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Migration and Development: Equalisation and Inequalities in Ecuador's Southern Sierra¹

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Abstract *Based upon a case-study of the municipality of Cañar, in Andean Ecuador, this paper examines the conflictive relationship between migration and development to show how current approaches fail to consider the political issues implicit in this link. Instead, the concept of displacement is proposed, which, as argued in this work, implies an action (that of moving to another place) which subjects perform reflexively upon themselves. This challenges the notion of this action as a transitive one, in which the subject exerts the action on an object.*

Cañar combines two important elements that make it relevant for highlighting this relationship: on the one hand, it is a district with a high indigenous population and, on the

other, it has had historically a high rate of immigration to the United States and Spain. These two factors make it possible to confront both the immigrants' practices and the role of nation-states in the construction of structures of exclusion and, thereby, to examine why the result of this confrontation does not necessarily turn into development. From this viewpoint, the paper discerns the role of the nation-state in constructing structures of social, political, cultural and symbolic exclusion in the locality of origin as well as in the locality of destination of migrants, further presenting the forms of agency used by the migrants to overcome these structures. In other words, it is an attempt to take the analysis into a terrain that escapes the dichotomies between state (structures) and actors (agency).

Keywords: Migration; Displacement, Development; Indigenous people; Ecuador; Inequality

Introduction

In this essay, I intend to highlight the ability of migrants and households in *cantón* Cañar (or Cañar 'county', in Andean Ecuador) to overcome structural exclusions through a set of strategies intended to diversify, guarantee and improve their living conditions (understood as all those elements, not only economic ones, that are part of development). I will further indicate the role of states in the construction and maintenance of a historical structure of socioeconomic, political and cultural exclusion that migrants have faced and continue to face in the country of origin and to which they are subject in the receiving country.

A useful concept to illustrate such a process is that of displacement. For Glick Schiller, this concept brings together a number of different insights into the exercise of unequal power and the ongoing contestations to the multiple forms of inequality that hierarchies of power produce. The concept of displacement emerges from an understanding that capital is itself an unequal social relationship sustained by force, often regulated by states and legitimated by law, institutional regimes within interpenetrating scales, from local to global, and varying situated moral economies (Glick Schiller, 2012b). At the same time, this concept of displacement is framed within a global perspective on migration (Glick Schiller, 2009, 17).

According to its definition in Spanish, the verb '*desplazar*' (to displace) means 'to move or remove someone or something from the place where they are'.² It is a transitive verb, so the action of the (grammatical) subject must be performed on an object. In other words, the

action of displacement is exerted on something: the displaced object. Under this notion of displacement, the present-day development of capitalism, in its various guises, such as state policies, urban reforms, control of ‘dangerous’ populations or real estate capital, would be the subject of (that is, the one that performs) the action of displacement. This is experienced in turn by a number of objects which end up being displaced. In effect, capitalism thus becomes in its current stage the main process that carries out the operation of displacement.

However, it should be pointed out, firstly, that the operations of this process take and have taken place historically, and, secondly, that these operations are complex, causing not only physical but also geographical, social, economic and symbolic displacements. One case in point is the *kañari* indigenous populations, who have been historically displaced, starting with the colonial organisation of the territory. Yet, more important is to take into account that they have not been included in the historical narrative: they have been displaced even from their right to a symbolic ‘place’ in history, as well as from their physical and economic place.

In this regard, the very notion of displacement entails that of inequality: the action of someone displacing someone else points to the pre-existence of a power relationship based on inequality, which has been constructed over history. The definition of the verb ‘to displace’, especially in English, also makes it possible to bring into question the concept of ‘place’ as ‘site’, that is, the fundamental assumption that somebody belongs to a place which is their ‘proper place’, whether conceived of as a place in space, but also as a social and economic place, to which they belong ‘naturally’. To this extent, it is possible to think of displacement as an operation which jeopardises this ‘natural’ place. This, in turn, implies the association of place, culture and identity. In this regard, analysing displacement involves analysing the concept of place and inquiring into how discourse has historically created the notion of place, which is territorial but also symbolic. The ‘proper place’ could be interpreted, not only as a material place, of dwelling or residence, but also as the corresponding ‘social’ place.³

However, in Spanish, this verb also has a pronominal form, that is, it can be used with a pronoun: ‘*yo me desplazo*’, ‘*tú te desplazas*’ (‘I move’, ‘you move’). In this case, the action takes no object: it is carried out by the subjects themselves. This grammatical resource makes it possible to resituate the action by the subject in the movement to and from structure and action: displacement can also be a form of agency, of action undertaken by subjects in order to ‘move away from their own place’. Thus, they challenge the structure that condemns them

to remain in that place, to refrain from moving, to stay in their ‘proper place’, to abstain from questioning, by moving somewhere else, the place assigned to them as the ‘other’ and from fighting for an understanding of the (territorial, social, economic, symbolic) assigned place where race, gender, class interact.

In brief, this essay intends to illustrate this interplay between, on the one hand, being an object of displacement, understood as an action carried out by a subject that establishes a historically constructed relationship of inequality, and, on the other, being the subject of the action, without the latter being performed on any object except oneself. With their movement, subjects challenge their territorial, but also socioeconomic, cultural and symbolic place.

The place chosen for this analysis is Cañar, a *cantón* (or ‘county’) in a province, also called Cañar, located in Ecuador’s southern sierra, from where residents have been migrating for a number of decades, especially to the United States and, since the end of the last century, also to Spain. Cañar is also home to an indigenous group, the Kichwa Kañari, for whom, as with the rest of Ecuador’s indigenous population, various quality of life indicators lag seriously behind those for the population in general (García 2004, 2012; Larrea 2007). These two elements, migratory processes and the low levels of ‘development’ in the *cantón*, led to our initial questions: What effects has migration had on living conditions in migrants’ and non-migrants’ households in *cantón* Cañar? Is there a relation between migration, displacement, inequalities and development? What are the characteristics of that relation?

These questions place this paper in a wider discussion on the relations between migration, displacements, inequality and development. Raghuram (2009, 108), in her attempt to deconstruct the narrative constructed around the migration-development nexus, asks *what* migration and *what* development are under discussion. For this author, the generation of knowledge about the migration and development link makes better ‘governmentality’⁴ possible and makes certain kinds of migration and certain kinds of development visible and normatively valid, while concealing others. The paraphernalia constructed around remittances is a case in point. On the other hand, this knowledge constructs a morally committed migrant subject who ‘looks at’ his/her community and who also ‘sacrifices’ his/her own well-being to achieve some level of development. However, defining the nexus between migration and development solely through economics leaves out the nature of migrants’ daily life and long-term needs (Raghuram, 2009, 110). In this same sense, Dannecker (2009, 120) proposes to

ask about the *who* and the *where*, that is, to deconstruct the meta-discourse of development and migration and to situate migrants in their gender roles, but also to analyse the different conceptions of development.⁵

Consequently, in this essay, I consider the migratory processes as socially, economically, politically, and culturally meaningful. To that extent I attempt to analyse how the migration and development relation comes about in a specific context of historical, economic, social, political, cultural displacements through the study of migrants' practices and the role of the state / states in the construction of that context of displacement and exclusion. That is, I attempt to contrast the 'development' practices of migrants and the state. Migration and, thus, remittances, could mean certain levels of equality within the group, without this implying that exclusion of a more structural nature is being overcome. Thus, migrants are agents in equalising processes, in challenging displacement, within their most immediate spheres, those of daily life and of the most immediate social reproduction, though that 'equalising' agency does not necessarily encompass more general equalising processes, either national or, even less, transnational.

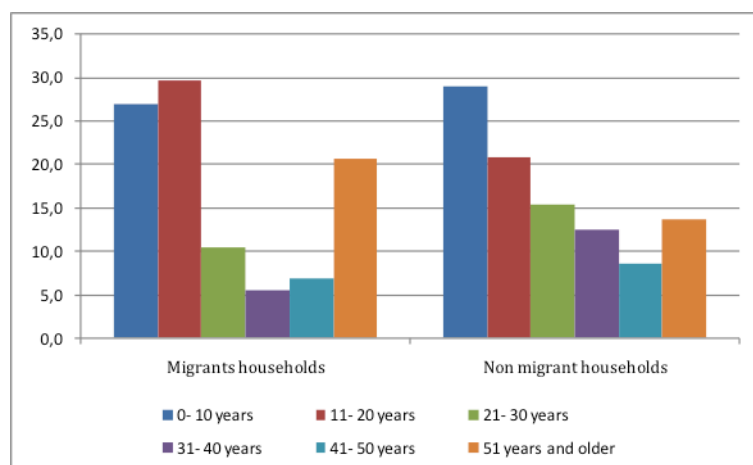
In this essay, I use information on population, the sending and use of remittances, as well as data related to conditions of education and housing from a survey conducted in 2007. The analysis is completed with some ethnographic information collected during the survey and in subsequent fieldwork carried out from 2007 to 2009. This set of information has made it possible to prove that the sending and use of remittances is one of the central strategies of migrants seeking to improve their living and subsistence conditions. However, as I will show, the agency of migrants faces historical exclusions that reproduce a vicious circle causing labour to enter the global market in disadvantageous conditions.

First, I will provide a demographic profile of the population of *canton* Cañar, attempting to take into account the context and the heterogeneous kinds of households. Next, I will analyse information on the use of remittances, conceptualised as the ways in which migrant families generate equalising processes. Finally, in the third part, I analyse information on conditions of education and housing, in an attempt to compare strategies of migrant families with the 'policy' of the nation-state in the construction of a structure of exclusion that renders deeper equity processes unviable.

Cantón Cañar's Population

In contrast to the general trend in the country, which shows that, since the mid-1980s, Ecuador's population has been largely urban (62.76 per cent),⁶ the province of Cañar reveals that, instead, most of its population (58.0 per cent) lives in rural areas. This figure, in the case of Cañar, reaches 77.4 per cent. Another characteristic of Cañar's population is the high percentage of young people, an analysis of the population of migrant and non-migrant households by age yields striking results. The graph below is eloquent, by demonstrating the absence of a middle-aged population and the significant presence of children in 40,2 per cent of households, as well as of older adults who are in charge of caring for the children, as will become apparent below (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Cañar County: emigrant households by age



Source: Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida y Migración. PCCM, AECID, FLACSO, UNICEF, ODNA; August 2007⁷

Another outstanding feature of migrant households is their composition, particularly as regards three facts. In relation to the presence of a spouse, there is a significant difference between migrant and non-migrant households: 11.0 and 18.1 per cent, respectively, which indicate that, in principle, this percentage of households seem to have a single parent structure. At the same time, there is a remarkable difference in the presence of sons/daughters in migrant and non-migrant households: in the former, there are significantly fewer sons/daughters as compared to the latter, in contrast to the presence of grandchildren in migrant households. The difference in this type of family relationship between the households is revealing. While grandchildren are present in only 5.8 per cent of non-migrant households, the figure for migrant households is 19.5 per cent. Finally, there is a significant

presence of ‘other relatives’ in households. In the case of migrant households, 8.7 per cent fall into this category while in those of non-migrants, the figure is a mere 1.6 per cent, which would be indicative of the presence of cousins, uncles, and aunts (Table 1).

Table 1: Composition of Households by Family Relation and International Migration

Family relation	Migrant household	Non-migrant household	Total
Head of family	22,5	22,6	22,5
Spouse	11,0	18,1	15,2
Son/Daughter / Stepson/Stepdaughter	34,6	48,1	42,6
Son-/Daughter-in-law	2,0	2,1	2,0
Grandchild	19,5	5,8	11,4
Parents / Parents-in-law	1,3	1,3	1,3
Other relatives	8,7	1,6	4,5
Employee(s)	0,1	0,3	0,2
Other non-relatives	0,2	0,1	0,1

Source: Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida y Migración; August 2007

This information on the composition of households provides a profile of new kinds of family arrangements that do not necessarily correspond to the general trend to think of families as composed of father, mother and children. It would seem that households in Cañar, especially those of migrants, tend to be constructed in a different way. According to the information, at least two kinds of households come to light: the first, a single-parent family in which the spouse/father is absent and in which there tend to be fewer children. The presence of fewer children could be related to the disruption in the population structure indicated above: young people and younger adults, who would have begun their migratory experience earlier. By way of hypothesis, based on information presented here and on qualitative information, it could be said that this type of household is closely related to migration to the United States. The

second type of household that could exist in Cañar is formed, not on the basis of the presence of parents, but on that of grandparents and uncles/aunts. That is, with the emigration of father and mother, the children have remained in the care of grandparents and/or uncles/aunts. At the same time, this kind of household may be more closely related to migration to Spain. These trends could be explained by the migratory legislation in the respective countries.

While the nuclear family dominates in all households, whether indigenous or non-indigenous, migrant and non-migrant, there is a marked difference in the case of migrant households in which the nuclear family has given way significantly to single-parent families and a family composition which includes other consanguineous and non-consanguineous relatives. Although it is evident that the practice of constituting compound families is not unknown in *cantón* Cañar households, especially among indigenous families, what is relevant is the significance this practice acquires in the case of migrant households (in comparison with the lesser significance of the nuclear family and the relevance of the single-parent family), as a way to deal with the absence of one or both parents.

These data suggest a number of trends: in the first place, the significance of grandparents in taking care of the children of migrating parents, and especially mothers. This centrality varies, especially between urban and rural areas. Yet, it can be stated that in rural and indigenous households in which the mother has migrated, the major caregiver role is assumed by the migrants' parents. In addition, according to qualitative information collected during field work, it can be stated that this task is assumed by the mothers of migrating sons and daughters. In contrast, the major absent party among caregivers is the father, a fact that could be explained both by his absence, that is, because he has migrated, but also by the traditional roles assigned to men and women. Another relative group to take into account is that of uncles/aunts, especially among migrant indigenous households, migrant rural households (in which they are as significant as mothers), and in those in which the mother is the migrant.

In brief, the demographic figures for Cañar reveal a profile characterised by migration: indigenous people have left the *cantón* to a larger extent than mixed-race persons; men are outnumbered by women; the population is mostly young, with a large proportion of children and a clear lack of working-age men. Nuclear households are as important as single-parent and compound ones. Another characteristic, shared by both mixed-race and indigenous populations, is the significant role played by grandparents and uncles/aunts in taking care of

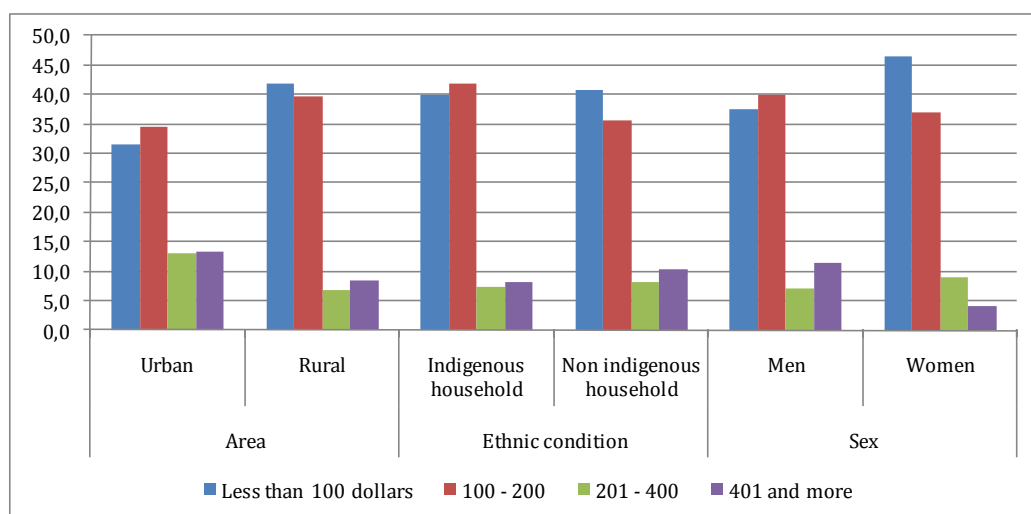
children. These are the characteristics of the population that the migrant has left behind. This is the intended population of the remittances which migrants will send from the places to which they have moved. This is the population that, together with the migrants, has been historically displaced and which migrants seek to help out of their situation of exclusion and displacement.

Migration: Development or Equality? The Use of Remittances

By taking into account the characteristics noted above, I examine the living conditions in Cañar based upon information on the sending and use of remittances by households. I conceptualise remittances as a means for diversifying income and as one of the subsistence strategies used by households. The purpose is to develop an explanation for the relation between migration and development, focusing on those items in which remittances are invested by migrant households. That is, on the basis of the concept of remittances as a strategy used by households to achieve levels of equality, it is assumed that they signify a degree of agency on the part of the actors of migration (migrants and their families) as a way to improve their means of subsistence, while, on the other hand, structural conditions are at play (Glick Schiller, 2009, 24).

In *cantón* Cañar, 40.8 per cent of households have at least one migrant member and, of these migrant households, 75.3 per cent receive remittances. Only between indigenous and non-indigenous households is there a larger difference, with indigenous ones ranking higher: 79.6 versus 70.6 per cent of non-indigenous households. So it can be said that there is a strong trend for the migrant relatives of these households to send remittances.

The amounts sent are, to a significant extent, between less than 100 dollars and 200 dollars per month: around 80 per cent of migrants send these amounts. In regard to them, there are variations: women are the ones who, to a greater degree (46.5 per cent), send less than 100 dollars, while indigenous migrants are the ones who, to a larger measure, send between 100 and 200 dollars (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Sending of Remittances by the Migrant's area, Ethnic Condition, and Sex

Source: Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida y Migración; August 2007

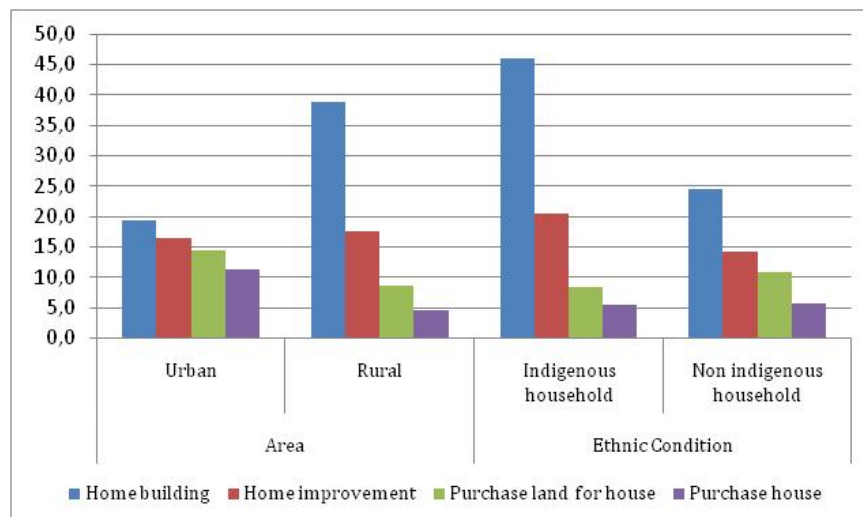
How do households use the remittances they receive?⁸ The categories in which migrants' families clearly invest remittances are: food, health, education and clothing. The percentages confirm this for the different variables, for urban and rural as well as for indigenous and non-indigenous households. These are the items for which the numbers are conclusive. The values, in most cases, are above 80 per cent.

The second most important item is payment of debts. Around 70 per cent of persons from migrant households said that they use remittances to pay debts. This information is related to the costs involved in undertaking the migratory adventure: for 30 per cent of migrant households, the cost of the trip was between 8,000 and 12,000 dollars; for 31 per cent, between 4,000 and 8,000 dollars, and, for a very significant 7 per cent, more than 12,000 dollars, which is indicative of debts that, in most cases, involve usury and guarantees that put at risk migrants' or their relatives' dwellings. Thus, it is understandable that, at least during the early years, a significant percentage of remittance money should be used for this purpose.

These uses of remittances —health, education, food, clothing and the payment of debts— are the only ones showing high percentages and concentration. To that extent, they exhibit a degree of homogeneity among the households surveyed. That is, they are the most important items in which remittances are invested in all cases. In addition to the already mentioned uses, there is a broad range of others, which depend on whether the household is urban or

rural, and indigenous or non-indigenous. Below, I comment on some of the aspects of this diversity, one of which has to do with housing⁹ (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Use of Remittances - Housing



Source: Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida y Migración; August 2007

As is evident in this graph, the investment of remittances in housing involves significant differences. While for rural and indigenous households, the construction and improvement of housing is a relevant use, this is not true to the same extent for urban and non-indigenous sectors, among which, for example, there is a slight trend towards the purchase of a house and of land for the construction of a house. These practices are related, of course, to the area of residence and to the urbanisation level in the *cantón*, which, as shown above, is low. They are also —and especially— related to different patterns of residence between indigenous and non-indigenous sectors. Indigenous households build their houses on land they have inherited or to which they have access through family relations or purchase¹⁰ in rural communities, leading to what Jokisch calls ‘a landscape of cultivated real estate’ (2002, 525). The non-indigenous households located in the urban centre and immediate surroundings of the various parishes (canton administrative subdivisions) tend, rather, to migrate to larger urban centres (Azogues, Cuenca, El Tambo) or, in effect, to buy a house or a lot in parish centres.

A view to the area’s landscape reveals that formerly rural areas on the edges have begun to be incorporated into the urban centre either through systems of sale of urbanised lots (with water, electricity and sewage) or by means of land divisions. In this case, large extensions, previously dedicated to farming, are now divided (without utilities) to be sold as properties

for housing construction. Moreover, in the rural areas of the *cantón*, whether near or far from the urban centre, houses are built on properties being farmed, preferably near a rural road, though this is not an indispensable requirement. In some cases, the former dwelling is replaced, while in others, the new house is built next to the original one; in still others, new structures are added to the original house and many 'old' dwellings still exist in this landscape.

Another variation that deserves mention is the use of remittances for festive occasions, social and/or religious celebrations. While, as already mentioned, differences can be found among the categories analysed, this type of use is not uncommon. For example, among urban sectors, households report that they use remittances for social occasions (baptisms, birthdays, marriages, etc.) in higher percentages than for the purchase of furniture, tools, or vehicles. Among indigenous households, both social occasions and the financing of religious feasts account for a relevant proportion of positive responses.

Assigning remittances to these celebrations is related to what Pribilsky calls the 'commodification of status' (2007, 105) for the case he studied, and in reference to different ways in which families, while seeking higher levels of well-being based on new definitions of progress and development, believe that these should be achieved 'within traditional avenues of participation. For many migrant households, what counted most was not so much the accumulation of status as the activity of status management' (2007, 106). Those activities relate to religious life (feasts of patron saints) and social-religious festivals but also, especially in the case of indigenous families, to contributions to community works and the payment of *minga*¹¹ dues. Participation in *mingas* is considered as an obligation for all families belonging to the communities, and a family member must participate. Previously, this member was, in general, the head of the family. However, nowadays, *mingas* are largely attended by women, children and the elderly. When no family member participates, the community council imposes a fine on the family, which is paid with remittance money, according to statements by a significant number of migrants' families.

Another aspect of remittance use is related to land purchase. According to the information referred to, land purchase is an important item for indigenous and rural households, while this is not the case for urban families. This trend could be explained, in the first place, because many indigenous and/or rural households already own lots and/or by the inability to invest in

land purchases due to the currently high prices of land in the area. However, having land on which to grow crops and build a home is a priority for households. In *cantón* Cañar, a process similar to that described by Jokisch (2002) and Pribilsky (2007) for Jatundéleg is taking place, in which agriculture has become more difficult due to the rise in the prices of land and agriculture inputs, and because reciprocal work is no longer an alternative, since migration has left the community without men available to carry out these tasks. These elements have resulted in the disarticulation of agriculture, a practice that forms a part of identity construction. This process is exemplified by the production of corn, which the author defines with Mauss as a ‘total social fact’ (Pribilsky, 2007, 102) because it is an anchor of social, cultural, and material life.

These are the items on which families in Cañar reportedly use remittances. As noted, the priorities of migrant families are basic needs and debt payments, followed by the building of houses, celebration of *fiestas*, and the purchase of land, furniture and equipment. That is, the use of remittances is varied and nuanced, covering items required for economic as well as social and cultural reproduction. In these spaces, ‘development’ takes the form of attempts at equalisation within a group, within the closest, everyday surroundings, where the celebration of the markers of difference and of equality is relevant. These markers have a connection with the history of the place and with the forms that inequality adopts in it. This desire is reflected by the following testimony:

[[‘The people here (those of the free community) had these parcels here, and with that they could have a bit of grain, a bit of food, that’s one thing, and the other is that the community people worked as sharecroppers with the *huasipungueros*¹² and that left the free Indians a little better off economically... The people were economically better off, they had a bit of land where they had a house, while the poor [the *huasipungueros*] couldn’t even build a little house on *hacienda* land because they ran the risk of the landowner expelling them... That difference doesn’t exist now; now, with migration, things have got a lot better, while the people who were better off before have stagnated, now the children of the *huasipungueros* are the ones who have gone over there, now they have their little *huasipunguito* [little plot of land] where they are working, in that *huasipungo* some have good land, they managed to work and to catch up a little more ... here in the community you don’t notice the difference much, there isn’t that much difference in all communities...’]] (Antonio Q., Community of Quilloac, May 30, 2009) (Torres, 2010, 182).

These attempts at equality, this agency of migrants and their families, comes up against other actors and other conditions, especially related to public policy, which would make it difficult to speak of marked development processes, and even less of equalisation in the sense taken by migrants' agency.

Living Conditions

As noted by de Haas (2010, 256),

[[General development is a complex and multifaceted process, involving and requiring structural social, political and institutional reform, which cannot realistically be achieved by individual migrants or remittances alone, and requires active state intervention.

Notwithstanding their often considerable blessings for individuals, households and communities, migration and remittances are no panacea to solve more structural development problems.]]

In this regard, I offer in this section a survey analysis of the living conditions of residents in Cañar, in order to demonstrate how the 'investment' of remittances to achieve well-being and processes of equalisation of migrant families requires a context in which other actors intervene, especially the state. After analysing migrant families' priorities in the use of remittances, I then examine a number of variables related to education and housing, aspects that illustrate how an improvement in the living conditions of residents and the achievement of development and, through that, of equality, do not depend solely on the private investment of resources. Rather, these variables show more structural conditions whose change is beyond the capacities of migrant households and their use of remittances.

Education

The information used for education are rates of illiteracy and of school enrolment at the various educational levels.¹³

Illiteracy affects 15.4 per cent of Cañar's population, a figure that coincides with the rate given for the entire province by the SIISE (*Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador*, Ecuador's Integrated System of Social Indicators, version 4.5). The different percentages among women and men are 16.8 and 10.3 respectively. However, on analysing this rate for the ethnic variable, a clear disparity becomes apparent: among indigenous

households, the rate is 25.5 per cent, while it is 8.4 per cent for non-indigenous ones. If the migration variable is added to the ethnic condition, the rate rises to 28.3; that is, conditions in indigenous migrant households are the least favourable as regards illiteracy. On the contrary, if the migration variable is considered for non-indigenous households, no marked differences can be observed between migrant and non-migrant ones, as the rates are 9 per cent and 8.1 per cent, respectively. It would seem, thus, that the migratory factor together with ethnic conditions causes this indicator to rise or drop.

Illiteracy data underline historical ethnic exclusions. It could be argued that indigenous households, which play a major role in the current migratory dynamic of the *cantón*, have not managed to overcome the inertia of this exclusion.

As regards the level of schooling, in Cañar, it is a mere 5.54.¹⁴ This means that children do not complete elementary education (which involves children from 5 to 12). This level of schooling falls alarmingly for the indigenous population (3.72 grades of formal instruction) and is lower still for the indigenous population from migrant households, with a rate of 2.90 years. The situation of the non-indigenous population is better, in general reaching higher levels of schooling, especially for non-migrant households, where the level of schooling averages 7.15.

As for the rates of primary school enrolment, the survey indicates that they are high in all the population groups studied, reaching more than 94 per cent. However, it would seem that enrolment has a low level of continuity, since the analysis in succeeding education levels reveals a dramatic decrease. Thus, enrolment at the basic education level (children up to 15 years of age) falls to 64.8 for the total population, and to 49.8 for the secondary level (children up to 18 years of age). Indigenous households with and without migrants exhibit the lowest rates at these levels, with 60.1 and 36.5 per cent, respectively. Of course, rates drop sharply at the higher education level, with only 8.8 per cent of the population enrolled and, as is consistently the case, indigenous households are those in the worst situation. Only 3 per cent have enrolled in some university education program. For indigenous households with migrants, enrolment in some form of higher education is almost non-existent: 1.7 per cent.

Information on enrolment rates compared to schooling rates, that is, educational levels completed, provides a better idea of the educational situation of *cantón* Cañar's population. Only 67.1 per cent finish primary education, a rate that is lower for the indigenous

population, of which only 56.5 manages to complete primary school. The situation is worse for indigenous households with migrants, where the rate is 53.3 per cent.

While the rate of those finishing elementary school is lower, rates for the following levels are lower still. Only 34 per cent of the population above 14 years of age completes the basic educational level. That is, nearly 50 per cent of those who finish primary school do not continue their formal education. However, the rate of around 30-35 per cent is the same for all the population groups analysed; thus, there are no major differences between the indigenous and non-indigenous populations or between households with and without migrants.

The rate for the following level, that is, for those who complete secondary school, in general, does not fall significantly across the entire population: 30.3 per cent, which indicates that most of those who finish the basic educational level complete their secondary education. However, this rate conceals a degree of disparity. The most important drop occurs among the indigenous population: only 20.5 per cent have completed high school and, as we have seen in some other indicators, the situation is worse among indigenous migrant households, where this percentage is 17.9.

As for gender differences, the gaps in enrolment rates, at all levels —elementary, basic, secondary and higher education— are around 1 per cent. That is, there is a difference, but as in the case of the illiteracy rate, it is not as wide when the ethnic variable is considered. In addition, it is interesting to note that this gap does not evolve, contrary to what happens with the ethnic variable, given that it is 1.02 per cent for primary education, 1.03 per cent for basic education, 1.02 per cent for secondary education, and 1.10 per cent for higher education. That is, only for higher education does the gap widen slightly.

The information on education allows us to observe some trends: Illiteracy rates are an indication of exclusion processes and scant state attention. On the other hand, enrolment and schooling rates could be evidence that finishing elementary education is the most frequently fulfilled possibility. The possibility of reaching higher levels would be associated with resources, of course, but also with the quality of education and with the practical benefit of that education on employment opportunities, pay and possibilities for social mobility. If a

high percentage of the population works in agriculture and manufacture, higher levels of education would not be justified, especially for indigenous households.

Housing

As shown above, housing is one of the important items on which migrant families in *cantón* Cañar spend their remittances. Below is a profile of their conditions.

A majority of Cañar's population (76.75 per cent) live in dwellings they own, a situation that does not change with the population's ethnic or migratory condition. In like manner, a majority (91.4 per cent) of the population of this *cantón* lives in a house, a country house, or an apartment. However, it is important to emphasise that indigenous households and households without migrants still live in rustic dwellings best described as huts. These data are consistent with the dwellings visible on the landscape of the *cantón*: large houses and country houses built next to old adobe and straw houses (huts) that are still standing.

However, what are the dwellings themselves like, whether these are houses, country houses, or apartments? The building materials used in the dwelling's floor covering is the indicator chosen because it is related to the quality of the dwelling and, thus, to the population's living conditions.¹⁵ In Cañar, only non-indigenous households exceed the national average: 85.04 per cent of these households have floors covered with resistant material. On the other hand, indigenous households show the highest percentage of earthen floors (40.52). At the same time, there is a clear contrast in the presence of uncovered floors between households with migrants and those without: 30.13 versus 19.80 per cent.

Therefore, this indicator also reflects that indigenous households and those without migrants are the most vulnerable; the situation is even worse for indigenous, non-migrant households. A space in the household designated for food preparation is another indicator associated with living conditions and with care and hygiene in households. In this respect, a large majority of Cañar's population (83.51 per cent) designate a room for cooking; this is a figure well above the national (65.3 per cent) and the provincial (42.9 per cent) averages. It should be noted that, once again, the major difference is between indigenous (76.41) and non-indigenous (88.86) households. The difference between households with and without migrants is minimal.

As for access to water, most of the population is connected to the public system. Indigenous households are those with least access to the public water system. Besides, on the other hand, this same group is the one with the highest percentage of households getting water from a well or a spring. While the figures are not alarming, nevertheless, it is striking to find that the percentage of migrant households with access to the public water system is lower than for non-migrant ones. This could be implying that, while the former are in a better condition in terms of housing construction, this does not necessarily imply better access to utilities, which are available in urbanised areas and their immediate surroundings, while availability is lower in rural areas.

Hygienic conditions, regarding how human wastes are eliminated and garbage is handled, is perhaps the information through which a certain inconsistency in the data can be best appreciated. This suggests that it is necessary to look at housing 'from the inside.' Only 8.31 per cent of indigenous households have a bathroom and sewage, as compared to 50.10 per cent of non-indigenous households. This percentage may be associated with the indigenous population's predominant area of residence, which is rural or in areas surrounding urban centres; however, it also reveals the lack of availability of public utilities. Another significant fact is the absence of any way to eliminate human wastes among 36.35 per cent of indigenous households, which has an impact on health conditions. As regards differences between households with and without migrants, these are less significant. In fact, households with migrants have, proportionally, less access to sewage than households without migrants. This could be explained, as in the previous case, by the rural character of most migrants.

The data presented confirms what has been pointed out by other statistical sources and investigations: the situation of the indigenous population is more vulnerable in comparison with that of the non-indigenous one.¹⁶ That said, through migration and the use and sending of remittances, these historically excluded indigenous households implement strategies targeted at overcoming these levels of marginalisation; however, that initiative, in the absence of activity by other actors in their surroundings, results in an improvement in households rather than in the context, and contributes even less to overcoming exclusion. This fact is confirmed by information on poverty and inequality.

As I pointed out at the beginning, the information analysed comes from a survey administered in 2007, designed and carried out only for *cantón* Cañar. Between 2007 and

2014, Rafael Correa's government gave strong impetus to social policies in health, education and housing, among other areas, allocating an increased amount of resources to them. However, the implementation of these policies among rural and indigenous populations does not seem to have had the desired effect. It is not possible, with the existing sources, to draw a detailed comparison between the 2007 figures (analysed here) and the present-day ones, since the only information currently available are the national 2010 census and, at present, the national survey on living conditions, which provides data at the provincial, but not the *cantón* level. Still, a brief analysis of the 2010 census yields some significant figures: the illiteracy rate in the indigenous population is 28.9% in the province of Cañar, as compared to 27.52% of the indigenous population in *cantón* Cañar. Rates of illiteracy by sex among the indigenous population are 19% for women and 8% for men. Illiteracy affects more women than men across the entire province (14% and 9%) and the different percentages in the *cantón* are 11% for men and 19% for women. In addition, the indigenous population's enrolment rates at different school levels are as follows: 25% have never attended school, whereas 36% have completed primary school and 18% have been through basic education. However, all numbers aside, one of Ecuador's indigenous movement's most insistent demands for some years has been access to bilingual education. This demand was met beginning in 1988. Today, in Quilloac, in *cantón* Cañar, where the first Intercultural Bilingual Institute in Ecuador was founded, the position of the indigenous movement *vis-à-vis* government plans to eliminate institutes for bilingual education is under debate. The only indigenous university in Ecuador, Amawtay Wasi, was closed on November 7, 2013 by Rafael Correa's administration, on the grounds of its allegedly inferior academic standards. Paradoxically, while communities appeal to the role of the state, today that very same state is pushing their bilingualism into a corner.

In any case, the analysis presented in this essay attempts to illustrate how migrants' agency has to face a historically constructed gender and race exclusion structure: the state, a structure which it has been impossible to dismantle in spite of greater investments, the creation of countless bureaucratic agencies and the technification of follow-up and evaluation policies, all coupled with a discourse of change.

Conclusions

Emigrants from Cañar leave a place that has experienced historical socioeconomic and political displacement, for which different strategies have been applied by way of solution, from demands for land redistribution and those by the indigenous movement intended to overcome conditions of ethnic exclusion (Torres, 2010, 167–171) to migratory processes which involve the sending and use of remittances. As analysed here, these are used as resources to meet subsistence needs: health, education, clothing, food, and, in light of the cost of the migratory undertaking, the payment of debts.

At the same time, sending and using remittances indicates that these are conceived by migrants not only as an economic strategy, but are also related to the migrants' social and cultural practices. Thus, they are used to construct sociocultural capital in the migrant's community of origin to enable processes of equalisation within said communities, evident in the construction of houses and the celebration of *fiestas*.

However, the implementation of strategies targeted at reducing inequalities produced by different types of discrimination and displacement has not achieved its intended objective. That is, the migrants' agency comes up against a state that has not provided responses in the form of public policies designed to eliminate historical displacements, whether based on class or ethnicity, or to attain a better distribution of wealth.

So, what is the relation among migration, development and equality in *cantón* Cañar? Is it possible to argue that migrants from Cañar, when conjugating the verb to displace in its pronominal form (I displace myself), manage to overcome the historical ways of displacement in which the same verb is conjugated in its transitive form, where the action of the verb is displayed by a subject on an object?

Migrants are already agents of development simply by implementing different strategies as productive workers abroad and attempting to bring about processes of equalisation in their surroundings. However, this agency, this displacement in its pronominal form is undertaken in conditions that reproduce inequalities at the local and global levels: low-skilled workers

enter labour markets characterised by exclusion, where subjects are capable of displaying the action of displacement upon an object.

As de Haas (2008; 2010, 227), Piper (2009), and Raghuram (2009) have pointed out, the debate over the migration and development link has been taken up anew with special optimism by states and various international organisations that have gone from a sceptical stance to a view in which migrants are seen as potential development agents in both the sending and receiving countries (Piper, 2009, 94; Faist, 2008, 25).

However, this renewed optimism has neglected a number of aspects of the migration and development relation. One of these has to do with the fact that, while in discourse and in public policies, migrants and their communities are viewed as agents, they are basically seen as economic agents and, to a lesser degree, as sociopolitical actors; to that extent, discussions regarding the endurance of inequalities at the global and local levels are avoided.

In this way, this interest in the relationship between migration and development loses sight of migrants' ability to revert the displacement process of which they are objects. In other words, it leaves aside the pronominal form of the action, which makes migrants the subject of a movement carried out to challenge the historical forms of inequality and exclusion that have caused their territorial, social, economic, political and cultural displacement. In this same sense, Delgado and Covarrubias (2007, 6-7, 11) criticise the developed countries' perspective of the interrelation between migration and development. Instead, they advocate a perspective from the Global South that analyses development processes in the sending countries, incorporates migration as an element in that process, and also calls into question the global reproduction of inequalities. Canales puts the matter this way:

[[‘In this sense, remittances flow from precarious, vulnerable workers to their family members who live in conditions of poverty and contexts of social marginalisation. In this context, it is not unusual that, on the one hand, remittances are used primarily to finance family consumption, contributing to the maintenance of a minimal level of well-being while, on the other, they do not flow in amounts and volumes necessary to promote a true process of social mobility.’ (2008, 19)]]

Notes

¹ Previous versions of this article were presented at the event that followed the 28th Brazilian Anthropology Meeting, called ‘Deslocamentos e Desigualdades / Displacements and Inequalities’, held in Sao Paulo in July 2012, and in the panel titled ‘Displacements and Inequalities: Comparative Perspectives on Global Capitalism’, during the 111th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, in November 2012, both organised by Bela Feldman Bianco. In these two events, I received valuable comments from the participating colleagues. I would like to thank especially Nina Glick Schiller for her remarks on the version presented at the AAA meeting and, most of all, Bela Feldman Bianco, for her endless revisions, comments and patience.

² In English: to remove from the usual or proper place.

³ For Glick Schiller, ‘Displacement cannot be conceptualized without emplacement, which means to develop a scholarship of displacement is to simultaneously theorize power differentials as they are experienced, embodied, conceptualized, undone and reconstituted within specific places and times.’ (2012a, 1).

⁴ Using the later work of Foucault and its application by Duffield (2006), Raghuram points out that ‘international development is a form of governmentality. He suggests that the ability of society to protect life is a key characteristic of a developmental notion of society. But it is also a modality through which power can be exercised’ (2009, 107). Governmentality produces spaces and spaces need ‘rationality and knowledge – a range of visibilities, epistemes and identities’, (Raghuram, 2009, 108) which it is necessary to unravel in order to understand how the development – migration link is construed.

⁵ For further discussion about the migration and development nexus see, among others, Bakewell (2008, 2012); de Haas (2007, 2010); Delgado Wise and Márquez (2009); Faist, T. (2009); Glick Schiller (2012b); Glick Schiller and T. Faist (2009); Hansen (2012); Kapur (2004); Kofman, E. and Raghuram, P. (2006); Piper (2008); Sørensen (2003; 2012); Taylor et al. (2007). For the migration, development and gender debate in general, as well as in Ecuador and the Andean region, see, Herrera (2013); Herrera and Eguiguren (2014); Oso (2011, 2012); Oso and Ribas-Mateos (2013); Pribilsky (2007); Cortés (2013); Mata-Codesal (2013).

⁶ Censo de Población y Vivienda, 2001 (INEC).

⁷ Unless otherwise indicated, the source of information is, in all cases, the ‘Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida y Migración del Cantón Cañar’, applied in July-August 2007 by the Cañar-Murcia Co-development Project (AECID, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation– Government of Ecuador), FLACSO, UNICEF– ODNA (Observatory for the Rights of Children and Adolescents) and Plan Internacional.

⁸ When the survey was conducted, those who responded were not asked to list the items on which they spent remittances; instead, they were given options that covered everything from housing to leisure activities, with the choice of answering yes/no. As a result, each option represented 100 per cent, which makes it possible to conduct an intra-category rather than an inter-category analysis.

⁹ For an analysis of the use of remittances in southern Ecuador, see Mata-Codesal (2013, 366-369).

¹⁰ On the importance of access to land for both home construction and growing crops in a community in the same province, though in a different *cantón*, see Pribilsky (2007, 135-138).

¹¹ A form of communal work on small infrastructure works in communities: repair of roads, water systems, schools, churches, etc.

¹² A system of debt peonage introduced by the Spanish during the Colonial Period and finally abolished with the first Land Reform Law of 1964, though it persisted for years in some parts of Ecuador after the law was passed. The *huasipunguero* was entitled to use a *huasipungo*, or small plot of land, in exchange for his labour on the *hacienda*. He also received a wage, but as this did not cover basic needs, he and his family lived in a state of permanent indebtedness, and the debt was inherited by the *huasipunguero*'s heirs. Those indigenous people not tied to the land through this system were known as 'free Indians'.

¹³ An analysis of the education-remittances relation in Ecuador, from various perspectives, can be found in Pacheco (2007, 2008); Olivie, Ponce, and Onofa (2008); Olivie and Ponce (2008); Calero, Bedi, and Sparrow (2008).

¹⁴ According to information in the latest census (2010), 6.43 is the figure for years of study.

¹⁵ According to SIISE (version 4.5), there are two types of floors: those covered with resistant material that are easier to keep clean (fitted boards, planks, parquet, tiles, vinyl, cement, brick) and those that are more difficult to keep clean (earth and cane).

¹⁶ See, among others, F. García (2004, 2012) and C. Larrea (2007).

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