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**Analysis of the perception of social capital in the
community of Cuenca; comparison between the
immigrant population and the local**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduation work to my family in recognition of their constant support and encouragement. Thank you for always being there and providing me with the motivation necessary to achieve my goals.

GREETINGS

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to the Universidad del Azuay for giving me the opportunity to train academically in an environment of excellence and constant growth. Also, to my director of this research, Bernardita Quintanilla, I owe a special recognition; her expert guidance, patience and dedication have been invaluable at every stage of this work.

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Summary

The present investigation analyzes the need to know the perception that both the local and immigrant population has regarding social capital in the city of Cuenca, the investigation has a qualitative character, it starts from a theoretical framework on social capital and immigration obtaining concepts and definitions based on magazines, articles and legal instruments; The information is then obtained through semi-structured interviews, information that is systematized and captured in the results, finally the results obtained in the discussion are analyzed, from which it is concluded recognizing that there is a social capital with respect to the immigrant population, as well as among them; however, it will be necessary to work on it in both sectors of the population, as some weakening can be perceived, based on specific expressions.

Keywords: social welfare, social capital, trust, discrimination, immigration, security.

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Abstract

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1. Introduction

The present research is motivated by academic and personal reasons, since the phenomenon of immigration, as well as social capital, have been topics of interest in the course of professional training.

In the field of political science, the study of immigration is of vital importance, as well as its implications in the settlement process of the immigrant population in their new destination. Thus, it is an important contribution to have information from primary sources, which allows us to know how the processes of human integration occur in these cases. From this, it will be possible to recommend pertinent strategies capable of favoring social development, integration, as well as the human rights of the population in condition of mobility in our community.

According to an article published in *El Mercurio* on January 22, 2023, it is known that about 10.000 foreigners currently live in the city of Cuenca; the same newspaper published another article by Fabián Campoverde on October 4, 2023 in which the reality of immigration in the city of Cuenca is made known. Campoverde mentions Jorge García Guerrero, deputy director general of the National Institute of Statistics and Census, who refers that "the Venezuelan migratory wave has placed this population group in the first place of foreign residents in the country, which includes Cuenca" (Campoverde, 2023).

It is important to take into account the difficulties that immigrants face in order to be able to enter the labor market, or to receive attention and/or public and citizen services. Being immigrants and often not having all the necessary papers to be considered Ecuadorian citizens, they face labor problems such as jobs in which they are not paid a fair remuneration or are not affiliated with health insurance, so many of their rights are violated, and as a result of this they also face difficulties when looking for stable housing and even if they enter the country with children, they do not have access to education, nor to goods and services that allow them a decent life.

In this context it is essential to address social capital since it can influence the welfare of the migrant population, facilitating the process of insertion and adaptation, social capital can improve employability and reduce poverty, promote access to social services and provide economic and social support, among many other aspects; this is how all this leads to the question: What is the perception that the local and immigrant population has of social capital in the community of Cuenca?

1.1 Objectives

Based on this background, the present research aims to analyze the relationship between social capital and immigration in the community of Cuenca, from the perspective of the local and immigrant population; for which a theoretical framework will be developed regarding social capital and immigration, from which tools will be built and applied for the investigation of the perception of social capital in the immigrant and local population, and finally, the perception of the local and immigrant population regarding social capital will be analyzed. Thus, this research seeks to obtain data based on interviews with local and immigrant population of the city of Cuenca that help to analyze the perspective they have regarding social capital.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Now, given that social capital influences the life and development of people, it is important to analyze previous studies conducted on this topic, in a case study conducted in 2019 by Jorge Lera and Roberto Ochoa in Tula-Mexico, it is possible to analyze the general role played by social capital in migrant families, this article can contribute to the present research being a reference for the development of the proposal.

On the other hand, the study conducted by authors Jorge Aedo, Estefany Oñate, Marcela Jaime and Cesar Salazar in Chile, in 2020, entitled "Social capital and subjective well-being: A study of the role of participation in social organizations in life satisfaction and happiness in Chilean cities", describes that

High levels of social capital are manifested in an active participation of society and higher levels of trust, which reduces transaction costs, facilitates the provision of public goods and promotes the constitution of healthy social actors and civil societies, contributing to the economic and social development of a country (Aedo, et al.2020).

This shows that social capital brings benefits to people and definitely a better quality of life.

In order to analyze the history that Ecuador has had with immigration we can rely on an article published by the author Alex Valle Franco from the Catholic University of Ecuador in 2017, this article addresses immigration from a legal point of view, mentioning how since the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador of 2008 there has been a greater immigrant flow in the country due to the rights that it contains and how some of them benefit the migrant. The article mentions how it can be considered that the immigration flow began to increase in the mid-twentieth century until the end of the twenty-first century and this was due to trade relations of the country, as well as armed and political conflicts in other countries. Something very important that is mentioned in this article and should be taken into account for this research is that there are not enough data and academic studies on migration flows.

The article mentions some of the most important early immigration flows to Ecuador that occurred in the mid-twentieth century, among them we can see the Arab, Spanish, Jewish, German, etc. immigration. Later, at the beginning of the 21st century, a wave of immigration to Ecuador started coming from Colombia, Peru, Cuba, Haiti, etc. Now, it should be noted that the few data that exist on the subject and the laws that are said in the 2008 Constitution helped immigrants to have more benefits, only refer to immigrants who enter legally; however, illegal migration is not recognized as a condition in which an individual is found, so the situation in which they find themselves is unknown. "In short, it is not in line with the constitutional definition of Art. 40 Inc. 1 of our Constitution "No human being shall be identified or considered illegal because of his or her migratory condition" (Valle,2017).

In this context, it is essential in this research to address the concept of migration, Jaime Gómez (2010) refers to migration in the following terms

International migration is the movement of people from one country to another to exercise their residence. There is no agreement on the length of stay, although some entities, such as the World Bank, set a minimum residence period of one year. When people migrate, they bring with them their knowledge, customs, ideologies; therefore, migration cannot be reduced to a simple fact of wage competition between national workers and immigrants and monetary flows, but it involves many factors to be taken into account for its study. (p. 84).

As stated by Gómez, it is necessary to recognize that migrating from one country to another entails a myriad of reasons and possible consequences that cannot be simply classified into one category, and therefore can be both positive and negative, so that arriving in another country challenges the migrant to seek the necessary support to adapt.

Here it is essential to make a parenthesis to clarify the differences that exist between the terms migration, immigration and emigration, the same that may present some similarity, against which it is necessary to identify their specificity; as Arrieta (2016) states, migrating on the one hand is simply the change of habitual residence of a person, emigrating the act of leaving the place where a person is living and immigrating is the act of entering a country which is not that of the person's habitual residence.

Table 1
Differences between Immigration, Emigration and Migration

	Immigration	Emigration	Migration
Definition	The entry of a person into a foreign country for the purpose of establishing a new residence. The person who performs this action is known as an immigrant.	The act of a person leaving his or her country of origin to go and live in another country. The person who performs this action is called an emigrant.	The movement that a person, group or animal makes from a specific place to a different one.
Ambit	Country.	Country.	Country or region.
Application	People.	People.	May apply to people or animals
Time	Permanent.	Permanent.	Permanent or temporary.
Origin	From the Latin <i>immigro</i> , meaning to enter or introduce oneself into a place.	From the Latin <i>emigro</i> , which means to migrate or change residence.	From the Latin <i>migro</i> , meaning to leave or migrate.

Note: "*Differences between Immigration, Emigration and Migration*", by Arrieta, 2016, Diferenciador.

It is clear that migration is a right recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which in Article 13 stipulates that "Everyone has the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence within the territory of a State. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country". (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948), it is necessary to recognize that, along with this right, people should enjoy other fundamental human rights such as: the right to education, health, a decent life, security, equality and access to work.

In the national context, the right to free mobility is recognized in Article 40 of the 2008 Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, which explicitly states that:

Art. 40.- Individuals have the right to migrate. No human being shall be identified or considered illegal because of his or her immigration status.

The State, through the corresponding entities, will develop, among others, the following actions for the exercise of people's rights Ecuadorian citizens abroad, regardless of their immigration status;

1. Offer assistance to them and their families, whether they reside abroad or in the country.
2. Offer attention, advisory services and comprehensive protection so that they can freely exercise their rights.
3. Protect their rights when, for any reason, they have been deprived of their freedom abroad.
4. Promote their links with Ecuador, facilitate family reunification and encourage voluntary return.
5. Maintain the confidentiality of personal data in the files of Ecuadorian institutions abroad.
6. Protect transnational families and the rights of their members (p.20).

These actions, which are recognized in the Constitution, are intended to provide a "dignified life" for people in a situation of mobility; expressed this obligation of the State, according to the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador of 2008, in Article 66, paragraph 2, in the following terms: "The right to a dignified life that ensures health, food, nutrition, drinking water, housing, environmental sanitation, education, work, employment, rest and leisure, physical culture, clothing, social security and other necessary social services" (National Constituent Assembly of Ecuador, 2008).

However, taking into account that this research will be carried out in the city of Cuenca-Ecuador, it should be noted that according to Ecuador's national regulations, the term migration is not so widely used, "In Ecuador, the term "human mobility" has replaced the term migration. Thus, human mobility is defined as the migratory movements made by a person, family or human group to transit or settle temporarily or permanently in a State other than that of their origin or in which they have previously resided, a situation that generates rights and obligations regardless of the migratory situation." (Chancellery, 2020, P.10)

According to the United Nations:

Discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference or other differential treatment that is based directly or indirectly on prohibited grounds of discrimination and that has the intention or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. (ONU, s.f.)

Taking into account the above quote where discrimination itself is defined, it should also be mentioned that the most common form of discrimination is in fact racial discrimination, about this it is worth mentioning the International Convention of the United Nations on the elimination of all forms of discrimination, which stipulates seven relevant articles where you can see the importance of the issue and its seriousness. (<https://www.ohchr.org/es/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-elimination-all-forms-racial>, 1965)

Thus, when speaking of discrimination, it is important to differentiate between the different types of discrimination that exist, among them are: racial discrimination, social class, gender, age, disability, ethnic origin, etc. For this research it is essential to conceptualize racial discrimination, so it is worth mentioning the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which in a bulletin states that racial discrimination is "Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms ..." (International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965).

For the present study, we will mainly consider discrimination based on race and socioeconomic status, i.e., xenophobia and aporophobia.

According to UNICEF, xenophobia "is a type of discrimination. Just as there is discrimination for being a girl, a woman or for having different sexual tastes and affective relationships, xenophobia is discrimination against identities or cultures different from our own. It is the fear or rejection of foreigners." (<https://www.unicef.org/colombia/media/1136/file/Cartilla-para-profesores.pdf>, 2019)

Aporophobia, on the other hand, is a term that refers to the rejection of the poor (Cortina, 2017).

In sociological terms, aporophobia falls within the framework of hate speech. In this sense, it shares with other hate speeches -such as homophobia or racism- the fact that it leads to actions of rejection or violence against a person regardless of who they are or what their life has been like, exclusively because they belong to a social group about which black legends have been raised that presumably justify the belief of the discriminator that he or she is superior to the victim of discrimination. Other features are the absence of arguments and the failure to recognize the dignity of the person who paradoxically fulfills the role of "receiver" of a hate speech. (p.2)

Taking into account the above quote, aporophobia can be understood as a rejection by one individual of another simply because of his or her economic status of poverty.

Another very common type of discrimination is ageism, according to the UN World Health Organization "Ageism occurs when age is used to categorize and divide people causing harm, disadvantage and injustice. It can take many forms, including prejudice, discrimination, and institutional policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs." (WHO, 2021)

These types of discrimination and others, which, as we have reviewed, have no real basis, are the result of the proliferation of stereotypes, understood as "a generalized vision or preconceived idea about the attributes or characteristics, or the roles that women and men possess or should possess or play" (OHCHR, n.d.).

Thus, it is essential to recognize that the condition of human mobility exposes certain people to a situation of defenselessness, when their fundamental rights are violated for any reason, among which xenophobia and aporophobia have been mainly mentioned, based on stereotyped concepts; a situation that threatens the welfare of people, considering that:

Social welfare is an end state in which basic human needs are met and people are able to live peacefully together in communities with opportunities for advancement. This end state is

characterized by equitable access to and delivery of basic services (water, food, shelter, and health services), the provision of primary and secondary education, the return or resettlement of those displaced by violent conflict, and the restoration of the social fabric and community life. (National Institute of Statistics, 2023).

In turn, the welfare situation of people makes possible the strengthening of social capital, which from the perspective of the American sociologist James Coleman (1990), is "the value for the actors of those aspects of the social structure, such as the resources they can use to pursue their interests" (p. 305).

Corao (2006) in his study quotes one of the authors who has made a significant contribution to the construction of the concept of social capital

Social capital is defined by Putnam as a set of characteristics of social organization, present in the structures of interpersonal and intersectoral relationships of a society in the form of norms, networks of interpersonal relationships and trust. They are resources used by all people and social actors in a community to facilitate cooperation, the coordination of joint actions for mutual benefit and to develop agreements in a balanced, continuous and sustained manner over time (Corao,2006) (p.3.).

Concept that in general terms refers to the networks and trust that result from optimal living conditions, as Hernández, et al. (2021), refer to the contribution of different authors, as shown in Table No. 2.

Table 2
Contributions of the concept of social capital

Author	Definition
Bourdieu (1980)	A set of resources, actual and potential, that are associated with the presence of a network of more or less institutionally established relationships, characterized by mutual knowledge and recognition among the members of said network.
Bourdieu y Wacquant (1992)	The total amount of resources, actual and potential, accumulated within an individual or social unit, because it possesses a more or less institutionalized network of relationships of knowledge and mutual recognition among its members.
Westlund (2006)	Informal social networks created, maintained and used by network members to disseminate norms, values, preferences and other shared social attributes and characteristics. These networks also arise as a result of participants sharing certain elements in common
Martínez (2013)	Connections between individuals and society, considered as a resource that allows network members to obtain different benefits
Arzuero (2009)	Social capital resides in social relationships; it compensates for the lack of other resources in contexts of poverty; it is based on trust, reciprocity, associativity, collective action and cooperation; it is an intangible asset that can be converted into economic loans.
Rostila (2011)	Social capital is defined as the resources and trust that exist within personal networks, which can be used and activated to achieve individual and collective goals.

Note: "Social Capital and the results of research, technological development and innovation groups in the department of Atlántico, Colombia", by Hernandez, Villaverde and Ortega, 2021, Scielo, vol.32 no., Pag.59, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-07642021000100057>

Eito (2005) states that the ties that constitute social capital can be of two types: strong (bridging) or weak (bounding).

Strong ties correspond to sets of relationships and more homogeneous groups, where there are hardly any relationships outside the group and the information that is distributed and controlled is very similar. Weak ties are described as "those that expand the network of contacts and acquaintances beyond the group of belonging, also expanding other horizons such as labor or relational ones" (Mateo, 2005, p.193).

Against this background, recognizing the risk faced by people in conditions of human mobility, the question arises: Why do it, and in this sense, several analyses arise with respect to migration.

The European Parliament (2023) mentions that there are two factors: push and pull factors; push factors refer to the causes that force a person to leave his or her place of residence, while pull factors are those that cause a person to enter or move to his or her new place of residence.

Push factors can be socio-political factors and a common example of these are wars or changes of governments, as well as economic and demographic factors such as unemployment, low economic growth, lack of accessibility to health services, etc.; they can also be environmental factors such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, etc. (European Parliament, 2023).

In this study, we will analyze the perception in relation to social capital, of immigrants located in the city of Cuenca; so it is essential to recognize the attractiveness of the city of Cuenca as a migratory destination, of course when analyzing the attractiveness of the city we must also know and study the origin of immigrants in the city. For example in the case of migrants from the United States an article by the BBC in 2012, mentions that it can be considered that they began to arrive the largest number of U.S. migrants in 2009 where a U.S. magazine called "International living" mentioned Cuenca as the main destination where American citizens came to retire, and other international magazines like National Geographic also, and this was due to some reasons such as the cost of housing in the country, decent living conditions and economic benefits, which could not get in their previous country of residence.

In the city of Cuenca there are migrants from all over the world, however, the treatment received by an American migrant is undoubtedly very different from that received by a Venezuelan or Colombian migrant, and this is due to discrimination and stereotypes regarding each of them, because of their origin; This is in fact a common imaginary where it is thought that because a person is Venezuelan, he/she will be dishonest, of a low socioeconomic status, with few opportunities in all areas and not worthy of receiving help or having a decent life; while it is thought that an American migrant will always be of great economic possibilities, who brings benefits to the country and who has the best of intentions in whatever his/her activity in the city may be.

On the other hand, as for Venezuelan migrants entering Ecuador, it is known that in some cases they do not enter with many resources and possibilities, mainly due to the political situation in their country; proof of this is that social support organizations mainly welcome Venezuelan migrants or migrants from emerging countries, supporting them with economic projects, social assistance, accompaniment, among other aspects.

The Foreign Ministry of the Ecuadorian government in October 2020 published the "Comprehensive Plan for the Attention and Protection of the Venezuelan Population in Human Mobility in Ecuador 2020-2021" in which several important aspects are mentioned in order to understand the profile of the Venezuelan migrant, mentioning that "Venezuelan migration in Ecuador is considered varied and is made up of people who left their country for economic reasons in search of better life opportunities, but there are also Venezuelan citizens who have international protection requirements." (Cancillería, 2020, p.19).

In a period of 5.5 years, from January 2015 to June 2020, a total of 3,284 cases of Venezuelan citizens who were in situations of vulnerability have been registered and attended. During this period, a considerable increase in the number of cases was observed as of 2018, coinciding with the significant increase in the migratory flow of Venezuelans into the country. The cases of vulnerability dealt with cover a wide range of situations, including: deported, missing and deceased citizens; persons deprived of liberty; victims of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants; cases of gender violence; situations of defenselessness in terms of health, migratory and economic status; in addition to Venezuelan citizens who suffered traffic and work accidents, health problems, kidnapping, robbery and domestic violence.

2. Methods

To define the methodology of this research, the book "Las metodologías de la investigación" written by the authors Roberto Hernández-Sampieri and Christian Paulina Mendoza Torres in 2018 was used as a reference and basis.

The methodology proposed for the present study, is qualitative in nature, it is worth mentioning that this methodology was chosen since "it is convenient to understand phenomena from the perspective of those who live them and when we look for patterns and differences in these experiences and their meaning" (Sampieri et.al, 2018, p.44), therefore, the qualitative methodology allowed us to know the perspective of the participants in the study.

We started with a review of the literature, from which we obtained the categories of analysis that allowed us to establish the relationship between social capital and immigration in the community of Cuenca, from the perspective of the local and immigrant population. For the literature review we used search engines such as Google Scholar, journals such as Dialnet and Scielo, national legal instruments such as the Constitution of the

Republic of Ecuador of 2008 and international instruments such as the Declaration of Human Rights and the European Parliament; for the search we used keywords such as: social capital, immigration, networks, discrimination, aporophobia, xenophobia, social welfare. Then all the information obtained was filtered through the criteria of relevance of the article and matching the researched topic. Next, after having obtained the information, the theoretical framework was drafted and the categories of analysis were identified, which are detailed in Chart 3.

Table 3
Matrix of analysis categories

Category	Conceptualization	Subcategories	Indicators
Discrimination	Any action that differentiates, excludes, restricts, prefers or treats a person or group unequally, with the intention or result of preventing or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on equal terms, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in any area of public life, whether political, economic, social, cultural or otherwise	Aporophobia Xenophobia	Rejection at Work Rejection in public spaces Rejection in public or private institutions
Social Capital	The characteristics of society, manifested in the structures of personal and inter-sectoral relationships, including norms, networks of relationships and trust, which are shared by all members of a community. These characteristics enable people to cooperate, coordinate their actions and reach mutual agreements in a balanced, continuous and sustained manner over time	Intersectoral Relations Interpersonal Relations	Belong to networks of people Trust in local people Participates in community activities Is in formal or informal employment
Immigration	The act of a person entering a country other than his or her own, with the intention of establishing a new residence there. The person who performs this action is called an immigrant	Migrate Migrate	Reason for entry to another country Economic, political or social reasons that contributed to migration

The context in which the research will be carried out will be the city of Cuenca; the participants will be individuals living in the city of Cuenca, of foreign origin who are immigrants, as well as the native population of the city, who live in the city.

In terms of inclusion and exclusion criteria in this research, it is worth mentioning some criteria, the participants in the study as mentioned above will be local and immigrant population, the geographical location of the research will be in the city of Cuenca Ecuador and all interviews will be conducted in Spanish, additionally for the individual to be considered as a sample he/she must already have a minimum stay in the country of one year.

Another aspect regarding the sample is that it will be a diverse sample since the research is seeking to analyze different perceptions and find differences or coincidences in the points of view.

In terms of data collection, the instrument to be used will be semi-structured interviews since specific questions will be asked to talk about some specific categories related to social capital, but they will have to be specified according to how the conversation with the interviewee goes, general questions will be used in the interviews, The interviews will use general questions to be able to talk in an open way about the topic in general, questions to exemplify also to be able to collect more in-depth questions about the topic and also contrast questions that are expected to be used to be able to see the similarities and differences in the different answers of the interviews that are carried out about social capital and its categories.

3. Results

The interview is the instrument for the collection of information. It was carried out based on an interview guide established in Annex 1; we had the participation of 8 individuals from the local population and 8 individuals from the immigrant population in the city of Cuenca, as characterized in Annex No. 4. From Tables 4 and 5,.

However, for the analysis of the results obtained in the surveys, the responses obtained by both the local and immigrant populations will be analyzed by categories.

It can be observed that, with respect to social capital, six people of the local population do know immigrants residing in the city of Cuenca; one person does not feel that they constitute a threat to their integral wellbeing and security, two that they do sometimes, and five that they do. When sharing a public or private space, four people do not feel uncomfortable; one does, and three sometimes or a little. Regarding the security and trust that the local population feels in immigrants, two people said yes, one said no, and five said sometimes.

Regarding the immigrant population, seven people say that they feel accepted and comfortable going to public places, and one person is mostly accepted and comfortable; five people have not felt rejected when going to public places, one has, and two rarely. Next, with respect to whether they have a social circle they can count on, only two people said no and the rest said yes; with respect to whether they feel safe and confident in the local watershed population, all of them said yes. Five people have not attended community activities, and three have. Five people have attended celebrations or fairs in the city, and three have not.

Now, with regard to the category of discrimination, six of the eight people interviewed state that the immigrant population does occupy jobs of the local population, while one does not perceive it that way, and another person considers that it happens on some occasions. In this same area, in relation to the perception of lifestyle, the majority of those interviewed—five out of eight—consider that they have inadequate lifestyles, while the remaining three people stated that this is not necessarily the case, or only in some specific cases.

In this same category, the immigrant population express that, with respect to employment, six people said that it was difficult to find work and one that it was not, while the other person does not know because he has not looked for work since he entered the city as a retiree. Likewise, in the labor sphere, five people have been exposed to situations of job rejection and three have not.

Regarding the category of immigration, four members of the local population think that the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination because of the security that exists in the city; the other interviewees say that another attraction of the city is the job opportunities, the climate, the warmth of the people, and the cost of living. In the same category, the majority of the interviewees—six of the eight—think that the most difficult area in the hypothetical case that they would have to migrate would be the social area; among them, one thinks that apart from the social area, the economic one, and the other thinks that the labor and economic ones would also be difficult. On the other hand, all of those interviewed stated that for a person who immigrates to the city of Cuenca, the most challenging area is undoubtedly the economic one.

In this same area, the immigrant interviewees expressed that most of them left their previous place of residence for economic reasons; only one interviewee expressed that it was for economic, social, and political reasons. Regarding the reason why they chose the city of Cuenca as their new place of residence, the majority said it was because of recommendations from family or friends about the city, while some expressed motivations such as the current currency (the dollar), the climate, food, security, water, and the environment for their children to grow up in.

4. Discussion

From the results obtained in the present research, we can state that there is a positive perception regarding social capital, since as considered by Aedo et. al (2018) social capital is expressed in the level of participation of individuals in community activities, it is so that the majority of immigrant interviews have manifested that they feel comfortable and safe in the city, that they attend public places without feeling rejection, in the same way they participate in community activities; However, it is worth mentioning that some interviewees stated that their social circle is their children or relatives, feeling safe in the city, although they do not attend community activities or celebrations because, as alias "D Duglimar Vega" stated "*one does not have the right clothes for these events, and as a person one feels bad when they start to criticize the people around us*", an expression that shows that the notion of social capital is closely related to that of discrimination, While the former alludes to trust and the consolidation of community networks, the latter recognizes some of the obstacles faced by the immigrant population in forming networks, a situation that, although not explicitly found in the study, can be perceived as the circles and networks that are consolidated among immigrants being made up of people who share this condition.

In relation to the perception that the local population has regarding the migrant population, we were able to show that the trust that this population generates, for some people, is related to the lifestyle that the immigrant leads, which suggests that if it is about immigrants who are in street conditions or vulnerable, they generate distrust, while if they lead a "correct lifestyle," they do not generate discomfort. On the other hand,

discomfort is also expressed, arguing that "*she does not know their values, customs, or background.*" However, alias "Emilia" states that "*she does not consider that she cannot trust any of them.*"

This narrative leads us to refer to discrimination as one of the most important variables for the consolidation of trust, security, and the formation of networks, that is, for the consolidation of social capital. .

The United Nations:

Discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction, preference, or other differential treatment that is based directly or indirectly on prohibited grounds of discrimination and which has the intention or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life (UN, n.d.).

Despite the fact that the people interviewed did not explicitly manifest a position of rejection towards the immigrant population, the discourse allows us to recognize certain discrimination, a situation that conceptually fits the aporophobia, conceptual construction of Cortina (2017), to describe the rejection based on the belonging to the social group of a person, on which "black legends have been raised that allegedly justify the belief in whoever discriminates of being superior to the victim of discrimination" (p. 2).

Rejection that, although subtle, can be related to the expressions of some immigrants; among them, we can mention what was expressed by alias "Duglimar," who said, "*I have not attended because one does not have the right clothes for these events and one as a person feels bad when they start to criticize the people around us.*" For his part, alias "Greisi Dos Santos Martinez," he said, "*I did have strong situations in my work environment in 2022 and 2023, mostly including a mockery of the economic support I received.*"

Meanwhile, alias "Dunia," when asked if she has been excluded, stated, "*Yes, because of my age.*" She commented that she has been exposed to situations of labor rejection; testimony that confirms the presence of ageism, a concept pointed out by the WHO (2021) in which it recognizes that "age is used to categorize and divide people, causing damage, disadvantages, and injustices."

It is worth mentioning that it was not explicitly asked if the local population felt comfortable or uncomfortable with the immigrants according to their origin, that is, if they were North American or South American immigrants, in order to know if there is discrimination in terms of the migrant's place of origin; however, this aspect was not explicitly mentioned in the responses received, so it can be deduced that it is not a determining factor in the treatment received by migrants.

On the other hand, referring to Gomez (2010), who mentions that the fact of migrating to another country leads the migrant to seek support to adapt, a conceptualization that we can see expressed in several of the interviewees who state that they chose the city of Cuenca because they had friends or relatives who could help them in different areas until the migrant can settle down. In this same aspect, it is worth mentioning the European Parliament (2023), which mentions that there are two important factors in the migratory phenomenon: push and pull factors; push factors refer to the causes that force a person to leave their place of residence, while pull factors are those that cause a person to enter or move to their new place of residence; in this case, the fact of having family or friends in the new place of residence is clearly a pull factor.

The approach to the migration issue cannot ignore the recognition and reference to human rights, those to which every human being should have access by the simple fact of being a human being. It can be stated that these rights are not guaranteed in all parts of the world, and in fact, the search for these rights is a push factor for migrants to move to other places to live.

According to the study conducted, it is essential to know the situation of immigrants with respect to social welfare, which, according to the definition established by INEC (2023), is the final state in which all the basic needs of human beings are satisfied. In this area, most immigrants say that their basic needs are somewhat covered, that is, they have a stable job, a social circle that they can count on, feel accepted in society, and have access to education.

As expressed by Corao (2006), social capital encompasses the characteristics of social organization present in the structures of interpersonal and intersectoral relationships in a society; this capital is manifested through norms, networks of interpersonal relationships, and levels of trust. These are resources used by all individuals and social actors within a community to facilitate cooperation, coordinate joint actions for mutual benefit, and establish agreements in a balanced, continuous, and sustainable manner over time. The fieldwork allowed us to recognize these aspects among the local and immigrant populations. My experience as a researcher was interesting, since I had the opportunity to approach a diverse population and hear firsthand their

perspectives on the planted topic, from which I consider that this is a topic that has not been addressed in depth and that requires an analysis involving academia, civil society, as well as political and social organizations, the same that affect society as a whole.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that the objectives proposed in this research were successfully developed; a theoretical framework was elaborated with respect to social capital and immigration, in which several authors were mentioned who referred to important and necessary concepts for a deep approach to the subject, such as social capital, immigration, migration, emigration, social welfare, discrimination, aporophobia, xenophobia, ageism, etc. On the other hand, the research tool was constructed as a script for the application of semi-structured interviews, which contained questions related to the selected categories of analysis: social capital, immigration, and discrimination. This technique was applied to both the local and immigrant populations, with data obtained on the perception that both sectors of the population have regarding social capital in the city of Cuenca. Finally, as a result of the results and answers obtained in the interviews, it was possible to analyze the different perceptions in the discussion.

It is worth mentioning that, as a result of the results obtained, it cannot be overlooked that there is a remarkable social capital in the city of Cuenca; however, it should not go unnoticed that more awareness should be created in the population regarding all the challenges faced by a migrant at the time of moving from one place of residence to another; Without a doubt, the foundations, competent authorities or organizations that exist to support migrants are evidently not informing the local population in a suitable manner, regarding the situation of the immigrant population; as was analyzed in the discussion in the section on the perception that the local population has of the immigrant population.

In general terms, we cannot assert that there is discrimination by the local population against immigrants; however, we can conclude that there are indications that the immigrant in street conditions is perceived more contemptuously than the "formalized" immigrant; this is also the perception of some of the immigrants interviewed. Thus, it is necessary to strengthen the knowledge regarding immigration, social welfare, and social capital in order not to waste the social capital consolidated in the city, both among the local population and the immigrant population; in this way, immigrants could make a significant contribution to the city while achieving welfare and having a dignified life.

We consider it appropriate to conclude by mentioning the reflection with which this research began, in which I mentioned that the problem of immigration in the city of Cuenca, due to the increased migratory flow, has a population that, according to studies and press data as well as state agencies, mostly comes from Venezuela. The data from which we start, as well as those obtained in the interviews, corroborate that there is an important Venezuelan migratory flow; in fact, most of the interviewees come from that country. Despite the fact that not all of those interviewed are in formal employment, which limits their access to goods and services that guarantee a dignified life and social wellbeing, their general perception is of security and comfort in the city, without ignoring that some people have perceived specific situations of exclusion.

In this same area, it should be noted that even when it is concluded that there is social capital among the immigrant population, these networks of trust and interaction are mainly consolidated among people who share the condition of immigrants, making the contact networks between immigrants and locals more limited.

Therefore, this is a subject that should be studied in depth, since it is a matter of facing the reality of human mobility and recognizing in it pull and push factors, as proposed by the European Parliament, since both could be identified in the migratory phenomenon in the city of Cuenca.

Among the limitations we found in the present research, it is necessary to mention that the immigrant population interviewed was mostly of Venezuelan origin; therefore, it was not possible to obtain comparative conclusions regarding the topic analyzed. However, the results obtained were important to know the aspect raised in the present study, from which the need to explore the topic in subsequent studies is exposed.

Finally, we would like to recommend the involvement of academia, civil society, the third sector, and the state in addressing the issue so that, based on knowledge, various actions are proposed from these instances to work together in strengthening social capital based on communication strategies regarding immigration and its various aspects, since a thorough knowledge of an issue contributes significantly to addressing it more efficiently, as well as the consolidation of shared spaces, among others. It is up to the academy to contribute with the state and society in the quantification of the immigrant population, as well as to the characterization

of their living conditions, since we can presume that there is an underreporting of the population that is not regularized, which was even perceptible in the suspicion with which some people faced the interview; This information should be efficiently disseminated, so that it can contribute to the strengthening of social capital, since, as we have analyzed, the factors that pushed people to migrate were mainly economic, in addition to those related to security, the networks they have and their lifestyle, strengths recognized in the city for choosing it as a destination for people who for various reasons decide to migrate.

6. References

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7. Appendices

Appendix 1

Table 4 and 5 on interview responses of local and immigrant population

Table 4

Responses interviews local population

Categories of analysis	Data	Social Capital	Discrimination	Immigration
Interviewe Local 1 Fictitious Name: Rosa	Female, 66 years old, born in Paute, with basic education, no profession, with occupation of domestic assistant in a formal job.	She does know immigrant people residing in Cuenca, specifically a friend and you think that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to your integral wellbeing and safety when they are living on the street or have an incorrect lifestyle. On the other hand, he does not feel discomfort when sharing a space with an immigrant, but it depends on the lifestyle they have; and he feels trust only in some immigrant people residing in the city of Cuenca.	She considers that immigrants take jobs from the local population and whether it considers that immigrants have inadequate lifestyles because they live on the street and do not have stable lifestyles.	She thinks that the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination and the attraction that this one has is for the security. She states that if she had to migrate it would be difficult, especially in the social area and she thinks that the most difficult area for a person who immigrates to Cuenca is the economic one.
Interviewe Local 2 Fictitious Name: Emilia	Female, 20 years old, born in the city of Cuenca, with higher education and student occupation.	She does know immigrants residing in the city of Cuenca, your hairdresser. You feel that they constitute a threat to your wellbeing and safety. She feels uncomfortable sharing a public space with immigrants because she does not know what their customs and values are. She does not trust all immigrants, but neither does she feel that she cannot trust any of them.	She considers that immigrants take jobs from the local population and that they have inadequate lifestyles.	She thinks that the immigrant population chooses Cuenca because it is a small city and because of its security, and the attraction of Cuenca is its security. She thinks that in the hypothetical case that he would have to migrate to a part of the world it would be difficult mainly in the social area and the most difficult area for the people who immigrate to Cuenca is the economic one..
Interviewe Local 3 Fictitious Name: Isabel	Female, 50 years old, born in the city of Cuenca, with higher education, profession and occupation of Designer in a formal job.	He does knows immigrants in the city of Cuenca, specifically the nurse who takes care of his father who is from Venezuela and emphasizes that he is an excellent person. She thinks that they constitute a threat to her integral wellbeing and safety on certain occasions, such as when they come with a criminal past, since they can affect the healthy coexistence in the city of Cuenca. He does not feel uncomfortable sharing a space with an immigrant person and states that he feels safe and confident in most of the immigrants residing in Cuenca and only not when he sees them doing improper acts.	She think that immigrants take jobs from the local population and do not necessarily think that immigrants have inadequate ways of living	She thinks that the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination because there are job opportunities, it is a quiet city and more tolerant of immigration issues. She thinks that the attraction of Cuenca is the tranquility of the city, the kindness of the people and that they are more open-minded.

Interviewee Local 4	Fictitious Name: Isabella	Female, 24 years old, born in the city of Quito, with a high school education and no profession, working as a manicurist in a formal job.	She does know immigrants residing in the city of Cuenca, specifically a former co-worker who is her friend. If she feels that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to her well-being and safety in the sense of violence and when she shares space with immigrants she sometimes feels uncomfortable because of distrust. She feels security and trust in some of the immigrant people who reside in Cuenca as well as with local people.	She considers that immigrants take jobs from the local population and whether it considers that immigrants have inadequate lifestyles.	She thinks that the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination because it is the most expensive city. She thinks that the attraction of Cuenca for the immigrants is that Cuenca is a very touristic place and in the hypothetical case that he would have to migrate he thinks that the most challenging area would be the economic one and for the people who immigrate to Cuenca the most challenging area would be the economic one,
Interviewee Local 5	Fictitious Name: Cristina	Female, 32 years old, born in the city of Cuenca, with higher education. Profession of economist with a private occupation and a formal job.	She does know immigrant people residing in the city of Cuenca but do not have any relationship, you feel that the immigrant population constitutes a bit of a threat to your overall well-being and safety and when you share a space with an immigrant person you feel a bit uncomfortable because they may be people with a criminal record. He does not feel security and trust in the immigrant people residing in Cuenca.	She considers that immigrants take jobs from the local population and also that they have inadequate lifestyles.	She thinks that the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination because of the cost of living and that the attraction of the city is the security and the cost of living. In the hypothetical case that he would have to migrate, he thinks that it would be difficult because of the security issue and that for a person who immigrates to Cuenca the most challenging area is the economic and social one..
Interviewee Local 6	Fictitious Name: Andrés	Male, 26 years old, born in Cuenca, with a higher education and a profession as a biotechnology engineer, with an occupation as assistant to the general manager of a company with a formal job.	He does not know any immigrant person residing in Cuenca and does not think that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to his integral wellbeing or security. He does not feel uncomfortable when sharing a space with an immigrant person and he does know an immigrant person who was his university professor of advanced organic chemistry and he was from Venezuela. If he feels security and trust in the immigrant people who reside in the city of Cuenca.	He considers that some immigrants do take jobs from the local population and considers that some immigrants as well as locals have inadequate lifestyles.	He thinks that the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination because of the security and climate and that the attraction of Cuenca is its security. In the hypothetical case that he would have to migrate, he thinks that the most difficult area would be the social area and for the immigrants who come to Cuenca it is the economic one.

Interviewee Local 7	Fictitious Name: Ximena	<p>Female, 53 years old, born in the city of Cuenca, with high school education and no profession, with occupation of advertising manager for the restaurant “Red Crab” with a formal job.</p>	<p>She does know any immigrant person who resides in the city of Cuenca, specifically your manicurist. Sometimes she feels that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to her integral wellbeing and safety and it depends on the situation but she almost never feels uncomfortable sharing a space with an immigrant person, She almost never feels security and trust in the immigrant people who reside in Cuenca but states that “there is everything”.</p>	<p>She does not consider that immigrants take jobs from the local population and it does consider that immigrants have inadequate lifestyles.</p>	<p>Thinks that the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination because of the beauty of the city, the warmth of the people and the opportunities that exist in the city. He thinks that the attractiveness of the city is the cost of living, the places to visit, and the security. In the hypothetical case that he would have to migrate, he thinks that it would be difficult in the social and labor field and thinks that for a person who immigrates to Cuenca the most challenging area is the economic one because of the smallness and few job openings.</p>
Interviewee Local 8	Fictitious Name: Paul	<p>Male, 28 years old, born in Tungurahua, he has a high school education with no profession and works as a master builder. He has a formal job in a company but also works in informal jobs outside the company.</p>	<p>He does not know any immigrants residing in Cuenca and he does feel that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to his integral wellbeing and security, but it depends on who these people are and where he meets them. When he shares a space with an immigrant person he does not feel uncomfortable if they are not asking for money and are educated people with values. He does not know immigrants with whom he has any relationship and feels security and trust in some immigrants, he thinks that it depends more on the person himself than whether he is an immigrant or a local.</p>	<p>He considers that immigrants take jobs from the local population and that some of them have inadequate lifestyles.</p>	<p>He thinks that the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination because there are job opportunities and that the attraction of the city is its opportunities and security. In the hypothetical case that he would have to migrate, he thinks that it would be difficult in the economic, social and labor areas and he thinks that for a person who immigrates to Cuenca the most challenging area is the economic one.</p>

Table 5
Respuestas entrevistas población inmigrante

Categorías de análisis	Datos	Capital Social	Discriminación	Inmigración
Interviewee Immigrant 1 Fictitious Name: Tyler	Male, 61 years old, born in Pennsylvania, USA, with higher education, does not specify profession, only states that his current occupation and profession is to be retired.	He feels comfortable and accepted when he attends public places and has very rarely felt rejection when attending public places. If you feel that you have a social circle that you can count on and most of the time you feel safe and confident in the local people of Cuenca except when it is at night; if you have participated in community activities and have also attended activities or celebrations in the city.	He has not looked for a job, does not know if it is difficult to find a job and therefore has not been exposed to situations of job rejection.	The reason he made the decision to leave his previous place of residence was because of his retirement, it can be interpreted as economic reasons and the reason he chose Cuenca is because of the climate, the American dollar and the food.,
Interviewee Immigrant 2 Fictitious Name: Inner	Male, 39 years old, born in Caracas-Venezuela, with higher education. Profession and occupation of barber and with formal work.	He feels accepted and comfortable when attending public places and has not felt rejection when attending public or private places. You do not feel that you have a social circle that you can count on and if you feel safe and confident in local people in Cuenca. Whether you have participated in community activities and attended activities and celebrations.	It has not been difficult for him to find a job and he has not been exposed to situations of job rejection..	The reason why he decided to leave his previous place of residence is because of the economic problems that exist in Venezuela and says that it is "because of the war that is lived" in the country. And the reason why he chose the city of Cuenca as a new place of residence is because of the recommendation of friends who say that Cuenca is safe and quiet.
Interviewee Immigrant 3 Fictitious Name: Génesis	Female, 34 years old, born in Barinas-Venezuela, with high school education. Profession housewife with occupation of home occupation with an informal job.	She feels accepted and comfortable attending public places, has not felt rejection when attending public or private places, and feels she has a social circle she can trust. If she feels security and trust in local people, she has not participated in community activities and if she has attended activities and celebrations in Cuenca.	It has been difficult to find a job, she has not been exposed to situations of job rejection.	The reason she decided to leave his previous place of residence was for economic reasons and she chose Cuenca as his new place of residence because she has family living in the city.
Interviewee Immigrant 4 Fictitious Name: Greisi	Female, 45 year old, born in Valencia Edo, Carabobo Venezuela with unfinished higher education. Profession of dance teacher with occupation of social work with a formal job.	Mostly if she feels accepted and comfortable going to public places, once she felt rejection in a restaurant where she said she perceived "strangeness" from the people present in the place. If she feels she has a social circle that she can count on, she feels safe and confident in the local people of the city and has participated in community activities and attended activities and celebrations.	It has been difficult to find a job and she has had situations of job rejection, she thinks it was due to cultural differences.	The reason why she decided to leave her previous place of residence was for economic, political and social reasons and chose the city of Cuenca as her new place of residence was because of the development that exists at a cultural level in terms of artistic services, security, water and a good environment for the growth of her children.

Interviewee Immigrant 5	Fictitious Name: Diana	Female, 35 years old, born in Venezuela, with high school education, no profession and has an occupation as a kitchen assistant with a formal job.	She feels accepted and comfortable going to public places and has not felt rejection. If she has a social circle she can trust and feels safe and confident in local people. She has not participated in community activities or attended celebrations.	It has been difficult to find a job and she has not been exposed to situations of job rejection.	The reason why she decided to leave her previous place of residence was due to economic problems in Venezuela and her children's studies. She chose Cuenca as her new place of residence due to the recommendation of relatives and security.
Interviewee Immigrant 6	Fictitious Name: Duglimar	Female, 31 years old, born in Venezuela, with higher education, with a degree in business development and has a job as an informal house cleaner.	She feels accepted and comfortable going to public places, she has felt rejection because people look at her ugly and she says it is because of her dress. The social circle she has are her children and if she feels security and confidence in the local people of Cuenca, she has not participated in activities or attended celebrations.	It has been easy for her to find a job and if she has been exposed to situations of job rejection, she states that she thinks it is because she does not have the country's documentation.	The reason she left his previous place of residence was for economic reasons and she chose Cuenca because she had friends in the city who helped him when he first arrived in the city.
Interviewee Immigrant 7	Fictitious Name: Yamileth	Female, 35 years old, born in Venezuela, with high school education, no profession, with an occupation as a saleswoman of covers at traffic lights in informal work.	She feels accepted and comfortable when attending public places and has not felt rejection when attending public or private places. She does not feel that she has a social circle that she can trust and she does feel safe and confident in local people in Cuenca. She has not participated in community activities or attended celebrations.	It has been difficult to find a job and she has not been exposed to situations of job rejection.	The reason she left his previous place of residence was because of the economic situation in Venezuela and she chose Cuenca on the recommendation of his brother.
Interviewee Immigrant 8	Fictitious Name: Dunia	Female, 53 year-old, born in Venezuela, with high school education, electrician and domestic assistant in informal work.	She feels accepted and comfortable when attending public places and has not felt rejection when attending public or private places. Whether she feels she has a social circle she can trust and whether she feels safe and confident in local people in Cuenca. She has not participated in community activities and if she has attended celebrations.	She has found it difficult to find a job and she has been exposed to situations of job rejection, she states that it is because of her age.	The reason she decided to leave her previous place of residence was because of the economic situation in Venezuela and she chose Cuenca because she had heard before that it is a safe city.

Appendix 2

Interview script

Interview questions immigrant population:

- NAME OR ALIAS (codify):
- Sex
- Gender
- Ege
- Place of birth
- Education: elementary, middle school, high school, high school...
- Profession
- Occupation
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?

Capital Social

- ¿Do you feel accepted or comfortable when attending public places?
- ¿Have you felt rejection when attending public or private places? In what way?
- ¿Do you feel that you have a social circle that you can count on (friends, acquaintances, even family?)
- ¿Do you feel secure and confident in the local people of Cuenca?
- ¿ Have you participated in community activities?
- ¿ Have you attended the activities that take place in the city such as year-end celebrations, carnival, fairs?

Discriminacion

- ¿Has it been difficult for you to find a job?
- ¿Have you been exposed to situations of job rejection? Why do you think this happened?

Inmigracion

- ¿What was the reason for your decision to leave your previous place of residence? Were these reasons economic, political or social?
- ¿Why did you choose the city of Cuenca as your new residence?

Interview questions local population:

- NAME OR ALIAS (codify):
- Sex
- Gender
- Ege
- Place of birth
- Education: elementary, middle school, high school, high school...
- Profession
- Occupation
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?

Social Capital

- ¿Do you know any immigrant person residing in the city of Cuenca?
- ¿Do you feel that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to your overall well-being and security?
- ¿When you share a public or private space with an immigrant person, do you feel uncomfortable? Why?
- ¿Do you know any immigrant person with whom you have a relationship? Specify
- ¿ Do you feel safe and confident in the immigrants residing in the city of Cuenca?

Discrimination

- ¿Do you consider that immigrants take jobs from the local population?

- ¿ Do you consider that immigrants have inadequate lifestyles?

Immigration

- ¿ Why do you think the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination?
- ¿What do you think is the attraction of the city of Cuenca for a person who wants to migrate?
- ¿In the hypothetical case that you would have to migrate to another part of the world, do you think it would be easy or difficult? in which areas and why?
- ¿What area do you think is the most challenging for a person immigrating to the city of Cuenca, economically, politically or socially?

Appendix 3

Interviews with local population

Interviews 1:

- NAME OR ALIAS (codify): Rosa Matilde Jara
- Sex: Woman
- Gender: Female
- Ege: 66
- Place of birth: Paute
- Education: elementary, middle, high school, high school, college: elementary
- Profession: None
- Occupation: Domestic assistant
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?: Formal

Social Capital

- ¿Do you know any immigrant person residing in the city of Cuenca?: Yes
- ¿ Do you feel that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to your overall well-being and safety?: Sometimes when they are on the street or have a bad lifestyle.
- ¿ When you share a public or private space with an immigrant person, do you feel uncomfortable? Why? Not necessarily, it depends on the lifestyle they lead, whether they are on the street or are decent working people.
- ¿ Do you know any immigrant person with whom you have a relationship? Specify: Yes, he/she is a friend, sometimes he/she comes to the house or they go out to eat.
- ¿ Do you feel security and confidence in the immigrant people who reside in the city of Cuenca? Some, it depends if they are people who live on the street or already have stable housing.

Discrimination

- ¿Considera que los inmigrantes ocupan plazas de trabajo, de la población local?: Si
- ¿Considera que los inmigrantes tienen formas de vida inadecuadas?: Si, porque muchos viven en la calle, bajo los puentes y no tienen una vivienda segura o estable.

Immigration

- ¿Why do you think the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination: security
- ¿ What do you think is the attraction of the city of Cuenca for a person who wants to migrate?: Security, more than anything else.
- ¿In the hypothetical case that you would have to migrate to another part of the world, do you think it would be easy or difficult? In what areas and why? Difficult because I am leaving without knowing, I am going to an unknown country and nobody will have the confidence to say.... Shall I help you or give you a hand?
- ¿Which area do you think is the most challenging for a person immigrating to the city of Cuenca, economically, politically or socially?: Economic

Interview 2:

- NAME OR ALIAS (codify): Emilia Vintimilla
- Sex: Woman
- Gender: Femenin
- Ege: 20
- Place of birth: Cuenca

- Education: elementary, middle, high school, high school, higher: Superior
- Profession: None
- Occupation: Student
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?: Not working

Social Capital

- ¿Do you know any immigrant person residing in the city of Cuenca?: Yes
- ¿Do you feel that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to your overall well-being and security?: No
- ¿When you share a public or private space with an immigrant person, do you feel uncomfortable?
Why: It can be especially in public spaces that are closed because I don't know them and I don't know what their customs or values are.
- ¿Do you know any immigrant person with whom you have a relationship? Specify: Not a close relationship but my hairdresser is an immigrant.
- ¿Do you feel safe and confident in the immigrants residing in the city of Cuenca?: I do not trust everyone, but I do not consider that I cannot trust anyone.

Discrimination

- ¿Do you consider that immigrants occupy job vacancies in the local population? Yes
- ¿Do you consider that immigrants have inadequate lifestyles? Yes, because many times they do not have places to sleep and they occupy public places as their own.

Immigration

- ¿Why do you think the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination: Because it is a small city that is safer than other cities in Ecuador.
- ¿What do you think is the attraction of the city of Cuenca for a person who wants to migrate?: Safety
- ¿In the hypothetical case that you would have to migrate to another part of the world, do you think it would be easy or difficult, in which areas and why? I think it would be difficult because I would have to leave all my family and friends here, so socially.
- ¿Which area do you think is the most challenging for a person who immigrates to the city of Cuenca, economically, politically or socially?: I think economically because many times people who migrate do so in an unstable and low economic situation and leave in search of a better lifestyle in another city.

Interview 3:

- NAME OR ALIAS (codify): Isabel
- Sex: Woman
- Gender: Femenin
- Ege: 50
- Place of birth: Cuenca
- Education: elementary, middle, high school, high school, higher: Superior
- Profession: Designer
- Occupation: Designer
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?: Formal

Social Capital

- ¿Conoce a alguna persona inmigrante que reside en la ciudad de Cuenca?: Si
- ¿Do you feel that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to your overall well-being and safety? On certain occasions. -For example, people who have come with a criminal past and are not controlled at the borders can affect our healthy coexistence.
- ¿When you share a public or private space with an immigrant person, do you feel uncomfortable?
Why: Not necessarily.
- ¿Do you know any immigrant person with whom you have a relationship? Specify: Yes, the nurse who takes care of my dad at the center. She is from Venezuela and is an excellent person.

- ¿ Do you feel safe and confident with the immigrants residing in the city of Cuenca? With most of them, but for example, sometimes I find myself in a dangerous situation, I see them doing improper acts.

Discrimination

- ¿Do you consider that immigrants occupy job vacancies in the local population? Yes
- ¿Do you consider that immigrants have inadequate lifestyles?: Not necessarily.

Immigration

- ¿Why do you think the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination? Because there are more job opportunities, it is also a quieter city and more tolerant because we have a lot of immigration, not only from Latin America but also from other countries.
- ¿What do you think is the attraction of the city of Cuenca for a person who wants to migrate? It is quieter, the people are kinder, more open.
- ¿In the hypothetical case that you would have to migrate to another part of the world, do you think it would be easy or difficult? In what areas and why? Difficult because starting a new job, meeting people, socializing, being accepted, is not easy. Also some people may have a limitation with the language depending on where you want to go.
- ¿What area do you think is the most challenging for a person immigrating to the city of Cuenca, economically, politically or socially? Economic.

Interview 4:

- NAME OR ALIAS (codify): Isabella
- Sex: Woman
- Gender: Femenin
- Ege: 24
- Place of birth: Quito
- Education: elementary, middle school, high school, high school: Bachillerato
- Profession: None
- Occupation: Manicurist
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?: Formal

Social Capital

- ¿Do you know any immigrant person residing in the city of Cuenca?: Yes
- ¿Do you feel that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to your integral wellbeing and security? Yes, in the sense of violence..
- ¿When you share a public or private space with an immigrant person, do you feel uncomfortable? Why: Sometimes out of distrust.
- ¿Do you know any immigrant person with whom you have a relationship? Specify: A former co-worker, she is my friend.
- ¿ Do you feel security and trust in the immigrant people residing in the city of Cuenca?: In some cases, it depends on the person as well as with local people.

Discrimination

- ¿Do you consider that immigrants occupy job vacancies in the local population? Yes
- ¿ Do you consider that immigrants have inadequate lifestyles?: Yes

Immigration

- ¿Why do you think the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination: Because it is the most expensive city.
- ¿What do you think is the attraction that the city of Cuenca has for a person who wants to migrate: it is a tourist place.
- ¿In the hypothetical case that you would have to migrate to another part of the world, do you think it would be easy or difficult? in which areas and why? Difficult in the economic area.
- ¿Which area do you think is the most challenging for a person immigrating to the city of Cuenca, economically, politically or socially?: The economic area.

Interview 5:

- NAME OR ALIAS (codify): Cristina Vintimilla
- Sex: Woman
- Gender: Femenin
- Ege: 32
- Place of birth: Cuenca
- Education: elementary, middle school, high school, high school, college: Superior
- Profession: Economist
- Occupation: private employee
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal: Yes, formal

Social Capital

- ¿Do you know any immigrant person residing in the city of Cuenca?: Yes
- ¿Do you feel that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to your overall well-being and security?: A little bit
- ¿When you share a public or private space with an immigrant person, do you feel uncomfortable? Why: Yes, because they may be people with a criminal record.
- ¿Do you know any immigrant person with whom you have a relationship? Specify: No
- ¿Do you feel safe and confident in the immigrants residing in the city of Cuenca?: No

Discrimination

- ¿Do you consider that immigrants occupy job vacancies in the local population? Yes
- ¿Do you consider that immigrants have inadequate lifestyles?: Yes

Immigration

- ¿Why do you think the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination?: Because of the cost of living.
- ¿What do you think is the attraction of the city of Cuenca for a person who wants to migrate?: The security of the city and the cost of living.
- ¿In the hypothetical case that you would have to migrate to another part of the world, do you think it would be easy or difficult? In what areas and why?: I think it would be difficult to find a safe city.
- ¿Which area do you think is the most challenging for a person immigrating to the city of Cuenca economically, politically or socially?: Economic and social

Interview 6:

- NAME OR ALIAS (code): Andres
- Sex: Male
- Gender: Male
- Age: 26
- Place of birth: Cuenca
- Education: Basic, middle, high school, high school, superior: Superior
- Profession: Engineer in biotechnology.
- Occupation: Assistant general manager.
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?: Formal

Social Capital

- ¿Do you know any immigrant person residing in the city of Cuenca?: No
- ¿Do you feel that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to your integral wellbeing and safety?: No
- ¿When you share a public or private space with an immigrant person, do you feel uncomfortable? Why?: No
- ¿Do you know any immigrant person with whom you have a relationship? Specify: Yes, my university professor of advanced organic chemistry was from Venezuela.
- ¿Do you feel security and trust in the immigrant people who reside in the city of Cuenca?: Yes.

Discrimination

- ¿Do you consider that immigrants take jobs from the local population?: Some do.
- ¿Do you consider that immigrants have inadequate ways of life: Some as local equals.

Immigration

- Why do you think the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination: Security, climate.
- What do you think is the attractiveness of the city of Cuenca for a person who wants to migrate?: Security.
- In the hypothetical case that you would have to migrate to another part of the world, do you think it would be easy or difficult? in what areas and why?: Difficult in the social area.
- What area do you think is the most challenging for a person immigrating to the city of Cuenca, economically, politically or socially?: Economic.

Interview 7:

- NAME OR ALIAS (code): Ximena
- Sex: Female
- Gender: Female
- Age: 53
- Place of birth: Cuenca
- Education: Elementary, middle school, high school, high school: Bachillerato
- Profession: Bachelor
- Occupation: Advertising for "Red Crab".
- If you are working, is your job formal, or informal?: Formal

Social Capital

- ¿Do you know any immigrant person residing in the city of Cuenca?: Yes
- ¿Do you feel that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to your wellbeing and safety?: Sometimes
- ¿When you share a public or private space with an immigrant person, do you feel uncomfortable? Why?: It depends on the context of the situation, but almost never no.
- ¿Do you know any immigrant person with whom you have a relationship? Specify: Yes, the one who does my nails is Venezuelan.
- ¿Do you feel safe and confident in the immigrant people who live in the city of Cuenca?: There is everything, but I hardly feel safe.

Discrimination

- ¿Do you consider that immigrants take jobs from the local population?: No
- ¿Do you consider that immigrants have inadequate lifestyles?: Yes

Immigration

- ¿Why do you think the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination?: Because of the beauty of the city, the warmth of the people and the opportunities they can have.
- ¿What do you think is the attraction of the city of Cuenca for a person who wants to migrate?: The cost of living, the places to visit and the security.
- ¿In the hypothetical case that you would have to migrate to another part of the world, do you think it would be easy or difficult? In what areas and why?: I think it would be difficult although I would try to migrate to a place where I already have family to be able to adapt at the beginning. It would be difficult to find a job, a place to live and get used to the place and its people,
- ¿What area do you think is the most challenging for a person who immigrates to the city of Cuenca, economically, politically or socially? I think economically, because you can see all the begging that exists in the city and the few jobs that may exist for certain people.

Entrevista 8:

- NAME OR ALIAS (code): Paul
- Sex: Male
- Gender: Male
- Age: 28
- Place of birth: Tunguragua.
- Education: Elementary, middle school, high school, high school: Bachillerato.
- Profession: I don't have.
- Occupation: Master builder.

- If you are working, is your work formal or informal?: Yes and it is a formal job in a company and also work for hours in extra jobs.

Social Capital

- ¿Do you know any immigrant person who resides in the city of Cuenca?: No.
- ¿Do you feel that the immigrant population constitutes a threat to your well-being and safety?: Yes, it depends on who they are and where you meet them.
- ¿When you share a public or private space with an immigrant person, do you feel uncomfortable? Why?: I do not feel uncomfortable if they are people who are not asking for money. Rather, if they are educated people with values.
- ¿Do you know any immigrant person with whom you have a relationship? Specify: I do not know.
- ¿Do you feel security and trust in the immigrant people who reside in the city of Cuenca? In some, sometimes you don't know if they are from other places or from here, so it depends more on the person than on whether they are immigrants.

Discriminacion

- ¿Do you consider that immigrants take jobs from the local population?: Yes.
- ¿Do you consider that immigrants have inadequate ways of life: Some.

Immigration

- ¿Why do you think the immigrant population chooses Cuenca as a destination: Because there are jobs.
- ¿What do you think is the attraction of the city of Cuenca for a person who wants to migrate? There are opportunities and it is safe.
- ¿In the hypothetical case that you would have to migrate to another part of the world, do you think it would be easy or difficult? In what areas and why?: Difficult to get a job and let's say in all areas, economic, social, labor.
- ¿What area do you think is the most challenging for a person who immigrates to the city of Cuenca, economically, politically or socially?: I think the economic.

Appendix 4

Interviews immigrant population

Interview 1:

- NAME OR ALIAS (code): Tyler
- Sex: Male
- Gender: Male
- Age: 61
- Place of birth: Pennsylvania
- Education: Elementary, middle, high school, high school, college: Superior
- Occupation: Retired
- Occupation: Retired
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?: No

Social Capital

- ¿Do you feel accepted or comfortable when you go to public places?: Yes
- ¿Have you felt rejected when attending public or private places? In what way: Almost never very rarely.
- ¿Do you feel you have a social circle you can count on (friends, acquaintances, even family?): Yes absolutely.
- ¿Do you feel safe and trusting of local people in Cuenca: Most of the time yes, not at night.
- ¿Have you participated in community activities?: Yes, in many.
- ¿Have you attended activities that take place in the city such as end of the year celebrations, carnival, fairs?: Yes.

Discrimintion

- ¿Has it been difficult for you to find a job: I have not looked for a job.

- ¿Have you been exposed to situations of job rejection? Why do you think that was?: No

Immigration

- ¿What was the reason for your decision to leave your previous place of residence? Were these economic, political or social reasons: I decided to leave because of retirement?
- ¿What was the reason why you chose the city of Cuenca as your new residence? The climate, the US Dollar (very important) and the food.

Interview 2:

- NAME OR ALIAS (codify): Ilmer Gonzales
- Sex: Men
- Gender: Male
- Age: 39
- Place of birth: Caracas - Distrito Capital
- Education: elementary, middle school, high school, high school, superior: Superior
- Profession: Barber
- Occupation: Barber
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?: Formal

Social Capital

- ¿Do you feel accepted or comfortable when you go to public places: Yes
- ¿Have you felt rejection when attending public or private places? In what way?: No
- ¿Do you feel that you have a social circle that you can count on (friends, acquaintances, even family?): No
- ¿Do you feel safe and confident in the local people of Cuenca?: Yes
- ¿Have you participated in community activities: Yes
- ¿Have you attended the activities that take place in the city such as year-end celebrations, carnival, fairs?: Yes

Discrimination

- ¿Has it been difficult for you to find a job?: No
- ¿Have you been exposed to situations of job rejection? Why do you think that was?: No

Immigration

- ¿What was the reason for your decision to leave your previous place of residence: Economic, political or social reasons: Economic problems due to the war.
- ¿What was the reason why you chose the city of Cuenca as your new residence? Through friends who recommended cuenca because of the security and tranquility.

Interview 3:

- NAME OR ALIAS (codify): Génesis Gonzalez
- Gender: Female
- Gender: Female
- Age: 34
- Place of birth: Venezuela-Barinas
- Education: Elementary, middle school, high school, high school: Bachillerato
- Profession: Housewife
- Occupation: Housework
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal: Informal, self-employed.

Social Capital

- ¿Do you feel accepted or comfortable when you go to public places: Yes
- ¿Have you felt rejection when attending public or private places? In what way?: No
- ¿Do you feel you have a social circle you can count on (friends, acquaintances, even family?): Yes.
- ¿Do you feel safe and confident in the local people of Cuenca: Yes.
- ¿Have you participated in community activities: No
- ¿Have you attended the activities that take place in the city such as year-end celebrations, carnival, fairs?: Yes

Discrimination

- ¿Has it been difficult for you to find a job?: Yes
- ¿Have you been exposed to situations of job rejection? Why do you think that was?: No

Immigration

- ¿What was the reason for your decision to leave your previous place of residence? Were these economic, political or social reasons: I decided to leave for economic reasons of price increase in my residence.
- ¿What was the reason why you chose the city of Cuenca as your new residence? Because I have family in the city of Cuenca.

Interview 4:

- NAME OR ALIAS (code): Greisi Dos Santos Martinez
- Sex: Female
- Gender: Female
- Age: 45
- Place of birth: Valencia Edo. Carabobo Venezuela
- Education: elementary, middle school, high school, higher education: higher education unfinished
- Profession: Certified in Dance Management and Production by the Instituto Universitario de Danza 2006- International Folkloric Dance Teacher/ Argentine Tango Teacher/ Community Caregiver by the organization Childfund OIM/ Administrative Assistant- Social Work- under labor dependency.
- Occupation: Social Work
- If you are working, is your work formal or informal?: Formal

Social Capital

- ¿Do you feel accepted or comfortable when attending public places: Mostly I feel accepted and/or comfortable when attending public places.
- ¿Have you felt rejection when attending public or private places? In what way: Yes, on one occasion in a restaurant where I could perceive the strangeness of some of those present of our stay in the place.
- ¿Do you feel that you have a social circle that you can count on (friends, acquaintances, even family?): Yes, I have a social circle that I can count on, first of all, friends, students, people who have hired our services, acquaintances in the artistic field.
- ¿Do you feel safe and confident in the local people of Cuenca?: Yes.
- ¿Have you participated in community activities: Yes
- ¿Have you attended the activities that take place in the city such as end of the year celebrations, carnival, fairs?: Yes

Discrimination

- ¿Has it been difficult for you to find a job?: Yes, last year I felt it was difficult to find a job when I thought about changing my work environment.
- ¿Have you been exposed to situations of job rejection? Why do you think this happened? Yes I had strong situations in my work environment in 2022 and 2023 mostly including a mockery of an economic support I received, threat of ultimatum to lose my job if I did not correct (without specifying what I should change) and certainly it was due to cultural differences expressing me openly that I am at a disadvantage for being Venezuelan in one of the many conversations.

Immigration

- ¿What was the reason why you made the decision to leave your previous place of residence? Were these economic, political or social reasons?: The reasons for leaving my place of residence was because of economic, political, social situations (shortage of insulin medicine for my diabetic husband, lack of food mostly the years 2016 and 2017 year in which I emigrate and our family group we were without good nutrition low weight, for 2018 that the two youngest children arrive the youngest arrived with the beginning of malnutrition, lack of opportunity for growth and mainly security.
- ¿What was the reason why you chose the city of Cuenca as your new residence? The reason why we came to Cuenca almost two years after arriving in the country and having lived in another province

was because of the greater opportunity for development at the cultural level with respect to our artistic services, for security, water and better environment to live and grow our children.

Interview 5:

- NAME OR ALIAS (code): Diana Lorena Medina
- Sex: Female
- Gender: Female
- Age: 35
- Place of birth: Venezuela
- Education: Elementary, middle school, high school, high school, high school: Middle school
- Profession: None
- Occupation: Kitchen assistant
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?: Formal

Social Capital

- ¿Do you feel accepted or comfortable when you go to public places: Yes
- ¿Have you felt rejection when attending public or private places? In what way?: No
- ¿Do you feel you have a social circle you can count on (friends, acquaintances, even family?): Yes, an aunt.
- ¿Do you feel safe and confident in the local people of Cuenca?: Yes.
- ¿Have you participated in community activities: No
- ¿Have you attended the activities that take place in the city such as year-end celebrations, carnival, fairs?: No

Discrimination

- ¿Has it been difficult for you to find a job?: Yes
- ¿Have you been exposed to situations of job rejection? Why do you think that was?: No

Immigration

- ¿What was the reason for your decision to leave your previous place of residence, was it economic, political or social reasons: Because of the economic problems in Venezuela and because of my son's studies.
- ¿What was the reason why you chose the city of Cuenca as your new residence? Because of my brother, he told me that Cuenca is the best city in Ecuador and because of its security.

Interview 6:

- NAME OR ALIAS (codify): D Duglimar Vega
- Sex: Female
- Gender: Female
- Age: 31
- Place of birth: Venezuela
- Education: Basic, middle, high school, high school, superior: Superior
- Profession: Lic. Business development.
- Occupation: House cleaning work.
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?: Informal

Social Capital

- ¿Do you feel accepted or comfortable when you go to public places?: Yes.
- ¿Have you felt rejection when attending public or private places? In what way?: Yes, I have felt rejection in private places because we are looked down upon because we may not wear the proper clothing and there are people who judge at a glance.
- ¿Do you feel you have a social circle you can count on (friends, acquaintances, even family?): The social link I count on are my children.
- ¿Do you feel safe and confident in the local people of Cuenca?: Yes
- Have you participated in community activities: No

- ¿Have you attended the activities that take place in the city such as end of the year celebrations, carnival, fairs?: I have not attended because one does not have the right clothes for these events and one as a person feels bad when they begin to criticize the people around us.

Discrimination

- ¿Has it been difficult for you to find a job?: If it has been difficult to get a stable job, first it was because I didn't have the documentation of this country. Now that I have it, there is no work.
- ¿Have you been exposed to situations of job rejection? Why do you think it was? Yes for not having the documentation of the country.

Immigration

- ¿What was the reason why you made the decision to leave your previous place of residence? Were these economic, political or social reasons? My reason for leaving my country was because the economic situation is not adequate and also that I almost always had no food for my children because the money was not enough and at that time I had my youngest son very small and if I bought milk or diaper I did not have enough for food and if I managed to buy food I could not make it for the whole week those times were very hard.
- ¿What was the reason why you chose the city of Cuenca as your new residence?: I took the city of Cuenca as my residence because I had a friend who received me when I arrived and then I had to look for a place to live by myself because my friend only received me for a few days. Since then I have had to work as a cleaner because I have not been able to get a job that generates a better income and stability because the cleaning job is only between days from there I have to get for the rent and my expenses and I am always behind in the rent because I do not have a better income.

Interview 7:

- NAME OR ALIAS (code): Yamileth Sanchez
- Sex: Female
- Gender: Female
- Age: 35
- Place of birth: Venezuela
- Education: elementary, middle school, high school, high school: Bachillerato
- Profession: I don't have
- Occupation: sells covers at traffic lights
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal?: Informal

Social Capital

- ¿Do you feel accepted or comfortable when you go to public places: Yes
- ¿Have you felt rejection when attending public or private places? In what way?: No
- ¿Do you feel that you have a social circle that you can count on (friends, acquaintances, even family?): No.
- ¿Do you feel safe and confident in the local people of Cuenca: Yes.
- ¿Have you participated in community activities? No.
- ¿Have you attended activities that take place in the city such as end of the year celebrations, carnival, fairs?: No.

Discrimination

- ¿Has it been difficult for you to find a job: Yes.
- ¿Have you been exposed to situations of job rejection? Why do you think that was?: No.

Immigration

- ¿What was the reason for your decision to leave your previous place of residence: economic, political or social reasons: because of the economic situation in Venezuela.
- ¿What was the reason why you chose the city of Cuenca as your new residence? On the recommendation of my brother.

Interview 8:

- NAME OR ALIAS (code): Dunia Acosta
- Sex: Female
- Gender: Female
- Age: 53
- Place of birth: Venezuela
- Education: Elementary, middle school, high school, high school, high school: Bachillerato
- Profession: Electrician.
- Occupation: Domestic assistant.
- If you are working, is your job formal or informal: Informal, per day.

Social Capital

- ¿Do you feel accepted or comfortable when attending public places: Yes.
- ¿Have you felt rejection when attending public or private places? In what way?: No.
- ¿Do you feel you have a social circle you can count on (friends, acquaintances, even family?): Yes.
- ¿Do you feel safe and confident in the local people of Cuenca: Yes.
- ¿Have you participated in community activities: No.
- ¿Have you attended activities that take place in the city such as year-end celebrations, carnival, fairs?: Yes.

Discrimination

- ¿Has it been difficult for you to find a job: Yes, because of my age.
- ¿Have you been exposed to situations of job rejection? Why do you think this happened? Yes, because of my age, especially in restaurants because they search young people.

Immigration

- ¿What was the reason for your decision to leave your previous place of residence: economic, political or social reasons: because of the economic situation in Venezuela.
- ¿What was the reason why you chose the city of Cuenca as your new residence? Because I had heard of Ecuador before and because Cuenca is safe.