

Expectation and Hope. Experiences of Time by Ecuadorian Returnees Envisioning a 'Life Worth Living'

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Abstract

This article contributes to anthropological reflections on 'hope' and 'expectation' by analysing the experiences of time of two Ecuadorian migrants who returned to their homeland from Spain and envision their future lives differently. Building on the migrants' trajectories and reasonings, I propose a clearer conceptual delineation of the notions of hope and expectation than is currently operative in anthropology. I do so by showing their interrelations and articulations, particularly in one's own experience (constituted by moments of expectation and moments of hope), and by drawing attention to my interlocutors' temporalisation. As a future-orientation, hope is directed toward change and constitutes an envisioning more open and creative than expectation, which builds on continuity and stability. The notion of 'duration' provides insight into the ways my interlocutors compartmentalise their time experience, constituting a sense of past-ness, present-ness, and future-ness, which impacts their future imaginings as hoping versus expecting.

Keywords: Hope, expectation, duration, return migration, Ecuador

Introduction

This article proposes a reflection on two future-orientations, namely ‘hope’ and ‘expectation’. Its considerations are grounded in the deliberations of two Ecuadorian migrants who are back in their homeland on how and where to live better. Drawing a distinction between the two notions facilitates my understanding of the two returnees’ contrasting ways of envisioning their future lives and the possibilities emerging from their different responses to difficult socioeconomic contexts.

Agustín¹ and Julio, who have never met one another, migrated from Ecuador to Spain at the turn of the century. Whereas their departures from Ecuador coincided with a profound economic and political crisis in their home country (Aguirre 2019), the 2008 financial crisis resulted in the deterioration of the Spanish economy and labour market, such that it severely impacted Agustín’s and Julio’s livelihoods. After careful reassessment, they each decided to return to Ecuador. Their return, however, was disappointing, as their country was not as they imagined. With Ecuador experiencing yet another economic recession and political uncertainty, Agustín and Julio are asking themselves: what should be a ‘normal’ or satisfactory life, a life in which they can somehow flourish, a ‘life worth living’ (Mattingly 2014:9-10)? Despite their comparable circumstances and trajectories, they each imagine their future lives differently. As a result of their moral deliberations on what constitutes a ‘good’ life—which includes reflections on how one should live and interact with others (e.g. Sykes 2009; Zigon 2009b; Laidlaw 2014; Mattingly 2014)—and where they may achieve it (which context making which kind of life possible), Agustín wishes to go back to Spain and Julio envisages remaining in Ecuador. I am interested in how to analytically grasp these two imaginings of a better life, projected as they are into the future, and which concept best conveys the specificity of each. I argue that the two envisionings are better understood by clearly differentiating between hope and expectation: whereas Agustín *hopes* for a better life elsewhere, Julio *expects* to continue to experience the kind of life he has been developing since his return to Ecuador.

In anthropology, the notions of hope and expectation, by and large, lack clear differentiation and are often confused. This is partly due to anthropologists’ focus on only one of them, usually ‘hope’, which is the future-orientation that has gained most traction over the last two decades (Jansen 2016; Hauer, Nielsen & Niewöhner 2018; Bryant & Knight 2019). My first endeavour is to clarify, from Agustín’s and Julio’s cases, each notion and their differences, drawing my

¹ The names of my interlocutors are pseudonyms.

inspiration from the scholarship addressing one or both notions. Bryant & Knight (2019) are among the few who distinguish hope and expectation and Crapanzano (2003), while emphasising the former, draws a parallel with the latter. While both notions imply indeterminacy, hope, for Crapanzano (2003:9), 'is more ample, more full of promise' and 'penetrates further into the future' than expectation and, for Bryant & Knight (2019), the latter implies a continuity with the past and the former relates to a different future. However, in such differentiation, both notions are treated separately, so my second aim is to further the heuristic distinction of hope/expectation, showing their interrelations and articulations, particularly in one's own experience (constituted by moments of expectation and moments of hope).

Furthermore, the scholarship on these future-orientations suggests that they are not related to the future alone. Indeed, scholars usually link these notions to present and past, and are interested in their interlocutors' 'temporal reasoning', or how they make sense of present, past, and future situations (Kleist & Jansen 2016). While some scholars emphasise the future and its uncertainty in the relation past-present-future (e.g. Miyazaki 2004; Bryant & Knight 2019), others focus on the contextualisation, historically situated, of future-orientations (e.g. Narotzky & Besnier 2014; Jansen 2016). However, it appears that anthropological literature on hope and expectation tends to take for granted what constitutes past, present, and future for social actors. Consequently, my third argument, which allows me to further sharpen the conceptual distinction between hope/expectation, is to understand my interlocutors' temporalisation. To do so, I build on the notion of 'duration' (Bergson 2004; see e.g. Deleuze 1997; Hodges 2008; Nielsen 2014), addressing how my interlocutors compartmentalise their time experience and how this impacts their future imaginings as hoping or expecting.

I begin with a section showing how hope and expectation have been addressed in anthropology, before describing the ethnographic cases of Agustín and Julio. I then analyse these two cases through the lens of hope and expectation, taking into account my interlocutors' experiences of migration, crisis, and life in Spain and Ecuador, as well as the moral deliberations shaped by these experiences and which mould their conceptions of a better life projected into the future. Finally, from Agustín's and Julio's hopes for and expectations of a satisfactory life, I seek to understand the relations and overlappings of past-present-future (e.g. Munn 1992). My interlocutors' ways of constituting a sense of past-ness, present-ness, and future-ness appear to shed new light on anthropologists' distinct conceptions of the notions of hope and expectation.

Expectation and Hope in Anthropology

Hope and expectation are two specific future-orientations. As Bryant & Knight (2019:2) put it, they constitute ‘ways in which the future may orient our present’ which help us to think ‘about the indeterminate and open-ended teleologies of everyday life’. In anthropology, hope has been widely addressed, while expectation much less so theoretically.

Most of the anthropologists using the notion of hope emphasise Ernst Bloch’s ‘not-yet’ (1986), its orientation to the time ahead, as well as its indeterminate and affective dimensions (e.g. Crapanzano 2003; Miyazaki 2004; Mar 2005; Zigon 2009a; Mattingly 2010; Jansen 2016; Kleist 2016; Kleist & Jansen 2016; Ringel 2018; Bryant & Knight 2019). Crapanzano (2003) argues that ‘hope’ is quite passive, as its fulfilment ultimately depends on someone/something else’s agency (such as another person, a god, or fate, for example). However, for Bryant & Knight (2019:157), for instance, hope is active as it ‘draws the not-yet into the present and motivates activity in the here-and-now’. Crapanzano (2003:26-27) also highlights the transitivity of ‘hope’ as one hopes for/that (see also Jansen 2016; Bryant & Knight 2019), while its object may be concrete or abstract². The imaginative dimension of hoping is mostly acknowledged (e.g. Crapanzano 2003; Jackson 2011); however, Mattingly (2010) and Hauer, Nielsen & Niewöhner (2018) emphasise hope as a practice³.

Hope is usually conceived of as an orientation toward a positive future, such as a better life or a life worth living (e.g. Mar 2005; Zigon 2009a; Mattingly 2010; Jackson 2011; Beyer 2015; Schielke 2015; Jansen 2016; Kleist 2016; Bryant & Knight 2019). Nevertheless, the notion is not all positive. Jackson (2011) emphasises that hope for something that is assessed to be possible is mitigated by a ‘sense of impossibility and danger’ (xii), which brings ‘fear and anxiety’ (xiii)⁴ (see also Crapanzano 2003:18; Beyer 2015; Schielke 2015). As Mattingly (2010:3) writes, ‘To hope is to be reminded of what is not and what might never be’.

Thus, while hope is future-oriented, it is tied to the present: hope refers to a future that is distinct from one’s present situation. The relation between hope and crisis or difficult times —hope making life supportable— is made by several scholars (e.g. Zigon 2009a, Mattingly 2010; Berlant 2011, Narotzky & Besnier 2014, Beyer 2015, Bryant & Knight 2019). Yet some

² Jansen (2016:448-449) reveals that hope can also be intransitive, such as when it refers to hopefulness, and as an affect not directed to any specific object, as opposed to hopelessness.

³ Hauer, Nielsen & Niewöhner (2018:63) particularly seek ‘to embed “hoping people” in their material surroundings and examine this nexus as a continuous process of dynamic co-constitution’.

⁴ Ringel (2018) differentiates ‘hope’ from ‘fear’; both constitute an envisioning of a different future: a better one for the first, a worse one for the second.

scholars also insist on hope's relation to the past. In disentangling two types of hope in the case of his Muscovite interlocutors, Zigon (2009a) highlights that one of them is rather past-oriented, unreflective, and passive. The other, emerging from a 'moral breakdown' (implying an ethical reflection), is turned toward a better or ideal future and, therefore, more active. The former seeks continuity and stability; the latter, change (Zigon 2009a). Scholars approaching hope from a political economy perspective are interested in how 'particular conditions' in a 'historically specific' context (Jansen 2016:461), including individual 'dispositions' and 'embodied inclinations' (Jansen 2016:453), shape hope (e.g. Hage 2003; Jansen 2014, 2016; Narotzky & Besnier 2014; Kleist 2016).

By comparison, the notion of 'expectation' has enjoyed less analytical attention. Incidentally, Jansen (2016:462) argues that the characteristics of hope may be suitable for other notions, such as expectation or aspiration. However, I highlight here some particularities that emerge from scholarship that makes explicit use of the term expectation. Bryant & Knight (2019:50) argue that expectation is often conceptualised through the metaphor of 'horizon'. Graw & Schielke (2012:14) conceive of horizon as a person's or society's 'vision through thought and imagination' and as 'refer[ing] not only to what is actually visible but to what is familiar, known, and imaginable for a person in a much more encompassing sense'. Bryant & Knight (2019) contend that expecting relies on past experiences, so that it is possible to have a sense that something will happen on the horizon, something not quite discernible and that is yet to be realised (Bryant & Knight 2019:50-51, 58, 74; see Jansen 2014, 2016). For this reason, they talk of expectation as a 'conservative teleology' (2019:58). Notably, Bryant & Knight (2019) draw from the German historian Koselleck's (1985) notion of 'horizon of expectation'. 'Horizon of expectation' is equated with the future and partly deduced from what has been experienced, the 'space of experience', which is associated with the past (Koselleck 1985).

Ferguson's (1999) research in Copperbelt, Zambia, helps illustrate the notion. He shows that, from the mid-20th century, steady growth in the mining industry and accelerating urbanisation led Zambian people to develop 'expectations of modernity' and prosperity (Ferguson 1999:5-6). Their expectations were legitimate, as they were based on actual past experiences of industrialisation elsewhere, such as in Britain. In this case, however, their expectations went unfulfilled, as Zambia experienced a sharp decline from the 1980s, leading to de-urbanisation and de-industrialisation (Ferguson 1999:11).

From what precedes, expectation, like hope, is put in relation not only to the future, but to past and present experiences, which embeds these notions in experiences of time and temporality. As I show in the next sections, the entanglement of past-present-future in future-orientations

such as expectation and hope becomes apparent via attention to ‘temporal reasonings’. These can be understood, following Kleist & Jansen (2016), as the ways in which social actors ‘engage with difficult, challenging, sometimes unexpected *current* experiences through particular /381/ understandings of past and future’ (380-381, italic in the original; see also Jansen 2014). However, what constitutes past, present, and future tends to be taken for granted in many discussions on hope and expectation. Studies addressing the experience of time through the notion of ‘duration’ help to de-reify these time categories, avoiding a predefined compartmentalisation of time. ‘Duration’, which has been developed from Bergson and Deleuze by several anthropologists, refers to time as a temporal heterogeneous extension (e.g. Das 2007; Hodges 2008; Nielsen 2014), which allows me to clarify the conception of hope and expectation in a sharper way.

The ethnographic cases of Agustín and Julio I describe in the next section show their temporal reasonings related to their life experiences and the relevance of distinguishing analytically between hope and expectation. I met the two Ecuadorians during my fieldwork for a project on return migration and the reassessment of what constitutes a ‘good’ life⁵. To understand the differences in Agustín’s and Julio’s imaginings of a better life, equating expectation with future, as does Koselleck (1985), or using both notions loosely or interchangeably (e.g. Koselleck 1985; Graw & Schielke 2012; Narotzky & Besnier 2014; Jansen 2016:456, who talks of ‘realistic hope’ for expectation) is not enough.

Envisioning a Life Worth Living

Agustín and Julio—who do not know each other—are both from Quito and around sixty years old. As they explained, they migrated to Spain due to the 1999 deep financial and political crisis in Ecuador and returned to Quito around 2013. When I first met Agustín, in August 2018, and Julio, in August 2019, we talked about their migration experiences, the reasons for their return, their present situations, and their projections of the future. In a broad sense, both assessed their time in Spain positively and their returns as disappointing.

⁵ I have worked on several research projects related to sociocultural processes in Ecuador for more than fifteen years (including a total of approximately three years of ethnographic fieldwork, in urban and rural settings). For this specific research project, I have conducted three fieldwork sessions thus far, the equivalent of five months, between 2018 and 2020, in different northern Ecuadorian regions (including the capital Quito). I spent time with approximately forty returnees who came back from Spain. My research is part of the larger ERC-funded project ‘Returning to a Better Place: The (Re)assessment of the ‘Good Life’ in Times of Crisis’ (Graduate Institute, Geneva), which comprises two more case studies, one on Cuban returnees from Spain and the other on Ecuadorian and Cuban migrants in Spain, carried out respectively by Valerio Simoni and Elise Hjalmarson.

Feelings of disappointment are common in literature on return migration (e.g. Gmelch 1980; Long & Oxfeld 2004; Markowitz & Stefansson 2004; Tsuda 2009; Schurr & Stolz 2010; Simoni 2019). As a result, Agustín told me that he was planning to go back to Spain with his wife Lola, while Julio affirmed that he had no intention of returning to Spain. Each traced a different path towards a better future. The two cases presented here constitute ‘narratives of the self’, which rests on the idea that ‘[a]n individual agent is a historical being, one who endures over time and is imbued with a complex internal life’ (Mattingly 2014:18).

Agustín

From the day I met Agustín, he has repeatedly told me that he and his wife Lola want to go back to Spain. ‘We’ll travel next February’, Agustín told me on several occasions in 2018, the same words he repeated to me the year after when we met again. He imagines Lola and himself with jobs in Palma de Mallorca —where they previously lived— and earning money to cover their basic needs, to save, and for a trip to Rome, which Lola is eager to visit. They would like to retire in Spain, so they could receive the pension, which allows them to foresee an ‘enjoyable life’ in the long run. Indeed, Agustín told me that Lola’s sister and some friends who live in Spain say that the economic situation there has been improving in recent years, and the labour market is better than following the 2008 financial crisis⁶.

As Lola and Agustín told me several times, they always worked when they lived in Spain. Lola usually had two jobs: one during the week (as a caregiver for elderly people) and one during the weekend (as a waitress). Agustín worked mostly as a bricklayer. They saved money to buy the house where they are living now. After Spain’s financial crisis, Lola and Agustín thought that they could have a better life in Ecuador, which they saw as full of economic opportunities, and where they would be close to their family, especially to their children and to Lola’s mother who was sick. However, after several failed attempts to set up a business in the first years after their return, Agustín has been unable to find a job and Lola has worked half-time in a grocery shop, where she worked before migrating.

Agustín feels stuck in Ecuador and does not expect to find a job there. He feels that from age forty onwards, it is almost impossible to be employed in Ecuador without pulling strings. In his view, the only way to escape his predicament is to migrate again to Spain, where he is quite confident he would find a job. A friend of his from Palma de Mallorca told him that he would

⁶ My article does not consider the impact of the covid-19 pandemic, as I was not able to conduct fieldwork since then.

help him in his search. Agustín considers that they would have a better life in Spain, as they had when they lived there. Several times, he mentioned aspects of life that he appreciated in Spain —aspects he is not able to find in Ecuador. In the domain of work, an employee is recognised as a ‘person’ and ‘human’, and respected by superiors. There is a concern for a job well done, which is awarded with a decent salary. Agustín told me that in Ecuador it is very different, as workers tend to botch the job and arrive late, and employers usually disrespect their employees. According to Agustín, the salaries in Spain allow even the poorer not only to cover their basic needs, but also to buy a house and a car. Furthermore, everyone has access to studies and medical care, as education and health care are public. Agustín hopes to regain these elements in his future.

Incidentally, one of the reasons Lola and Agustín came back to Ecuador was that they saw ‘improvements’ in their country; the public education and health system had been strengthened and the economy was flourishing, while Spain was suffering the aftermath of the financial crisis. Ecuador was then ruled by the leftist Rafael Correa, but according to Agustín, his successor in 2017 followed a different political trajectory, neglecting the public sector and plunging the country into an economic crisis⁷. Agustín told me that Ecuador had regressed to where it was when he had decided to migrate in 2000.

On one occasion, he confessed to me that sometimes, at night, when he cannot sleep, he thinks about his life in Spain, longing for those days (*añorar*) and regretting having come back. A sense of failure looms large in Agustín’s current life, as his return has not been what he thought it would be. However, his feelings of frustration have also emerged from his desire for a different future life, which is situated in a ‘better’ place, elsewhere.

Julio

I first met Julio in August 2019 in the square Plaza Grande, in Quito’s colonial area, by the President’s palace, the cathedral, and the municipal government buildings. After telling me about his migration experience and his return, he affirmed that he had no intention of going back to Spain. However, he told me that he and his wife, along with their three children, had lived well in Madrid. ‘The life Spain gave us was very nice. We thought we were in paradise. We ate, we drank’, he said. He added that he worked as a carpenter and his wife had a job as

⁷ The political scientists Sánchez & Pachano (2020:8) also highlight the change of orientation of Lenin Moreno, Correa’s successor, although being member of the same party. However, they point out that the economic recession began during the two last years of Correa’s government.

well. He earned good money because he could practise his profession. He partied a lot with his friends and ‘wasted’ his money on drinking, as he said. When he returned to Ecuador in 2013, he was very disappointed; he had lost his job, his flat, and his savings in Spain as a consequence of the 2008 crisis. Not only did he come back alone, as he had separated from his wife, but he did not find a job in Ecuador. This came as a surprise to Julio who, spurred by President Correa’s promise of jobs for returning migrants, expected his new life in Ecuador would be much improved.

Three months after he arrived in Ecuador, he was introduced to a Catholic group, which sent him on a retreat to a provincial town. He has always been Catholic, he told me, but thanks to this group, he underwent a reassessment of his way of life and his moral values. Since then, Julio has attended Mass and church activities (such as talks, retreats, meetings). The moral reasoning sparked by his visits to his Catholic group led him to reconsider his social relationships: to refocus on close relatives, like parents, and on friendships grounded in spiritual concerns rather than material pleasures, like drunkenness and partying. While his church taught him to respect one’s parents under any circumstances, he became very close to his mother, looking after her until her death.

In Ecuador, Julio has opted for a ‘simple life’, which has guided him since his encounter with the Catholic group and which is still what he wants for his future. He lives in a small house inherited from his parents and has set up a carpentry workshop, where he works alone. As he cannot work much due to his age and charges cheap because of the competition, he earns little money. However, he is at peace; ‘*tengo lo justito*’ —‘I have just what I need’, he said— which allows him to buy food and necessities. He claimed that his current life is better than the life he had in Spain: ‘I realised that one lives better like this... with little resources’ he remarked, adding ‘here, with little money, I live peacefully, there with lots of money, I had troubles’. Indeed, as he told me, when he had some capital, he was not able to manage it ‘correctly’, spending it on partying, drinking, and material goods such as clothes. Moreover, he had lost the money invested in his flat. Now, with little money for his essential needs, he feels good, he explained.

Unlike Agustín, Julio looked quite serene. It seemed that he had found a satisfactory life in Ecuador and he was keen to see it through, despite the difficulties he faced. He saw himself continuing to attend Mass and church activities and to work in his workshop. When he spoke of the time ahead, he talked about the next church meeting, the next retreat, the next holiday. During our first encounter, much to my surprise, he recounted that he had applied six months earlier to recover his Spanish residency permit, an opportunity provided by the Spanish

embassy to those who had lived over ten years in Spain. He had not yet received a response. I asked him if he would go back to Spain, if he receives his permit. He answered, ‘To do what?’ and added that his workshop allows him to make a living, he has no rent to pay, and no more debt to worry about. So his plan is to stay.

The Experience of Migration and Return and the Context of Envisioning the Future

In their deliberations about their respective future lives, both Agustín and Julio referred to past and present experiences, constantly going back and forth from the future to the past, via the present, and the other way around. Their ‘temporal reasonings’ include ‘past futures’ (Jansen 2014; Kleist & Jansen 2016), namely how they envisioned the future in specific moments in the past, the hopes and expectations they had at certain times, particularly in difficult moments (such as economic and/or personal crises), which led to reassessments of some domains of their lives. Their migratory experiences occupy an important space in their temporal and moral reasonings, also as a result of my inquiries, as this topic constitutes a central dimension of my research. Nevertheless, references to their migration trajectories engender comparisons about life in Spain and in Ecuador, and reflections on how a satisfactory life could be achieved in both countries.

Agustín’s and Julio’s trajectories have taken place within particular political-economic contexts (see e.g. Hage 2003; Jackson 2011; Jansen 2014, 2016; Narotzky & Besnier 2014; Kleist 2016). Spain experienced economic growth from the end of the 20th century until the 2008 financial crisis, accelerating its need for labour, especially in construction, agriculture, caregiving, and tourism, and which led to an increase in the foreign population (Iglesias et al. 2015; Mercier et al. 2016; see also Boccagni 2011; Boccagni & Lagomarsino 2011; Aguirre 2019). The subsequent financial crisis hit migrants particularly hard in Spain, where Ecuadorians have constituted one of the most numerous immigrant nationalities since the 2000s (Schurr & Stolz 2010; Boccagni & Lagomarsino 2011; Herrera 2012; Iglesias et al. 2015; Aguirre 2019). Consequently, Ecuadorian and Spanish governments implemented programs to encourage migrants’ return and to support their economic reintegration (e.g. through financial aid to set up a business), with underwhelming results (Schurr & Stolz 2010; Boccagni 2011; Boccagni & Lagomarsino 2011; Herrera 2012; Riaño 2013; Mercier et al. 2016). After the profound crisis of the end of the 1990s and its aftermath in Ecuador, Correa’s presidency (2007-2017) constituted a period of political stability, which was accompanied by an economy thriving on high oil prices and state investments (Sánchez & Pachano 2020). These developments attracted

Ecuadorians, who of all immigrant groups in Spain, undertook return journeys at the highest rates (Mercier et al. 2016). The 2014 drop in oil value slowed economic growth and state funding, the consequences of which continue (Sánchez & Pachano 2020).

Over the last several decades, then, both Agustín and Julio have experienced crises in Ecuador and Spain, migration and return, and the current deteriorating situation in their homeland. Despite their being of the same generation and having many experiences and concerns in common, they each envision their future life in distinct ways and in different places. Referring to my earlier framings of notions of hope and expectation, Agustín's future-orientation, with its emphasis on migration, is better understood through the former, while that of Julio, through the latter. Agustín hopes to change his circumstances quite radically, while Julio expects continuity of his present lifestyle. Drawing a parallel between these two ethnographic cases and focusing on the articulation of hope and expectation in each one's experience urge me to clarify the distinction between the two notions.

Agustín's Hope for Change and his Feeling of Loss of a Life Worth Living

Agustín is particularly dissatisfied with his life in Ecuador. He imagines, and hopes for, a better life, and one quite different from that which he has had since his disappointing return. Drawing from the philosopher Ernst Bloch, Jackson (2011:xi) argues that hoping comes from an existential condition; human beings tend to be unsatisfied of their current situation, as they imagine that their situation could be better. In fact, Agustín asserts that he had the life he wants—namely, the lifestyle he experienced in the pre-crisis Spain. He had a job, a 'good' salary, was well-treated by people and his employers, and had free access to good quality healthcare. According to Agustín, these are the elements that allow people to 'progress' (*'progresar'*) in life and to develop projects (*'proyectos'*), and all human beings deserve the same. That is what he sees as a 'normal' life. Consequently, Agustín has the feeling to have lost—and not to lack—something essential, while returning to Ecuador. According to Jackson (2011:xii), this feeling of loss of a previous good life is what characterises hope, whose aim is to have that life restored, and which also causes anxiety about its possible irrecoverableness.

Agustín reworks and seems to idealise his past in Spain, omitting the crisis he experienced there. Referring to poor living conditions and experiences of racism or exploitation, some studies note, however, the difficult realities which many Ecuadorian migrants residing in Spain or Italy confronted during the same period (Cuesta 2007; Herrera & Pérez 2015; Iglesias et al. 2015; Raffaetà 2015). Incidentally, in my fieldwork, and to my surprise, relatively few of my

research participants mentioned such negative aspects, with most of them depicting a positive migratory experience overall. Yet, the kind of evaluation Agustín makes about life in Spain is central to opposing his current dire situation (see Jansen 2014 for Bosnia-Herzegovina and the remembering of the socialist past). As Zigon (2009a) and Jansen & Kleist (2016) among others argue, hope particularly and necessarily emerges in situations people perceive as desperate. Hoping helps one to endure those situations (Zigon 2009a; Berlant 2011) and to imagine changes (Mattingly 2010; Jackson 2011; Bryant & Knight 2019).

When Agustín decided to come back to Ecuador, he expected to find the same political-economic conditions there as in pre-crisis Spain. After all, the Ecuadorian economy was burgeoning, there was political stability, and the provision of public services was much improved. He got a sense of these aspects through two earlier visits and through the image spread by state institutions. Consequently, Agustín could reasonably expect to develop the lifestyle he valued and had in Spain before the crisis and to have economic opportunities, to have projects. He expected to be able to expect: he had ‘a sense of how things *ought* to be, given particular conditions’ as Bryant & Knight (2019:58, italic in the original) elucidate. Ecuadorian migrants in Italy also saw their country as a better place to live at the beginning of the 2010s (Raffaetà 2015; for Ecuadorian migrants in Switzerland, see Riaño 2013). However, things did not go in the right direction as Agustín’s past future expectations were not fulfilled. The businesses he undertook failed, he received no financial aid, the economic situation had declined, and Correa —of whom he is a fervent admirer— left power in 2017. As in the case of the Zambian miners in Ferguson’s analysis (1999:12-13), the promising past future is gone, but still haunts Agustín’s memory (and those of several other returnees I met). As Zambians did, Agustín perceives the decline as enduring and not temporary.

As his expectations of a satisfactory life in Ecuador failed to materialise, he began to *hope* for such a life —somewhere else. In his stuckedness, to move forward has come to mean a physical move elsewhere (see Hage 2009). Several scholars have associated migration with the hope of a better life, for oneself and one’s family (e.g. Mar 2005; Graw & Schielke 2012; Narotzky & Besnier 2014; Pine 2014; Raffaetà 2015; Schielke 2015:chap. 7; Kleist 2016; Pettit & Ruijtenberg 2019). Raffaetà (2015:116) insists on ‘the spatial dimension of hope’ as ‘hope is materially distributed in significant spaces’, not only in the time ahead.

Consequently, hope refers to an envisioning of a ‘qualitatively different future’ (Bryant & Knight 2019:136), as ‘the otherwise-than-actual’ (Bryant & Knight 2019:134), of a rupture of some kind, which fits Agustín’s imagination of a future in Spain. This hope for change is a result of his moral deliberations, which comprise the maintaining over time of his ideas on what

constitutes a good life. Hoping encourages actions in the now directed toward an end (Bryant & Knight 2019:135, 157), which can be challenging. Agustín takes action to lead to the realisation of his hope; however, he has postponed his trip to Spain three times since I met him, which adds to his frustration. Julio's situation differs significantly from Agustín's in this sense. Thanks to his change in conception of what makes for a life worth living, Julio can see a future aligned with his present situation and his recent past, which brings him rather serenity.

Julio's Expectations of Continuity and Stability for his 'Simple Life' in Ecuador

The economic, familial, and personal setbacks Julio experienced in Spain which influenced his decision to return to Ecuador, and the disappointment he experienced in his life back in his country, led him to a 'moral breakdown', or a moment when someone consciously reflects on his/her 'moral world and moral personhood' (Zigon 2009b:261). Julio's participation in the church activities helped him to solve his 'ethical moment'; he reassessed what matters in life and what he values, working on himself so that he was able to return to a kind of 'unreflective and unreflexive' everyday morality, as a 'new moral dispositional person' (Zigon 2009b:262). This has entailed a focus on family relationships and on a materially modest lifestyle, accompanied by spiritual growth. For Julio, a 'simple life' is not only acceptable due to the Ecuadorian economic situation, but desirable for the future. Already living this lifestyle and feeling satisfied, he can reasonably expect to continue down this path. He can therefore envision a worthy future in Ecuador. From his moral change, Julio has created in Ecuador a stable new 'normal life', as it can be unproblematically reproduced (Jansen 2014, 2016:456-457), and as his expectations are expectable, which means he 'has a future' (Bryant & Knight 2019:chap. 2). As Bryant & Knight (2019) argue, expectation is linked to continuity with the past, teaching us what to expect (2019:58). This provides a sense of 'familiarity' on the horizon of the future (see Graw & Schielke 2012). In Julio's case, the relevant past for his expectation is that which began after his moral breakdown.

Zigon's (2009a) theorisation of hope may help to conceive of Julio's experience from his moral breakdown until now. In fact, in my view, one of the two hopes Zigon identifies —namely the 'passive' hope or hope of permanence, contrasted with the 'active' hope or hope of change— would be better understood through the notion of expectation. Indeed, the passive hope of Zigon refers to an attitude toward the permanence of 'a sane life' for oneself and the others, a life one is already living (Zigon 2009a). Interestingly, Zigon argues that this kind of hope may refer 'back to a founding event' (2009a:258), a moral breakdown, which is characterised by 'active

hope’, ‘allow[ing] one to live-through the breakdown and return to the existential structure of persistent hope as the background attitude for unreflective being-in-the-world’ (2009a:266). When he joined the church, Julio certainly hoped to get out of his predicament —namely, he hoped for radical change— through moral reflections resulting from his participation in the church activities. This hope allowed him ‘to live-through the breakdown’ and to begin a new ‘normal’ life, a ‘sane life’ for himself and the people around him. As the ethnographic description showed, Julio himself assessed his encounter with his church as a pivotal moment in his journey to imagining a possible future in Ecuador. Just as Zigon argues in his discussion of hope for permanence, Julio does not truly long for a betterment, but expects continuity along the lines of what he has already been living. Incidentally, on one occasion, Zigon (2009a:267) nicely refers to ‘the not-yet-but-expected’ concerning hope for permanence. Even if he does not formulate it as such, Zigon thus hints at a way to relate and distinguish hope from expectation.

Expectation as future-orientation maintains a sense of uncertainty for the time ahead. Indeed, the life Julio proposed himself is not to be taken for granted, as he is fully aware. It is never achieved, as he has to work to keep it, according to the (now nonreflexive) principles that emerged from his moral breakdown (Zigon 2009a, 2009b). He must continue living in line with his morality, which includes participating in church activities. One month after we met in August 2019, once I was in Europe, Julio wrote me a WhatsApp message to let me know that he had obtained his Spanish residency permit and that he was going to travel to Spain to find a job. Even so, four months later, I met him again in downtown Quito, so I asked him if he was going to travel to Madrid. He answered that he does not want to live in Spain anymore, because he would resume his previous life: partying and getting drunk with his friends, ‘wasting’ money in those activities. He confessed me that he is ‘weak’ (*débil*). As in the case of Agustín’s postponements of his departure, the decision not to leave may also be related to financial constraints (both told me several times that flights to Spain were expensive). Nevertheless, it seems that Julio cannot envision in Spain the ‘simple life’ he wants to cultivate. A particular morality is assigned by him to experienced places (see Mar 2005; Raffaetà 2015) and social contexts make it difficult to disturb this order.

Agustín’s and Julio’s cases reveal their different projections of the future and how they are linked to their conceptions of a life worth living, to what a ‘normal’ life should be. They illustrate the relevance of a conceptual distinction between expectation and hope. Furthermore, both cases allow us to consider how the two future-orientations may be articulated in one’s experience. To develop further the heuristic dimension of distinguishing these two notions, I

am interested, in the next section, in my interlocutors' experience of time, namely the 'kairological time', the 'phenomenological or experiential sense of time' (Zeitlyn 2015:386; see Hirsch and Stewart 2005).

'Duration' and Compartmentalising the Experience of Time in Hoping and Expecting

As scholarship demonstrates, future-orientations are related not only to the future, but also to present, past, and past future. Expectation and hope, therefore, may gain from anthropological reflections on the experience of time. To address the experience of time and 'temporal reasoning' (Jansen 2014; Kleist & Jansen 2016) entails wrestling with when the past finishes, when the future begins, and the scope of the present. Furthermore, as Zeitlyn (2015) contends, past, present, and future are plural, 'polyvalent, intercalated and multi-perspectival' (2015:399; see also Ringel 2016). Using the terms 'past', 'present', and 'future' may be reductive and often they are used as a leap (as it is the case in this article), which may, however, be misleading. Indeed, it presupposes a predefined temporalisation and time compartmentalisation, and risks reification. In a similar way, Das (2007) and Dalsheim (2015) wonder when an event begins and finishes if it is still 'present' in one's current worries, conversations, and actions (Das 2007:97-98) and as it has 'befores' and 'afters' that are part of it (Dalsheim 2015:10). Scholarship widely recognises that time is not experienced as a linear and chronological succession of discrete events or 'nows' 'like beads on a string' (e.g. Munn 1992; Das 2007; Hodges 2008; Nielsen 2014; Dalsheim 2015).

In this section, I build my argument of the relevance of distinguishing analytically expectation and hope from an anthropology of the experience of time, on two steps. Firstly, I propose to conceive of the experience of time as 'duration'. The concept of 'duration' was introduced by Bergson, as '*durée*' in French, and rethought and promoted more widely by Deleuze (Hodges 2008; Nielsen 2014). 'Duration', or some of its principles and elements, has had an influence on many anthropologists interested in temporal experiences (e.g. Hirsch and Stewart 2005; Das 2007; Hodges 2008; Nielsen 2014; Dalsheim 2015; Zeitlyn 2015; Knight & Stewart 2016). Bergson (2004:177) shows the difficulty of separating past, present, and future arguing that one's present is necessarily spread out in duration, as it comprises the immediate past and future. Drawing from Bergson and Deleuze, anthropologists have highlighted several aspects of the concept of 'duration' that are useful for my purpose. 'Duration' refers to time as a temporal extension and as an 'heterogeneous continuity' or a 'continuous multiplicity' (Bergson 2004; Deleuze 1997; Nielsen 2014:168). This implies that 'simultaneously /395/ we

think at different rates and over different scales' (Zeitlyn 2015:394-395) and that 'past' and 'future' coexist in/with the 'present' (Hodges 2008:411, 412; Knight & Stewart 2016:4; see also Ringel 2016:403). The whole 'past' exists virtually (in the 'present') and some elements are actualised through acts of remembering and embodying, which gives a sense of the passage of time (Bergson 2004; Deleuze 1997; Das 2007:100; Hodges 2008:411-412; Knight & Stewart 2016:6). Therefore, 'one must instead see the virtual as productive of the actual, without, of course, the virtual ever being actualized' (Hodges 2008:410). Indeed, as the virtual is non-actual, but real, its actualisation is a process of differentiation and of creation (Deleuze 1997:96-101) that develops toward the time ahead. Past experiences and future envisionings can, consequently, fold into the present (Dalsheim 2015:11; Zeitlyn 2015:395).

While duration de-reifies past, present, and future and de-compartmentalises them, my second step is to look at how my interlocutors themselves compartmentalise their experience of time. As Das (2007) is concerned with what counts as past for her research participants, I am also interested in what constitutes a sense of past-ness, present-ness, and future-ness for Agustín and Julio. Their ways of temporalising and compartmentalising their life experiences by evaluating their relative value and worth, and of giving meaning to this temporalising/compartmentalising, shed light on the distinction between expectation and hope.

In Julio's case, there is a sense of continuity between (a quite recent) past, present, and future. He seems to be developing his life in a single unit of time and to experience a sense of present-ness, which includes sections of past and future, beginning with his encounter with his church into a time to come, which seems quite close —almost already here. Indeed, Julio has already entered, from the moment of his moral breakdown, a period of time in which he has been constructing a lifestyle according to his new morality that gives him satisfaction. Additionally, he wants this period to stretch into the future —so long as there is no obstacle to that, he has a sense of closeness to the future. As Bryant & Knight (2019:50) argue, the 'thickness of present' is given through a close relation to the past and the future, which characterises expectation. His life in Spain is part of the past in his view, as a finished chapter, as he does not consider it anymore for his future. As I showed, events (such as the receiving of the Spanish residency permit) may trigger the re-evaluation of past experiences to imagine another possible future. Effectively, temporalisation is not experienced once and for all; it may be fragile.

Agustín finds himself in a period of his life from which he wants to escape. There is a discontinuity —a gap— between the present and the better future he envisions. This disjuncture is also spatial, as I argued, and relates to the past as well, namely to his time in Spain before the 2008 financial crisis. This past elsewhere (which he '*añora*', 'longs for') is imagined as an ideal

future. Spanish past and hoped Spanish future are folded into and actualised in his Ecuadorian life, but as a contrast to his sense of present-ness. This experienced past and imagined future haunt his current life, reminding him of what he considers a life worth living and influencing his reasonings and actions. The time compartmentalisation he makes between his ‘here and now’ and the ‘there and before and hopefully after’ generates frustration because the desired future is out of reach (for now at least).

Agustín’s future envisioning is a portion of time that could stretch forward so that he could expect again to develop the life he values, as it was when he lived in Spain before the crisis. While distinguishing his current present-ness from his hoped future and, as a result of the folding of Spanish past and future, he undertakes actions to try to make the desired future a reality, such as maintaining contact with relatives and friends living in Spain. He can also rely on his possession of a Spanish passport and practical knowledge of life in Spain to make his migratory project look and feel feasible. Such social relations and material elements allow him to cultivate a sense of hope (Mattingly 2010; Hauer, Nielsen & Niewöhner 2018) as opposed to ‘yearning’ (Jansen 2016:458)⁸. In the meantime, Agustín finds meaning in his present-ness via small pleasures, such as visits to his children and holidays on the beach, and with the goal of buying a small flat, as he and his wife find up-keep of the three-storey house they own to be too much for a couple of their age.

Conclusion

As a future-orientation, hope is directed toward change and constitutes a more open and creative envisioning than expectation, which builds on continuity and stability. At the same time, hope is potentially more cruel (Berlant 2011) and more anxiogenic (Mattingly 2010; Jackson 2011) as Agustín’s frustration illustrates, contrasted with Julio’s peacefulness. Although the historical and present contexts shape in one way or another their distinct projections of the future, Agustín and Julio envision the time ahead in complex manners; their envisionings are also moulded by, and mould back, personal occurrences, ‘temporal reasoning’ and moral deliberations. The concept of duration shows not only how past experiences have an impact on present moments, but that the future —how it is imagined and constructed— does as well, engendering further thoughts and actions (see Mattingly 2010, 2014; Ringel 2016:399, 403).

⁸ Jansen (2016:458) differentiates ‘yearning’ from ‘hope’ as: ‘Unlike in the case of hope, the object here is known to be out of reach in both directions, lost in the past and seemingly endlessly deferred in the future’.

Furthermore, Agustín's and Julio's different ways of temporalising and compartmentalising their experiences of time shed new light on the process of hoping and expecting. Julio's Spanish life lies in a past that is separated from the period of time he is experiencing from his encounter with the church and which is open into the time ahead, making his sense of present thick—he can expect (Bryant & Knight 2019). By contrast, while Agustín's sense of present is also separated from his Spanish experience, the latter is not relegated properly to the past, as it does not constitute a sense of past-ness. He also distinguishes his future, which should be otherwise in his view, and not unlike his Spanish past, from his current life. More precisely, his Spanish past should be his future (and it is projected as such). This makes Agustín's sense of present thin. He seems trapped in it, haunted by a (Spanish) past, which has not properly passed (a 'frozen past' [Das 2007:99], caught in the filter [Knight & Stewart 2016:5]), and hoping for a future that *has* to be different (to be *really* a 'future').

Addressing two (or more) future-orientations and putting them in perspective have proven to be fruitful, not unlike the distinction of hope/yearning in Jansen (2016) or that of hope/fear in Ringel (2018) (see also Bryant & Knight 2019). As I have demonstrated, the articulation of hope and expectation allow for the clarification and differentiation of both future-orientations. There may be moments of hope and moments of expectation in different stages of life. For instance, a period of moral breakdown—full of hope and resulting from a dire situation—may be followed by a period of expectation thanks to the attainment of a new moral life, as in Julio's case after his return to Ecuador. Expecting to prosper in his life back home, Agustín's disappointment at being unable to do so has led him to hope to return to Spain. In this case, the transition from expectation to hope is the result of Agustín's sticking to the same kind of ideals, moral dispositions, and values in the face of changing political-economic and living conditions with which one must make do. However, hope and expectation may be articulated in the same moment. Agustín's engagement in his thin present-ness carries with it some expectations for a slightly better life (such as the search for a small flat, visits to his children, beach holidays), without significant impact on what he considers a life worth living, though. This shows that, even if Agustín feels stuck and frustrated in Ecuador, he imagines multiple scenarios for the time to come, as his hopes to return to Spain remain uncertain. People in situations such as that of Agustín diversify their relations to the future, intermingling hopes, expectations, and other possible future-orientations. Consequently, one's sense of past-ness, present-ness, and future-ness may be moving as duration is a *qualitative* temporal extension.

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