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Article

Processes of Discrimination and Humiliation Experienced by Ecuadorian Immigrant Workers in Spain

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Abstract

The workplace is currently one of the main places of discrimination for socially vulnerable groups such as immigrant workers, who are often required to take on highly stigmatized, menial jobs under supervisors who subject them to daily mistreatment and racism. This study adopted a qualitative approach to 42 semi-structured interviews of Ecuadorian immigrant workers residing in Spain to explore the processes of discrimination these laborers feel in their everyday workplaces. The findings clearly indicate that immigrant workers can be victims of daily discrimination, which is evidenced by the higher degree of scrutiny and lower levels of trust they suffer compared to their Spanish counterparts, and by their supervisors' lack of compliance with contractual agreements. As these immigrants are obliged to take on less qualified jobs, they suffer from a lack of recognition and a sense of being undervalued. This analysis also gathered evidence of interviewees' daily humiliations imparted by their supervisors—and even, at times, by work colleagues—in the form of racial slurs, verbal abuse, and unequal treatment, leaving them feeling powerless and helpless. Most of our respondents in fact find themselves in a predicament they do not know how to confront and cannot reject. All of these factors lead to feelings of humiliation and lack of independence.

Keywords

discrimination; everyday racism; humiliation; workplace; Ecuadorian workers; Spain

Issue

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1. Introduction

In spite of the vast body of research on the daily discrimination and humiliation encountered by immigrants throughout Europe, an aspect that remains largely unexplored is the link between discrimination and labor market precariousness. The current economic situation, and in particular the labor markets of high-income nations, benefit enormously from the “capture” of immigrant workers (Fouskas, 2018; Markova et al., 2016). Bryson and White (2019) point out that three out of ten workplaces comprising five or more employees tend to hire

immigrant workers and that the probability of engaging them increases with larger businesses.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2018), there are approximately 258 million immigrants throughout the world, of which an estimated 164 million are workers. About two-thirds live in high-income countries, forming a key labor resource. Large-scale immigration in the case of Spain did not begin until the 21st century and the proportion of these workers among the total working-age population was practically insignificant at that moment. Their number since then has risen exponentially due to a growing

demand, particularly in the construction, agriculture, and services sectors (Camacho et al., 2020), which has provoked an increase in the degree of precariousness and occupational segregation among Spanish workers (Diaz-Serrano, 2013). The majority of the immigrants to Spain are from outside the European Union, notably Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2019), which has led to coining the term “Latin Americanization” to describe the immigration flows in Spain (Hierro, 2016).

The most recent Spanish economic crisis led to a deterioration of immigrant working conditions, triggering an increase in the processes of discrimination especially directed toward South American nationals. This group, together with workers from Sub-Saharan Africa, accounts for most cases of racism and discrimination (SOS Racismo, 2017). Llácer et al. (2009) point out that one-fifth of the Ecuadorian immigrants in Spain who participated in their investigation stated that they experienced continuous discrimination.

1.1. Discrimination and Precariousness

Different theories have attempted to explain processes of discrimination. According to Fibbi et al. (2021), these can be grouped into individual (due to personality differences and negative attitudes towards minority groups), social, and organizational levels. Social and organizational theories suggest that inequalities do not stem from attitudes and beliefs, but from organizational structures (Fiske, 1998).

One of the many types of discrimination affecting immigrants relates to the precariousness of their working conditions, circumstances that are further enhanced by the deregulation of labor relations and the fragmentation of markets. This aspect is even greater among specific vulnerable groups such as immigrants, which can lead to a devaluation of their professional expectations upon arrival in a new destination, obliging them to redefine their migratory project (Bretones, 2020; Jørgensen, 2016; Schierup et al., 2015).

In 2015, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights identified several factors that affected precariousness among immigrant workers. Certain factors relate to personal circumstances (e.g., language barriers or low levels of education) while others are connected to their workplace (e.g., working in isolation or with little contact with the outside world, which renders them “invisible”; working in specific economic sectors). As these factors can interrelate, working in isolation can compromise language proficiency.

The issue of language as a factor in workplace discrimination has been addressed by various authors (Buchanan, et al., 2018; Koopmans, 2015). Their findings suggest that language plays a key role in the sense that less proficient immigrants encounter greater discrimination. More recent studies (Schmaus & Kristen, 2022; Spence et al., 2022), on the contrary, have determined

that accent as opposed to linguistic competence or even a foreign surname plays a fundamental role in discrimination. Accents can thus be linked to a negative categorization and evaluation of immigrant workers. Hence foreign or non-standard accents have implications in job development, leading many immigrants to attempt to reduce their foreign accent to minimize discrimination and job segregation (Cocchiara et al., 2016).

In any case, inequality also paves the way to a “twofold discrimination”: In the workplace, this is manifest by employers who pay immigrant workers less than their native counterparts on the one hand and, on the other, by an antagonizing rhetoric triggered by market complications that places immigrants as the cause of reduced wages and a decrease in employment opportunities. This places the focus of the problem on the immigrant workers rather than the employers who determine working conditions, turning the victim of discrimination (the immigrant) into the perpetrator of unemployment among native workers, an argument often used in anti-immigration rhetoric (Bellovary et al., 2020).

A consequence of this precariousness is the hoarding, by native workers, of certain positions, leaving immigrants access only to menial low-paid positions (Drange & Helland, 2019) perceived as unpleasant or demeaning (Ahmad, 2020; Moyce & Schenker, 2018). This situation is further aggravated for immigrants from low-income countries (Bratsberg et al., 2014), resulting in them being, as a whole, negatively stigmatized—which in turn has detrimental consequences for their health in the form of stress, anxiety, and depression (Koseoglu et al., 2022).

These socioeconomic and labor conditions thus transform immigrant workers into “prisoners of their own destiny” since, in addition to the worsening of their labor conditions, their planned project of immigration in many cases becomes a social and family failure back in their country of origin. This is especially the case of unskilled workers in Spain in sectors marked by a higher unemployment rates (Hellgren & Serrano, 2017). To these different aspects one must also add attitudes and behaviors of rejection in host societies manifested through various, often subtle, forms of harassment and discrimination (Krings et al., 2014).

1.2. Discrimination and Humiliation

Processes of discrimination and everyday racism suffered by immigrant workers can often take the form of extensive and continuous episodes of humiliation and explicit or subtle aggressions on the part of their supervisors and native work colleagues. The findings of a review by Sterud et al. (2018) of 82 scientific articles indeed highlight a prevalence of discrimination and harassment aimed at immigrant workers. Moreover, the European Working Conditions Surveys (Eurofound, 2010) also emphasize that immigrant workers experience discrimination and harassment more often. Similar results can be gleaned from other national studies such as that by Bergbom et al.

(2015) in Finland reporting that the risk of being intimidated is almost three times higher among immigrants than nationals. Similarly, evidence from New Zealand shows that immigrants are much more likely to report cases of workplace discrimination than individuals born in the country (Daldy et al., (2013). Krings et al. (2014) likewise identify subtle discrimination and workplace incivility in Switzerland, especially directed towards qualified immigrants perceived to be highly competitive.

The different theories on discrimination share a common feature, notably that it upholds the privileges of specific groups over others and, as such, bolsters the existing relations of power between groups, thus perpetuating ethnic and racial hierarchies (Fibbi et al., 2021). This social construct leads to their subordination (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2014), generating a greater probability of mistreatment by their supervisors and other native employees (Hanna & Ortega, 2016). This likewise exposes them to greater exploitation: Though there are social protection mechanisms for workers in Spain, these are sometimes symbolic (not real) in the case of immigrants, either because the latter are often unaware of this protection system or because they are afraid to denounce their employers (Caparrós Ruiz, 2014; Murphy, 2013).

Discrimination and inequality in many cases entail systematic practices and expressions of disrespect and contempt that also form part of a process of humiliation and personal degradation. For Parekh (2009), this type of humiliation is based on an ideology that legitimizes an assault on groups considered inferior based on race or ethnicity. In this sense, humiliation also entails an internalization of the degradation process on behalf of the immigrants who tend to accept their supposed inferiority.

These different circumstances, in addition to the great number of challenges and negative aspects that immigrants face on a daily basis, especially in the workplace, lead to higher levels of anxiety (Doki et al., 2018; Roura et al., 2015) and a predisposition to depression (Nadim et al., 2016).

All of this suggests that the immigration experience, especially in its early stages, is associated with high levels of stress, which explains why immigrants tend to resort to social networks to cope and connect with people with whom they share cultural ties; these are mechanisms that can easily assist in reducing levels of stress, loneliness, and psychological distress (Ward & Styles, 2003).

In any case, confronting these daily events of discrimination and humiliation requires taking into consideration the personal resources of the immigrants themselves (Bulut & Gayman, 2016), which differ greatly between unskilled and highly skilled workers, especially as the latter will certainly benefit from greater emotional, cognitive, and economic resources (Gheorghiu & Stephens, 2016). It is in personal and intimate spaces, linked to a perception of closeness and social support, that the immigrant worker will enrich their personal and social situation, thus reducing stress, loneliness, and anguish levels (Ward & Styles, 2003). Support and social relation-

ships with co-workers also have a buffering effect on psychological distress, contributing significantly to psychological well-being (Bretones et al., 2020; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2006). But these means of assistance, although generating initial psychological comfort, can also hurt their social integration as they can potentially play a role in perpetuating racial segregation, exclusion, and, hence, vulnerability.

Focusing on the Ecuadorian immigrant population in Spain, the objective of this study is to analyze processes of labor discrimination and humiliation encountered by immigrants occupying menial positions. This is a group that benefits from knowledge of Spanish as their mother tongue, but whose occupations are mostly limited to low-skilled jobs in the agriculture, domestic services, and construction sectors.

2. Methodology

To achieve the objective, this study applied a qualitative approach consisting of in-depth interviews with Ecuadorian immigrant workers residing in Spain. Adopting this method of interviews is potentially more beneficial than applying a quantitative design as they offer deeper insight into the character of discrimination and how it affects those who directly suffer from it rather than quantifying those who experience it. The approach also allowed the garnering of other general conclusions stemming from respondents' opinions and workplace experiences. On the other hand, summoning these unacceptable experiences of discrimination and humiliation entailed recalling troubles and traumas, which made it difficult, in many cases, for respondents to "tell their story" (Shuman, 2005).

The study therefore applied a non-probability and convenience sampling method focusing on Ecuadorian immigrants who gather on a weekly basis in the southern area of the city of Granada. This technique was particularly useful as it was possible to recruit participants with different demographic characteristics employed in different economic sectors.

Interviews lasted 43 minutes on average and were conducted face to face in Spanish following a semi-structured script drafted by a team of experts from the Universities of Granada (Spain) and Guayaquil (Ecuador). The scripts consisted of questions concerning sociodemographic aspects, working conditions, work environment perception, evaluation of workplace discrimination, and job expectations.

Prior to each session, the interviewees signed an informed consent form and adhered to the norms of the Declaration of Helsinki. Participation required them to have been born in Ecuador, speak Spanish, be at least 18 years of age at the moment of their departure from Ecuador, have resided in Spain for at least five years, and be employed. There was no economic incentive.

The final sample consisted of 42 active Ecuadorian immigrant workers based in Granada, Spain. The choice

of this province is due to it having one of Spain’s highest unemployment rates, at 21.67% (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2020).

The average age was 42.4 years and the average residence in Spain was of 14.83 years. Most respondents occupied low-skilled positions in the domestic services and cleaning sectors (43%), construction (31%), agriculture (14%), and others (12%). The sample was balanced as to sex (48% females; 52% males). Finally, all participants were *mestizos*, Ecuador’s predominant ethnic group (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, 2020).

All interviews were transcribed and coded using the qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti (version 8). The analysis began with substantive coding (both open and selective) before proceeding with theoretical coding until achieving theoretical saturation through constant comparisons. To increase the validity of the results, two experienced PhD researchers took part in the analysis and coding processes. Among the different themes and sub-themes that emerged, only those linked to discrimination processes were retained.

This approach applied a template analysis to organize the data by identifying a list of codes determined in two stages: a priori, before conducting the interviews, and a posteriori, after the analysis. Applying the methods of discourse, analysis was based on a search for new means to explore other sources of knowledge from the field of psychology and far from the dominant ideologies of positivism and scientism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012),

being closer to oral exchanges. Adopting this method is even more in keeping with immigrant research, where it is necessary to avoid subtle forms of cultural hegemony as well as a persistent Eurocentrism in the epistemological framing of the mindset of the researchers, even from the perspective of decoloniality (Grosfoguel et al., 2015). The authors have thus attempted to counteract these drawbacks by assembling a team of researchers from different countries and by avoiding the pitfalls of previous studies applying this method (Aragón & Bretones, 2020; González-González et al., 2019).

3. Results

By examining the content of each of the interviews and applying the method described above, we were able to identify the main issues related to inclusion and discrimination encountered by Ecuadorian immigrant workers in Spain. The following three codes (Table 1) were put to use to assess the transcripts of the interviews through the lenses of discrimination and precariousness.

3.1. Discriminatory Working Conditions

The sample thus indicates that the workplace is one of the main settings of discrimination and denigration expressed in the form of a workload surpassing that of their Spanish colleagues. The abuse is likewise evidenced by breaches in contractual agreements and regulatory

Table 1. Themes, subthemes, and open codes of the study.

| Themes | Subthemes | Open codes (quotes) |
|--|--|---|
| Work conditions | Conditions of mistrust | “The boss didn’t trust my word, and controlled my work, and made me do it again.” |
| | Work overload and schedule | “I’m working seven days a week.” “I work from Sunday to Sunday.” |
| | Disrespect of labor accords | “They did what they wanted with me.” “The contract was for four hours, but in the end I worked more.” |
| | Work insecurity | “I was afraid that they would kick me out.” “The boss said, ‘I’m sorry, no more work.’” |
| | Task repetition | “I had to do it again and again.” |
| Every day racism through social interactions | Excessive supervision and control | “I watched the boss standing there looking at his watch as I ironed and he said: I’m timing what you are doing.” |
| | Verbal aggressions | “Foreigner, go back to your country.” “They yell at you, they offend you.” |
| | Dehumanization | “I was treated like a dog.” |
| Psychoemotional consequences | Feeling of helplessness Sensation of helplessness | “I begged them to pay me, and they said there was no money.” “I cried tears of helplessness.” |
| | Social pressure from home country | “Because I wanted to return to my country with millions.” “Where can I get the money to successfully return to Ecuador.” |
| | Nostalgia | “There are days I feel bad, nostalgic, depressive.” “I think of my parents, my child.” |

conditions by the employer, who takes advantage of their position to impose unpaid extra hours:

The contract was for four hours, but in the end, I was also taken to clean the house of her parents, and to help out in a sewing shop owned by her husband. (interviewee no. 7, female, cleaning services)

Here immigrants are very useful to business, right? Spanish businessmen prefer immigrants because they can exploit them a bit more. (interviewee no. 14, female, domestic services)

This labor exploitation also appears to occur more frequently in the agriculture and domestic services sectors, where the immigrant laborer works alone:

I was treated very well at the construction site. But when I went to work in the fields, I was treated very badly; they often took advantage of the situation. I never liked that job because they paid very little and demanded very hard work. (interviewee no. 9, male, construction)

The interviews also point to discriminatory actions when compared to Spanish workers reflected in terms of salary:

At more than one place they wanted to pay me less. (interviewee no. 19, male, construction)

Inequalities, although recognized in all of the sectors of the study, especially concern females in domestic services since their work is solitary, lacking any control by the state:

Spanish people in the company always earn more....They paid them 1000 euros while they paid me only 750 euro. Yes, the Spanish don't have the same type of contract. (interviewee no. 14, female, domestic services)

Look, Spaniards in the company always earn more....They always pay us a little less...we earn less and work more. (interviewee no. 25, male, domestic services)

These cases reveal the vulnerability of immigrants who fear losing their jobs and accept excessive demands and hours surpassing the number indicated in the job description. The interviewees describe long daily hours, occasionally up to 12, and sometimes every day of the week without breaks. They are obliged to accept these conditions due to the scarcity of jobs and their perception of labor insecurity:

They hire you for a specific number of hours, but you have to work more hours, or they say that there are

other things to do such as care for their mother and other things....They don't want to pay for it, and if one demands what [one is owed], they say they don't need you anymore, so one loses everything, you lose it all. (interviewee no. 10, female, cleaning services)

Well, in the last job, I worked from nine to nine, 12 hours of work. (interviewee no. 13, female, domestic services)

I work from Sunday to Sunday. (interviewee no. 17, female, construction)

It is obvious that extending their working hours beyond the limit stipulated in the contract interfered with the amount of time they could devote to their own families. Moreover, unpleasant workplace experiences can have pernicious effects on family life as irritation generated at work tends to extend to the home:

One goes to work in the morning, leaves at night and comes back at night, never being able to see the children. (interviewee #33, male, construction)

Abuse of contractual agreements by their Spanish employers is a factor that further deepens immigrant insecurity and vulnerability, producing sentiments of defenselessness:

They did whatever they wanted with me, they hired me for eight hours but only paid the social security charges for two or three, and they didn't pay me....They didn't pay me. (interviewee no. 32, female, domestic services)

Well, they say that if you want to work, you have this schedule, and if not, then leave it and that's it. (interviewee no. 2, female, cleaning services)

The interviews reveal recurrent uncertainty and unease accompanied by insecurity and fear of dismissal. It is a type of anxiety that surges when witnessing the dismissal of colleagues, leading them to wonder if they are the next to go:

I always recall when the boss told us all to come, as he had to tell us something....Well, I trembled, everyone trembled. He said that he was very sorry but that the job was over for some of us...but even though it didn't affect me personally, my heart was racing as I watched my colleagues leave. (interviewee no. 1, male, construction)

3.2. Humiliating Social Interactions

Work insecurity is also often accompanied by abuse of power and humiliation in the form of discrete, more or less subtle, and/or explicit verbal aggressions. These at

times can attain a point where the worker almost feels like a slave. These types of microaggressions by native employers can range from extreme supervision and control to verbal assaults:

One day...I saw him standing there looking at the clock as I ironed. And then he said: "I'm timing you and you're taking too long." I felt humiliated, I felt like a slave, [like] if I didn't do it, well, it wasn't long before they would flog me, at least that's the way I felt. (interviewee no. 34, female, domestic services)

She asked me if I had done the job and I answered yes, but she didn't believe me and began to check and then made me do it again. (interviewee no. 10, female, cleaning services)

They see us differently, they think that they are above us, and so, in that sense, I feel there is discrimination because they can yell at a foreigner but not at a Spaniard. (interviewee no. 15, male, agriculture)

These humiliations at times turned into explicit verbal abuse and racial slurs from both supervisors and Spanish co-workers:

The bosses are bastards, they have bad temper, they yell at you, they offend you, they think that because you are a foreigner that they can treat you however they want. (interviewee no. 3, male, construction)

A co-worker who was always giving me a hard time was saying: "Foreigner, go back to your country," "you shitty *sudaca*" [a derogatory term for Hispanic Americans], things like that. (interviewee no. 9, male, construction)

This type of discrimination also manifests itself through a sense of superiority among certain individuals based exclusively on nationality:

Since we are foreigners they see us differently, they think they are above us. (interviewee no. 6, female, military)

Sentiments of humiliation and inequality by a supervisor are also transmitted through senseless repetitions of the tasks due to an absolute lack of trust. This affects both males and females regardless of their jobs:

She did not trust me and wanted to make sure it was done correctly...and made me repeat it. (interviewee no. 35, female, domestic services)

They look at you after work to see if you are hiding something in your bag, or if you have something in your hands...they look at you badly. (interviewee no. 4, male, construction)

Furthermore, these processes are also at times reproduced by Ecuadorian nationals themselves appointed as supervisors who assume a style and manner imitating their local Spanish bosses:

There are people, compatriots, put in charge...and as I tell you...it is the worst thing there is because, as they say, we at times try to hurt each other...we trample each other, that is the worst thing there is. (interviewee no. 28, male, construction)

Ecuadorian workers likewise signal microaggressions and humiliations from local Spanish co-workers. Although often subtle and expressed as jokes, they evidence inequitable social relations and an underestimation of immigrants:

He said that it's not because I'm a *sudaca*. Of course, even if they say the word as a joke, they are still saying it. (interviewee no. 16, male, street salesman)

In the army, when practicing shooting, they say: "Don't use the rifle, get a bow and arrow...just kidding." (interviewee no. 39, female, military)

All these events obviously prompt a sense of dehumanization and undervaluation. Several interviewees in fact expressed that they felt treated worse than an animal, noting that pets received better attention and care:

A dog, in fact, is better treated and is better seen than an immigrant. (interviewee no. 16, male, street salesman)

He treated me like a dog, come on, like a slave. (interviewee no. 17, female, construction)

This dehumanization is also identified by other authors. The study of Filipino female domestic workers in Hong Kong by Ladegaard (2015), for example, reports they were treated like animals as they were fed the leftovers of the employers.

3.3. Emotional and Affective Consequences

All daily expressions of racism or microaggression, including those in the workplace, have strong emotional consequences. The anguish of immigrants, particularly those subjected to poor treatment, is not only a source of stress but causes anger and helplessness as well, sensations with which they do not know how to cope:

And I cried tears of helplessness, I didn't know what else to do. (interviewee no. 36, female, domestic services)

Their great distance from family, combined with discrimination and precarious conditions, can induce nostalgia

and depression. This especially concerns an immigrant's early life in a host country, when reminiscing about the social and family networks left behind is paramount:

There are days when I feel bad....Nostalgia and depression overcome me, everything is overwhelming and I want to go back to my country and leave everything behind....I think of my parents, of my son, I think about times in the past, probably even those that were bad, as good. (interviewee no. 7, female, cleaning services)

Immigrant workers however are willing to suffer almost any level of humiliation to preserve their project and continue sending money home. Yet the social and family networks of their native country also represent a factor of pressure, a type of stress that not only emerges when reflecting on returning to their homeland but in their daily existence as well, as society imposes attaining a stable or even high socioeconomic level:

The stress is caused by the lack of sleep....We have to work, we have to pay the rent, we have to pay the mortgage, I have to work to buy a bigger car. (interviewee no. 12, female, cleaning services).

4. Discussion

The interviews with Ecuadorian immigrants clearly evidence that they experience workplace discrimination. In general, this is linked to precarious working conditions and their relationship and interaction with their Spanish supervisors.

Unfortunately, discrimination research often entails an ethnocentric component (especially in the discipline of psychology) due to its quantitative empirical methods. These studies resort to questionnaires which, although validated by more or less sophisticated statistical techniques, are developed and tested in national samples yielding findings impaired by interpretative dehumanization (Held, 2020) as they exert a certain epistemic violence by suppressing the knowledge possessed by the participants (Colombo, 2020). This is accentuated even more in immigrant research where, unfortunately, colonial knowledge continues to prevail through positivist ideologies. In this sense, the current study "gives a voice" to immigrants by adopting a qualitative approach and integrating the subjective components of their experiences.

The immigrants interviewed in the course of our study testify to various types of discrimination and humiliation, especially to women employed in private households where conditions of isolation render inspection and control impossible. Regarding working conditions, this study highlights the issue of precariousness as well as abuse by employers. The latter is expressed in different ways, through uncertain labor circumstances, breaches in contractual agreements, and lack of security, elements

that coincide with the conditions identified by Leão et al. (2017) in a study of Haitian immigrants in Brazil.

It is necessary nonetheless to take into account that, as in the case of most other immigrants from Latin America, the Ecuadorian community in Spain for the most part occupies low-skilled positions in the domestic services and the construction and agriculture sectors, which are often characterized by poor contractual conditions and high physical demands. Their concentration in these sectors is conducive to a stigmatization which in turn leads to an even greater discrimination and segregation.

It is likewise noteworthy that although certain authors suggest that discriminatory processes stem from language barriers, the Ecuadorians in this study report this type of abuse despite their mother tongue being Spanish as well, the language of their host country. This situation resembles that identified in other studies (Schmaus & Kristen, 2022) where subtle and veiled elements of differentiation and discrimination are linked to a different accent.

A second series of discriminatory actions affecting the Ecuadorian immigrants in Spain fall into the realm of social interaction. These include distrust and excessive supervision, humiliation, and abuse of power evidenced by imposing the repetition of tasks and even, in certain cases, verbal contempt.

This findings of this study ratify those of Cayuela et al. (2015) as they reveal that Ecuadorian immigrant workers in Spain are a vulnerable population characterized by unsafe workplace conditions and events of daily discrimination. On many occasions, this prejudice emerges when the immigrant laborer works in isolation or environments with little social contact. These situations are also reported when describing episodes of humiliation and subtle microaggressions often masked as jokes. Other research, notably the articles by Dias et al. (2013) and Džúrová and Drbohlav (2014), corroborates that similar discrimination and microaggressions are also directed toward immigrant populations elsewhere in Europe.

These types of work environments aggravate feelings of precariousness, a condition that can also be understood as a form of oppression leading to psychological distress. This is worsened by the social burden they feel imposed on them by family in their country of origin, who pressure them to remain abroad in order to enhance the "success" of their migratory experience. The Ecuadorians interviewed for this study in fact report various effects of this type of pressure on their health, particularly in the form of mental and emotional strain, sadness, melancholy, and low self-esteem.

Finally, combating the workplace predicaments experienced by Ecuadorian immigrants in Spain implies adopting strategies designed to avoid—or cope with—difficulties (Alvarado, 2020), especially in the initial phases of the migratory experience. Research has established that adopting skilled management strategies can serve as a means to cope with the undesirable effects

of discrimination and microaggression (Noor & Shaker, 2017; Van Der Ham et al., 2014). Future research should therefore delve deeper into these issues by adopting qualitative methods and intrapersonal experiences that can pave the way toward a more far-reaching and exhaustive understanding of immigrant cognitive and emotional processes.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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