

2-2-2013

Person to Person in Ecuador

Joseph Gladow
Linfield College, jgladow@linfield.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/intl_fieldnotes_1213

Recommended Citation

Gladow, Joseph, "Person to Person in Ecuador" (2013). *2012-13 Field Notes*. Essay. Submission 13.
https://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/intl_fieldnotes_1213/13

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.

Joe Gladow

Quito, Ecuador

February 2, 2013

Field Notes from Abroad: Person to Person in Ecuador

In Ecuador, kids live at home with their parents until they marry. No matter their age, if they are attending college or working a job, it is very uncommon and even somewhat looked down upon for single young adults to live alone. This was one of the biggest surprises for me in terms of the lifestyle of young Ecuadorians and a topic I explored with my friend Cinthya Benitez. Cinthya is 22, in her final year of college at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) and lives with her parents in a small house (by American standards) in the northwest part of the city. As with most students at USFQ, she has to drive about 45 minutes across town every day to get to campus. This sharply contrasts with the college lifestyle in the U.S., where the vast majority of students clamor to move out of their parents' house when they graduate high school and live with their classmates and friends on or very close to their universities' campuses. It is a lifestyle difference rooted in the traditionally more conservative culture of the country, Cinthya told me. The nuclear family plays an extremely important role in Ecuador, so much so that to break the structure by living alone before marriage is to break cultural norms.

Our discussion of lifestyle differences led into another on gender roles. Ecuadorian culture has more traditional views on the roles of men and women in society. Cinthya explained that she doesn't like to tell her father that she enjoys cooking because

he'll tell her that it's one of her duties as a woman and make her cook more for their family. She also mentioned several times that she doesn't like a lot of Ecuadorian men, especially those at the university, because they try to act too "macho". However, attitudes toward gender are also changing, as I noticed several events and a few poster campaigns leading up to International Women's Day promoting better treatment of women, condemning domestic violence and encouraging female entrepreneurship. I could tell Cinthya and many other female classmates I met are part of a demographic that resists many traditional views on gender and is already challenging many of them.

The things I have learned through talking to Cinthya and others have helped me see my own culture from a new perspective. There are a number of things that I now appreciate more about American culture, like our progressive attitude towards gender, while there are others that I have now come to question, like our demand for convenience and service. And while there may be things I prefer about one country or the other, this does not mean that one is better or worse than the other; they are just different. To experience both has opened my eyes to how there isn't any one way things should be. Rather, there are just multitudes of different ways things are.

Interview: Cinthya Benitez (Ecuadorian friend and tour guide on orientation day)