

# The statistical properties of the networks of emigrants: the Ecuadorian case

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## ABSTRACT

This article shows that the threshold model appropriately analysed can explain the emigration process as a consequence of the network features, where the willingness to emigrate depends on the personal and household conditions borne by the emigrant. In such a case, the emigration process can be defined in terms of a Pólya schema, and the emigration rate converges almost surely to a random variable with a beta distribution, which fully characterizes the network (assimilation, integration, separation or marginalization). The model is applied to Ecuador, which has experienced an unprecedented wave of emigration since 1998. We show that, despite the massive exodus, the process does not constitute a diaspora, because Ecuadorians do not interact appropriately with natives.

## INTRODUCTION

Defining an immigrant as integrated or non-integrated is not a simple task. In a first approach, integration means assuring equal opportunities of access to education, labour market, housing and health, offering meaningful opportunities to participate in the host society and economy (European Commission, 2016). But, as the European Commission recognizes in the “Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals”, integration is not just about learning the language, finding a house or getting a job. It is also about developing and sustaining real people-to-people contacts. The involvement of immigrants themselves in the design and implementation of integration policies, according to the European Union (EU) (2018) is essential to improve their integration outcome.<sup>1</sup> But the involvement of immigrants implies considering their predisposition to live integrated in the host society, beyond economic achievements, as an important concern; that is, recognizing the right to live non-integrated.

The predisposition of an immigrant to live integrated leads to the second approach to this matter. Berry (1997) defines four possible strategies or states of interaction between the migrant and his or her host and origin countries: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization (Figure 1).

According to Berry (1997), integration is a strategy which occurs when the immigrant is interested in maintaining the original culture while in daily interactions with other groups. The immigrant maintains some degree of cultural integrity and, at the same time, she/he seeks to participate as an integral part of a larger social network.

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