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Subject:

Disturbance of Cultural Identity in Ecuador, due the migration phenomenon
in the new millennium

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**LICENCIADO EN ESTUDIOS INTERNACIONALES CON MENCIÓN EN
COMERCIO EXTERIOR BILINGÜE**

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This paper has a special dedication to
my mother, whose unconditional
support was my principal
inspiration.

A special gratefulness to people who
contributed in some way to the
development of this paper.

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Summary

This paper aims to analyze the current cultural reality of Ecuador, as well as the influence migration has exercised and exercises in its alteration, its impact and the consequences and repercussions it has had in the last decade.

Through a desktop research combined with a field study, the clear relationship between migration and culture is demonstrated as well as the possible measures that can be taken to protect and preserve our identity, considering the government, family, education and mainly the individual as such, as main actors to achieve the expected results.

1. Introduction

The cultural identity of a people is in some ways what unifies its members as a community. Customs, traditions, ideologies and others, are important legacies that are transmitted from one generation to the other and allow us to feel part of something, part of a group that, just as us, carries the same feeling of belonging.

But what happens when that cultural identity is threatened by external factors so that its conservation is put in danger?

Every society is composed of elements that influence its formation and functioning. Among these are culture and migration, two important and characteristic aspects of a community.

Culture on the one hand, has been, is and will be undoubtedly a representative and significant factor for any community as it allows identification between its members.

However, on the other hand, in a changing world like ours, it is difficult to maintain our own culture intact. Developments in technology, communication, globalization among others, have heavily impacted the loss, change and alteration of people's cultural identity.

As for today, barriers that used to separate us from other societies are disappearing, leaving an open door to free, fast and direct communication with people hundreds or thousands of miles away, allowing us to always be in touch. This is why it is no longer difficult to talk about a global community or world where free exchange of ideas and thoughts are on the agenda.

All this has brought countless benefits to mankind but when it comes to society and particularly to the cultural aspect and its conservation, it has been counterproductive to a certain point. This is because our minds are open to receive new ideas, customs and traditions different from ours, thus replacing, adding or adapting those we already have.

However, it should be emphasized that changes in culture cannot be attributed to a single cause. There are many circumstances that directly or indirectly influence the alteration of the cultural identity of a person.

Among these many reasons there is undoubtedly the migratory phenomenon, which constitutes the focus of study this thesis is based on.

Just as culture, migration is a characteristic element in every society, its influence and effects are noticeable and momentous. Ecuador is one of the most representative countries in Latin America regarding migration issues. Remittances from migrants have had a great impact on the economy, turning them into the second source of income after the so-called "Black Gold" and even surpassing incomes from shrimp, bananas, cocoa, coffee, flowers and tuna exports.

High rates of migration have been a key feature of the country, but towards the end of the nineties the situation was further aggravated with the severe economic crisis that hit the nation in 1999, which gave place to events that marked the history and destiny of Ecuador. Perhaps, one of the most important and memorable events is precisely the change of currency as a result of the devaluation of the *sucre*, which was replaced by the dollar, thus becoming the new currency. This transition resulted in huge economic losses among those who found in migration an escape to their economic problems. The rate of migratory fluxes increased alarmingly, the main destinations chosen by Ecuadorians being the United States, Spain and Italy.

While the importance of remittances to the economy is a fact, they can also do as much harm or even more than the benefits they bring, depending on the point of the analysis. Unquestionably, migration has had a positive impact on the profitability of the country since for today income from remittances represents approximately 15.1% of the national income. However, it is necessary to examine both sides of the coin as, despite the benefits migration can seem to bring, they do not offset the counterproductive effects they can have in different areas. One example of this is the change in the constitution of families since the traditional structure of a father, mother and children had

to be replaced by including other family members or even not family members.

Regarding cultural matters, migration is one of the main problems for its conservation. Either way, peoples' cultural identity is affected due to this phenomenon, showing the clear relationship between these two elements. Changes in things like taste, preferences, clothing, ideologies clearly show the influence of migration on societies and individuals.

This is a situation that cannot pass unnoticed because new trends are gaining increasing power within this society and are gradually displacing our own customs and traditions thus threatening the conservation of cultures and the identification of people with their roots.

This issue deserves to be treated with care since it is a double-edged sword. While on the one hand, it is very important to protect peoples' culture, on the other hand, we must remember we are living in a totally globalized world, where new technologies are on the agenda and where there are virtually no boundaries. Therefore, to get isolated from the rest of the global community in order to preserve what is our own, can be really harmful for a country, especially for developing countries like Ecuador, which depend on other nations in different aspects.

Through programs, messages and campaigns, the Ecuadorian government has tried to stimulate in its people, especially in the youth, the love of one's own culture, making clear its intention is to do everything in its power to protect and preserve it. The idea is to try not to lose values, traditions and customs that identify us as Ecuadorians. This is hard work that requires effort from the society itself, more so now that there are no barriers for communication between most countries. This makes us easy prey of new technologies that aggregate nations into a single global community, where it is increasingly difficult for each to maintain their own ideologies.

In this thesis, I will analyze how migration has influenced the loss of cultural identity, which has significantly affected Ecuador in the last decade. I will study the causes, consequences and impact of this phenomenon as well as possible ways and measures to protect and preserve the cultural identity of

the country. Thus, my study is based on a combination of both office and field research, using statistical data, obtaining information from certified websites, as well as information from books related to the topic and concepts learnt throughout my studies.

Chapter I:

Culture as peoples' identity

1.1. Introduction

Every society is composed of particular elements that play an important role in its composition and functioning. Among these, there is culture. However, as a broad term that encompasses many aspects, it requires an in-depth study to clarify what is really meant by culture. This is why this chapter will be based first of all, on the analysis of its concept, its importance and some of the aspects stemming from this social phenomenon, mainly corresponding to cultural identity issues studied from a global perspective as well as focusing on the particular case of Ecuador.

To some extent, it is difficult to find a concept that describes in a clear, specific and complete manner what culture is: its concept has been changing and evolving over time. This term comes from the Latin word *cultus*. Initially, this word was related to land and its cultivation and subsequently, by metaphorical extension, it has been linked to the human species and to civilization, the term civilized referring thus to an educated person.

Since the eighteenth century, the word culture was used with reference to the cultivation of intellectual faculties regarding religion, art, science, philosophy, etc. This term was perceived as an individual trait more than to a social one. However, contemporary sociology and anthropology redefined the term giving it a sense of social fabric in which different forms and expressions of a particular group are enclosed.

1.2. Culture

1.2.1. Concept

As repeatedly stressed, the concept of culture, whether or not viewed from its anthropological aspect, is so broad that it is difficult to fit it into just one description. However, we can analyze several definitions to clarify the concept and get more explicit ideas on the meanings of culture.

For starters, there is Clyde Cluckhohnthe's definition, which describes it as:

"Historically created life styles, explicit and implicit, rational and non-rational, that exist in a given time as potential behavioral guides."

According to this concept, we can understand culture as an element that encloses norms, beliefs, ideologies, customs; that is shared within a community and that, over time, makes its essence long lasting in both external ways (clothing, ornaments, music, etc.) and internal ways (ceremonies, rituals, feature words from a language, etc.); which evolve and adapt to new realities and in turn directly or indirectly govern the behavior of people from one same community.

A second concept of culture is proposed Amadou Mahtar M'Bow:

"Culture is both a community that has created and what it has become because of that creation; what it has produced in all areas where it exercises its creativity and the set of spiritual and material traits that, through these processes has come to shape its identity and distinguish it from others. "

Based on this definition, we can say that culture is a phenomenon that is created and shaped through communitarian or collective action. It is everything that arises from the context in which it emerges and develops and every tangible and intangible element that becomes progressively characteristic and distinctive of such a culture through time. This leads to a sort of cultural identity where, although there may be many similarities with other cultures, there are also key features that distinguish it from others.

Finally we include a third concept from Carmel Camilleri who states that:

"It is the group of acquired meanings more or less linked to each other, the most persistent and shared, that the members of a group, due to their affiliation to this group, should propagate in a prevalent way from the stimuli coming from their environment and themselves, taking with respect these stimuli, attitudes, representations and valued common behaviors, to ensure their reproduction through non-genetic means. "

Based on this definition, we can understand culture as the set of elements, values and beliefs more widely accepted within a society and that, in one way or another, to a greater or lesser extent, are interrelated. These features

being the strongest, it is necessary for the members of a community to spread them so that their culture prevails and does not weaken. By these means, culture is passed from one generation to the next, turning into a sort of human conduct moderator where attitudes and behaviors of general acceptance create rules. These, despite not being mandatory in legal terms, acquire moral importance until they turn into the origin of those who integrate a collectivity.

Following the above, we can define culture as the traits, traditions, ideologies, customs, which appear in external and internal forms, tangible and intangible, which are shared by a collectivity where members feel identified amongst one another. This makes them a group and creates a community with a common identity, which endures and remains effective through time passing from one generation to the next, evolving and adapting itself to the needs and changes while preserving its essence. In this way, it turns into some sort of moral standards that influence the way their members behave, thus determining the behavior of the group and moderating the behavior of its members.

1.2.2. Importance of the culture

Humans are social beings by nature, throughout their lives they coexist and interact with other people. However, for a society to subsist, those who integrate it should be organized under certain legal and ethical standards that establish and govern the behavior of its members. This is why when we talk about society, we can say that we are also talking about culture. Culture would thus become this set of ethical and moral standards that, while not mandatory from a legal perspective, induce and influence human behavior in the environment in which it develops.

This is how a bilateral relation develops, a mutual relation where culture depends on humans as much as humans depend on it. In this context, we can say that it is the human who creates, applies and influences culture while also being affected by it.

Culture becomes part of a human's life as it gives him a sense of belonging and identity where culture is considered one's property and as the social

element that distinguishes one from the other communities. It is evidenced in each and every behavior of a society, it has an entirely group sense and goes beyond a level of education, of general knowledge, manners, etc.

Culture is a cumulative element: of time, of history. It comprises the sum of knowledge and group experiences, all learned patterns of ways to behave, feel and think that are shared by the members of a collectivity.

Societies create their cultures based on their stories; people have reminiscences, happenings and particular memories, reason why their cultures form and develop with traits and characteristics that distinguish them from those of other communities.

However, importance of culture by itself is the same in any society, our behavior will be based on what is seen as right or convenient in the social circle we belong to.

For example, attending a funeral with some type of colorful or flashy clothes would be frowned upon because, despite not being something punishable by law, it is "respect" for the deceased, his/her family and the situation so that people usually attend these events with discrete clothing, dark colored or black. It is a moral standard although not legal.

Like this, there are a lot of examples that demonstrate the extent to which culture becomes part of people's lives.

Violating any of these rules could be considered as an immoral act because it goes against what is known as "mores". Mores are social ideas of good and evil, which impose certain acts and prohibit others.¹

Therefore mores would be what the people of a community consider socially right or wrong and this is gradually defined based on the experiences of the people, thus drawing their conclusions of beneficial and harmful practices.

However, it is difficult that all standards imposed by mores are fully met. Most are shaped and carried on by its members in the way they accommodate to

¹ Horton Paul B., Horton Robert L., "Introducción a la Sociología", 4° edition, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Bookstore "El Ateneo" editorial, 1985.

to them while retaining its essence. This is how the so-called subcultures and countercultures arise.

"A subculture is a core of norms more or less divergent, shared by a group or category of people in a society." ²

For example if we compare a 50 year old person with a 20 year old that belong to the same culture, we will note that although, from a general analysis, they share most of the values, in a more specific approach, there are certain differences between one another, those being in the vocabulary they use or how they dress and think, etc.

We could even talk, in a casual way, about a youth subculture where their ideologies, attitudes and behaviors are somehow different from the traditional, but this does not mean they belong to another culture because they conserve the basic idea of their predecessors.

But just as we can speak of some kind of branch of the dominant culture, there are some subcultures that contrary to their predecessors, have more differences than similarities to the main culture. These are called countercultures and are those that reject key elements of the current structure of regulations.³

We can say that those who are part of a counterculture have distanced themselves from the dominant culture thus molding and adjusting to their own regulatory system, meaning what they consider right and wrong. It is precisely due to this that, in many cases, they are rejected by the rest of their community or society, or by most of it, as by displaying a different ideology and customs, they provoke antipathy due to the fear of the different.

The dominant culture is, the basis of moral norms that govern the behavior of its members. However, it is difficult for that regulatory system to be fully accomplished as established, so it is easier to talk about a real culture rather

² Horton Paul B., Horton Robert L., "Introducción a la Sociología", 4° edition, Buenos Aires, Bookstore "El Ateneo" editorial, 1985.

³ Horton Paul B., Horton Robert L., "Introducción a la Sociología", 4° edition, Buenos Aires, Bookstore "El Ateneo" editorial, 1985.

than an ideal culture. This is if we assume that an ideal culture is the set of rules that people should allegedly follow.⁴

In our society for example, one of the established moral rules is pre marital chastity and fidelity in marriage; but one could say that in most societies nowadays this does not happen, this is only theory and in practice, this is far beyond this ideal.

It is increasingly common to hear about hasty marriages caused mostly by unplanned pregnancies more than by feelings. Even in highly conservative societies like ours, rates of early pregnancy are escalating, so much that it is even less shocking than before listening to such stories.

The same goes for other moral standards such as faithfulness. In fact this is a cause, while not as common as others, which is also a cause of marital union breakups. Saying it is not as common does not mean it is nonexistent; it rather means this type of problem is preferred to be kept in the privacy of the home but it is a current reality often hidden from society.

However, beyond all this, as we have analyzed, with all its pros and cons, its good and bad aspects, the importance of culture is undeniable. Its impact on people's mindset, ideologies, attitudes, thoughts, behavior and so on, are extremely high, to the point that even great wars have been unleashed, all in the name of the defense of one's culture.

Culture guides a society, it is part of its history and at the same time it creates it. It is passed from generation to generation, changing and evolving but never ceasing to have an influence on people's lives who find in it the reason of being part of a community and why they differ from another. It creates in its members a sense of belonging and ownership. When people feel they belong to a defined culture it becomes theirs, as they consider it as part of their roots, which will be with them no matter the place or time they are.

⁴ Horton Paul B., Horton Robert L., "Introducción a la Sociología", 4º edition, Buenos Aires, Bookstore "El Ateneo" editorial, 1985.

1.2.3. Right to one's own culture

"Art.21. Persons have the right to build and uphold their own cultural identity, to decide their belonging to one or various cultural communities and express these choices; the right to aesthetic freedom, to right to learn about the historical past of their cultures and to gain access to their cultural heritage, to disseminate their own cultural expressions and to have access to diverse cultural expressions. "⁵

One could say that belonging to one or another culture is a free choice of each person, however since we are born, somehow we belong to a cultural core. From an early age, our parents, family and the social circle in which we develop, inspire ideologies, teachings and traditions in us, that ultimately influence the way we act, our conduct and behavior.

Every person has a history, which is the basis of a culture, the reason why we find communities with different customs and values, elements that distinguish a society from others. No matter if they are big or small, cultural differences are a reality. As stated earlier, although we all have freedom to choose to which culture to belong, it is also true we have an obligation to respect the others' choice, even if it is different from ours because we enjoy the right to our own culture.

In Argentina, for instance, it is customary to greet with a kiss on the cheek among men, but if the same custom is practiced in our country, it would be frowned upon and misunderstood. In Bolivia, it is natural and even traditional to chew coca leaves but to do the same in Venezuela, for example, could even be considered illegal. Like these, there are countless examples that make it clear that every community, people, nation, society, etc. has its own beliefs that are right, even though they may seem strange or different to others.

The examples above mentioned refer to differences between cultures of different countries, but in one nation, a variety of cultures can coexist. Our country is a clear example of that: Ecuador is recognized by the Constitution

⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, October 20. 2008, Article 21, Section Four.

as a multicultural and multiethnic country, where communities with different languages, traditions, ideologies and even rules different from the mainstream culture, coexist.

Ecuador is among the Latin countries that have made progress with regard to the recognition of cultural and ethnic diversity and therefore grant the right to one's own culture and all that it implies. This includes having a cultural life, professing and practicing one's own religion and using one's own language.

However, it is important to note that nowadays the fight goes beyond state's recognition; what is sought is to repair exclusion. Seen in this way, multiculturalism implies strengthening what is one's own from other cultures⁶. Focusing on the particular case of Ecuador, the constitution currently protects ethnic, religious and / or linguistic minorities, allowing them to develop their own culture with every right granted to them by law. However, the problem is that practice goes beyond theory, as even though we talk about equality and non-discrimination, the difficulty certain groups experience to get involved in society and be accepted by the rest of the community, making respect their culture, is notorious.

Although we cannot deny nowadays there is more openness to those with an origin or cultural life different from most of the people, as it is increasingly common to see these people moving into the business world, we cannot deny they still call attention, one way or another, and are still seen differently.

All this shows the great difference between what is said and what is done as in the Constitution and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in article 27 devoted to culture "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community".⁷

⁶ Walsh Catherine. *Interculturalidad, Reformas Constitucionales y Pluralismo Jurídico* [Online]. Aportes Andinos ed. N° 2. Quito, Ecuador: Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Ecuador; Andean Program on Human Rights. April 2002. Available in the web: <http://hdl.handle.net/10644/543>.

⁷ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948-1998) América Latina Hoy [online] 1998, (December) : Available online: <<http://redalyc.uaemex.mx/redalyc/src/inicio/ArtPdfRed.jsp?iCve=30802010>> ISSN 1130-2887>

However, it would be absurd to deny that there has been progress in terms of acceptance and respect for other cultures, although not in the way these would have been wanted. Hopefully, as time goes by, we slowly open our minds and assimilate there are more communities with different ideologies and customs, but like us, deserve respect and recognition before the law and society.

1.2.4. Cultural change

Every society develops and lives in a changing world. These changes can be demonstrated in different aspects of a community, whether in the political, economic, social or cultural fields. Focusing on the topic of our interest, we can say that over time, culture of a community is evolving and adapts to new scenarios.

It would be difficult to ensure that a culture totally changes or remains exactly the same throughout time. We might rather talk about an evolution of culture, where traditions, customs and values are transformed while keeping the essence that identified members of the same community. In other words, despite changes impact on society structures, they maintain a certain level of stability, which makes that elements such as rules, beliefs, among others, remain valid despite external influences.

Even if a society looks to base its system within the parameters of stability and consistency in order to achieve balance, it would be difficult for this to work properly if the society is isolated from the world community; especially in times where the globalization process has reached a titanic impact, involving every society.

Thus, in a world like today's, where barriers have all practically disappeared and the free and open communication has led to the creation of a global society, a country that tries to protect its culture at all costs may be affected at different levels, both in the economic, political, and social aspects, etc.

However, even if globalization plays an extremely important role regarding cultural changes, it is necessary to have in mind that it is not the only element as there are many aspects that influence the conservation of cultural identity

in different degrees. One of them is migration; it will be analyzed further on. Thus, basically change comes from two different sources: on the one side, the technological field and on the other, the social field.

Linked to this, cultural change is given by factors that can be both external, ie. outside a society's own environment, and internal, those that occur within the same community. We should also contemplate the possibility that change may not be given by only one of these factors, but may be the result of a combination of both.

The level of influence of either endogenous or exogenous factors varies depending on the society; for example, if we compare a third world country or a developing country with a developed country, we can see that in the first case, there is a much higher level of influence of external elements or foreign elements than what it would be in a first world country. Different aspects can cause this but one of them would definitely be the technological aspect and the ability that major powers have to insert their culture in smaller societies. This is why we can speak of acculturation, a fact present in the vast majority of societies that adopt more easily something that benefits and enhances the lifestyle of the inhabitants. Coupled with technology, advances in communication make possible to talk about a universal culture that identifies the large global community.

1.3. Cultural Identity

1.3.1. Concepts

The concept of cultural identity, as well as the concept of culture, can hardly be placed into one single idea. None of the two terms can be attributed a fixed concept since they are built, modified and enlarged throughout the years, continuously feeding from the influence of many external elements that somehow influence their definition.

Cultural identity is socially and historically built, through and on the basis of a variety of aspects that create a picture of what culture is with its own characteristics that identify people and distinguish them from others.

Thus, in trying to define the concept of cultural identity, we can start by saying it covers all the symbols, traditions, values, beliefs and other elements that allow a group of people to identify between each other and identify what they have in common, thus promoting a sense of belonging to a community that shares similar characteristics. It is precisely these characteristics that allow people to recognize each other over time in the same physical and social environment, thus keeping active cultural identity.

Cultural identity of a people is combined by certain factors without which it could hardly form and maintain. Among these, there is the physical environment; this tangible element generates a feeling of appreciation to the built environment, where, surrounded by his peers, the person forms and shapes his attitude and behavior based on customs and traditions that eventually become part of that environment.

Moreover, there is all that is linked to the historical legacy and the importance and significance of facts and events that mark the destiny of a nation. In fact, this factor would be somehow the predecessor of the above as it is precisely those experiences that determine the fate of a nation that unify its society; feeling they have fought for the same goal and that the results have affected in the same way to all of them. This is the case for example, of those historic battles to conquer territories or colonies that unify communities making its members feel part of the same objective and results, thus turning these events in the triggers of the feeling that makes them value both the physical and social environment.

Besides, the evolutionary projection of identity also plays an important role, this taking into account globalization's strong influence on all people and nations. It is a phenomenon whose impact has included and covers all areas of a society, without leaving behind the culture. In this way, traditional culture of an individual and the influence of external cultures and customs from abroad combine and / or complement.

Memory is another major factor regarding cultural identity, its importance is such that it could be said that without memory there will be no identity

because this element is the foundation upon which what will then be recognized as one's own culture is built and formed.

Based on the above considerations, we can conclude that cultural identity is the set of values, symbols, beliefs, traditions and behaviors that, defined by its past history but subject to permanent changes from the influence of external factors, acts as the cohesive element within a social group thus generating in its members a sense of belonging to a community. This element transcends in time as through it, people recognize historically both in their physical and social environment, which helps keep alive their cultural identity.

1.3.2. Construction of Identity

Cultural identity is a building process both socio-historical and cultural; it is formed within a group or community based on a set of experiences, beliefs and shared values.

Yet, to be defined as a community, rather than being based on similarities, the group focuses on the obvious differences that divide it from other communities; in other words, we can say that a group is defined as opposed to others, and the intrusion of a foreign culture in the group's own culture would imply some sort of loss of autonomy and therefore the loss of identity.

When in a group everyone shares a sense of belonging and ownership in relation to the cultural aspect, its members are moved to preserve their identity as they all have the same goal: preserve and not lose their culture, for which the community needs the collaboration of all those who integrate it.

Essentially it is considered that cultural identity is given with the birth of the individual, but there are theories that differ because according to these, as humans are considered to be autonomous and independent, able to build their own identity, it is us who choose what we are and what we want to become. However, the construction of cultural identity as such, would be a combination of these two ideas because humans are already born within a community with an established culture where they acquire their identity, which over time can evolve and adapt new trends from different sources that

influence the formation and preservation of their own culture but always maintain that essence that makes them feel part of a group.

The active participation of the community regarding the construction of identity is very relevant because the term culture is somehow a plural term as it implies the existence of a collectivity that is identified precisely by sharing the same values; so, as long as the commitment of its members exist, culture will continue to built, form and distinguish.

1.3.3. Dual Identity

It is the identity that a person is forced to adopt when it's own is frowned upon by society. This happens where minorities feel that their identity is being somehow submitted, rejected, and their freedom of expression and function based on their ideas and beliefs is frowned upon and judged by the rest of the community.

In this case, to better understand the idea of a dual identity, we could refer to the issue of a dominant culture and dominated culture. In most societies, it is common that in practice, some kind of domination of one culture over another is evidenced. The dominant culture imposes the rules and conditions of the game while the dominated culture, in a lesser or greater extent resigns to certain aspects of its own culture.

This is common in countries that, due to migration, are formed by communities of different places that live together in the same state, thus creating what is known as subcultures, where everyone is part of a global culture but retain certain characteristics of their own identity that is often evidenced in their behavior.

It is usually the dominant culture, which maintains political and economic control and which is accepted by society as it is seen as ideal and correct. This is the basis upon which the behavior of a person and its projection of how things should be must be funded; it is why the members of the dominated culture are in an apparent need to resign to their own culture. As it is contrary to the dominant, that subculture is seen as incorrect and is frowned upon; thus it loses to a certain extent its identity.

1.3.4. Excluding Identity

We can understand an excluding identity as the one that due to the desire to protect itself, is isolated from other communities resulting in a kind of invisible and impassable border that keeps it away from other cultures which it stereotypes and qualifies as bizarre, different and therefore they are bad or wrong, as they see their own culture as the ideal one.

The members of this type of identity are usually conservative, defenders of the past and of traditions and call themselves victims of a process of socio-cultural change, which threatens and endangers their integrity⁸.

It is not new that most societies have shown a certain degree of difficulty in sharing or living in the same space with cultures other than their own. This can be historically evidenced if we remember the countless wars, conflicts and deaths caused by the clash of racial, religious, ethnic differences, etc.

Nowadays, cultural changes that affect societies, mainly brought on by the technological revolution as well as by migration, have made communities with different characteristics to meet daily. Seeking to protect their identity, communities create imaginary borders that lead to the exclusion or denial of what is considered to be strange. The result is problems like racism, a term used to describe a form of social discrimination by which the individual is valued based on certain physical characteristics such as skin color regardless of his/her nationality or origin. Among other forms of social intolerance, there is classism, which is defined as a form of prejudice based on the membership and differences among social classes; another example is xenophobia, which is a form of rejection towards foreigners or people from outside a country.

Therefore, exclusionary identity encompasses within itself the idea of a form of social aggregation where its members are the set ideal figure that lasts over time, while the *other* would become the menacing figure associated with what is wrong, bad or decadent. More than this, the exclusionary identity is linked to a type of authoritarian personality whose main characteristic is

⁸ Rivera Velez Fredy. *Migrantes y racismo en América Latina: Dimensiones Ocultas de realidades Complejas* [online]. CEPAL ed. N° 1. Santiago de Chile, Chile: Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos; Reunión de Expertas sobre Racismo y Género, June 2001. Available online: <<http://www.eclac.cl/mujer/publicaciones/sinsigla/xml/8/6828/migrantes.PDF>>

prejudice. One could say it is based on harmful ideologies for social living because in an effort to preserve its integrity, it fosters racial hatred, respect for aggressiveness, strength, hierarchies, threats and so on that negatively affect the coexistence of a community. A clear example of this was the terrible violence and authoritarianism during the Nazi era, the National Socialist movement led by Adolf Hitler where the use of force to defeat the opponent was common and justified. Based on the doctrine of the superiority of the Aryan race, about six million people died in the so-called concentration camps, mostly Jews. This terrible genocide is remembered as one of the worst crimes ever registered in the history of mankind. Nowadays, most of the German population keeps in their memory this era as one of the most shameful of their national history.

1.3.5. Ethnic Identity

It is a form of social and cultural construction that fosters a sense of belonging to a community. Ethnic belonging is a strong core or element that identifies its members, it implies strong essential features, characteristic of a community that differs from other cultures with elements such as language, customs, food, common history, religious beliefs, etc.

People who share an ethnic identity are generally in a natural environment, develop signs and social symbols and create and recreate their own art, establish their own standards, rules and values that will govern both social and political coexistence. They develop their religion and beliefs and thus generate their own cultural identity that is transmitted through their systems of education and training while maintaining an interaction with other cultures.

Unlike the previous identity, ethnic identity does not seek isolation from other cultures; the only intention is to protect and preserve its roots while having access to modern science and technology. These ethnic groups also aspire acceptance and respect in a world where the main ideal is to be at the forefront of development in all areas.

Given the strong influence of trends from abroad and the favorable reception they have had in different populations, nowadays incredibly what is ethnic is more criticized than what is foreign. To better understand this, if in a

workplace, two people with similar curricula apply for the same job but look different, one can assume which person will be accepted depending on the appearance.

If on the one hand, there is someone who belongs to a certain ethnic group that attends an interview dressed with traditional robes, hairstyle and appearance, while on the other hand the other candidate is dressed in an impeccable way with a suit and perfumed, most likely, especially when it comes to a large company, the chosen person will be the second one, just because his/her looks would better suit the image the company wants to project.

If this is not the case and the first person would be the chosen one, it is very likely he/she would be seen in a different way by his/her working peers or even in an inferior way, thus suffering from discrimination and non-acceptance given his/her conditions.

This is why, as stated above, the only thing these groups seek is recognition of their rights, to be valued as a culture as worthy and important as any other and this, without resulting in the isolation from the world community but on the contrary, seeking their inclusion within it.

1.4. Ecuador's Current Cultural Reality

1.4.1. Cultural Identity in Ecuador

The national identity of a country is a historical process in which society has participated and participates. This includes a set of features that identify its members and generate a sense of belonging. Among these features there is culture.

In the specific case of Ecuador, we can say its culture is a mixture of influences from aboriginal societies of the pre-Inca period, to the Spanish conquest and colonization and the republican and modern times.

Ecuador is known as a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country in which diverse cultures coexist. Among the most representative ethnicities, there are mainly *mestizos* with approximately 65% of the population, followed by *Amerindians* with 25%, the *pentecostés* or pure descendants of Spanish colons represent

7% of the population and the remaining 3% corresponds to a minority of *Afro-Ecuadorian* within which are included *Mulatos* and *Zambos*.

Ecuadorians generally identify with a national culture, but in addition to this, there are many indigenous communities who practice their own indigenous culture, have their own religion, which even if it is based on the mainstream one, has certain traits of ethnic groups. In the case of Ecuador, Catholicism is the predominant religion, but indigenous Ecuadorians often merge this religion with their own beliefs and traditional practices as the worship of the earth, the sun and the mountains.

The same applies to dialects, *Castilian* is recognized as the official language, but there are ethnic groups that maintain their own dialect. Among the most recognized languages there are the *Awapit*, *Chapalachi*, *Paicoca*, *Záparo*, among many others, but of all ethnic languages, the most remarkable one, due to its wide circulation, is *Quichua*, which is spoken mainly in villages of the Highlands and the Amazon.

Ecuador is known as a sovereign nation-state and speaking of a nation-state, it is necessary to consider the difference between these two terms. On the one side, a nation is the identity formed by a group of people who share similar traits that allow them to identify as part of a community who seeks its own political control and is different from the rest. On the other side, a state is an established collectivity, in a defined territory, which operates under a scheme of social, political and legal order, with the clear objective to seek the welfare of its entire community. Thus, when we talk about a nation-state, as it is with the case of Ecuador, we talk about a combination of these two concepts. It is Ecuadorians themselves who have been able to institutionalize the political power, meaning they have reached their own political control.

Although, our current constitution seeks to protect and promote our own culture, it is also true that it is difficult to contain the strong influence from abroad. Everyone has the freedom to responsibly decide on the customs and culture he wants to adopt or include and there is no law prohibiting such freedom.

It is impossible to close borders and separate from the rest of the world in order to preserve our culture. Measures can be taken to preserve our identity as what the government is doing nowadays, but their effectiveness depends on the support and commitment that each Ecuadorian demonstrates and his loyalty to his/her roots and traditions.

1.4.2. Perception and valuation of cultural identity by Youth in Ecuador

Cell phones, internet, iPods, mp4, etc. among others, are today's novelty. This is so important that eight-year-old children or even less, will know how to use them. However, if we ask their opinion on Ecuadorian culture or if we ask them what they know about it, more than one will have difficulties in answering.

Many aspects can be pointed to as detonators of this situation, however in the end, most of them will lead to the same reason: globalization, a phenomenon that broke out in the nineties and which unprecedented effects have virtually reached every corner of the world.

Globalization, a result of the many technological advances, has helped shorten distances and erase borders, facilitating communication and making them more efficient between countries that are separated by thousands of miles and whose inhabitants, without these developments, may have never come to know other cultures.

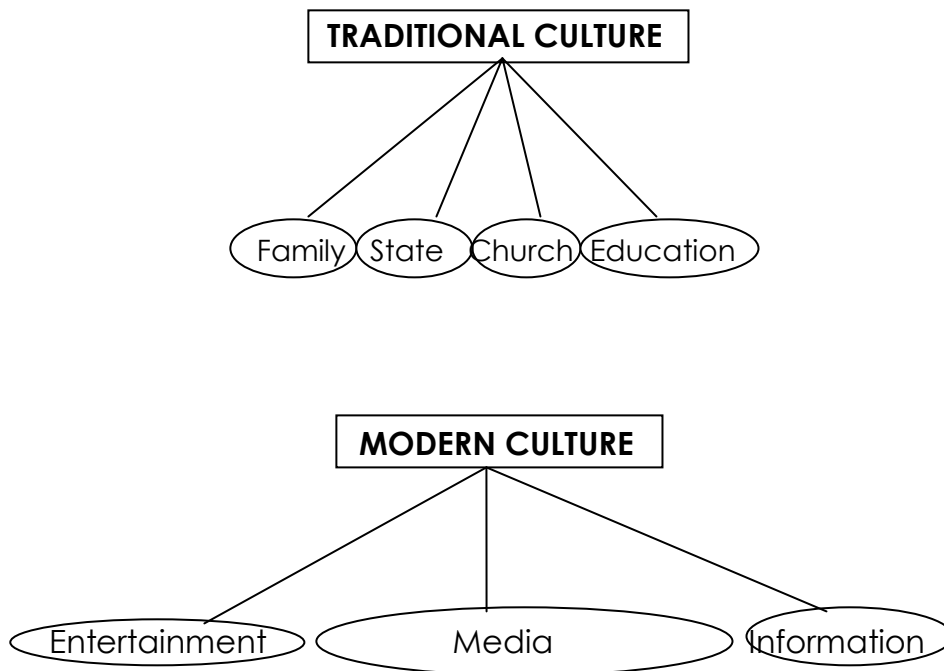
Our country, like many others, has been invaded by an infinity of foreign brands and ideas that somehow have changed our thinking and our vision of the world. It is absurd to try to deny that many imported products allow us to enjoy a lifestyle far more convenient and comfortable, and this may be the reason why we have become so dependent on progress and modernity.

It is important to note that the idea of culture can hardly be preserved intact throughout time. Its concept is based on something but new aspects are added according to the circumstances. Therefore, culture is built, created and recreated.

Sharing a common language, a defined territory, a common past, among other representative elements, makes us feel part of a community, of a

culture. These would become the basis upon which our identity is formed, which would allow us to auto-define as Ecuadorians.

There are several elements that influence and affect the cultural education of a child either helping maintain traditions or expand and modify their views on cultural identity. Among these elements there are:



We cannot deny that the influence coming from new technologies has made a notorious change in the mindset of the new generations. However, we cannot assure that Ecuadorian cultural identity is being entirely lost as it goes beyond a musical preference, apparel or slangs.

What we can say is that the current cultural identity has clear roots also known as traits of belonging (territory, language, patriotic symbols, etc.), upon which identity is formed among a combination of the current and the traditional context.

Judging, pointing or accusing of something is quite delicate because to do so we must be sure to be right and that we are not doing or have done the same things we criticize. We talk about a loss of identity because of changes

in areas such as: clothing, music, behavior, customs and even food, but this assertion should be analyzed with hindsight.

Fashion, is precisely one of the most changing elements in a society. At a certain time, the trend for women was the use of long, bulky dresses and big bows and hats, as for men, the use of suits, coats and hats was common. After this, what was on style were flared jeans for both men and women and finally nowadays things are different.

It would be hard to believe that at some point, what was common for the Ecuadorian society, regardless the social class a person would belong to, was to use of the so-called *polleras* for women and for men the characteristic pants of our own indigenous people. This clothing is considered as typical and there is no doubt about their importance and representativeness for the country, but this does not mean that not using them makes us less Ecuadorians, nor that we have a lack of commitment to our culture. As we learn to respect and value them for their meaning, they will continue to be part of our identity.

The same happens for the musical aspect: *pasillos* and *pasacalles* are considered by many as part of our culture, though it would be surprising to see a group of young people enjoying this music which, for *pasillos*, many consider very sad and for *pasacalles*, relate to songs played at the end of a party as an indication of its ending.

Now, if we look into the practical context, these genres are considered typical because they come from our land and whoever likes this music is considered to be 100% Ecuadorian. So the question is: Why are young people considered less Ecuadorians if at the end they support and like modern national music?

The difference is just that it is another musical genre. What is left to say is that judging cultural identity in the case of Ecuador must go beyond a preference or taste. Conclusions cannot be drawn based only on some aspects because we would end up issuing a somehow superficial judgment. As repeated several times, culture is what makes us feel part of something, part of a community, part of a group. Thus, Ecuadorian identity is just that, a feeling,

the feeling to feel Ecuadorian, feeling that we have a land to which we belong and which we love beyond its strengths or weaknesses.

1.5. Conclusions

This first chapter was intended to analyze the term *culture* and the key features arising from it. The intention was to understand what the idea of culture embraces, though as we have just seen, it is difficult to establish a clear and concrete concept of this very common word. Based on some definitions of known authors, we were able to develop a new concept with its most important features. We also wanted to highlight the important role that culture plays in any society in the world, beyond its geographic location, the size of their population or its political ideology. Its importance is such that in almost all communities the right to one's own culture is recognized. What is sought with this is to promote respect for the free development of peoples' cultural identity, something that was also examined in this chapter.

Besides, considering the fact that we live in a continuously evolving world, we treated the subject of cultural change and analyzed the facts that led to this situation. Because they are closely related, we also studied cultural identity; the way in which it is formed and developed till it becomes an important part of both society at large and the individual. Similarly, it was necessary to briefly analyze the main types of identity that have emerged over time as a result of certain characteristics, ideologies and circumstances.

Finally, to get involved a little more in the hard core of this thesis, the analysis was focused on the culture and identity of our country, analyzing both how it was built, formed and how it evolved and the way in which Ecuadorian youths perceive and experience our identity today.

CHAPTER 2:

The loss of cultural identity in Ecuador due to migration

2.1. Introduction

When analyzing theory, migration is a rather complex phenomenon but it is easily understood in practice and in the reality of any society. The vast majority of countries have a certain level of migration of its population, some more than others, but in the end, this factor has always been around and is part of the history of peoples. The human being, in the effort to find the best for himself and those around him, decides to go wherever he can achieve this goal, even if it involves distancing from home, his community and country.

There are several reasons for an individual or a community to migrate to another place, near or far from their place of origin. People can decide to move temporarily or permanently because of work, academic or economic motives, etc.

This is why migration is such a wide subject. We no longer talk about a single type of migration or migrant but of several: those who migrate out of the country, those who migrate from city to city, those who migrate temporarily, etc. Besides, both causes and consequences of migration are added to this phenomenon, thus turning it into a large scale and impact social feature.

Our country has not been left outside the scope of migration. To the contrary, Ecuador like many other Latin American countries shows high rates of migration, to the extent that remittances from abroad have come to be an important source of income. This has improved in some ways the economy of Ecuadorians. However, ensuring that migration is entirely beneficial for a country can be uncertain and even doubtful. We can not assess this phenomenon by taking into account only the economic aspect, it is necessary to analyze other areas which are affected such as the social aspect, and more specifically culture, which is the focus of this thesis.

In this chapter, we will analyze migration in general and its main features to then relate it to our country and thus determine the importance it has reached and the role it plays in our society. We will mainly focus on two of the areas affected by the migratory effect, which are culture and the social structure in itself, analyzing on the one hand the main causes that have led people to make the decision of leaving their place of origin and the

consequences this has brought, both for the family and for society in general, and on the other hand, we will study the impact and the advantages and disadvantages of this important social phenomenon.

2.2. Migration

2.2.1. Concept

Migration is latent phenomenon in every society and as it affects everyone directly or indirectly because of the influence it exerts, it is an attractive subject to everyone. Like culture, migration is a social element difficult to treat under a single idea or concept and it embraces so many relevant aspects that it is difficult to define it in a clear and concise manner.

Migration processes have gained increasing importance especially for their rapid growth in numbers mainly in small or developing countries. This situation hampers an appropriate measure on the indices that determine the relative number of people migrating to other destinations. Besides, this phenomenon is gaining greater notoriety in the social aspect as its impact has a global scope because it not only affects countries of origin but also the countries chosen as a destination. Precisely this impact also complicates the formulation of a concrete concept for migration, as it is necessary to analyze the different aspects upon which this social problem exerts its influence.

However, we have decided to study certain definitions given by some known scholars on the subject, to then define our own idea on this concept. We can start addressing the concept proposed by Joaquín Arango, which states that:

"Migrations are movements or changes of residence to a certain distance – that must be significant – which are relatively permanent or are willing to be permanent."⁹

This is a concrete and direct definition by which we understand migration as the term used to describe the movement of people for a time considered to

⁹ Arango. Joaquín. *Las Leyes de la Migración de E. G. Ravenstein, cien años después*. [online]. Ed. Nº 32. Spain: Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociales (REIS), 1985. Available online: http://passthrough.fw-notify.net/download/904926/http://www.reis.cis.es/REISWeb/PDF/REIS_032_03.pdf

be long-term or permanent and to a considerable distance from the place of origin.

On the other hand, Jorge Tizón describes this social phenomenon with the following words:

"Migration leading to the classification of persons as emigrants or immigrants, is the one in which the transfer takes place from one country to another, or from one region to another different and distant enough, for a long enough time, so as to imply living in another country and develop in it everyday life activities."¹⁰

As with the first definition, this concept focuses on the movement of people from their place of origin to another that is considerably distant from their own, which is permanent or at least long enough for a person to settle and develop daily activities.

Finally, it is interesting to analyze the concept proposed by Carlos Giménez Romero, who describes migration as:

"The movement of a person or group of people from their usual place of residence to another, to remain there more or less time, with the intention to satisfy some need or achieve a certain improvement"¹¹

Based on this description we can see that this definition, like the above, focuses on the idea that this phenomenon involves the transfer or movement of people to another place far from their original residence for a period of time considered extensive; but unlike the previous concepts, this definition includes the theory that people make this choice because they have the intention to gain benefits for themselves and / or to those around them.

Following the above, we can design a better idea about what comprises migration. As for a personal concept, we can say that migration is a social phenomenon result or consequence of a certain situation or circumstance in

¹⁰ Tizón García, Jorge L. et al. "Migraciones y Salud Mental" 1st edition, Barcelona, Promociones y Publicaciones Universitarias PPU. editorial, 1993.

¹¹ Giménez Romero, Carlos. "¿Que es la Inmigración? ¿Un Problema? ¿Una Oportunidad? ¿Cómo lograr la integración de los Inmigrantes? ¿Multiculturalismo o Interculturalidad?", 2nd edition, Barcelona, R.B.A. Integral editorial, 2003.

which a person or group of people decides to abandon its original place of residence and move to another chosen destination, considerably far away, crossing thus geographical boundaries and for a relatively long period, usually intended to satisfy a need or seek some kind of benefit.

2.2.2. Types of Migrants

In order to classify a migrant in a certain category, it is necessary to take into account several aspects to create a classification that includes all the characteristics that this phenomenon embraces. The main idea of migration is that in every case, the movement of people is the same; however, certain features or specific details of the displacement, time, distance, causes, among others, can vary. Because of this, we can classify this social factor as follows:

- **Internal Migration**

This term is used to describe the movements or displacements of a person or group of people within his own country in the search of a new place of residence. Like any migration process, it has consequences for the place of origin and of destination, for the community itself and for the migrants and their families. Regarding the effects caused by the community, we refer to demographics, while in the case of the person and his family, we focus more on the social, cultural, academic and economic aspects.

Movements with the following patterns; countryside-countryside, city-city, city-countryside or countryside-city, can be considered as internal migration. The latter pattern is the most common, especially because the lifestyle of the city attracts many in terms of comfort, work, education and stability. The reasons that lead to this kind of mobilization may vary but certainly the main cause lies with the economic aspect. The presence of this type of migration in society dates back from long ago. In the beginnings, this type of migration was seen as the main component of the urbanization process. Its role in the economic aspect was considered as positive because in a way, it fostered economic activity of the community.

However, the rapid increase in internal migration rates led to fast urban population growth, which caused a decrease in the interest in this phenomenon and rather increased concerns about it, as it was difficult to satisfy the demands of this rising population. Social problems became more present, not only in urban but also in rural areas. On the one hand, in the countryside, agricultural activities were affected as production diminished due to lack of labor to work the land due to the migratory process, while in the city, labor demand began to outstrip supply, which put internal migration from the countryside to the city in a second place, being displaced by migration between cities. Even if large cities were initially chosen as main destination, when saturated by migrants, destination changed to intermediate cities. Peasants were no longer the only internal migrants and city-dwellers joined them when, living in overcrowded cities, they chose to migrate to other places maybe smaller but with greater opportunities.

In the particular case of Ecuador, the main cities chosen as a destination for internal migration were Quito and Guayaquil, the latter being the main agro-export port of the country. Production of cocoa, banana and the subsequent consolidation of Ecuador as an oiling country, were determining factors in the transition from a rural to an urban society, as we can see in the following table from the population census:

Total, urban and rural population, 1950-2010

Población total, urbana y rural, 1950-2010

Año censal	Población total	Área urbana		Área rural	
		Población	%	Población	%
1950	3 202 757	913 932	28,5%	2 288 825	71,5%
1962	4 564 080	1 612 346	35,3%	2 951 734	64,7%
1974	6 521 710	2 698 722	41,4%	3 822 988	58,6%
1982	8 138 974	3 985 492	49,0%	4 153 482	51,0%
1990	9 648 189	5 345 858	55,4%	4 302 331	44,6%
2001	12 156 608	7 431 355	61,1%	4 725 253	38,9%
2010	14 483 499	9 090 786	62,8%	5 392 713	37,2%

Fuente: INEC, Censos de población 1950-2010

Source: INEC, Population census from 1950 until 2010

Table 2.1

It is important to note that in reality, internal migration was far from the initial idea peasants had that it was an opportunity to change and improve their quality of life. In fact, because of the poor preparation of rural people, they had a hard time finding a qualified job with good economic benefits and thus the majority, even today, have informal jobs such as with very low earnings. They work as carriers, street vendors, street performers and in the worst cases, are devoted to crime and prostitution to survive. All this turned into a social problem that successive governments have failed to solve given the unstoppable growth of these populations.

It should be noted that the above could be the result of internal displacements due to the economic situation, which although is the main reason leading to such movements, it must be remembered that it is not the only cause. Other reasons such as work and the academic aspect influence internal migration. One could say that in most cases these causes are mainly valid for city-to-city migration. In relation to education, this is increasingly common for young people, which especially in small cities or provinces, decide to go to college in places where educational opportunities are greater with higher quality than what they could find in their hometowns. Eventually, for diverse reasons, many of them end settling definitively there and make this destination their new home.

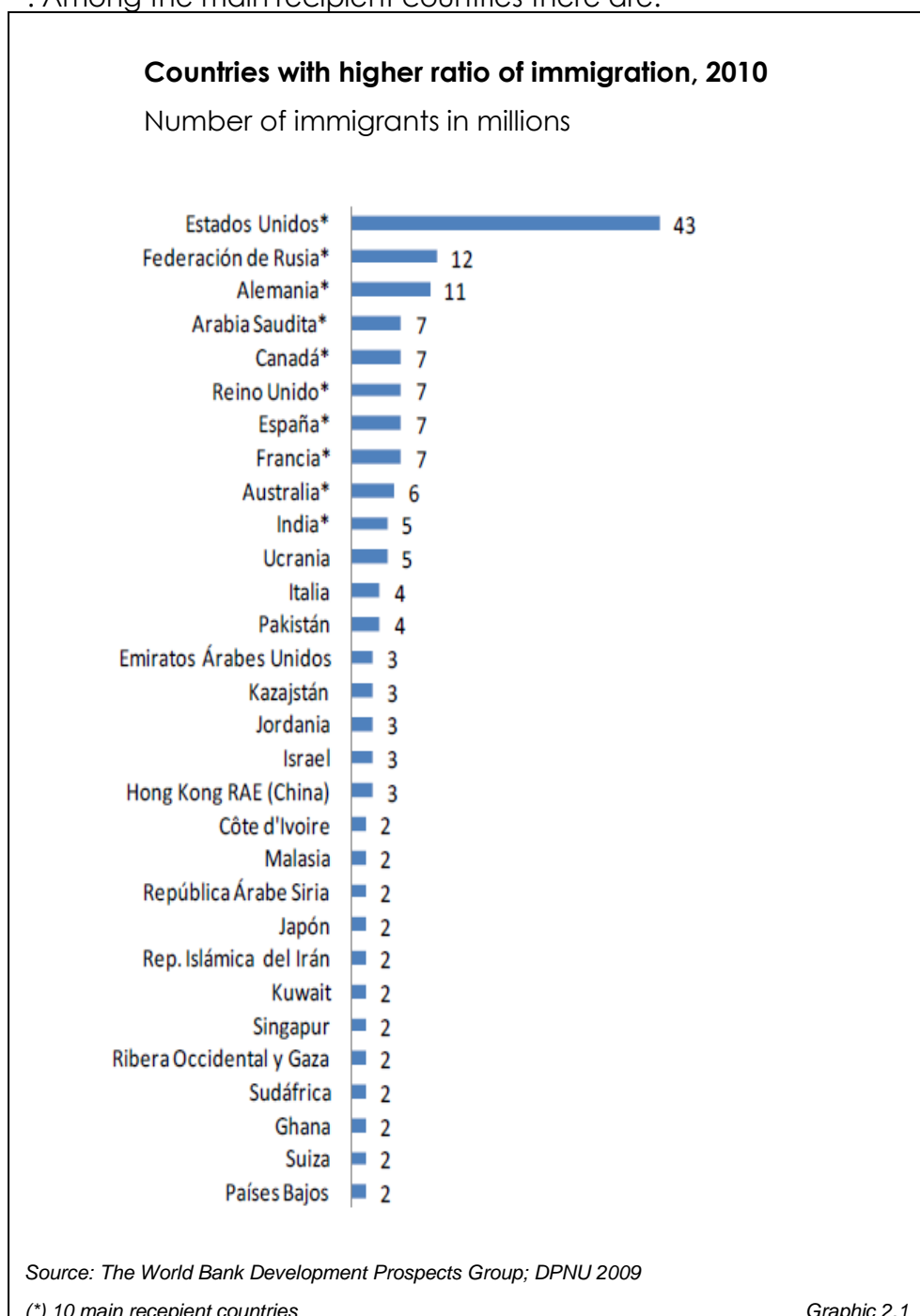
In the same way, although not as common, there are cases where because of job opportunities people decide to move to other places, and while it may be for a determined period of time, there are times when people stay permanently and make their lives there.

Finally, we should not neglect the urban-rural migration, which is important, although to a lesser degree, especially for elderly or retirees who decide to move to remote areas to get away from noise, traffic and the accelerated city lifestyle to change to a more calm and relaxed lifestyle.

- **External Migration**

This type of migration refers to the movement of a person or a group of people for a long period or permanently, from their place of origin to other places outside their country, thus crossing borders. "More than 215 million

people or around 3% of the world's population live outside their country of origin... Remittances registered in developing countries were estimated to attain US\$ 325.000 millions in 2010, which largely exceeds the volume of official aid and represents about 10% of the GDP of many developing countries"¹². Among the main recipient countries there are:



¹² Rhata, Dilip. Mohapatra, Sanket. Silwal, Ani. *Datos sobre Migración y Remesas 2011* [Online]. Ed. N°2. World Bank: World Bank Group, 2011. Available online: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1110315015165/Factbook2011Spanish.pdf>

As previously reiterated, the migratory phenomenon goes back to long ago, but is in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century when migration begins to acquire a highly relevant role, to the point of no longer being just a social situation to become a factor of political, economic and cultural interest. Because of its international character, it affects both the country of departure and the one of destination, so it attracts even more interest from foreign governments and agencies, thus turning into a global threat.

External or international migration has come to acquire such an importance that it has become the focus of many confrontations between governments and a campaign promise in search of a solution to a situation that is now part of the reality of every society. Given the size and rapid growth of this phenomenon, it is rather difficult to assume a number of migrants worldwide, but according to the 2005 report on the Division of Population published by the United Nations, the number of migrants reached nearly 200 million¹³.

There is no doubt that as for today, this social problem has become a global problem as more and more countries are involved in this complicated phenomenon that has advantages and disadvantages affecting both the family, the society, the country and the world. Although migration is highly restricted, this has not been an impediment to prevent the rise in rates, on the contrary, it is precisely this reason that has led to illegal immigration rates to rise with no limits.

Globalization has also contributed to reaching the high rates this social problem presents today. The benefits it offers have made the global perspective of the population to be highly positive thus turning any country in a potential destination for migrants. Moreover, the view that globalization generates respect to transportation and communication facilities, has fostered the idea that migration is perhaps the best opportunity to improve the lifestyle of people. However, its consequences affect both the country of departure and that of arrival, as we will discuss later on; but one of these

¹³ Report of the Global Commission on International Migration "Migration in an interconnected world: New directions for action" [Online]. Remittances and Development. Ed. N°1. Switzerland: Global Commission on international migration (GCIM), October 2005 [ref. April 23, 2009]. Available online: <http://www.remesasydesarrollo.org/uploads/media/Spanish.pdf>

consequences is the increase in demand, in all aspects, which greatly exceeds the supply. This is a major and increasing concern for recipient countries that need to fully meet all the needs of the community.

Besides what has already been raised, there are also social problems such as racism, discrimination, crime, xenophobia, and intolerance, among others, because of the problems that can be caused by the coexistence of different cultures in one place. Finally, it should be noted that not all the international migration outlook is negative, it also happens to be somewhat beneficial for countries, especially in economic terms, and particularly in developed countries where many immigrants perform jobs that people in that country are not willing to make.

- **Temporary Migration and Permanent Migration**

The concept of these types of migration is given by the duration of the displacement of the migrant, meaning that if after a period of time the individual returns to his place of origin, he can be considered a temporary migrant, whereas if the person decides to stay in a definitive way, he will be considered a permanent migrant.

The reasons behind temporary migration usually involve work or academic matters. After a certain period of time and after completing a certain goal, the individual returns to his place of origin. While in the case of permanent migration, reasons that lead a person to settle definitively in a place are most commonly economic. It is perhaps precisely for this reason that migration is much stronger phenomenon in developing countries where, unlike the *major powers*, poverty rates are much higher.

Although it is difficult to estimate an accurate number of immigrants given that most of them are illegal, the Ecuadorian Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC) presented the official number of permanent migrants in 2010, which reached 2,500,000 Ecuadorians abroad.

- **Individual and Family Migration**

In this case, the definition of this type of migration is directly related to the number of family members who decide to emigrate. In the first case, an individual migration is considered as such when only one family member, regardless of gender, age or rank, travels. In the second case, a family migration happens when the entire family decides to travel. Of these types, family migration is quite rare as what is usual is that a single member of the family, which tends to be the father, travels and once established there, there is a tendency for the rest of the family or at least some of its members to join him. But bearing in mind the difficulty of moving the entire family, as to do so the first migrant needs to be legal, family migration rates are very low.

- **Voluntary and Forced Migration**

The definitions in these cases are given by the situation or circumstance in which the decision to migrate is taken. In the case of voluntary migration, the person, making use of his free will, decides to emigrate elsewhere regardless of the reasons that motivate this. On the contrary, forced migration occurs when the person, against his will, is forced to leave his place of origin under the pressure of external factors that are outside his control.

Although voluntary migration is much more common and recognized because it includes mainly economic migrants, ie those who decide to migrate due to financial problems in order to improve their situation; numbers for forced migration also have been increasing in recent times. This category mainly includes the so-called refugees, meaning people that because of a racial, religious, political or other reason are forced to leave their country and these same reasons deter them from returning because they do not trust their governments' protection.

In the particular case of Ecuador, the country has turned into the largest recipient of refugees in Latin America, recording more than 54 000 displaced, mostly from the northern neighboring country. An estimated 1,500 Colombians enter the country monthly mainly due to the violence that has

afflicted that country for several years¹⁴. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that over time, organizations like the United Nations have tried to include in this category people who because of natural disasters have seen the need to migrate to other places, in order to have the protection they cannot find in their own countries.

2.2.3 Causes and Consequences of the Migratory Phenomenon in Ecuador in the new millennium

Migration is not a new issue for Ecuador. On the contrary, one could say that the country has a vast experience with the subject, to the extent that this phenomenon has become an important part of our daily lives. Every day more people are added to the high rates of emigrants the nation records thus making increasingly difficult to give an estimate figure of this social problem. While migration has been going on forever, in the particular case of Ecuador, migration rates were at their most critical level in 1999 when the country was involved in one of the worst economic and financial crises of its history. The bank holiday, the devaluation of the currency, political instability, among others, are some of the events that marked that gray stage of Ecuador's history.

Because of all these facts, more than one social sector was affected generating a kind of domino effect where the main loser turned out to be population in general. The high political, economic and financial instability led to the bankruptcy of banks and businesses, caused an alarming increase in the unemployment rate which resulted in an intense migratory process, which was seen as the only valid solution for people in these difficult times.

As a result of the 1999 crisis, rates were not at all favorable for the country. On the one hand, the inflation rate increased to 60.7% by December of that year, which affected the wages of workers and therefore their purchasing power, which decreased thus generating a drop in companies' production

¹⁴ *Ecuador, con más de 54.000 mil Refugiados* [Online]. Quito, Ecuador: Diario El Universo, June 21, 2011. Available online: <http://www.eluniverso.com/2011/06/21/1/1355/ecuador-mas-54-mil-refugiados.html>

that reached 7.3% due to the lower demand. The result of this was that companies and factories were forced to reduce work shifts and the number of workers thus increasing the unemployment rate that passed from 11.5% in 1998 to 15.1% in 1999. All this led people to see migration as a way to survive in places where perhaps their wage could at least allow them to maintain their family and overcome the crisis.

Although economic reasons are predominant regarding migration, we cannot exclude other causes that, to a lesser degree, lead to this decision, including religious, political and natural factors.

On the other hand to talk about the consequences of migration in our country, we need to take into account the fact that there is both a positive and a negative side as a result of this social phenomenon. If we start with the advantages, the most favored aspect is the economic one. Undoubtedly remittances have become an important part of our economy. This in turn has allowed the relatives of migrants improve their standard of living providing them with better access to important social areas such as education, health, food, housing, among others. However, as there are several benefits generated by this phenomenon, we cannot forget to mention the disadvantages that, to a greater or lesser extent, are detrimental to the migrant, his family and society itself. They include: changing the traditional nuclear family, family separation, the brain drain, the dangers illegal migrants have to face, the difficulty of getting employment abroad, large debts that come with the so-called "coyotes" and that many times cannot be covered leading to the seizure of the few assets migrants have, the loss of culture, among many other prejudices.

Further on we will analyze in more detail the multiple consequences generated by migration, focusing on specific areas to better understand the magnitude and impact of this phenomenon, which is already an undeniable social reality.

2.2.4. Main cities affected because of migration in the new millennium

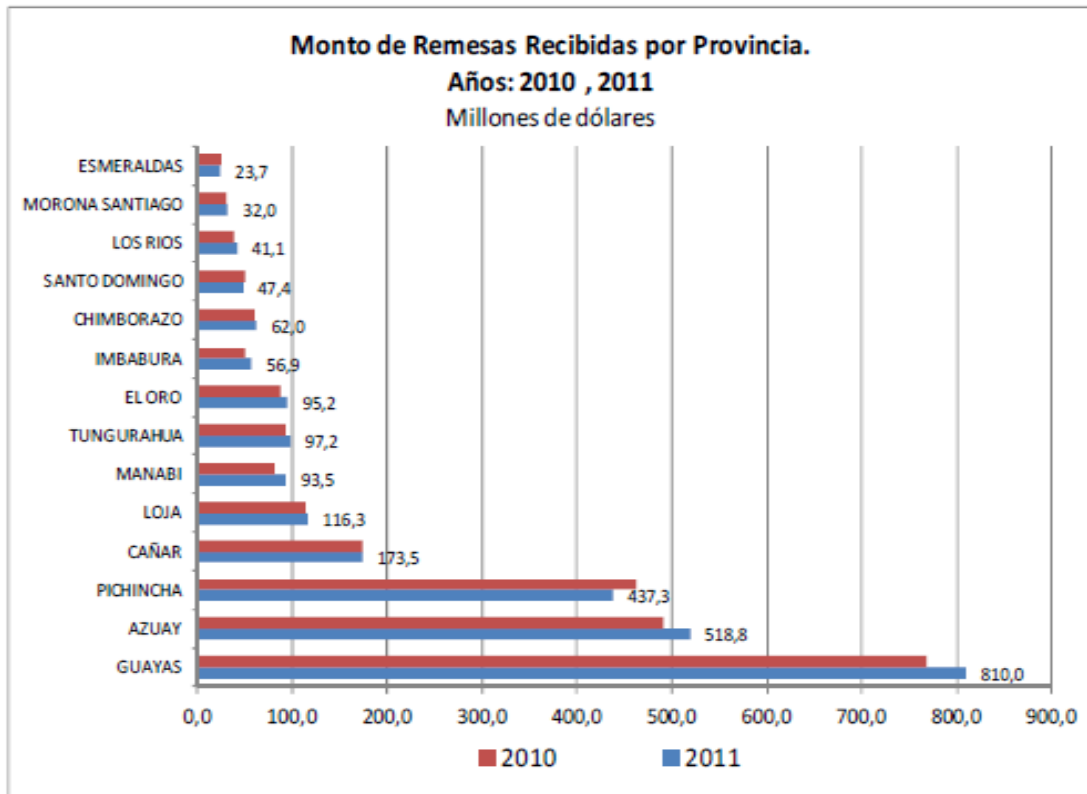
After the critical situation of instability through which the country passed in 1999, waves of migration increased alarmingly. However, we must bear in

mind that, although to a lesser extent, migration was always present in the Ecuadorian society and taking this into account, we can say that Cuenca is the city that records the oldest migratory activity. In the fifties, because of the fall in prices of *Panama hats* abroad, a characteristic economic activity in Azuay and Cañar, these provinces were the ones with the highest emigration rate in the country mainly directed to the United States.

The coastal zone of Ecuador also registered important migratory activity in the seventies. However, after the economic crisis of the late nineties, Quito was the city that recorded higher rates of emigration, reason why it is considered the city with more recent migratory activity.

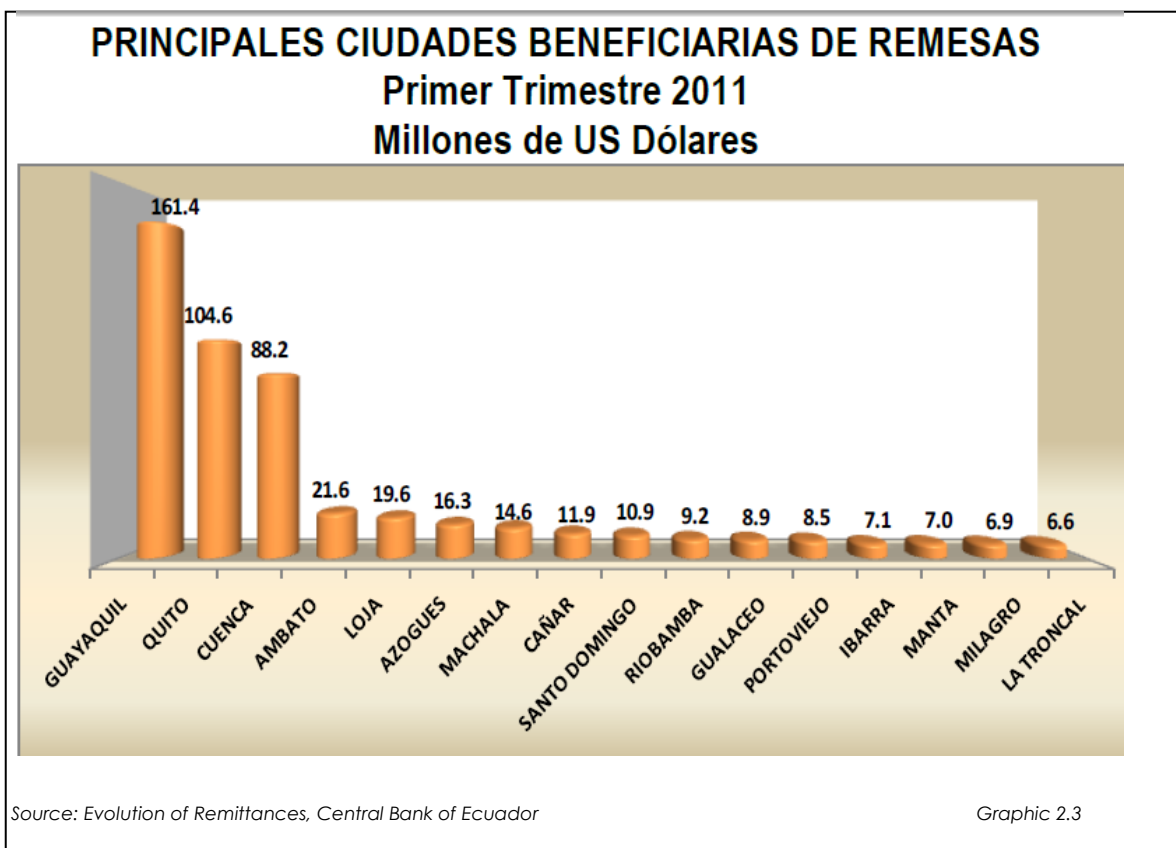
Concerning remittances, the most representative provinces, based on the origin of migrants and therefore their beneficiaries, are Guayas, Azuay and Pichincha, which total USD 1.7661 billion¹⁵. This can be seen in the following table showing the amount of remittances by province from 2010 to 2011:

¹⁵ Armendáriz Naranjo, Oscar. *Remesas y Sistema Financiero* [Online]. Ed. N° 1. Superintendencia de Bancos y Seguros del Ecuador (*Banking and Insurance Supervisory Agency of Ecuador*), December 2011. Available online: http://www.sbs.gob.ec/medios/PORTALDOCS/downloads/articulos_financieros/Estudios%20Tecnico%20de%20Remesas/2011/AT43_2011.pdf



Source: Remittances and the Financial System. Banking and Insurance Supervisory Agency of Ecuador Graphic 2.2

In a more specific analysis, the graphic below shows the major cities that benefited from remittances during the first trimester of 2011:



Source: Evolution of Remittances, Central Bank of Ecuador Graphic 2.3

Although the above data corresponds to the first trimester of 2011, It is important to note that between 1995 and 2000, the province of Azuay was the one that presented a higher rate in terms of remittances with a share of 45.6%, in contrast to what is recorded in current data where Guayas heads this list. Between 1995 and 2000, within the province of Azuay, the cantons of Girón, Chordeleg, Paute and Sta. Isabel were the most representative. The second place was for the province of Manabí with 5.4%, followed by Loja with 4.4%, while the remaining 40.9% spread between Cañar and the rest of the country¹⁶.

2.2.5. The level of dependence of Ecuador on migration.

As for today, the migratory phenomenon has become a constant in Ecuador's reality. The typical family portrait, who usually belong to a lower-middle or low socioeconomic level, who assume large debts with the so-called "chulqueros", the farewell of the future migrant and thus the disintegration of a home, the anguishing voyage, and (whenever the migrant gets to his destination) the worries that come with starting a life from scratch in a totally foreign place; are all part of a picture that has been common for the Ecuadorian community since long ago. On the contrary, it is more and more common to listen to this type of stories, which do not always end up well.

The social importance this factor has acquired over the years is remarkable. The dependence our country has developed towards migration is mainly evident in the economic aspect. In fact, it is considered that "dollarization, implemented in the country since January 2000 during the government of Dr. Jamil Mahuad Witt, and later established with the assumption of power by Dr. Gustavo Noboa Bejarano in the same month and year, is sustained by remittances."¹⁷

¹⁶ Eguez, Alejandro. *Las remesas de emigrantes en Ecuador tras la dolarización* [Online]. Ed. N° 1. Ecuador: Observatorio de la Economía Latinoamericana, 2001. Available online: <http://www.eumed.net/cursecon/ecolat/ec/Eguez-remesas-A.htm>

¹⁷ Eguez, Alejandro. *Las remesas de emigrantes en Ecuador tras la dolarización* [Online]. Ed. N° 1. Ecuador: Observatorio de la Economía Latinoamericana, 2001. Available online: <http://www.eumed.net/cursecon/ecolat/ec/Eguez-remesas-A.htm>

One could say that this phenomenon clearly fits an action and reaction situation in which the set off or trigger in most cases, turns out to be the country's economic situation and the reaction or the result of it is precisely migration. Ecuador a developing country, has not been precisely characterized by its political and economic stability, on the contrary, bad governments have manipulated the country leading it to a critical situation where corruption, inflation and unemployment led to the point where the country, without notice, had to face the overthrow of the government and dollarization, which generated perhaps one of the most serious crises Ecuador has had to passed through.

In the past two years, remittances have not lost their role in the economy of Ecuador as they represent around 10% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). "The flow of remittances the country received during the year 2011 amounted to 2.6724 billion dollars, which is higher by 3.1% than what was recorded for 2010, with an equivalent difference of \$ 80.9 million."¹⁸

Accounting for approximately 15.1% of the national income, today remittances are the second source of income for the country, after the so-called "black gold". This highlights the importance of migration for our nation. As discussed above, there are even some experts who attribute the sustainability of dollarization since the first year of its implementation to remittances. Actually, remittances have become the main, if not the only income for many households so we can therefore conclude that the dependence of Ecuador to migration is primarily of economic nature.

2.3. Migration and Culture

2.3.1. Influence of migration on the Ecuadorian culture in the new millennium

After analyzing independently both migration and culture, we have evidenced the importance of these elements in every society. As two factors with a strong influence, it is important to determine the direct relation between migration and culture, and the effects they have on each other. In

¹⁸ Armendáriz Naranjo, Oscar. *Remesas y Sistema Financiero* [Online]. Ed. N° 1. Ecuador: December 2011. Available online: http://www.sbs.gob.ec/medios/PORTALDOCS/downloads/articulos_financieros/Estudios%20Técnicos/2011/AT43_2011.pdf

the specific case of our country, given its socio-economic reality, migration has become another one of its features, which strengthened after the 1999 crisis.

As highlighted above, migration has both positive and negative aspects in different areas. Concerning cultural issues, we cannot venture to say that migration has affected in a totally negative way culture; it would be necessary to analyze the both sides of the coin to determine the reality. The influence it has exerted and it exerts will depend on the point of view from which it is analyzed or from the perspective it is seen, ie. most likely, the views of an indigenous person and those of someone who lives in the city, of a young and an old man, of a rich and a poor, of a migrant and a non-migrant, etc., can be totally different.

Migratory waves in the new millennium have somehow reactivated the country's economy. Nevertheless, concerning the cultural sphere, it is important to note that Ecuador is not the only country that has been affected by the influence of great powers. Children and relatives of migrants who are part of the Ecuadorian culture should not have the sole responsibility to keep alive our traditions. It is each and every one of us who must fight to preserve what is ours. It is also us who have been part of the technological revolution and of globalization, and this with no distinction of sex, social status or age as there are more and more facilities for everyone to have access to new technologies.

Isolating oneself from the world community to protect one's own culture is not only difficult but also detrimental to a society. As already mentioned, migration occurs mainly for economic reasons. People who cannot subsist in their own countries or people, who simply want to improve their living standard, decide to leave their place of origin in the search of their dreams. In the particular case of Ecuador, few migrants decide to return to the country, the vast majority ends up settling in their destination making it their new home. This generates two realities, that of the immigrant, who is directly influenced, and that of the family who, thanks to remittances, is able to access a world they did not know before.

It would be absurd to deny that many migrants adapt to the customs of their countries of destination, even more for those who have been residing there for several years. Many of us have evidenced cases of migrants who, after some time, return with a mentality, a way of acting and even a special dialect that denotes a mixture of languages and words different from their own. This combination of dialects has come to be known as *Spanglish*, a term that defines the fusion of English with Spanish. But we should keep in mind that this also happens for people who settle for short periods of one year or less. The mystery is thus: is it really migration that affects culture or is it a matter of the person?

As stated earlier, before reaching to a conclusion, it is important to consider both sides of the coin. The example of the United States, a country with one of the highest immigration rates, can help clarify this situation. In it, a variety of cultures live together, among which there is the Ecuadorian community, with about 591 000 people¹⁹, who almost all identify with the reality of living in a foreign country, illegally and in search of a dream. Perhaps it is precisely for this reason that they identify as part of a group, because they have been through the same experiences and have had the same feelings, fears and aspirations. All this unites them even more and this is why Ecuadorians, as a community, try to keep alive their own customs so that being away from their beloveds is less difficult.

However, this does not always happen because some prefer to adopt the customs of the host country, putting aside their own, thus forgetting their roots. So, in response to the question above, we can say that beyond migration, globalization, technology and other factors that affect the preservation of culture, the most important factor for the subsistence of migrants is themselves. An individual who recognizes and values his roots, who respects and ensures the respect of his customs and traditions, will be the best tool to preserve what he owns in terms of culture against a global culture and community where barriers have become almost imperceptible.

¹⁹ Rivas Zambrano, Rody. *En Estados Unidos hay 591 000 ecuatorianos* [Online]. Ed. N°1. Ecuatorianos por el mundo, May 2012. Available online: http://www.ecuatorianosporelmundo.com/home/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=76:en-eeuu-hay-591-mil-ecuatorianos&catid=37:ecuatorianos-en-eeuu&Itemid=56

2.3.2. Positive and Negative aspects

Like any social phenomenon, migration as such generates effects that positively and negatively influence a country. In the case of Ecuador, the main benefits of migration remain in the economic aspect. Remittances have helped revive the Ecuadorian economy especially when it was most needed, ie. during the transition from the *sucre* to the *dollar* as national currency. Their importance was such that many scholars claim that the dollarization was possible because of remittances from migrants.

From a cultural perspective, although personal judgment has much to do as well, we cannot deny that migration has been very helpful for the enrichment of culture. As stated before, the new millennium was characterized mainly by the unprecedented technological revolution. Looking backwards, the speed with which the man has shortened distances favoring communication, has been impressive. The main feature of this revolution has been without any doubt the Internet and all the benefits it has brought, allowing inclusion to the global community.

While we live in a sovereign country with its own laws, territory and culture, we cannot forget that Ecuador is also part of a global community and moves within a global arena where the only attempt of isolation can lead to serious consequences that would negatively affect the nation. New technologies have helped us open our minds, experience new cultures, arts, customs, traditions and so on, allowing us to take the best of each. To live locked in one's own ideology does not always turn to be the right thing because it prevents man to evolve and in turn, makes it more difficult to adapt to new social and global scenarios.

Globalization is an unstoppable phenomenon where only those who can adapt survive to it. This does not imply in any way abandoning our culture to form part of another, on the contrary, it is necessary to know, appreciate and respect well enough our roots to form part of the modern world, protecting our culture without getting isolated from the rest.

However, globalization is not the only phenomenon that has "threatened" the conservation of cultures. Although it is the most important element, there are

others such as migration. In the particular case of an immigrant, we can say he is under a direct influence or as others would call "under a direct threat to his own culture" because it is the immigrant who takes his culture somewhere else and not the opposite. Nevertheless, despite this and the difficult situation an immigrant has to live, we cannot deny the opportunity for the person to get to know a new world, new customs, new ideologies that in the long run help him fit his current reality; besides being able to transmit this new knowledge to his relatives who perhaps are unlikely to travel abroad and live on their own such experiences.

In addition and from an opposite point of view, we can say that migration is an opportunity for a person to share and transmit his culture in places where foreigners could hardly get to know and care about his country. In other words, migration is the opportunity for the immigrant to publicize his country to the world. In both the United States and Spain, which are the main destinations chosen by Ecuadorian migrants, many Ecuadorian residents have had the opportunity to get a living from their own businesses that are usually related to gastronomy. Besides publicizing Ecuador through its traditional food, they share a little more about our culture through photos, decoration and stories thus attracting the attention of the international community to our country, which in turn encourages and promotes tourism.



RESTAURANT: EL FOGON ECUATORIANO – MADRID

Photography 2.1

If we focus on the negative aspects of migration on the culture, we can say it mainly affects third world countries or developing countries, as they are those that have the highest rates of emigration. It is important to note that although culture is an element that identifies and distinguishes a community from others, this is because the community is formed of people who individually hold values, customs, ideologies and thoughts, which resemble those of other individuals of the same group. Therefore we can say that each of us carries the flag of our own culture.

At present, we have been invaded by technological developments and this, with the effects of migration, makes it not surprising for our mentality to change; society itself, compared to previous years, has different shades and this especially for new generations. Nowadays, it would be interesting and appealing to see a child playing with traditional toys like the well-known *trompo*, *macatetas*, *canicas*, among others. This also happens similarly with

other aspects such as clothing, hairstyles, preferences, etc. But to say for sure that these features are being lost because of migration would be somewhat uncertain because more than a substitution of culture, it is more appropriate to refer to this phenomenon as an evolution of culture.

Not only the migrant and his family are the only ones likely to change their habits given their circumstances; there is no need to migrate, or move to another country to have access to new fashions or trends. Simply with useful tools like Internet, television, radio, magazines, etc., one can learn about and absorb other cultures. So the problem does not just depend on migration but also on the individual as such. A migrant who lives in another country and who does not feel self-pride because of his roots, who does not value and respect them, will then be an easy prey of acculturation and it is precisely here where migration becomes a real threat to cultural preservation.

As one begins to assimilate foreign customs as being their own, giving priority to them and replacing them by new ones, the migrant slowly steps aside from his culture thus generating its loss. This situation becomes even more serious when the migrant passes this idea of cultural substitution to his relatives, as in many cases the migrant is the father or the head of household, who despite the distance is still regarded as the authority and thus remain the role model for his children. Children will in turn share these new teachings to their social circle, friends, schoolmates, and neighbors and thus, these cultural malpractices will spread.

However, it should be emphasized that we are the best tool to protect culture because the decision to respect and ensure its respect or to leave it and assume a new one, depends on us. Only those who are sure and proud of themselves and of their roots, maintain their culture with no need to get isolated from others.

2.3.3. Effects and impact of migration on the Ecuadorian culture in the new millennium

Migration has turned into one of the most important social phenomena, especially in small or developing countries. It has a strong presence in middle and lower socio-economic level families. The impact that migration has had

and therefore its effects are flagrant, especially in the economic aspect, but there are other areas that perhaps to a lesser degree, have also been affected by this problem.

Focusing on the cultural aspect, it is interesting to analyze the behavior, thinking and ideology of a migrant, comparing how he was before migrating and how he is at present. While it is true that migration is a phenomenon that has been present in the history of every society from long ago, it is also true that in the particular case of Ecuador, migration and its effects have become more easily detectable given the high rates recorded in the beginnings of this new millennium.

The individual is naturally vulnerable and his/her mind easily absorbs new experiences. In the case of Ecuadorians, it would be hasty to talk about a lack of ethnocentrism towards their own culture we cannot deny that many people value more cultures that are considered dominant rather than their own. A person who takes the tough decision to chooses a developed country as destination because logically is looking to improve his situation. Hardly, he will opt for a place where he knows he will have equal or lesser opportunities than in his own country.

When it comes to a big country or a metropolis, it is immediately classified as superior because it is seen as a power. By using the term superior we include all aspects: economic, better organization, better political management and a more advanced culture. These are all reasons why the migrant becomes an easy cultural receptor who quickly assimilates new customs, giving in many cases preference to those of his own, to feel accepted and included within the new society he has to live in.

Yet, there is an important point that should be taken into account. As mentioned above, most of the times individuals who are part of the migratory masses belong to middle-low economic strata, usually have just basic education – except those exceptional cases of people who despite having completed college, mainly for financial reasons decide to migrate – and therefore, because of their lack of preparation to face a new world, very

different from the one they used to live, will hardly have the necessary criteria to respect and accept what is foreign without undervaluing what is their own.

Despite all this, it would be unfair to point out immigrants as the only ones who diminish our culture as we cannot deny that the vast majority of Ecuadorians many times believe what is foreign is better than what we have here. A person who prefers foreign food to typical Ecuadorian food for example, is considered a sophisticated person while the other is considered as indigenous. In the same way we cannot assure that this happens only in Ecuador for it is a trend present in many countries like ours.

Each person is different and we all have the right to have different preferences, the problem is when we lose our identity, we forget who we are to pretend what we are not. Migrants who forget or deny their roots, customs and even their language, are those who become a problem for the preservation of our culture because the impact of migration does not lie only upon them, its effects reach relatives, friends, neighbors and their social environment and spreads rapidly.

It is common to witness, especially in the provinces, in the countryside or in the places of origin of most migrants, the image migrants project when they return from abroad just to visit their country. This image of a person with money, power, very different from who he was when he left years ago, makes those around him see him as an authority to some extent. He is seen as someone superior that eventually becomes a role model because it is a person with experience, who has known places that those who stayed perhaps will never have the opportunity to visit, so he inspires respect and admiration for those around him, who accept everything he says and imitate him in order to be at his level.

Therefore from this perspective, we can say that migration to some extent does constitute a threat to the conservation of our culture. Scenes like the one exposed above are very common so it would be pointless to deny it, on the contrary, we must accept the reality to find a solution to this problem that has become so common that it is precisely why the government has sought and seeks ways to protect culture to prevent the further spread of this

situation and reduce the strong effects of migration. However, we cannot forget that nothing will have the desired results while the main protector of one's own culture is not the individual.

2.4. Migration and Society

2.4.1. Impact of migration on the traditional family structure

The family is and will be one of the key elements in every society, however, the traditional family unit consisting of the father, mother and children has gradually been supplanted by a different structure in the case of migrants, where the heads of the family, ie. father and / or mother, have usually been replaced by a third person part of the same family or external to it. But the key question here is: what is the impact that this change generates?

Undoubtedly the main victims in these cases are usually the children, who many times have to grow in the absence a paternal and / or maternal figure, witnessing the disintegration of their family and attached to weak family ties that exist just thanks to a telephone or current technologies. Besides this feeling of abandonment, there are other prejudices and risks to which children are exposed.

Migration is a process that begins the moment the family member decides to travel; it is then that begins the so-called drama of the "American Dream." First of all, the future migrant has to cover the high cost and debts acquired with the "coyotes" or "chulqueros" as in most cases migration is done by illegal means. Therefore, even before the migrant arrives at his destination, the first impact attains families because they often must get rid of their few belongings to borrow large sums of money to cover travel expenses.

After this and once the journey started, the destination of the migrant is uncertain because not in all cases people make it to the desired country and on the contrary, are deported to their country of origin, returning to their home with no money, no job and heavily indebted. Above all, this could be considered lucky because there have been many cases where migrants disappear or die in the attempt to cross the border, leaving their family abandoned and in a precarious economic situation.

If the migrant manages to overcome the journey, he is still faced with another reality: being in a completely foreign country, far from home, without work and housing. However, after several months, migrants manage to improve their situation by performing basic jobs without the benefits of the law but that nevertheless allow them to fulfill their needs and those of their families. It is important to bear in mind that the remuneration received abroad is much higher than what migrants could receive in Ecuador, and when it is intended to their families, they have the opportunity to access a lifestyle better than what they had before the migration of their relative, thus enjoying the economic benefits of migration.

However, seen from the economic side, the impact of migration is very different than from a social perspective. In collected narratives, the deep feeling of pain and emptiness that such a phenomenon generates is evident. Many migrants try to fill their absence with money and expensive gifts, which in many cases, rather than as a sign of affection are seen as a way to meet their obligations. Gradually the children attach much more to the people with whom they live every day, the grandmother, the uncle, neighbor, etc., thus becoming a mother or the absent figure to complete the family.

In this way, the traditional concept of the family distorts and is supplanted by a very different one, where people outside the family unit try to fill the huge void left in the home warmth resulting, especially for children, in a feeling of abandonment that could have serious consequences in the future.

2.4.2. The effects of migration on the mentality of the emigrant and his family

As repeatedly stated, migration is a serious problem from a social perspective. The scars it leaves mark the lives not only of the migrant but also of his entire environment, mainly his family.

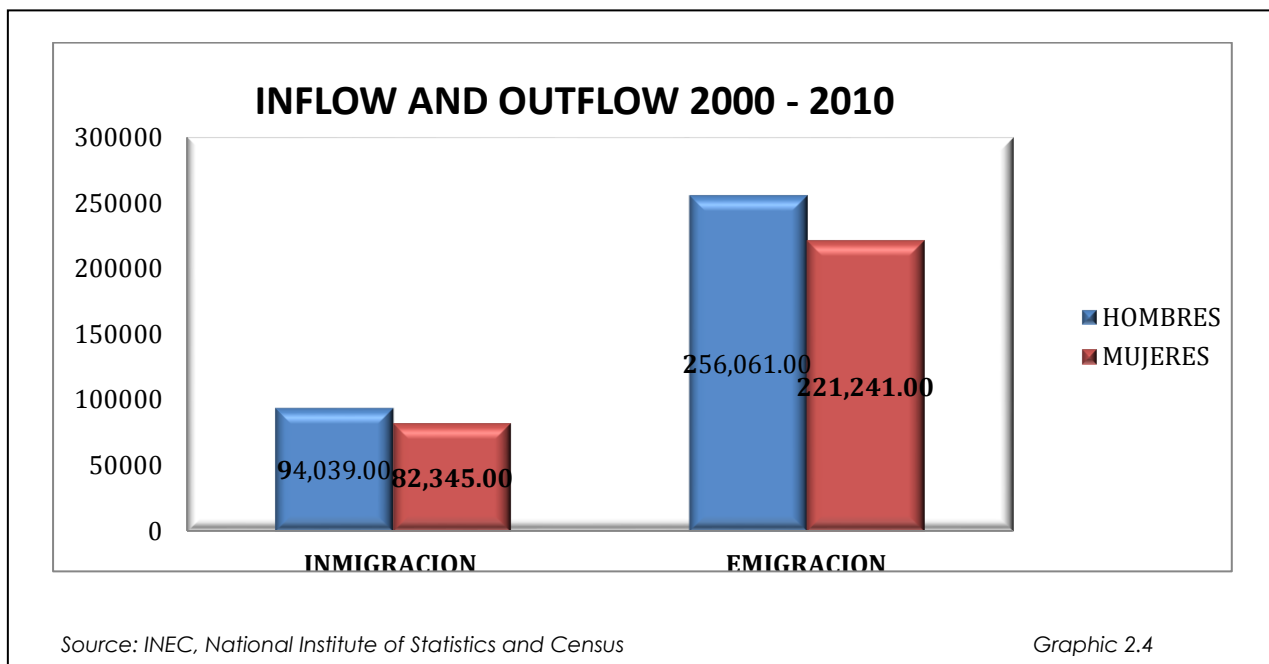
There are cases of migrants who have never failed to overcome the trauma suffered during their journey, and there are also children who never fail to understand and even worse, forgive the abandonment of their parents. The impact of migration on the minds of those who, in some way or another live it, can hardly be forgotten. In this sense, migration unleashes two realities: that of immigrants and that of their families.

Starting from the analysis of the migrant, there is no doubt he is affected both psychologically and emotionally; the pain of the separation from their loved ones and the feeling of loneliness, affect the person sometimes even to the point of desperation. Depressive and anxious disorders, phobias, somatization, various chronic pain syndromes, drug abuse, family violence and negligence of children, conduct disorders in children and adolescents, psychotic episodes and even schizophrenia, are some of the disorders emigrants can suffer from²⁰. Also, the anxiety and fear of being deported and not counting with on psychosocial support, make it more difficult for the migrants to adapt to their new environment.

As the migrant is involved in a scenario very different from what he was used to, he becomes much more vulnerable. This vulnerability is expressed in different ways as depression, frustration, stress, alcoholism, drug addiction, etc. However, this situation tends to change when the migrant finds some stability in the new country, but to get it is there is a need to try to adapt to his new reality. It is in that moment when his mentality starts to change, his dialect, his form of thinking and acting slowly change, all with the aim of achieving inclusion and acceptance within society.

Meanwhile, the effects of migration are transcendent, the migrant is not the only one affected but his entire surroundings, the main victims being his family. On the one hand, the feeling of abandonment is many times inevitable and leads to the family dislocation and the replacement of the absent member. Taking into account that the male migration rate is higher than the women's rate, women are faced with a reality where they have to assume the role of the father and the mother at the same time, thus feeling much more the emptiness that sometimes is filled by third parties. This situation also often happens with the migrant resulting in the total disintegration of the family unit where the only link still remaining are the children who become in a certain way an obligation, supplanting love for money. (Graphic 2.4 Immigration and emigration of men and women from 2000 to 2010).

²⁰ Maldonado, Mario G. *El costo psicológico de la Migración* [Online]. Ed. N°1. Ecuador: Instituto del Dolor y Psiquiatría Transcultural, 2008. Available online: <http://www.estedolor.com/dolor/index.htm>



From a practical point of view, children certainly are the main beneficiaries of remittances but likewise are the most prejudiced by migration. The absence of the paternal and/or maternal figure marks the childhood and even more the adolescence of an individual. Children are exposed to innumerable dangers, many cases of physical, psychological and even sexual abuse against minors by persons from outside the family have been registered. As the child grows, his resentment by the abandonment of his parents increases and he distances even more from his parents so he starts searching for solutions in alcohol, drugs and other vices. This harsh reality the children have to experience, far from being useful as a life experience, usually makes them repeat the decision of migrating, often at a very early age.

Although it is not usual, it is important to note there are few cases in which the story has a different ending where, to avoid the disintegration of his family, the migrant, once established, tries to bring all his family members to his new place of residence. However, given the difficulty to achieve this because to do so the migrant first needs to be legal, a procedure that usually takes years and is not always successfully achieved, there are few people that can do this.

2.4.3. Analysis of the approach and cultural perspectives of the emigrant

Migration is a phenomenon that has had such a great impact worldwide that we even talk about a *migrant culture*, meaning the fusion of two cultures: the own and the adopted in the new country. In the particular case of Ecuador, migration has a major presence in the *Sierra* (highlands), mainly in the provinces of Azuay and Cañar²¹, where people grow up with the idea of migration, many of them even only hope and aspire to reach majority or at least have an appropriate age to cross the border.

The issue of migration is nothing new to the people of these communities as they grow in the midst of this reality and perfectly know all that this implies thanks to the narratives of migrants and their relatives who even motivate those who stayed to undertake the journey. In a way, they serve as guides as they share strategic information on routes, employment opportunities, survival, etc., this allows the prospective migrant to create an idea even before traveling thus generating higher expectations that motivate him to make this decision.

Once established in his destination, the migrant feels what it is to be a stranger in a strange land, he realizes the new reality and looks for ways to be included in the society. Bearing in mind that the undocumented migrant is in a situation of total disadvantage compared to a legal immigrant, he does not have many options so he has to adapt to this new scenario, reason why he must learn the dialect, customs and ideology as living daily in a new community, he will be influenced in a greater or lesser extent by it.

However, in an effort to find a refuge, a place that despite the distance can make them feel home, migrants from around the world tend to group by communities. This is why in countries such as Spain and the United States, which are the preferred destinations of Ecuadorians, we can easily find great Latin communities and within those, groupings of Ecuadorians who look for ways to keep alive their traditions and keep their cultural roots as they are

²¹ Albornoz Guarderas, Vicente. Hidalgo Pallares, José. *Características provinciales de la migración Ecuatorianas* [Online]. Ed. N°1. Quito, Ecuador: Corporación de Estudios para el Desarrollo, June 2007. Available online: <http://www.cordes.org/descargar/migracionCuenca.pdf>

aware that distance can make them easy preys of the oblivion of their identity.

The desire of many migrants is to one day return home, reunite with their family and start a new life there. However, instability, the economic situation and the lack of guarantees hold them back. Despite this, the number of migrants who have embraced the return plan implemented by the current government, is increasing, mainly with migrants living in Spain given the severe economic crisis afflicting the European country. Nevertheless, this program started not long ago so the migratory phenomenon continues as present as always. This is why Ecuadorians living abroad look for ways to keep alive their culture; there are even those who profit from it by promoting our music, typical instruments, handicrafts, etc.

2.4.4. Main socio-cultural aspects affected by migration in Ecuador

The social sphere is the main one affected by migration. Besides the migrant, the family, the community and the country itself are victims of the aftermath that this phenomenon generates. Apart from the personal consequences we presented above, there are other at a society level that can affect those who remained in the country.

On the one side, there is the rejection of which family and especially children of migrants are subject to. In many cases, despite they try to maintain a social level, they are seen by the rest of the community as different, ostentatious and of inferior status. Many of them are easy targets of mockeries, discrimination and rejection leading them to isolation and grouping with those who share a similar condition. They lock themselves in their own world excluding anyone who does not live their same reality and this makes the rest of the society to stigmatize them as gang members, alcoholics or, in the case women, as single mothers at an early age or simply bad influences.

Another social aspect that is considered a consequence of migration is the so-called *brain drain*. Taking into account that 57% of migrants are between 18 and 30 years old, and if we expand the age range to 40 years that

percentage reaches 80%²², migrants are part of the economically active population, many of who completed high school and even if in smaller numbers, also went to college, so all that knowledge and skills are being invested abroad. Despite this, it should be emphasized that this aspect has two sides because although there is a *brain drain* we cannot deny that because of those who left, Ecuador has had remittances as one of its main sources of funding.

At a family-level, migration requires members to change roles and assume others that are not theirs. The stories of minors who forcibly have to mature, leaving aside their childhood and somehow turning into the new authority before their younger siblings, is not new. Children of twelve, thirteen, fifteen years old, are forced to look after their brothers, protect them, care for them and even justify the absence of their parents. These are all stories that have become common in our country.

Beyond distance, family ties are never broken, but they never go back to be the same. Despite this, being the migrant the one who continues to watch for the wellbeing of his relatives, he remains the head of household thus generating a sort of transnational family where the father or the mother are the decision makers and impose their rules so that even if they are physically absent, their authority remains present at home. Technological advances have been very helpful to some extent mitigate the absence of the migrant, enabling a more agile and constant communication. This in turn has led the migrants' family to know more about other countries and their cultures, even adopting some of those customs.

Despite the many benefits, mainly economic, that migration can represent for a family who once went through difficult times, according to the stories of those who stayed, the cost of migration exceeds its benefits because there is no money, house, car or other material good that can repair and even worse, justify the abandonment of home and mostly neglecting the children.

²² Camacho Zambrano, Gloria. *Sistema de Información sobre Migración Laboral* [Online]. Ed. N°1. Quito, Ecuador: Observatorio Laboral Ecuatoriano, February 2007. Available online: <http://www.uasb.edu.ec/indicador/Informe%20Final/Migraci%C3%B3n.pdf>

2.5. Migration and Culture: forward projections

2.5.1. Projections of the migratory phenomenon in Ecuador in the future years

A forward projection is uncertain in any field; if we focus on migration, to ensure that this phenomenon will remain the same, increase or decrease is extremely risky because the evolution of migrations depends on many factors.

But to get a clearer idea of what the future may hold for this phenomenon that has much relevance to our society, I have relied on surveys conducted in strategic locations considering determinant aspects such as migration rate and the number of migrants per family so as to formulate a future theory based on reality.

Given that both Azuay and Cañar are two of the most representative provinces of the country in terms of migration, the decision was made to base the field study in the cantons of Gualaceo and Biblian. Based on this study, we can say that although the idea of seeking new opportunities away from home persists, it has slowly lost force mainly because the scenarios on both sides have changed.

Analyzing the current reality of the major countries chosen as destinations by the Ecuadorian, we note that as for today, they have been involved in crises that have affected the different aspects of their system. Spain, which in recent years had become the primary country of destination for migrants, is now facing a profound crisis that has considerably affected the financial system of the European country. In fact, far from keeping what attracted the Ecuadorians to migrate there, the situation in the past years has led people to think twice before making the decision to migrate and those who resided in Spain have seen the need to return to Ecuador given that their situation abroad has become unsustainable.

While abroad the situation for migrants is increasingly complicated, in Ecuador, in the past years, there have been measures looking to favor emigrants and their families. The idea primarily is to help them overcome the difficult situation they have to face abroad, providing them with the

necessary support so that they can feel supported by their government and close to their country despite the distance.

However, the current government's primary intention is on the one hand, to stop level of migration and on the other hand, encourage migrants to return to the country on the basis of programs looking to provide the necessary support so that whoever returns to the country can start a new life leaving behind the idea of emigrating again. These programs have had a relatively important acceptance although it is still low considering they have been in place for about four years and so far around 20,000 Ecuadorians have benefited from both the *Plan Voluntario de Retorno* (Voluntary Return Plan) and the *Bienvenidos a Casa* (Welcome Home) programs²³.

Despite this, according to the results of the vast majority of surveys, people gradually rule out the possibility of migrating to other countries because although, according to them, their current situation is not the best, it is at least acceptable, unlike the reality many of their relatives or friends abroad have to face. They have been affected by the difficult situation some great powers are facing and so, the situation that had once attracted them to migrate is now making them rethink if whether it is worth to be away from their country and family to live in a place that is ceasing to be the gold mine that captivated them sometime ago.

Therefore, in a projection to the future, just the idea of a mass return of Ecuadorians is very difficult to conceive. In spite of the crisis and the deterioration of the labor market, more than one refuses to return perhaps with the hope this situation will be temporary or also because they are used to hard times and to bounce back. Nevertheless, an important thing to note is that the situation of these countries and the reality migrants are faced to, has made future migrants to reconsider the idea of leaving and on the contrary, look for opportunities to move forward in their home country.

²³ SALAZAR, Andrea. "Más de 20000 Ecuatorianos han retornado de España". *Ciudadanía Informada* [Online]. May 2012. Available online: http://www.ciudadaniainformada.com/migrantes-migracion-ecuador0/noticias-migrantes-ecuador/ir_a/judicial/article//mas-de-20000-ecuatorianos-han-retornado-de-espana.html

We could say that migration, far from disappearing, seems to at least have a mild tendency to slow, avoiding significant increases in the rates of migration.

2.5.2. The relation of Migration and Culture to the future

As discussed above, migration and culture are two elements that are part of the reality of any society and in a higher or lesser degree, there is a direct relation between them. Shaping the future of these aspects is certainly complicated because it will depend on several factors, however, we can say that based on the current situation and on the criteria of 47% of the relatives of the migrant who did the survey, culture as such is somehow protected because Ecuadorians, far from forgetting it, hang to it as a way to feel close to their land despite the distance, thus always having present their roots and showing pride for their identity.

Considering the analysis above on the future of migration, we can say that this situation will favor culture because the migration rate, even if it is almost impossible it can be totally reduced, seems to be diminishing compared to previous years and this goes hand in hand with the results from the surveys where about 71% of the respondents assured not to have the intention to emigrate. Meanwhile, we trust the current system in favor of migrants to encourage their return will help gradually increase the number of migrants who decide to return. This theory based on the field study is not completely absurd as about 48% of the respondents assured their relatives have envisioned the possibility to return in the medium run.

However, it is important to remember that the threat to the entire conservation of culture does not end with the temporary or permanent return of migrants nor with their decision not to migrate because we need to bear in mind they belong to a family unit and a social circle that, despite the distance, thanks to communication, get to know and embrace the new ideas and customs that the migrant brings along. Based on the results obtained, 40% of the respondents assured to have noticed a change in the dialect, behavior, way of thinking, etc., of their relatives or friends who had migrated. This is a small percentage but it is still relevant considering how difficult it is to conserve intact our identity.

A definitely clear reality is the relationship that exists and will continue to exist between migration and culture. Despite the time passed, the bond between these elements will continue to be valid beyond the variation in migration rates. Migration will continue to exert influence on culture, reason why the implementation of measures to protect our identity is and will be necessary now and in the future.

2.5.3. Possible impacts of migration on the loss of cultural identity in future years

Culture is a social element subject to changes due to various factors that somehow affect and influence the identity of the people. Among these factors there is our object of study, ie. migration, a phenomenon that will remain valid in the reality of our country, threatening the entire conservation of our culture.

As raised earlier, the human being is a social being by nature reason why, consciously or unconsciously, he seeks acceptance of those around him. This need for social acceptance is even more clear in the case of migrants as when they are in a different country, they will try to adapt to their new reality even when that implies to renounce to certain traits that up until then were representative of their roots.

The Latino community abroad, even though nowadays has managed to be representative in the countries that have become its new home, continues to be victim of all forms of discrimination, whether that be social, occupational, racial, etc., so that migrants see integration to their new community as a form of protection, no matter what that entails.

In recent years, the government has tried to implement measures to protect and promote the integration of migrants in society. Despite this, the reality remains the same: reprehensible acts of xenophobia and discrimination are still recorded and form part of the statistics, a scenario that does not seem to dissipate, at least not in the near future. This situation makes understandable that migrants will do what they deem necessary to achieve their inclusion in society, even if it compromises or threatens the conservation of her roots.

However, we should also note the other side of the coin, as not everything is bad because in the case of Ecuador, the creation of institutions destined to meet the needs from migration, have contributed to some extent to the protection of identity. Through programs, events, the creation of committees, etc., they have managed to encourage and keep alive the cultural essence of migrants thus promoting the practice of traditions and customs of our community.

Although the forward projection of migration indicates an apparent decline in the outflow of the country, we must remember that for this to happen, many aspects such as the employment rate, the stability of the country, its social and especially political situation have to exist. It must be recognized that even if the will to leave the country has decreased, it has been due in a large part to the work undertaken by the current government which has focused part of its efforts to meet the needs of the migrant and possible migrants, what has made people reconsider the idea of migrating or keep living outside the country.

Nonetheless, this might change if a new President would come to power or if the current president desists from offering the same support that has been offered so far to this sector of society.

Regardless of what the political future holds for Ecuador, the only certainty is that migration will continue as part of our reality as well as its influence on culture. The creation of measures that seek to protect our identity are necessary both now and in the future so our efforts to preserve our roots, either within or outside the country, should be constant as well as the commitment of each Ecuadorian to promote and respect what is ours to avoid losing that essence that identifies us as Community.

2.6. Conclusions

The main focus of this work was precisely centered in this second chapter to determine to what extent migration can and has influenced the cultural essence of our country. Being migration the determinant element of the study, it was considered necessary to address the main aspects explaining its strong influence in a society.

Given that the migratory phenomenon is extremely broad, it was considered appropriate to include the study of the different types of migration and their characteristics in relation to our country in this chapter. Similarly, to understand the magnitude and the reasons behind this social problem, it was necessary to be familiar with its background so we analyzed the causes and consequences that have turned migration into an important issue for any government.

Specifically included is a study of the major cities affected by migration in Ecuador and therefore the dependence of our country to this phenomenon. It was though necessary to also analyze migration in relation to two points: culture and the Ecuadorian society thus determining how these elements have been affected by it and how this influence could be classified as positive and / or negative, but also to get to know the social reality and cultural perception of the migrant.

Finally, using a field study as a basis, an attempt is made to project this phenomenon in the future so as to have an idea of the evolutions of migration in our country and therefore know to what extent it will continue to affect our culture, as well as the impact it would have on our roots and identity.

CHAPTER 3:

PROTECTION OF CULTURE AND **CONSERVATION OF IDENTITY** **IN ECUADOR AS A FUNCTION** **OF MIGRATION**

3.1. Introduction

The cultural identity of a people acquires importance mainly because it constitutes one of the most representative elements of a community, allowing its members to feel part of the group as they share similar traits and characteristics. However, what happens when cultural identity is threatened by external factors?

The culture of a people can be considered a legacy that transcends in time, generation after generation, but as people say: times change, people evolve as well as their tastes and preferences. We live in a consumer society where everyone looks for ways to improve their lifestyle, which makes needs to increase and therefore become more difficult to satisfy.

The financial situation is not exactly a plus for countries like Ecuador where political instability has constantly affected the economy of Ecuadorians, resulting in high migration rates, which in the last decade reached extremely high levels to the point that remittances became the second source of income for the country. Its rapid growth has turned this phenomenon into a compulsory subject for all governments.

Previously, we analyzed the causes and the consequences of this phenomenon and its positive and negative effects for the country. No doubt culture is one of the most vulnerable aspects of a society, its entire conservation is a challenge because there are several elements that to a greater or lesser degree, exert some type of influence on cultural identity; among those elements and perhaps as a major one, there is migration.

The protection and conservation of culture implies a commitment to the country, society and the individual itself. This chapter attempts to address tentative measures to safeguard our customs and traditions, the relationship and the role played by different actors and the possible ways to restore, protect and preserve cultural identity.

3.2. Politics, Migration and Culture

3.2.1. Relationship between politics and migration

As highlighted in previous points, migration has been a problem that afflicts society since long ago but it is starting the new millennium, in the case of Ecuador, when it increased alarmingly and turned into a mandate of the agenda of all governments. Following the previous analysis, we can assure that the effects of migration have a scope that goes beyond the migrant himself reason why the definition of migratory policies is essential.

The current government led by President Rafael Correa, elected in 2007, included as part of his campaign promises the creation of migratory policies to protect the expatriates. These promises were made plausible after the creation in March of that year of the National Secretariat for Migrants (Secretaría Nacional del Migrante) which, at the same level of a Ministry, has focused all its efforts on directing and implementing the so-called Human Development National Plan for migration (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Humano) with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an institution which has worked together to create campaigns, activities and programs for the migrant.

These migratory policies are based primarily on the respect for human rights and are focused in three main points: the protection of the migrant abroad, of his family in Ecuador and the repatriation to our country. Based on this, the National Secretariat for Migrants has developed a series of campaigns and services in order to direct its efforts in favor of migrants and their environment; the four main programs are: "We are all migrants", (*Todos somos migrantes*) "Welcome Home" (*Bienvenidos a casa*), "Network of welfare homes" (*Red de casas de atención*) and the "Banco del Migrante" (*Banco del Migrante*).

An important point to note in the SENAMI's work is the creation of the "Ecuadorian Houses" (*Casas Ecuatorianas*) as a social space in the main Ecuadorian migrant receiving cities like Madrid, New York, Milan, London and

Caracas. According to Lorena Escudero, Minister of the SENAMI, these open houses have turned into a complement of the work of Consulates, focusing purely on providing help and services to the Ecuadorian community abroad.

They have as their primary mission the inclusion of the Ecuadorian community in different fields including the economic, political and cultural ones; they are physical spaces of discussion, negotiation and support and they are located both inside and outside the country and work together with other associations of migrants. In the political field, through campaigns such as the so-called *Todos Somos Migrantes*, the aim is to ensure the respect for the rights of migrants as well as to raise awareness in host countries about the value and importance of migration for these countries. On the other hand, they also seek inclusion of migrants in national politics through open dialogues between representatives of the Embassy, of the SENAMI and leaders of migrant associations to develop applications, support and criticism of the government and their public policies, and also they promote the right to vote abroad.

On the other hand, it should be emphasized that the process of creating these "Ecuadorian Houses" goes beyond the physical space as a mapping is done to define the number of migrants, their situation in the host country and the organizations and institutions working for their support. All this is to define the main functions this facility will have, as they will vary depending on the rate of migrants, the challenges and problems they face and their needs. To design the House, every possible actor is invited to participate to workshops to determine the mission and functioning of it. Also, through these workshops the aim is to create committees and encourage the participation of expatriates for them get to know each other and promote the work together which allows us to locate the community leaders who will lead the House with specific responsibilities.

Basically the purpose of these houses is to integrate the migrant in all possible ways to mitigate their problems, pain and loneliness that come with being away from their home country. It seeks to involve migrants in all sorts of events of different nature including sports, cultural, artistic, political and others. Also, they intend to give all the support, information and advice migrants can

need in legal or economic matters to turn these Ecuadorian Houses into a sort of shelter or support for migrants abroad.

Besides this, the current government is trying to support migrants who for various reasons have the intention to return through the so-called "*Plan Bienvenidos a casa*". Its aim is to support migrants who have already made the decision to return helping them to bring clothes, appliances, vehicles, work equipment, personal items etc. Even if there are some weight limitations, the idea is that the migrant can have what is necessary to start his new life; other institutions like the MIDUVI, the Ministry of Education, among others, have been working to support this.

It should be noted that at present this plan has been very useful for a large number of Ecuadorians living mainly in Spain, given the strong crisis that this European country is facing. Ecuadorian migrants have been directly affected by this situation and by the recent measures taken by the government of Rajoy against migrants supposedly to reduce the effects caused by the precarious situation that began in 2008. These effects cross borders since not only the European country is hit by the crisis but also Ecuador, if we consider the issue of remittances, which in 2007 accounted for U.S. \$ 3.1 billion, while in 2011 failed to exceed U.S. \$ 2.7 billion dollars, affecting thus the income the country.

Another program developed by the State through the SENAMI is the "*Red de Casas de Atención*" which seeks to provide an integrated care for disadvantage people under psycho-socio economic conditions that hinder the normal functioning of the migrant abroad. Besides, this program covers other important points such as the repatriation of corpses or mortal remains of Ecuadorians abroad as the SENAMI takes care of everything related to consular services and service delivery in cases where the family is under a precarious socio-economic situation.

Finally another important and perhaps one of the strongest programs in the SENAMI is the "*Banca del Migrante*" which provides financial services to

promote the inclusion of migrants in the economic and social systems and gives them technical support for entrepreneurship, given that the migrant is a political subject, a subject of law and a key transnational actor for economic, social and cultural development²⁴.

3.2.2. Relationship between politics and culture

For a culture to subsist as such it requires a group or community who feels identified with it, practices it, preserves it and protects it, so if we talk about a community that shares a culture, we talk about a community who shares a common social order or structure so there is clearly a direct relationship between culture and politics because to protect a culture, rules or guidelines are needed but also a social commitment for the rules to be followed.

The absence of frameworks or policy guidelines focused on culture inevitably leads to a loss of identity, even more in a globalized and technologically advanced world like ours. Taking into account that today's communications virtually have no borders, it is illogical to deny we are easy preys of the world community and global culture. Adding the fact that in Ecuador the whole society does not have the same access to these advances and that traditional communities struggle to survive in this technological age, the creation of strategic policies to protect what is ours without isolating from the rest, is essential.

The culture and politics are two features of society that cannot be separated, much less in the case of Ecuador, which is considered a multicultural and multiethnic country where about fourteen indigenous nationalities coexist. Their protection and subsistence depends largely on the support and the policies proposed by successive governments to prevent their disappearance. As for today, Ecuador has a Ministry of Culture that was created on January 15, 2007 under of the term of office of president Rafael Correa, who declared Cultural Development and the creation of a National Plan of Culture, as state policy.

²⁴ Uribe Marín, Mónica del Pilar, "Las Casas de afuera para estar adentro. Entrevista con Lorena Escudero", The Prisma, October 30th, 2010, URL: <http://www.theprisma.co.uk/es2010/10/30/lorena-escudero-duran-ministra-de-la-secretaria-nacional-del-migrante-senami>

The clear trend of governments is to give greater focus to economic or social policies, leaving in the background the cultural aspect. However, through the new Constitution the aim was to change this by giving more importance to peoples, nationalities and culture in order to recognize these communities as part of the Ecuadorian State and guarantee their rights by promoting their respect and respect for free cultural practice within a framework of participatory democracy enacted by the current head of state.

Recent years have seen an increase in the mobilization of indigenous peoples and other minorities for greater inclusion in society. Through cultural legislation it has been possible to implement rules governing cultural policies, developing highly relevant regulations such as the Law of Culture, the Law of the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana (House of Ecuadorian Culture), the Cultural Heritage law, and the Ley del Banco Central del Ecuador (Central Bank Law), among others²⁵.

It should also be emphasized that the Ministry of Culture based its activities on four strategic points: (i) decolonization of knowledge and power as an affirmation and strengthening of what is own from what has been subordinated or denied by the colonial form of power and knowledge; (ii) cultural rights designed to ensure the access of citizens to goods, services and public resources for culture, in conditions of equality, human dignity and non-discrimination; (iii) cultural entrepreneurship oriented towards the production and dissemination of cultural messages and goods for mass production and circulation, and (iv) a new contemporary Ecuadorian identity for the recovery and revaluation of identities that can generate a new and positive collective self-perception of what it means to be an Ecuadorian and what is Ecuador. Additionally, the following were defined as transverse axes: multiculturalism, equity, international positioning and the cultural institutional strengthening²⁶.

²⁵ Ministerio de Cultura del Ecuador (Ministry of Culture of Ecuador). *Plan Nacional de Cultura del Ecuador: Un camino hacia la revolución ciudadana desde la cultura 2007-2017* [Online]. Ed. N°1. Quito, Ecuador: Preciado, Antonio, October 2007. Available online: <http://oegpc.flacsoandes.org/sites/default/files/Plan%20Nacional%20de%20Cultura%20del%20Ecuador%2021-11-07.pdf>

²⁶ Silva Charvet, Erika. *Resumen Ejecutivo* [Online]. Ed. N°1. Quito, Ecuador: Ministry of Culture, February 2011. Available online: <http://ministeriopatrimonio.ezn.ec/es/el-ministerio/ambito-de-coordinacion/ministerio-de-cultura-del-ecuador>

It is important to note the work of the current government on the field of culture, as through campaigns, projects, programs, sponsorships and other, it has tried to stimulate, foster and rescue the identity of Ecuadorians. Through the Ministry of Culture and cultural development having been declared a state policy, what is own has been better protected, but despite the efforts of successive governments, much depends on the attitude and commitment of the citizens; however we cannot deny the important role played by policy regarding the preservation of culture.

3.2.3. The role that politics play in the conservation of culture taking migration into account

As reiterated continuously, migration and cultural factors are two determining aspects, even more in the case of Ecuador. The following basic perspectives explain this: Ecuador is considered a country with ethnic and cultural diversity and the country's high dependence on remittances, given the high rate of migration.

Based on these two frames, the presence of a third actor is required to assume the role of regulator in these two scenarios, as while it is important to preserve one's own culture, it is also necessary to include the country in the global community. On the other hand, the negative effects caused by migration from the social point of view are undeniable although we cannot pass by the high relevance of migratory activity for the economic sector. Therefore, the government would become the needed mediator to maintain a balance between these two giants phenomena of the social structure.

Migration is a fact, a reality that is impossible to hide, while culture meanwhile becomes the victim of this monster that has marked its presence in the nation, especially in the last decade. Policies taken by the government to mitigate the social effects of migration constitute the main support for the protection and preservation of cultural identity both inside and outside the country.

One of the main activities to highlight, as detailed above, is undoubtedly the creation of the Ecuadorian Houses, that has been one of the most representative aspects developed by the current government in favor of the

migrant, as besides including politically the migrants, it is intended to preserve the customs and traditions of the country even outside it. To achieve this objective, the Houses create a form of Commission between migrants and organize between them to carry out typical celebrations, cultural events, sports, dances, etc., in order to keep our culture alive.

Besides this, the government through the Ministry of Culture and Foreign Affairs is constantly developing activities to promote conservation of culture both inside and outside the country; festivals of Ecuadorian films in Ecuador and abroad are a clear example of this. Also to encourage the preservation of culture, the Ecuadorian government supports institutions such as the *Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana*, the *Consejo Nacional de Cultura*, the *Dirección Nacional de Educación Indígena Intercultural Bilingüe*, the *Dirección Nacional de Salud Intercultural*, the *Dirección de Promoción Cultural*, among others to safeguard, form, disseminate and protect culture.

3.2.4. Possible Measures to take

Ecuador, a sovereign country constantly seen as a unstable nation, has focused its efforts, through successive governments, to seek a solution to its ongoing political, economic and social problems. A political mismanagement reflected in high levels of corruption put Ecuador among the most corrupt countries in Latin America and has made people to criticize a lot more the government than to support its actions.

The issue of culture was until recently in the background on the government agenda, while migration, given to its effects, has become a mandatory element in the campaign of every Head of State. While the current government has become one of the most controversial of all times given the acceptance and rejection of the president's actions, we cannot fail to recognize the important work that the government of the so-called *Revolución Ciudadana* has initiated in regards of culture.

Given that this work is focused on the clear relationship between migration and culture, we can say that for the preservation of the latter, from the

political perspective, it is necessary for the government to be aware of the importance of culture for the formation and development of any community. This is of great importance as this would be the starting point for the preservation of culture since once the government and those who are leading the country make decisions and organize society, they will understand this idea and channel their efforts for the defense and preservation of culture.

Once that culture has been included in the president's agenda and in the government's budget, it is necessary to conduct analyses and studies to invest in the best way for its funding. During the government of Rafael Correa there has been a creation of ministries, directorates, secretaries, etc., that divide among them specific tasks to perform a more complete work within the specific area assigned to them. Although this is a good initiative, it is important to seek the best ways to communicate the desired message as otherwise, despite the efforts made by these organizations, if they do not know how to reach citizens, their work done will be in vain.

As Ecuador is one of the countries with highest migration rates, it is important to approach the cultural campaigns to the core of migrants. When an Ecuadorian is in a foreign country, surrounded by a variety of customs and traditions different than theirs, he becomes an easy-prey of new cultures thus risking giving less importance of his own culture.

Finally taking into account the fact that we are close to the new presidential elections, it is important that regardless the results the programs designed to defend and preserve culture remain active because thanks to them, there have been important advances. It is necessary to continue raising awareness of people, society and in this case, governments on the importance of our culture so the governments to come do not reduce efforts to avoid any regression in what has been achieved so far.

3.3. Education, Migration and Culture

3.3.1. Relationship between Education and Migration

Education in every human being is perhaps a key element in his formation. Educating a child is in itself a task of great responsibility, as the results will be reflected in his future and will mark his life, so educating a migrant's child is a complex task because despite the young age of the child, he will have to bear the consequences of a social problem that can affect his performance.

Children living with grandparents, uncles, brothers, relatives, neighbors or one of the parents, is a reality that constantly occurs in our society. The effects of growing up in a disintegrated family are evident in a greater or lesser degree in a child's development as it affects his academic performance and makes difficult the work of teachers in the education of the child. Many times, the household problems are taken out of the private sphere of the family to another like school thus affecting the concentration of the child.

Given that migration is one of the main problems afflicting the Ecuadorian society, education must have special attention as to the particular case of migrant's children, specialized care and education that goes beyond academics are needed, as we are dealing with children who are somehow psychologically affected and therefore require a guide to overcome the pain of the abandonment.

Despite Ecuador is a country where migration ceased to be a novelty and became a feature of society, discrimination is still a current problem but it is even more in recipient countries. This happens in the cases in which the migrant decides and has the opportunity to bring his children to the country of destination. There are many stories of psychological, emotional and even physical abuse among the schoolmates of children and adolescents of migrants.

These types of situations generate fear of going to the school for these students, causing disinterest in education and sowing resentment that over

time can lead to gangs, drugs, alcohol and even vandalism. Therefore education is an issue that has always had and will always have a high priority in any presidential agenda. But if we add migration to this issue, the importance given so far to education has certainly been lesser if we consider the negative effects for students, children of migrants. So it is essential that both the current government and future governments pay special attention to these two aspects together and not separately as it has been done up until now as the direct relationship between education and migration is undeniable.

3.3.2. Relation between Education and Culture

Education and culture are two elements commonly associated and difficult to untie. On the one hand, culture is or represents a legacy that transcends time and, generation after generation, keeps its essence alive within a community. But for this to happen, a tool that works as a transmitter of these customs, traditions and knowledge is needed so that education becomes the way through which culture is transmitted.

Culture is understood as a set of customs, traditions, ideologies, dialects and others that identify characteristics of a community while on the other hand, education is understood as a social process that is primarily based on the teaching and learning of knowledge and culture, having in mind the description previously given on the latter. Relating the above, it is interesting to keep in mind certain concepts regarding education:

AZEVEDO:

"Education is a process of transmission of the traditions or culture of a group, from one generation to another."

BITENCOURT:

"Progressive adaptation process of individuals and social groups to the environment, by the valued learning, and that determines individually the formation of personality, and socially the conservation and renewal of culture".

DEWEY:

"Education is the sum of processes by which a community or a small or large social group transmits its acquired capacity and purposes in order to ensure the continuity of its existence and development."

STUART MILL:

"Education is the culture each generation gives to the next one to make it capable of preserving the results of the advances that have been made and, if possible, take them further."

Therefore, taking into account the concepts outlined above, we can assure that culture and education are closely linked, depend one on the other, both being equally important because, although culture is a set of behavioral patterns, it needs education as a means to transmit and transcend time and likewise, education requires culture as it is dependent on it because it is the source over which its process is based.

3.3.3. The role education plays on the conservation of culture taking migration into account

Bearing in mind the clear and direct relationship between culture and education, the latter would become an essential tool for the conservation of our identity. If we involve migration as a third factor in the education system, it acquires an even greater importance for the preservation of culture from what it already has by itself.

We have repeatedly heard, the mind of a child is like a sponge that easily absorbs everything it sees and hears, and in practice, infancy is certainly the stage where the human being is completely malleable and can quickly assimilate new knowledge. From childhood we form on the base of what we learn, so this period is the ideal stage for the child to get to know his culture, teaching him to value, respect and be proud of his roots.

Education certainly plays a essential role in this regard because, although the first knowledge of the child comes from home, it may be overshadowed, substituted or replaced by what he sees and learns outside, reason why school and even college are the ideal and necessary complement to

counteract the bad teachings to which a child is exposed and to reinforce what was learnt at home.

On the other hand, taking into account again that children due to their young age are highly vulnerable and can easily be affected and influenced by any situation, in this case by migration, education would become the main solution to mitigate the effects of this social problem. In the life of a child there are basically three scenarios: his home, his school and his external environment (friends); of these three elements, education would constitute the cure while the other two would become the disease in the case of an infant who grows in an environment where migration and its effects have a strong presence.

It is therefore important to remember that education can play a role in the life of a migrant or of a migrant's child, regardless of his age. As this social phenomenon does not distinguish sex or age, to promote the protection and conservation of culture it is necessary to give more strength and focus to programs and education systems that include in their academic curricula subjects that focus on building, strengthening and disseminating cultural knowledge that will enable them to adapt to new realities without forgetting their roots.

3.3.4. Possible Measures to take

As already stressed, education is an extremely valuable tool for the protection and conservation of cultural, but its effectiveness in this purpose will highly depend on other aspects which, to a greater or lesser degree, become the pillars on which the education system rests, in which the State and the family are undoubtedly the main actors.

The government is a key element to route the academic system towards the targets to be achieved. On the one side, there is the issue of access to education given the direct relationship between illiteracy and child labor. There are many cases where given the precarious financial situation of the family, children are forced to work despite their young age to generate a little income to their family. Certainly the current government has spent much of its work fighting this situation with positive results as the number of children

and adolescents who have stopped working and have had access to education grew from 77% in December 2006 to 90% in December 2011²⁷. These figures are worth to note but the work does not end there because according to these same figures, 10% of Ecuadorian children and adolescents continue to work instead of studying so that full inclusion is a goal that has not yet been achieved but which is necessary to continue fighting for.

Another important objective that links the government with education is the quality of the latter because it will determine the kind of people who will become a proactive part of society being the ones who determine the country's future. Considering this, the government of the so-called *Revolución Ciudadana* has turned the educational system upside down with the alleged purpose of improving its quality. For this end, the current president has launched a series of campaigns and programs with the aim of improving and modernizing the current academic system and training teachers responsible for educating and preparing future professionals.

Likewise, it is absolutely necessary that successive governments, through educational institutions, provide support for cultural programs in order to promote and spread the love of our culture from a small age. For this it would be appropriate to collaborate and coordinate joint work between the Ministries of Education and Culture and the SENAMI because if it is necessary and difficult in itself to promote the valuation of our identity in our own country, it is even more in foreign countries.

The role played by the family in the education of children and adolescents is equally important for the preservation of culture. The best education system could not achieve the desired results if it does not have the support of the external environment in which the child grows and develops; therefore it is necessary for the family to complement what is learned by the child fostering respect and appreciation to their own culture.

²⁷ Secretaria Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo. *La Pobreza continúa descendiendo en Ecuador*. Ecuador ama la vida [Online]. September 2012. Available online: <http://www.planificacion.gob.ec/?p=4459/la-pobreza-continua-descendiendo-en-ecuador>

This situation becomes a bit more complicated when it comes to the family of a migrant, as many of its members are driven by the influences of other cultures affecting not only their identity but also generating some confusion in the child or adolescent who sees in the adults around him a role model. Therefore, all efforts made of the educational system to preserve identity will be overshadowed if there is no clear and strong attachment to their own culture at home, thus turning children and adolescents an easy prey of new scenarios in which there is a global culture.

3.4. Nationalism, Migration and Culture

3.4.1. Relation between nationalism and migration

Nationalism is known as a political ideology mainly characterized by a strong sense of attachment to one's nation because people feel totally identified with their customs, thoughts, language, origins and interests so they defend them above all. Nationalism as such, fosters in the individual a sense of patriotism and loyalty, making him feel similar to a group and different from others.

"As an ideology, nationalism defends that the nation should be the first political identity of individuals"²⁸; meaning that according to this statement nationalism should prevail and take precedence over any other identity. For example in our case, according to a nationalist doctrine a person is Ecuadorian and then can be from Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenca - Catholic, Christian, atheist – democrat, communist, socialist, etc.

This ideology has a global focus and presence and certainly is stronger or more easily seen in some countries than in others, sometimes even taking extreme views, when it can become a danger and a threat to the world community. If migration is related to nationalism, there will probably be enough reasons to believe that the latter is more a problem than a solution.

²⁸ Rourke John T., Boyer Mark A., *"International Politics on the World Stage"*, 12^o Edition, New York, The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2008.

As discussed above, the two main destinations chosen by Ecuadorians to migrate are Spain and the United States, countries that certainly have in common a nationalist ideology. Although, as we discuss further below, nationalism as such is not a doctrine that should be judged as bad or wrong, it has certain aspects that can be labeled as negative that can and should be part of what is considered extreme nationalism.

Later on, we will study in more detail the good and bad sides of this ideology, but for now, when we relate it to migration, we can say it has both positive and negative aspects, depending on the approach used to analyze it.

A healthy type of nationalism can be positive when we relate it to migration as it somehow prevents the migrant to be far from home and lose his attachment to his roots, it may be helpful for the individual to maintain his love for his country and customs thus enforcing respect to what is of his own but not losing respect for what is foreign.

Yet a badly managed nationalism could turn, as what has happened on numerous occasions, into a big social problem when it is used to justify acts of racism, xenophobia, discrimination, intolerance, and so on, i.e. when it becomes extreme and instead of reflecting the love of what is own, it reflects the hatred of others.

When it comes to the United States and Spain, as nationalist countries, they prefer what is of their own above what is foreign in every way. This certainly is not wrong, as it is an effective way to support the country and show love for it but given that these countries are directly related to Ecuador as main destinations for our migrants, nationalism is somehow detrimental to our compatriots in work related and social themes.

Ecuadorians have a great difficulty to find a good opportunity to work in one of these countries, it is not common to find an Ecuadorian in an important position because these are countries that give priority to their people while for foreigners, at least in our case, the tasks that others refuse are the ones attributed to migrants, that is why it is quite common to see mostly migrants working as construction workers, janitors, street vendors, drivers, etc., at least until they achieve some economic stability.

On the other hand, extreme nationalism practiced by some people has also affected our fellow migrants, as they have been numerous cases of violence, rejection and discrimination against the Ecuadorians both schools, universities, companies, etc..; Such violence does not distinguish age, sex or color, and many of these acts have finished even with the life of Ecuadorians, Therefore, the relationship between migration and nationalism is evident, which can take advantage if they know how to handle it within the limits of respect, in other words, nationalism can be an opportunity that can counteract the negative effects of migration with respect to identity or it can become a threat used to justify acts of hatred and violence as has often resulted in death.

3.4.2. Relationship between nationalism and Culture

Taking into account that nationalism represents the love, respect and loyalty to a nation and given that this nation is the set of people who share, beyond a physical space, the same language, ideology, customs, beliefs, history, traditions, etc., ie the same identity, we can assure there is a link between culture and nationalism, where the latter represent the love of one's identity.

Therefore we can say that there is a greater reliance of culture on nationalism than culture given that culture does not need be hang on something to exist, while nationalism depends on another element to which it can devote its loyalty to survive, this is the case of culture. However, saying that the level of dependency of culture is lesser does not imply it is an independent element, as it certainly needs to rely on certain bases or pillars to preserve its identity. They can be the government through politics and individual education and there is no reason to deny that even nationalism could be a useful to preserve culture in a globalized world like ours.

Nationalism is a very delicate aspect of societies and it must be managed within clear limits for the thin line that divides its advantages from its disadvantages is a risk for those who do not know how to cope with the situation. While, as noted above, nationalism somehow could be useful for the protection of culture as it implies a strong attachment to our roots, it is also important to note that extreme nationalism can be detrimental to a

society in many ways as it can lead to isolation from the world community generating significant negative impacts for a country.

In the particular case of Ecuador, it could be risky to talk about nationalism, as the attachment or pride felt by Ecuadorians for their nation is not as strong or obvious as in other countries. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why we find so complicated to preserve our identity, even more now that thanks to technology we are bombarded with new customs and ideologies that have exercised to a certain extent, an influence on the minds of people. This is something very different from what happens in large countries or countries that have been recognized as nationalists where what is own is defended above all.

However it is important to highlight that most countries labeled as nationalists maintain some social, political and / or economic stability like the United States or countries like Chile, Peru and Venezuela where people have learned to value to their customs despite the external influences but always within the limits because although loyalty to their country has been their top priority, it has not implied isolation from other societies.

A very clear point from all this is that *the man is a social being by nature*, therefore isolation from other communities could be prejudicial not only for the individual but for society as well. The human being is an innate explorer; knowledge will never be enough, even less having tools for his communication with other cultures. Therefore, misguided nationalism can only lead to the creation of imaginary boundaries that limit interculturality, thus sentencing a community to remain stagnant because of a supposed protection of culture that ultimately will only limit it to live in its own world without the possibility of progress.

3.4.3. The role that Nationalism plays on the conservation of Culture in a country

Protection of culture will depend on two key elements: the individual as such, and society as a whole, represented by the government. Since birth, every person forms part of a society, a country and a culture, and much of its conservation will depend on the individual and on how he perceives his

identity. However, being part of a community we need to get organized for which we require representatives to be at the forefront and guide us to where we want to be.

As part of a society, since we are little, we acquire habits that we start to feel like our own and through which we identify with the rest of the community. As we grow up, many factors influence us, whether towards preserving our culture or moving away from our cultural essence.

The preservation of a culture in itself is difficult but if we add the fact that we are in the millennium of globalization, where the technological revolution has virtually broken every border that somehow separates societies, it is then necessary to find key tools that allow us to protect our identity without isolating ourselves from the rest of the world.

Based on the above, we cannot deny that nationalism could become one of those precise elements which would undoubtedly favor the preservation of culture; however, for this to have the desired effect, the limits within which it must be managed need to be set and a clear idea of what nationalism is and what it can be depending on how it is assimilated, should be infused.

Nationalism is the clearest sign of loyalty, pride and respect for a country, a culture and everything that a country as such represents and, although many have called nationalism as a form of self-centeredness of a society, we cannot deny that this perhaps misnamed egocentrism, has let many communities preserve their identities, despite being exposed to external influences.

A well run nationalism can certainly have positive effects for a community that is looking to keep its cultural identity, that is, if this is understood as a way to value what is ours while respecting others. A serious extreme nationalism would be that which judges others for being different from us, for having beliefs, customs, languages, ideologies different from ours and therefore placing them as inferior and putting what is ours above all others – believing we are superior and have the right to belittle and diminish those who are not like us.

The nationalist ideology described above harms a culture, because besides generating conflicts, it separates the community from the rest of societies, while a *clean* nationalism allows the interaction of cultures, foments learning and respect but never loses the essence nor the love for its roots, which helps people grow as individuals, as a society and as a country and encourages participation in the global scenario.

Thus nationalism plays a determining role in the preservation of culture as it can promote its growth or stagnation depending on what sort of ideology is practiced. Nationalism is often frowned upon by outsiders but respected by insiders. A nationalist country will see this as something positive but will criticize nationalism of others because many times we do not know until where to value what is ours and from where to start respecting the others', so once we have clearly marked boundaries we can begin to use nationalism as a form of cultural protection.

3.4.4. Positive and negative aspects of Nationalism

As we have seen, the nationalist ideology can be a double-edged sword depending on how it is taken and transmitted. On the one hand, it can become an emblem that reflects the love of a country, but on the other hand, it can turn into a serious problem when more than showing respect for what is own, it expresses some kind of contempt for what is different, thus generating large conflicts between societies, cultures and countries.

The technological revolution and globalization are two intertwined phenomena, are an important part of the new millennium and their effects have been almost impossible to avoid for any society. In the midst of these two monsters, it is easy to think that nationalism would have difficulties to subsist, but more than one country has shown that this is wrong because rather than fading, the nationalist feeling has gained more force and has become increasingly noticeable.

A positive nationalism benefits the society that practices it, as the love of a country is reflected in the common interest to achieve the political, economic and social development for all. Nationalism is citizens' first identity so many believe it favors democracy as, according to the democratic

doctrine, the power resides in the people and the rulers are just a tool through which the people channels power. Also, given that a nationalist people will seek the good of its nation in general rather than that of particular individuals, we can say that the combination of nationalism and democracy is beneficial for the country as it is much easier to manage a political system where citizens, regardless of their political identity, and the government share the same vision and feeling.

A clear example is the recent events in the United States, a country recognized and seen worldwide as nationalist. After a hard-fought campaign the Democrat candidate Barak Obama was reelected as president for a four year-period to complete his social policy program. His opponent, the Republican Mitt Romney, despite having assured he only had prepared his victory speech, said to the media the same night of the results: "I have just called President Obama to congratulate him on his victory ... These are times of great challenges for the United States of America and I pray for the President to succeed in guiding our nation."²⁹

This attitude of the former presidential candidate demonstrates the idea of positive nationalism, that which ignores individual benefits and gives priority to the good of the nation, that which is *clean* and favors a society.

Another point in favor of nationalism may be the country's economic development. As repeatedly stated, nationalism reflects the love of the country, of what is own. In this sense, the priority given by citizens to what is own above what is from the outside, favors the economic system as it reactivates the economy, strengthens industry, creates jobs and all profits remain in the country.

Finally, another positive point to highlight of nationalism is culture. All cultures worldwide have been and are exposed to changes or alterations due to the speed with which new technologies have shortened distances and connected societies. Youth and even children have grown up in this new era

²⁹ Listin Diario. *Mitt Romney admite su derrota y felicita a Obama* [Online]. Boston, USA, November the 7th, 2012. Available online: <http://www.listindiario.com.do/las-mundiales/2012/11/7/254178/Mitt-Romney-admite-su-derrota-y-felicita-a-Obama-durante-discurso>

of globalization by what they have been easy preys of external influences, threatening the preservation of traditions.

From this point of view, we can say that nationalism can play an important role in the preservation of culture, as the loyalty that the nationalist ideology generates can become a key tool to defend, in the good sense, the essence of cultures.

Despite the above, most people and societies see nationalism as negative. The dark side of this ideology prevails over any kind of advantages, mainly because of the past conflict that marks the history this doctrine, but also as the practice of misguided nationalism has been used to justify deplorable acts which have stained with blood the history of more than one country or community.

It is human nature to tend to associate with those who think like us, but to form a group with which we identify implies that there is another with which we do not feel the same affinity, meaning a group that is different from ours. Communities are formed in this way so we cannot point as wrong the tendency of individuals to get together, and certainly it is not wrong to feel different from others, trouble comes when we express this difference in terms of superiority and inferiority thus affecting the interrelation between societies or nations.

This erroneous idea of differentiation between societies where some cultures are considered better or superior to others, affects the basic laws of global coexistence, limits our sense of social responsibility by focusing solely on the problems afflicting us and downplaying the difficulties which others may be going through, even when their situation may be much more precarious than our own.

A clear example of this are the countries mired in poverty as in the case of African nations. We can say that to some extent, both developed and developing countries have become used to this situation, so although we are aware of the bleak picture that has been and is part of the reality of these populations, we are no longer disturbed or worried in the way we should be. Even more, great powers like the United States have limited financial

assistance to those nations and contrary to showing more interest to these matters, studies have shown that the vast majority of Americans think that their government is too concerned with assisting other countries and instead neglects its obligations to its people. In fact, only 8% of the population believes that money spent on humanitarian aid is not enough³⁰, meaning that Americans, like in many other countries, watch first for their interests and needs even if those are less important than those of other nations.

While nationalism values a nation, there are more problems associated with this ideology like destructive ways of interacting with other nations, because the overvaluation given to what is own generates a believe of superiority that is expressed in terms of fear and hatred of difference. Examples of this are the many cases of social exclusion and more radical cases of xenophobia where deep feelings of contempt and hatred make people attack others just because they belong to a different culture or society.

Similarly, culture is also affected by a misnamed nationalism, especially in those countries where various ethnic groups or cultures live together, and one is the dominant and the others can be considered as subcultures. Generally the dominant culture imposes the rules of the game as it deals with the main sectors of the social structure and if we add to this an extreme nationalism, the consequences can be fatal, as what has happened in the past. The most memorable event linked to this was the fearful Nazi Era with Adolf Hitler who starred one of the bloodiest and most repudiated episodes in the history of mankind. This somehow explains the skepticism of people to the idea of a positive nationalism as the memory of this and other genocides like those in Rwanda or Sudan have created a rejection to any type of nationalism in the minds of a large number of people.

Although to a lesser degree if compared to the above, oppression or discrimination many subcultures have had to suffer, may also trigger conflict or violent acts. A clear and well-remembered example of this in the case of Ecuador is the racist attack by Sergi Xavier Martinez, 21, against an

³⁰ Rourke John T., Boyer Mark A., *“International Politics on the World Stage”*, 12° Edition, New York, The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2008.

Ecuadorian minor who was verbally and physically assaulted while traveling on a train in the city of Barcelona - Spain in October 2007.

Like this case, there are more aspects that can be related to consequences of uncontrolled or extreme nationalism; so to weigh the pros and cons of the nationalist ideology implies having a clear criterion to distinguish up to where the loyalty to a nation should come without infringing the necessary respect for social and global coexistence. Defining nationalism as a positive or negative phenomenon is somewhat difficult because despite the positive facts associated with this ideology, it is easier to visualize its dark side. We cannot judge it as a social evil as there are countries or groups that put in practice a healthy nationalism, reason why what should be paramount should not be assuming the role of judges but that of learners, participants and promoters of a well-run nationalism that expresses the love to the country and respect for others.

3.5. The individual as part of the Culture

3.5.1. Relationship between the person and the culture

A person as such can be considered one of the main protectors of cultural identity or a threat to its preservation. Culture is one of the most distinctive features of the human being, it is the social heritage of our ancestors, it is part of an individual and somehow determines his future as his behavior is largely based on cultural patterns (ie. customs, traditions, beliefs, etc.), so we can assure that there is a direct relationship between the person and culture as the individual is part of culture and culture is part of the individual.

From our birth, we join a community, we are raised within the parameters that form our identity and we live everyday within a cultural society that makes us an active part of culture, which models our individual personality. Our roots are present throughout our lives as well as our cultural essence, but our identity may change as time passes by because we are affected by different factors that, for good or bad, influence culture.

Culture is transmitted to humans in different ways or processes. The individual begins its cultural life through an enculturation, which is "a learning

experience partly conscious and partly unconscious, through which the older generation incites, induces and forces the younger generation to adopt ways of traditional thinking and behaving "³¹.

Then there is the stage of institutionalization that could be understood as the period of integration of the individual to society, for example, the inclusion of the child to the education system where he reinforces what he had previously learned and thus models his identity.

Finally, there is the stage of interrelation that could perhaps be the most crucial in terms of the protection and preservation of culture.

Likewise, a culture cannot survive unless there is someone who is part of it as it is not an abstract object that is floating in the air, it is the set of customs, beliefs, ideologies, traditions and others that require someone to practice them so they can stay alive and be recognized as a culture. Culture therefore needs the man as much as the man needs culture.

Definitely the role that culture plays within a society and on an individual's life is remarkable, it is part of the person from his birth, and even if not genetically, it socially determines the patterns of behavior accepted by a society and that will be transmitted from generation to generation, thus having a role in the formation of the personality of the individual who will determine his behavior based on the cultural patterns of his community. More than this, the importance of culture in the life of a person also lies in the feeling of belonging that is generated in each individual and that becomes the reason why we belong to one or another community.

3.5.5. The role the individual plays on the conservation of culture

As we have stated before, the individual is one of the main tools for the conservation and protection of their own culture. A culture is formed by those who believe in it, practice it and defend it, and so identity is preserved, this is why we can say that the role of the individual is imminent as the fact that a culture is maintained or in the worst case disappears, largely depends on him.

³¹ Harris, Marvin. *Antropología Cultural*, 2nd Edition, Madrid, Spain. Alianza Ed., 1996.

Culture is part of a person, no matter where he is, his roots will always be predominating in his personality. But despite our essence remains intact, culture as such may be threatened by external factors that generate a curiosity in the individual to know new stories and customs, which is certainly not bad but the problem comes when the admiration for what is foreign, goes beyond limits and the individual begins to assimilate as his own what is not, leaving aside or replacing important features of his cultural identity.

The cultural bases of a person begin at home, as named above by the so-called enculturation process, and are reinforced during his growth and education. We can venture to say that these are two key steps to promote the attachment and respect of the individual to what is of his own and in the future, play a determinant role in the protection of culture.

As for today, we are engaged in a revolutionary era where new technologies have reached a main role in the reality of all societies, turning those smaller ones in easy preys of a global culture which receives more and more attention and interest of individuals that want to know about new cultures and be part of this huge and unstoppable phenomenon known as globalization.

Added to this, there are other social realities that mainly afflicting developing countries and to a lesser or greater degree, also become a threat to the preservation of cultures. One of them is certainly migration, which in addition to being a social and political problem, its effects also reach the cultural field.

The search for acceptance in the desire not to jeopardize coexistence makes small communities to accept the guidelines that the dominant community imposes indirectly as basis of the socialization process, ie. *landlords set the rules*.

The need the immigrant has to fit to his new reality makes him to consciously or unconsciously put aside or slowly lose the representative traits of his cultural identity to replace them with new elements that he considers necessary to assure his acceptance in the new society. Thus, based on the idea of integration, many people are losing important features of their culture such as their dialect, customs, traditions, etc.

The government can and should establish programs and campaigns that encourage the love and protection to their own culture, both within and outside the country, but little or nothing will be obtained of any action as long as the individual does not understand by himself the determining role he plays. Each person becomes the flag of their country and culture, wherever we go and stay we will be the representatives of our identity and it is our responsibility to keep our traditions alive without isolating ourselves from other communities or sacrificing what is of our own in the search of acceptance of others.

3.5.6. Possible Measures to take

Ecuadorians enjoy one of the richest cultures in the world, we are a multiethnic and multicultural constitutionally recognized country in which live about 13 recognized indigenous nationalities, 13 native languages and have the honor to have two cities declared World Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO. But despite the richness of our customs, traditions, cuisine, dialects, etc., for various reasons we have slowly lost those values that identify us as a community and culture.

There have been few presidents who have taken effective action regarding the protection of identity. The current government has allocated part of its actions to the restoration of heritage and of collective memory through several programs that have been aimed at working towards the preservation of culture.

No doubt the government is a major player to get positive results in terms of protecting identity, but more than it, the main protagonist is and will always be the individual, because presidents are ephemeral and the validity of their actions greatly depend on the support of the people.

From his birth, culture is a key element in the life of every human being, for it generates a sense of belonging in us and the same importance culture has for the man, the man has for culture for without it, it cannot exist. So to protect a culture of all external factors that one way or another can affect it, it is necessary to rely on three pillars that in some way form a chain: the family,

education and the individual as such, while the government would provide additional support to these three main elements.

The first type of values to which every human being belongs when he is born is the family. The role played by the family in the formation of the cultural identity of the individual is certainly crucial; taking into account that culture is an element that transcends generations, the family is the first to pass the child the customs, traditions, language, ideologies, etc., that were taught to them by previous generations, thus becoming the foundation upon which to build the cultural identity of the person.

It is therefore essential for the family to teach since childhood the importance of culture for the individual and for society, and foster in the child the love of what is of his own, the value of his roots, our cultural richness which is worth of recognition and pride, as well as the respect for both what is ours and what is foreign. In this way, the shield that will protect the cultural essence of the individual in the future and turn the person into a sort of cultural flag before his community and the rest of society, begins to form.

A second relevant point is the education system. Once the child, thanks to the family, has acquired his cultural bases, the construction of cultural identity begins academically reinforcing what he has learned.

At this stage the child starts getting to know a new environment, although each household has their own customs that can mark differences between families, it should be emphasized that these are superficial differences as we would be talking about ways of living but not of cultural differences as we as Ecuadorians all share a common identity.

Education plays a very important role in the formation of cultural identity and it is important that those in charge are trained professionals who are aware of the great responsibility they have because the success or failure of cultural protection depends on them and their preparation. We often hear that the mind of a child is like a sponge that absorbs everything he sees and hears and this is true since childhood is the stage in which the human being virtually has no knowledge, has no ways to refute what he is taught and on the

contrary, assimilates everything so the early school years are crucial to instill the cultural patterns of a person.

As the individual grows, he transforms into a being with criterion who can identify and distinguish new realities and make decisions; he becomes a socially active being who is exposed to a number of elements that can influence and impact on the cultural stability he main have. So the reaction and attitude that the person has before new scenarios and the extent to which external factors influence cultural identity, will depend a lot on the bases that were instilled in the early years of his life.

The government plays an equally important role, it is like a support to safeguard culture, however, even if much effort is done by the state, the desired results will not be reached if each one of us is not committed as Ecuadorians to value what we own, to love and respect our roots without this implying isolation from other communities. It is necessary to remember that culture is an ancestral heritage, which is passed from generation to generation, and the survival of our identity will depend on this. Giving value to what is ours does not mean to belittle what is foreign but to remember and recognize that our culture is so beautiful, so good and as valuable as any other, that it is worthy of our admiration and respect owing it the pride of being called Ecuadorians.

The individual is the main actor of society so it is necessary to raise public awareness of the great contribution that each person has for culture. Rather than basing efforts on developing campaigns on the importance of it, we should focus on campaigns about the importance of individuals for the preservation of cultural essence and thus transmit the idea that each one of us is culture and that each is an important part of identity; we are a key part of our society and the moment we step away from our roots we are contributing to the demise of our culture. It is important to focus our efforts on the present so in the future we can focus our energies on programs to maintain and strengthen our identity and not to recover it, that is on prevention and no on recovery.

Finally, we should recognize once more the work that has been done by the current government to protect our cultural essence, mainly abroad where migration threatens the preservation of our identity. However, efforts and initiatives must start at home through programs and campaigns that encourage Ecuadorians to value and recover what is ours, our customs and traditions that distinguish us from others, without this implying the loss of continuity of the great work that has been done abroad.

Theory aside, if we focus on the practical aspect we can include certain recommendations to rescue our culture such as conducting events: regular programs can be carried out one day each month and have as main focus highlighting the traditional features of our culture (day of food, clothing, games, dialects, etc.). Another suggestion would be to include in all levels of the educational system, cultural workshops that instill the love, appreciation and respect for what is ours in students.

Similarly benefiting from the great dissemination power of media, it is important that the government invests part of its budget on dynamic media campaigns that promote important aspects of our roots thus passing the message to a large number of Ecuadorians both within and outside the country, using the advantage that some national channels have international signal.

An interesting point would also be to give more focus and support to the Ecuadorian film industry that in recent years has made great progress. It has managed to reach the public but has not yet achieved very successfully to catch the attention of the population, which is very unfortunate since it would be a useful tool to promote our culture. Indeed, films are made in the country, by Ecuadorians and show our realities, dialect, customs, landscapes, etc. In Cuenca, it has been more than two years of the existence of the so-called *Festival de la Orquídea*, where a space for national short films is allocated. However, the festival has not yet reached the required public so it would be important to look for support from either the government and public and / or private companies to expand the interest in local films so that festivals like this one are not only made in one city but also at a country level and even

abroad by using the facilities of the *Casas Ecuatorianas* which have strategic locations. This would help to promote the national film industry and our culture in a different way.

While migration, technology, globalization among other things are imminent threats to the culture of countries like ours, it is clear that the best protection we have is the individual who, by working together with the government and the community, can become the main advocate and defender of the culture both inside and outside the country. However, considering our social reality includes a high rate of Ecuadorians living abroad, it is important to continue working on initiatives that encourage migrants to stick to their roots by prioritizing their culture despite living in a different environment.

Based on the above stated, it is necessary for the government in charge to continue providing support and attention to this sector of the population that although lives in other countries, continues to be an important part of our society. The *Casas Ecuatorianas* are an important contribution for the preservation of culture abroad as they are responsible for carrying out programs and events that rescue our traditions which is very helpful to safeguard the cultural identity of our migrants.

3.6. Recovery of Cultural Identity

3.6.1. Implications

The retrieval of collective memory to help foster cultural identity brings with it certain implications that if we do not know how to handle, may cause that the main purpose gets out of context. There is no present without a past, nor can a future be built without a historical basis, the historical basis is precisely what we know as culture.

Although the ideal would be that our concern was focused on how to strengthen our identity, the reality is different and today we must direct our efforts on how to avoid losing our cultural traits. "It is evident that a people without memory is doomed to be forgotten, since without it, the conservation of knowledge to transmit forms of culture, is not feasible. Unable to do so, the

people have no identity and cannot be recognized as part of a whole, and finally, it will not be able to relate to the world around us."³²

The national government, aware of the importance of culture for society, has undertaken a number of programs, campaigns and plans in order to protect and recover everything that identifies us as a community; proof of this is the development of the Plan for the Protection and Recovery of the Cultural Heritage of Ecuador through which the state seeks to ensure the protection and conservation of both tangible cultural and heritage goods of the country.

However, the most difficult task is to restore and preserve intangible cultural goods of our community, ie. the collective memory, our identity. "Historical memory is a collective memory, an evocation towards the present of the symbolic value of collective action lived by a people in the past. It is an action that preserves the identity and the continuity of a people, it is not to forget what has been learnt, often with blood, it is the way to avoid repeating past mistakes. The memory is a fact transformed into a system of values."³³

Intangible cultural heritage is all those customs, traditions, beliefs, practices that characterize a community and instill in it a sense of belonging and identity, the great value it represents for a society makes this heritage an element that needs to be protected so as not to risk its validity in the future. The importance of culture is recognized worldwide; indeed in 2003, UNESCO held a convention in Paris where a document including relevant guidelines that promote the protection and respect of intangible cultural heritage of the peoples was produced. The purpose of this text is mainly to:

"a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;

b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;

³² Marañón Rodríguez, José Luis. *Reflexiones teóricas acerca de la interrelación entre memoria histórica e imaginarios sociales* [Online]. Texinfo ed. N°1. Spain: Contribuciones a las Ciencias Sociales, May 2011. Available online: <http://www.eumed.net/rev/cccss/12/jlrmr.htm>

³³ *ibid*

c) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;

d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance."³⁴

Society's commitment to its culture is crucial to achieve successfully any plan intended to be carried out in favor of identity. No matter the efforts that an organization or government makes, there will be no results if those who make part of culture do not collaborate protecting and promoting what is their own.

However, we need to remember that the world does not stop, it is constantly changing and evolving and we are all part of this transition so, in an effort to protect our culture, we cannot isolate ourselves from the world community as this would imply a stagnation of our society where the main victims will be ourselves.

Although as previously stated, culture is society's representative ancestral heritage that needs to be transmitted from generation to generation because it is the main link to belong to a community, it is also necessary to remember that radically holding to the past can bring consequences that, far from favoring a society, can affect it. This because past scenarios are not the same now and, to cope with new realities, it is necessary to adapt to them; and this does not mean we have to let go of the past and replace it for the present to build a future as there is no present or future without a past. Ideally we should find a balance where we can insert into the new scenarios without forgetting who we are and where we come from, ie. without forgetting our roots.

The work to recover our identity is not limited to physical or geographical spaces; in our particular case, the threat to the conservation of our roots is twofold because not only must we deal with the effects of globalization but also we must protect us from the scope of migration, which strongly affects our country and threatens the preservation of our culture. In this regard, the current government has spared no efforts and an important point of note is

³⁴ Malo, Claudio. "Arte Cultura Popular", 2nd edition, Cuenca: Cidap; Universidad del Azuay, 2006.

the creation of the SENAMI, which in turn led to the creation of the so-called *Casas Ecuatorianas*. They have enabled our expatriates to get a little closer, symbolically, to their land, inviting migrants to be part of events and programs that promote our customs and traditions in order to keep our culture alive despite the distance. However, their effectiveness will depend, as already said, solely on each of us and on our commitment to the community.

3.7. Conclusions

Considering the direct relationship between migration and culture, this third chapter intended to add to these elements other factors also are also linked to them and somehow exert an influence on them; all this in order to consider possible measures that could be put in place to protect our identity both inside and outside the country.

Taking this into account, the role played by certain important actors for society like the government, was analyzed. Politics is the framework within which a people is handled, it is the responsible for tracing the way forward and raising the standards to achieve the objectives of the community. Within this framework we focused on the clear relationship between politics and the two main aspects of this thesis, which are migration and culture, seeking to define the effectiveness of the actions taken so far by successive governments regarding each of these phenomena and the position that the leaders have taken to deal with the implications of these two elements.

Another aspect linked both to migration and culture is education so based on an analysis of the role played by the education system the aim was to establish possible measures that could be implemented to protect our identity from factors that threaten the conservation of its essence.

Although nationalism is not a feature that stands out in the Ecuadorian society, it is an issue that for various reasons has an important role in the world's collective memory and in the current reality. This is why it was considered appropriate to conduct an analysis to determine to what extent it has a relationship between culture and migration, and on what ways it can influence these elements. It was also necessary to define the positive and

negative aspects of nationalism to determine the extent to which it can be favorable for the conservation of culture.

Undoubtedly, after what was analyzed in this chapter, we reached to the conclusion that definitely one of the main actors in a society, if not the principal, is the individual as he is the one who is part of culture, is culture, is part of migration and is a migrant, so the dependency between these three elements is evident. This is the reason why it was considered essential to study the role played by the individual in relation to culture and migration, and the approach of certain measures to be taken in favor of preserving the identity.

Finally, the issue of the recovery of identity and the possible implications this may have was studied in an effort to highlight and evaluate what has been done and determine on which aspects work must be done and improve to achieve the desired goal which is the protection and preservation of the cultural identity of our people.

CHAPTER 4:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

This thesis was developed with the purpose of, based on two key elements in our society, determining the relationship between culture and migration and to what extent the latter influenced and influences the loss of cultural identity, considering that the events of the late nineties and in the early century generated an important and even alarming increase in the migration rate of the country.

Culture is a broad term that encompasses many aspects and connotations that can vary depending on how it is used. Precisely for this reason, it is difficult to compartmentalize the word *culture* in a single concept. However, based on the various definitions of experts, a theory was created to highlight the idea that culture is all the traits, traditions, customs, ideologies shared by a community and which makes this community to group, thus creating an identity that persists over time, adapting to changes but maintaining its essence, becoming a kind of conduct moderator for its members who govern their behavior based on their culture.

The importance of culture in a society is so strong that based on it, international organizations have recognized culture as a right of peoples, in our particular case, Ecuador was constitutionally declared as a multicultural and multiethnic country in 1998, but it was not until the 2008 constitution that significant progress was achieved in the recognition and respect of the right of individuals and peoples to build and maintain their own cultural identity.

We can certainly say that the country has made significant progress in terms of the inclusion of minorities in society, if we compare the current situation with that of earlier years. Nevertheless, one thing is to accept the inclusion of different ethnic groups within a society and a very different one is to get involved and stick more to our identity. It is not because we recognize the existence of different ethnic groups within the country that we are more interested in our culture. A clear reality that was tried to highlight in this academic work is precisely that today we live in a revolutionary era that has given place to an obvious cultural change in which we are immersed and whose effects are becoming more noticeable.

The cultural identity of the country has been built on the basis of a historical legacy joint with experiences and significant events that have shaped the destiny of the nation. It is those events that, added to traditions, customs, values, ideologies, and other elements and features, we share and that allow us to identify as a community, united by a sense of belonging and headed towards the same future, which will be determined to some extent by the way in which we, as Ecuadorians, assimilate new trends from abroad whose strong influence has had a clear impact on our cultural identity.

Precisely, the current cultural reality of Ecuador is one of the issues that today captures a lot of attention and concern of society as more than one considers and ensures that the essence that identifies us as Ecuadorians is getting lost. Although our country is recognized as multicultural, most Ecuadorians identify with a national culture, which according to many, is gradually weakening mainly in new generations whose loyalty is more inclined towards the global culture rather than theirs. This is certainly worrying, even more if we take into account how difficult it is not to cross the thin line between the protection of culture and isolation from the world community.

There are many factors to which a culture is exposed and this makes difficult to preserve it, mainly in the case of small societies like ours where the dominance and power of the great powers make us followers of their markedly trends. Globalization, technology, easy communication, those imaginary borders that used to divide countries and that have become imperceptible today, have given rise to a new culture, the global culture that ignores boundaries and is the symbol and identity of the global community.

But the existence of such a global culture should be attributed not only to the previously mentioned elements but also to others, which have a prominent participation in the spread of this global identity. One that has become a major contributor to the weakening of cultural identity is migration; its presence has become stronger in small nations, which dazzled by the impressive empire of great powers, see in them an exit to their problems without considering the implications this might have.

Ecuador has not been left aside of this phenomenon, its political stability has not exactly been one of its main features as its history has been marked by a series of facts and events that, besides damaging the image of the country to the world community, have internally triggered countless political, economic and social crises with historical results that can hardly be erased from the memory of Ecuadorians. Such crises reached their most alarming peak at the end of the nineties when the country's financial situation became untenable and the government, after the so-called bank holiday, had no other option but to renounce the national currency resulting in dollarization, which has undoubtedly marked a *before and after* in the history of Ecuador.

While migration has been part of our reality since long ago, based on the analysis in this thesis, we can assure that this problem intensified after dollarization as, in a deep despair, several Ecuadorians took the crucial decision to leave their home and country. Migration rate increased rapidly year after year, until it became an issue that now must necessarily be included in the presidential agendas of governments.

The effects of migration have had an impact on different aspects of the social structure but it would be difficult to define this phenomenon as something positive or negative, as its impact varies from the perspective it is analyzed. While certainly the revenue generated by remittances has helped consolidate migration as the second source of income of the country thus turning into a representative element of its economy, we cannot leave aside other aspects that besides finance, have been rather negatively affected by the effects of migration; one of these and the one which constitutes the focus of this research is precisely culture.

The migratory phenomenon mainly affects the population considered to be low and lower-middle class, a population who in the best case has had access to secondary school. This lack of preparation turns them into good receptors of new cultures and, if we consider that many times in search of society's acceptance, migrants give priority and preference to the dominant culture by placing it above their own, the threat to the preservation of our identity is even greater, especially if we remember that the migrant is not alone. He is part of an environment composed by family or friends who are

often influenced and become fast imitators and followers of the new cultural identity that the migrant shows.

To eradicate migration of our society is now a dream whose crystallization is impossible to imagine and even worse to reach, but we cannot fail to recognize the work done by the current government whose desire is focused on reducing the rate of migration in Ecuador and turning more attractive the thought of returning to the country for those abroad through programs that give support to the migrant once he is back.

If to these facts we add the unfavorable financial situation we are living in the major destination countries chosen by Ecuadorians, there is a slight chance that in the future, although migration will not completely disappear, at least something will lower its incidence in Ecuador and this would be useful for the preservation of culture.

The undeniable relationship between culture and migration makes us analyze how favorable the dependency maintained by the country with remittances is. Often, the nation's economic balance makes us forget of the implications of migration, which go beyond the financial factor. While migratory activity is symbolic for our economy, so much that even many claim that dollarization managed to stay afloat in Ecuador because of remittances, we must remember that not all areas of society have benefitted in the same way from it.

Azuay and Cañar are two major provinces in Ecuador affected by migration, reason why the field study of this thesis was conducted mainly in Cantons like Biblian and Gualaceo where the effects of migration are easily noticeable. According to the testimonies collected, the vast majority of families of migrants claim that perhaps one of the main losses of migration is the disintegration of the family unit. In fact, more than one described migration as a way of running away from home. Also, changes in the dialect, in mentality, and in the way to act were attributed to the environment in which the migrant develops and lives. So, considering what has been analyzed, we can assure that while there are factors that are unstoppable and uncontrollable

and can affect a community, society must find ways to protect itself from the impact these events may have on it.

There are some elements that play an important role in the protection of culture, and the government head the list. Having in mind that political and economic stability have not precisely been what has characterized this country, most presidents have primarily focused on these two aspects thus leaving culture aside for a long time.

Thanks to the 2008 constitution, significant progress was achieved in recognizing the cultural rights of all peoples and ethnic groups in the country. Similarly, the current government has taken important actions to protect and promote the culture both inside and outside Ecuador. One of the main tasks carried out in the mandate of Rafael Correa is precisely the creation of the SENAMI (National Secretariat for Migrants) and with it, the creation of the so-called *Casas Ecuatorianas*, located in major receiving countries of Ecuadorian migrants. Among the programs developed by the SENAMI, there are cultural projects for the inclusion and participation of migrants in an effort to promote the continuity of our customs and traditions regardless of the distance and therefore protect and preserve the cultural identity of the Ecuadorians living abroad.

Everyone is part of a community from birth, every community has a culture that identifies it so, at birth, we are already part of a culture and as we grow, we build and develop our identity. Two major pillars in the construction of identity are family and education, these factors play an important role in the future because the way in which the individual values his culture depends largely on what has been instilled during childhood and adolescence. This is a reality that is reflected in the migrant: his weak cultural foundations coupled with his desperate search for acceptance in foreign societies tend to create confusion in many of them as, fascinated by the dominant culture, they often overestimate it and consider it superior, thus becoming faithful followers and practitioners of these customs and putting aside their own roots which they end up dismissing.

That search for acceptance to which we refer is mainly due to the fact that destinations chosen by migrants are countries whose nationalist ideology is one of its most important features; places where love for that culture sometimes trespasses boundaries of respect, even becoming a social problem as the loyalty they profess to what is theirs, may end up turning into a form of intolerance towards what is foreign. However, leaving aside the extreme nationalism that led to events now part of the memory of mankind, we can say a positive nationalism has been what has allowed American cultures to be kept largely intact, despite being one of the countries with greater cultural variety as there are countless communities from different corners of the world and yet, the love and pride they feel for their country is reflected in most Americans.

It is important to remember that as a society, the responsibility does not fall on a single actor but in each and every one of those who are part of the community. The individual as such, could be considered one of the major players, if not the principal, in helping preserve cultural identity as despite the efforts of the government, beyond its strengths and weaknesses in directing a country, not much will be achieved if there is no commitment of the citizens. One of the most important conclusions that could be reached after what has been observed in this thesis is that culture is as important to man, as man is to culture.

Culture creates in the person a sense of belonging to a community and gives him identity, thus allowing him to distinguish from other societies. However, this important element for the individual could not survive and prevail without a community that practices it, without a group that identifies with it and transmits it; if there is no one who believes and lives a culture, it will eventually disappear. Therefore, the notorious dependence between these two elements is proportional.

Culture is us, we live culture, before having a name and a surname, we have an identity, we are Ecuadorians, we belong to that small country in terms of size but big in terms of culture. We enjoy a cultural and ethnic diversity that not even great powers can afford to have, then if we are so culturally rich, why jeopardize our identity?

Political, economic and social instability, have brought serious crises that have led us to underestimate as Ecuadorians, to feel weak and small, forgetting that although we are not part of the list of developed countries, we are recognized worldwide as a country rich in cultural terms. Proof of this is that two of our cities are recognized as World Cultural Heritage. Our art, our music, our customs and traditions are admired by many foreigners, so what we need as Ecuadorians and as a community is to remember how valuable our culture is, how worth of respect and admiration of us and foreigners it is.

Globalization and new technologies have welcomed us into a new world, a world that changes and moves forwards constantly to be up-to-date with the new and insatiable needs of humanity. Is important for every society to be part of this new scenario and maintain ties and links with other communities that allow us to grow and move forward as a country, avoiding isolation and therefore the stagnation of society.

But being part of the global community should not imply neglecting what is ours to assimilate as ours what is external. While government's efforts to protect culture are worth of recognition, it is also necessary to work in campaigns whose main focus is the individual as a key part of culture, whether he lives inside or outside the country.

Unfortunately, the cultural situation of the country, combined with the impact of migration on our society, has forced programs and projects undertaken by the government and other nongovernmental groups to have as main objective to rescue the cultural values and not to reinforce our culture; this is, the current focus of campaigns is recovery more than prevention.

However, it would be advisable that such programs develop based on two perspectives: the already named recovery of culture and everything it implies and the promotion of identity since childhood so that in the near future efforts focus on promoting our culture rather than on recovering it or protecting it. Indeed, someone whose cultural foundations are well grounded does not risk to be influenced or lose his cultural essence even while living far from their land and people as the love and loyalty for his roots, for his culture and for his

identity will endure through time and space, always feeling the pride to be called an Ecuadorian.

To finish, I consider important, as a personal opinion, to note that the initial intention of this thesis was to verify the loss of cultural identity in Ecuador because of migration; however, taking the risk of being wrong, as a suggestion of a specialist in this subject, the title was changed to "The alteration of cultural identity in Ecuador because of migration in the new millennium". After having analyzed these issues with the *field and desktop* research I could maintain throughout the development of this work, I can now with strong bases say that the fact of assuring a migrant, just because he is a migrant, has lost or forgotten his roots, is highly risky and frankly a wrong assertion as it is easy to assume that belief when one is not closely familiar with the reality of a migrant and that of his family. However, the truth is precisely the contrary as more than one migrant feels more Ecuadorian than most of the Ecuadorians living in the country, despite the distance and time. It would be unfair to point to migration as the cause of the loss of our identity as the Ecuadorian essence has not been lost but has certainly been altered, partly as a result of migration; however, it should be emphasized that the influence it has exerted is lesser than the one we thought it had and even than that of other factors whose impact on our culture is higher and whose effects are very noticeable.

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