



**Faculty of Legal Science**

**School of International Studies**

**EFFECTS OF MIGRATION IN THE PLACE OF  
ORIGIN FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE.  
CASE STUDY: WOMEN ARTISANS FROM  
THE CANTON OF GUALACEO IN ECUADOR.**

**Degree dissertation prior to obtaining the degree  
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## **DEDICATION**

To my family, especially my parents: Gustavo and Ligia, for giving me their constant love and support from the beginning. Thank you for your patience, understanding and encouragement that have given me the strength to overcome obstacles and achieve my goals. To my boyfriend and my closest friends whose company has given me support and moments of distraction during this stage. To all these people around me for believing in me and being my constant support network.

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## Table of Contents

<i>DEDICATION</i> .....	<i>i</i>
<i>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</i> .....	<i>ii</i>
<i>Abstract:</i> .....	<i>v</i>
<i>Resumen:</i> .....	<i>v</i>
<i>1. Introduction</i> .....	<i>1</i>
1.1 Objectives .....	<i>1</i>
1.2 Theoretical framework.....	<i>2</i>
<i>2. Literature review</i> .....	<i>3</i>
<i>3. Methods</i> .....	<i>4</i>
<i>5. Discussion</i> .....	<i>11</i>
<i>6. Conclusion</i> .....	<i>13</i>
<i>7. References</i> .....	<i>14</i>

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1</b> Distribution of categories.....	5
<b>Figure 2</b> Frequent word cloud.....	8
<b>Figure 3</b> Category Networks.....	10



### **Abstract:**

This paper analyzes the impacts of migration on women artisans who remain in Gualaceo after the departure of their family members. Through a qualitative analysis based on semi-structured interviews, the consequences on social, economic, and emotional dynamics are explored. The findings reveal that migration generates significant changes in the environment of these women. The absence of their closest family members implies that they assume additional roles that generate greater responsibilities. In addition, there is an impact on the local economy, as women artisans must adopt additional activities to face the economic challenges resulting from migration. At the emotional level, feelings of loneliness, nostalgia, as well as greater autonomy and personal strength are evidenced. How they cope with both the positive and negative impacts of migration is also analyzed.

**Keywords:** artisans, economy, family, migration, woman

### **Resumen:**

Este artículo analiza los impactos de la migración en las mujeres artesanas que permanecen en el cantón Gualaceo tras la salida de sus familiares. Mediante un análisis cualitativo basado en entrevistas semiestructuradas, se exploran las consecuencias en las dinámicas sociales, económicas y emocionales. Los hallazgos revelan que la migración genera cambios significativos en el entorno de estas mujeres. La ausencia de sus familiares más cercanos implica que asuman roles adicionales que generan mayores responsabilidades. Además, se muestra un impacto en la economía local, ya que las mujeres artesanas deben adoptar actividades adicionales para enfrentar los desafíos económicos resultantes de la migración. A nivel emocional, se evidenciaron sentimientos de soledad, nostalgia, así como también una mayor autonomía y fortaleza personal. Se analizatambién cómo logran sobrellevar tanto los impactos positivos como los negativos que trae consigo la migración.

**Palabras clave:** artesanas, economía, familia, migración, mujer



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# **EFFECTS OF MIGRATION IN THE PLACE OF ORIGIN FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE. CASE STUDY: WOMEN ARTISANS FROM THE GUALACEO CANTON IN ECUADOR.**

## **1. Introduction**

Ecuadorian migration has caused great impacts, ranging from the separation of the families to social problems that have resulted in depression, job desertion, abuse, and strained family relationships. Migration is a social phenomenon that refers to the movement or transfer of people from one country to another for different social, economic, or cultural reasons (Rodríguez Martínez, 2000). Migration has always been a constant aspect present in human existence. Since the beginning of time, millions of people have left their place of origin in search of a better quality of life and better opportunities (Silva et al., 2020). Ecuador is one of the many countries in the world that have experienced strong waves of emigration. During the last decades, this migratory phenomenon has intensified due to various factors and has had a significant impact on the country, generating opportunities as well as challenges for migrants and their families.

The motivations behind migration are multiple and varied, depending on the context in which people find themselves. Among these motivations are: the need for greater economic income that allows a livelihood, security in the face of life-threatening situations in the place of origin, an increase in demand for employment in developed countries; or due to different social and political conflicts that force people to have to leave their place of origin. There are also cultural reasons in which there is an eagerness to integrate and learn about a culture different from their own, either for reasons of university or postgraduate studies (Gómez Santa & González Leivaz, 2019). Migration can be driven by different situations within the social environment that decrease the quality of life, such as insecurity, unemployment, and poverty. Each case of migration is unique, and its motivations may be due to a combination of different economic, social, political, family, or educational factors.

Migration as any social phenomenon brings with it positive and negative impacts to society. Among the positive impacts, according to the official UN website, migrants will provide performance in various dynamic and productive roles as they will somehow contribute to the countries of destination and origin, through this they add value within the sectors and the welfare of their households, migrants come to strengthen competitiveness and growth (2016). If migration is managed properly, it can be beneficial. However, within the negative impacts can be found separations and ruptures of family ties, the lack of paternal or maternal figures at home, and the disparagement of migrants in the destination country as they can even deprive others of jobs or suffer xenophobia, which in turn can lead to psychological problems such as low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety, among other disorders.

It is known that migration has many impacts on society; however, these impacts are not received or experienced by everyone in the same way. The impacts are different based on variants such as gender, age, social class, level of income, level of education, place of residence, among others. Migration has been studied from different perspectives according to the different disciplinary approaches of the social sciences (Caballero et al., 2008). This is why it is important to understand the consequences that this phenomenon has on different groups in society. This research focuses on the effects of migration on women who remain in their place of origin after the migration of their family members. It is important to approach each specific challenge faced by women and thus seek to ensure that they have access to the resources and support necessary to make their lives as safe and healthy as possible. These results will be achieved through a case study that focuses on the experiences of women artisans in the canton of Gualaceo in the province of Azuay in Ecuador.

### **1.1 Objectives**

#### **General objective:**

To identify the effects of migration on women artisans who have remained in the canton Gualaceo in Ecuador.

#### **Specific objectives:**

1. Conduct a historical review of Ecuadorian migration from 1970 to 2021.
2. Analyze migration in the canton of Gualaceo: demographic, economic and social factors.

3. Identify the effects of migration on women artisans who have remained in the canton of Gualaceo.

## 1.2 Theoretical framework

Migration according to the International Organization for Migration is the movement of a population or social group from its place of origin to another place where it is considered that its quality of life could be improved. It involves the establishment of a completely new life, in a different social, political, and economic environment (2021). This phenomenon falls within the group of demographic processes that includes changes in the size, composition, and distribution of a country's inhabitants (Silva et al., 2020). Different meanings can be differentiated within this branch. A person who makes the decision to leave his or her place of origin to move to another will be called a migrant. Furthermore, an emigrant, refers to the person who moves from his or her place of residence established geographically or administratively to settle in another. Finally, an immigrant refers to the person who leaves his or her native country to settle in another from the inverse perspective of the emigrant (Silva et al., 2020).

There are several theories that seek to explain migration from its causes, motivations, and primary and secondary effects. Among the main theories is that of push-pull factors, which postulates that there are several factors that cause the expulsion of people from a place, as well as others that attract them. Thus, referring to pushers to everything related to labor opportunities and conditions, or those factors that motivate people to leave their place of origin such as poverty, overpopulation, environmental problems, low quality of life, scarce basic services, persecution, political repression, harassment problems, discrimination, wars, etc. Attracting factors include access to better living conditions, a better paid job, the enjoyment of a system with social guarantees, etc. On the other hand, the 'system-world' theory, which is part of a debate on the development of countries, portrays the migrant as a passive subject who is forced to migrate to a developed country because of the economic imbalances of the country of origin, leaving the main population behind and strengthening the country of destination. Another theory is that of 'migratory networks', which explains migration from the networks of people with whom an individual relates and shares information. These networks are made up of all those people linked both to migrants at the destination as well as to possible candidates to migrate; these can be family, friends, compatriots, or even detached people since the information can come from secondary sources constituting a form of social capital, and when disclosed, certain individuals are influenced or even pressured to follow a behavior such as migrating (García Sánchez, 2016).

According to the International Organization for Migration, there are five types of migration:

1. Internal migration: Refers to the movement of people within the same country.
2. International migration: This type of migration involves movement outside the place of residence across an international border.
3. Irregular migration: It occurs outside the laws, norms or international agreements that guide the entry or exit of the country of origin.
4. Regular migration: Which occurs within the legality established by the country of origin, transit, and destination.
5. Labor migration: This type of migration occurs when individuals move for employment purposes (2021).

Among the reasons for migration are mainly political causes such as coups d'état, political violence, persecutions, economic causes linked to extreme poverty, hyperinflation, shortages, cultural causes due to studies abroad, social causes because of insecurity and unemployment, ecological causes due to various natural disasters, climate change, and war causes due to civil wars and hostility from foreign forces.

Globally, the United States has been the main destination country for migrants since 1970. In second place is Germany with 15.8 million people, followed by Saudi Arabia (13.5 million), Russia (11.6 million) and the United Kingdom (9.4 million). On the other hand, among the countries from which most people migrate are India (15.6 million), Mexico (12.3 million) and Russia (10.6 million) (Cruz et al., 2018).

The impacts caused by migration will be different for different population groups. While some impacts will be experienced by the person who migrates, others will be very different for their family and friends who remain in the place of origin. Not only among these groups there are differences, but there are also variations depending on gender, and it is here where the idea of gender takes on greater relevance. Gender impact refers to the analysis that aims to identify and assess the provisions on men and women separately. It refers to an analysis of results and effects with the aim of preventing and avoiding the production or increase of gender inequality (Herrera & Carrillo E., 2009). Migration, being a global phenomenon, can affect women in different ways, including the possibility of being abandoned by their husbands or family members who



decide to migrate to another country as a result of different factors. This abandonment can significantly affect women, bringing with it physical, emotional, and economic consequences.

## **2. Literature review**

For a long time, many people had to leave their place of origin in search of a destination that would allow them to find work, food, housing, or, in other words, a better lifestyle for their families. Other historical triggers were political and social conflicts such as massacres, persecutions, and wars, as well as environmental conflicts linked to natural disasters (Guillén de Romero et al., 2019). Migration has been associated as a phenomenon that has always been present in human life. Within the framework of globalization, with technological advances, this migratory process had a greater boom since communication and transportation systems facilitated this phenomenon. Migration can have significant impacts both on the migrants themselves and on the societies they leave and join, primarily due to the different motives behind it. Although there are different triggers for migration, there is evidence of this phenomenon that can offer an increase in the GDP growth rate within the destination countries, an increase in migrants' wages, and an expansion of indirect remittance benefits in the countries of origin.

After the 1990s, Ecuador entered a large-scale emigration process due to a severe economic crisis that affected macroeconomic and social indicators. This crisis left serious consequences in different areas, specifically in the population, which caused a massive outflow of Ecuadorians, because many lost their jobs (Tomalá Parrales, 2019). The objective of the population leaving the country was to seek a higher standard and quality of life in countries such as the United States, Spain, and Italy. The migration of both men and women justified by different causes, among them the pursuit of better paid jobs or family reunification, has led to approximately 3 million Ecuadorians leaving the country (Moreno Egas, 2006). This migratory phenomenon in Ecuador has been occurring since the 1950s, and in the 1990s this phenomenon began to expand. In terms of the number of people migrating from the early 1950s to the 1970s, the different migrants came from the rural sectors of a few provinces (mainly Manabí, Cañar, and Azuay), but in recent years a greater number of citizens have migrated from all over the country, including urban centers (Ponce Leiva, 2005). Even though migration can motivate an economic increase in the destination countries, this will benefit the increase of migrants' salaries and this expansion of indirect benefits will be attracted to our country. Ecuador, according to the latest UN update has 1,183,685 emigrants, which figures 6.85% of the Ecuadorian population (2019). Emigration from Ecuador has been directed mainly to the United States representing 43.61% of the total number of emigrants, followed by Spain with 35.9% and Italy 7.20% (2019). In recent years, the number of Ecuadorian emigrants has increased by 4.62% (INEC, 2019). Thus, it is important to analyze the consequences of migration for Ecuador as it is necessary to know the challenges the country faces.

Gualaceo is a canton in the province of Azuay located in southern Ecuador. It has 38,587 inhabitants and its main source of income is the manufacture of shoes and leather goods, as well as the manufacture of cloth and typical local handicrafts (Municipality of Gualaceo, 2023). Many years ago, the inhabitants of this canton migrated to the coast or the east because these areas offered better working conditions, and since the 1970s, the idea of the "American Dream" began to spread among the society. Within the canton in question, many inhabitants reside in the rural sector, with a higher proportion of men. In general, they are unemployed people, or if they have a job, their income is not enough to subsist. For this reason, 86% of the canton's migrants have left with the desire and search to improve their quality of life (Padilla Molina, 2012).

In the canton of Gualaceo, in each family there is a member, mostly male, who has gone abroad for various reasons and has left his family in the hands of a woman, whether it is his wife, mother, sister, who has often had to take care of his family on her own. The migratory phenomenon in this town affects a large part of the population, this migratory border current has been occurring since 1970, mostly made up of working men and young women. The migration rates of the canton of Gualaceo are somewhat complex, we can recognize an improvement in the economy, which provides the inhabitants with better living conditions in infrastructure, education, health, etc. However, these migration costs for the family will be high (Marambio Chávez, 2009). To this day, this migration effect persists and continues to increase, mainly because of an economic crisis that has continued for decades. In the canton of Gualaceo, one of the main factors driving migration is the search for economic opportunity. Many people from the rural areas of the canton mainly leave for urban areas such as Cuenca or Quito in search of better paying jobs or in some cases to start their own businesses. However, in recent years there has been an increase in migration from this canton to other countries, mostly the United States and Spain. According to official data from the last Population and Housing Census 2010, there are 2,647 residents in different cities of the American and European continent,

which possibly continues to increase (Gobierno Autónomo Descentralizado Municipal del cantón Gualaceo, 2015).

The coronavirus pandemic (COVID - 19) is part of the migratory scenario given that it showed considerable intra-regional mobility in 40 million people around the world (United Nations & CEPAL, 2020). Due to several of the economic and social impacts of the pandemic, an exponential increase in irregular migration of Ecuadorians to the United States has been generated. It is indicated that the number of Ecuadorian people who were detained by the United States Border Patrol experienced a growth between 2018 and 2021, going from 1,988 in 2018 to 47,807 in the first months of 2021 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, 2021). Within this framework, the pandemic has aggravated the inequalities of migrant groups by leaving them without a source of economic support after a long confinement, which has triggered an increase in the unemployment level at the national level. Regarding how the pandemic has affected the Gualaceo canton specifically, if it has negatively affected the local economy, this could have encouraged people to seek new opportunities and led to increased migration, particularly if the pandemic has negatively affected the economy of the area and neighboring areas, so that people seek new opportunities in safer and more economically stable places.

It is important to know and understand that migration does not affect everyone equally, therefore, it is necessary to study the different effects that this phenomenon has on different groups. In this case, the group of women is significant, since they have been seen facing situations of violence, discrimination, and abuse. It is women who have historically remained in charge of families while their husbands, brothers, or sons migrated in search of greater resources to meet the needs of the household. It is a questioning of stereotypes and the possibility of creating new contents of socialization and relationships between human beings. Starting from a misconceived "ideological" perspective, the man is the one who must fulfill the role of economic and social support within the household, and the woman the role of organizing, managing, and ensuring the social generation of the family. This sexual division of productive and reproductive labor places men outside the domestic space. The departure of the father from the home has been seen to affect wives more strongly. Their situation when they are left alone is expressed in fears, either because of the irregularity in sending money, which places them in situations of vulnerability and economic dependence, especially if they do not have a paid job, or because they bear the responsibility of raising and supporting their children alone (Herrera & Carrillo E., 2009).

### **3. Methods**

Within this study, descriptive exploratory research methodology was employed as the main objective was to investigate a relatively understudied phenomenon: the effects of migration on women whose family members have migrated. The study aimed to provide a detailed description of the case of women artisans in the canton of Gualaceo. First, a review of relevant articles, reports, and books was carried out to obtain a solid base of information on the topic. Specialized reports and articles from local and international organizations on the topic in question were used. In addition, the Scielo, Google Scholar, and Scopus databases were used to obtain the different articles, books, and reports for the theoretical basis. Also, data was collected from official sites such as the UN for world migration statistics and INEC for migration statistics up to 2019 in Ecuador.

To gather the results, the technique of semi-structured interviews was employed to obtain qualitative information. According to Lopezosa (2020), the semi-structured interview allows the researcher to interact with and adapt to the interviewees and their answers; in context, they are more dynamic, flexible, and sincere interviews, which allow for a better understanding of the data. In this way, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Ecuadorian women whose relatives have emigrated as the universe, with the canton of Gualaceo as the population and ten artisans from the canton in question as the sample, to obtain different perspectives and opinions. The information collected from the interviews was processed with the help of the Atlas.ti program for its analysis and interpretation, and then the most important points obtained from the perspectives and experiences of the interviewees were analyzed, synthesized, highlighted, and explained.

### **4. Results**

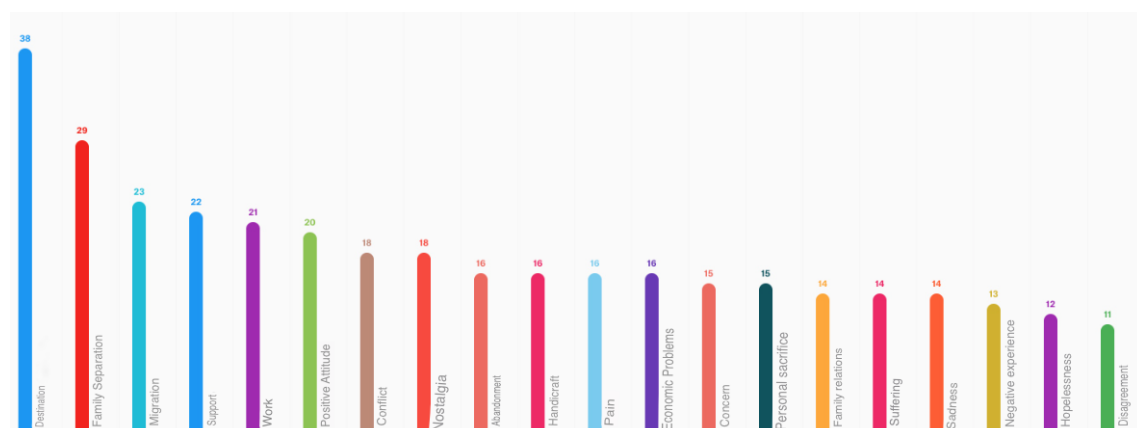
In this section, the results obtained from semi-structured interviews will be presented. The main objective of the research was to identify the effects that migration has had on women who have remained in the

canton of Gualaceo, which revealed a series of recurring themes, and the results revealed the effects and experiences of migration from different perspectives. Among them, the motives, the challenges, and the day-to-day struggle after the departure of their relatives. On the other hand, the importance of recognizing and valuing the role and resilience of women in staying in the country of origin was mentioned. The interviews were conducted in person in the canton of Gualaceo and ten artisans were selected. All of them had experiences of family members who have migrated.

The semi-structured approach allowed greater flexibility during the interviews. General questions were used as a starting point, but the free expression of the participants was encouraged. The interviews were recorded in voice notes and later transcribed for analysis.

The analysis and interpretation of the interviews were processed using the software Atlas. Ti. The program makes it easy to work with and organize qualitative information of large quantities with a variety of digital formats in order to sort and understand the information.

**Figure 1** *Distribution of categories*



*Note:* Graph generated using the Atlas.Ti program Web version

Figure 1 illustrates the categories that were identified according to the content of the participants' responses. It also presents the frequency at which the content within each category was reiterated.

Mainly, it can be seen in a very significant way that the craftswomen essentially talk about the 'destination' of their family members. Within the margin of migration, the “destination” refers to the places or countries that migrants choose as a destination to fulfill their objectives. With respect to this category, it is important to keep in mind that migrants' perceptions and choices regarding the destinations to which they go are shaped through experiences and perspectives. In addition, economic, political, and social factors play an important role in shaping opinions about the destinations chosen by migrants. The main destination country is the United States, as it is known for its robust economy and ample supply of employment with higher wages that will improve their quality of life. Other countries mentioned were Spain and Russia, these two countries are chosen depending on the situation of the migrant, such as for studies, since they are countries recognized for their highly valued educational system, allowing them to later find job opportunities in various sectors.

The second category is the issue of 'family separation', this causes a great amount of conflict for the craftswomen. It is a significant situation that requires attention in this context. Family separation occurs when family members are divided, living in different countries, due to migration. Specifically, among the most common situations mentioned by the artisans are those of their children who migrate; the son or daughter decides to migrate to another country in search of better economic opportunities, leaving their own children behind in the care of their mother for several years. In this case the artisans who are the grandmothers, sometimes maintain little communication through telephone calls, videoconferences or messages with their sons or daughters. During this time, the family will face emotional separation and various challenges of maintaining family unity despite the distance. This separation has a significant impact on the individuals and families involved and can generate emotional and psychological consequences for

both the migrants and the members who remain in the place of origin. Family separation is, therefore, a frequent reality within the margin of migration.

The third recurring and crucial category is the issue of 'migration' itself. There is no single way that people who remain in their place of origin categorize migration. Within this category the responses are varied, with each artisan expressing different opinions and showing different attitudes towards the topic. Economic circumstances, education, personal experiences and culture are a fundamental basis for categorizing migration since these different aspects are the motivating factors that lead people to opt for it. Some people see migration as an opportunity to improve their living conditions, recognizing migration as something that can provide access to better paying jobs, education, or security in general. However, there are others who express a negative view of migration, as feelings of abandonment and destabilization arise. Despite this, it is important to keep in mind that these perceptions may change over time and depending on how each person's specific circumstances develop. Some people may even have mixed views, recognizing both the benefits and challenges associated with migration.

The next category categorizes opinions within the 'support' they receive from their relatives abroad. The support of migrants towards their family back home is fundamental. Some of them send money that is used to cover basic needs such as housing, food, education, and health on certain occasions. This economic support has a significant impact on the quality of life of their families, as it will help improve their economic well-being and provide opportunities for development. In addition, people who stay behind receive emotional and social support as frequent communication helps to preserve family ties and provide a sense of emotional bonding. The support has a positive impact on family circles and the overall well-being of all members.

Within the category of 'work', the artisans expressed the jobs in which their family members work abroad, which vary depending on factors such as their training and skills, immigration status, and the needs and labor policies of the country in which they are located. Generally, they tend to opt for job positions that are available, such as construction, factory, masonry, or house cleaning jobs, but with more favorable remunerations than they would receive in their country of origin.

The category of 'positive attitude' is another of the most frequently mentioned by the artisans as it implies a constructive and optimistic approach to migration, experienced either by the migrants or by the people who remain in the place of origin. Thus, for the people who stay in the place of origin it implies empowerment, strength, support, openness, mutual understanding, solidarity, and other attitudes that are essential to cope with the situation of their migrant family members. In the same way, they show a positive attitude in providing emotional support to their migrant loved ones by expressing understanding, affection, and encouragement to strengthen family esteem and maintain a comfortable emotional cohesion for all despite the distance.

Then, the category of 'conflict' can be observed, which the artisans named situations in which their migrant family members were disadvantaged or had problems in their migratory experience and process. For example, the most recurrent conflict through which the artisans' family members went through is illegal border crossing, specifically to the United States. Some that were caught by the police in Mexico or situations where they were discovered upon arrival in the country. Another of these unfavorable situations are those artisans who lost a family member while trying to cross the border on foot or by boats. These are situations of tension, discrepancy, or confrontation.

In relation to the next category, it encompasses the sentimental part such as 'nostalgia' and within the migratory context it refers to feelings of longing, melancholy and yearning with respect to lived experiences, such as recurring family events, festivities that used to be celebrated as a family, or the fact of seeing their family member at home, before migrating. The lack of physical and sentimental contact may generate an intense feeling of nostalgia and a desire to be close to their relatives again.

Then, the category of 'abandonment' itself can cause diverse emotional and social implications, since it generates a significant physical and emotional separation, this abandonment gives rise to feelings of sadness, loneliness, anxiety and among different psychological disorders. On the other hand, it generates an impact on the family dynamics since there are changes in the roles and responsibilities that are normalized within a household. For example, someone within the household fulfills the role of bringing the money, another the domestic roles and others study or are engaged in other situations. Among some specific cases that the

artisans reported were that of family members who left the country with such resentment and without any information or news to their families.

An important category is that of 'handicrafts' since it is from this category that women's empowerment can be visualized; handicrafts are their main source of income. Crafts have a therapeutic and healing effect for women by providing them with a creative outlet that captures their origins and a space to process emotions and experiences. It serves as a way to relieve stress, inspire emotional well-being and promote their emotional health.

The next category captures another feeling, 'pain'. It refers to an emotional and psychological suffering expressed by women who remember the scenario they went through when a family member migrated. Similarly, pain is a response to the negative aspects of migration, as it implies leaving behind their loved ones and the familiar environment that was lived daily. It is important to understand that pain within the migratory context is a complex and varied reality, not everyone experiences the same level of pain since it depends on the relationship between the person who stays and the migrant. Most of the craftswomen talked about very close members, such as children or siblings, this pain is intense due to the previous close emotional connection.

The category of 'economic problems' refers to all those challenges related to the financial situation and economic difficulties faced by both migrants and their families, which lead them to make the decision to leave the country in search of better remuneration. These economic problems are due to different circumstances that occur in their country of origin such as lack of employment, debts, poorly paid jobs, discrimination when looking for a job, among other factors.

Next, the category of 'concern' refers to the concern and anxiety experienced by women and family members who remain at the place of origin regarding the well-being and safety of their loved ones who migrated. Mainly, their concern is directed at thinking about the migrants' future and prospects for success at the destination and the same generates uncertainty about the challenges they face in the new environment. Another concern refers to the fear that they will settle and continue their life there and have no reason to return to their place of origin with their family.

Next, in the category of 'personal sacrifice', the artisans expressed the need to look for ways to get ahead on their own, their personal sacrifice is expressed by the desire to get ahead by doing any type of work that generates income in order to survive, since most of them do not receive remittances from their families abroad.

On the contrary, the category of 'family relations' expresses the coexistence and emotional support they have with their relatives abroad and those who are still with them. Having a good family relationship can provide understanding and comfort in a way that will help to face emotional challenges. Although it may seem contradictory, many of the artisans do not receive remittances from their migrant relatives. However, there is consistent communication. This is because their relatives, especially their children and siblings have established a whole new life in the destination country. The artisans have learned to cope with the fact that their loved ones are well and maintain regular contact to stay connected. Now, when it comes to a husband who emigrated, the craftswomen said that they have the support of remittances sent to them, especially for the support of their children. There are few artisans who receive economic support from their children; some of them initially supported them and then stopped sending remittances due to the conformity they found abroad.

However, the category of 'suffering' is a very strong category for the craftswomen, leading them to consider the migration phenomenon as something negative due to the separation and absence of their close relatives. Missing the presence, support and company can cause a high level of pain categorized in suffering.

In addition, the category of 'sadness' was incorporated, which, although related to the other categories, are two different emotional experiences. Sadness is a basic and common emotion that is experienced in the migration context in response to a loss or a negative event. It is a natural and healthy emotion that allows processing and expressing emotions.

Next, we can look at the category of 'negative experience' which refers to any unfavorable experience that the migrant has gone through that affects family members and can be categorized as abuse, exploitation,



Next, you can see the word 'year' which the program grouped by the time their family members are or have spent abroad. This time reference is a key measure to understand their experience and the process of adapting to the new environment where they went. The length of their stay can vary from a few months to several years, or even without return. During the time migrants have spent at the destination, they have experienced several changes, both personal and at the level of a new culture. During the first few months, migrants have been seen to face different challenges depending on the culture they are entering, such as language, finding a job and housing. As time goes by, many of the migrants have managed to settle in and adapt to their new way of life. The time they have spent abroad has had a gradual influence so that many of the artisans' relatives have made the decision to stay because their jobs and their new way of life there have influenced their aspirations and goals.

The next word is 'esposar', the program categorized this word as referring to married couples. The artisans were able to express the support they have from their partners in order to get ahead emotionally and economically, since the departure of their children affected them, they mentioned that their husbands are a great support. On the other hand, they mentioned their children's partners who are with them abroad, indicating that their company has been of great help to them not to give up in an unknown country and has helped them to move forward and thus rebuild their lives in a different way. Within this group in the figure, we can find the words 'casar' and 'matrimoniar' which refer to the same topic, but the program was able to adjust them, in other terms.

Another dominant word is 'work' since the main reason why people decide to emigrate is the search for a job with higher salaries. The word 'economy' is the same word that is the trigger for people to leave the country, as they are looking to improve their economic situation by going to a country where there are better opportunities. As can be seen in the figure in smaller sizes, the main jobs that they manage to get are 'carpenter', 'bricklayer' and 'construction'. These jobs are the ones that best suit these people since in their countries of origin they used to do it and the experience facilitates their work abroad. The figure shows that the main motivators for seeking employment abroad are 'poverty', which generates 'debt' and turns it into a 'need', these being the factors that trigger the effects of migration. Thus, 'money' is the main objective for which people decide to take the decision to seek a major alternative such as migration in order to support their lives. We can also observe the word 'student' which is another of the reasons why people migrate in search of a 'university' to complete their studies, which brings with it thoughts of finding better job opportunities by exercising a profession in a developed country and gaining access to and benefiting from the international reputation.

The next dominant word is 'United States' because it is the most popular destination to migrate because of the wide variety of economic opportunities that can be found in various sectors. Many people choose this developed country in search of better wages and a better lifestyle. Within the same is 'New York' this city within the United States hosts many migrants from Latin America, which is why people decide to go there specifically. People can find like-minded groups and feel comfortable and safe even without the language. It is worth mentioning that, within the process of moving to the United States, many of these people travel 'illegally' as mentioned by the artisans through the 'pampa' which refers to arriving by road, which must pass through 'Mexico' and have a journey by car, swimming, boats, and walking. The danger and what several relatives of the artisans have had to experience is to face the law and end up 'prisoners' in the Mexican 'jail', being subsequently returned to their countries of origin with records to their histories. Added to this are the debts, since arriving at the destination illegally comes at a high price.

Then, in smaller size, we can find 'Spain' which is another of the most frequent destination countries since it offers job opportunities in various sectors, also being a Spanish-speaking country generates greater attraction for people since it does not require the effort to understand a different language and facilitates rapid adaptation.

Within the gender theme, the word 'woman' can be observed. The artisans defined themselves as women who can get ahead through various types of jobs that allow them to have 'stability' in their day-to-day lives. The word 'mother' refers to this important figure in the home and is associated with concepts of care, love, and support. In the context of migration, the mother can be a great source of strength and emotional support. Many of them have been left in charge of their grandchildren and as can be seen in the figure, they mentioned that they have had to 'raise' them. Something that has complicated their situation is that after a while migrants have stopped sending remittances for their children and they have had to sacrifice twice as much to be able to send the kids to 'school'.







various sources during the course of his or her life, which are the result of the long work experience they have. Due to this, people have managed to find jobs almost similar to what they did in their country of origin, although abroad they require greater personal sacrifice. This leads them to a personal improvement, wherein within this approach, migration is perceived as a positive experience as their objective of seeking good remuneration is being fulfilled. From this, the positive attitude to achieve their objectives arises and here again enters the category of family relationships, which provide essential support through the preservation of connections.

Based on these work experiences, we can begin to distinguish between gender roles, starting with the jobs that men and women perform. Men dedicate themselves to heavy work that requires effort, which women are prevented from doing, leaving them in charge of their homes. Thus, when women artisans stay in their place of origin, they are left with the responsibility of fulfilling the domestic role and even encouraged to try to find ways to generate economic income with scarce opportunities. In general, the additional jobs they do are house cleaning and cooking, since not all of them receive remittances from their migrant relatives. In the study, only 3 of the 10 women artisans said that they receive support from their relatives abroad. Although they receive it, it is not sent with the consistency they would like. While the other 7 said that they received support during the first months or years, but now their relatives no longer send them economic support. With these events that are normalized in society, it is possible to distinguish the gender perspective, which generates a conflict full of disagreements of which the artisans, with the course of time, have left high the fact of being women with their empowerment in the daily struggle they live.

This study has compiled different experiences of women artisans in the canton of Gualaceo who have remained in their place of origin due to the migration of their immediate family members. These results highlight the emotional and economic challenges they face, as well as the new responsibilities they have had to assume. Their ability to build support networks based on their family relationships is evident. In this way, it is possible to visualize that migration will always be predisposed to two positions, that of the positive experience and that of the negative experience. On the one hand, it can be perceived as a positive experience by opening up new opportunities, such as better skills acquisition, greater access to jobs and cultural diversity. On the other hand, there are also negative experiences, such as family separation, cultural shocks, discrimination, and various adaptation challenges. It is important to note that these two perspectives are not mutually exclusive and can coexist depending on each migration situation. This is why it is necessary to clarify that each situation may vary depending on the individual circumstances and specific experiences of each migrant family.

## **5. Discussion**

Consistent with previous research, the following statement can be strongly supported:

Before being an immigrant, one is a migrant affirm Bourdieu and Wacquant, to underline the importance of connecting the place of origin with the place of destination in migration studies, and of recognizing that these processes modify the lives of those who stay, of those who leave, and of the societies of destination (Herrera, 2002, p.88).

The present study corroborates the findings of Herrera's study: migration, whether drastic or not, provokes significant changes in the forms, processes, and roles of their lives, both for those who stay in the place of origin and for those who leave to settle in a new destination. These changes can have a profound impact on the dynamics of communities and the way people relate to each other.

In relation to the economic impacts of migration, the study by Tomalá Parrales (2019) is supported, indicating that Ecuador experienced a severe economic crisis that led to a large-scale migration process after the 1990s. According to the results of this study, many of the craftswomen's relatives migrated due to the difficult economic situation that the country was going through. These faced great difficulties in finding a job, as the lack of job opportunities and remuneration were predominant in the local context. For this reason, they decided to look for a better future outside the country, in a destination where there were better job opportunities and a more favorable standard of living.

The study conducted by Herrera and Carrillo (2009) starts from premises related to the international migratory context. It has a conception of family structures as a product of permanent adjustments to changing situations of social organization, explaining that families are constantly reacting to economic and political situations, in addition to the ideologies and structures that shape and determine the way in which

they respond to changes, they also argue that the behavior of men and women is determined by cultural norms that establish how they should act. The results of this study highlight the complexity of the effects of migration specifically on women who stay behind after their family members leave the country. Faced with significant challenges, such as family separation and lack of resources, these women have been able to find various opportunities to strengthen their economic participation and autonomy. Their ability to pursue different activities and take on new leadership roles has given them greater independence. In addition, this study has shown that women are not exactly driven by societal norms and have decided to forge their own paths.

In terms of social and emotional impacts, they examine how migration affects women artisans who remained in their place of origin. According to Martínez et al. (2013) women are the ones who most frequently have migrant family members and must experience the emotional costs that migration brings with it. They experience different emotional disorders or ailments that are associated with various factors of which somatic and psychic disorders stand out after the abandonment or separation of their family members. It has been corroborated within this study that these women usually experience a series of emotions and challenges linked to this situation. Many of them experience profound feelings of loneliness and sadness when separated from their closest loved ones, especially their children. The absence of their loved ones makes them miss the emotional support and companionship they used to have. In addition, they face difficulties in maintaining family relationships, as in many cases frequent communication is limited, thus stress and worry arise.

In terms of economic impacts, according to Herrera and Carrillo (2009) there are very marked differences within the migratory contexts. They have evaluated the type of family arrangements regarding economic support, a factor that qualifies this situation in people who have stayed in the country of origin is to see whether or not they receive remittances from their relatives abroad. They have managed to show that not all families receive money, only 50% of migrants send remittances in such a way that they leave their families in a situation of vulnerability in the place of origin. This study has shown that, although some of these women receive remittances from their relatives abroad, these remittances are often not sufficient or do not arrive at the necessary times, so they have had to look for additional jobs to supplement their income. On the other hand, it is important to note that many of them do not receive these remittances, which implies a greater burden and responsibility to meet the needs of their families. Women artisans who remain in their place of origin have been forced to take on new roles and responsibilities that they did not have before. They have demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt and seek innovative ways to maintain economic stability within their households. In addition to engaging in handicrafts, many of these women have ventured into other types of employment and have sought additional job opportunities, thus strengthening their skills to cope with lack of income and overcome financial challenges.

Going into the gender perspective, Herrera (2002) mentions that those women who use and control the remittances sent by their migrant relatives are subject to a series of family controls that continue to be exercised and reproduced by the male role on behalf of the family. However, this study provides new perspectives, as could be identified in the testimony of the craftswomen, who made it very clear that, although their family members help them economically from abroad, most of them do not depend on this. They have been able to seek alternatives to manage to get ahead on their own and fulfill their role of supporting the household. The results of this study highlight the importance of considering a new way of interpreting gender roles.

Likewise, Herrera and Carrillo (2009) explain that the woman, by remaining the head of the household, acts as an anchor from which the different domestic and economic activities are articulated as the new pillar of her family. In this article, it has been shown that the resilience and determination of these women are certainly visible in their quest to move forward. Despite the difficulties, they show a strong determination to achieve economic self-sufficiency and the well-being of their households. Their valuable effort and dedication deserve recognition, as they not only face economic challenges, but also assume greater responsibility in making decisions for themselves and their families.

Furthermore, when contrasting our results with the ingrained prejudices that society takes for granted, Herrera (2002) mentions that discrepancies are revealed that deserve special attention. For example, it is common to assume that if a person has a migrant relative, the family will enjoy economic stability due to the belief that the relative will send remittances continuously. However, this study demonstrates that each migration situation is unique and, specifically in the case of the artisans. It is evident that some of them have been forced to face the reality of being left alone and seek multiple ways to survive daily. Artisans

have had to struggle with significant economic challenges. Over and above social expectations, not all have received regular remittances from family members abroad and some do not receive them at all. The lack of a steady flow of income has led these women to seek various creative solutions to support their families, and they have had to enrich their economic activities by developing new skills and undertaking additional projects beyond their artisan work. It is important to note that the lack of continuous financial support from their migrant relatives has implied greater responsibility and effort on the part of these craftswomen. They have had to work hard to secure daily sustenance and ensure that their families' basic needs are met.

## **6. Conclusion**

This empirical study has explored the various and multiple effects of migration at the place of origin from a gender perspective. Strong evidence has been found that gender roles and relations significantly influence the migration experience and the resulting impacts on the place of origin.

In recent decades, Ecuador has experienced significant migration changes due to a variety of factors. Lack of employment and the economic crisis have driven many migrants to seek opportunities abroad, but it has also been influenced by globalization, which has facilitated international movements. In the case of the canton of Gualaceo, its high emigration rate is due to its weakened economic situation and its proximity to larger cities that limit its growth. The inhabitants of Gualaceo seek opportunities in other places where they can access jobs and services not available locally, motivated by improving their living conditions and development prospects.

By understanding the socioeconomic and geographic circumstances of Gualaceo canton, we can contextualize the high emigration rate and understand why the inhabitants of this small canton decided to seek opportunities elsewhere. In addition, the canton of Gualaceo has many women artisans who were the focus of this study. The women artisans of the canton of Gualaceo are women who have managed to demonstrate and overcome the limits of gender prejudice. Although these women face challenges in economic, social, and cultural terms, they have found opportunities to strengthen their participation in different areas and to adapt their own artisan practices in the canton of Gualaceo. It has been highlighted how the ingrained gender expectations of society can influence the experiences that these women have. Although it has been shown that many of these women do not receive economic support from their migrant relatives, they have managed to cope with their situation alone, their main motivator is the emotional support they receive from their family, but in economic terms they have been able to find alternatives to support themselves.

Gender roles and relations play a critical role in the way in which the effects of migration are experienced by women in the place of origin. It is normalized in many societies to assign roles and responsibilities according to gender. Typically, women are the ones who are responsible for taking care of the household, raising children, and maintaining the family unit. So, when a man of the household migrates, the responsibilities fall more heavily on the woman. When women stay in their place of origin, they face different challenges in meeting their family responsibilities with their economic and artisan dynamics. Despite the challenges faced by women, this migration can create transformations in gender relations and promote female empowerment.

Likewise, the importance of considering the positive and negative impacts of migration has been observed. On the one hand, it has been shown that migration has provided opportunities for the personal development of both women artisans and their migrant family members, since it allows for both personal and economic development in their lives. On the other hand, challenges and difficulties associated with migration have also been identified. One of the most significant challenges is family separation, which can generate emotional and affective pressure. Physical distance and lack of constant communication can affect family relationships. Another challenge is the emotional impacts such as sadness, loneliness, and worry. These challenges require attention and support measures to cope with the various effects that migration brings with it.

In summary, the contrast between ingrained prejudices and the result of this study underscores the importance of recognizing that migration and its impacts are much more complex than is often assumed. Artisans have demonstrated resilience and determination in the face of economic challenges, adopting innovative strategies to ensure the well-being of their families. Their experience challenges stereotypical perceptions and teaches us that each migration situation is unique, requiring a sensitive and comprehensive approach.

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