return migration as the solution. However, some refined wording in policy and speeches (consider the inclusion of the word human mobility to the lexicon of migration issues), diverge from this discourse and might imply a philosophical turn, from migration as deviation, to mobility and connectedness as new ways of living (transnational?) lives.

Transnational migration perspectives allow us to precisely investigate the lived experiences of people as well as the initiatives that states take across national borders. The reasons why they move and how they make arrangements for social life and reproduction are enmeshed in the global political economy. The scalar and the local, which continue to be theorized and empirically analyzed, need more attention to precisely delineate how the transnational takes material form and to determine the particular local conditions. This thesis has only hinted at the specificities of the national and subnational levels. Future work along these lines is needed and collaborations across space, such as comparing different cities could be done in the future.

Moreover, not only pensions, but decent livelihoods for people aged 60 and over are a matter of concern to virtually all regions worldwide, and Ecuador, Spain and Austria are no strangers to it. Not only how Ecuadorian migrants age in or across borders, but the demands of aging populations in all of these three spaces will require increasing attention in the decades to come. After all, securing the different stages of the life cycle of people is one of the most elemental aspects of ontological security and social reproduction. Officials in all three countries recognize this challenge and have taken some steps in addressing this particular challenge. For individuals, securing the wellbeing of their parents and their own uncertain future, is a pressing matter. As we have

seen, the rationale behind decisions to invest in TSP includes economic evaluations of cost benefit, but goes beyond them. Familial and place ties are key factors in the equation.

The resource environment tool served to analyze how migrants patch together the social protection of their relatives or themselves, yet some precisions such as the distinction between financing and provision actors can reveal a much clearer picture. In this case, the fact that although the state provides important services in Ecuador, access to them is enabled by migrant financing must be noted. This distinction is key and makes the self-responsibilization trend evident. The four sources that are visualized as the resource environment are not enough to distinguish the actors that finance from the actors that actually provide the services of social protection.

Ecuadorian, Spanish and Austrian national frameworks evidently enable and restrict differently; they count on different legal frameworks, welfare models and financial possibilities. Migrants and their families need to know how to navigate these different schemes at different scales.

When addressing the social protection of Ecuadorians in Ecuador the state steps in steadily and does so with such force and scope that the third sector has significantly been reduced. Migrants and their families recognize the improvements of the public health and social security systems in Ecuador, yet experience clear limitations (remember the waiting periods for instance). In this sense, the increase in public transfers has meant a reduction in the out-of-pocket expenditures for migrants or their relatives — a lighter burden to carry, but a burden nonetheless.

The welfare state in Spain, particularly the universalist healthcare system allowed Ecuadorian migrants access without formal documentation³¹. The Austrian State, on the other hand, requires formal documentation for health and social security. Once formal documentation is achieved, welfare benefits in

³¹ A health reform in 2012 removed permits and restricted access for undocumented migrants. Some autonomous governments rejected the national law and in 2015 the State again granted some access.

Austria are more encompassing than in Spain. The European framework of free mobility, put into question in the recent past, enables Ecuadorian migrants with acquired European citizenship to access social protections in their new destinations and on special cases for their relatives within the European Union.

The Bilateral Social Security Agreement between Spain and Ecuador is an example of state coordination for transnational social protections across the Atlantic. Similar bilateral agreements have existed before among other parties and are on the rise. Yet, the absence of an agreement between Austria and Ecuador, or for that matter a European-Ecuadorian agreement, means that there is no formal channel for the payments to these different systems to be added to a retirement pension. In the EU there is a legal framework of portability of pension rights for citizens. In practice, however, it is not a simple or automatic process as it requires harmonizing different legislations. By January 2017 the negotiations on how to implement the visa waiver for Ecuadorians to the European Union will begin, continuing to pave the road for other bilateral and multilateral projects.

Important financial flows, although often publicly acknowledged, are not showcased as the main motivation for the state to reach out to migrant populations. However, as we have seen, there are stipulations in the 2008 Constitution which refer to it. As currently? presented, the Ecuadorian government actively engages in designing policies and legal frameworks that respond to the actual transnational ties held among Ecuadorian migrants and non-migrants. Not only that, but its actions are coherent with the rights-based approach to migration established in the 2008 constitution. The social protection agreement with Spain is a clear step in this direction and it is also a clear stance of the Ecuadorian government in caring for its citizens, crossing territorial frontiers. This particular agreement is directed to migrants, Ecuadorian, Spanish or of any nationality, whether they intend to return or not.

Some of the actions the Ecuadorian State has taken, such as the changes in the contribution system to the Social Security, are combined with individual strategies that migrating people from Vienna adopt to guarantee well-being for their future.

Some of these strategies are; **A)** to make use of the **voluntary affiliation** scheme (launched by the IESS for Ecuadorians abroad) for those considering a potential retirement period in Ecuador. For some migrants it is clear that they themselves will not necessarily receive any provisions, but their children under eighteen and their spouse could have access to a pension if something were to happen to the person abroad, and it has other benefits as well.

The **B) inland voluntary membership** without a working relationship is being used for relatives who are not dependents. Aunts, grandmothers, cousins, children above eighteen, etc. fit in this category because they are excluded from formal categories. Yet another widely spread practice is that of **C) remunerating reproductive work** done by kin and non-kin with financial remittances in order to guarantee that these services will continue to be provided in time. Finally, **D) financial remittances for health expenses** continues to be an important strategy in enabling access to (private or third sector) healthcare in Ecuador, or to supplement where the public healthcare system falls short.

In all of the strategies here reviewed, migrants carry the burden of the economic cost. In both B) inland and A) abroad schemes of voluntary affiliation migrants pay for care, yet states provide it. With C) Remunerating reproductive work, migrants pay yet either the informal labor market or individual ties provide care. In D) sending remittances to cover medical expenses and maintenance costs of parents, migrants pay while the private market provides doctors, medicine, food, and other services.

The degree to which the Spain-Ecuador agreement and the voluntary affiliation scheme have an impact on people's lives remains to be determined³²,

³² The nearly 15 years of the largest migration wave in Ecuador continues to be well studied. However, the recent arrival of important numbers of return migrants has not

and will certainly be influenced by people's (dis)trust in the political system and social security institutions. In this regard, future ethnographic studies could certainly reveal the intricacies and shades of individual and collective stories, the strategies from above and from below, and of coverage and gaps. Conflicts of differentiated social status and mobility between migrants and non-migrants and their families, pointed out by Herrera and Carrillo (2009), could also appear as relevant categories to think about the relationships in communities where return migrants, beneficiaries of the Spain-Ecuador agreement, settle. Additionally, it is important to connect social protection regimes with socio-cultural practices of care. This is increasingly relevant now when increased numbers of Ecuadorians are returning from Europe, many of whom might make use of the agreement.

Thus, while the state provides some channels, it is *de facto* making way for self-responsibilizing individuals to bear the costs. Advances in a rights-based approach in migratory policy in Ecuador disguise neo-conservative attitudes, such as emphasizing the role of the family in social reproduction, and the role of women particularly as mothers or care givers. This is evidenced in policy that sees the family as the primary source of some protections and only steps in after testing that the family is unwilling or incapable of performing said protections. Loyalty to migrants' families is indeed strong, in this sense *blood is thicker than the ocean waters* that lie in between the family members. But how far can the national loyalties go for a collective dispossessed and displaced by national policies? Will migrants in Vienna want to retire in Ecuador? Will the IESS voluntary scheme increase its members in the decades to come as more and more migrants of the late 1990s wave reach retirement age? What about those who still distrust the Ecuadorian State and are excluded from destination countries' systems by being illegalized?

Ecuadorians left Ecuador fleeing a devastating crisis and some fled from crisis for a second time, in this case from Spain. Crises are systemic to global

yet allowed for an extended and qualitative assessment and is an interesting line of research for future ventures.

capitalism and will continue to shape the movement and mobility of peoples across the world. In so doing, as Miraftab has pointed out, social reproduction is being restructured on a global scale, with emigrant-sending regions bearing the highest cost. And with women in these regions bearing the higher share of reproductive work.

Beyond the Ecuadorian case, TSP and portability of rights indeed cover more territories, yet citizenship remains the principal status for rights-granting, revealing practices of exclusion and dispossession. While nation-states evaluate if and how to provide more social protections to mobile populations, people will continue to live *here* and *there*, *now* and *in the years to come*. The question is, will the cost and share of work increasingly remain in the hands of self-responsible individuals, and especially women?

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