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Senior Seminar  
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**The Effects of Modernization in Ecuador:  
An Assessment of Middle Class Women in Their 50's.**

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*Abstract: During the 1960s, the Women's movement in the United States banded women together to protest against the injustices that were, and in some instances, still are ingrained, into American society. During this time, women who had never worked outside of the home were encouraged to seek new roles and professions by joining the labor force. Unfortunately, the disparities between the two genders were still evident. By 1963 the average working woman earned only 63 percent of what a man made. Now, fifty years later, women in Quito, Ecuador are experiencing a similar women's movement. Despite women's gains in liberation, society has stereotyped them to be "less successful, productive and entrepreneurial than their male counterparts" (Bose 1995: 195). Although women are making enormous strides, their battle has not been an easy one to fight. Modernization in Ecuador has resulted in increased education for women, better resources, more women joining the work force, and an increase in technology: There has also been a rise in the divorce rate and a change in male/female relationships. This is an assessment of women's role in the development process and the effects modernization has had on middle class women in their 50's.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> This project was facilitated by the support and resources provided by the women of Ecuador, the faculty at Kenyon College and the Kenyon College library staff.

**Introduction** The women of Quito<sup>2</sup>, Ecuador are living in the midst of social change. Members of a patriarchal society, they are now challenging the labels given to them. Motherhood has always loomed large in images and representations of women in Latin America. As scholars haven noted "there is absolutely no question that -- in *mestizo* [a person of racially mixed ancestry] Latin America at least – motherhood has been both privately and publicly venerated" (Chant & Craske 2003: 9).

With women predominantly associated with the household, their image is slowly but surely changing. This has to do in large part with society's new expectations. Ecuadorian women are now being told by media and popular culture (specifically from the West) that not only should they be independent but that they should also not depend on anyone else (Chant & Craske, 2003). Trying to individuate themselves from the family in matters of identity and rights there is now a "shift toward a collective understanding that every individual, whether male or female, should support at least one person: himself or herself" (Bose & Acosta 1995: 118). The initial purpose of modernization, "was to illuminate conditions in Latin American from a traditional era toward modernity" (South & Trent 1989: 391). Although modernity brings many great things -- improvements in social conditions and an increase in goods and services, the costs are often overlooked. According to South & Trent, "in a transitional situation, the individual struggles constantly to evolve some new set of constructive relations with his fellows and to build the complex and interdependent structure required to feed, house, educate, and service a rapidly multiplying mass of citizens whose expectations increase apace" (South & Trent 1989 : 396).

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix Fig. 2

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My interest in the Ecuadorian women's movement began in the fall of 2008. After studying abroad there last year, I was disheartened to learn that the majority of research conducted on women in Ecuador over the past years has been limited to indigenous women. Indigenous women have little to no economic resources and typically live in rural areas. In order to enhance the available research on women in Ecuador, I created a set of interview questions for middle to upper-middle class women ranging between the ages of 50 to 60. The duration of each interview varied from thirty minutes to an hour. Interviews included questions about the participant's job, personal relationships, and adaptation to new technology. Participant responses were documented in an effort to further research on the effects modernization, specifically the introduction of Western ideals and technology, has had on women and their role within society. I wanted to know how women perceived technology and in what ways it has helped or handicapped them in their every day lives.

In addition to conducting one on one interviews, I elected to use several articles and books that dealt with the effects of modernization and development on women in Latin America. Based on the research I have conducted thus far, it is evident that as Ecuador continues to progress and become more modernized, the roles and expectations of women in the Third World begin to change as well. A comprehensive review of the literature found that "growth in Latin America and women's employment has been integrally linked to trends in North America" (Bose & Acosta 1995: 3). Furthermore, findings have consistently shown that "women have responded to economic crisis and restructuring in innovative ways, often politicizing and putting into question their class positions, their racialized roles and identities as women, and their social locations as "Third World" or "underdeveloped" (Lind, 9).

## **Literature Review**

### *Recasting Women in the Global Economy*

Empirical research has shown that changing economic conditions fuel new gender definitions. Bose and Acosta's book, *Women in the Latin American Development Process*, addresses the changing definitions of gender that come with modernization.

"In the United States and other advanced countries internationalization led to industrial restructuring and a shift from manufacturing to services. That, in turn, resulted in the expansion of technical and professional jobs and the growth of an even larger number of occupations with features generally associated with women's employment, including temporality, comparatively low wages, and reduced union membership" (Bose & Acosta 1995: 99).

As theorized by Bose and Acosta, in less developed countries like Ecuador, women must reconceptualize themselves as "economic actors in contrast to preexisting definitions that emphasized their domestic role" (Bose & Acosta 1995: 100). In this sense, what has essentially changed is "the perception that domestic and reproductive work are women's only responsibilities" (Bose and Acosta, 118). According to research, in 1960, American women were "expected to be at least potentially able to support themselves and make substantial contributions to their household" (Bose and Acosta, 118). If a similar movement is taking place in Quito, Ecuadorian women will report feeling a higher sense of independence with the new modernization. Furthermore, research has shown that the ultimate form of modernization is the introduction of women into the labor force, as for many this transformation "has made the real test of social equality of the women's movement" (Azicri 1985: 371). However, economic restructuring has also caused what Chante and Craske call, a "double burden on women." As women seek to gain independence through the labor force, they also have the burden of domestic responsibilities (Chante & Craske, 2003). In congruence with Charlton, one problem women face by joining the work force is that many of the jobs that modernization creates call for

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technological skills and "specializations which are very different from the traditional division of labour" (Charlton, 1983: 33). Handicapped by the lack of opportunities, many women find their traditional skills unwanted by the new economy.

### *Soaring Divorce Rates*

Based on literature, it is evident that as Western ideals are pressed upon underdeveloped countries, more women join the work force. However, as a society becomes more modernized, divorce rates increase as well. According to *The Journal of Marriage and The Family*, on the basis of theoretical precedence, three major factors are considered as predictors of divorce rates at the societal level: "socioeconomic development, the female labor participation rate, and the sex ratio" (South & Trent 1989: 391). The current movement in Quito is congruent with this; as more women "gain independence" they inevitably lose the security the sanctity of marriage once provided. Statistics show that between 1977 and 1989 the divorce rate in Ecuador has almost doubled per 100 couples. In 1977 five out of every one hundred marriages ended in divorce compared with nine out of every one hundred marriages in 1989<sup>3</sup>. South and Trent's cross-societal analysis of divorce rates stated that "many have linked modernization to family change, disorganization, and the shrinking functions of the family" (Ogburn and Nimkoff, 1955). Nimkoff (1965: 354). My understanding of the sexualization of women as a result of modernization is based on Sultana Alam's article entitled "Women and Poverty in Bangladesh." This is to say that "the traditional oppression of women intensifies with modernization or the sexualization of the image of 'woman' whereby the sexual dimension in her role definition begins to take precedence over the dimensions of 'mother', 'sister', and 'wife' " (Alam 2002: 361). According to Alam, as societies become more advanced, the relationship between men and

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix Fig. 4

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women shifts. As women gain more independence and begin to work outside of the home, men begin to sexualize women and the concept of marriage begins to lose its purpose. Thus, "widows, divorced and deserted women who were once reabsorbed into their families of origin suddenly find themselves cut off and are forced to fend for themselves without adequate preparation and without the benefit of alternative arrangements aimed at meeting their needs for employment, housing, or childcare" (Alam 361).

Furthermore, if a woman no longer relies on her husband's economic gains then the bond shifts from one based on family stability to romantic love. The reason that this becomes problematic for traditional cultures is that in many traditional cultures "marriage is not expected to be based on love. The cement of marriage is the reliability provided by economic ties" (Abraham, 58). The fear in this sense is that equality between the sexes leads to a disintegration of marital bonds.

#### *Change in Family Structure*

In addition to divorce, another negative impact of development may be changes in family structures. With development, women and children as well as men are viewed as a source of labor. The popular theme in America during the 1950s "involved a division of labor in which the wife in her expressive role was responsible for childcare, cooking, housekeeping, and general nurturance while the husband was responsible for providing economic security" (Abraham, 51). According to data, a consequence of changing family roles, "is that the family itself becomes smaller (reduced from an extended to a nuclear family) and in turn is often less stable" (Charlton, 33).

#### **Methodology**

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I conducted six in-depth interviews with women of the middle and upper-middle class between the ages of 50 and 60 from Quito, Ecuador. Interviews were completed between November 2009 and December 2009. The one-on-one interviews were confidential, ranging anywhere from thirty minutes to one hour. Two of the women selected were close friends or acquaintances, the other three women were selected using snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a social science research technique in which study subjects recruit future subjects from or among their acquaintances. I elected this particular age group of women because they grew up in an era before major technological advances such as the cell phone, Internet, computer, and Internet cafes. In addition to this, women of this age group were born into a society that did not give them the liberation that their daughters were born into. Many of these women ended up leaving school or their jobs to take care of family members and raise children. This is very similar to what happened to women born in the 1940s in the United States. It was not until the 60s that women really started gaining headway in the equal rights movement.

Another reason I was drawn to use interviews as my form of gathering information is because I thought it would be an interesting way to find out how things have changed between their generation and their daughters' generation. I was also interested in finding out how their own mothers were raised before them. Based on informal conversations it is my understanding that many women are not as technologically adept as their daughters nor have they received the same amount of education as their daughters.

In order to ensure that the interviews were not forced and were ethical, I conversed with the women over the nature of my project and the reasons for wanting to interview them. In addition to this all participants were given a consent form where participants were further educated on the subject of modernization and the interview process. All participants gave

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consent to conduct the interviews and were well aware of the topics that were going to be discussed prior to beginning the interview. While filling in the consent forms I made it clear that participants would be tape recorded during the interview. It is my belief that a participant cannot be given one hundred percent just accuracy throughout the interview if the researcher is only writing down notes. I used a tape recorder to play back quotes I may have missed during the interview.

Before I delved into the questions regarding personal relationships, it was necessary to gain the interviewees' trust by first asking easier questions about their perspectives on social issues and technology. My first question addressed the dollarization in Ecuador. I asked all participants what their opinions were pertaining to the new currency. Did the change in currency affect their current lifestyle and if so how? Next, I asked questions concerning the introduction of new technology and the effects it has had on their lives.

I also questioned the women about the degree to which their computer literacy has affected their chances at getting jobs, as most research indicates, women who are newly integrated into the economy experience marginalization as low wage workers in industrial jobs or within the informal economy (Bose, 1995). I wanted to see if the women in Ecuador suffered a similar experience as the women in Bose's book and if so how they felt about the issue. I further questioned them on the role technology played in their everyday life. I asked the subjects how much they were involved with the following forms of technology: Internet, automobiles, cell phones, the dryer, and the washer.

The majority of my interview questions were designed with the intent of seeing if women found technology helpful, intimidating, or both. The questions concerning personal relationships

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were meant to see how things have changed between their generations, their daughter's and mothers' generations.

Nearing the conclusion of my interviews, my questions were more directed towards the relationship between women and men in the workforce and home life. As Lind mentions, " The paradoxes of women's survival and struggle occur within the culturally constructed boundaries of the "public" and "private," sometimes challenging or transgressing these boundaries, other times reinforcing them" (Lind, 109). I assumed that women would say that they have gained more independence in the home life (with spouses and children), and their daughters' have gained even more independence than they have. My goal was to see how women were adapting to the new roles they had been given, and find out what their perspectives were on the new expectations society was giving them.

During my time in Ecuador I ran across several different problems. One of my three personal contacts went on vacation and was not able to be interviewed. Another problem that I experienced was one of miscommunication. One individual repeatedly missed interview appointments and was eventually taken off of the interview schedule. In addition to this I found it difficult to find women specifically in their 50's and in the middle to upper middle class. Another problem I ran across was the validity of each interview. Some of the women whom I knew personally did not give me accurate information. Thus, based on participant observation I was able to discount some of their answers. Overall, the women were friendly and very open to working with me on my project. However, they were not as helpful when it came to recruiting other women to take the interview.

For future research I think young women between the ages of 20 and 30 should be interviewed. I think a comparative study of how young women and middle aged women feel

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about the current changes in society could be an insightful project. Some of the ways in which these results may be biased is the way that the women were recruited, as many of them were either related or family friends. In addition to this I was not given an apt amount of time to interview a *significant* amount of participants, therefore I feel that this study cannot be used to represent the attitudes of Latin American women as a whole. However, this comprehensive portrait of middle class women in their 50's spreads before us the mosaic of dreams, desires, insecurities, and internal contradictions experienced by real women caught in the currents of change.

## **Results**

*Dollarization:* Five out of six women said the dollarization<sup>4</sup> was a positive step for the Ecuadorian economy. All six women acknowledged that prices were higher due to hyperinflation but women viewed this as a step in the right direction, claiming that it made travel and trade with other countries easier. Overall, they were optimistic that the new change in currency would eventually improve their current standard of living. In addition to this, as prices increased salaries did as well. Some women associated women joining the work force to the change of currency, claiming that with the dollar, two incomes were needed more than in the past.

*Education:* Out of the six women I interviewed, only one graduated from college. The one woman who graduated was working on her doctorate but never finished. The reason she never finished is because she got married. I was informed that during her era, when a woman got married her obligations automatically changed from the classroom to the "hogar"<sup>5</sup>. When asked if she would have completed her degree had she not gotten married her answer was "most

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<sup>4</sup> In 2000 Ecuador changed its currency from the sucre to the dollar. Before it was twenty three sucres to one american dollar. After the dollarization the economy went through a period of hyper inflation.

<sup>5</sup> English translation: home

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definitely". Although she regrets not finishing her doctorate, she does not regret the choice to have a family. According to her, a woman's priorities in life should change when she becomes a wife. These priorities changed from one where her life was focused on what was in her best interest, to what was in the best interest of her spouse and family. A common trend among the women was that all six of the women's own daughters had received higher education than they had.

*Promiscuity:* One woman said that although women have more freedom, they are not always exercising their freedom in the best manner. She believes that "women are more promiscuous than they were before with their morals." She went on to say that as society becomes more liberal, women become less moral, she gave examples of more women having abortions, having sex before marriage, and sleeping with multiple men. She thinks that "women's freedom has made women act more like men"(Interview #5).

*The Double Burden:* Five out of the six women interviewed said that they have worked outside of the home. Out of the five women who answered yes to working outside of the home, four of the women eventually left their job to take care of their children. When asked if it was an option for the man to stay home with the children, their response was almost always that in the Ecuadorian culture the male works. However, some women did acknowledge exceptions, claiming that in recent years they have seen young males sharing domestic responsibilities with females, and some staying at home to take care of the children. Overall it was evident that "there is a current movement in Ecuador in which the male is now participating in the obligations of the home. (Interview #5) " The one woman who said she worked and took care of her children, explained the process as a difficult yet a manageable one. Her experience was similar to what sociologists have coined as the 'double burden': This burden is the woman's struggle of balancing

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work and taking care of her children. Women who tried working and raising children almost always quit their jobs. Some women tried hiring maids to take care of their children but later fired the maids and took over all domestic responsibilities.

*Change in Family Structure:* Women also stressed a concern for the youths of today. All women claimed that the concept of family has completely changed. When they were raising their children, the family "always ate meals together"<sup>6</sup>. Now there is a movement in which family meals<sup>7</sup> are becoming less common, and work hours are becoming longer. According to participants, "without the traditional family dinner, children are not able to gain the kind of direction from their parents as they were in the past"(Interview #3). One woman said "today's children are not given the love and time they deserve; today's parents are not asking them about school and their professors. Who will teach them things? The television?"<sup>8</sup> Women also expressed concern for the lack of attention their own children were giving to their grandchildren. One woman described the following current phenomenon: "Parents arrive home tired... and the kids want to play... but the parents tell them to leave them alone." They claim that this is because of the economy. As the Ecuadorian economy has grown, the cost of living has also risen, and two incomes are needed. Many women were verbally expressive about their concern for the lack of time parents are now giving their children. They went as far as associating the increase of crime and delinquency to the lack of parental involvement in the home.

*Smaller Families:* All women noted a change from a large to a small family unit. One woman's mother had ten children, while she only had four. She attributed the decline of the family unit to the result of increased education and modernization. She went on to say that her

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<sup>6</sup> All Women Interviewed

<sup>7</sup> Most women noted the table as the #1 place family conversations took place

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

mother did not know of birth control and was not educated in the ways that many of today's women are. Literature is in accordance with her response as "much of the decline has been attributed to family planning. Data<sup>9</sup> indicate a broadly inverted relationship between contraceptive prevalence and total fertility rates"(Chant & Craske, 73). While falling fertility is clearly facilitated by increased availability of modern contraception, this fact is no guarantee that men or even women will use it.

*More Women In the Work Force:* When asked why more women are joining the work force, many women responded by saying that there are more jobs available. This is congruent with modernization theory that says that more jobs will be provided through the industrialization process. According to participants, "before there were only secretarial positions available and now women can go into any career they would like as long as they have the right credentials."<sup>10</sup> However, one woman deviated outside of the norm and associated the increase of women in the job market to increased cost of living. According to her, "women enter the workforce not because they necessarily want to but because technology makes everything so much more expensive. Now you have to pay for cell phones, Internet connection, automobile insurance, and computers; expenses that did not exist before."<sup>11</sup> All women agreed that an education was important, the primary reason being to have a better salary and increase an individual's standard of living. Women who reported having had previously worked outside of the home, discussed a certain sort of empowerment they had gained from it. In addition to this all females claimed that their own mothers had never worked. The male - female relationship was much more hierarchical in the past with many of the men forbidding their wives from joining the work force

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix Fig.1

<sup>10</sup> Interview #1

<sup>11</sup> Interview #1

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at all. It must be noted that even now there exist *machista*<sup>12</sup> men who refuse to let women work or even take birth control. "Men do this in an effort to 'make sure women do not cheat' and maintain a power relationship"<sup>13</sup>. "*Machismo* was introduced into the New World by the Spanish whose culture was deeply patriarchal, predicated on the primacy of male 'honor', on the inherent inferiority of women, and on the need for strict sexual control and domination of wives, concubines and daughters" (Chant & Craske, 15). Many writers have drawn attention to the fact that machismo's emphasis on male strength and men's right to control women contributes to cultural gender roles and a legitimation for the abuse of women.

*Technology:* When asked questions about whether technology was a good or bad thing, all women agreed that technology was good if you used it appropriately. Six of six women said that technology had made things easier and had given them time they didn't have before. Women specifically discussed the efficiency of the washer and dryer as key technological advances. However, many women attributed the decline of the nuclear family to technology, claiming that in the end it was going to leave people "cold and alone".<sup>14</sup> The family remains the primary source of security and well-being for the vast majority of Third World women. Unfortunately, many felt that technological devices such as the Internet and cell phone were taking away time that was once allotted for family members. Many women associated cell phones with the word "esclavo".<sup>15</sup> These women claimed that their children could not leave the home without their phones, demonstrating a type of dependency that many deemed as scary. Overall, the women

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<sup>12</sup> A man who does not view a woman as his equal; he generally treats her like property by ordering her around the house to do loose end jobs (clean the kitchen, make the beds, cook the meals)

<sup>13</sup> Interview #6

<sup>14</sup> Interview #3

<sup>15</sup> Spanish word for slave

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themselves did not feel dependent on their phones. One woman said she was so separated from her phone that in two years she had not bothered to learn her own phone number.

I then went on to ask the women who predominantly drove in their house and if their children knew how to drive. One of the women that I interviewed said that she had four children. Of her four children: two boys and two girls, only the males knew how to drive. I found her decision to allow the males but not the females in the family to learn how to drive an ironic one. Charlton's book says that "in the developing world, responsibilities and resources are distributed among family members in ways which are quite different from those currently prevailing in Western developed countries" (Charlton, 45). If income does not allow a family to distribute resources evenly, in the Third World the males are often given priority to females. Even though Ecuador is becoming more modernized, women in their 50s in some ways are still handicapping their daughters. What was perhaps more ironic than her decision to not have her daughters drive was a comment she made afterwards, "I believe that it is a necessity to know how to drive"<sup>16</sup>; what she should have said is I believe it a necessity for males to know how to drive.

Furthermore, I asked the women whether or not their daughters knew how to cook. Out of the women I interviewed, two women had never taught their daughters to cook, while one mother taught her daughters but not her son how to cook. She claimed that even though she is divorced her former husband still makes it blatant that he does not want his son in the kitchen. I found this interesting because this individual was actually helping to reinforce the gender roles she had been given. Furthermore the same woman claimed to teach her children "egalitarianism".

*Computer Literacy:* I also questioned the women about the degree to which their computer literacy has affected their chances at getting jobs. Many women laughed at this

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<sup>16</sup> Interview #1

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question claiming that it was "casi imposible a encontrar un trabajo ahora".<sup>17</sup> Many of the women claimed to use the Internet only to check email. Even tasks as minimal as checking email were viewed as difficult, as all women frequently asked their children for help. They said that they would need a lot of time to learn programs needed to find a decent job, and later claimed that more than anything their age inhibited them from finding work. I was shown newspaper ads for secretarial positions that specifically asked for *young*, experienced women between the ages of 20 to 35. Furthermore, all women informed me that women their age who are currently employed are employed at jobs that they have either held all of their lives or jobs in which they work for themselves. When asked how they measure up against younger women I was told that with "technology we don't stand a chance... they just know more"<sup>18</sup>. Out of the six women I interviewed, four worked as domestics and two worked for themselves [buying and selling property].

*Divorce:* Lastly, I asked the women why more women were getting divorces. Women attributed the increase of divorces to the result of being more educated and having more options. According to women, because women are more educated, they no longer have to stay in an unfulfilling relationship and can leave their husbands if they choose. I was actually surprised to hear this as most women assumed that divorces were happening not because the male wanted them but because the female did. Women claim that men in Ecuador are very patriarchal and a lot of women have realized this through education. When asked why some men chose to divorce their wives, the answer was never that the wife was a demanding person but that the man had found someone younger; the issue usually centered around infidelity.

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<sup>17</sup> English translation: Almost impossible to find a job now.

<sup>18</sup> Interview #6

*Vulnerability:* One woman had never attended college nor worked outside of the home said that she was extremely economically dependent on her spouse. When asked what she would do if he decided to get a divorce, she did not know what to say. She brushed the question off by saying it was unrealistic and that they were completely and entirely in love. She said that they have a healthy relationship and even though she is not independent economically he makes her feel like an equal by giving her the things that she wants and needs.

Overall women viewed the changing gender roles as positive. Women claimed that they have gained more independence with Western ideals but simultaneously have lost some traditional values. In addition to this some women have acknowledged their dependence on their male counterpart claiming that when they are not employed they feel extremely vulnerable because they have to rely one hundred percent on their spouse to pay the bills and maintain the house. In addition to this when only one person works the amount of dispensable money is cut in half. One interesting fact is that many women attributed the changing gender roles to co-education. According to women, schools used to be single sexed. Now that there is co-education boys and girls are able to learn and understand the other sex better. One woman who worked as a teacher at a former all girls school claimed that "there isn't the curiosity that there was before to know the opposite sex. Individuals are able to respect the other sex"<sup>19</sup>.

## **Discussion**

*Dollarization:* Despite the fact that only one of six women claimed to be against Ecuador's decision to "dollarize" the economy, statistics show that she is not alone. "While the introduction of the U.S. dollar was meant to bring stability to Ecuador's economy, in reality, for many people it has meant lost savings, inflationary costs of living, fewer jobs, and heightened economic

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<sup>19</sup> Interview #3

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security"(Lind, 8). While talking to participant 4, I realized that although her answer deviated from the norm, it was an answer that I think more women would give had I conducted more interviews.

*Education:* The decision that participant three made [to not continue her doctorate] is a decision that many women in the United States during the 1950s had to make as well. During this time period, a lot of women were unable to complete their education or even go beyond a bachelor's degree because of the limitations and responsibilities a marriage proposal placed upon them. "No one would dispute the value of education in and of itself. In the 1950s there were many liberally educated women caught in a bind similar [to participant three], but these days we expect some vocational reward for our investment in education" (Headlee & Elfin, 67). This was not true for participant three's generation in which society expected women only to be wives and mothers. Furthermore, I believe the doors of higher education are wider open for not just women in the United States but women in Ecuador as well. The fact that women have largely caught up with men in this area is encouraging.

*Women in the Work Force:* Research has shown that "education is not only important for accessing better jobs, but also for its effects on women's values and perceptions. Women with higher education are less likely to hold traditional beliefs regarding the role of women" (Chant & Craske, 203). Furthermore, women listed economic reasons as the number one reason women join the workforce. This is congruent with research that says that with industrialization it has become more valuable for women to work for a wage than to stay home and serve the family (Headlee & Elfin, 1996). Unfortunately in Ecuador there still exists occupational segregation with clear lines between what is considered to be a man's job and what is a women's job. While in Ecuador I purchased a newspaper with classified job ads. I was shocked to see ads specifically

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asking for a certain gender and age. For secretarial positions the heading "females between 18 to 25" was very common. This not only discriminates against certain age groups but contributes to the gap in male/ female earnings. Typically, female related jobs are paid less. On the upside, women have gained economic independence, intellectual growth, and self-confidence through the work-force.

*Machismo*: All women said that their mothers were stay at home moms, largely because their fathers "wouldn't let their mothers work". In Latin culture it is common for "machista" men to not let their wives work in the public sphere. The inability of some women to join the workforce is similar to the analysis that Charlton gives in her book, *Women in Third World Development*. Charlton claims that with a changing economy two incomes are often needed, but many women in the midst of social change are unable to join the workforce.

"The exclusion of women from extrafamilial activities was not particularly important in the traditional society that was not concerned with progress, but it is an anachronism in a society that professes to wish to change and is actually investing both capital and effort in bringing about change and development. To confine women to the family structure is to keep them at a subsistence level at a time when entire sectors of the economy are moving toward a money base." (Charlton, 33).

This implies that if women are confined by tradition or custom to the family, they are falling further and further behind as development accelerates.

*Divorce*: "Even today it is true that women returning to school in the 1980s and 1990s have often sought education as a way to independence and out of unhappy marriages" (Headlee & Elfin, 81). Although all women acknowledged the reality of divorce, all women listed the female's educational background and increased options as the reason more women and men were getting divorces. The one woman who had never worked or gone to college, did not seem to fear divorcing her spouse but did list herself as extremely economically dependent. I was surprised by

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this as not only did she fail to answer my question but she was anxious to skip it and answer the next one. I think that a lot of women in this particular age group do not see divorce as something that could happen to them, or at least avoid the thought.

*Smaller Families:* I think that when women are more educated they are more aware of the advantages of limiting family size, and are also more aware of the kind of contraception that is offered. "The overlap between variables should not be forgotten here, with education often associated with lower fertility, and, in turn, higher class status which almost always connotes the possibility of hiring domestic help" (Chant & Craske, 2008) Although five of six women left the workforce to take care of their young, two of the women tried hiring domestic help before leaving their jobs.

*Family Structure:* Many conservatives have argued that women's quest for equality has "destroyed" the family. With less time given to the family, a lot of women fear that their children are being raised by friends and the media. I think that the answer is not for women to give up on the world of work but for spouses to be more vocal with one another about the sharing of responsibilities in the private sphere. It isn't fair that the woman should take on all responsibilities of the home life. According to Headlee & Elfin, "mothers who have to work for pay or who choose to pursue their career are faced with the childrearing responsibilities when they get home from work. This amounts to working a second shift, which raises the social cost of being female by depriving women of leisure time" ( Headlee & Elfin, 49).

### **Conclusion**

To date it appears that Ecuadorian women's lives have changed massively as a result of social, political and economic changes of the last twenty years. Influenced by the current social revolution, many of today's young women feel far less pressure to marry and start a family than

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their mother's generation. Overall, I think the world is a lot more open to women – and women are expected to take advantage of this! Although women's struggles have by no means ended, they have overcome a number of obstacles. One of the biggest problems that women are now facing is the "double burden", balancing work life with home life. With less time spent at home, the family dynamic has changed from one where the woman took on all home responsibilities to one where both parents are sharing responsibilities. Along with this change, the number of children couples are having has decreased. Not only are women having fewer children but more women are graduating from college, joining the work force, and postponing marriage. Based on interviews and literature it is evident that the women of today's generation have more independence and opportunities than past generations.

## Bibliography

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This book explores development theory and its assumed positive linkage between social advancement and economic development. Ahlawat explains the effects that globalism has on third world countries and the social transformations that they must undergo: identity crisis, sacrifice, and a change in lifestyle.

Alam, Sultana. (2002, July). "Women and Poverty in Bangladesh". Retrieved December 9, 2009. From [http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?\\_ob=ArticleURL&\\_udi=B6VBD-46699HT22&\\_user=7774802&\\_rdoc=1&\\_fmt=&\\_orig=search&\\_sort=d&\\_docanchor=&\\_view=c&\\_searchStrId=1129363455&\\_rerunOrigin=google&\\_acct=C000062877&\\_version=1&\\_urlVersion=0&\\_userid=7774802&md5=14d2fa81a6b1b870ca0107348054ce4b](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6VBD-46699HT22&_user=7774802&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&_docanchor=&_view=c&_searchStrId=1129363455&_rerunOrigin=google&_acct=C000062877&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=7774802&md5=14d2fa81a6b1b870ca0107348054ce4b)

Azicri, Max. 1985. "Women's Development through Revolutionary Mobilization.' In *The Cuba Reader: The Making of Revolutionary Society*, ed. Philip Brenner, William M. Leogrande, Donna Rick and Daniel Siegel, 457-471. New York: Grove Press.

Bose, Christine, and Edna Acosta - Belen, eds. Women In The Latin American Development Process. New York: Temple UP, 1995.

Bose and Acosta Belen provide a historical framework for understanding the changing role of women in the political economy of Latin America. The book examines the following topics: women's subordination, positive and negative consequences of development for women, women's organized resistance and survival patterns, and the relationship of gender to class, race and ethnicity/nationality.

Chant,Sylvia., Nikki Craske. Gender in Latin America. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press., 2003.

Charlton, Sue. Each In Her Own Way Five Women Leaders of The Developing World. Colorado: Lynne Reinner Publishers, Inc.,1988.

Charlton, Sue. *Women in Third World Development*.Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1984.

Dean, Dwight G.1968."Alienation and Marital Adjustment." *The Sociological Quarterly* 9 (2):186-192.

Dean uses theory as a way to describe how women might feel alienated in the home by using Emile Durkheim's theory of alienation. I felt this theory useful when explaining how Ecuadorian

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women might have feelings of alienation and normlessness as society changes its ideas on how a woman should act.

Domingues, Jose. 2009. "Global Modernization, 'Coloniality' and a Critical Sociology for Contemporary Latin America." *Theory Culture and Society* 26 (1):112-133.

Domingues' article analyzes recent social, cultural, and political developments in Latin America, by discussing modernity sociologically. Terms like W.E.B. Dubois 'double consciousness' are used to explain some of the effects that modernization has on the third world.

Headlee and Margery Elfin. *The Cost of Being Female*. CT. Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 1996.

Kutner, Bernard, and Florence Rosenstock. 1967. *The Sociological Quarterly* 8 (4): 397-405.

Bernard and Rosenstock discuss alienation in the family system. They use examples of how families respond to family crisis and social change.

Lemert, Charles. 2004. *Social Theory The Multicultural and Classic Readings Charles Lemert Third Edition*. Colorado: West View Press.

Lemert's book is a composition of famous theorists and theories. In my research paper I draw from theorists such as Simone de Beauvoir, Emile Durkheim, Peter Berger and Max Weber. Such theories help explain the subordination of women and changing gender roles.

Lind, Amy. Gendered Paradoxes Women's Movements, State Restructuring, And Global Development In Ecuador. PA: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2005.

The author of this book, lived in Quito for many years to conduct her study. In this book she examines one local setting in Quito, Ecuador in which women have politically mobilized. Her results reveal much about the gendered making of modernity, national identity and politics in Ecuador.

Marx, Karl. 1969. "*Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization*". Edited with an Introduction by Shlomo Avineri. Garden City, NY: Anchor books.

This book shows how the West exploited the East for their resources. With detailed descriptions of motivations behind the West's decision and the aftermath affect of exploitation, this book can be linked to the development of third world countries by core nations such as the United States.

Moody, Thomas E., and Richard Schmitt. Key Concepts in Critical Theory Alienation and Social Criticism. NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc. 1994.

This book gives an in depth analysis of alienation in society. There is a chapter entitled The Alienation of Women Under Capitalism. Moody uses Marxian theory to describe the effects that working in the public sphere has on the individual.

Phillips, Lynne. The Third Wave of Modernization in Latin America Cultural Perspectives on Neoliberalism. DE: Scholarly resources Inc., 1998.

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Pieterse, J. (1996). *The Development of Development Theory: Towards Critical Globalism*, *Review of International Political Economy*, 3, 541-564.

This article gives the reader an insight into developmental theories. The author provides both an economical and sociological theoretical framework. The final argument discusses globalization and the inevitable development in third world countries that it brings with it.

Scott, Robert E. *Latin American Modernization Problems Case Studies in the Crisis of Change*. NJ: University of Illinois Press

Smith, Dorothy E. 1992. "Sociology from Women's Experience: A Reaffirmation." *Sociological Theory* 10 (1): (88-98).

Smith discusses women's social reality. According to Smith social reality is constantly in motion. How a woman acts and does things is based off of learned experiences. This includes: seeing, acting, and speaking. Smith's article shows how the world that we see is shaped by social relations, organization and powers beyond our own direct experiences.

South, Scott J., and Katherine Trent. 1989. "Structural Determinants of the Divorce Rate: A Cross Societal Analysis." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 51 (2): 391-404.  
Data was taken from a sample of 66 different countries. Researchers used four different predictor variables to predict divorce rate.

Zammit, Ann J., and Marilyn Thomson, trans. Women and Social Change in Latin America. Ed. Elizabeth Jelin. NJ: Zed Books Ltd., 1990.

This book documents six studies by different authors. It asks why and how women are transcending the private world of the home for a more active role in the public domain. Jelin one of the main authors argues that while a woman is struggling to get out of a subordinate role she is also struggling with cultural identity.

## Appendix:

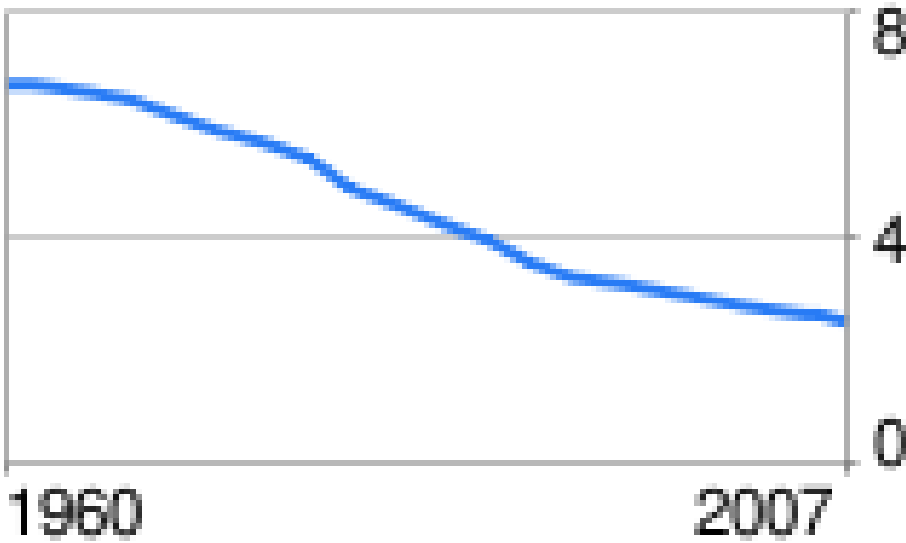


Fig. 1 Fertility Rate



Fig. 2 Map of Ecuador

## ESTADÍSTICAS LABORALES DE ECUADOR

### 2.3 ECUADOR : MERCADO DE TRABAJO

INDICADOR	Unidad	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>Población Total (PT) 1/</b>	Millones	12.41	12.65	...	...	...
<b>Población en Edad de Trabajar (PET) 2/</b>	Millones	...	...	8.92	b /	5.93
<b>Población Ocupada (PO) 3/</b>	Millones	c / 3.23	3.38	...	...	3.26
PO como % de la PEA	% de PEA	...	...	...	...	...
Categoría Ocupacional		100.0%	100.0%	...	...	...
Patrono o socio 3/	% de PO	8.5%	4.6%	...	...	...
Trabajador familiar no remunerado 3/	% de PO	5.7%	6.0%	...	...	...
Transporte y comunicación	% de PO	6.8%	6.3%	...	...	...
Servicios financieros	% de PO	1.5%	1.3%	...	...	...
Servicios comunales y sociales	% de PO	29.0%	29.1%	...	...	...
<b>Tasa de Desempleo Urbano 4/</b>		14.4	9.0	10.9	9.3	11.7
Hombres		10.8	6.2	7.1	6	9.4
Mujeres		19.6	13.1	16.1	14	14.9

**Fig. 3 Work Statistics**

(Shows the amount of women and men who are unemployed)

### Number of Divorces in Ecuador Between 1971-1989

1971	1974	1977
1,292	1,542	2,269
<b>Divorces per 100 matrimonies</b>		
3	4	5

1980	1983	1986	1989
2.737	3.133	4.203	5.663
6	6	7	9

Fig. 4 Divorce Statistics