

Wendy Rivadeneira

Ms. von Uhl

Box 11 Assignment

Unlearning Our Privilege

This is my list of privileges based on the fieldsite I am choosing to observe. The fieldsite I am observing for this assignment is the culture of my relatives in Ecuador in comparison to the culture and lifestyle of living in the United States.

- Education level/ opportunities
- Financial Support
- Freedom to travel
- Socioeconomic status

Growing up in the United States has allowed me to have these privileges over many of my family members who live in my native country. I was not born in the United States, therefore, I am a permanent resident unlike my two sisters. Even so, I moved here when I was three years old and because of that I do not fully consider myself as having grown up in Ecuador. Visiting my family in Ecuador is always fun and memorable. It is easy for me and my relatives to notice how different we are in culture and lifestyle when I go visit them.

For instance, my aunts and uncles financial income is very different compared to what an average worker would earn here. They earn about half of what my parents would earn. This is +

+not to say that they do not enjoy living in Ecuador. Everything is cheaper over there. I remember a ride on the bus cost me and my dad 40 cents. Over here, the average bus ride costs \$2.75, and that is just the bus. The train I take to school costs about \$15 one way.

Many of my cousins who live in Ecuador are around my age or older. Three or four of my cousins are not able to attend college because of financial issues as well as travel. There are many universities that are financially accessible in the city areas of Ecuador, such as Quito and Cuenca. However, my mom's side of the family lives 7 hours away from the closest city, and it would be a burden on my aunt to pay for the bus fare back and forth plus the tuition itself. In this way, I can see I have a privilege because I live in an area with access to many affordable colleges and with opportunities to scholarships and state aid. My cousins do not have access to financial aid from the government because it is hard to access. Another area in which I have a privilege is being able to choose my college career. Not until recently, did I find out that in Ecuador, students are asked to take a placement test. The students are able to choose a career based on their score on the test. Here, I am free to choose my area of study and even change it. Even when it comes to voting, anyone over the age of 18 is required to vote in Ecuador. Even though, I am an Ecuadorian citizen, I am not required to vote in the elections because I am a resident of the United States. There are many freedoms like this that I have that my relatives do not.

Going back to my privilege on freedom to travel, most of my family in Ecuador are not allowed to travel to the United States. This is because they have not been granted with Visas. The only members of my family that can travel are my grandparents and two of my cousins. My aunt who lives near me has not seen her son in over ten years because of this barrier. I consider this a privilege because my parents are able to see their parents and brothers and sisters whenever

they want to buy a ticket. This barrier prevents many of me and my cousins from being close to each other because the only way we can communicate is by texting or calling. I hope that in the near future there would be less barriers that would prevent me from being close to my relatives in Ecuador.