

4-10-2020

Observations in Ecuador

Guadalupe Ramirez Ramos
Linfield College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/intl_fieldnotes_1920

Recommended Citation

Ramirez Ramos, Guadalupe, "Observations in Ecuador" (2020). *2019-20 Field Notes*. Essay. Submission 12.

https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/intl_fieldnotes_1920/12

This Essay is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It is brought to you for free via open access, courtesy of DigitalCommons@Linfield, with permission from the rights-holder(s). Your use of this Essay must comply with the [Terms of Use](#) for material posted in DigitalCommons@Linfield, or with other stated terms (such as a Creative Commons license) indicated in the record and/or on the work itself. For more information, or if you have questions about permitted uses, please contact digitalcommons@linfield.edu.

Guadalupe Ramirez Ramos

Quito, Ecuador

April 10, 2020

Observations in Ecuador

I decided to conduct an interview with my host mother where we discussed the differences and similarities in our lifestyles and habits as well as cultural customs of the day-to-day life. When discussing our lifestyles, my host mom commented that meals are generally shared among family and friends such as lunch, which is a social time and the largest meal of the day, whereas in the US she noticed that people eat a lunch very fast and many times alone. I agreed with her point and added that lunches here in Ecuador are much larger than in the US, as they include a soup, a strong plate, and a dessert, where in the US we generally eat a light lunch such as a salad, sandwich, or leftover from dinner, and snacks throughout the day and the bigger meal is dinner. My host mom also made an observation about stress levels, where she noticed that people in the US are very work-oriented and they are usually very stressed out compared to here, where spending quality time with family and friends is essential. Families generally meet every Sunday, which is a day to go to church, not think about work, and spend with family and friends.

A cultural day-to-day custom very particular to this culture that I experienced was Cafecito nights where a group of friends get together and have long conversations about their life as they enjoy coffee and continue on to a special dinner. My host mom commented that meeting with friends face to face and spending quality time having a good coffee while playing games or having conversations was something very important to this culture and was also a way of

unwinding. Another custom I experienced was saying hello and/or goodbye with one kiss to the cheek whether to a close friend or a person you just met; most of the time when I introduced myself to someone, they greeted me with a kiss. In addition, my host mom added that her culture is very physical; she described that generally people leave a distance of about an elbow all around, while she notices that in the US the distance between people is about a full arm of distance. I also commented my observation of the different perception of time, as it is said that Ecuadorians are always late to parties and other events. For example, if someone tells you to be at their house at 5:30, they will be there at least an hour late. Thus, when someone is late to an invitation, it is completely normal; therefore some of the basic social norms are not based on rigor but on importance, friendship, and affection.

My learning experience changed the perception that we have in the US about wellbeing. I have grown my whole life with the idea that working hard makes you the happiest. While that is true, one needs to leave space to spend quality time with friends and family face to face. In Ecuador, a large meal is a time of conversation with friends or family, but also sharing a coffee with other people. Therefore, spending quality time with family is a great life priority to leave the stress of work and continue on happily. In the US however, a lot of people may live stressed due to the demands of their work and may work even on Sundays. Learning about these clearly noted differences has helped reflect on the importance of social interactions such as meaningful conversations face to face on a daily basis in order to unwind. While sharing meals with friends I made in Ecuador, I noticed I enjoyed my food more and I was receiving a good break releasing the tension of classes and schoolwork. This helped me maintain a positive outlook throughout the day!