

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: JUST A CLICK AWAY FROM HOME:
ECUADORIAN MIGRATION, NOSTALGIA
AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN
TRANSNATIONAL TIMES

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Focusing on three different narrations of migration from Ecuador to the United States, Spain and Italy, this documentary video and its study guide explore how new technologies such as the Internet, satellite communications, email, videoconferences, and cell phones have changed the experience of displacement. The two components of this dissertation propose that, due to the encounter with new technologies intent upon shrinking space and time, nostalgia is becoming digital –a quest for continuity of time and space through the simultaneity offered by digital media. Under these new circumstances, transnational businesses profit from nostalgic markets, whereas transnational families and organizations grapple with digital technologies to foment a “globalization of solidarity.”

As an aesthetic artefact, the project responds to the controversy within film theory regarding subjectivity and fiction storytelling procedures as defining features of documentary, a film genre traditionally marketed as objective and non-fictional. For this reason, the video is composed of what I call not three case studies but three stories of migration. The documentary starts out in Cuenca (Ecuador), where, speechless, Arturo and Mercedes see their children on the videoconferencing screen. It is their first “reunion” since the children left Ecuador and settled in New York City, eleven years ago. In another Ecuadorian city, Gloria -whose husband migrated from Quito to Madrid- promotes Internet access to rescue families torn apart by migration. Finally, we meet Carla, a journalist settled in Milan, who takes advantage of new technologies to report on the Ecuadorian community in Italy for readers far away.

With a comparative and translocal approach –and theoretically based on Hall, Appadurai, Boym, Nichols and Portes among others-, this project explores multiple relationships with new technologies determined by gender, age, race, ethnicity, education, computer literacy, geographical situation, and socio-economic background. Through their differing and even contradictory discourses and practices, expressed and lived in geographical locations that coexist and overlap on the screen, the protagonists of this dissertation-documentary video show us to what extent they are inscribed in different places of enunciation that shape their experience of displacement and nostalgia in contrasting ways.

JUST A CLICK AWAY FROM HOME:
ECUADORIAN MIGRATION, NOSTALGIA AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES
IN TRANSNATIONAL TIMES

By

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Preface

This dissertation is a non-traditional artefact, a documentary video. Evidently, as an audiovisual production, a dissertation-documentary presents the advantage of being much more accessible for a wide range of audiences than a written dissertation. The first tricky question that might be posed, however, is whether a documentary video can respond simultaneously –and successfully- to the intellectual rigor expected in a dissertation research project and the aesthetic expectations that this film genre conveys. Can a documentary video be academically valid without recurring to dreadful explanations of concepts, hypotheses, and methodologies that would ruin the cinematic experience? Is it possible to translate theories about migration, transnationalism and nostalgia into moving images embedded in a narrative? Thus the main challenge that this scholarly project poses is that the aesthetics of the documentary video must respond to the theoretical discussion that backs it up. That discussion cannot ignore the controversy that surrounds the documentary genre itself.

The word documentary did not appear until the late 1920s and scholars coincide in attributing it to the British filmmaker and theoretician John Grierson, who defined documentary as “the creative treatment of actuality” (Winston 11). To Grierson, who in 1930 convinced the Empire Marketing Board to create a Film Unit that would shape the British school of documentary, it was important to take advantage of the growing capacity of the film industry to attract the masses in order to “democratize” knowledge and strengthen citizenship. From his point of view, actualities, travelogues and newsreels¹

¹ The term documentary tends to be identified with the more general category of nonfiction film, which includes actualities (the *actualités*, or scenes from daily life with which the Lumière brothers inaugurated the art of film), travelogues (films from trips to “exotic” places –early cinematic evidences of the colonial

lacked that “creative treatment” necessary to not only entertain people, but also “educate” them.

“We thought,” wrote Grierson alluding to himself and his colleagues of the Political Science school at the University of Chicago, where the first ideas about a documentary genre took form, “that even so complex a world as ours could be patterned for all to appreciate if we only got away from the servile accumulation of fact and struck for the story which held the facts in living organic relationship together” (290).

A documentary, then, is not a simple document (like an *actualité*), nor a sheer accumulation of audiovisual evidence, but a narrative construction where documents or evidence taken from the physical world (shots, audio recordings) acquire meaning² in the process of *emplotment* (White 84) or *sequenciation*, as Philip Rosen names it. Far from helping to establish a clear border between documentary and fiction film, the inscription of *emplotment* techniques in the very nature of the documentary film approaches mainstream feature film:

Evidently, the actuality film lacked elements implicitly or explicitly claimed by both the documentary and the mainstream ethos. I am suggesting that basic to these is the value placed on sequenciation. This value lies in the great assistance sequenciation provides for centralizing and restricting meanings derived from the points at which actual contact with the real is asserted –the realm of the document (74).

gaze that filmmakers from the metropolis applied to their “others” in the colonies), newsreels, films and videos with medical or other technical applications and, of course, documentaries.

² I am using the word in the sense Stuart Hall does in his essay “Encoding/Decoding:” the ensemble of denotations and connotations that a sign acquires when confronted with economic, political and cultural discourses, most frequently the dominant ones (171-172).

Thus sequenciation or emplotment emerged as key in communicating a unified meaning within the documentary film. Can we affirm, then, that there is absolutely no difference between fiction and documentary film, since both rely on the procedure of emplotment in order to ensure a coherent and unified meaning for its narratives? Although the postmodern approaches to documentary lead us to the dissolution of boundaries between fiction and documentary film, several important aspects make documentary “a fiction unlike any other” (Nichols 109).

In a cultural studies approach to the question, Bill Nichols asserts that documentaries “do not differ from fictions in their constructedness as texts, but in the representations they make.” Whereas postmodern theorists like Rosen see the construction of stories or narratives as a regular practice in documentary, Nichols affirms that “at the heart of documentary is less a *story* and its imaginary world than an *argument* about the historical world” (111). As in the case of the postmodern approach, this perspective admits that no single fact represented in a documentary has a definite meaning outside of the argument and this is why, actually, the same facts can acquire diverse meanings when used within different arguments.

While the constructedness of documentary film and video –as of any other text– has been widely discussed by scholars, it is not always grasped outside Academia, where the hegemonic discourse –especially orchestrated by television and its news programs– has identified documentary with objectivity, realism and truth. An oppositional discourse, according to Claire Johnston, needs a counter-cinema that “challenges the depiction of reality... so that break between ideology and text is effected” (30). As a counter-realist cinema, she proposes reflexive documentary, a mode of documentary that constructs a

certain argument revealing at the same time the cinematic techniques and the perspective that give shape to such discursive representation.

However, it is not documentary itself that is being questioned, but the discourse of objectivity that has been assigned to the genre in order to use it as a strong persuasive tool. From the critical standpoint that guided the production of *Just a Click Away from Home*, the kinship between reality and fiction not only defines the nature of documentary film and video, but also liberates the genre from the straitjacket that has limited its expressive resources for objectivity's sake. This is why this documentary-dissertation relies on what I generally call not three case studies but three "stories," since it attempts to be a narrative-realist representation of the intertwined relationship of Ecuadorian migration, nostalgia and new technologies in a transnational age. This is also why voice-over narration, archival footage, graphics, tables and similar resources currently associated with the documentary genre (especially with mainstream, "objective" documentary) have been avoided.

In order to make its case, *Just a Click Away from Home* relies fundamentally in the stories being told, in its narrative structure, and refuses to get extra help from devices that would take the viewers away from these stories. The only resource of this type used in the documentary is the interview. However, the interviewees are mainly the protagonists of the stories, and whenever they appear in an interview, they are shown in the context of the spaces they inhabit, where their stories unfold, sometimes answering questions while they keep working on what they had planned to do for the day. Although a few interviewees are not exactly protagonists of the stories -like the journalists from *El Comercio*, or the researchers of the *Migration, Communication and Development*

Project- they have been consulted and included in the documentary because the organizations they belong to are actively involved in two of the narratives developed in the video: the correspondent base in Milan and the *telecentro* located in Pucará, respectively.

The documentary, nevertheless, also intends to be reflexive, not through an emphasis in revealing the cinematic techniques that sustain its dramatic structure, but rather exposing the nature of its discursive and subjective perspective over a restricted set of phenomena. In order to attain this goal, *Just a Click Away from Home* underscores the presence of an individual behind the camera (a female individual who interacts with the protagonists of the stories and whose presence is acknowledged by them) and renounces a “voice-of-God” narration that would impose a certain interpretation of the events represented in the documentary’s narrative as the natural, the objective, the right one.

The documentary applies, as well, a comparative and translocal approach to its subject matter, understanding translocality in the sense that Laó-Montes does:

The notion of translocality refers at once to historical/structural locations, geographic scales, and subject positions. ... (It) articulates geographic units of space (place, nation, region, world) with historical locations and subject positions (classes, genders, sexualities, races, ethnicities, nationalities, etc) (13).

With a translocal perspective of three stories of migration from Ecuador to the United States, Spain and Italy, *Just a Click Away from Home* explores how Adrián, Vaneza and William in New York City, Luis in Madrid and Carla in Milan -as well as the families and organizations they belong to- have established different types of relationships with new technologies, according to their gender, age, race, ethnicity,

education and computer literacy level, geographical situation, and socio-economic background. Through their differing and even contradictory discourses and practices, expressed and lived in geographical locations that coexist and overlap on the screen, the protagonists of this documentary video show us to what extent they are inscribed in different translocal spaces, different “places of enunciation” (Hall, “Culture” 36) that shape in contrasting ways their perception of displacement.

Likewise, *Just a Click Away from Home* aims at exposing its own producer place of enunciation. The woman behind the camera enjoys privileges that some of the protagonists of the video can only dream of: while Mercedes and Arturo wish they could jump into the videoconference screen and hug their kids stuck in New York City, where they have been denied legal entrance, I easily move from Cuenca to Queens and hang out with their children. On the other hand, the distance that separates their reality from mine narrows in the ritual of preparing and sending the *cuy* (Guinea pig) to the United States. My gaze is that of someone who grew up eating *cuy*. In that measure, an episode that for another gaze could have appeared gruesome, distasteful or just banal, turns transcendent, almost beautiful, when seen through my own Ecuadorian, middle-class, *mestizo*, displaced and nostalgic place of enunciation.

Dedication

To all those who generously allowed this documentary-dissertation to tell their stories.

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See DVD attached to this dissertation.	

Introduction

Focusing on three different stories of migration from Ecuador to the United States, Spain and Italy, the documentary-dissertation *Just a Click Away from Home* explores how new technologies such as the Internet, satellite communications, email, videoconferences, and cell phones have changed the experience of being away from home for displaced people, while transforming nostalgia and encouraging the appearance of transnational phenomena.

Since the very beginning, this documentary was conceived as a pedagogic tool to be used in college classrooms. As a complementary document to accompany the video, this study guide has been developed to provide instructors with:

- Background information about Ecuador and the historical context that has surrounded the different waves of Ecuadorian migration during the last 60 years.
- A theoretical approach to the concept of transnationalism and the role performed by new technologies of information and communication within transnational processes and practices.
- A definition of digital nostalgia rooted in the history of the concept of nostalgia and the psychological transformations generated by digital technologies intent upon shrinking space and time.

In the following pages, this study guide delves into these subjects through three separate and independent units. Unit 1, *Ecuadorian Migration in a Historical Context*, starts out by describing the transformations that migratory phenomena have produced in the village of Pucará during the past 60 years, and then moves to a more general explanation of the differences between the first two waves of immigration from Ecuador

to the United States (1960s and 1980s), and the more recent wave of Ecuadorians that migrated mostly to Spain in the last ten years. Through a historical account that incorporates political, economic and social perspectives, this unit explains the particularities of the Ecuadorian diaspora within a regional and global context. Conceived as the foundation piece of this guide, Unit 1 is larger than the other two and has been designed to provide instructors and their students with a base from which to approach many different subjects using *Just a Click Away from Home*.

Conversely, the other two units develop suggested themes that could be approached in the classroom utilizing the documentary and this study guide to spark the discussion. Unit 2, *Transnationalism and the Role of New Technologies*, places the “emergent social field” of transnationalism in the context of globalization, and proposes a discussion about the role performed by new technologies of information and communication in the development of initiatives that imply regular contact and travel across national borders. As shown in this unit, while some scholars affirm that transnationalism would not be possible without these new technologies, others state that transnationalism is most likely the result of the barriers that migrants encounter while trying to assimilate in the settlement countries.

Finally, Unit 3, *Is Nostalgia Becoming Digital?*, delves into the gap that separates “analog” human beings -driven to conceive time and space as a constant flow, as continuity- from “digital” machines –which inhabit a permanent present, where all the possible past and future combinations of zeros and ones coexist, simultaneously, in every fraction of a second. This unit proposes the concept of digital nostalgia -defined as the quest for continuity of space and time through the simultaneity offered by digital media-

as a way to understand how displacement and uprooting feel in an age of ever shrinking space and time.

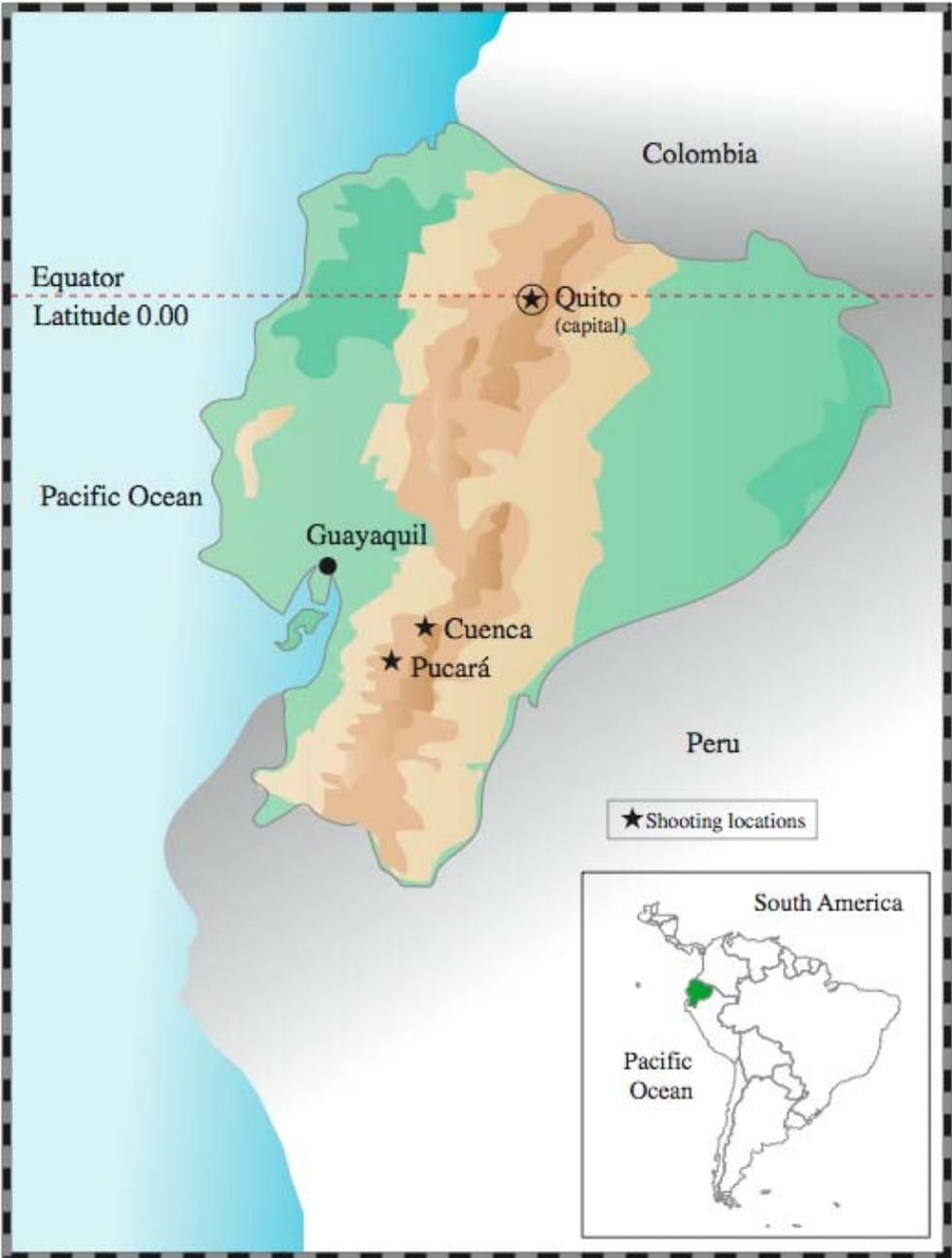
Each of these three units consists of an essay, suggested readings, and a set of questions that connect the information provided in the text with relevant scenes and interviews from *Just a Click Away from Home*. These questions have been designed to push the discussion beyond the particular stories represented in the documentary and towards the larger picture of the many peoples in the world who may be experiencing similar situations.

In addition, this study guide includes the lyrics of the songs used in the soundtrack (which were chosen because they discuss migration and nostalgia) in Spanish and translated to English, the documentary's synopsis and treatment (a brief description of every scene), and a chronological transcription of the dialogues and interviews, in Spanish and English. Hopefully, these appendices will help adapt *Just a Click Away from Home* for individual classroom objectives.

Before the screening...

Have your students look at the map of Ecuador (map 1) and describe the country's geographic position. Since they may not be familiar with most of the places shown in the documentary video, this "visit" will help them recognize the names and have an idea of where these places are located. Ask them to find the cities of Quito and Cuenca, and the town of Pucará.

Map 1
Ecuador:
Relevant Locations for the Study of *Just a Click Away from Home*



Elaboration: Oxigenio (Quito, ECUADOR).

Unit 1:

Ecuadorian Migration in a Historical Context

Three hours away from Cuenca -the third largest city in Ecuador, located in the southern region of the country- sits Pucará, a small town populated mostly by peasants whose major source of income has always been agriculture. Over the course of the last decades the economic and social situation has substantially changed there. Today, you will find only women and old people working in the plots that surround the center of the hamlet. Besides some school children who play every afternoon in the plaza across from the local church, young people –particularly men- seem to have vanished. Decades ago, young men would descend to the coast to find jobs with the mining companies that still operate in southwest Ecuador, but they would always come back to Pucará during the weekends, and get into trouble while spending their salaries in the local cantinas. Today, however, a growing number of young men –and recently women- leave town as soon as they finish high school –and some leave before graduation. Usually, they move to Cuenca, where sooner or later they get in touch with a smuggler (*coyote* or *coyotero* in the local slang) that will charge their families between 12,000 and 15,000 dollars for bringing them illegally to the United States.

From a lifestyle regulated by the rhythms of agriculture, Pucará's people have switched to the monthly pace imposed by the remittances that their young relatives send them from far and away -mostly from the United States, but also Spain and Italy during recent years. Even the landscape has changed in the hamlet. The traditional small wooden houses are being replaced by huge concrete constructions sitting on the lands once mortgaged to pay the *coyote*.

There is still another transformation in Pucará, probably the most disturbing from the point of view of the research that backs up this study guide. Over the roof of a small building annexed to the local church, the *Red de Comunicación de la Pastoral Social de Cuenca* –a Catholic non-profit known for its work with migrants and their relatives- recently installed a parabolic antenna. It provides a satellite Internet connection to the *telecentro* (telecommunications center) that opened its doors about three years ago. Regular telephone service arrived in town just a few years before. There are still a limited number of families that own landlines, and they do not use them to call their relatives living abroad because the service is too expensive. However, in the *telecentro*, Pucará’s residents are helped with opening free email accounts, so they can write to their relatives or even have videoconferences with them. That is, of course, if they do not already own a cell phone financed through remittances.

1.1. From Ecuador to New York:

The First Two Waves of Ecuadorian Migration

At least three different waves of international migration can be identified when analyzing the patterns of Ecuadorian migration in the second half of the 20th century: the migration processes of the 1960s, those of the 1980s and, finally, the massive migration registered between the last years of the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century. Although there are those that affirm that just two “epochs” should be distinguished during this period -migration from 1960 to 1995, and from 1996 to present- (Gratton 33; Jokisch and Kyle 57), local scholars insist in the existence of three waves marked by times of economic and political distress in Ecuador, crises in the global market, changes

in the immigration policies in the settlement countries, and the solidification of Ecuadorian immigrant networks in those countries (Herrera et al. 17).

The crisis in the exportation of the “Panama hat” has been associated with the first wave of Ecuadorian migration. Since colonial times, the weaving and commerce of straw hats had become the cornerstone of the economy for the southern provinces of Cañar and Azuay.¹ The hats, produced by peasant weavers scattered in the Andes and then exported to the United States and Europe through networks of mestizo/white middlemen and rich exporters, acquired their famous name when they “began to be exported for sale to gold miners passing through Panama during the California gold rush of the 1850s” (Kyle 56). After World War II the United States, Ecuador’s best customer, began to import cheaper hats from Japan, China, Italy and the Philippines. Moreover, by the 1960s, the use of hats was no longer fashionable. The collapse was inevitable for a local economy dependent on these exports. In response to the crisis, middle-class exporters and middlemen, as well as peasants connected to the networks of straw hat commerce, followed the “Panama hat trail” and settled in New York City in the late 50s and early 60s (59-60).

Thus, according to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), 8,574 Ecuadorian-born immigrants acquired legal permanent resident status throughout the 1950s (almost four times the number registered in the previous decade), and during the 1960s this number quadruples again, to reach 34,107. During the 1960s, many Ecuadorians from all over the country migrated to Canada, Venezuela and, above all, the

¹ As explained by Matías Zibell in the article “El sombrero que no era de Panamá,” the *toquilla* straw grows in the coastal province of Manabí. Here is located the town of Montecristi, where the world’s finest “Panama hats” are woven. In Montecristi, a few masters take months to weave a hat that costs about 500 U.S. dollars. However, the center of mass production of these hats is located in southern Ecuador. The *toquilla* straw is delivered from Manabí to thousands of weavers spread in the provinces of Azuay and Cañar. They will take a few days to produce a hat valued at about 8 to 10 U.S. dollars. Historically, Cuenca, capital of the province of Azuay, has been the center of straw hats’ exports.

United States. During the Vietnam War, the U.S. opened the doors to young Latin Americans willing to go to the front or to cover the need for laborers. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, a few Ecuadorians from Quito -mostly people connected to diplomatic circles-, as well as former laborers of the Standard Fruit Company from the coastal provinces of Guayas, Manabí and El Oro joined the stream of migration from southern Ecuador to the United States (Garcés 97). In most cases, the families obtained legal residency or went through naturalization processes, and never came back.²

During the second wave (1980s to mid 1990s), Ecuadorian migration acquires different characteristics: it mostly originates in the Southern provinces of Cañar and Azuay, it presents a strong rural character, and it is mainly composed of male migrants (Herrera et al. 17). A steady flow of migration towards the United States had characterized the 1970s, but in the early 1980s Ecuador, like the rest of Latin America, had to confront a new collapse of the economy, this time due to the Debt Crisis.³ During what has been called the “lost decade,” the national currency was devalued, salaries diminished and the minimum annual income dropped about 7.6% between 1982 and 1991. Meanwhile, the cost of living increased, interest rates were higher than ever, and

² In the United States, the Immigration Act of 1924 restricted the arrival of Southern and Eastern Europeans, who had begun to enter the country massively beginning in the last decade of the 19th century. East Asian and Asian Indian immigration was prohibited, but the Act did not set any kind of limits for immigrants from Latin America. In 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Act amendments set an annual limitation of 120,000 visas for immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean, but there was no limitation for family reunification visas, and chain immigration quickly spread (USCIS, “Historical”).

³ The Latin American Debt Crisis exploded in 1982, when Mexico announced that it was unable to service the debt to international creditors. Like Mexico, Ecuador had acquired many short-term credits throughout the 1970s for industrialization and infrastructure programs. Also, during the 1970s, vast oil reserves were discovered in Ecuadorian territory, and oil exports became the main source of income for the country. However, in the early 1980s, when oil prices dropped and international creditors raised interest rates, Mexico collapsed and the rest of Latin American nations collapsed along with it. Those governments that had been hoping to renegotiate their short-term loans found that creditors would not lend to them anymore. As private capital fled Ecuador, the national currency was devalued and, as in the case of most countries in the region, Ecuador adopted the neo-liberal structural adjustment programs designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

the State cut many social programs (Jokisch, screen 2). No wonder Ecuadorians from those regions that had already established migratory networks in previous decades found their best option to be migration to the United States.

It is still unclear how the *mestizo* peasants from rural areas in the provinces of Cañar and Azuay took the lead in the use of the networks established by the “Panama hat trail.” In 1990, between 80,000 and 100,000 people migrated from these provinces to the United States (Garcés 100). They were mostly young men from peasant communities located in the outskirts of Cuenca (the Azuayan capital). Thus, in 1988-89, 85% of those who migrated from Azuay to the United States were men who left behind small towns now populated mostly by women (Gratton 33).

By 1990, 61.5% of the Ecuadorian immigrants in the United States lived in New York City, concentrated in the borough of Queens. Much smaller communities settled in Florida, California and Illinois (Jokisch, screen 2). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1990 a total of 191,198 Ecuadorians lived in the United States (Garcés 99). The official numbers, however, do not take into account the tens of thousands of people who, back then, would pay about 5,000 U.S. dollars to the *coyote*, a smuggler who would arrange false documents, a flight to Central America and the crossing of the U.S. southern border. “It is not uncommon to hear educated Ecuadorians call New York City the ‘third Ecuadorian City,’” affirms Ann Miles in her book *From Cuenca to Queens*. She adds about New York: “in the early 1990s it was reported that Ecuadorians made up the largest group of undocumented immigrants in that city” (15).

Those who migrated early during this second wave could take advantage of the amnesty program for illegal immigrants applied in the United States in 1986.⁴ By the early 1990s, in Ecuador, the provinces of Azuay and Cañar were already heavily dependent on remittances coming from the United States, and the massive (and abandoned) houses built in hamlets and small towns became the trademark of a bonanza based on international migration.

Parallel and different than these waves of mostly *mestizo* migration are the processes undertaken by the Kichwa Otavalo, an indigenous group settled in the Andean mountains, in northern Ecuador. Commercial links developed through the production and commercialization of handicrafts may have provoked some indigenous pioneers to migrate to the United States and Europe during the 1950s and 1960s. Whereas the *mestizos* tended to settle permanently and survive in the host countries basically selling their labor in the areas of construction and the service industry, the Otavalo people applied a strategy of temporary migration -between three and ten months per year. Instead of looking for employment in the host countries, they look for customers for their merchandise (handicrafts) in the multiple cities of Europe, the United States and South America that they will visit on every trip (Kyle 202; Herrera et al. 18).

⁴ Issued during the Reagan era, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was meant to reduce illegal immigration to the United States. About 2.7 million people regularized their situation through an amnesty, but the law also criminalized the act of hiring illegal immigrants and ordered the intensification of border patrols (USCIS, “Historical”).

1.2. The Past Decade:

Political Instability, Economic Crisis, Dollarization and Diaspora

With the backdrop of several years of economic and political crisis –which reached its apex in early 2000, when the Ecuadorian currency (*sucre*) was devalued by 66% and the U.S. dollar was adopted as the new national currency-, international migration became the most transcendent social, economic and cultural phenomenon. According to the *Dirección Nacional de Migración*, between 1996 and July 2003, the number of Ecuadorians who left the country and did not return reached a total of 780,480 (Sánchez 50). This official number, however, does not reflect the thousands of people who have migrated crossing borders illegally. The most recent literature on the subject establishes that approximately one million Ecuadorians migrated between 2000 and 2005 (Acosta et al., “Las remesas” 228), and the most conservative calculations affirm that, currently, 1.5 million Ecuadorians are living abroad, which represents more than ten percent of Ecuador’s total population, calculated at about 13 million people (Dávila, interview in *Just a Click Away from Home*).

Scholars locate the beginning of this third wave of Ecuadorian migration in the mid 1990s. After a decade of military dictatorship, in 1979, Ecuador went back to a democracy that has proved weak, populist, and always willing to put aside the most basic needs of the population to serve better the interests of the hegemonic classes.⁵ In 1996, populist Abdalá Bucaram won the presidency. Six months of corruption scandals and

⁵ In 1981, democratically elected president Jaime Roldós Aguilera died in a plane crash never completely accepted as an accident. He was replaced by his vice president, Oswaldo Hurtado. Three other presidents of center-right and center-left tendencies managed to complete their four-year terms despite the appearance of subversive groups (violently exterminated by León Febres Cordero, 1984-88), the emergence and uprising of one of the strongest indigenous movements in Latin America (Rodrigo Borja, 1988-92) and a new border war with Peru (Sixto Durán Ballén, 1992-96).

popular demonstrations supported by the opposition lead to his overthrow in 1997 by Congress, which declared him “insane.” Since then, six presidents have governed the country and two of them were overthrown.⁶ The border war with Peru, in 1995, as well as the floods and destruction provoked by the phenomenon of El Niño in 1997-98 (two billion U.S. dollars in losses) and the simultaneous fall in the price of oil spurred on the crisis (Jokisch, screen 4).

Jamil Mahuad, the capital’s former mayor, won the presidency in 1998 with the economic support of financial institutions. When, in early 1999, many of these institutions announced bankruptcy, Mahuad opted for rescuing the banks to the detriment of the whole country’s economy. A void of 2.6 billion dollars was covered, consequently devaluing the national currency (*sucre*) and “freezing” bank accounts, in order to stop further insolvency of the banks. As would happen two years later in Argentina, Ecuadorian customers were prevented from withdrawing the money they had deposited in savings and checking accounts. In September 1999, Ecuador failed to service its external debt. With a 60% rate of inflation and the *sucre* devalued by 66% in a matter of months, Mahuad announced “dollarization” in early 2000, when the exchange value had gone from about 7,000 to 25,000 *suces* per dollar (Jokisch, screen 4).

On January 21st, 2000, Jamil Mahuad was forced to step down as president by an uprising led by indigenous organizations and members of the military. The very same

⁶ This number does not include Rosalía Arteaga, Bucaram’s vice president, who assumed the presidency for three days and was then, in a dubious political maneuver, replaced by the President of the Congress, Fabián Alarcón. It does not include, either, the *Junta de Salvación Nacional* that led to the overthrow of Jamil Mahuad in January 2000 and took power for 24 hours, until Mahuad’s vice president, Gustavo Noboa, assumed the presidency. Col. Lucio Gutiérrez; Carlos Vargas, president of the *Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE)*, and Carlos Solórzano, former president of the Supreme Court, made up the *junta*. Gutiérrez won the presidential elections in 2002 and was overthrown in 2005.

year, 107,000 Ecuadorians -almost six times the 18,000 people who had left the country in 1996- migrated to Europe and the United States (Gratton 38-39).

1.3. A Migratory Wave Unlike the Others

It is not only its massive numbers that sets the most recent wave of Ecuadorian migration apart from previous ones. At least three important shifts differentiate the current diaspora from the migratory processes registered in the 1960s and the 1980s: the crisis registered in Ecuador in the late 1990s brought a migratory stream originating mainly in the urban centers; a high percentage of the migrants are women; and the United States no longer is the main destination of Ecuadorian migrants, who now favor Spain.

As Gratton puts it, in 1999-2000, the loss of savings due to the financial institutions' bankruptcies and the acute inflation directly struck the urban middle class dependent on fixed wages,⁷ which "saw their future aspirations evaporate" (37). Many of these Ecuadorians began considering international migration as a chance to recuperate that future. Thus, whereas the first and especially the second wave of Ecuadorian migration were overwhelmingly composed of peasants from rural areas in southern Ecuador, between 1996 and 2001 "about 70% of emigrants came from urban areas," especially the two biggest cities in the country: Quito, the capital, and the port of Guayaquil. In addition, according to a survey done by the *Instituto Nacional de*

⁷ If, in September 1999, someone's monthly salary in *suces* was the equivalent of 500 U.S. dollars, by January 2000 that same salary in *suces* was worth 170 U.S. dollars and, on top of that, the dollarization produced rampant speculation. Thus, if the cost of a loaf of bread was 5000 *suces* (U.S. 20 cents) before the dollarization, once the economy was dollarized, that same loaf of bread would cost one U.S. dollar (25,000 *suces* or five times its original prize!!!).

Estadísticas y Censos (INEC) in 2000, 40% of these migrants belonged to homes where the heads of the family had high school or an even higher level of education (39-40).

Before 1995, only 30% of those Ecuadorians who opted for migration were women. In the case of southern provinces like Cañar and Azuay, the historic pattern of migration predominantly by men still applies, although many women began migrating toward the United States in the 1990s, pursuing their own individual projects or to be reunited with family. However, starting in the mid 1990s, most of the Ecuadorian migration from cities like Quito and Guayaquil is by women. In 1997, more than 58% of those who migrated to Spain and 68% of the total of Ecuadorians residing legally in that country were women. They tended to be 30 years old or older, generally traveled alone, and concentrated mainly in cities like Madrid and Barcelona, where they found a niche working in domestic service. The initial gap between men and women quickly began to shrink though. By 2003, 51% percent of the Ecuadorians living in Spain were women (Gratton, 45).

How did it happen? Why was it that the majority of the Ecuadorian diaspora during the last decade gave up the “American Dream” and pinned its hopes on Spain? The ever increasing risk, harder migratory policies, and the high cost of the trip to the United States made Spain and other European nations a safer and less expensive option.

During the first half of the 1990s, the crisis of the “boat people” –Haitian and Cuban refugees looking for asylum- generated a harsh reaction in the United States.⁸ In

⁸ Approved in 1996, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) significantly changed the immigration laws in the U.S. Among other new rules, it set a deadline of one year for filing political asylum applications. It also established that minor violations like shoplifting could be sufficient cause for deportation, even in the case of residents married to U.S. citizens. According to the Act, deportees can be held in prison for up to two years. Since the events of September 11, 2001, this detention time can be extended indefinitely (USCIS, “Historical”).

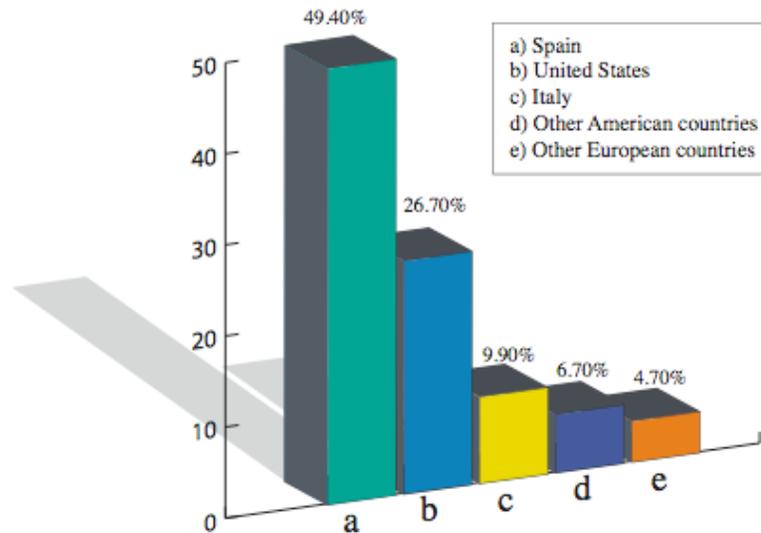
1994, operation Gatekeeper and similar initiatives meant a tighter control not only on the US-Mexico border, but also in Central American countries like Guatemala, transit territory for undocumented migrants coming from Ecuador (Jokisch, screen 4). In order to avoid the risks of crossing many borders, since the late 1990s Ecuadorians have chosen the “sea route.” They paid about 7,000 U.S. dollars then, and pay up to 15,000 U.S. dollars now to leave the coast of northern Ecuador in cargo ships that usually take them to Guatemala, from where they head north by car and on foot. According to Thompson and Ochoa’s “By a Back Door to the U.S.,” with luck, the whole journey takes about a month. The “sea route,” nevertheless, is not free of risk. In the year 2000, the U.S. Coast Guard intercepted 1,244 Ecuadorians (more than any other nationality) at sea: 70% of them were young men, predominantly from the provinces of Azuay, Cañar and Chimborazo. During the first six months of 2001, Mexico deported 788 undocumented Ecuadorian immigrants (Jokisch, screen 4). Deportation, however, is not the worst that can happen. In August 2005, more than a hundred undocumented Ecuadorians died while on a fishing ship that went down in the Pacific, along the Colombian coast.

On the other hand, until 2003 Ecuadorians did not need a visa to enter most of Europe as tourists. The cost of traveling there, including the *bolsa* (literally, the bag, or the money that travelers had to show when asked by immigration officers about the resources they were planning to spend in Spain as “tourists,”) oscillated between 3,500 and 4,000 U.S. dollars. Thus, the third wave of migration headed mainly to Spain and, in a minor proportion, to Italy. According to Gratton, the number of departures to Spain skyrocketed from less than 5,000 per year in the early 1990s to 150,000 per year after 2000. If, in 1995, 65% of the Ecuadorians leaving the country headed to the United

States, five years later things looked very different: between 1995 and 2000, 53% of the Ecuadorian diaspora went to Spain, while only 30% went to the U.S. (43).

(See graphic 1)

Graphic 1
Permanent Immigrants from Ecuador by Settlement Country
1996 – 2001



From: Gratton, Brian. "Ecuador en la historia de la migración internacional: ¿Modelo o aberración?" Graphic 10. *La migración ecuatoriana: transnacionalismo, redes e identidades*. Quito: FLACSO-Plan Migración, Comunicación y Desarrollo, 2005. 31-55.

Elaboration: Oxigenio (Quito, ECUADOR).

Although this sudden switch to Spain has been mostly attributed to the higher risk and cost of migration to the United States, it is also important to mention that the absence of a linguistic barrier and the devaluation of the U.S. dollar in relation to the euro –which meant an advantageous exchange rate for the families receiving remittances in dollarized Ecuador- made Spain an even more attractive destination. In addition, by 1991, the Ecuadorian population in Spain was already larger than the immigrant colonies from other South American countries. This may have contributed to the establishment of migratory networks that started being fully used in the late 1990s (Herrera et al. 19).

As a reaction to the massive arrival of Ecuadorian “tourists” who ended up staying, in 2003 the European Union (EU) imposed a visa for travelers coming from Ecuador. However, since the late 1990s, Spain began three processes of regularization for undocumented immigrants, and Ecuadorians have been able to participate through bilateral agreements. If by 1999 only about 13,000 Ecuadorians had their permanent residence in Spain, by 2001 the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (INE) registered 140,631 residents. from Ecuador. “In 2003 the number practically tripled to 387,565, which represents 15% of the foreign residents in Spain or the second biggest community of immigrants” after those immigrants of Moroccan origin (Gratton 44).

When the job market in Spain became too crowded, Ecuadorians began settling in Italy, where they found a higher linguistic and cultural affinity than in other countries of northern and central Europe (Avilés 131). There also may have been incipient migratory networks that spread the word of newly created work possibilities and higher salaries than in Spain. In 2002, the Ecuadorian community benefited from a regularization process, and it has been estimated that approximately 100,000 Ecuadorians currently live in Italy, with 50% of them concentrated in the cities of Milan and Turin (133).

Despite the rapid increase of the Ecuadorian presence in Europe, the flow of migrants towards the United States has not stopped. The U.S. is still home to the largest Ecuadorian community abroad. According to the press in Ecuador, between 750,000 and one million Ecuadorians currently live in the United States. These numbers are at least twice the data obtained by the U.S. Census Bureau, which in 2000 determined that 396,400 people of Ecuadorian descent lived in the U.S. territory. Most of them –177,957 people- are in New York City, concentrated principally in the borough of Queens.

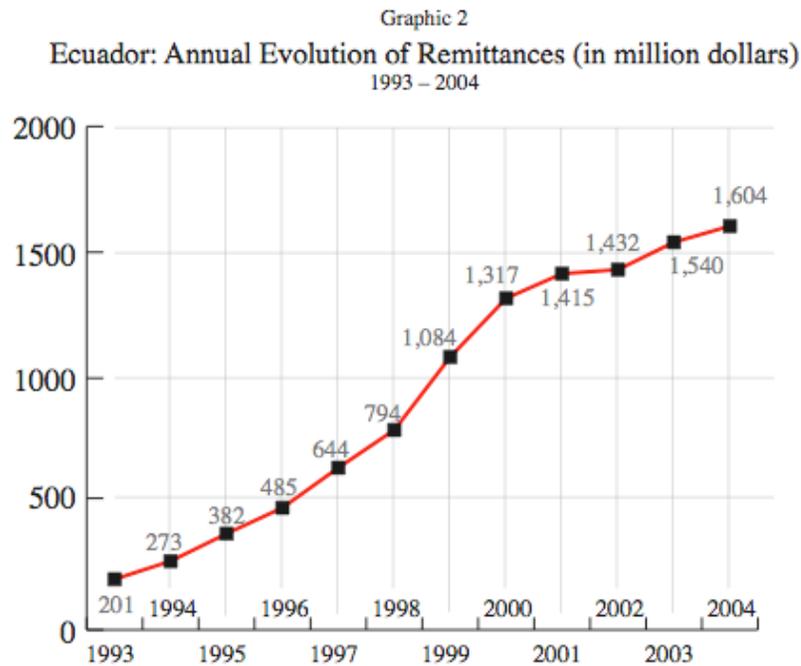
Between 1990 and 2000, the Ecuadorian population in the United States grew 53.7%, according to the Census Bureau. The percentage could be even greater if one takes into account that the majority of Ecuadorian immigrants get to the United States illegally and, in consequence, tend to avoid being counted in the census.

1.4. A Country Sustained by Remittances

As a consequence of the migratory stream at the turn of the century, Ecuador - whose economy has been historically centered on the exports of primary goods like coffee, cacao, bananas and, lately, petroleum- is now a country that exports its work force and has become heavily dependent on the income produced abroad by its diaspora. Thus, electronic remittances to Ecuador increased from about 200 million U.S. dollars in 1994 to 1.32 billion in 2000, becoming since then the second largest source of income for the country after oil exports (Acosta et al., “Las remesas” 230).

According to the *Banco Central del Ecuador*, in 2004 the country received 1.6 billion U.S. dollars through remittances, whereas oil exports produced about 4.5 billion U.S. dollars. The difference between the two incomes in this particular year may seem enormous but, put in context, it actually reflects one of the main advantages of remittances: their steady growth and reliability, as opposed to the unstable behavior of oil export prices, governed by the capricious global market. In 1998, for instance, due to the falling prices of petroleum, oil exports and remittances provided the country with almost exactly the same income: about one billion U.S. dollars each. Whereas since 2001 the Ecuadorian diaspora has steadily sent to the country approximately 1.5 billion U.S. dollars per year, oil exports have followed an erratic pattern that varies from about 2.5

billion U.S. dollars in the year 2000 to 2 billion in 2001 as well as the already mentioned 4.8 billion in 2004, a direct consequence of the war in Iraq and the rise in the prices of petroleum provoked by the conflict (232). (See graphic 2)



From: Acosta, Alberto, Susana López and David Villamar. "Las remesas y su aporte para la economía ecuatoriana." Graphic 1. *La migración ecuatoriana: transnacionalismo, redes e identidades*. Quito: FLACSO-Plan Migración, Comunicación y Desarrollo, 2005. 227-252.

Elaboration: Oxigenio (Quito, ECUADOR).

Today, approximately one million of the 13 million residents living in Ecuador receive remittances. They get an average of 175 U.S. dollars per wire transfer and about eight deliveries per year (Sánchez 54). Apart from being more reliable than oil exports, remittances do not pass through State institutions and go “directly into people’s pockets” (Dávila, interview in *Just a Click Away from Home*). In the midst of the economic collapse of 1999-2000 and the inflation generated by the devaluation of the *sucre*, as well as the adoption of the U.S. dollar as the national currency (see note 9), remittances became the saving grace that spared the country a complete collapse. On the one hand, the State was able to mask the lack of social investment that, always insufficient, fell to a

lamentable proportion of total spending during and immediately after the crisis.⁹ On the other hand, those lucky enough to have relatives settled abroad managed to cover the loss of savings, the sudden reduction of their salaries, the unemployment and the increase in the cost of living with remittances.

According to research conducted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Ecuadorians spend 61% of the money received via remittances in basic goods and services (food, clothing, health care, etc.), while 22% is saved or invested in business, acquisition of property, and education. The remaining 17% is used to service debts and for the acquisition of luxury goods (Acosta et al., “Oportunidades” 2004). (See graphic 3)

For many, then, remittances have provided the option to overcome unemployment or low salaries through small scale private initiatives: Internet based business ventures are a quintessential example of these initiatives. The acquisition of personal computers and related technology is still a luxury that only a few Ecuadorians can afford. The proliferation of cyber-café and *telecentros* throughout the national territory and in those places where the Ecuadorian diaspora has settled clearly illustrates how, in the case of Ecuador –as in those of many other Third World countries forced to export their human capital- mass migration and the development of new technologies of information and communication intertwine in the emergence of a transnational strategy of survival.

Among the many negative consequences that the migratory phenomenon provoked in Ecuador, the multiplication of families torn up by migration is one of the

⁹ A quick look at State social spending versus income received through remittances during the worst years of the crisis allows us to see clearly how the money sent by migrants covered the gap. In 1999, the Ecuadorian government spent 853 million U.S. dollars in social initiatives (health, education, development projects, etc.), while the country received 1.1 billion U.S. dollars via remittances. In 2000, social investment fell to 717 million, while remittances rose to 1.3 billion. In 2001 social spending continued to fall to 685 million and remittances reached 1.4 billion U.S. dollars (Acosta et al., “Oportunidades” 263).

most serious. Single-parent households and children living with their grandparents are frequently analyzed as a phenomenon intricately related to the emergence of violent teen gangs, for instance. Non-profit initiatives like the *Programa Migración, Comunicación y Desarrollo*¹⁰ try to confront the problem supporting the creation of *telecentros* to serve groups with high rates of migration and seriously deprived of access to new technologies (see stories of *Ruminet* in Quito and the *telecentro* in Pucará, portrayed in *Just a Click Away from Home*). However, in comparison to *telecentros*, more entrepreneurs have opened cyber-cafés all over the country. Thus, until 2004, there were 1,180 cyber-cafés registered in Ecuador: 84.57 % of them appeared between 2000 and 2004, whereas only 15.43% had been registered before 2000 (Ramírez and Ramírez 95-96). Called *locutorios* in Spain and *phonecenters* in Italy, these businesses are frequently owned by migrants (see story about *Ecuadorian Phonecenter* in Milan, portrayed in the documentary) or their relatives and neighbors.

Ecuadorian researchers studying migration patterns warn of the possibility of a new economic collapse. They fear that the stream of remittances will soon begin to diminish due to processes of family reunification and permanent settlement in the host countries. Currently, financial institutions widely benefit from remittances with expensive charges for money transfer services: according to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), remittance fees average about 8% of the amount transferred

¹⁰ The Migration, Communication and Development Project partners non-profit organizations from Ecuador and Spain in a joint effort to coordinate initiatives related to the phenomenon of migration. Their main goal is to transform Ecuadorian migration into a generator of cultural exchange and co-development between Ecuador and Spain. The project started in 2001. In *Just a Click Away from Home*, three leaders involved in the Project are interviewed: Alberto Acosta, Luis Dávila and Father Fernando Vega (head of the *Pastoral Social de Cuenca*).

(Ransom, screen 1).¹¹ However, the local industries do not recover from the crisis because a substantial portion of the remittances is sent abroad again through a mass consumption of imported goods. Meanwhile, those Ecuadorian communities that keep sending their youngest and, lately, quite qualified people to work as cheap laborers in the First World, do not experience major signs of development (Acosta et al., “Las remesas” 250; Sánchez 57). Paradoxically, those very same communities (the southern provinces of Azuay and Cañar in particular), where labor work has become scarce and expensive, experience today the growing arrival of Colombian refugees and Peruvian temporary laborers. They come attracted to the higher wages and the payment in dollars. They call Ecuador “the little U.S.”

1.5. Discussion Questions

- Where is the Panama hat from? Why did people related to the production and commerce of this hat end up migrating to New York? What is a migratory network? Adrián, William and a third brother migrated to the United States in the year 2000. Do you see any connection between the “Panama hat trail” and their decision to head to the U.S. and not to Spain, like many other people did at the time?
- Adrián and William, currently living in New York City, and Luis, settled in Madrid, left Ecuador in the year 2000. What migratory wave do they belong to? Do they fit the scholars’ profile of the typical Ecuadorian migrant during that wave?

¹¹ According to Acosta et. al., “in the case of the remittances sent from Spain, fees fluctuate between 3.7% and 14.4% of the total amount, while in the case of those sent from the United States it has been estimated that the transfer services charge between 10 and 30%” (“Las remesas” 250).

- When asked about his reasons for migrating to Spain, Luis mentions the “dollarization.” What does that mean? Have you heard of similar processes in Latin America or other regions of the world? How are political/economic/social crises connected to migratory waves? Think of the Ecuadorian case and any other that you know: how are these internal crises and their consequent migratory waves linked to the global market and the power relationship between the First World and the Third World?
- How has migration transformed the political, economic and social landscape in Ecuador? Have women taken up new roles? Do rural communities like Pucará see benefits of sending their youngest people to work in the U.S. or Europe? How have elite sectors of the society, like the press or the banks, reacted to the recent migratory wave? Illustrate your thoughts with examples from the video.
- One of *Just a Click Away from Home*’s premises is the existence of an intricate relationship between the recent migratory process and the quick spread of access to new technologies in Ecuador. Do you agree with this premise? How would you describe this connection between migration and new technologies? Can you quote some examples from the video?

1.6. Suggested Readings

Herrera, Gioconda, María Cristina Carrillo and Alicia Torres, eds. *La migración ecuatoriana: transnacionalismo, redes e identidades*. Quito: FLACSO-Plan Migración, Comunicación y Desarrollo, 2005.

Hidalgo, Francisco, ed. *Migraciones: un juego con cartas marcadas*. Quito: Abya-Yala, 2004.

Kyle, David. *The Transnational Peasant: Migration Networks and Ethnicity in Andean Ecuador*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Miles, Ann. *From Cuenca to Queens. An Anthropological Story of Transnational Migration*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004.

Ponce Leiva, Javier, ed. *Emigración y política exterior en Ecuador*. Quito: Abya-Yala, 2005.

Unit 2:

Transnationalism and the Role of New Technologies

Throughout the 1990s, the concept of transnationalism was developed within the fields of social sciences and cultural studies as a theoretical tool that would help to understand the presumably new nature that international migration has acquired in this late stage of capitalism, due to the increasing mobility of people and the rapid development of information technologies. The term transnationalism, though, needs to be situated in the larger context of globalization.

2.1. Globalization, Ethnoscapes, Transnationalism

As Stuart Hall affirms, globalization is an old process whose origins could be traced at least back to the formation of the modern nation-states and the colonial empires. However, what is currently named as globalization refers generally to some of the new “forms, rhythms and impetuses” of the globalizing process (20). Global commodities and financial markets, new digital technologies “which have linked production and markets in a new surge of international global capital,” and a new multinational production which “links backward sections of the third world to so-called advanced sections of the first world” constitute, according to Hall, an old way to think about globalization which has been broken up by the “enormous, continuing migrations of labor in the post-war world.”

There is a tremendous paradox here which I cannot help relishing myself; that in the very moment when finally Britain convinced itself it had to decolonize, it had to get rid of them, we all came back home. As they hauled down the flag, we got on the banana boat and sailed right into London (24).

The paradox not only applies to England, but to other colonialist metropolises such as Madrid and Paris, as well as to the neocolonialism of the United States, whose first grand demonstration of power was the victory in the American-Spanish-Cuban-Philippino war (1898), that snatched Cuba, Puerto Rico and Philippines from Spanish rule and defined Latin America as the “backyard” of the United States (Duany 57, Flores 188-189, Laó-Montes 6). In the same way that Hall left Jamaica to settle in Britain, millions of Africans, Indians, Asians, Latin Americans and Caribbean people continue to move towards the First World today, in a continued flux that, according to Arjun Appadurai, marks another paradox within the globalization process:

...The central paradox of ethnic politics in today’s world is that primordia (whether of language or skin color or neighborhood or kinship) have become globalized. That is, sentiments, whose greatest force is in their ability to ignite intimacy into a political state and turn locality into a staging ground for identity, have become spread over vast and irregular spaces as groups move yet stay linked to one another through sophisticated media capabilities... Because of the disjunctive and unstable interplay of commerce, media, national policies, and consumer fantasies, ethnicity, once a genie contained in the bottle of some sort of locality (however large), has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders (41).

Ethnoscapes is how Appadurai labels this paradox, where the landscapes of relatively stable communities and networks of kinship, friendship or work are “everywhere shot through with the woof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move” (33-34).

It is within these *ethnoscapes*, understood as a core element of the current process of globalization, that we can locate the “emergent social field” of transnationalism which, according to Alejandro Portes, Luis Eduardo Guarnizo and Patricia Landolt, “is composed of a growing number of persons who live dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders” (217).

2.2. Would Transnationalism Be Possible Without New Technologies?

In their essay “The Study of Transnationalism: Pitfalls and Promise of an Emergent Research Field,” Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt admit that multiple inconsistencies have surrounded the definition of the field of transnationalism, such as the lack of agreement between those studies that see it as a novelty and those that consider it “as old as labor immigration itself” (218). However, they construct a working definition that delimits the concept of transnationalism to “occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation” (219). Probably the most important aspect of their definition is the role played by new technologies in the emergence of the phenomenon:

Transnational enterprises did not proliferate among earlier immigrants because the technological conditions of the time did not make communications across national borders rapid or easy. (...) The ready availability of air transport, long-distance telephone, facsimile communication, and electronic mail provides the technological basis for the emergence of transnationalism on a mass scale (223).

If one is to accept this definition, the phenomenon of transnationalism must have developed at the same pace as communication and information technologies, which ushered in a period of rapid evolution and massive diffusion during the last 50 years. These technological innovations were first exploited by governments and corporations, which were thus enabled to accelerate the process of what these scholars call *transnationalism from above*, as opposed to the *transnationalism from below* or *grass roots transnationalism*, undertaken by “ordinary people who have availed themselves of the same facilities to implement their own brand of long-distance enterprises” (223). In addition, this approach to transnationalism places a great amount of faith in the quick dissemination of the new technologies among ordinary people, and seems to trust blindly the “good uses” (democratic, counterhegemonic) that the concept of *transnationalism from below* implies.

However, Sarah Mahler underscores “the difficulty and artificiality of distinguishing between transnationalisms for they, indeed, are interrelated,” and points to the fact that “actors may participate simultaneously in transnational activities that both challenge *and* contribute to the hegemonic process” (72). As an example, Mahler presents the scenario of the Central American peasant who, after fleeing civil war in his country and joining an advocacy group in the United States to fight for his rights as a migrant laborer, ends up reproducing exploitation patterns: when he saves enough money to buy land in his country, he hires day workers and pays them minimum wages to work the land (65).

Recent studies have demonstrated that, even in a country like the United States, where the access to new technologies is broader and cheaper than in other regions of the

world, the use of computers and the Internet has not entered into the daily life of most of the Latino population,¹² composed of 35.3 million people, or 12.5 percent of the nation's population, according to the 2000 Census (Rivas-Rodríguez, 10). The lower income and level of education that generally characterizes immigrants of first and even later generations determines -as in the case of Latinos in the U.S.- a restricted access to those technologies that, supposedly, would enable them to undertake processes of *transnationalism from below*.

Moreover, scholars like David Kyle find that definitions of transnationalism such as Portes' overestimate the weight of technology in the development of transnational phenomena. In his book *Transnational Peasants: Migrations, Networks, and Ethnicity in Andean Ecuador*, Kyle affirms that the study of the Kichwa Otavalo merchant migrants proves that transnationalism can happen even in the absence of technological resources.¹³ He minimizes the role of technology in favor of ethnic trading patterns that would have enabled the Kichwa Otavalo indigenous to experience transnational lives long before the term transnationalism was even coined (202).

¹² Maggie Rivas-Rodríguez compares the cases of Latino, Black and White populations in the United States: "According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, in 2001, 50 percent of U.S. Hispanics 18 and older have used computers, compared to 58 percent of White adults and 43 percent of Black Americans. However, other studies contend that the digital gap for Hispanics has actually increased; only 40 percent of Latinos had computers in their home in 2001, compared to the national average of 54 percent; according to the Latino Issues Forum, a policy and advocacy think tank, Latino households with Internet access represented 32 percent, compared to the national average or 51 percent" (xvi).

¹³ The Kichwa Otavalo indigenous specialize in the commerce of handicrafts. Located at approximately 50 miles from Quito, the capital of Ecuador, Otavalo city is the heart of their commercial activity within the country. "Without the Otavalan village of Peguche," Kyle affirms, "we would not know one of the most amazing findings of this study: in one rural community merchant migrants were traveling to at least twenty-three different countries and generally returning in the same year. In observing a village with only one telephone -but with a centuries-old history of transnational, cross-cultural relations- we need to reevaluate our globalization narratives that emphasize contemporary communication and transportation technologies as the driving force to increased transnational flows of all sorts, including people" (202).

Kyle's concern with the presence of a technological determinism in transnational studies coincides with the position of Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton-Blanc who, in their essay "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," sustain that "the tendency of today's transmigrants to maintain, build, and reinforce multiple linkages with their countries of origin seems to be facilitated rather than produced by the possibility of technologically abridging time and space." For them, "immigrant transnationalism is best understood as a response to the fact that in a global economy contemporary migrants have found full incorporation in the countries within which the resettlement is either not possible or not desirable" (52).

The case for a central role of new technologies in the emergence of transnationalism turns even more complicated when seen from the standpoint of developing countries like Ecuador. For instance, Castello and Ramírez affirm that, according to official statistics, just 3 to 5% of the Ecuadorian population (about 13 million people in total) has access to Internet technology (8). Nevertheless, in *Just a Click Away from Home*, Gloria's story -and the *telecentro* founded by her Association- demonstrates that the phenomenon of Ecuadorian migration might be forcing everyday people to become computer literate, and to avail themselves of new technologies through grassroots organization.

2.3. Discussion Questions

- While some scholars see transnationalism as a novelty that would not be possible without the new technologies of information and communication, others believe that transnationalism is "as old as labor immigration itself," and reject giving

technology such a central role. After viewing *Just a Click Away from Home*, what is your position on this debate? Are new technologies generating transnational phenomena or are they just facilitating them?

- In the sequence “A Digitalized Society?” Father Fernando Vega talks about a “globalization of solidarity.” What does he mean by that? Do you think that giving people more access to new technologies is the right way to achieve this kind of globalization? Why?
- In the sequence “A Transnational Family,” Gloria says that a *telecentro* (like the one that her Association runs) is different than a *cyber-café*. What is the difference? Do you agree with her idea that making migrants and their relatives feel more comfortable using the Internet and email could save families torn apart by migration?
- Carla, *El Comercio*'s correspondent in Milan, affirms that most Ecuadorian immigrants settled in Italy do not own computers. Given this limitation, what is the role performed by *phonecenters* in Italy or *locutorios* in Spain? Have you seen many of those in the United States? Why does the *telecentro* installed in Pucará not seem as popular as the recently arrived cell phones?
- In an interview, *El Comercio*'s editor-in-chief describes today's Ecuadorian migrants as “electronic migrants.” What does he mean by that? Do you agree with his idea that, one day, this diaspora may hold the country accountable for what forced them to leave? Do the protagonists of the video seem interested in returning to Ecuador or in participating in national politics?

2.4. Suggested Readings

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Unit 3:

Is Nostalgia Becoming Digital?

Up until twenty years ago, to leave and settle abroad meant quite a definitive break up with home and the life left behind. Exiles, emigrants and refugees would nurture their nostalgia with letters filled up with old news, with expensive and telegraphic phone calls, and with glimpses of TV images from home. Today, however, it is quite inexpensive for an immigrant peasant, displaced in any big city of the First World, to call his/her village lost in the mountains of a given Third World country, where probably there are few landlines but many more cell phones.

Depending on their level of computer literacy, displaced people may maintain an almost real-time contact with relatives and friends in their home countries by email, instant messaging and videoconferences, or stay up-to-date with the local news thanks to the web sites that newspapers, TV, and radio stations from home provide on the World Wide Web.

How has nostalgia been transformed in this posthuman age, when the body of an individual is displaced thousands of miles away from home, but she or he can “virtually” be there, ordering pizza for friends or buying a home appliance for mom? As the advertisements posted in immigrant-oriented web sites say, mom and friends are “just a click away.” How have new technologies such as Internet, satellite communications, email, videoconferences, and cell phones changed the experience of being away from home? Is the expansion of new technologies obsessed with shrinking space and time changing the way that we experience nostalgia? Perhaps nostalgia is becoming digital.

3.1. Nostalgia: From Modernity to Postmodernity

Let's first establish what we will understand by the term nostalgia throughout this unit. "Nostalgia (from *nostos*-return home, and *algia*-longing) is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy", affirms Svetlana Boym in her book *The Future of Nostalgia* (xiii). According to James Phillips, "nostalgia is more subjective, less literal than homesickness" and it gives to terms such as exile and return a metaphoric meaning. Thus, in terms of nostalgia, home means a place as much as a time left behind. However, as Phillips puts it, the emphasis in modern nostalgia may have switched from space to time: "Odysseus longs for home; Proust is in search of lost time. Further, since space is retraversable but time is not, the return is possible for the homesick exile in a way that is not for the nostalgic" (65).

If at the beginning of the modern era philosophers like Kant played with the idea of time as a subjective experience, the teleology of progress imposed an objective time, measurable to the detail (railroad timetables were invented then) (Boym 10). Once time had been "objectivized," efficiency in its use became a matter of speed. The postmodern quest for efficiency, however, goes beyond speed and acceleration: the technological race of today will not accept less than "instantaneity" (Bell 86).

Transposed to the realm of daily life, this quest for instantaneity has not meant that more time is available, but rather the opposite: a continuous shrinking of time. The counting of keystrokes per minute became a popular measure of efficiency in the golden years of typewriters, and the practice continues today, only now computers do the counting and are entrusted to measure how efficient their users are. Thus every minute

counts in this postmodern age, when tasks can be finished much more quickly but, at the same time, one is expected to complete many more tasks than before. It is because we live under this “perpetual time pressure” that, as Boym affirms, “contemporary nostalgia is not so much about the past as about the vanishing present” (351).

If the present vanishes in the expectations of the future, without giving us the chance to digest it, what we are missing is the experience of continuity, the cement that holds together the isolated events transforming them in episodes in the narratives of memory or history. Thus nostalgia in our time is also a longing for that continuity of events that now, thanks to the ever-improving speed of technology, is becoming simultaneity. Lots of data, lots of tasks, lots of events happen at the same time, while we struggle against time to establish connections and to make some sense of them.

3.2. Analog Human Beings vs. Digital Technologies

In the XIX century people had to adjust to the pace of the analog machines and learned how to deal with the timetables in train stations. Today, we struggle to keep up with the breathtaking rhythm of digital machines that most of us do not even understand. According to Charles Petzold, “people and computers are very different animals, and unfortunately it’s easier to persuade people to make adjustments to accommodate the peculiarities of computers than the other way around” (365). Steam powered trains or ships were analog machines, whose operation simulated processes that people had seen before in nature and in the functioning of their own bodies. Although in a fairly general way, this “analogy” helps us understand how these and other analog machines work.

Moreover, their activity crosses time and space in a visible way that allows us grasp the link between a movement and its effect, the process, the continuity.

On the other hand, just a few of the initiated understand what is going on inside those magical boxes called computers, which are apparently able to transform any kind of information to a binary code of zeros and ones (Laue, screen 13). As Petzold says, computers are quite different animals than us: even when the box is open, we cannot see the continuity of movements crossing space and time to produce an effect. Digital machines do not operate physically like something we could recognize in nature and, above all, they do not “think” of time or space the way human beings do:

The machine seemed to understand time and space, but it didn't, not as we do. We are analog, fluid, swimming in a flowing sea of events, where one moment contains the next, *is* the next, since the notion of “moment” itself is the illusion. The machine –it- is digital, and digital is the decision to forget the idea of the infinitely moving wave, and just take snapshots, convincing yourself that if you take enough pictures, it won't matter that you've left out the flowing, continuous aspect of things. You take the mimic for the thing mimicked and say, Good enough. But now I knew that between one pixel and the next –no matter how densely together you packed them- the world still existed, down to the finest grain of the stuff of the universe (347-348).

This passage comes from Ellen Ullman's novel *The Bug*, whose main subject is precisely the struggle to reconcile analog human beings with digital machines. The “flowing sea of events” is what we, analog creatures, have come to conceive of as time. Thus time for us is about the connection of one instant with the previous and the next

one, about that continuity between them that Bergson calls duration: "...a memory that prolongs the before into the after, keeping them from being mere snapshots and appearing and disappearing in a present ceaselessly reborn" (30). Digital machines, on the other hand, inhabit that present ceaselessly reborn. There, digital objects are created anew every time we open their files.

3.3. Digital Nostalgia

To propose that nostalgia might be becoming digital, then, is to propose an oxymoron. Whereas digital implies a permanent present inhabited by all the snapshots and all their possible arrangements at the same time, nostalgia is about understanding time as a fluid stream that turns into irrecoverable past all that it touches. This oxymoron, however, may be useful to explain how displacement and uprooting feel in this postmodern age.

Digital nostalgia is the quest for continuity of space and time through the simultaneity offered by digital media. The almost real time contact that new technologies allow between today's migrants and the home left behind is narrowing the space of longing for an idealized home. After all, displaced people's lives have become a daily negotiation between the challenges presented by the reality they physically inhabit and those other commitments based in their home countries, where their families, and ultimately the whole country, depend significantly on their decisions... and their remittances (see last interview with Gloria Orellana in *Just a Click Away from Home*).

It is happening now: daily or even more frequent Internet phone calls that happen to be cheaper than local calls. Permanent exchange of text and digital photos or videos

that cross continents and oceans in a matter of seconds thanks to email. Web pages that allow you to follow the performance of your preferred soccer team at home, or to check from a *phonecenter* in Italy how your son is doing at school, in Ecuador. Digital nostalgics tend to accumulate snapshots of places and times left behind, and cherish the illusion that, somehow, they continue to be there.

3.4. Discussion Questions

- “Here and there, together, looking and talking. We were there together,” says Vaneza, struggling to find the word that would best explain how she felt during the first videoconference with her in-laws. That word is simultaneity. In your opinion, why does this impression of simultaneity touch her so much?
- The fact that a videoconference allows people geographically separated to see each other seems to be a big deal for the family that is shown using this technology. What scenes from the video justify this statement? Why do you think that this visual element is so important for Arturo, Mercedes and their children living in NYC? How do they reflect on this?
- From the stories told in *Just a Click Away from Home*, would you say that women and men use new technologies differently when it comes to dealing with separation and nostalgia? What is used for practical/business purposes? What do they find more suitable for expressing inner feelings? Use examples from the video to make your case.

- Did you get the impression that Ecuadorian migrants are living in more than one space at the same time? If so, what gave you that impression? Gloria Orellana, the owner of *Ecuadorian Phonecenter* in Milan, says that her customers are not always that happy about being so connected to their families and to what happens in Ecuador. Are new technologies, then, making it easier for people to cope with uprooting and nostalgia? Or are they, somewhat, complicating it?
- Age and education level may determine in many ways how migrants and those who they left behind relate to the use of new technologies of information and communication. Think of the final sequence of the documentary. Arturo and Mercedes don't use email and the videoconference was something extraordinary. Regularly, they communicate with their children through the phone and by sending them home-cooked Ecuadorian delicacies. How are old customs and new technologies interacting in this transnational event? In terms of nostalgia, how is the food sent from home different than what can be easily found in ethnic shops and restaurants in New York City? Have you heard of similar practices performed by immigrants from other nationalities?

3.5. Suggested Readings

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Appendix 1: Synopsis and Treatment

Documentary Title: Just a Click Away from Home

Runtime: 52 min. 10 sec.

Logline:

Through new technologies, Ecuadorian immigrants displaced in New York, Madrid and Milan cope with nostalgia and find themselves “just a click away from home.”

Synopsis:

Focusing on three different stories of migration from Ecuador to the United States, Spain and Italy (the three main destinations of Ecuadorian immigrants), this documentary shows how new technologies such as the Internet, satellite communications, email, videoconferences, and cell phones have changed the experience of being away from home. The project explores how nostalgia itself is transformed by technologies that sell the experience of being “just a click away from home” to displaced peoples, while encouraging the appearance of transnational phenomena.

The documentary starts out with Mercedes and Arturo in Cuenca (Ecuador). They are experiencing the first videoconference of their lives. It is Father’s Day and their five children living in New York have decided to surprise them with a virtual encounter after 11 years of separation. Since they are undocumented immigrants, Mercedes and Arturo’s children cannot leave the US to visit their relatives. Thus, video conferencing technology becomes a replacement for face-to-face contact precluded by illegal migration.

The second narration focuses on Gloria, whose husband, Luis, migrated to Madrid five years ago. Gloria -who remained in Ecuador- and thirty other people founded the *Association of Migrants’ Relatives Rumiñahui*. When they realized that access to new technologies could strengthen the communication with their relatives abroad, and thus save families torn apart by migration, they created *Ruminet*, a *telecentro* located in downtown Quito, where members and non-members obtain affordable access to the Internet, as well as free instruction on basic computer operation.

Finally, the documentary narrates the story of Carla, an Ecuadorian correspondent based in Milan who writes for *El Comercio*, the second largest national newspaper in Ecuador. While Carla uses digital photos, email, and the Internet to report regularly on the successes and misfortunes of her compatriots settled in Italy, some immigrants choose to tell their stories by themselves: they take advantage of the same technologies to send images and texts to “Ecuadorians in the World,” a recently created section of *elcomercio.com*.

Treatment:

Sequence I – Introduction

Scene 1

The scene opens with a panoramic view of Cuenca, Ecuador. From an establishing shot of Banco del Austro’s videoconferencing center, we go to shots of several members of the Chalco family entering a videoconference room. From the giant screen located in front of them, five blurry images wave their hands and say: “hi mommy, happy Father’s Day, daddy!” The mother, Mercedes Chalco, starts to cry, while the father, Arturo Chalco, looks at the screen speechless.

Fade to black. The documentary’s title appears.

Sequence II - From Cuenca to Queens

Scene 2

Fade up to interview with Arturo and Mercedes, who explain that five of their eight children migrated to the United States; two of them 11 years ago and the other three five years ago. The interview is juxtaposed with shots from the videoconference. Arturo can’t hold the emotion and, crying, says: “I wish I could hug you kids!!” While we see several members of the family parading in front of the screen to show how they look now, Arturo and Mercedes add that, being undocumented immigrants, their children cannot leave the US. The parents have tried unsuccessfully to get visas and visit them. This is the first time Arturo and Mercedes have “seen” their children since they left Cuenca and settled in Queens, NY.

Scene 3

Over the Ecuadorian song “Romance de mi destino,”¹⁴ (*son* version) a traveling shot of the borough of Queens seen from the train introduces us to an interview with Adrián Chalco, who explains that he and his brothers prepared the videoconference as a surprise for Father’s Day. We go back to that day and, on the screen, Vaneza (Adrián’s wife) stands up and introduces herself: “A pleasure to meet you!” Back in Queens, Vaneza explains in an interview that she married Adrián in NY almost a year ago, and adds that she had not met her parents-in-law until the videoconference. “Given our circumstances, it’s the same as having them here,” Vaneza concludes.

Sequence III – Covering the Diaspora

Scene 4

We see panoramic views of Quito, the Ecuadorian capital. From an establishing shot of *El Comercio*’s building, we go to a tracking shot of its bustling newsroom, full of reporters and computers. In an interview, Hernán Ramos, editor-in-chief of this national

¹⁴ Old song remade by the Ecuadorian band *Cacería de Lagartos*. Originally a *pasillo* (sad and slow Ecuadorian musical genre), this song talks about nostalgia and having to leave all that one loves. Throughout the documentary, I will be using *Cacería de Lagartos*’ *son* and punk versions of this *pasillo*.

newspaper, explains that between 800,000 and one million Ecuadorians have left the country during the last decade. In order to respond to this massive migration, *El Comercio* created five correspondent positions abroad, right in the main centers of Ecuadorian migration: The United States, Spain, Italy, England and Argentina.

Scene 5

Over “Romance de mi destino” (punk version), we see panoramic views of Milan, and then Carla Maldonado, *El Comercio*’s correspondent in Italy, walking on the street, entering an office and greeting the two Ecuadorian engineers that she is about to interview. She explains in an interview that her job there would not even exist if it were not for the convergence of the recent Ecuadorian migration to Italy and the quick development of digital technologies. As she speaks, we see Carla interviewing the two engineers, taking photos of them with a digital camera, and then opening her Gmail account on a computer. She selects a photo and sends it through email. The scene closes with a tilt-down of her article, published in the newspaper.

Scene 6

“Now, what I don’t see is immigrants using the Internet. They always go to the *phonecenters*, but the Internet is not yet used as much as the phone,” Carla affirms. We see several shots of the busy *Ecuadorian Phonecenter*. “In the *phonecenters*, various services are available. They sell plane tickets, Ecuadorian products, and clothing. You can find everything there,” says Carla in a voice over, while the camera shows handicrafts displayed for sale in a corner of *Ecuadorian Phonecenter*. “They become orientation centers,” adds Carla, while a tracking shot takes us from the *phonecenter*’s main area to a crowded back room. There is a meeting. Among the people gathered is Gloria Orellana, the owner of *Ecuadorian Phonecenter*. In an interview, Gloria explains that they have just created the Federation of Ecuadorian Immigrants, Milan branch.

Sequence IV – A Transnational Family

Scene 7

Over the song “Carpuela,”¹⁵ panoramic views of Quito lead us to a radio station where Gloria Jiménez, president of the *Association of Migrants’ Relatives Rumiñahui*, meets Sandy Chávez, producer of the radio show *Callos y Guatitas*. The camera follows them to the studio, where they record an interview. Talking on the studio microphone, Gloria introduces herself and explains that, after her husband migrated to Spain, in 2000, she met other people in the same situation and they organized the Association she currently directs. A tracking shot introduces us to *Ruminet*, the *telecentro* created by the association. I ask what the difference is between a *telecentro* and a regular Internet Café. Gloria replies that a *telecentro* pursues social goals rather than economic success. Several shots show Gloria working in the *telecentro*, leading an Association meeting, taking the bus, buying bread and then arriving home and greeting her two children. Meanwhile, in a voice over, Gloria explains that before her husband left she was a housewife and absolutely dependent on him. “I didn’t know anything about computers until I joined the

¹⁵ Popular song about internal migration in Ecuador. I use a new version created by *Cacería de Lagartos*. Their version introduces the issue of Ecuadorian migration to the United States and Spain.

Association. When I discovered how useful the Internet and email could be for us, I knew these technologies should be available to everyone in our situation,” she says.

Scene 8

Panoramic shots show different scenes of Madrid over the song “Romance de mi destino” (punk version). Then we see Luis Espinoza (Gloria’s husband) supervising masonry works and driving. A tracking shot lets us see the interior of his small apartment. In an interview, Luis explains that the economic crisis of 2000 in Ecuador brought him to Madrid. He received his permanent residence one year after his arrival in Spain. We see Luis and two workers meeting in a café and then working in a parking lot. While we see him leaving his apartment and entering an Internet Café across the street, Luis says that his wife, Gloria, taught him how to use email. Cut to shots of Gloria helping her two children, Luis Miguel and Estefanía, to work on computers at the *telecentro* in Quito. In interviews, both children affirm that they use email mainly to communicate with their father. Back in Madrid, Luis struggles to open his Yahoo! account, while he explains in a voice over that he gets connected once per week.

Sequence V – A Digitalized Society?

Scene 9

The scene opens with a series of brief interviews. “Lots of people have entered an accelerated process of connectivity because of the immigration phenomenon,” says Alberto Acosta, research coordinator of the *Plan Migración, Comunicación y Desarrollo*. “We’re experiencing a digitalization of the Ecuadorian society... There are approximately four million users of cell phones now,” affirms Hernán Ramos, editor-in-chief of *El Comercio*. “Migration has determined a major development of new technologies of information and communication in Ecuador,” says Sabrina Duque, reporter of *El Comercio*. “We have opened seven *telecentros* in the provinces of Cañar and Azuay, plus the Centro Mitad del Mundo in New York,” explains Father Fernando Vega, from *Plan Migración, Comunicación y Desarrollo*, while we see some shots of the *telecentro* in NY. “The idea is to put technology at the service of the poor, to generate a globalization of solidarity,” he concludes.

Scene 10

Over the song “Romance de mi destino” (*son* version), we see panoramic views of the town of Pucará (Ecuador), a small town that, according to Father Vega, is located at “the end of the world.” Several shots show a deserted *telecentro* and satellite antennas on top of its building. As he drives the car, Father Cléver Pañi, the Parish priest, explains that the *telecentro* is gradually motivating young emigrants and their families to use the Internet. “But it’s much easier to make phone calls and the population’s low level of education doesn’t help,” he says. Cut to a group of women preparing a meal together, in La Estancia’s primary school. The women say there is no road to connect this village with the rest of the world. “About 20 families live here, four of them have bought cell phones during the last year,” they say in a voice over, while we see a woman, Gloria Nieves, enter a small house and show a phone. In an interview, Gloria explains that she has one brother living in the US. A year ago, he sent the money to buy this cell phone.

Father Pañi arrives at the school and sits in front of the table that La Estancia's women have set up. Over the song "Romance de mi destino" (*son* version), the camera follows Father Pañi as he leaves the village. He crosses ridges and rocky paths on horseback to the place where the road begins and his pick-up awaits him.

Sequence VI – Email vs. Phone Calls

Scene 11

Panoramic views of Cuenca open the scene. We see Mónica Chalco working in a dentist's office, as she explains that until the moment when she and two of her brothers living in the US began to communicate through email, their relationship, once so close, was almost dead. Mónica sits in front of a computer, opens her email, and shows drawings of the soccer team's uniform that her brothers ordered from a shop in Cuenca. Cut to William Chalco, who checks his Hotmail account on a laptop, at home. He's wearing the uniform t-shirt that we first saw in Mónica's computer. "A complete uniform costs at least 30 dollars here in Queens. But if I get it made in Ecuador, with delivery and everything, it costs no more than 14 or 15 dollars," he affirms. In an interview, Mónica says that writing emails, they have been able to talk about "all those things that one can't say on the phone." A new cut takes us to Quito, where Gloria Jiménez explains that, when it comes to expressing what's going on deep inside her, she chooses email over the telephone. Luis –Gloria's husband- disagrees: "I do prefer the phone... with the phone at least you can listen to your loved ones," he says.

Sequence VII – Doing Business from Far and Away

Scene 12

Over the song "Carpuela," we see Gloria visiting her house under construction and talking with a worker there. Afterwards she buys a cell phone phonocard on the street. In an interview, she explains that once or twice a week she needs to call her husband for things related to the house. Gloria talks on the phone about payments. We can slightly hear Luis' voice answering her questions. Then we see William and Adrián Chalco looking for houses on the Internet. On the laptop screen there is a picture of a big house. "Is that house in Queens?" I ask. "No," replies Adrián. "It's in Cuenca." Now we see shots of the Chalco parents, Mercedes and Arturo, riding a bus and then arriving at a house where some construction is going on. In a voice over, they explain that this house belongs to three of their children living in the US. The song "Carpuela" comes back and over it we see Mercedes walking in downtown Cuenca and then entering a remittances office. In an interview, Luis Dávila, from *Plan Comunicación, Migración y Desarrollo*, explains that the Ecuadorians living now in Europe and the US represent 10% of the Ecuadorian Population and send a total of 1.6 billion dollars in remittances every year.

Sequence VIII – Globalized emigrants?

Scene 13

Over "Romance de mi destino" (punk version) a series of shots shows Luis Espinoza entering a metro station in Madrid, Carla Maldonado buying subway tickets in Milan and

William Chalco riding the train in New York City. In a voice over, Hernán Ramos, editor-in-chief of *El Comercio*, affirms that the migrant of the 1960's was a laborer, whereas today's migrant is an "electronic" migrant. "These migrants remain connected with the country through electronic means of communication. They are away... but not that much," he explains.

Scene 14

We see images of *elcomercio.com*'s small newsroom. In an interview, Gonzalo Maldonado, editor-in-chief of the electronic version of *El Comercio*, affirms that "digital media, making more fluid the communication, are generating a more global sense of citizenship." While several shots let us see text and photos in "Ecuadorians in the World," a section of *elcomercio.com*, Gonzalo explains in a voice over that the Ecuadorian diaspora is learning how to prosper in societies where politics is less cannibal and corrupt. "Through spaces like 'Ecuadorians in the World,' they are transmitting this knowledge to us," he adds. A tracking shot shows Gloria Orellana helping customers in *Ecuadorian Phonecenter* (Milan). In an interview, Gloria explains that the Federation of Ecuadorian Immigrants has supported the double nationality and the recently approved right to vote for Ecuadorians living abroad. "We are registering voters for the coming presidential election in 2006," she says.

Sequence IX - The Next Best Thing

Scene 15

In an interview, Alberto Acosta, research coordinator of the *Plan Migración, Comunicación y Desarrollo*, affirms that new technologies might be turning nostalgia into an experience more hurtful than before. "Out of sight, out of mind," he says. Gloria Orellana, owner of *Ecuadorian Phonecenter* in Milan, adds that being able to call home everyday may help to heal nostalgia, but not in most cases: "I see all the time people who leave the phone booths really sad: every time they call is to hear complaints from the family in Ecuador and to be asked for money."

Scene 16

Over the song "Romance de mi destino" (punk version) we see Adrián Chalco and his wife Vaneza arriving by car to a videoconferencing center in Queens, NY. Cut to Luis Espinoza, who arrives at a remittances office in Madrid. Then several shots show Carla Maldonado arriving at her office in Milan. The music stops and we go back to the videoconference room in Queens, where Vaneza, Adrián and William Chalco can be seen chatting animatedly with their family through the screen. "Nothing can replace a hug, you know?" affirms Adrián in an interview. "After that, I would say the videoconference is the next best thing." From the screen, Mercedes and Arturo Chalco ask their sons to go look for a package they have sent them earlier that week through a delivery agency. "Go with Silvia, so she can film it!" Arturo says. Over the song "Romance de mi destino" (*son* version), intercut shots show the Chalco parents buying Guinea pigs and cooking them in Ecuador, while their sons pick up the package in Queens and happily prepare and eat the special Ecuadorian meal they have just received.

Appendix 2: The Songs

Romance de mi destino / Romance of my Destiny¹⁶

Lyrics by Abel Romeo Castillo. Music by Gonzalo Vera Santos. Interpreted by Julio Jaramillo (*pasillo*, original version) and *Cacería de Lagartos* (*son* and punk versions).

SPANISH

Todo lo que quise yo
tuve que dejarlo lejos.
Siempre tengo que escaparme
y abandonar lo que quiero.
Yo soy el buque fantasma
que no puede anclar en puerto.
Ando buscando refugios
en retratos y en espejos,
en cartas apolilladas
y en perfumados recuerdos.

(Coro)

Por más que estiro las manos,
nunca te alcanzo, lucero.
Jugo de amargos adioses
es mi vaso predilecto.
Yo me bebo a tragos largos
mi pócima de recuerdos
y me embriago en lejanías
para acariciar mis sueños,
y me embriago en lejanías
para acariciar mis sueños.

Nadie sabe como yo
lenguaje de los pañuelos
agitándose en los muelles,
sacudiendo el aire trémulo.
Nadie como yo nació
con destino marinerero.
La única flor que conozco
es la rosa de los vientos,
la única flor que conozco
es la rosa de los vientos.

(Coro)

ENGLISH

Everything I ever loved
I had to leave behind.
I always have to escape
and abandon what I love.
I am that ghost ship
that cannot anchor in port.
I am always looking for shelter
in portraits and in mirrors,
in moth-eaten letters
and in perfumed memories.

(Chorus)

As much as I stretch my hands,
I never reach you, bright star.
Juice of bitter goodbyes
is my favorite drink.
With long gulps I drink
my dose of memories
and get drunk with distance
to caress my dreams,
and get drunk with distance
to caress my dreams.

No one knows like I do
the language of handkerchiefs
waving in the piers,
shaking the tremulous air.
No one was born like me
with a seaworthy destiny.
The only flower that I know
is the compass,
the only flower that I know
is the compass.

(Chorus)

¹⁶ Old song remade by the Ecuadorian band *Cacería de Lagartos*. Throughout the documentary, their *son* and punk versions of this *pasillo* (sad and slow Ecuadorian musical genre) are used. A fragment from the original *pasillo*, interpreted by Julio Jaramillo, plays when the credits roll.

Carpuela¹⁷

Lyrics and music by Milton Tadeo.

Adapted and interpreted by *Cacería de Lagartos*.

SPANISH

Yo ya no quiero vivir
en este Carpuela,
porque lo que tenía
se llevó el río. (bis)

(Coro A)

Ya me voy,
yo ya me voy,
ya no hay dónde trabajar.
Ya me voy,
yo ya me voy,
al Oriente a trabajar.

Te dejo mi corazón,
Carpuela lindo.
Te juro que olvidarte
jamás podría. (bis)

(Coro B)

Ya me voy,
yo ya me voy,
a la Yoni a trabajar.¹⁹
Ya me voy,
yo ya me voy,
para España a trabajar.

ENGLISH

I don't want to live anymore
here in Carpuela,
because all that I had
the river took. (twice)

(Chorus A)

I'm leaving,
I'm leaving already,
there is no work here.
I'm leaving,
I'm leaving already,
I'll find a job in Amazonia.¹⁸

I leave you my heart,
beautiful Carpuela.
I swear that forget you
I never could. (twice)

(Chorus B)

I'm leaving,
I'm leaving already,
I'll find a job in the U.S.
I'm leaving,
I'm leaving already,
I'll find a job in Spain.²⁰

¹⁷ Popular Ecuadorian song about internal migration. Carpuela is a estate located in the Chota valley, in northern Ecuador. The valley is mostly inhabited by Afro-Ecuadorians, descendents of slaves presumably brought to this territory by the Jesuits. The documentary uses a new version of the song created by the Ecuadorian band *Cacería de Lagartos*.

¹⁸ *Oriente* is the word generally used in Ecuador to talk about the Amazonia, or the jungle located east of the Andes. During the second half of the 20th century, many Ecuadorians from the highlands colonized the *Oriente* escaping the drought in their hometowns and attracted by the possibility of becoming landowners.

¹⁹ *Yoni*, slang for *Estados Unidos* (United States).

²⁰ While the original version of the song only repeats the same chorus (A), *Cacería de Lagartos'* version introduces the issue of contemporary Ecuadorian migration to the United States and Spain through variations in the chorus (B).

Appendix 3: Spanish Text and English Subtitles

Documentary Title: Just a Click Away from Home

Translation by: Silvia Mejía Estévez, Matthew Kennis and Regina Harrison

1. INTRODUCCIÓN

Videoconferencia:

- Mónica

¡Hola! Willo, Juan, Adrián...

- Mercedes

¡Hola mis hijos!

- Desde la pantalla...

¡Buenos días, don Arturo!

- Adrián

¡Feliz día, papi!

- William

Se les ve opaquísimos...

- Mónica

Igual les estamos viendo a ustedes también medio medio borrositos.

- Mercedes

Sobrepuestos de la sorpresa ya mis hijos. No saben la emoción que nos causan... Tantos años... Verles. Parece que están detrás de este aparato.

¡Tengo ganas de entrarme y abrazarles!

1. INTRODUCTION

Videoconference:

- Mónica

Hi! Willie, Juan, Adrián...

- Mercedes

Hello my kids!

- From the screen...

Good morning, don Arturo!

- Adrián

Happy Father's day, daddy!

- William

You look so blurry...

- Mónica

*Same thing here!
You also look a bit blurry.*

- Mercedes

Now, recovered from the surprise, my kids... You don't know how emotional this is... To see you after so many years! It seems you're behind this thing.

I want to jump in there and give you a hug!

**2. TÍTULO:
A UN CLIC DE DISTANCIA**

Entrevista en su casa, en Cuenca:

- Arturo

Para mí fue bastante, diremos así, bastante impresionante el verles, porque yo no pensaba verles así a mis hijos.

Claro, me mandan fotos y todo, pero ya no se compara la foto con el verles así, personalmente.

Videoconferencia:

- Arturo

Después de la impresión que me he llevado, y la sorpresa diremos, porque no he sabido a qué me han estado trayendo...

Ahora mis hijos, tomando ánimos, les mando un saludo a cada uno con un abrazote, mis hijos.

Como no quisiera mis hijos, abrazarles... (empieza a llorar)

- Adrián y William

*A ver, papi.
Papi, ¿qué pasa, mijo?*

- Mercedes

Es la emoción, mis hijos, es de la emoción.

- Adrián

No es para que se ponga así. Queremos que se pongan contentos, como nosotros también estamos.

**2. TITLE:
JUST A CLICK AWAY
FROM HOME**

Interview at home, in Cuenca:

- Arturo

For me, it was so... so shocking to see them. Because I didn't expect to see my kids the way we did.

Of course they send photos and everything, but you can't compare a photo with seeing them like this... in person.

Videoconference:

- Arturo

After the initial shock and surprise, because I didn't know that you were bringing me here for this...

...Now, as I try to pull myself together, I wish you well and send each of you kids a big hug.

I wish I could hug you kids!

- Adrián and William

*Daddy!
What's going on?*

- Mercedes

It's the emotion, really...

- Adrián

Don't get upset. We want you to be happy, like we are.

Entrevista en su casa:

- Silvia

¿Y hace cuánto que no los ven?

- Mercedes

A dos de ellos ya 11 años. Luego se fueron tres después, se fueron de golpe los tres.

Son en total ocho, allá están cinco.

Videoconferencia:

- Mónica

Ahora sí comiencen de uno en uno a desfilar. Vamos, Adrián.

- Mercedes

¡Ayyyy, qué pena! Él sí, gordo. ¡Uhhh!

- Mónica

¡Qué bárbaro!

- Mercedes

¡Cómo has dañado, mijo, ve! ¿Dónde quedaría el Adrián que salió de aquí?

¡Ay, qué ancho!

- Mónica

¡Willo!

- Sobrino

¡Dale, Willo!

- Mónica

¡Párate, Willo!

Interview at home:

- Silvia

How long since you've seen them?

- Mercedes

For two of them, it's been 11 years. The other three left later. Three at once.

There are eight in all. Five are living abroad.

Videoconference:

- Mónica

Now it's time for each person to strut their stuff! Let's go, Adrián.

- Mercedes

Oh, what a shame. He's so big!

- Mónica

Wow!

- Mercedes

You've ruined your body, son! Where's the Adrián that left here?

Wow! He's built!

- Mónica

Willie!

- Nephew

Come on, Willie!

- Mónica

Get up, Willie!

- Raúl

¿Dónde te fuiste, pues?

- Mónica

Más al centro, más al centro.

- William

Este cuerpo fenomenal...

¿Cómo?

- Mónica

Más al centro.

- Hermana

Que está hecho un fenómeno, dice.

- Desde la pantalla

A ver, papi.

- Mónica

Papi, papi! Ahí va, ahí va.

- Mercedes

Ve cómo tenemos que levantarlo...

- Mónica

¡Con grúa!

Vírese, papi. Vírese.

Entrevista en su casa:

- Silvia

Ustedes no han podido volver a reunirse ni allá ni acá.

Raúl

Where are you?

- Mónica

More in the middle...

- William

This phenomenal body...

What?

- Mónica

Go to the middle.

- Sister

"He's a phenomenon," he says.

- From the screen

Let's see... daddy.

- Mónica

Daddy! Daddy! There he goes.

- Mercedes

See how we have to lift him...

- Mónica

With a crane!

Turn, daddy. Turn around.

Interview at home:

- Silvia

You haven't been able to see each other in person, either there or here.

- Mercedes

No

- Silvia

No han podido ellos legalizar su situación todavía.

- Mercedes

No, fue tan difícil... Sí han metido papeles dos de ellos, pero más les ha costado dinero y... Usted sabe que no tienen ellos ayuda. El migrante no tiene ayuda de ninguna autoridad allá.

Claro que ellos anhelan, quieren, para poder venir de vez en cuando, siquiera de visita, pero no pueden.

- Arturo

Ellos quieren que nosotros viajemos. Pero, ciertamente, el dinerito es difícil reunir, para decir tenemos una cuenta...

- Mercedes

Dicen que lo principal es tener una buena cuenta...

- Arturo

Una buena cuenta, nos dijo ahí el gringo.

- Silvia

Ya intentaron sacar la visa...

- Arturo

Ya intentamos. Tuvimos 8,000 dólares allí en la libreta. Y resulta que dijeron que era muy poco, que no justificaba para poder viajar nosotros.

- Mercedes

Right.

- Silvia

They haven't been able to arrange things yet.

- Mercedes

It's been really tough... Two of them began to prepare the paperwork...but they spent money and... You know, they don't get any help there. Immigrants don't get any help from the authorities.

Of course they want to get their papers, so they could come and visit us. But... they can't.

- Arturo

They want us to travel there, but it is truly hard for us to save enough money.

- Mercedes

You need to have a good bank account...

- Arturo

"A good bank account," they told us at the Embassy.

Silvia

So, you did try to get the visa...

- Arturo

We tried. We had 8,000 dollars in the bank. But we were told that it was too little money. Not enough to cover the trip.

En su casa, en Queens:

- Adrián

En realidad nosotros no le habíamos dado mucha importancia.

Justamente por el Día del Padre, una semana antes más o menos, se nos dio por empezar a averiguar, a ver si es que hay eso.

Si es que hay eso, y está económicamente aceptable para nosotros, está bien, vamos.

Videoconferencia:

- Mercedes

Ya, Vane!

- Mónica

*Vaneza, vaneza, ¡vamos!
¡Levantando el pelo!*

En su casa, en Queens:

- Vaneza

Yo les conozco a mis suegros por teléfono. La primera vez que hablé con ellos fue cuando decidimos casarnos.

Y dice Adrián: “las primeras personas que tienen que enterarse de esto son mis papás”. Y yo: “OK, ya, les llamamos”.

Y así les fui conociendo, hasta que llegó el día de la conferencia.

¡Guau! Yo estaba nerviosa. Eso fue un domingo. Yo el sábado salí a comprarme ropa.

At home, in Queens:

- Adrián

We hadn't paid much attention to it.

Because of Father's Day, a week earlier, more or less, we decided to find out whether it existed or not.

We said: “if it exists and it's affordable... we'll do it.”

Videoconference:

- Mercedes

Now, Vane!

- Mónica

*Come on, Vaneza!
Take your hair away from your face.*

At home, in Queens:

- Vaneza

I met my in-laws by phone. The first time we talked was the day we decided to get married.

Adrián said: “the first ones to know have to be my parents.” And I said: “OK, let's call them.”

Then we started to get to know each other, until the day of the videoconference.

Wow! I was nervous. That was a Sunday. On Saturday I went out to buy an outfit.

- Vaneza (continúa)

Entonces yo estaba en las tiendas. Me pongo esto, no, me pongo lo otro. Con esto se me va a ver muy mal, con esto se me va a ver demasiado liberada, con esto se me va a ver muy conservadora...
¡Uyyy, Dios!

Videoconferencia:

- Vaneza

*¡Un gusto conocerles!
Son tan maleducados que no me presentaron.*

En su casa, en Queens:

Para mí, yo les conocí ahí. Para mí, yo tuve contacto con ellos así, directo.

En las circunstancias en que estamos, esto es igual que tenerles aquí. No puedo ser tan exigente como para decir: “quiero darle un abrazo”...

...Pero fue igual, tanto allá como acá, juntos. Estábamos mirándonos, estábamos conversando. Estábamos viviendo (lo mismo) ellos y nosotros.

- Vaneza (continued)

There I was in the store: “should I buy this one, or the other one.” This is going to make me look bad. This would make me look too confident. And this seems too conservative...”
Oh, God!

Videoconference:

- Vaneza

*A pleasure to meet you!
They have such bad manners that they didn't introduce me.*

At home, in Queens:

For me, I first met them there. I had direct contact with them.

Given our circumstances, it's the same as having them here. I can't be as demanding as to ask for a hug...

...But no, it was the same!
Here and there, together, looking and talking. We were there together.

3. CUANDO LA DIÁSPORA SE VOLVIÓ NOTICIA

- Hernán Ramos
Editor general – EL COMERCIO

Estamos hablando de que aproximadamente unas 800 mil personas han salido en la última década del país. Entre 800 mil y un millón de personas.

Eso grafica el efecto social que está generando la migración y, por ende, el efecto informativo que genera dentro de los medios.

Nosotros hemos ampliado nuestra cobertura internacional. Tenemos corresponsales en España, Italia, Inglaterra, Buenos Aires y Estados Unidos.

Carla en su trabajo, en Milán:

*Hola, ¿cómo has pasado?
Ella es Silvia... Gustavo, Boris.
Ellos son los jóvenes ingenieros
ecuatorianos con quienes vamos a
hablar hoy.*

- Silvia: *¡Hola, mucho gusto!*
- Carla: *Hola, ¿cómo estás?*

Entrevista:

- Carla

La idea de las corresponsalías nació precisamente de la migración.

Si no hubiera habido la migración, tal vez no hubieran pensado todavía en la posibilidad de establecer corresponsalías en el extranjero.

3. COVERING THE DIASPORA

- Hernán Ramos
Editor-in-Chief – EL COMERCIO

Approximately 800,000 people have left the country in the last decade. Between 800,000 and a million people.

This shows the effect that migration is having on society. Migration has also affected the press.

We have expanded our international coverage. We have correspondents in Spain, Italy, England, Buenos Aires, and the United States.

Carla at work, in Milan:

*Hi, how are you?
This is Silvia.... Gustavo, Boris
These are the young Ecuadorian
engineers who we're going to talk to
today.*

- Silvia: *Hi, nice to meet you!*
- Carla: *Hi, how are you?*

Interview:

- Carla

The idea of setting up correspondents' posts was born precisely because of migration.

If there hadn't been such migration, maybe they wouldn't have thought of assigning correspondents abroad.

- Carla (continúa)

Y además estas corresponsalías tienen su base en los países donde viven ahora muchos ecuatorianos, como España, Italia y Estados Unidos.

Era un nuevo flujo de información que había que cubrir y del que había que hablar.

Esta puede ser muy linda.

Sin la tecnología yo no podría enviar la información, no podría hacer nada.

No podría comunicarme con toda la gente que me comunico, ni siquiera con el periódico.

Tendría que volver a como se hacía diez años atrás, como trabajaban los corresponsales, vía fax.

Con el desarrollo del email es muy fácil y es muy simple.

Nosotros afortunadamente tenemos la computadora y esa es nuestra herramienta principal de trabajo.

Eco, finito... (en italiano)

- Silvia

¿Realmente esto de las nuevas tecnologías es un fenómeno que toca a nuestros migrantes?

- Carla

De cierta manera te acerca a los tuyos y no rompe los lazos que tienes con tu país de origen.

- Carla (continued)

In addition, these correspondents' posts are based where many Ecuadorian immigrants live: Spain, Italy, and the United States.

There was a new flow of information that had to be covered and had to be talked about.

This photo could be really good.

Without these technologies, I couldn't send information, I couldn't do anything.

I wouldn't be able to talk to all the people I talk with, not even with the newspaper.

I would have to work the way correspondents worked ten years ago, via fax.

With the development of email, it's simple and easy.

We fortunately have computers and they're our principal tool for work.

All set, done... (in Italian)

- Silvia

This new technology really affects Ecuadorian immigrants?

- Carla

In a way, it brings you closer to your loved ones and you don't lose ties with your country of origin.

Entonces, es importante, es muy importante.

Ahora, lo que yo no veo mucho es que los inmigrantes utilicen internet.

Aquí, por ejemplo, los inmigrantes no tienen computadoras en las casas.

Siempre van a los *internet points* o *phonecenters* para enviar sus mensajes a sus familiares y amigos.

Hasta pueden buscar trabajo a través del internet, pero todavía eso no está tan utilizado como el teléfono, por ejemplo.

En el *phonecenter*:

- Cliente

Esto no es problema para mí. Yo lo que quería es el pasaje...

Entrevista:

- Carla

En los centros telefónicos nacen los multiservicios.

Te venden los pasajes para ir a Ecuador, productos ecuatorianos, ropa ecuatoriana. Se encuentra todo ahí.

Hasta los propietarios de los centros telefónicos hacen a veces de asesores legales, entre comillas.

Se vuelven centros de orientación...
¡Hacen hasta traducciones en los centros telefónicos, eh!

Porque los ecuatorianos necesitan eso para hacer sus papeles aquí.

So, yes, it's important, it's very important.

Now, what I don't see is immigrants using the Internet.

Here, for example, immigrants don't have computers at home.

They always go to the *Internet points* or the *phonecenters* to send messages to their relatives and friends.

They can even search for work on the Internet, but the Internet is not yet used as much as the phone, for example.

At the *phonecenter*:

- Customer

That's not a problem for me. What I wanted was the ticket.

Interview:

- Carla

In the *phonecenters*, various services are available.

They sell plane tickets to Ecuador, Ecuadorian products, clothing. You can find everything there.

The *phonecenters*' owners even act as "legal advisors."

The *phonecenters* become orientation centers. They even do translations there!

Because the Ecuadorians need this help to get their immigration papers in order.

Reunión de inmigrantes:

- Presidenta

Yo propongo ¿no? Si la señora Glorita gentilmente nos hace un préstamo...

- Gloria Orellana
Propietaria phonecenter

Una señora que se llama Elsa Vinueza vino y habló conmigo.

Dice, señora, tuvimos un congreso en Ecuador y a mí me han nombrado comisionada para que forme una filial acá en Italia.

Entonces le digo, mire, yo tengo este negocio, aquí vienen tantos compatriotas ecuatorianos que quizá podamos llegar a hacer algo.

- Miembro de la filial Milán:

Primero tengamos un respaldo de la gente. Hagamos ese respaldo como todo el mundo está de acuerdo aquí.

Salgamos si es posible en campaña, o solos, a inscribir a las personas.

- Gloria

Y llegamos a formar la Federación de Inmigrantes Ecuatorianos, filial Milán.

- Silvia

¿Cuándo sucedió eso?

- Gloria
Eso sucedió el 10 de agosto de este año, de 2005.

Immigrant's meeting:

- President

I was saying...If Señora Gloria could kindly lend us the money...

- Gloria Orellana
Phonecenter Owner

A woman named Elsa Vinueza came and spoke to me.

She said: "we had a meeting in Ecuador and I was named commissioner so that I would form a branch here in Italy."

So I said to her: "look, I have this business where so many Ecuadorians come. Maybe we can put something together."

- Milan branch member:

First, we have to get the support of the people. Like we've all agreed, we have to build that support.

Let's get out there, individually, in groups, to sign people up.

- Gloria

So we were able to form the Federation of Ecuadorian Immigrants, Milan branch.

- Silvia

When did this happen?

- Gloria
This year, on August 10th, 2005.

4. UNA FAMILIA TRANSNACIONAL

En la radio, en Quito:

- Gloria

Buenas tardes, mi nombre es Gloria Jiménez Molina, soy presidenta de la Asociación Rumiñahui – 9 de enero de Familiares de Migrantes.

Tengo 42 años. Dentro de la organización estoy desde su inicio, el 9 de enero del año 2000.

Tengo dos hijos, una niña de 18 años y un niño que va a cumplir 10 años.

Tengo mi esposo que va a cumplir ya cinco años en España, en Madrid.

- Sandy

Pues así es amigos y amigas de Ecuador y España de “Callos y Guatitas”. Ella es doña Gloria María Jiménez Molina, presidenta de la Asociación de Migrantes Rumiñahui, con quien vamos a conversar para que nos cuente cómo es su vida, por qué se involucró en el tema de la migración, y por qué desde hace algunos años comienza a trabajar en la Asociación Rumiñahui.

Vamos a conocer un poco más de la historia de vida de doña Gloria María Jiménez Molina.

Doña Gloria, muchas gracias por estar con nosotros.

- Gloria

Gracias a ustedes por invitarnos una vez más.

4. A TRANSNATIONAL FAMILY

At the radio station, in Quito:

- Gloria

Good afternoon, my name is Gloria Jiménez Molina, I'm the president of the Rumiñahui Association of Migrants' Relatives.

I'm 42 years old. I've been involved in the organization since the beginning, January 9th, 2000.

I have two children, an 18-year-old daughter, and a boy about to turn 10.

My husband has been in Spain, in Madrid, for almost five years.

- Sandy

Well then, friends of our show in Ecuador and Spain.

This is Gloria María Jiménez Molina, president of the Rumiñahui Association of Migrants' Relatives, who we're going to talk to about why she got involved with the issue of migration, and why she's been working with the Rumiñahui Association for several years.

We're going to learn a little more about the life of Gloria María Jiménez Molina.

Gloria, thank you for being with us today.

- Gloria

Thank you for inviting me again.

Entrevista sobre telecentro:

- Gloria

Nosotros con la experiencia diaria vimos que una de las dificultades más grandes que se presentan con nuestros familiares es la comunicación.

Realmente esto debería ser una política de Estado, un trabajo de Estado, empezar a implementar estos telecentros, para ayudar a la comunicación de la familia, de la gente.

Pero no ha sido así, lamentablemente. Y estas iniciativas han tenido que salir prácticamente de las organizaciones.

Y sabemos nosotros que esto ayuda mucho en la relación de comunicación de la familia.

Este Internet ya vamos a tenerle tres años...

- Silvia

En esta zona hay muchos café-nets, ¿por qué ustedes se llaman telecentro? ¿Cuál es la diferencia?

- Gloria

Nosotros aquí además de dar el servicio de internet, más nos interesa acercarnos a la gente.

Que venga, que sepa que tiene quien le pueda ayudar, orientarle en diferentes aspectos, más que todo con los familiares de los migrantes.

Interview about the *telecentro*:

- Gloria

From our daily experience, we saw that one of the biggest difficulties for our relatives was communication.

This should really be a national policy, the work of the government, to begin setting up these *telecentros*, to help families communicate with each other.

But it hasn't been that way, unfortunately. These initiatives have had to come almost completely from grassroots organizations.

And we know that this helps a lot with family communication.

We've had this *telecentro* for three years now.

- Silvia

In this area, there are many Internet Cafés, why do you call yours *telecentro*? What's the difference?

- Gloria

More than providing Internet access, we're interested in working with people.

We want people to come, to know there's someone who can help them. We want to orient them in different ways, and especially to work with the migrants' relatives.

- Gloria (continua)

Se ayuda justamente a la gente que no puede utilizar el internet. Son cursos básicos de internet, de dos horas el sábado y dos el domingo.

Entonces eso también es gratuito, no les cuesta nada.

La primera experiencia fue con el grupo de mujeres de aquí, de la organización.

A ver compañeras, pues nos vamos a abrir un correo para conversar con nuestro familiar allá en España, y es lo que primero hicimos.

Grupo de mujeres:

- Gloria

Todas tenemos hijos, mi esposo está cinco años, doña Celita tiene hijos afuera...

Entrevista:

- Gloria

Yo era una mujer sumamente dependiente, que mi esposo, pues, incluso las calles me ayudaba a cruzar él.

Y en el momento en que se fue yo aprendí todo eso, fue como si yo fuera otra, otra persona.

Yo de computación no sabía nada, nada, nada. Dentro de la asociación nos dieron cursos.

Entonces ahí nos explicaban que se puede comunicar, esto, así.

- Gloria (continued)

We help those that don't know how to use the Internet. There are basic Internet classes, for two hours on Saturday and Sunday.

And this is also free, it doesn't cost them anything.

The first experience was with the group of women from the organization.

We said: "OK everyone, we're going to set up an email account to talk with our relatives over there in Spain..." And that's what we did first.

Women's group:

- Gloria

We all have kids. My husband has been away for five years, and Celia has kids abroad...

Interview:

- Gloria

I was extremely dependent on my husband; he even helped me cross the streets.

And when he left, I learned to do everything by myself. It was as if I were a different person.

I didn't know anything about computers, nothing at all. They gave us classes at the Association.

So there, they explained to us that you could communicate using these new technologies.

- Gloria (continúa)

La verdad que la primera vez a nosotros nos causaba chiste. Decíamos, ¿cómo vamos a estar conversando? ¿Y cómo vamos a hacer?

Pero de ahí empezamos con el curso, las pruebas y todo. Y ahí le vimos lo interesante.

Por eso nosotros queremos que realmente se de la importancia que se debe dar al uso del correo electrónico, al uso del internet.

Nosotros dentro de la organización estamos promocionando que la gente se adueñe de esta tecnología, porque es súper, súper importante.

En el trabajo, en Madrid:

- Luis

Juanito, nueve menos cuarto en la boca del metro de Valdeacederas...

¿Sí, Juanito?

Salida Anibal, Juanito, ¿de acuerdo?

- Juan

Sí

- Luis

Valdeacederas, una parada antes de Plaza de Castilla

- Juan

Sí, sí, ahí le espero

- Gloria (continued)

The truth is, at the beginning, it made us laugh. We said, how could we possibly communicate through these things? How are we going to do it?

But we started the classes, the quizzes and everything. And then we realized how interesting it was.

Because of that, we really want the use of email and the Internet to be given the importance it deserves.

Those of us in the organization are encouraging people to own these technologies, to start feeling comfortable using them. We think this is super important.

At work, in Madrid:

Luis:

Juan, 8:45 at the Valdeacederas metro...

OK, Juan?

Anibal exit, Juan, OK?

- Juan

Yep.

- Luis

Valdeacederas, one station before Plaza de Castilla.

- Juan

Yeah, yeah, I'll see you there.

- Luis

*Adiós Juanito, hasta mañana.
Hasta mañana, Yuri.*

- Silvia

Hasta luego...

- Luis

Estos chicos...

Luis en la casa:

- Silvia

¿Qué es lo que haces?

- Luis

Ahora estoy separando las facturas, porque me toca hacer la declaración del IVA cada tres meses...

En el Ecuador, desde que se dolarizó la economía, estaba un poquito más complicada la situación económica más que todo.

Yo vine en el año 2000, en noviembre del año 2000. Y tuve los papeles casi al año prácticamente.

En esa época daban la facilidad de que si uno trabajaba en algún tipo que trabajo que España necesitaba, entonces daban los papeles. En mi caso, yo me fui a trabajar cuidando a un par de ancianos, y saqué mis primeros papeles de servicio doméstico.

Yo era contratista en terminados de construcción en mi país. Entonces yo quería aquí también ejercer mi oficio.

- Luis

*Bye Juan, see you tomorrow.
See you tomorrow, Yuri.*

- Silvia

See you later.

- Luis

These guys...

Luis at home:

- Silvia

What are you up to?

- Luis

Right now I'm separating receipts because every three months I have to do my taxes.

Since the dollarization in Ecuador, the economic situation has been a little more complicated.

I came in the year 2000, in November. I received my immigration papers just about a year later.

At that time, if you worked in something that was needed in Spain, you would get your immigration papers. In my case, I worked caring for a couple of elderly folks, and then I got my first domestic service work papers.

I worked as a contractor doing construction finish work in my country. So I wanted to do that here also.

- Luis (continúa)

Por eso es que he decidido hacerme autónomo. Ser autónomo significa que tú trabajas por cuenta propia. Es decir que tú contratas tus trabajos con las personas que necesitan hacer el trabajo.

Yo trabajo aquí con empresas y con administradores de las fincas, que les llaman aquí a las casas, los edificios.

En épocas he tenido 10, 13 personas trabajando. Pero siempre tengo dos personas fijas. O sea, dos personas aparte de mí. El uno se llama Juan Cando, es ecuatoriano. El otro es Yuri Jodachov, es ruso este chico.

- Juan

Ya toma ve, Yuri.

- Luis

Anda, anda tú con el Juan.

- Silvia

¿Qué tanto sabías utilizar correo electrónico y todo eso antes de que migraras?

- Luis

Yo no sabía, yo no sabía.

Cuando estuve en el Ecuador, Gloria me dijo, mira Luis, yo también ya he aprendido... porque Gloria tampoco sabía.

Como trabaja ahí con esto de los migrantes, entonces Gloria también aprendió.

- Luis (continued)

That's why I've decided to become self-employed. I mean, you contract your work out to those who need it done.

I work with companies and with building managers.

At times, I've had 10, 13 people working for me. But I always have two permanent people. I mean two in addition to me. One is Juan Cando, from Ecuador. The other is Yuri Jodachov. He's Russian.

- Juan

Yuri, take it... here.

- Luis

You go with Juan.

- Silvia

How much did you know about using email before you migrated?

- Luis

I didn't know anything.

When I visited Ecuador, Gloria said to me: "I've learned." Gloria didn't know how it worked either.

Since she works there with the migrants' relatives, Gloria also learned.

- Luis (continúa)

Entonces, Luis, mira, yo te escribo y tú me escribes, y así es más fácil podernos comunicar. Ya, le dije, es buena la idea, ¿entonces ahora enséñame porque yo no sé!

En Ruminet:

- Gloria

Aplastas éste, y luego éste...

- Luisito

Ya, pues...

- Estefanía

Mami, ¿cuál era la arroba?

- Gloria

Ay, no importa eso. ¡Qué es pues, Luisito!

- Silvia

¿Y te gusta ir al telecentro o no tanto?

- Luisito

Sí

- Silvia

¿Por qué te gusta ir allá?

- Luisito

Porque hay el Internet.

- Luis (continued)

“Luis, look, I’ll write to you, and you to me, and that way it’ll be easier to communicate,” she said. “OK,” I said, “it’s a good idea.” “So now teach me because I don’t know how to do it!”

In Ruminet:

- Gloria

Press here, and then there...

- Luis Jr.

Come on, already.

- Estefanía

Mom, which key was the @?

- Gloria

Oh, that’s not important, Luis. What’s going on with you!

- Silvia

And you like going to the *telecentro* or not so much?

- Luis Jr.

Yes

- Silvia

Why do you like to go there?

- Luis Jr.

Because of the Internet.

- Silvia

Y en la escuela, ¿aprendes a manejar el Internet? ¿Dónde aprendiste?

- Luisito

Mi mami me enseñó.

Familia en casa:

- Gloria

Entonces la que tú quieras, ya, la que tú quieras...

- Estefanía

Ésta, donde está bonito, guapo.

- Gloria,

No pues, ahí ponle, en la mesita.

- Luis

¡En esa está en BBD!

- Gloria

Pero saca la canasta, negrita.

- Silvia

¿Dónde aprendiste a usar el correo electrónico?

- Estefanía

Mi mami me enseñó.

- Silvia

¿Y en el colegio no te enseñaron?

- Silvia

And in school you learn to use the Internet? Where did you learn?

- Luis Jr.

My mom taught me.

Family at home:

- Gloria

So, whichever you prefer, that's it, whichever you want...

- Estefanía

This one, here he looks good, handsome.

- Gloria

No, put it there, on the table.

- Luis Jr.

In that one he's in an undershirt!

- Gloria

But take out the basket, honey.

- Silvia

Where did you learn to use email?

- Estefanía

My mom taught me.

- Silvia

In high school they didn't teach you?

- Estefanía

Sí, sí me enseñaron, pero no me interesaba mucho eso. Ahora ya me interesa.

- Silvia

¿Por qué te interesa ahora?

- Estefanía

Porque ya sé que por ahí puedo comunicarme con mi papi, hablar un poco más. Contarle algo que no había podido contarle.

Ciber-café en Madrid:

- Luis

Cuando hay tiempito, yo me dedico a leer lo que me escriben. Yo les escribo... Cada semana, un domingo salgo, pago una hora de internet. Media hora vale dos euros. Cuatro euros más o menos una hora, o 3,50, depende del sitio.

Voy a hacer una llamada, ¿no?

- Empleado

Sí, pase

- Luis

¿A ésta?

- Empleado

Cualquiera.

- Luis

Estoy llamando a Gloria ahora. En el Ecuador es las...

- Estefanía

Yes, yes they taught me, but I wasn't really interested in it. Now I am though.

- Silvia

Why are you interested now?

- Estefanía

Because I know that with email I can communicate with my dad, talk a bit more, tell him things I wouldn't have been able to say.

Cyber-café in Madrid:

- Luis:

When there's a bit of time, I read what they've written me, I write to them... Every week, on Sunday, I go out and pay to use the Internet for an hour. A half hour costs two euros. Four euros for an hour, or 3.50, depending on the place.

I'm going to make a call, OK?

- Worker

Sure, go ahead.

- Luis

This one?

- Worker

Any of them.

- Luis

I'm calling Gloria now. In Ecuador the time is...

5. ¿UNA SOCIEDAD DIGITALIZADA?

- Alberto Acosta
Plan Migración, Comunicación y Desarrollo

Muchas personas dieron paso a una conectividad más acelerada por efecto de la migración.

La migración ayudó no sólo a los flujos humanos y todo lo que queramos, sino también a una mayor conectividad.

¿Cuántas personas que están afuera les entregan a sus familiares, por ejemplo, un teléfono celular?

La masificación de los teléfonos celulares se debe también a los procesos migratorios.

No sólo es el hecho de que la telefonía celular creció en nuestro país por la ineficiencia de la telefonía fija...

...sino que muchos familiares, en vista de las diferencias horarias, prefieren que su hijo, que su madre, esposo o esposa tenga un teléfono celular...

...para poderle contactar en cualquier momento del día o de la noche.

- Hernán Ramos
Editor general – EL COMERCIO

El fenómeno migratorio es un fenómeno profundo en el Ecuador, por la magnitud y por el alcance que tiene en una sociedad tan fragmentada como la ecuatoriana hoy en día.

El otro fenómeno es la digitalización de la sociedad ecuatoriana.

5. A DIGITALIZED SOCIETY?

- Alberto Acosta
Migration, Communication and Development Project

Because of migration, many people got connected more quickly.

Migration not only stimulated human flows, but also raised the level of connectivity.

How many people who are abroad give their relatives, for example, a cell phone?

The abundance of cell phones is also due to migratory processes.

It's not only true that cell phone use has grown in our country because of the inefficiency of landlines.

But also because many relatives, knowing the time differences, prefer that their son, mother, husband or wife has a cell phone...

...to be able to get in touch at any time of the day or night.

- Hernán Ramos
Editor-in-Chief – EL COMERCIO

Migration is a very important phenomenon in Ecuador, because of its magnitude as well as the reach it has in a society as fragmented as Ecuador's today.

The other phenomenon is the digitalization of Ecuadorian society.

- Hernán Ramos (continua)

Este rato en el Ecuador hay aproximadamente cuatro millones de usuarios de teléfono celular. Eso significa que hay una interconexión profunda, un enlace comunicacional que va mucho más allá del enlace tradicional a través del teléfono estándar.

Ahora el celular se volvió una herramienta cotidiana en los hábitos de vida de la gente. Y el celular está enlazando también con el migrante.

- Sabrina Duque
Reportera – EL COMERCIO

Bueno, yo creo que el Ecuador no habría avanzado tanto en TICs si no hubiera sido por la migración.

En qué sostengo esto... punto número uno: el fenómeno de los locutorios es sumamente claro.

Basta solamente caminar por cualquier calle de Quito y en el barrio más alejado, que no tiene nada de vida, hay un locutorio por lo menos.

El acceso a Internet, que estaba en el 94 limitado a un universo de unas 2000 personas, ahora está en un estimado de usuarios de 200 mil, pero estamos hablando de terminales. Y por cada familia hay un terminal que llega a cinco personas.

- Padre Fernando Vega
Plan Migración, Comunicación y Desarrollo

En este momento nosotros tenemos una media docena de centros, siete centros funcionando...

- Hernán Ramos (continued)

Right now in Ecuador there are approximately 4 million cell phone users. This means there is a profound connection, a communicational link that goes far beyond the traditional link of a standard telephone.

The cell phone has become a commonplace tool in people's daily lives. And the cell phone is also linking us with migrants.

- Sabrina Duque
Reporter – EL COMERCIO

Well, I think that Ecuador wouldn't have advanced so much in ITs if it hadn't been for migration.

How do I support this? The phenomenon of the *phonecenters* is very clear.

Walk down any street in Quito, or in the most far off, dead neighborhood, and there will at least be a *phonecenter*.

Access to the Internet, which in 1994 was limited to about 2,000 people, now it's estimated at about 200,000 users, but that's counting only computer terminals. Each terminal reaches a family of about five.

- Father Fernando Vega
Migration, Communication and Development Project

Currently we have seven centers functioning.

- Silvia

¿En todo el país?

- Padre

Concentrados en Cañar y Azuay básicamente.

- Silvia

Visité Nueva York, y hay un telecentro que, tengo entendido, también está relacionado con ustedes.

- Padre

Sí, así es, efectivamente el Centro Mitad del Mundo ha sido impulsado por nosotros y son nuestra contraparte allá.

Telecentro en Queens:

- Instructora

... Universidades, ahí se le van a abrir todas las universidades en el mundo. Entonces, tiene que poner "universidades en Nueva York"

Entrevista, en Cuenca:

- Padre Vega

Creemos que, en un mundo globalizado, poner al servicio de los pobres, al servicio de las personas vulnerables, la tecnología es muy importante.

Es decir, creemos en otro tipo de globalización, en la globalización de la solidaridad.

- Silvia

In the whole country?

- Father

Concentrated in Cañar and Azuay basically.

- Silvia

I visited New York, and there's a *telecentro* that I understand is connected to your organization.

- Father

Yes, that's right. Effectively Mitad del Mundo Center was created by us and they are our counterpart over there.

Telecentro in Queens:

- Instructor

...Universities...that word will bring up all the universities in the world. So, you have to write "universities in New York."

Interview, in Cuenca:

- Father Vega

We believe that in a globalized world it is very important to put technology at the service of the poor and those who are vulnerable.

That's to say, we believe in another kind of globalization, in a globalization of solidarity.

En Pucará:

- Padre Vega

Como era un programa Ecuador-España, buscamos y seleccionamos aquellos lugares donde había mayor migración hacia España.

Y precisamente Pucará era una de las poblaciones donde más migrantes ecuatorianos estaban en España.

Otro criterio que se utilizó es que fueran lugares lejanos, donde la gente no tenía acceso a estas posibilidades, ¿no?

Es una zona que está alejadísima, está en el fin del mundo.

- Padre Cléver Pañi
Párroco de Pucará

Usted sabe, estamos aquí a los 3200 metros sobre el nivel del mar, con difíciles medio de comunicación.

Vea las vías que tenemos; las líneas telefónicas que tenemos son muy deficientes.

Entonces, ante toda esta situación, el telecentro se ha convertido en algo de desarrollo, en un polo que nos ha abierto la comunicación al mundo.

- Silvia

¿Cuánto tiempo lleva abierto el telecentro, padre?

- Padre Pañi

Un año.

In Pucará:

- Father Vega

Since this was a joint Ecuador-Spain project, we looked for and selected those places where migration to Spain was the greatest.

And Pucará was one of the communities from which a large number of people had emigrated to Spain.

Another criterion used was that the places were rural, where people didn't have access to these possibilities.

This is a very rural area; it's at the end of the world.

- Father Cléver Pañi
Parish priest - Pucará

As you know, here we are at more than 10,000 feet above sea level, with limited means of communication.

Look at the roads we have. The telephone lines that we have are very deficient.

So, given this situation, the *telecentro* turned into a generator of development, into a pole that has opened up communication to the world.

- Silvia

How long has the *telecentro* been open, Father?

- Father Pañi

A year.

- Silvia

¿Y cómo evaluaría usted el nivel de recepción en la comunidad del telecentro?

- Padre Pañi

La comunidad un poco tiene expectativas sobre el servicio que presta el telecentro.

Pero tenemos algunas deficiencias en las que el nivel de educación, de cultura de la gente nos ha puesto un poquito hacia abajo, ¿no?

La gente al principio pensó que podíamos comunicarnos con el extranjero con mucha facilidad.

Pero resulta que también nuestros compañeros migrantes en el extranjero utilizan muy poco la informática.

Entonces allí hemos tenido algún inconveniente, por el nivel mismo de educación de la gente aquí en el pueblo.

- Silvia

¿Sabe usted qué tanto se ha generalizado el uso de los celulares desde aquí?

- Padre Pañi

Es un negocio bastante bueno para la gente que lo vende, sí.

Realmente, ha habido mucho uso porque es más fácil comunicarse.

- Silvia

And how would you evaluate the reception of the *telecentro* within the community?

- Father Pañi

The community has some expectations about what the *telecentro* can offer.

But we have some problems. People's education level, their ways of doing things have made it hard to succeed.

At the beginning people thought we would be able to communicate abroad with great ease.

But it turns out that our migrants abroad don't use computer technologies much either.

So we've had some difficulties because of the level of education here in the community.

- Silvia

Do you know how widespread the use of cell phones is here?

- Father Pañi

It's quite a good business for those who sell them.

Really, there's been a lot of use because cell phones are easier to use.

En La Estancia:

- Blanca Nieves
Habitante de La Estancia

Estamos en La Estancia. Estamos al encuentro del padre que nos visita. Son las misiones, que vienen a visitar a los mayores, así a algún enfermo. Nos reunimos toda la comunidad para hacer el almuerzo.

- Silvia

¿La comunidad qué tan lejos está del centro de Pucará?

- Blanca

Ha de estar a dos horas, casi tres horas.

- Silvia

Si no hay camino que llega hasta acá, ¿qué pasa? ¿se pueden comunicar telefónicamente o...?

- Blanca

Salimos a Pucará, a las cabinas centrales que hay de IETEL.

Y ahora últimamente los vecinos tienen bases celulares, por los familiares que hay ayudado, hay apoyado, han puesto.

- Silvia

¿Cuántas familias hay en La Estancia y cuántas tienen teléfono celular?

- Blanca

Dieciocho a veinte familias creo que somos aquí. Pero de eso tienen tres o cuatro, así.

In La Estancia:

- Blanca Nieves
Resident of La Estancia

We're in La Estancia. We're preparing for the priest's visit. He comes to visit the elderly and the sick. The whole community comes together to prepare lunch.

- Silvia

How far is the community from the center of Pucará?

- Blanca

It must be two, almost three hours.

- Silvia

If there's no road that you can take to get here, then what happens? Are you able to communicate by phone?

- Blanca

We go to the phone booths in downtown Pucará.

And now lately, some neighbors have gotten cell phones, since their relatives helped pay for them.

- Silvia

How many families live in La Estancia, and how many have cell phones?

- Blanca

Eighteen or 20 families, I think. Three or four have cell phones.

El celular de Gloria:

- Silvia

Ése es su teléfono...

- Gloria Nieves
Habitante de La Estancia

Hmmm...

- Silvia

Entonces, no es un teléfono regular, de línea regular. ¿Es un teléfono celular?

- Gloria Nieves

Sí, técnicamente es celular, porque los otros teléfonos convencionales aquí no cogen señal.

Y así éste nos sirve mucho. Tenemos comunicación de aquí al exterior, del exterior para acá. A todos lados.

- Silvia

¿Y desde hace cuánto será que tienen esto de los celulares?

- Blanca

Recién, de unos creo que es un año, de otros tres meses.

- Silvia

¿Y se puede decir que aunque sea caro ustedes ven como una ventaja el poder comunicarse desde ahí?

¿O no ha cambiado para nada su posibilidad de comunicarse telefónicamente, por ejemplo?

Gloria's cell phone:

- Silvia

This is your phone...

- Gloria Nieves
Resident of La Estancia

Uh-huh

- Silvia

But it's not a regular phone, a land line. It's a cell phone?

- Gloria Nieves

Yes, technically it's a cell phone, because the other conventional phones here don't get a signal.

And it helps us a lot. We're in touch with people abroad, and they with us. We can communicate with all places.

- Silvia

And since when have you had the cell phones?

- Blanca

Pretty recently, I think for some it's been about a year, for others three months.

- Silvia

And would you say that despite being expensive, you see it as an advantage to be able to communicate on the cell phones?

Or would you say that being able to communicate on the phone hasn't changed anything?

- Blanca

Aunque sea caro, pues sí es una ayuda, porque sí hay a veces emergencias que toca llamar, comunicarse con los familiares también...

...Estar saliendo lo mismo igual caro a Pucará pierde el día ya.

Se recibe aquí nomás, más que sea denoche, sea dedía.

- Silvia

Gloria, cuénteme, ¿desde hace cuánto tienen el celular?

- Gloria Nieves

Hace más o menos un año.

- Silvia

¿Y por qué decidieron invertir en ese tipo de teléfono?

- Gloria Nieves

Porque tenemos familia en el exterior y ellos no podían comunicarse con mi mamá, con mi papá.

Entonces mi hermano decidió invertir en el teléfono para poder comunicarse el rato que él deseara.

- Silvia

¿Su hermano no está aquí?

- Gloria Nieves

No, él está en Estados Unidos.

- Blanca

Although it's expensive, for sure it's a help. Sometimes there are emergencies and you have to call your relatives...

To go to Pucará is also expensive, and you lose the day.

We just get the call here, whether it's night or day.

- Silvia

Gloria, tell me, how long you've had the cell phone?

- Gloria Nieves

For about a year.

- Silvia

And why did you decide to invest in this type of phone?

- Gloria Nieves

Because we have family abroad and they couldn't get in touch with my mom or dad.

So my brother decided to invest in a phone so he could be in touch whenever he wanted.

- Silvia

Your brother isn't here?

- Gloria Nieves

No, he's in the United States.

- Silvia

Me decían los vecinos también que a veces ellos les piden poder usar el teléfono.

- Gloria Nieves

Sí, también. a veces. Por ejemplo, ahora que pasó la fiesta de aquí de La Estancia, algunos nos pidieron para poder comunicarse con la familia, o amigos.

Y así, siempre y cuando haya tarjeta, podemos ayudarles a ellos también, para que se comuniquen.

Aquí, mi mamá pone tarjeta de 10 dólares. Entonces, como le dije, sólo es para emergencias.

Yo llamo a mi hermano o hermanas. Les digo, sabes qué, tengo poca tarjeta, estoy llamando del celular, devuélveme la llamada

Y entonces ellos me devuelven la llamada.

Pero más o menos así, tratando de economizar, si nos dura por ejemplo un mes.

Salida de La Estancia:

- Silvia

Padre, cuénteme, ¿cuántos habitantes aproximadamente hay en el cantón Pucará?

- Padre Pañi

En la zona alta que yo recorro hay unos 10 mil habitantes aproximadamente. De ahí, todo el cantón tiene 16 mil.

- Silvia

The neighbors were telling me also that sometimes they ask to use the phone.

- Gloria Nieves

Yes, sometimes. For example, with the fiesta of La Estancia that just passed, some people asked to use the phone to talk with family or friends.

As long as there's a prepaid phonecard, we can let them use the phone.

My mom puts 10 dollars on the card. So, as I told you, it's only for emergencies.

I'll call my brother or sisters and tell them: "look, I just have a little bit of money on the phonecard, I'm calling on the cell phone, so call me back."

And then they call me back.

So this way, by trying to economize, the card lasts about a month.

Leaving La Estancia:

- Silvia

Father, tell me, approximately how many people live in the county of Pucará?

- Father Pañi

In the highland areas that I visit there are about 10,000 people. The whole county has 16,000.

- Padre Pañi (continua)

Noventa por ciento está en los sitios alejados. El diez por ciento está concentrado en el centro.

Todas las semanas salgo a distintas comunidades. Tengo cerca de 40 comunidades como la que acabamos de visitar...

...Y es muy largo acompañar, vivir junto a la gente...

- Father Pañi (continued)

Ninety percent live far out. Ten percent is concentrated downtown Pucará.

Every week, I visit different communities. I have almost 40 communities I visit regularly like the one we were just in...

...And it's tough accompanying, living with the people...

6. EMAIL VS. TELÉFONO

En Cuenca:

- Mónica

Nosotros tenemos nuestra casita aparte, entonces casi sólo venimos los fines de semana, y cuando ellos llaman no estamos nosotros. Prácticamente todo este tiempo nosotros hemos pasado incomunicados. Sabemos algo de ellos por intermedio de papá, de mamá, que nos cuentan.

Y últimamente, en este año, yo por intermedio de mi trabajo he logrado contactar con dos de ellos mandándonos emails.

Oiga, muy lindo, porque nuestra relación como que ha comenzado a revivir de nuevo, ¿no? No es igual que la carta, porque con la carta usted se sienta y a veces ya le interrumpe y se va hasta la idea. Tiene que estar bien concentrada para eso.

En el email, en cambio, como que las cosas fluyen más rápido. Y como que se limita uno a contestar lo que ellos han mandado ese momento.

En cambio la carta... hasta que ellos lleguen, y vuelta hasta que uno se anime a querer responder, la carta ya se ha perdido. Y volver a leer lo que ellos han mandado, para poderles responder, resulta más... más difícil.

Ya le digo, es ese momento. Yo ahora leo en la mañana, le guardo, y en la tarde le cojo y le respondo.

Saludos, saludos... uniformes para Willo, ese es otro...

6. EMAIL VS. TELEPHONE

In Cuenca:

- Mónica

We have our own separate house, and we only come here on weekends. When they call, we're not in. Practically the whole time they've been away we haven't been in touch. We've heard how they're doing through mom and dad, who tell us.

But lately, this year, at work I've been able to contact two of them through email.

It's really nice because our relationship is coming back to life again. It's not the same as a letter, because with a letter you sit down, and sometimes you're interrupted, and you lose the idea. You really have to concentrate for that.

With email, on the other hand, everything flows faster. It's like you're limited to respond to what they've sent you right then.

But with letters...until they arrive, and then until you're in the mood to respond, you've already lost them. And to go back and read what they've sent, to be able to respond, ends up being harder.

Now what I do is read their messages in the morning, save them, and then in the afternoon, I'll write back.

Greetings, greetings, uniforms for Willy, that's another one...

Uniformes:

- Mónica

Ellos me mandaron a hacer a mí unos uniformes para un campeonato.

- Raúl

Deportes...

- Mónica

Entonces, me mandaban seguidito. Hoy en la mañana me escribía uno, verás, te mando tal modelo. Yo, igual, les respondía, ya, verán, la señora dice que me va a cobrar tanto...

Aquí está, vea... aquí me mandaban indicando todo lo que ellos querían. Éste era el modelo del uniforme. Aquí querían el logotipo... Aquí está la pantaloneta, el logotipo, número de camiseta aquí.

En Queens:

- William (con uniforme)

Un uniforme completo, lo que es las medias, pantaloneta, camiseta, costaba 30 dólares, me parece, como el valor mínimo aquí en Queens. Mientras que mandándolo a hacer, y con envío y todo, me parece que sale un valor menor de 14 o 15 dólares.

En Cuenca:

- Mónica

Esto es lo que querían que vaya en el centro vuelta, de toda la camiseta: Barrial Blanco, Cuenca. Y este dibujito, que es en Ying Yang, que dicen ellos.

Uniforms:

- Mónica

They asked me to order some uniforms for a local championship.

- Raúl

Sports...

- Mónica

So they sent me several emails. One morning one of them wrote me, and he said: "I'm sending you this style." And I said: "OK, look, the shopowner says it'll cost this much..."

Here it is, look... They sent messages describing everything that they wanted. This is the style of the uniform. Here they wanted the logo... Here are the shorts, the logo, the jersey number here.

In Queens:

- William (in uniform)

A complete uniform with socks, shorts, jersey, costs at least 30 dollars, I would say, here in Queens. But if I get it made in Ecuador, with delivery and everything, it costs no more than 14 or 15 dollars.

In Cuenca:

- Mónica

This is the logo they wanted to put on the jersey: Barrial Blanco, Cuenca. And this little drawing, the Yin Yang.

En Queens:

- William

Estos sellos fueron enviados por intermedio de la computadora. Inclusive de cómo fue la confección, el color, todo.

En Cuenca:

- Mónica

Ahora que he logrado contactar con ellos, si tengo mis problemas les cuento. Dicen bueno, sabes, espero que te superes. Ya has de ir saliendo de esto. O sea, nos apoyamos mutuamente. Y me siento de nuevo como antes.

Por teléfono a veces hasta nos faltan las palabras. Es más difícil dialogar, es más difícil conversar, tanto de parte de ellos como de mí.

Porque mi hermano también me ha dicho igual: "sabes que esta alternativa que hemos hallado me parece buena, porque tengo mayor facilidad para escribir, para expresarme".

En Queens:

- William

Esa es la facilidad... No hemos tenido tiempo de contactarnos por teléfono, pero ahora que se me ocurrió revisar, pues me di cuenta de que me había escrito por medio del email.

In Queens:

- William

The logos were sent through email, as well as the instructions for the whole uniform, the color, everything.

In Cuenca:

- Mónica

Now that we've been in touch, if I'm having problems, I'll talk to them.

They say: "we hope it comes out OK." We support each other, and now I feel like I did before they left.

On the phone, sometimes we don't know what to say. It's hard to talk, for them and for me.

My brother also said the same thing: "you know, this alternative we've found is great, because I'm much better at writing, to express myself."

In Queens:

- William

This makes it easy. We haven't had time to call each other, but I just checked my email and found out that my sister wrote me.

Quito y Madrid:

- Gloria

Una llamada telefónica es sumamente cara y, más que todo, se riga a cosas bien estrictas y necesarias. Y eso se vuelve como cada vez más monótono, una rutina que va cansando.

Ya no tiene cobertura, entonces ya se fue... Es que sí me dijo que le llame a las once y yo no me acordé. Y ya van a ser las doce.

Con ochenta centavos que aquí vale una hora o, como socio, cincuenta centavos, se puede conversar mucho más con las personas que están en España. Incluso, se les puede mandar fotos, se les puede mandar tarjetas, bueno, hay un sinnúmero de cosas que se pueden hacer, lo que en el teléfono no se permite. Muchas veces en el teléfono no se puede decir, incluso por el recelo de la gente que te está mirando o que te está escuchando... no puedes por lo menos decir: "me hiciste falta" o "te extrañé". Y son cosas que el ser querido, que está lejos y solo, necesita.

- Luis

Gloria prefiere escribir. Escribir solamente tú lees, en cambio hablar, siquiera escuchas.... ¿sabes lo que te digo? Entonces siquiera le escuchas a tu ser querido, o lo que sea.

Bueno hija, ya, te deajo, ¿no? Qué pases bien, ¿no? Ya, salúdales a mis hijos... Chao.

Yo, por ejemplo, sí prefiero hablar por teléfono que escribir. Me gusta escribir sí, pero, yo prefiero hablar mejor y ahí ya entendernos así.

Quito and Madrid:

- Gloria

A phone call is extremely expensive and, more than anything, it's only used for very important and necessary things. It becomes something monotonous, a tiring routine.

There's no longer coverage, so he's gone...He told me to call him at eleven and I forgot. Now it's almost noon.

For 80 cents, or as a member, for 50 cents, you get to use the Internet for an hour and can talk a lot more with people in Spain. You can even send pictures or greeting cards. There are innumerable things you can do that the phone doesn't let you do.

Many times on the phone, you can't say what you want because of all the people who are watching, or listening to you. You can't even say: "I missed you" or "I wish you were here." And these are things a loved one, who's far away and alone, needs to hear.

- Luis

Gloria prefers to write. When they write, you can only read. But when you talk you can even hear them. That's something different. You know what I mean? At least you can hear your loved one or whoever it is.

OK, honey, I'm going to go now. Be well, OK? Hug the kids for me. See you.

I do prefer to talk on the phone than to write. Sure I like to write, but I prefer to talk on the phone and solve things that way.

8. NEGOCIOS A LA DISTANCIA

En la construcción:

- Gloria

!Ay! Justo llegué cuando se iba.

¿Cómo está don Patricio?

Todos los días me toca venir...

- Silvia

¿Qué es lo que vienes a hacer?

- Gloria

Primerito, por mi perro, que es el cuidador de mi casa.

Y de ahí, ahora que está trabajando el señor, vengo a ver, por ejemplo, qué es lo que se ha avanzado, así.

Por ejemplo yo, si veo ahorita que me dice algo el señor, inmediatamente me toca llamarle...

En la calle:

- Gloria

¿Me puede dar cargando de una vez?

Una o dos veces por semana me toca llamarle súper urgente.

Entonces me comunico desde el celular, porque el teléfono fijo te cobra muchos impuestos y es carísima la llamada.

Ya... otra cosa, negro. Le dije acerca de lo que le tienes que pagar a don Patricio.

8. DOING BUSINESS FROM FAR AND AWAY

At the new house:

- Gloria

Ay! I'm arriving just when you're leaving.

How are you, don Patricio?

I have to come here every day.

- Silvia

What is it that you're doing here?

- Gloria

First, I come to feed my dog since he's the guardian of the house.

And now that don Patricio is working, I come to check how the work is going.

For instance, if don Patricio asks for something, I immediately have to call my husband.

On the street:

- Gloria

Can you help me to refill the phonecard?

Once or twice a week I have to call him very urgently.

I use the cell phone, because the land line charges lots of taxes and the phone call becomes too expensive.

OK... another thing, honey. I was talking with don Patricio about the money you owe him.

Él máximo necesita pagar el material que ha sacado el día 20.

- Luis (por teléfono)

¿Cuándo es 20, hija?

- Gloria

Creo que es el próximo miércoles.

- Luis

Bueno, si ya tengo que pagar, le pago...

- Gloria

Ahhh, ya, ya.

Chequeando el Internet en Queens:

- Silvia

Ahorita creo que se hallan en algo interesante, chicos. ¿Qué hacen?

- Adrián

Curioseando lo que es negocios, o algún tipo de casa, construcción, terrenos.

- Silvia

¿Estás conectado al Internet?

- Adrián

Sí

- Silvia

¿Y dónde estás buscando?

En Bienes Raíces Amazonas. Ahora estábamos chequeando una casa que está por el estadio.

He needs to pay for the supplies that he bought by the 20th.

- Luis (on the phone)

When is the 20th, honey?

- Gloria

I think it's next Wednesday.

- Luis

Well, if it's time to pay, I'll pay...

- Gloria

OK, good.

Browsing the Internet in Queens:

- Silvia

It seems you're checking out something interesting, guys. What are you doing?

- Adrián

We're checking out business possibilities, some kind of house or house in the works, or a piece of land.

- Silvia

Are you connected to the Internet?

- Adrián

Yes

- Silvia

And where are you looking?

In *Amazonas Real Estate*. Just now we were checking out a house near the stadium.

- Silvia

¿Una casa aquí en Queens?

- Adrián

No, en Cuenca.

Como yo le había hablado antes, mis ideas son regresar. Entonces, me gusta curiosear un poquito sobre lo que es terrenos y cosas así.

A ver si de pronto hay un tipo de buena oportunidad... aprovechar eso.

Justamente estábamos chequeando una casa que está en el estadio, pero es demasiado cara.

Está en 275 mil dólares.

- Silvia

Montón de plata...

- Adrián

Aquí me tendría que quedar 20 años más para hacer eso.

Entrevista en Cuenca:

- Mercedes

Ahorita está haciendo una refacción en la otra casita.

- Silvia

Otra casita de ustedes...

- Mercedes

No, eso es ya de nuestros tres hijos, los que se fueron...

- Silvia

A house here in Queens?

- Adrián

No, in Cuenca.

As I told you before, I want to go back to Ecuador. So, I like to check out what properties are available and things like that.

Maybe a really good opportunity will appear... Try to take advantage of it.

We were just looking over this house near the stadium, but it's too expensive.

It costs 275,000 dollars.

- Silvia

What a lot of money...

- Adrián

I would have to stay here 20 more years to buy that house!

Entrevista in Cuenca:

- Mercedes

Now he's fixing up the other house.

- Silvia

Another house of yours...

- Mercedes

No, that house belongs to our three kids.

- Arturo

De los que se fueron al último.

Mientras salen de la casa:

Estoy sudando yo, oye, sólo haciendo ese disparate...

- Mercedes

Para que veas que los quehaceres de la casa hacen sudar.

- Arturo

Como si no supiera...

La casa de los hijos:

- Mercedes

Les hicimos que se endeuden y les compramos la casita.

- Arturo

A base de lo que les hicimos hacer esos esfuerzos grandes, porque tenían que mandar 2,826 dólares mensuales durante tres años.

Es una casita de tres pisos. Es un departamento para cada uno porque es de los tres.

Entonces ahorita está en arriendos. Me desocuparon la planta baja y estoy haciendo pintar.

- Arturo

The ones that left most recently.

While leaving home:

Look, I'm sweating from doing hardly anything...

- Mercedes

Now you see that house work is tiring.

- Arturo

As if I didn't know...

The kids' house:

- Mercedes

We encouraged them to get a loan and then we bought the house for them.

- Arturo

It was a great effort for them, because they had to send 2,826 dollars every month over three years.

It's a three-family house. Each one of them owns one apartment.

We have tenants in the house, but the first floor apartment is empty and I'm getting it painted now.

Las remesas:

- Mercedes

Mi hijo me manda una mesadita cada mes. Yo voy a retirar en Delgado Travel. Los otros utilizan este otro servicio, Servipagos. Por allí me envían ellos.

- Luis Dávila
Plan Migración, Comunicación y Desarrollo

Bueno, en este momento se señala que alrededor de un millón 500 mil ecuatorianos están fuera del país, entre toda la gente que vive en Estados Unidos, en España, en Italia, y en otros países de Europa principalmente.

Eso es el 10% de la población ecuatoriana.

- Silvia.

El año pasado, entonces, ¿cuál era el equivalente al ingreso vía remesas?

- Luis Dávila

Alrededor de 1,600 millones de dólares. El petróleo está un poquito más arriba, pero hay una gran diferencia.

El petróleo tiene que pagar una serie de costos. En cambio esto es plata que entra directo al país.

O sea, aquí no pasa por el Estado... Bueno, los bancos se quedan con una tajada enorme.

Pero, de todas maneras, esto entra al bolsillo de la gente. Esto es como poner un suero directo a la vena.

Remittances:

- Mercedes

My son wires me money every month. I pick it up at Delgado Travel. My other children use another service, Servipagos.

- Luis Dávila
Migration, Communication and Development Project

Well, at this moment about 1.5 million Ecuadorians are living abroad, mostly in the United States, Spain, Italy and other European countries.

That represents 10 percent of the Ecuadorian population.

- Silvia

The past year, then, how much money was sent to Ecuador through remittances?

- Luis Dávila

About 1.6 billion dollars. The income through oil exports is a bit higher, but there is a big difference...

Crude oil has to pay a series of taxes. Remittances, on the other hand, enter the country directly.

In other words, remittances do not pass through the national government... Well, the banks do take a huge chunk.

Even so, this is money that goes directly into people's pockets. It is like feeding the body through an intravenous.

9. ¿MIGRANTES GLOBALIZADOS?

- Hernán Ramos
Editor general – EL COMERCIO

Hay un migrante globalizado ahora, y eso es bueno en la medida en que ese migrante está siendo parte de un circuito de información que le conecta con su país, con el sitio donde está y, en general, con el mundo.

El migrante de los años 60 era un migrante, digámoslo así, fabril. El migrante actual es un migrante electrónico.

Los otros migrantes se fueron. Muchos de ellos se quedaron, hicieron familia fuera del país y vivieron con la nostalgia en el fondo de su alma y con el desarraigo permanente.

Este migrante está yendo y viniendo. Es el migrante que tiene la posibilidad de subirse a un avión, y si no se sube al avión está conectado con el país a través de los medios electrónicos de comunicación.

Ya sea a través de los periódicos, o directamente por el teléfono o por el internet.

Yo diría que es un migrante que está afuera pero no lo está tanto.

- Gonzalo Maldonado
Editor general – elcomercio.com

Bueno, éste es un micrositio que forma parte del portal de elcomercio.com, el sitio se llama “Ecuadorianos en el mundo”.

9. GLOBALIZED MIGRANTS?

- Hernán Ramos
Editor-in-Chief – El Comercio

There is a globalized migrant now, and this is good in the way migrants are becoming part of the information circuit that connects them with their country, with the place where they are now, and in general with the world.

The migrant of the 1960's, let's say, was a laborer. Today's migrant is an “electronic” migrant.

The laborers left the country. Many of them remained abroad, had families and dealt with nostalgia in the depths of their souls and with their permanent uprooting.

The “electronic” migrant is coming and going. This migrant has the possibility of getting on an airplane, or if not traveling on a plane, is still connected with the country through electronic means of communication.

Whether it be through newspapers, or directly by telephone or the Internet.

I would say this is a migrant who's abroad but not completely.

- Gonzalo Maldonado
Editor-in-Chief – elcomercio.com

This is a site that belongs to the elcomercio.com website. This site is called “Ecuadorians in the World.”

- Gonzalo Maldonado (continúa)

Lo que quiere reflejar el nombre de esta sección es que los ecuatorianos estamos desperdigados por todo el planeta, que este fenómeno es tan importante que merece una sección especial.

Ésta es una sección que se llama “Álbum familiar”, donde la gente nos envía fotografías.

Son fotografías muy familiares, fotografías íntimas que la gente tiene la confianza de enviarnos, con un pequeño saludo, para que nosotros las publiquemos.

Tenemos también este espacio, que se llama “Historias de éxito”, donde contamos lo que hacen los ecuatorianos afuera.

Ésta es la historia de un chico que se llama Fernando Guerrero, que es al parecer muy talentoso con la pelota y ha sido ya reclutado por las divisiones inferiores del Real Madrid.

Yo creo que se está formando una especie de doble ciudadanía, un sentido de ciudadanía más global.

Los ecuatorianos que están afuera, en España o Estados Unidos, a través de medios de comunicación como una página web, también están transmitiendo conocimiento, cultura ciudadana, a los ecuatorianos que vivimos acá.

Ellos nos dicen cómo vivir en un país donde hay leyes que se cumplen, donde hay instituciones sólidas, donde hay igualdad de oportunidades.

- Gonzalo Maldonado (continued)

The site’s name reflects that Ecuadorians are now spread out throughout the planet. This is such an important phenomenon that it deserves a special section

This section is called “Family Album.” It’s built with photographs that people send us.

These are intimate photos that people trustfully send us, accompanied with short greetings, so we can post them.

We also have this other site called “Success Stories,” where we talk about what Ecuadorians accomplish abroad.

This is the story of Fernando Guerrero, a young boy who apparently is very talented at soccer. He’s already been recruited by one of Real Madrid’s minor league teams.

I believe that another kind of dual citizenship is taking shape, a more global sense of citizenship.

Ecuadorians who live abroad now, in Spain or the United States, through means of communication such as a web page are sharing knowledge of civic responsibilities with those Ecuadorians who live in the country.

They are showing us how to live in a country where laws are respected, where there are solid institutions, where equal opportunity exists.

- Gonzalo Maldonado (continua)

Cómo, en una sociedad así, las personas podemos abrirnos un espacio, independientemente de quiénes seamos.

- Hernán Ramos

No estamos midiendo el alcance, la incidencia y el valor de esta migración. Sobre todo la de la oleada de estos últimos cinco años, desde que pasamos a la dolarización.

Este migrante está globalizado, es un migrante intercomunicado, es un migrante más formado, es un migrante que ya no le tiene miedo a las teclas de un computador, es un migrante que usa el celular, que entra al Internet y sabe cómo tiene que moverse.

Es un migrante más exigente, y ese migrante le va a pedir cuentas a este país un día.

Phonecenter en Milán:

- Gloria Orellana

Estamos nosotros ahorita empadronando. Yo aquí doy, asimismo, el servicio de empadronar a los ecuatorianos.

Para que llegue a cumplirse la doble nacionalidad.

Para nosotros poder ejercer el voto en el exterior, para presidente y vicepresidente, ahora en las nuevas elecciones que va a haber en el 2006.

- Gonzalo Maldonado (continued)

They talk about how, in that kind of society, people can open up a space for themselves regardless of who they are.

- Hernán Ramos

We're not measuring the reach, the repercussion and the value of migration, especially of the last wave that developed during the past five years, after the US dollar was adopted as the new Ecuadorian currency.

This new migrant is globalized and more educated. It's a migrant that doesn't fear the computer keyboard, who uses a cell phone and knows how to browse the Internet.

This is a migrant with high expectations, and one day this migrant will hold the country accountable for its actions.

Phonecenter in Milan:

- Gloria Orellana

We're now registering Ecuadorians in the area to vote. They can come here to the phonecenter and register.

What we want is to make use of the dual citizenship.

For the coming elections in 2006, we want to be able to cast our votes for the new Ecuadorian president and vice president.

10. ENCUENTROS DEL TIPO VIRTUAL

- Alberto Acosta

En algún sentido puede ser muy doloroso también.

Por ejemplo, cuando se producía una ruptura familiar, la ruptura, por la distancia, por eso de que “ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente”, no era mayor.

Pero a través del Internet quién sabe si uno está más interrelacionado y no termina por curar esa herida o por tomar la distancia suficiente.

Y la nostalgia se mantiene mucho más presente. De alguna manera menos aguda, porque hay posibilidad hasta de verse, hacerse señas en la pantalla de la computadora.

- Gloria Orellana

Con una llamada uno se siente ya realizado... Bueno, yo tengo mi mamá ¿no? Todos los días le doy una llamada.

- Silvia

Y el poder llamar, ¿ayuda o no? ¿Cambia ese sentimiento de nostalgia o no?

- Gloria Orellana

Sí, a veces sí. Bueno, en mi caso, ¿no?

Pero otros veo que tienen problemas. Siempre la familia, que yo te he dicho que hagas esto y no haces, que fulano está mal, que fulano está enfermo...

10. THE NEXT BEST THING

- Alberto Acosta

In some senses, it can be quite painful...

For instance, in the past, when there was a family breakup, this rupture may not have seemed that serious for the person living abroad, because of the distance, because. “out of sight, out of mind,” the saying goes.

However, through these new means of communication, one might be more connected with the family and it can be more difficult to heal that wound and move on.

In that way nostalgia is much more present, although it can be also less acute, since now there is even the possibility of seeing each other through the computer screen.

- Gloria Orellana

With just a phone call, you feel so happy. My mother is in Ecuador and I call her every day.

- Silvia

And being able to call, does it really help? Does it make you feel less nostalgic?

- Gloria Orellana

Yes, sometimes it does. At least in my case.

But I see that for other people it represents problems. It's always the family: “I told you to do this and you haven't done it. This one's in a bad situation... The other is sick...”

Salen desesperados, llorando, que tengo que enviar dinero, que de allá siempre me piden dinero.

Videoconferencia 2:

- Vaneza

Don Arturo, ¿y usted cómo está?

- Arturo

¿Yo?

- Vaneza

Se ve bien jovencito, lleno de salud, todo.

- Arturo

Yo andando en agonía vivo.

- Vaneza

Ya, claro...

Entrevista con Adrián:

- Adrián

Eso fue lo máximo. O sea, lo máximo aparte de tenerles aquí, personalmente y darles un abrazo y todo eso.

De pronto lo siguiente es eso, poderles ver por lo menos. Con una pantalla que era grande y tener una comunicación directa.

No es igual que por teléfono, ¿no? El hecho de sólo escucharse... el resto queda a la imaginación: ¿qué estarán haciendo? ¿Dónde estarán? ¿Con quién estarán?

They leave the phonecenter desperate, crying. "I have to send money," they say. "From home they're always asking for money."

Videoconference 2:

- Vaneza

Don Arturo, how are you doing?

- Arturo

Me?

- Vaneza

You look very young, full of health.

- Arturo

I'm living in constant agony.

- Vaneza

Yeah, uh huh...

Interview with Adrián:

- Adrián

That was the best. I mean the best option apart from having them here, in person, and being able to hug them.

Maybe, that's the next best thing. To be able to see them, at least, on a big screen, and to have direct communication with them.

It's not like the phone, you know? With the phone you can only hear and the rest is left up to the imagination: what are they doing? Where are they? Who are they with?

Videoconferencia 2:

- Arturo

Lo que les mandé a ustedes es sólo para ustedes. Y avisaránle a Paúl también que vaya a retirar, ¿no?

- Mercedes

Déense tiempo hoy día mismo para que vayan a ver.

- Vaneza

Sí, ahorita que salgamos de aquí nos vamos para allá.

- Arturo

Váyanse con la Silvia para que ella les filme.

Envío cuyes:

- Mercedes

Hasta luego señores cuysitos!

Videoconferencia 2:

- Arturo

What I sent you is just for you. Tell Paúl to go pick up his package too, OK?

- Mercedes

Make sure you do it today.

- Vaneza

Yes, we're going to pick it up right after leaving here.

- Arturo

Go with Silvia, so she can film you.

Sending the "cuyes:"

- Mercedes

Good bye, Mr. Guinea pigs!

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