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Post-Dollarization Narratives of Economic Literacy in Ecuador

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University of San Francisco

POST-DOLLARIZATION NARRATIVES OF ECONOMIC LITERACY
IN ECUADOR

A Dissertation Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education

Department of Leadership Studies
Organization and Leadership Program

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
of Doctor of Education

By
Luis A. Reynoso
San Francisco, CA
May 2012

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Dissertation Abstract

Post-Dollarization Narratives of Economic Literacy in Ecuador

Research Topic

This study addresses how the economic narratives of conversation participants in Ecuador after dollarization permeates the concepts of self, and quality of life, binding both into a personal economic story that describes a person's economic narrative towards a definition of economic literacy.

Research Theory and Protocol

Through critical hermeneutic theory formulated by Paul Ricoeur (1992) and the inquiry protocol developed by Ellen Herda (1999), the interpretive categories of narrative identity, text, and imagination were applied to this study.

Research Categories

The narratives describe the stories of the people of Ecuador pursuing daily tasks in their economy. The text refers to meaningful activity associated with the economic sphere, which is later defined as economic text. Imagination provides the medium for the people of Ecuador to realize their economic goals through entrepreneurship.

Findings

The study revealed the following four findings: dollarization promotes suspicion towards nefarious activities such as money laundering; in the course of daily cash transactions, the lack of smaller coin denominations creates challenges; the people of Ecuador still yearn for and identify with their prior currency, the sucre; lastly, imagination plays an active role in the development of entrepreneurship. This study provides a perspective on how economic literacy influences quality of life and the need for people to become economically literate. This study also sub-

stantiates how the influence of economic activities on the quality of life is of such magnitude that some people are driven to poverty while others continue to thrive.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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I am very thankful to God for the unwavering protection and opportunities He has given throughout my life so that I may prosper and learn to be a compassionate human being as I discover myself while accepting the dignity in others.

To my parents, I am grateful. My father Luis Reynoso, may his soul rest in peace, taught me as a child to work hard and never give up. My mother Maria Socorro Caballero taught me to give to others even as I watched her in the darkest hour, upon becoming a young widow. To my family and friends thank you for being so patient with me while I complete the Organization and Leadership doctorate program at USF.

I am thankful for all the assistance and guidance Dr. Herda has given me to participate in learning critical hermeneutics in the classroom and in interpretive research in the real world. Special thanks for the mentorship Dr. Mitchell gave me when I first came to USF and for serving on my dissertation committee. To Dr. Taylor for the thoughtful counsel while participating on the committee, and to Dr. Raccanello for providing gracious guidance on my proposal and serving on my committee.

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CHAPTER ONE: STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Introduction

This study is a compilation of narratives that portray the lives of selected participants living in Ecuador who graciously told about their experiences with the change from the sucre to the dollar in 2000. Currency and economics represent a driving force both in Ecuador and the world today, but they take on meaning in the world of business and for the individual in an intimate and personal way in the home. This research focuses on the home and the local entrepreneur whose business is directly tied to his or her family. Children learn the concept of bills and coins, but they develop a true understanding of the significance of money based on what their families say and do with money. According to Hernando de Soto (2009: 1), author of *The Mystery of Capital* (2000), in his 2009 interview with Newsweek, “When you go visit a home...you don't find justification for it through the books.” People see and participate in their families’ earning of money, thoughts on money and spending of money. In this way, they rely on a particular form of what I call economic literacy.

Economic literacy, as mentioned by Donald Wentworth (1976: 3) is “elusive to pursue” and is investigated in this study within the realm of an interpretation of the immediacy of need for money. One way that an entire country becomes aware of the immediacy of money is when the government changes both the name and the evaluation of currency. When such a dramatic change happens, citizens of all economic levels are made highly aware of money and its value and meaning in their lives. In 2000, Ecuador changed their currency from the *sucre* to the American dollar as reported by Carlos Cisternas (2000: 1). The purpose of this inquiry in Ecuador is to delineate an understanding

of money's use and valuation, particularly as it relates to personal use in the home and in familial entrepreneurial settings.

Economic literacy refers not to how much money an individual may or may not have, but to their beliefs surrounding money and ownership. As de Soto (2009) remarks in his Newsweek interview, “[w]hen you think about it, whether it's ownership, whether it's credit, whether it's capital, whether it's identification, none of the things that make a modern economy are possible without property.” In this case, an understanding of the importance of owning something- a taxi, a vegetable stand, a market stall- indicates an evolving rate of economic literacy. Economic literacy describes where a person sees himself or herself “fitting in” with money, how much or how little a person is empowered to make personal decisions with money, and what he or she ultimately chooses to do with it. As such, it is imperative that individuals who are influenced by changing monetary infrastructures be educated in economic literacy, much like they are taught how to read and write. Economic literacy defines our ability to use and to *be comfortable using* money, and particularly, be comfortable using a different kind of money. It is the purpose of this study to explore and identify the possible influences economic literacy has on the lives of people in Ecuador after dollarization in order to understand what everyday challenges individuals face in the home and workplace.

In applying a critical hermeneutic approach to this research topic and analysis, three concepts guided this inquiry along: Text, Narrative Identity, and Imagination, as described by Paul Ricoeur (1981, 1991, 1992) in Chapter Four: Research and Theory of this study. The subsequent references to Economic Text in this study address meaningful

economic activity within the context of meaningful action as used by Ricoeur (1991: 155) in his description of a text.

The following general questions in the categories of Economic Text, Narrative Identity, and Imagination are addressed:

1. Text: What economic human activities can be identified to contribute in the understanding of economic literacy? (The term is expanded in this work to the idea of Economic Text – meaningful economic activities.)
2. Narrative Identity: How do the economic activities in text and imagination shape the economic stories which create and shape the identity of people?
3. Imagination: What images are exercised and desired to improve the economic conditions of people?

Statement of the Issue

Unlike reading and writing, economic literacy is not taught in the schools even though the importance of such literacy is presented by the president of the National Council on Economic Education, Robert Duvall (in Stern 1998: 1), who states “Economic literacy is a vital skill, just as vital as reading literacy.” Instead, it is most often taught by example at home and attained, to one degree or another, during life. It is not explicitly taught by any real institution, leaving many at a disadvantage, regardless of level of affluence. Even if a person is quite affluent, having a low rate of economic literacy means this person may be unable to feel competent using this money. Essentially, a person may not be empowered to use money effectively. The ability to make informed economic choices is a defining barrier between affluent and non-affluent individuals. It is the quality of life that ultimately is determined by the level of economic literacy an individual obtains as suggested by the former president and chief executive officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Gary Stern (1998: 1), who writes, “Economic literacy is cru-

cial because it is a measure of whether people understand the [economic] forces that significantly affect the quality of their lives.” This type of literacy plays an even more critical role when a country changes its money and, more often than not, informally educates locals on how to use a foreign currency.

The challenge in educating others about their economic potential is in breaking down lifelong beliefs about personal competency and the value of self-education. Self-worth figures greatly in an individual’s willingness to take on new projects and learn new things: “[s]elf-concept controls the feedback loop and determines how the individual will respond to almost any new learning situation” (Sousa 2006: 54). Before any kind of economy literacy education can be attempted, the individual must accept that he or she along with anyone else is worth the new knowledge, and that this understanding is valuable.

In order for economic literacy to be better understood, it is necessary for economics to be examined critically as a social science in this study as Jon Wisman (1991: 126) explains:

From a Habermasian perspective, then, an ideal economic science would need to embrace two dimensions that currently are accorded no significant role within the mainstream of the discipline. These dimensions are the hermeneutical or interpretative and the critical. Without these two crucial components for social theory, economics is unnecessarily handicapped from aiding humans in their struggle for liberation, not just from material privation, but also from social strife and domination.

The challenge is if economic literacy is to provide any benefits in a social context to people involved in an economy using a non-familiar currency, it may be useful to observe and hear their stories about economic activities. This research orientation attends to the narrative identity and the place a person has in public life, the home, and local business.

Discussion of the Issue

Through actual experiences, I illustrate that economic literacy could be a key factor in helping communities help themselves. In many countries, like Ecuador, working class people are not educated concerning legal and economic concepts. One of the aspects to support this statement is the economics and legalities of property ownership (de Soto 2009). Indeed de Soto comments on this idea when he states “[property is] not standardized and it's not distributed”, and as a result people are unaware of any possible ownership or economic rights.

The joining of hermeneutic thought with my fieldwork, and conversations with the participants, inquired into economic literacy as perhaps one of the more pressing issues of our time, particularly when it comes to the individual's search for knowledge and desire for self-improvement. Economic literacy requires having the understanding, whether a person is wealthy or not, to use resources effectively, not necessarily of amassing large amounts of capital or similar resources.

The ability to make educated, informed choices and plan for future projects may be a defining distinction between affluent and non-affluent individuals. I believe the challenge in helping people learn more about their economic potential is found in breaking down lifelong beliefs about personal competency and the value of self-education. Literacy or learning shows that personal assessments of self-worth figure greatly in an individual's willingness to take on new projects. Moreover, according to Ricoeur (1992: 152), the self-worth needs to embrace a

“[r]elation between the action and its agent, [and] calls for a considerable extension of the field of practice, if the action described is to match the action recounted.” A person can recount through imagination what projects they hope to work on, but this recount needs an extended field of practice in order to be actualized, whether he or she is a person of monetary wealth or modest sustainable means.

New entrepreneurial projects could be considered an extension of the individual, and as such, also agents of action deepened through narratives that define them. Before any kind of economy literacy learning can be attempted, the individual needs to accept that he or she is worth possessing the new knowledge, and that this information is valuable in order for any projects to materialize.

Ultimately, this compendium of work argues for the value of the concept of economic capability that is, economic literacy, and the application of economic literacy to non-affluent individuals. At the core of this project is the belief that most people can improve their economic situation if they are committed and have the imagination to use practical knowledge and understandings that ultimately create a new narrative identity. To enact this possibility, as Ricoeur argues (1992: 152), the relationship between the individual and a new meaningful activity, i.e., an economic text, comes into play through living out the new in our every day practical activities.

Significance of the Issue

Once a set of principles has been developed for teaching economic literacy perhaps that knowledge could be applied to people of economic need in different situations. Improving the quality of life and reducing the struggle against poverty with entrepreneurship speaks for itself as a worthwhile endeavor. The first approach to accomplishing these

goals is to focus on resources. Ecuador, in particular, presents an ideal place to conduct research, primarily because people are still becoming acquainted with the value of the U.S. dollar and its cultural influences. Amy Lind (2007: 140) observes, “The implications of dollarization, as one result of the economic restructuring process, go far beyond the economic, as culture, politics, and power are also put into question.”

In this study I present my research in terms of an analysis drawn from critical hermeneutic principles that may go towards the creation of a general working definition of economic literacy that could result in increasing success among economic activities towards entrepreneurship.

The principles of a potential definition for economic literacy are a primary goal of this research. This goal incorporates the development of an economic text for entrepreneurship coupled with the goal of transitioning to a new narrative identity utilizing one’s imagination towards the accomplishment of economic needs. As a first step, future entrepreneurs will have an understanding of what meaningful actions described as economic text are necessary to generate income. Second, their identity is inspired by the possible narratives of what they are likely to become with an appropriate understanding of resources. Lastly, in utilizing people’s imagination as a medium to identify useful economic texts and to develop a new narrative identity, economic literacy may provide the framework from which to build economic well-being manifested in the home and in the private business place.

Summary

Economic literacy is the action-related ability to make informed choices using the financial resources one has, even in the context of minimal means to live a quality of life

with dignity that provides food, shelter, and security to support oneself and family. Economic literacy is investigated in view of the people of Ecuador in this time of dollarization and world-wide economic uncertainty. When people associate their well-being with their identity, and improving their financial status, it may mean a simultaneous improvement in individual and collective identities. In the next Chapter, I discuss the country of Ecuador and some of its recent history, which led to the formulation of this project.

CHAPTER TWO: COUNTRY BACKGROUND



Figure 1 – Ecuadorian Flag
Image from <http://www.flags.net/ECUA.htm>

Introduction

Ecuador has experienced its share of high inflation and boundary disputes with its neighbors, as identified in Figure 2. According to George Kohn (2006: 172), “Ecuador and Peru erupted in fighting January 26, 1995...finally a ceasefire and truce took effect on March 1, 1995 after tense peace talks...In May 1999, Ecuador and Peru finally sealed the accord.” This situation has allowed for geographic political stability in the region. Other writers support this point of view. According to St. John *et al.* (1999: 34), “As part of a sustained diplomatic effort, Ecuador and Peru introduced significant policy changes in late January and early February [1995] which made an important contribution to the process of conflict resolution.”

After establishment of the peace agreement, the scene was set to allow a currency transition. According to Luis Jácome (2004) dollarization helped to begin the process of stabilizing the economy: “While preconditions for dollarization– mainly strong public finances in the sound stable financial system– were not in place, the full dollarization of the economy succeeded in stabilizing the financial system and to stop the collapse of the economy” (Jácome 2004: 24). Next I examine the Geographical Location and Brief His-

tory of the country in order to present a fuller understanding of the context of the research site.

Geographical Location and Brief History

Ecuador was one of the South American colonies Spain had controlled since the early 1500s. Quito is the original seat of government, as established by Spain early in the country's history. Kris Lane (2002: 1) writes, "Although no census exists or even rough contemporary estimate survives, Quito in 1599 was clearly a second tier Spanish-American city, seat of a permanent home to...ten thousand people." While one of the smaller countries in South America, Ecuador suffered its share of political instability and tensions with surrounding countries. Carlos de la Torre (2009: 3) notes, "[t]here have been many struggles in Ecuador...perhaps none more important than the struggle for recognition and justice...and political organizing." Much of this political upheaval has been due in part to the economy; Ecuador relies on natural resources other than agricultural crops and similar exports for its economic sustenance.



Figure 2 - Map of Ecuador
Image from <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ec.html>

As indicated earlier, my choice of Ecuador for this research was based on the fact that this country has recently switched from the sucre to the dollar, so people are still trying to adjust to this change in currency. Also, many people live under the poverty line, which made this inquiry in economic literacy worthwhile. According to the World Bank

(1997: 63), “The Ecuador Poverty report states that, although the oil boom of the 1970s led to unprecedented growth, poverty remains pervasive in this Andean country.” Many of Ecuador’s indigenous peoples are depicted in art and in the accounts of explorers, as well as modern scholars. According to Michael Handelsman (2000: xiv), “Ecuadorians struggle to come to terms with their diversity...[t]o the extent that *mestizaje* was the bedrock of the modern Ecuadorian state...one might argue that the (pluri)national model of multiculturalism at the close of the twentieth century is the nucleus of a postmodern Ecuador.” It is evident from even a brief exploration into Ecuadorian history that the cohabitation of different peoples and the colonialism of the country have a deep influence on the social and cultural customs of contemporary Ecuador.

Culture and Environment

Ecuador became independent fairly recently compared to other countries in South America. The country began as part of New Granada, a Spanish colony. Since that time, Ecuador has become a diverse country populated by native indigenous peoples and Europeans. Spain left a heritage of government and legal structure, as well as cultural and social influences. As Erick Langer (2003: 73) states, “...when Ecuador became an independent nation, their poverty and political marginalization were problems of unprecedented proportions...[t]o justify independence, it was important...to show [that] breaking away from Spanish rule had alleviated racial inequalities.”

Today, Ecuador has revised its constitution to address the contemporary needs of a changing country. As in other places around the world, Ecuador has to contend with water pollution and environmental threats to the surrounding parts of the Amazon rainforest and the Galapagos Islands. In addition, the country suffers from frequent earth-

quakes and volcanic explosions, and progressively redesigns many emergency procedures. Deforestation and other common problems are issues for Ecuador, and the current government has focused on these problems both as environmental and financial threats. Palmerlee *et al.* (2006: 47) comments, “[v]arious international conservation agencies have provided much-needed expertise... ecotourism projects have largely had a positive effect on habitat protection.” Clearly, policymakers are looking at Ecuador’s environment as a resource that can improve the economy by increasing the influx of visitors to the country.

Regardless of its political history, Ecuador is a young country; 25 is the median age of its population, as mentioned in the Central Intelligence Agency (2011) website. Most people migrate to the large urban areas, given that the rest of the country is forest or otherwise inhabitable. Jack Hopkins (1998: 40) observes, “[d]ifferences in land, climate, and resources in pre-Columbian societies, and in degrees of a cultural influence by European colonial administrations led to major political and economic variations in South America.” It was those settings described above that helped create the political situation in Ecuador which is discussed next.

Political Background

Ecuador has had political tensions with Peru and Columbia, which focus on the crossfire of notorious drug cartels. In addition to difficulties with neighboring countries, Ecuador has also struggled with political instability ever since the demise of the “banana boom” of the 1950s, as Ronn Pineo (2007: 136) calls this period in Ecuadorian history.

As an example of this instability, it is helpful to look at the political career of Jose Velasco Ibarra who rose to power just before World War II. After being ordered by the military to take command of the country, Ibarra was ousted a total of four times, spanning

the pre-war years to 1972 (Pineo 2007: 141-42). While he was initially welcomed by the people as the person with the most potential to help Ecuador, his later actions, which were taken in an effort to help colleagues, alienated the people from his cause. While the mid-century years brought some economic relief to Ecuador as a result of greater banana and cacao bean exportation, this relative affluence ended by the mid-1960s. To further complicate the challenge of national stability, Ecuador came under military control and experienced a series of coups. Eileen Rosin (2005: 233) writes, “[Ecuador] has been enmeshed in a series of economic problems that have made its governments extremely weak, made the political situation unpredictable, and limited Ecuador’s ability to develop.” Part of Ecuador’s troubles stem from its economic background, which is discussed in the next section.

Economic Background

Ecuador has little to sustain itself economically. The country has very little farmland, resulting in a heavy dependence on forest resources, petroleum, fishing, and hydro-power as mentioned in the Central Intelligence Agency (2011) website. As a result, Ecuador found other ways to use its land and natural resources. Mostly, the country depends on the oil industry for its economic welfare. Under the recent political administration, laws have been passed that discourage private investment, creating significant economic uncertainty for the country.

In particular, the last president Jamil Mahuad made some unpopular political moves that left some Ecuadorians feeling “[t]hey could never accept what they saw as Mahuad’s act of betrayal, a land giveaway to the enemy...” (Pineo 2007: 211). Most notably, the move from the *sucre* to the American dollar increased the inflation rate “to 91%

in 2000” (Pineo 2007: 214). Another effect of this move was that Ecuador “gave up control of monetary policy” (Pineo 2007: 214). Ecuador underwent dollarization in 2000, and since then it has been trying to re-balance social, cultural, and economic norms. Furthermore, national currency replacements employ an influence that is not very positive to the population regardless of whether it is the sucre to dollar or Franc to Euro; as explained by Teppei Hayashi (2003: 50). “The changes that occurred in the people's daily lives were drastic, and some people continue to face the challenges caused by the currency changes... Those people need more support, economically, politically, and culturally, from their political and economic institutions.”

Based on my literature review, I believe that this study is the first foray into an economic system that has recently changed currency. As Robert Carbaugh (2008: 494) notes, “[d]ollarization is considered to be one way of avoiding the capital outflows that often precede or accompany an embattled currency situation.” The next section discusses the Educational Background of the country.

Educational Background

Like many other countries in South America, Ecuador has a large disparity between rich and poor. Most of the more affluent people also live in urban areas, which, not without coincidence, is also where people with higher levels of education live. According to Robert Kaplan (2007: 11-12), the educational system is organized into levels, and students “must attend six years of primary school...three years of basic secondary education...[and] then have the option of attending an additional three years of high school[.]” School is considered mandatory for students between the ages of 6 and 14. Furthermore, says Thomas Leonard (2006: 541), “Ecuador has made great strides in social develop-

ment [literacy rate 90%].” Such a high percentage of literacy has been noted to be the “highest for South America,” states Julian Smith (2009: 398).

In terms of higher education, Ecuador has more than 29 universities overseen by a national technical council (Kaplan 2007: 12). This country could benefit from the correlation described by Pundy Pillay (2010: 2): “[i]n the case of Finland and South Korea, education planning, specifically higher education, has been closely linked to changes in the pattern of economic development.” Determining what areas in higher education could relate to economic literacy might help create a program aiding Ecuadorians to make better economic decisions.

Summary

Ecuador is a country of contrasts, with a comparatively well-educated citizenry and a challenging economy. The country has an extensive social and cultural history, first as a Spanish colony and then as a country in its own right. The population is very young, with an average age in the mid-20s, and vary from *mestizo*, to indigenous native groups, to Europeans. The recent transition to the dollar has created a difficult dynamic where people who are already dispossessed have lost more economic resources, as well as an understanding of the local currency. All of these factors make the country an ideal place to explore the concept of economic literacy. In Chapter Three, the Review of the Literature is discussed.

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The work of three anthropologists stands out surrounding the topic of economic literacy. Ruth Benedict, Clifford Geertz, and Alfred Kroeber all developed ethnography of groups and, in doing so, also expanded an understanding of their economic systems. These works explored how peoples around the world used their imagination to promote their resources and their knowledge of which resources to use at specific times in particular developing regions in the world. As Margaret Mead (2005: 48) notes, “Clifford Geertz, who in some aspects of his work is close both to Alfred Kroeber and Ruth Benedict speaks...of a social history of the imagination;” which, in the case of Ecuador, will include an examination of how people use relevant resources. In a sense, these anthropologists could be looked at as the founders of the study of anthropological economics. In addition to the anthropological foundations for economic activities, established in terms of culture, it becomes necessary to introduce the economic views of Adam Smith, Max Weber, and Milton Friedman. The introduction of economists is necessary to show how even bartering and other forms of trade in daily economic transactions are influenced by basic economic principles and rely on economic literacy to improve their economic well being. Anthropological and economic principles are discussed in the next two sections.

Section One: Anthropological Theory

The work of three anthropologists, Ruth Benedict, Clifford Geertz, and Alfred Kroeber, has contributed to the shape of this inquiry. My goal here is to illustrate the aspects of their work that informed this study, and to give examples of their contributions.

Ruth Benedict: Economic Literacy and the Participant-Observer

Ruth Benedict is primarily known for her books *Patterns of Culture* and *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. Her work with the peoples of the American Southwest dealt with their bartering systems, and the value they gave to different items in their daily lives. She describes “the obligations of the economic system” (Benedict 1934: 22) in her study of various indigenous peoples and interprets her findings related to fieldwork centered on economy. In this way, her work is closely tied with the idea of economic literacy.

In her book, *Chrysanthemum*, she explores how the last emperor of Japan ruled the country and influenced its economy. According to Benedict (1946: 68), “[e]ven in the last and desperate days of the Tokugawa regime, Commodore Perry did not suspect the existence of an Emperor in the background.” The emperor was still influencing the economy at a time when the United States had entered the country. When thinking about economic literacy, it is helpful to think about how centralized power might shape the economic cycles, often invisibly, and the values of different financial resources.

Clifford Geertz: Ethnography and Economic Literacy

Clifford Geertz’s *The Interpretation of Cultures* is a remarkable observation of, among other things, the role of the economy in Southeast Asia in the 1950s and 60s. His work focuses on how certain cultural practices, such as cockfighting, influenced the economy and the quality of life at the time. Much of his work focuses on how the Southeast Asians worshipped their fighting roosters by the lavish attention they gave to them, “...grooming them, feeding them, discussing them...” (Geertz 1973: 418). The winnings

earned at these sporting events were a significant influence in the role of choice and investment in the village economy. The point here reminds researchers that the local patterns of action influence how people think about and participate in their own economy.

Another relevant aspect of Geertz's work is his selection of an area of the world similar to Ecuador, in that Southeast Asia also struggles to find sustainable financial resources. Many of his observations were helpful in my work studying economic literacy. In both areas, there is a considerable gap between the haves and have-nots.

Alfred Kroeber: The Interaction Between Culture and Economy

Alfred Kroeber's study of the indigenous peoples of California also has a significant amount of information related to early economy and economic literacy. His work, *Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America*, published in 1939 discusses how indigenous tribes selected what they needed from natural and other economic resources to maximize their quality of life. For example, when talking about the Inuit, Kroeber (1939: 214) remarks, "the results of these [climate] variations are a number of essentially equivalent but well-differentiated forms of the [Inuit] economy." He was already considering the interaction of environmental and economic factors and the influence on Native peoples.

Although many indigenous people had died from famine and disease by this time in history, Kroeber's work shows that the survivors developed ways to continue their sustenance through particular kinds of economic systems. The next section discusses economists of major influence on our ideas of economies. The work of Adam Smith, Max Weber, and Milton Friedman are described in the context of how their economic principles might be relevant to the practice of economic literacy.

Section Two: Economists

The ideas and economic concepts of three anthropologists, Adam Smith, Max Weber, and Milton Friedman, supplemented and inspired my study. It is the marriage of the anthropological writings discussed above with the economic premises explored that have allowed this work to be possible.

Adam Smith: *The Wealth of Nations*

As one of the founding fathers of economic theory, Adam Smith was the first economist to recognize and publish works on the importance of the free economy, regulated by cyclical economic principles. These principles are described in his seminal work, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), which continues to influence contemporary economic thought. His contributions of observations in commercial and financial stabilities helped identify the concept of business cycles. According to the economist Michael Belongia (1992: 4), writing on the work of Adam Smith, “well before the concept of a business (or trade) cycle originated serious episodes of commercial and financial instability were observed repeatedly by contemporaries.” If it were not for his contributions, economic literacy would only be thought about in terms of institutional development. As Ellen Herda (1999: 112) mentions, theory is the only way to keep research relevant and applicable through time: “A new conceptual framework for [economics] is significant because without an appropriate [economic] curriculum, our students are mired in an antiquated and inaccurate account of themselves and their world.” In this case, Adam Smith gave us a way to look at economics that constitutes a specific framework of cycles, one that can be observed on its own as well as in the context of critical hermeneutic theory. Questions arise today, however, whether or not, the influence of Smith may, upon reflection, lead to

new theories for a battered world economy. Yet, it is the work of Smith and other early economic thinkers that, at this time, shape the Western economies which in turn significantly influence developing countries.

Max Weber: *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*

Another founding father of modern economics, Max Weber wrote *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (1920), a work that stood out from many of the more conventional works of the period. According to Talcott Parsons (1997: 49), “[Weber] lay great emphasis on the importance for a free market economy...[he] warned strongly that the pressures working toward an inflationary breakdown of the monetary system were exceedingly strong, far stronger than many monetary experts of the day...realized.”

While countries around the world were experimenting with different social paradigms and political theory, Weber advocated for a society where people could work and be supported by their respective governments for their contributions to the common welfare. He placed great emphasis on metacognitive processes, or the kinds of feelings people attached to their work and their daily economic decisions. Weber’s ideas render some of the personal connections to local families in that “[e]ntree into any organization, society, community, or country requires timing, planning, and flexibility” (Herda 1999: 115). In this case, Weber understood the flexibility needed to evaluate the kind of effort people put into their economic decisions, and the personal attachments they have in their lives that may influence these decisions. In this way, Weber’s work has a sociological theme in that he describes social factors in economic activities.

Milton Friedman: *Essays in Positive Economics*

Finally, the third economist considered here is Milton Friedman, a supporter of the economic principle that governments should not interfere in the free market, a proponent for providing a good education to the poor, and a believer in free agency. According to Friedman (1953), “[g]overnment actions undertaken to eliminate or offset economic instability may instead increase instability” (Friedman 1953: 117). The reason Friedman’s work informs this project is that my conversations consisted of reflective questions designed to encourage participants to think about what they do independently regarding their economic decisions. Furthermore, looking at Friedman’s work he maintains that “[i]n the case of education, the entire community benefits from an educated citizenry” (Ebenstein 2007: 224). Additionally, Friedman was a very strong advocate to give the poor access to a good education for according to syndicated columnist Cal Thomas (2006: 2) “[Milton] Friedman did not fit the stereotype of an economic conservative. He was genuinely interested in helping the poor by giving them a choice of schools that would offer them the best opportunity to escape poverty's cycle.”

Acknowledging Friedman’s rationale if the government was the only factor influencing the economy, I would not have been able to have conversations with people regarding how their personal lives are influenced through their rates of economic literacy. As Herda (1999: 129) remarks, “[p]roblem-solving and decision-making processes have received attention...at the expense of ... think[ing] about the nature of the problem. This latter activity is far more philosophical than it is technical. It requires discussion and conversation with others to reach a conclusion grounded in action about what things mean and the way things are done.” Milton Friedman’s economic theory has been a driving

force in shaping the American economy, as well as in many economies throughout the Western world. The question remains whether this approach will continue to serve us in light of the currently changing configuration of the world economies. One aim of this study was to engage others in conversation about what their economic decisions mean in their own contexts.

Selected contributions drawn from anthropology and economics have been thought to contribute to a fund of knowledge necessary to educate people in a society. Norma Gonzalez (2005: 134) acknowledges that such knowledge represents a "...totality of experiences...whether they take place individually, with peers, or under the supervision of adults, helps constitute the funds of knowledge children bring to school." It can be of further support to include in educational curriculum the economic knowledge people ostensibly practice for "[w]hen funds of knowledge are not readily available within households, relationships with individuals outside the households are activated to meet either household or individual needs" (Gonzalez 2005: 134). Again, a question remains what fund of knowledge would best represent the economic literacy needed for the well-being of many Ecuadorians.

Although a diligent effort has been made to find relevant scholarly research literature for the experiences of the Ecuadorians after dollarization, none has been found. The only literature remotely addressing dollarization in Ecuador is a World Bank (2005) economic report, and it does not contribute to understanding the narratives of the people in Ecuador.

Summary

The work of the three anthropologists, Ruth Benedict, Clifford Geertz, and Alfred Kroeber represent a compendium of work on the study of economic systems and economic literacy through time and in different cultures. Even though the groups studied varied considerably in culture and geography, all three took pains to observe and record the economic patterns and methods of economic literacy each group employed to survive and create financial choice in a changing world. Interestingly, even though these anthropologists contributed meaningfully to a growing knowledge of economic systems, they did not receive any kind of institutional support. In essence, what this group of anthropologists described was that culture largely determines the kinds of patterns that prevail in any given economy. According to Swidler (1986: 278), the sociologist and economist Max Weber (1922) in his book *Protestant Ethic*, generalizing a sociology of religion particularly expressed support of this belief in his characterization of culture playing an “independent causal role” in defining an economy. Ironically, however, the kinds of cultural practices driving economic forces are not necessarily legally condoned as Weber may have assumed; practices such as cockfighting in Southeast Asia and similar customs have been known to shape economies. As Ann Swidler (1986: 278) further states “Weberian students of culture have been embarrassed by their success in finding functional equivalents to the Protestant ethic in societies that Weber would have considered other worldly, mystical, or otherwise averse to rational economic activity.”

Adam Smith, Max Weber, and Milton Friedman are the three economists who have informed aspects of my work in Ecuador. Smith started it all with his discussion of the free economy and economic cycles, while Weber pursued a more sociological ap-

proach while looking at what economic decisions can mean on a personal level. Friedman emphasized free agency and education on the part of individuals regarding economic decisions, rather than government involvement.

The following section, Research Theory and Protocol, describes the structure of this project in a theoretical framework of research, discussing the specifics of the research, procedures and protocol.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH THEORY AND PROTOCOL

Introduction

This study was designed and guided through the use of critical hermeneutic theory to define economic literacy and to establish a procedure for determining different levels of this literacy in a setting where there has been a significant, recent currency change. As Herda (1999: 88-89) mentions:

Although the conversations and the creation of the text are critical to research, there are other aspects that form a general protocol that one can follow to identify a topic, set up an inquiry process, and collect and analyze data. In so doing, one can create a text that remains open for further reflection and action. Hermeneutic research protocol reflects a moral and historical stance. I believe that the creation of a text is one way we can see where we have been, where we are, and what future we might envision and project.

Herda suggests that there are many more factors at play, besides protocol, that influence the process and findings of a research project. Throughout my research, a text was created by my transcribed conversations with participants and entries in the research journal. I was able to elaborate on this essential protocol by following up with participants informally, keeping a thread between myself and the other.

Ricoeur (1992: 317) spoke of the relationship between oneself and the other in the following terms: “The fact that otherness is not added on to selfhood from outside...but that it belongs instead to the tenor of meaning and to the ontological constitution of selfhood is a feature that strongly distinguishes this third dialectic from that of selfhood and sameness.” Essentially, Ricoeur emphasizes his belief in the importance of creation of the relationship over simple data gathering. The creation of the relationship represents a departure from the self, and thus a meaningful inquiry into the other. In this study, conver-

sations were used to promote inquiry. Following is a discussion of Text within the theoretical framework of critical hermeneutics, addressing the connection to economic literacy.

Economic Text

Text is an important category in my project because stories are central to an understanding of how economic literacy influences lives. However, the idea of text is expanded beyond representing stories. As Ricoeur (1981: 37) observes, "...the notion of the text prepares itself for analogical extension to phenomena not specifically limited to writing, nor even to discourse...." Based on this idea, I use text to include both narrative and meaningful action, which includes economic activity.

Additionally, to further support that economic activity could be meaningful text, Ricoeur (1976: 91) offers some insight that "to 'make one's own' what was previously 'foreign' remains the ultimate aim of all hermeneutics. Interpretation in its last stage wants to equalize, to render contemporaneous, to assimilate. . . . This goal is achieved insofar as interpretation actualizes the meaning of the text for the present reader." Here, the goal is to "actualize" conversations on economic literacy. Herda (1999: 2) also discusses text as a category for research when she states "[t]he text refigures the world under consideration and, in so doing, engenders new possible worlds in the shared meanings obtained among the members through the research act." It is my hope that the conversations I had with research participants will change the way we see individual agency in the promotion of economic literacy and to do so through an economic text. An economic text displays both stories about economics and the lives of the participants and also meaning-

ful activities that open a new possible world. The next category of Narrative Identity emphasizes identity.

Narrative Identity

The scholar Mi-Rang Kang (2011: 6) describes Ricoeur's concept of narrative identity in the following terms: "narrative identity is formed not only in story-telling and listening, but also through acting at a certain moment of one's life...to connect narrative identity to one's daily life and practice...[implying] moral practice for a good life for the individual, the other and the society, all living together." Narrative identity permeates the concepts of self and time, binding both into a personal story that can describe a person's experience. Ricoeur (1991: 473) says "to give people back a memory is also to give them back a future, to put them back in time and thus release them from the 'instantaneous mind'...our future is guaranteed precisely by our ability to possess a narrative identity, to recollect the past in historical or fictive form." Hence, the concepts of time and self are one and the same. It will be necessary for the recollection of the past in either factual or fictional remembrance that will allow for the Ecuadorian people to maintain their national identity.

The transition in Ecuador from the previous currency of the sucre to the dollar will demands that their narrative identity continue to depend on the stories and text surrounding the sucre. The challenge is to reconfigure a new economic plot with their national narrative identity influenced by the dollar. Below the concept of Imagination is introduced as the final category for this economic literacy inquiry.

Imagination

The concept of imagination is important to this project because research participants were asked to imagine a better quality of life through more informed economic decisions. This act required participants to evaluate their *status quo* and determine what steps needed to be taken so that their ideas for an improved lifestyle could come to fruition. Our narrative identity is a product of our imagination and life experiences. We may not have any control over what the world provides to us in life experiences, but we can influence our narrative identity with the type of imagination we practice. Ricoeur's definition of poetic imagination describes who we can become in the world as he states, "the poem gives birth to the image" (Ricoeur 2003: 254). Essentially, the poem has formative power, and influences the image of those shaped by it. In Ecuador for people to flourish and thrive, regardless of their economic status, it will become necessary for them to imagine a new self always improving their economic quality of life. The poetic justice in imagination will demand not to accept the oversimplification that the end justifies the means. Richard Kearney (1988: 362) argues that "...imagination should not be the end of human imagination...[e]thics has primacy over epistemology and ontology..." Just because epistemology or ontology are satisfied that it is not the goal of economic literacy; instead, it is where the other's needs are also met too and not just the self.

Many people in Ecuador could rise above poverty, or even become persons of wealth, regardless of where they begin their economic literacy quest. This could happen through education which happens most often in the home, but could take place in formal education which might promote even more appropriate economic decisions. If people acquire a different narrative in which a new identity is based and from which new actions

come, a more appropriate economic ideology could reside in what I call economic literacy. A modest goal of this research is to contribute to this end.

Research Protocol

Research was carried out through the medium of conversations and the collection of data through a research journal, observations and documents available. According to Herda (1999: 93), “[protocol] [s]pecifically...entails an awareness of the critical difference between research that uses tools and techniques and research that lives in language.” It was through the language as a medium that the conversations emerged. The conversations served to carry the text that informed the project, and the journal records observations and questions of the researcher. Following is a description of the research categories embodied in the research protocol.

Research Categories

The categories for this project were determined through my personal study of critical hermeneutics, as well as by my own personal and professional interests in education. Text, identity, and imagination are the critical points for concentration when examining the nature of economic literacy, because these three categories represent a combination of the individual, the individual’s choices, and how these choices change in relation to life experiences. Research categories are the supports for the research protocol, and as Herda (1999: 103) points out, “one needs to think about developing certain categories that will help serve as parameters for the research project.”

Economic text, generated through transcribed conversations, encompassed the activities associated with everyday economic transactions in a person’s life in Ecuador. These activities include grocery shopping, transportation, housing, and the myriad activi-

ties associated with the obligations of maintaining a livelihood. Narrative identity is identified through the economic activities and the imagination of the participants as they strive to survive in their economy. Imagination is conceptualized by the image of their needs required in a given economy to improve their economic condition.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study represented a blend of inquiries into text, identity, and imagination. Text questions focused on the activities of the research participants with regard to economic literacy and their daily transactions and financial decisions. Identity questions surrounded the research participants' concepts of self and their images of themselves engaged in different activities. Imagination questions focused on the participant's conception of what could be possible, given the right circumstances. Below are the research questions used to guide conversations with the research participants; not all questions may have been asked, but served as parameters for the conversations:

Text

1. Describe how you plan your daily transactions for food, transportation, etc. How do your transactions remain consistent; do they vary on a day-to-day basis?
2. What kinds of activities do you remember your family engaging in to earn and spend currency? Do you remember any bartering, and if so, can you tell me about this experience?
3. What kind of system do you have in place that alerts you to when you overspend or are about to overspend? What kind of tangible influence does this activity have on your family?
4. Tell me what you remember about the move from the sucre to the dollar.

Identity

1. Does how you spend your money influence your sense of self, and if so, how does it do this?
2. How do you see your family of origin influenced by money? Please give me some examples?
3. How do you see your current family influenced by your financial decisions? How does your family, or how do you, take part at some level in these decisions?

Imagination

1. If you had all the money you needed, what would you have accomplished to earn this money? What would you do with these funds for yourself and your family?
2. What does “spending within my means” signify to you? What might it mean to other people?
3. If you could choose to barter for an item you need rather than use currency, which option would you choose and why?

These research questions were designed to help the participants think more deeply about their choices and economic literacy. Furthermore, the questions helped shape the direction of the conversation, spurring some spontaneous contributions from the participants. The most important purpose of these questions was to inspire original thought and personal insight into how economically literate the participant was. Engaging in purposeful conversation allowed the dynamic between researcher and research participant to take on meaning and dimension. Following is a description of how data were collected and the process through which research participants were guided to contribute to the data base.

Data Collection

My conversations represented individuals from myriad locales in Ecuador including cities, villages, mountains, and sea. The conversations represented data, which in turn were audio-recorded and transcribed into text (Herda 1999). I proceeded with data collection in the following manner: after choosing research participants; inviting them (see Appendix A); I talked with them using a template of my research questions. I tape recorded these conversations after I explained to my participants the purposes of the conversations and how I used them. Following the conversations, participants were sent a thank you letter (see Appendix B). All conversations were carried out in Spanish. I transcribed the conversations and then when possible returned them to the participant. After transcribing the conversations, I translated each one into English.

Research journals are critical to participatory research, and I kept one throughout the research process (see Appendix F for excerpt). This journal contains personal thoughts, ideas as related to theory, and analysis of the conversations with participants. As described by Herda (1999: 98), research journals allow scholars to delve into “the life-source of the data collection process,” with the added benefit of allowing me to record my own research process.

Data Analysis

I needed to be careful as to how I implemented my research conversations into my project as a whole. The journal aided in deciding how to analyze and use the theory I learned to interpret the findings. As Herda (1999: 55) notes, “How this world comes into being is not the result of a protocol, such as interviews, conversations, and data analysis. Rather, it comes into being out of an orientation toward understanding on the part of the researcher and participants; out of the relationships established with conversation partners; and out of a fusion of horizon for each individual.”

The data analysis of this research needed to delve deeply into the economic practices of the everyday person, both economically challenged and economically successful. We see the poor struggling in many parts of the developing world. Most previous research has focused on what people do with funds given to them, from an observable and behavioral perspective. This research looks at the ways people think about money, poverty, and wealth. This current approach may contribute to ways the international developer could work with local poor populations. There has been little improvement in the lives of the poor; as Herda (2010: 133) notes “[t]he West has tried for decades to care for the poor,

the sick, and the disheartened...[t]he poor are still with us, however, and are increasing in number.”

Interpretive participatory research represents the interaction between self and other; the subsequent analysis entails a research process that relies on an approach to analysis which promotes the creative aspect of people. According to Herda (1999: 98), “[a]nalysis is a creative and imaginative act. In data analysis the researcher appropriates a proposed world from the text.” I attempted to create a new world from the text. In order to carry this process out, I:

- listened to, recorded and transcribed audio tapes;
- found the themes and categorized to determine the directions of the research;
- quoted the participant on an as needed basis to support the themes discovered;
- examined the themes using the theoretical framework of critical hermeneutics;
- provided opportunity for additional conversations with participant;
- incorporated the ideas;
- searched within the text group for the themes where possible for multidimensional analysis; and,
- discussed the theory behind the research problem, implication and direction for future research.

All of these steps helped the research move toward a critical hermeneutic data analysis.

This process reflects the interactive nature of research and the new potential understanding that is created when the researcher and participant converse.

Research Site Information

Ecuador is a land of great variety, both in terrain and people. Ecuador has forests, ocean, mountains, and farmlands, and of course, the country is home to the Galapagos

Islands of Darwin's research. The people of Ecuador include European, indigenous, and *mestizo* populations, with the majority of the country made up of this latter category.

The variety of the country was what attracted me to Ecuador as a research site, in addition to the fact that Ecuador has just gone through dollarization. This site provided a chance to have conversations with a wide spectrum of people and generations, both pre-*sucre* and post-*sucre*. According to the Central Intelligence Agency (2011) website, the average life expectancy is age 75.3 years, and the population is estimated at 15,007,343.

Entrée to Research Site

I conducted my research in Ecuador for the purposes of this study. In order to accomplish this, I made plans to visit the country in early August 2011 to carry out data collection. I have contacts in Ecuador who helped me navigate my visit. I traveled through Andean villages, major cities, and the coastal region of northern Ecuador.

During September, I translated and transcribed the recorded conversations. The Data Presentation and Preliminary Analysis was completed in October. In November, I wrote the Secondary Analysis and began the Summary chapter. December was dedicated to completing the first draft. January was the time to seriously edit and finalize the document. It was submitted on February, 2012 to the dissertation chair for review.

Introduction to Research Conversation Participants

My interest in economic studies and my cultural background allowed me to participate in conversations with people from Ecuador in a meaningful fashion using their and my native language. I grew up speaking Spanish, and I am fairly familiar with the customs of Latin countries. All research participants were people from Ecuador and I approached potential participants from rural and urban settings. (see Table One). All per-

sons were over 18 years old and I was able to take pictures of some of my participants. I have given pseudonyms to three of my participants who asked not to have their actual names used.

Table 1: List of Participants in Ecuador

Name	Age	Occupation	Education	Location
Alberto Morales	56	Businessman	4 th grade	Otavallo
Jovita Mina	72	Vendor	3 rd grade	Otavallo
Juan Ruiz	44	Taxi Driver	High School	Quito
* Jose Crespo	49	Taxi Driver	Middle School	Otavallo
Sacha Malez	22	Shop Owner	High School	Otavallo
Cecilia Vallejos	36	Small Hotel Owners	3 rd grade	Otavallo
Ivan Paredes	41		High School	
Hernan Buendia	41	Entrepreneur	6 th grade	Otavallo
Mauricio Pozo	32	Businessman	Middle School	Otavallo
Jorge Villaruel	62	Museum Curator	College	Otavallo
Mauricio Quaran	33	Taxi Driver	High School	Otavallo
Franklin Adear	45	Taxi Driver	6 th grade	Otavallo
* Jose Montoya	54	Museum Curator	College	Quito
* Jorge Arguella	45	Account/Taxi Driver	College	Quito
Jorge Castillo	49	Store Owner	5 th grade	Campo Alegre
Glenda Girando	22	Pharmacy Clerk	6 th grade	Atacames Canton
Dario Lastras	52	Taxi Driver	6 th grade	Esmeraldas
Katusca Andres	39	Domestic Worker	4 th grade	Atacames Canton
Rosa de Alvarado	67	Restaurant Owner	High School	Santo Domingo
Maria Garcito	97	Retired	None	Otavallo

* Pseudonyms

Biographies of Conversation Participants

The participants lived in different regions of Ecuador, both rural and urban, from the areas of Quito, Otavalo, Campo Alegre, Atacames Canton, Esmeraldas, and Santo Domingo. They generously donated their time for conversations at a moment's notice while I visited Ecuador for my research. These participants varied in education, backgrounds, and knowledge of the currency change from sucres to dollars. The guiding questions used in the conversations provided not just data for my research but also very personal illustrations of their life experiences depicting their tribulations, aspirations and hopes for their future and the future of their families.

All except two of my participants described below worked in entrepreneurial positions. In places where work possibilities are scarce, people navigate towards making a living in entrepreneurship. As supported by Kelley *et al.* (2011: 13), "Entrepreneurs have particular motives for entering entrepreneurship. They may be pushed into starting businesses out of necessity because they have no other work options and need a source of income." What follows are the biographic stories of each of my participants. All photographs were taken by the researcher.

Alberto Morales



Mr. Morales is a 56-year-old business man from Otavalo with over 40 years' experience specializing in the sale and creation of handmade woolen garments. According to Mr. Morales, he is self-taught in the use of the dollar for managing his

business. He had to adapt to the new currency and its computations for mark-ups on his store products and provide change in dollars on customer purchases. He feels that it has been difficult to transition to the dollar. Mr. Morales clearly enjoyed talking about his climb to becoming a businessman from his early beginnings as a seven-year-old boy and the help he received from fellow vendors in his community by introducing him to the making and retailing of woolen garments to tourists. This led him to becoming a store owner.

Jovita Mina



Mrs. Mina is a 72-year-old market vendor with over 45 years of experience selling a variety of fruits and vegetables at the open market in the town square of Otavalo. She believes that the switch to dollars was a good decision because now she sells a little more produce. However, although she sells more, the operating costs are higher, and the living costs have also increased.

Mrs. Mina takes care of her incapacitated husband at home and is the sole provider

for any type of family care or support. Before becoming a vendor she employed herself as a maid in the surrounding area while being a mother then raising her children until they moved out of the home. Preparation to sell her goods at the market is a year round labori-

ous task, for she grows her own produce and tends her market space without any assistance. She has a yearly schedule which she uses to plan the sale of her goods.

Juan Ruiz

Mr. Ruiz, a 44-year-old Quito taxi driver, married with four children, is a proud Ecuadorian who continues to yearn for the sucre. He was very excited to share sucre notes with me in several denominations when I asked him about whether he had any knowledge of dollarization. No question, as he waved this stack of money exclaiming, “[t]his is my money, and I will never forget it.” He had appropriated the sucre to maintain his cultural identity. Mr. Ruiz describes himself as a family man, and enjoys spending his free time with his wife and children. He enjoys reading the newspaper on events around the world for, as he stated, he must stay informed to better understand the tourists. Mr. Ruiz also is concerned about his community and participates in long walks in the surrounding neighborhood area to mitigate any graffiti. He has held many different jobs over the years, including refinery worker.

Jose Crespo

A 49-year-old father with a self described eclectic work experience as a prior welder, truck driver and currently a taxi driver with a middle school education from Otavalo. Mr. Crespo claims to have a better understanding of the effects of the dollarization of Ecuador than many others. He is also generally concerned about his observations of widespread corruption surrounding currency exchanges amongst the indigenous people on the surrounding border with Colombia.

Sacha Malez

Ms. Malez is a 22-year-old shop owner from Otavalo, currently living with her mother and father. She believes there has been a rapid rise in corruption since the transition to the dollar, as evidenced by the sight of drug dealers. Her family lost money in the sale of the family home, necessitated by the change in currency. The vendor space she owns and manages is crucial in order to help make ends meet for the entire family. Ms. Malez has passionate aspirations to come to the United States and begin a new life by attending college and becoming a working professional to eventually help her family in Ecuador.

Cecilia Vallejos and Ivan Paredes



Mr. Paredes, 41 years old, and Ms. Vallejos, 36 years old, are a married couple living in Otavalo. They live next door to their hotel and have two young children. She is interested in entrepreneurship and has taken on the project of the hotel because she feels her family's financial and personal future is invested in it. She is still learning about the field of hospitality and appreciates learning more about the experience of other successful hospitality entrepreneurs. Her husband is a great support to her and takes over child care when she works at the hotel. They both believe in helping their children understand the value of money. Mr. Paredes believes the transition to the dollar has been good for the economy. He feels people need to work harder to support their families and that he needs to help teach his chil-

dren about the realities of the new economy and how to save money. He enjoys spending free time with his wife and children.

Hernan Buendia

Mr. Buendia is a 41-year-old entrepreneur from Otavalo. He says he has lost a good deal of his business since the switch to dollars. In fact, he remembers when he was able to make a living from working a regular taxi route. He says he has seen many building projects start and stay unfinished because they are funded illegally. Mr. Buendia is the father of three young children and has been married for ten years. He has been very proactive in teaching his children and his wife about the new currency.

Mauricio Pozo

Mr. Pozo is a 32-year-old businessman from Otavalo. He believes there has been a rapid rise in corruption with money laundering since the transition to dollars. In fact, he has noticed that many of the indigenous workers have been recruited by drug dealers, and they can often be seen around the city engaged in no visible activity. Mr. Pozo has a deeply ingrained work ethic, and believes that people who do not work are making money dishonestly. He feels his city has changed greatly, and this makes him sad about the changes since dollarization.

Jorge Villaruel



Mr. Villaruel is a 62-year-old museum curator from Otavalo. While many participants believe dollarization has been harmful to the indigenous population, Mr. Villaruel believes that the indigenous

were ready for dollarization. He bases this opinion on his knowledge of the city's past and the resiliency of the local population when they travel abroad for their art or engage visiting tourists that come in with many different types of currency. Mr. Villaruel is an expert on the history of indigenous cultural clothing for Ecuador and he enjoys demonstrating to visitors the various display cases of the myriad types of garments that have been used by different indigenous people in Ecuador.

Mauricio Quaran

Mr. Quaran is a 33-year-old taxi driver, husband, and father of five from Otavalo. He believes the transition to dollars was a painful one, because prices were raised suddenly and many people lost their savings. Additionally, he feels the dollarization was very challenging for him personally and professionally as he had to adjust store purchase prices using the dollar currency, which trades at times in fractions (cents). Mr. Quaran likes to read the newspaper and occasionally go to a movie. He enjoys his job because he is able to talk to others from outside Ecuador and see what is happening in the world.

Franklin Adear

Mr. Adear, a 45-year-old taxi driver from Otavalo, is also a husband and father of two, with a daughter in college. Mr. Adear's wife runs a stationary store from their home. He supports his wife in managing the family finances and is very concerned about the illicit private taxis that are taking his business away. In addition, he is unable to save with the new currency, whereas he used to be able to save money with sucres.

Jose Montoya

Mr. Montoya is a 54-year-old museum curator as well as a numismatic scholar residing in Quito. His wealth of knowledge provided a good basis for a conversation about

dollarization in Ecuador. In his opinion, the dollar will pass like any other currency used before, depending on how well the economy supports that currency. Mr. Montoya hopes for his family to prosper under this new currency and feels that Ecuador had done very well in transitioning to the dollar from the sucre.

Jorge Arguella

Mr. Arguella, at 45 years old, worked in the United States as a senior accountant before returning to Ecuador due to lack of accountancy jobs. He holds a Ph.D. in accounting and is currently a taxi driver in Quito. Mr. Arguella also provided a comparative synopsis of someone that has gone from one poor economy (Ecuador) to a wealthy economy (the United States). His recount of his flight to the United States as an illegal immigrant accentuated how professional people can experience the same trials and tribulations as the poor do. He has been very excited to the new entrepreneurship opportunities the dollarization has brought to Ecuador.

Jorge Castillo



Mr. Castillo, a 49-year-old store owner of Campo Alegre, was raised in an orphanage and eventually entered the workforce when he was twelve. He started doing odd jobs and working as a street vendor, working his way up to having his own small store, in front of which he proudly dis-

plays his children. He is very well known among his community of small business owners, as he likes to help them when he is called upon for assistance. The dollarization, ac-

according to him, was the best thing that could have happened, as more opportunities for commerce in retailing have developed since the change. He enjoys watching the financial newsfeed for the value of foreign currencies since he also conducts business with tourists from different parts of the world.

Glenda Girando



Ms. Girando, a 22-year-old pharmacy clerk in Atacames Canton, did not have a well-defined opinion for the dollarization of Ecuador due to her age at the time of this event. However, she is aware of how her family, in disappointment, had experienced the transition. Ms. Girando wor-

ries about the financial circumstances her mom and dad are in as they continue to have concerns about the effects of dollarization in Ecuador. She maintains a busy schedule raising a child as a single mom, in addition to helping manage the small family owned drugstore which is on the verge of being sold due to lack of business. Glenda hopes to reverse her family circumstances by diligently making a daily presence at this pharmacy, contributing to the only family's source of income.

Dario Lastras



Mr. Lastras, a 52-year-old taxi driver is the sole provider for his wife and daughter as he struggles in the post-sucro economy. He has to send remittance to his family far

away from his place of employment, Esmeraldas, in order to support them. Mr. Lastras favors the dollarization for he notices many improvements in his community, but recounts how everything is more expensive and it is very difficult to have change ready in dollars for paying fares.

Katiusca Andres

Ms. Andres is a 39-year-old domestic worker from Atacames Canton. I spoke with Mrs. Andres on the bus ride returning to Quito from Esmeralda. An engaging participant, she discussed how both she and her 40-year-old husband work two jobs to pay for his medical needs as a diabetic, as well as for family expenses. She was disappointed not to see the Ecuadorian culture depicted in any way on the new currency being used in Ecuador. Ms. Andres, however feels a sense of hope with dollarization to become an entrepreneur on the beaches of Esmeralda by providing mobile physical therapy, once she is able to get the training.

Rosa de Alvarado



Ms. de Alvarado is a 67-year-old restaurant owner, wife, and mother of three who resides in the vicinity of Santo Domingo. The humble beginnings of Mrs. de Alvarado illustrate the spirit of entrepreneurship in Ecuador. Her climb from a food vendor on the street to restaurant owner was challenging,

but rewarding. Ms. de Alvarado contributes to her community by being an active member in her church and allowing the use of her restaurant for religious services to the commu-

nity. She attributes her present financial state to hard work and willingness to learn. The arrival of dollarization has provided her with more customers allowing her to improve her facilities. Further, she proposes that criminal acts by individuals in her community are due to a complete lack of discipline towards work.

Maria Garcito



Mrs. Garcito of Otavalo estimates her age at 97 years old because she does not know the year she was born. She speaks Quechua and does not speak a word of Spanish, and has no children or any surviving family. She has no recollection of where she was born. As a young woman she and her husband were kept as slaves for a land owner. In the years of her youth she and her husband were worked to exhaustion on a daily basis taking care of the large farm

for the rich landlord. They were subjected to harsh and very laborious working conditions. Mrs. Garcito recognized that her husband struggled with depression, and ultimately died of alcoholism. She worked for other landlords in the Otavalo surrounding area without pay for a while, and was kept as a domestic slave through her sixties. Mrs. Garcito has been adopted and cared for by a supportive family these recent years.

These participants all had their own particular take on dollarization, and each individual experience contributed to a rich collection of data. In the next section, the Research Pilot Project is discussed.

The Research Pilot Project

In the Fall of 2010, I carried out the pilot study that provided practice with the principles in *Research Conversations and Narrative* (Herda 1999). It allowed me to ask questions of a participant which led to conversations relevant to research on economic literacy. Following is a brief description of the pilot project and my conversation with the research participant.

Background of Conversation Participant

In my inquiry to select research participants for my pilot conversations, I determined that any potential participant should have economic obligations and be a native of Ecuador. A good example of both was Ms. Pilar Mejia. She is a retired teacher and administrator living in San Francisco, and she has various members of her family working for the public school system. Ms. Mejia is originally from Ecuador and has experienced a unique journey from her beginnings as a young immigrant to her rise to economic freedom. Her story was captivating and interesting as she shared her life experience around economics in Ecuador. Conversing with Ms. Mejia was an intellectually stimulating exercise, and her wonderful span of experience across innovative years in education was enlightening.

Data Presentation

I met with Ms. Mejia in November of 2010 in her home in San Francisco. She is a gracious individual with a rich collection of stories about herself and her family. She has

experienced and continues to experience personal frustration over her identity; much of this frustration was fostered by her school experiences. In conversing with her, I discovered that much of what she discovered as a child followed her throughout her professional and personal lives. A great deal of what she observed about her economic literacy is documented in our conversation. Ms. Mejia came here as a child, and has vivid memories of her parents and family dynamics, as well as her first days in school. One of the things that she remembers is living in a comfortable home in southern California, albeit at the expense of living without many of the enjoyable social activities that people generally take advantage of. The common theme in her narrative was that she learned to live “within her means,” even as a young child. This entailed not being able to engage in shopping trips or excursions. By the same token, she admits that she never missed her meals and she believes her parents were able to provide for her and her siblings. In school, she remembers struggling to find an identity with peers and developing the language skills to become a participating member of the school community. For a complete data presentation of the pilot project, see Appendix D.

Data Analysis

The conversation with Ms. Mejia was analyzed in the framework of critical hermeneutics for content and various modes of communication that become evident in personal encounters with others which were not necessarily expressed verbally. This was participatory research in action.

1) Who are you?

“My name is Pilar Mejia and I’m currently retired. I worked for over 30 years in education, most of those years in the public school system here in San Francisco. I’ve

been a teacher, a principal, and a central office administrator. My sons both graduated from the public school system here in San Francisco, my granddaughter is attending first grade in the public school system, and my son is a teacher in this system so I have a very long history.”

According to Ricoeur (1981: 274), “the ultimate problem is...to show in what way history and fiction contribute, in virtue of their common narrative structure, to the description and re-description of our historical condition...What is ultimately at stake...is the correlation, or better the mutual belonging, between narrativity and historicity.” Here, Ms. Mejia sees her history as her narrative, and she defines herself through her history. It might also appear as though she has forgotten about her narrative, a story that can be structured and restructured.

At this point in our conversation, it is clear she will refer to her history as her story of self. “I was born in Ecuador and when I was almost 6, my family moved to Los Angeles and we lived with family there until we got our own place. We went from L.A. to Paramount and eventually when I was 12 to Buena Park in Orange County.” Again, an historical account of what she believes happened at this time in her life. Per Ricoeur (1985: 293), “fiction is not an instance of reproductive imagination, but of productive imagination. As such, it refers to reality not in order to copy it, but in order to prescribe a new reading.” Ms. Mejia would benefit from a new reading of her life; rather than looking at her history of moving as passing time until her family “got [their] own place”, she would empower herself by looking at this time spent moving as a time of exploration and learning.

“I went to Catholic school most of my life and then when I graduated from high school to Fullerton Junior College in 1967, I decided to move to SF. It was that era where people were doing very alternative things. I was pregnant and decided not to get married.” This is an important junction in Ms. Mejia’s narrative, and one that deserves more analysis than she actually offers. According to Ricoeur (1981: 73), “a tradition must be seized, taken up, and maintained; hence it demands an act of reason: preservation is as much a freely-chosen action as revolution and renewal.”

In this case, the participant creates a new tradition when she leaves her family home for San Francisco, pregnant and quite young. “I was part of starting an alternative school for my son. About four yrs later, I decided to go into the public school system, we didn’t make children do anything that they didn’t want to do, unless it had to do with the group.” Ricoeur (1991: 274) said, “I place myself in the historical process to which I know that I belong,” and here Ms. Mejia is doing exactly that. She is placing herself in her own historical process, and she does so with a sense of identification and belonging.

2) Why did you decide to go into the public school system?

“Our school was very small, and we decided we were isolating our children too much.”

Here, the participant demonstrates a certain understanding of what is required to do things in the economy. In addition, she shows some competency in communicative action, which Ricoeur refers to when he says “the interest in emancipation would be quite empty and abstract if it were not situated on the same plane as the historical-hermeneutical sciences, that is, on the plane of communicative action” (Ricoeur 1991: 219). With her above statement, Ms. Mejia describes her desire to change an educational

tradition in terms of social justice, and communicates her motivation to change “status quo” in the schools.

3) You mention you wanted to move to SF because you wanted to live independently. If you had had the resources you needed, would you still have moved?

“I did not want to be dependent on my parents, I was still living at home w my parents, I was about 20. I wanted to move away from my family. ...anyway, this was the land of opportunity in those days. My mother really thought there was more equality for women, men took care of their families better, and there would be better job opportunities for my father. I did not speak in school until I got to high school; it was really difficult to do things like raise my hand. I had insecurity about who I was and because I was a white *Latina*, I was treated differently from the *mexicanos* even though I identified with being a *Latina*. So I was neither here nor there. I never really quite got over it, and it wasn’t until I was older and got into therapy groups and women’s groups, that I started to reclaim my identity and my history. I really felt the racism inherent in the educational system in a different way than many *mexicanos* did...”

This was a very rich part of our conversation. Ricoeur (1981: 277) says “to follow a story is to understand the successive actions, thoughts and feelings as displaying a particular *directedness*... rather than being *predictable*, a conclusion must be *acceptable*.” Her conflicts about her identity and considerations of the identity of others share a pattern of insecurity and ongoing ambiguity. The complete Data Analysis of the pilot project is on Appendix E.

Conclusion

The pilot study through the research participant provided a new understanding of how economic literacy is interpreted. Through this pilot conversation, it became clear that economic literacy is, among other things, a product of the different economic needs people have. The first conversation with Pilar Mejia was a promising beginning for the project, and the patterns of feeling and changes in economic literacy that she described provided a helpful perspective with which I traveled through the research project with my conversation participants.

Implications

Setting the foundations for future projects aimed at possibly implementing an educational plan for people in Ecuador and around the world to increase their economic literacy, this project served as reconnaissance work to determine how economic literacy changes with life experiences. It will be the critical inquiry of economic literacy from this participatory research that provides a new economic narrative for others from what was before something unidentifiable in economic activities. This pilot project began the process of understanding for economic literacy; as Herda (1999: 129) claims, “Learning must go beyond the score to include understanding as well as a change in our present and our history — a fusion of horizons that happens when we make our own what was once alien.” Lastly, as a result of this work, data were gathered to elucidate the structure and function of a possible course on increasing economic literacy in developing countries and perhaps, globally, at a later time.

Reflections on Pilot Project

My conversation with Ms. Mejia was informative both in terms of how the conversations should be structured and in terms of learning about the dynamic created between researcher and research participant. While many of the questions were developed before our conversation, Ms. Mejia's story led to spontaneous questions in the context of a researcher-participant narrative. It became apparent that the pilot project took on a life of its own due to the give and take of the conversation between both parties. Though I considered the questions I used in my conversation at first adequate, I learned later during the pilot data analysis that a better set of questions needed to be created to better facilitate a flowing conversation. A good set of questions invites both participant and researcher to new understandings. In order to create a high quality research protocol, the researcher needs to allow the dynamic between researcher and research participant to develop and inform the research topic. This is corroborated by Herda (1999: 100) who says "[the] ... personal reflections [are] an important source of data and can enhance the text derived from conversations and the analysis." These personal reflections and the information from this conversation provided the framework as a research protocol for the many other conversations that followed in Ecuador after my proposal on Economic Literacy in Ecuador was approved.

Background of Researcher

In addition to my work as a graduate student, I serve on the boards of the Hayward Unified School District and Eden Regional Occupation Program and collaborate with other board members regarding important district-wide policies and procedures. Also, I worked with international corporate leases in North America, South America, and

Europe. Currently, I am studying economic literacy because it combines my fields of interest, specifically education, anthropology, and critical hermeneutics. Finally, I chose to study Ecuador because of the recent currency value transition from the *sucre* to the American dollar, an economic transition that has influenced the entire country.

Summary

Economic literacy is a combination of needs, goals, and the practical knowledge to use funds wisely. The pilot project revealed that economic literacy incorporates the many personal experiences that a person may accumulate over a lifetime. Due to the social nature of economic literacy, it is best studied through participatory research through critical hermeneutics. The new understanding I acquired from the literature review and the participatory conversation allowed me to be better prepared for my study of Ecuadorian narratives in economic literacy.

Chapter Five provides the data presentation drawn from the transcribed conversations. The data are presented in terms of each of my participants. The biographic stories of each participant found in this chapter presents a context for the data discussed in Chapter Five in terms of my three categories, economic text, narrative identity, and imagination.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION

In Chapter Five, I present a synopsis of the data collected on all nineteen participants about their experiences since dollarization. The people I engaged in these conversations came from various places, as indicated earlier, in Ecuador, including Otavalo, Quito, Campo Alegre, Atacames Canton, Esmeraldas, and Santo Domingo. All of these people had commonalities; two of which were struggles with the new currency memories of before and after dollarization. In holding these conversations I oriented the discussion around the research categories of economic text, narrative identity and imagination. The conversations were held informally at the participant's residence or place of business. The abstracted data collected are presented here to best illustrate the variety of themes that surfaced during these conversations.

The Ecuadorian people, having experienced the transition from the sucre to the dollar (dollarization), continue to encounter difficult economic scenarios that personally challenge their beliefs toward their national currency and the influence of the dollar on their culture. The data collected, exposed the various views of the participants towards the world around them. These stories helped the participants explore uncharted waters to personally re-tell the story of their spending and saving habits at the time of dollarization. Perhaps most importantly, the conversations allowed the economic texts to come through, shedding light on new understandings from life experiences for the researcher and the participants alike.

Upon arrival in Ecuador, my understandings about what I expected were going to be tested. The literature I read regarding the economic status of the Ecuadorian people led me to believe that some kind of general acceptance of the dollar had been galvanized. To

my surprise, almost immediately during my first conversation, I was reminded of the sense of ownership some Ecuadorians still have towards the sucre. As my first participant, Juan Ruiz, exclaimed, “You see?”, as he waved a tightly wound pack of sucres, “This is our money, and I will never forget it- dollars or no dollars.”

The generalized data presented below follow the research categories of economic text, narrative identity, and imagination. Prior to the synopsis of the conversation with each participant, I briefly set the stage with an overview of the categories. Within the context of this study, the original category of text is better suited under the title “economic text.”

Economic Text

The interpretation of human intentionality to become a text is a necessary element to classify economic activity as economic text for this study. Richard Ebeling’s (1991: 173) analysis of Paul Ricoeur’s (1991) essay, *‘What is a text? Explanation and understanding’* contributes that text and price reflect human intentionality as follows:

The question, ‘What is a text?’ as I shall attempt to show, has its counterpart in the question, ‘What is a price?’ Both a text and a price reflect human intentionality: in the case of a text the desire by an individual to convey knowledge about some aspect of the natural or social worlds, or of his thoughts and beliefs, to anonymous others separated from him by time and space; in the case of a price, the desires of individuals to obtain goods and services from anonymous others also separated from them by time and space. And both texts and prices must be interpreted by those others to discern the meanings they contain (Ebeling 1991: 175).

The classification of an economic activity as text and price as one and the same for intentionality contributes the necessary association of economic text to be that of economic intentionality or economic activity. In this study, therefore, all economic activity is designated as economic text. Identifying economic text relies on interpretation by the re-

searcher, but to obtain a better understanding of the economic activity the participants must contribute a level of awareness to appropriate the action as meaningful text to convey to the anonymous a meaningful economic activity.

In the conversations it soon became clear that many participants had a diminished sense of personal awareness before having the opportunity to discuss the text – their meaningful activities – relating to their past and present understanding of experiences.

According to Ricoeur, understanding within a text can be defined as:

[T]o understand is *to understand oneself in front of the text*. It is not a question of imposing upon the text our infinite capacity for understanding, but of exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self, which would be the proposed existence corresponding in the most suitable way to the world proposed. So understanding is quite different from a constitution of which the subject would possess the key. In this respect, it would be more correct to say that the self is constituted by the 'matter' of the text (Ricoeur 1991: 87-88).

The participants were able to develop new understandings through conversation. These understandings became evident to me through the expressions on their faces. Some had quizzical expressions on their faces when listening to my questions for the first time, suggesting that no one had asked them questions regarding their experiences before. After completing the conversations, I believe, without question, that my participants had, in fact, shared their economic experiences about dollarization for the first time.

One of the predominant themes arising from the economic text during the conversations was how the participants were able to efficiently prioritize their expenditures with limited income or resources. For example, some participants claimed that food expenses took priority over other expenses, whereas others insisted on a balance of spending habits.

Another theme arising from these conversations as economic text was the importance of prioritizing goals for the family's future. Along with this theme came a focus on education and a belief that children should do better than their parents.

The resiliency factor among Ecuadorians is high, as can be interpreted by their new understanding for the use of the dollar in their economic text of everyday consumer activities. The new currency represents yet another challenge that had to be overcome in their lives, no different from finding money for food or someone to watch over their children. The nostalgia one might associate with any cultural attachments to their sucre was verbally expressed by some participants. The conversations provided me with a perspective on how the Ecuadorians were able to come to an understanding of dollarization to move forward with their lives.

Narrative Identity

The narrative identity of a person is their ongoing dynamic of a story in flux adapting to ever-changing world events. According to Kearney, narrative identity is continuously adapting to these events:

The narrative self involves an ongoing process of self-constancy and self-rectification that requires imagination to synthesize the different horizons of past, present, and future. The narrative concept of self thus offers a dynamic notion of identity (*ipse*) that includes mutability and change within the cohesion of one lifetime.... This means, for instance, that the identity of human subjects is deemed a constant task of reinterpretation in the light of new and old stories we tell about ourselves. 'The subject becomes, to borrow a Proustian formula, both reader and writer of its own life. Self-hood is a cloth woven of stories told' (Kearney 2004: 108-109).

Similarly to Kearney's concept of self, the participants described their identities as ambivalently influenced by dollarization. These mixed reactions of liking or disliking the dollar reflected their interpretations of identity in different contexts, particularly age. The

older generation of participants expressed some loss of identity through the currency change, but the younger participants were more apt to go through the change without having to experience any loss of identity. For the older participants, not to see symbols of historical value, such as national figures, geography, and battle scenes in the dollar was a loss. The younger participants did not express loss regarding the change.

Imagination

The most persuasive moment of Paul Ricoeur's work for the developmental anthropologist is his idea of narrative imagination. This concept applied to the development act of working together with the other who faces marginalization, fear, famine, and isolation, provides a medium for both the anthropologist and the local to emplot history and fiction into a social reality that brings each to a new place (Herda 2010: 129).

Herda's words above on the creation of a social reality are highly applicable to my work in Ecuador. One of the elements of this social reality is hope, which was possible through the imagination these participants expressed when asked about their inspirations. A notable theme that emerged from the conversations included the desire for reasonable improvement in their lives within the scope of shelter, food, security, and education. Another theme was the projection of hope onto future generations of family members. Overall, participants were looking for economic security.

When I began conversing with the participants regarding the currency transition, I noticed that most of them had some preconceived ideas of what I might be looking for as a researcher. For example, when I met with some of the taxi drivers, some of them automatically assumed I was in Ecuador to look at local artwork or see the markets. When I would re-direct the conversation to their personal experiences, many were surprised; I think this factor added significant authenticity to my conversations and yielded deeper

information on the topic of currency change in Ecuador than if the participants had been prepared with questions given to them before the conversation.

A significant aspect of the inquiry into imagination was that most participants had difficulty considering the future manifesting into the present from the past. This is likely due to the abrupt onset of dollarization, which has made economic planning a risky activity for Ecuadorians. Discussing plans five years into the future may have seemed like an extraneous activity to the participants.

The following synopsis of the data is generated from the conversation with each participant. Particular attention is given to the research categories within each conversation.

Juan Ruiz – Taxi Driver

Mr. Ruiz has first-hand knowledge of the change from sucres to dollars. He is a father of four. The change in currency has been a difficult adjustment for him as he complained of higher living expenses ten years after dollarization. His economic text described an ongoing dilemma to meet his expenses.

He feels the change in currency represents a loss of culture, because an important part of the country's identity attached to the sucre has disappeared. Mr. Ruiz, as noted earlier, was very passionate in demonstrating his pride in the sucre such that he pulled out a pack of tightly bound sucre notes from his side door compartment and began to wave them, explaining to me his unwillingness to just let the culture of Ecuador pass by in the midst of dollarization. From that reaction it was obvious how his narrative identity is tied to the national identity of the sucre.

He believes all people need to try their best to make a living honestly. The imagination of Mr. Ruiz is to ethically envision his family doing well and for his community to be safe after the dollarization.

Jose Crespo – Taxi Driver

Upon meeting me, Mr. Crespo immediately began discussing local artwork and suggesting places I might visit to see examples of local indigenous crafts. He was knowledgeable about his town, suggesting that he could be a good source of information.

After some light conversation about his work and family life, I began to ask questions about the local scenery and neighborhoods, scarred by half-built, abandoned homes. According to Mr. Crespo, many of these homes were built with money from a blossoming drug trade, fueled by the new currency and a large indigenous population of unemployed laborers. Many of these individuals had gone from unknowns to small-time bosses practically overnight, helped by the demand for money laundering in dollars from such places as Colombia. A never-ending series of gaudy homes, started but left unfinished because of an abrupt termination of finances, greets visitors to Otavalo.

I took this opportunity to ask Mr. Crespo about how the switch to dollars had influenced him personally, whereupon he jumped into a passionate description of the increase in local crime. He believed this was due to the indigenous people involved in drug activity. He felt personally affected by the transition to dollars because, while he considered himself an honest worker, with considerable experience in various fields, these indigenous small-time drug-dealers were highly dishonest yet financially rewarded for their services. Along with this injustice, the police had joined with these dealers, further distancing themselves from honest people such as Mr. Crespo.

Mr. Crespo's economic text consisted of his personal struggle to make ends meet while still conducting himself in a dignified and honest manner. He clearly had high ethical standards, and these standards helped keep him motivated to continue his life's path. In terms of identity, the switch to dollars represented a sort of moral fall for Mr. Crespo, perhaps not personally, but in the way he saw those around him. Even though he did not consider the switch to dollars as a loss of culture for Ecuador, he did see it as the trigger for the ethical demise of those in his community. Finally, in observing how the currency change affected Mr. Crespo's imagination, his hopes lay primarily in what his children would accomplish once they completed school.

Alberto Morales – Businessman

My conversation with Mr. Morales echoed some aspects of my conversation with Mr. Crespo. Mr. Morales expressed some difficulty adjusting to the new currency and frequently appeared to not understand my questions about how he coped during the currency change. In some ways, it was as if he had never really thought about the ordeal he had gone through when the sucre switched to the dollar practically overnight in 2000.

Clearly, Mr. Morales had experienced some community outreach after dollarization. He believed he had been greatly helped by a group of villagers with running a store. Perhaps more importantly my conversation with Mr. Morales made clear to me just how confusing monetary value became after the currency transition. Items that used to cost just a few cents on the dollar had suddenly skyrocketed to 10 to 12 dollars. Notably, Mr. Morales mentioned that even buying a chicken in the market now cost 12 dollars.

As I spoke with him, I could tell that Mr. Morales was giving the currency transition real thought for the first time. For example, when asked about how his children han-

dled the new currency, he paused and finally contended that they may have learned to do that in school. Much learning about the dollar occurred through trial and error.

Mr. Morales' activities as a store-owner are his economic text, including his community outreach projects to help fellow merchants. Most of his concern surrounded his children and family, and he expressed his thoughts and actions in terms of others most of the time. During our conversation, he was realistic about many of the challenges his family had to face and the business of prioritizing expenses, however, he was convinced that things for his family would likely become more challenging with time. For example, he believed that his children would have more economic challenges than he had currently.

In terms of identity, Mr. Morales saw himself as part of a network of friends and neighbors. A good illustration of this was when I asked him about what happened when there was no food. He immediately responded that he borrowed from friends, and that this was common practice where he lived. In some ways, he acted surprised at my questions because it seemed very natural to him to borrow and lend things as needed.

His imagination was influenced by the force of the currency change, and he claimed that he did not remember many aspects of dollarization. His prognosis for the future of Ecuador was somewhat bleak, in that he felt greater challenges lay ahead for everyone. He hoped for a stable future for his children, regardless of the difficulties they will face.

Jovita Mina - Vendor

Ms. Mina is an example of those Ecuadorians who have dealt with the new currency in a practical manner, avoiding too much comparison with the sucre and prioritiz-

ing certain expenses over others. She brought a helpful perspective on how Ecuadorians handle changing costs and lifestyle.

While conversing with Ms. Mina, she went about her work day greeting customers and bagging items. She reflected that, while her business kept her busy throughout the day, it generally provided just enough to buy food for herself and her husband. She believed that she was able to make this money based on the sporadic purchases of people who desired small amounts of different produce, because even just a few dollars added up by the end of the day.

Ms. Mina learned her vendor trade bit by bit, and most of the progress she made was self-earned. Ultimately, she felt that sucres were better than dollars because there was predictability in the unpredictability of this currency. Dollars, on the other hand, were less predictable for her. She had framed her day in terms of supply and demand, going home when she had run out of vegetables to sell.

Ms. Mina conceived of her economic text as a series of needs, most of which had to be met through selling produce or saving money. Her existence and that of her produce stall complimented each other and the earnings from her business went expressly to meet her most pressing needs, food and rent. She did not appear to think about what others did with their earnings, or how others might have reacted to the dollar.

The consideration of her economic text is also reflected in her concept of identity, which was based on serving the needs of others by selling produce while also satisfying her personal needs. For example, when I asked Ms. Mina about the leftover produce, immediately she commented that none of it goes to waste for she takes it home and cooks the food.

Similarly, she did not express many ideas in terms of imagination. I came out of my conversation with her unsure of how Ms. Mina viewed her future, and whether she anticipated further challenges ahead.

Sacha Malez – Shop Owner

Ms. Malez was an example of those participants who had a background in economic literacy. As a result of her entire family consisting of shop-owners, she had been used to learning about money from her family at a very young age, visiting different places of business with her father and learning how to budget from her mother.

In my conversation with Ms. Malez, she struck me as a bright young woman who had seen firsthand the damage the currency change had caused her family. Her father sold the family home shortly before the currency change, thus resulting in a major economic blow to the family after dollars were introduced. This home had served as a place to live, but also as a place where the family grew produce to sell at the local market. Ms. Malez believed that even eleven years later, her family was still adjusting to the currency change.

Fortunately, Ms. Malez had learned quite a bit from her mother about budgeting, including the need to set up different ledgers for family and customer accounts. She felt that this background in ledgering had been invaluable to her in her own business and for the well-being of her family.

Ms. Malez's economic text was one of recovery, the story of a woman who had lost her family roots in the form of their ancestral home, still trying to make up for old financial losses. She believed strongly in the sincerity of her parents to do what was best for the family, blaming the president of Ecuador for the family's hardships. She also saw

her story as one of fortitude, helping herself while helping others by giving them food when they did not have any.

Her identity was one of regeneration as she saw herself as helper of her family and community. She mentioned that she is currently teaching her siblings about money and how to save, in the hope that they will be better equipped to deal with currency problems when they are adults. Ms. Malez saw herself as preserving the culture and legacy of her family, sharing and transmitting this knowledge to the next generation.

For imagination, Ms. Malez dreams about coming to the United States and studying at a university. She would love for her family to have an easier life.

Cecilia Vallejos and Ivan Paredes – Small Hotel Owners

An Ecuadorian couple who took the currency change as an opportunity, rather than as an additional challenge to confront, Ms. Vallejos and Mr. Paredes had many responsibilities on their hands, including children and a new hotel lease. Their management of the hotel had gone into effect the very day I met them, and they were still under the nervous, yet excited, effect of this action. As parents of two young children, they were excellent examples of the younger generations of Ecuadorians trying to piece a life together with the dollar.

I first met Ms. Vallejos at the Hotel Maria in Otavalo, before meeting her husband Ivan. Once I was able to speak with them together as a couple, I realized just how large a challenge this young family faced. While they had adjusted somewhat to the dollar, including the higher prices and lack of government aid, they were still struggling with their earnings from the hotel, which were barely enough to cover their operating expenses.

The economic text of this couple ran like a maze, because both husband and wife recognized that they had to provide for their family, but were not sure how everything would proceed in the future. They did not know if their hotel would ultimately be successful, and it was still unclear to them what path to take in the event this venture was not successful. They were using a script learned from their parents, comprised of budgeting and saving, but found that in their own stories, much had to be improvised.

As a couple, their identity was almost entirely focused on the family unit, with both individuals providing for the needs of the family through various roles. Mr. Paredes had a second job renting instruments and equipment to local music bands. Ms. Vallejos had a business from home selling diapers to local families. Together, these two were desperately trying to make enough money to make ends meet and set enough aside for savings.

The couple's imagination was projected onto the well-being of the family and on helping their community to understand the many problems with wanting things they could not afford. Ms. Vallejos, in particular, felt that she must teach her children to buy only the necessities, because she did not want them to become trapped into spending money needlessly and then being broke. Aside from helping their family thrive, this couple envisioned a future where their family would make wise financial decisions.

Hernan Buendia - Entrepreneur

My conversation with Mr. Buendia revealed an aspect of the currency switch that I had not encountered to as great a degree with other participants. His sense of frustration was very real, making him sound almost bitter in his responses. While the other participants I had worked with previously had also experienced loss and thus frustration, Mr.

Buendia had an edge to him that suggested he was still trying to adapt to this new currency.

While he drove me to the destinations I needed to visit, I asked him about his current occupation. His words suggested an economic text that had lost merit since the switch to the dollar, because he was no longer able to afford the quality of life he had previously been accustomed to with the sucre. He believed that many things were out of his reach financially, for himself and his family. He had had to give up on those things that make everyday life enjoyable and was able to pay only for the bare necessities. He also mentioned that his life actions had diminished in purpose because of less money earned for the same amount of work.

His identity as an entrepreneur and an individual had suffered greatly as a result of the currency change. Even with his wife working in the family business, he could in no way match the lifestyle he had been able to afford with the sucre. While he did not mention that the loss of the sucre made him feel any less Ecuadorian, his tone suggested that he felt less empowered since the change. He was not able to afford medical insurance for anyone besides himself.

As a result of his more modest lifestyle, Mr. Buendia had a difficult time imagining a prosperous future. He did not speak about his life's desires or dreams about any of his family members. I sensed that he felt some trepidation towards hoping for anything more than he had currently, for fear he would lose even more.

Mauricio Pozo - Businessman

Although my conversation with Mr. Pozo was quite short, his information shed some light on what it might be like for a young Ecuadorian to start a job working for su-

ces and subsequently earning dollars. This was precisely the case for Mr. Pozo from Otavalo, who had started working at age 19.

Mr. Pozo had a far more hopeful attitude towards the dollar than Mr. Buendia, suggesting an economic text rich with potential and ideas for greater productivity. Rather than seeing himself as a casualty of the dollar, Mr. Pozo created a narrative identity as one where the dollar could be his ally, allowing him to do more than what he could accomplish with sucres. Because of this tenacity, Mr. Pozo suggested he could conceive of imagining a better future.

Jorge Villaruel – Museum Curator

Mr. Villaruel had a lot of information to contribute regarding the influence of the currency change on Ecuadorians. In my conversation with him, I noticed it was difficult for him to disclose information on how dollarization influenced his own life. As the conversation progressed, he began to open up more about how his family life had changed.

The economic text he presented was structured with a clear beginning, middle and end. He had trained for his job as curator at the local museum in Otavalo, and had started earning sucres. When dollars arrived, things became difficult because he could not earn as much. His conversation reflected a keen eye for observation, including ways that dollarization changed daily activities such as bill-paying, grocery shopping, and saving money.

His identity seemed to be strengthened rather than diminished by the introduction of the dollar, as was shown by his insistence that the dollar would provide a means to a better way of life for him and other Ecuadorians. He also had a healthy imagination, al-

lowing him to envision a better life for his family in five years with better job security. Generally, he felt that the dollar would allow for a more positive future.

He was able to stay optimistic about dollarization, while still remaining realistic about the problems it had caused those Ecuadorians who lost their homes and their bank accounts. He also distinguished the effects of dollarization on the indigenous people versus mixed populations, recognizing that for mixed households who had set aside sucres, dollarization had resulted in a significant loss of funds. Mr. Villaruel suggested the indigenous had an advantage on dollarization for they had more exposure to that currency and the potential of its value through their own travels.

An interesting aspect of my conversation with Mr. Villaruel was his hypothetical advice to any given country facing dollarization; buy dollars before the transition and stay organized. He was one of the few participants able to express some advice on dollarization.

Mauricio Quaran – Taxi Driver

Mr. Quaran provided some helpful insights regarding the kind of people one can find surrounding the main city. Mr. Quaran had to support his family, having only a sixth grade education. Fortunately, his mother had taught him about money and how to save, and he was using this knowledge to help himself and his own family.

Mr. Quaran had a quiet and firm disposition, giving neither too much nor too little consideration to the topics we discussed. He believed overall that dollarization had negatively influenced Ecuadorians, including himself. His economic text was that of someone who had successfully struggled against losing all resources, with actions suggesting pre-

ventive strategies. One such strategy is that of educating his children about money, even though Mr. Quaran is often tired after working twelve hour shifts or more.

He was honest about the role of others in his financial education, acknowledging his mother, but stating he had learned the rest on his own. He lamented that he could not pay for medical insurance, thus any medical expenses were out of pocket. He constructed his identity by observing others managing expenses and the use of the dollar trying to predict problems before they occurred. A good example of this was when he shared that much of his future was up to him, rather than others. Also, if he did not work sufficiently, he could lose his house or be unable to pay for food.

Mr. Quaran explained to me that many people in the surrounding areas of Otavalo are involved in drug money projects. Part of these projects include the crassly built home I had seen earlier in my stay. He knew about a local drug lord who had recently been arrested. He also was aware that people unassociated with illicit activities avoided the local market because they could not always afford the high prices asked by those benefiting from money laundering. He warned me to be careful with my questions, as potential participants in the area would probably not like them.

In terms of his imagination, he kept a realistic picture in his mind of what he thought of as possible versus not possible for himself and his family. He believed that through staying informed about the dollar and saving money, many problems could be averted. He expressed that two of his children are going to high school, and he has great hopes for them in the time of the dollar.

Franklin Adear – Taxi Driver

Mr. Adear showed considerable depth of understanding into the currency transition and how it affected Ecuadorians such as himself. Rather than seeing dollarization as an isolated phenomenon, as many other participants did, he was able to trace back dollarization to previous and current political interests. In this way, he had a much more complete vision of dollarization than some of the other individuals I spoke with.

Like many Ecuadorians, he struggled with the new realities of being a licensed taxi driver after dollarization, informing me that many illegal taxis comprised of private vehicles throng the streets of Ecuador competing for his fares illegally. Overall, he believed the transition had been bad for Ecuador, but he did acknowledge that the banks now authorized many more loans than with the sucre. He discussed his actions and other elements of text as reactive mechanisms, defending himself and his family against the repercussions of dollarization rather than foreseeing things that could become problems later on. A good example of this frame of mind was his mention of not being able to earn more than enough wages to meet his daily expenditures. With the sucres, he was able to meet his expenses and save money, but this was no longer possible with dollars.

I learned that Mr. Adear had an excellent grasp of some of the social constructs in Ecuador, freely acknowledging *machismo* and the fact that many women did not know how much money their husbands make. At the same time, many professional couples split their finances, with each person having their own fund rather than depending on a joint bank account. Mr. Adear saw his identity as in between these two scenarios, using a notebook to record incoming and outgoing funds, and having his wife do the same. He

shared that his wife was in charge of the household's finances, an unusual practice for male-dominated Ecuadorian society.

Mr. Adeal was also one of the participants who most allowed himself to imagine what the outside world might think about Ecuador. He wanted me to record our conversation in the hopes that the world could finally find out about dollarization in Ecuador, and for the world to be aware of the political corruption so prevalent in his country. He confided that while Ecuadorians "will always have the sucre in their minds and hearts," keeping the rest of the world informed about what happened in Ecuador is necessary.

Jose Montoya – Museum Curator

Mr. Montoya may well have been the most challenging participant from whom to obtain a personal perspective on dollarization. Being a college-educated curator and lecturer from the national museum, Mr. Montoya had vast amounts of knowledge of local customs and the history of Spanish coins, and he would willingly have shared everything he knew with me had there been more time available. However, I was primarily interested in how the currency change had affected his life rather than hypothetical questions, and it took him some time to understand this and become comfortable with sharing about his life. After an initial listening period, he started to share his more personal ideas.

Mr. Montoya believed that while Ecuadorians generally complain about dollarization, overall Ecuador has done much better since the currency change. Prices did go up, but eventually stabilized leaving Mr. Montoya to think that any complaints about dollars are tied to nostalgia. He felt the use of a new, American currency detracted from the Ecuadorian sense of a national identity, as the sucre and other original coins represented the dignity and culture of the people.

In some ways, he saw his text and associated actions as reflecting the need to reinvent himself and his museum. For example, he shared that since dollarization, the museum had increased in cultural value because it had gone from being a monetary to a historical museum. Perhaps along with this change in the museum, he also saw his purpose there of becoming more important.

He also saw himself as the purveyor of knowledge in his family, teaching his children, both in their early teens, to save money. He identified himself with that class of Ecuadorians who had higher education but were still very much tied to the ups and downs of the economy, and he did not feel he was able to provide his family with everything he wanted to. In many ways, he thought of himself as the steward of Ecuadorian national monetary history, keeping history alive while current events swirled about him.

Once he was able to share personal points of view, he began to imagine what he would like to have happen now that dollars are the new currency. Teary-eyed, he stated he would like to have life insurance and provide a privileged education for his children, emphasizing the importance of his family over any personal desires he might have. In my conversation with Mr. Montoya, I had the distinct impression that he derived much personal and moral strength from his family.

Jorge Arguella – Accountant/Taxi Driver

A remarkable find for this project, I was truly fortunate to find Mr. Arguella. My conversation with Mr. Arguella was of great value to me because he had lived for some time in the United States, and could thus offer helpful comparisons between Ecuador, the United States, pre-and post-dollarization.

Mr. Arguella was born in Ecuador and crossed over into Mexico and then illegally into the United States as a newly married young man. He lived for a time in New York, where he earned his CPA and doctorate in Accounting while working as a carpenter. He then returned to Ecuador after the political upheaval and establishment of the new currency.

In the way he described his economic text, it was evident to me that Mr. Arguella was a man of action. After losing his job at the bank in Quito due to all the bank closings at the time of dollarization, he took his wife and left the country. Clearly, Mr. Arguella created a life for himself where he would have an answer to every problem, not necessarily the best answer, but a response to a problem nonetheless. While he did get a divorce and leave the United States, he did not avoid novelty or abandon himself to any fear of change; his response to dollarization was to keep moving forward, physically and mentally.

Mr. Arguella saw himself as a survivor. His identity as a survivor allowed him to get through all the confusion of the currency change and find a way for himself to continue meeting his needs. This helped him as well as helping him come to the aid of others, showing them how to save money and provide for themselves. He had a good sense of how people in different countries spent money, and how financial customs vary greatly even within the same country.

He approached conversation of his future with a well-grounded and optimistic attitude, understanding that dollarization had been a significant change for Ecuador but acknowledging that overall, this change had been good. People had better medical care and more chances to start businesses. While he believed that younger people might handle

this transition more effectively than he could, he ended our conversation sounding hopeful and energetic about the future. He allowed himself to imagine that with time, people could heal from the drastic change, adjusting to dollars and using the new currency to their benefit.

Jorge Castillo – Store Owner

Jorge Castillo worked as a store owner, and provided credit for purchases at the store to individuals in the community. While he operated his store, for he was highly trusted, he also helped out his fellow merchants in the community when called upon for assistance for merchant related errands.

Jorge had a grade school education and struggled to make ends meet, but my conversation with him helped me to understand how he survived during the period before and after dollarization. Jorge was an orphan, and learned at an early age how to make a living for himself and how to save money.

He rented a store and, along with his fiancée, sold general everyday goods. He had a system of percentages, allowing him to accurately judge how much money to set aside for things like food, water and energy. Jorge taught his fiancée this system, and they both used it to take care of daily expenses.

His economic text reflected the kind of paradigm one might expect from a disadvantaged but bright individual who relied on a system of saving and spending allowing him to rise from a street vendor to a store owner; Jorge provided the instruction to his family and ensured that the system was followed. His business aptitude rewarded him with some financial success, allowing Jorge to also become a small money lender in his

neighborhood. This directly relates to his identity, because he was thought of as a community resource to his friends and family.

His mostly positive attitude towards the dollar was seen in his description of imagination. He described how familiar he was with engaging in financial transactions with different currencies. Jorge was used to working with tourists who paid in various currencies, so when the dollar arrived, he was far less intimidated than other Ecuadorians. Jorge did not view dollarization as a damaging blow to Ecuador, but rather faced this change by imagining ways to handle the dollar currency competently.

Glenda Girando – Pharmacy Clerk

Ms. Girando gave an interesting perspective on what the transition to dollars might have been like for a young woman with a child living with her parents. My conversation with her helped me to understand what the currency change meant to a young person with some responsibilities and not a lot of resources.

She believed that what she knew about spending and saving money she learned from her family. Ms. Girando acknowledged that her family did help her when they were able to, but that in many ways she was on her own in terms of handling the restaurant and scheduling childcare and other responsibilities around it. She shared that there used to be a young man at the drugstore who helped introduce her to running it, and she took it up from there.

My conversation with her suggested that her economic text was a difficult one, complicated in part by not being able to rely on someone consistently to help her with the day's tasks. She felt a need to act in the best interest of herself and her family, but this road was likely unclear at times. The loss of the sucre was a further complication, be-

cause most things became more expensive. She revealed that even though Ecuador now uses dollars, an American currency, she did not feel this represented a loss of her identity. In fact, she even mentioned that she now thinks in terms of dollars rather than sucres.

Ms. Girando was not able to give me an idea of her plans for the future or anything related to her imagination, and I think this was in part due to the fact that she was trying to stabilize her present first. Given the fact that she was operating a store with little supervision, she probably did not have a framework with which to view the future.

Dario Lastras – Taxi Driver

Mr. Lastras felt the weight of the responsibility of caring for a family in post-sucro Ecuador. With his wife at home and a 20-year old daughter in college, he was clearly under pressure to earn enough money for the family's needs. With dollars, this was even more difficult for him than with sucres.

According to Mr. Lastras' economic text, he was not at liberty to consider expanding the family or find another line of work. Having his daughter in college was a bit of a relief for him, because he would not have to worry about clothing her or feeding her. He readily admitted that both he and his wife had a limited education, although both could read and write. He concluded that he would simply have to learn how to best use his resources for the maximum financial gain possible.

Mr. Lastras certainly saw his identity as being the bread-winner of the family, working long hours to satisfy his family's needs. Fortunately, his father had taught him about the value of money and learning how to save money to buy things later. Now, it was up to him to translate this tradition from sucres to dollars. Ms. Lastras found that the switch to the dollar was overall positive for him. He did express reservations, as he men-

tioned how it was easier to spend money with the higher value of the dollar, as the prices for goods were designated in lesser monetary quantities (1 U.S. dollar had the buying equivalent of 20,000 sucres). Also, the tender of cents for small items was at times difficult, as he was accustomed to pay in whole number quantities with the sucre for the same small item. To further complicate the onset of the dollar for him, he lamented that the paying of fares at times required for him to provide change, which is in very short supply, to complete the transaction, and that was a challenge for everyone in the taxi business. Mr. Lastras' imagination, even with all of the challenges, portrayed that he was hopeful for increased job security to guarantee the well-being of his family.

Katiusca Andres – Domestic Worker

Mrs. Andres gave some important information on how she believed the currency change affected Ecuadorians not just financially but culturally too since in her opinion the world will not know about Ecuador for the sucres will no longer be traded in a world economy.

She also shared that her husband sometimes would go to the hospital where they would give him medication for free. While she and her husband tried to save money, something they were able to do with sucres, they found this was difficult to do now with dollars.

Economic text became evident in my conversation with her as we discussed her everyday reality. While she did not learn how to save money in school, her husband had taught her how to save sucres. As she worked, she would have to find a way to save dollars now, a much more difficult feat because of the higher prices. Much of her actions and

daily activity surrounded spending and saving, and finding out ways to best handle the new currency.

She appeared to see herself as the main supporter of the family, giving no information on what her husband might be doing to support the family. This may have been because he was too ill or unemployed. She tended to see her identity through her family, responding indirectly to my question about where she learned to save money with dollars, as she mentioned her husband had learned to save money on his own.

Mrs. Andres had a specific goal in her imagination, which was to one day own a mobile massage therapy business at the beaches of Esmeraldas. She felt that overall the switch to dollars had been good because Ecuadorians would now understand the importance of truly saving money. This fact gave her hope for a better life.

Rosa de Alvarado – Restaurant Owner

Mrs. de Alvarado is a very pleasant lady who appeared to have a bustling restaurant with regular customers. During my conversation with her, she would sometimes pause to pleasantly greet a customer. She had a very authentic manner about her, and she spoke in a natural tone of voice with me as if I had been one of her regular customers.

A mother of three, Mrs. de Alvarado had learned most of what she knew about the restaurant business from her husband. Even after dollarization, she still added up bills by hand with pencil and paper. She shared that dollars had been a challenge for her family, and felt they all had to work harder for less money.

Overall, she believed her family was beginning to adapt to the dollar, but that it had been a difficult road. Her economic text reflected the actions of what I might expect a mother of three to take, working hard at the restaurant so that her children might benefit

and go into their own careers. One of her daughters had gone on to be a chef, while the other worked for a company. In contrast to some of the other participants, Ms. de Alvarado did not see work as a limiting factor to her happiness or the well-being of herself and family. She also proudly provided her restaurant to the community church as a permanent place of worship.

Mrs. de Alvarado gave the impression of seeing herself as the center of the family, her identity solidly defined by her role as mother and a community leader church member set an example for her family. She believed very much that working hard at her business would help her family in the long run, hinting at the fact that this might be what they needed to get over their difficulty with dollars.

Her imagination was influenced by the poverty and resulting crime that she saw around her. She seemed to feel fortunate that she was working, and hoped that in five years, her entire family would still be working and keeping well. She had a clear chain of priorities in her mind in terms of meeting expenses, with food and rent taking precedence over other needs. Her desire for the future appeared to consist of keeping the status quo for her family, continuing to meet their needs on a daily basis.

Maria Garcito – Retired

In my drive through Otavalo, as I looked for conversation participants, I took an interest in the local indigenous population. In the distance I noticed Mrs. Garcito in her traditional dress and inquired of the residents about her identity, for she could not understand any Spanish. Mrs. Garcito of Otavalo at first appearance seemed diminutive as she stood no more than four feet tall. After making immediate arrangements for translation with a family member who was helping to take care of Mrs. Garcito, I began the conver-

sation with Mrs. Garcito through her translator to discern her story. I was very surprised as the story unfolded with this participant of how a family community that has no relation to a person can help in the care of that person. She was alert and cognizant through the conversation. Her story of being a domestic slave was compelling and reminded me of how life in other countries can be so different from life in the United States. The story of her youth was not pleasant to hear because she and her husband had worked many years without pay. As the conversation progressed into the dollarization of Ecuador she contributed observations of how the family that was taking care of her had to struggle more than before. Mrs. Garcito also mentioned how development in the area had made things better with more roads, water and electricity available to people than before dollarization.

The economic text of Mrs. Garcito was limited to her impoverished exposure to involuntary servitude and she was not able to contribute in the conversation any experiences of purchasing or trading. The narrative identity disclosed was very heartbreaking as I understood how slavery was still practiced through the late 1970s. The imagination of Mrs. Garcito was also limited to her past and her experiences, for she could not describe in the conversation the hope of experiencing a better life for her.

These participants all had their own particular take on dollarization, and each individual experience contributed to a rich collection of data. A summary concludes this chapter.

Summary

The conversations in this Chapter provided an understanding of the narratives of Ecuadorians about their economic and personal experiences following dollarization. My intent in completing this research was to come to a better understanding of this economic

event and to demonstrate the influence of losing one's national currency on Ecuadorian culture. Furthermore, the subsequent actions of these participants illustrated the various positions ranging from ambivalence to accepting or rejecting the American dollar in everyday transactions. From these points of view, hope emerged as a dominant theme in the mindset of most of my participants. This was most evident when the families were introduced into the conversations.

Additionally, the participants had an awakening sense of understanding about the need to change their actions in order to save for their futures and become more competent consumers. The unexpected findings provided this research an understanding that current literature could not contribute such as the claims of illicit activities tied to money laundering and the challenges associated with tendering change to accomplish a commerce transaction.

In Chapter Six the data collected from the conversation participants are examined through the critical hermeneutic concepts. The categories of economic text, narrative identity and imagination, selected for this study, guide the analysis.

CHAPTER SIX: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

In Chapter Five, I presented the data gathered from my conversation participants in Ecuador. In Chapter Six, the data are analyzed through critical hermeneutic categories of economic text, narrative identity, and imagination to develop a deeper understanding of the narratives of the people in Ecuador after dollarization. This interpretive protocol for participatory research in conversations assists the researcher as the narrator to also become the transformed learner of new understandings towards the world of the participants. According to Herda (1999: 137), “[t]he event of conversation lends itself to understanding... [L]earning is the creative act that takes place in the relationship between an event and understanding. .. [A]s such, interpretation is not a methodological act, but rather a transformative act. Hermeneutics and learning are inseparable.” My new understandings provide a means to better analyze the data to begin the process of synthesis towards interpretation. The intent of this analysis is to better understand the concept of economic literacy.

In the data analysis I have become the narrator in the retelling of the stories of my participants as I discover and learn the different plots derived from my conversations. The coming to new understandings with the people of Ecuador goes beyond just knowing about the dollarization. To learn what happens with my participants, more than simply collecting information on what they know, I needed to ontologically approach their experience. As Herda (1999: 135) posits, “Learning is more an ontological activity than an epistemological activity.”

In the next sections the discussion follows the investigation of critical hermeneutic categories of Text, Narrative Identity, and Imagination with the conversation data of participants.

Economic Text

How do we pass from letters to life, from ancient texts to modern business transactions? What texts and phenomena of action have in common is that they both are utterances of human minds, that they have to exist as thoughts before they become manifest as observable phenomena. A text needs to be thought out before it is written down, a business transaction before it is entered upon (Lachmann 1991: 136).

The understanding of economic activities for my conversation participants in Ecuador is relevant to the critical hermeneutics category of text which I call economic text. In order to analyze the text as a meaningful action, a paradigmatic connection is made between text and action within human sciences, such as economics. In his proposal to consider action as text, Ricoeur (1981: 218-220) presents three arguments in considering meaningful action as text due to the paradigmatic association to human sciences.

According to the first argument, any social phenomenon needs to be defined as text because of its analogous connections in linguistic signs. Second, because the framework of linguistic signs is semantically derived through appropriation, the action must have an epistemological function. Third, in order to understand meaningful patterns in interpretation, we need to qualify the personal commitment to understand human phenomena. In conclusion, to examine an action as meaningful text, Ricoeur (1981: 220) provides that:

The paradigmatic character of text-interpretation must be applied down to this ultimate implication. This means that the conditions of an authentic appropriation, as they were displayed in relation to [economic] texts, are themselves paradigmatic. Therefore we are not allowed to exclude the fi-

nal act of personal commitment from the whole objective and explanatory procedures which mediate it.

The conversations of the participants denote economic social phenomena as economic activity exercised in a personal form. It is such for participants to know and understand why they might perform those economic activities or, in other words, appropriate an economic text in a meaningful way.

It is the meaningful economic activities of the conversation participants that are considered as text seen through the lens of critical hermeneutics in this study. The participants provided descriptions of economic activities that are performed routinely by the people in Ecuador before and after dollarization. These economic activities required to survive in Ecuador after dollarization were extensive and included working to pay the bills, buying groceries, paying rent, practicing charity, employment or even unemployment.

The economic activities described in conversation are in transcription from participants Jorge Arguella, Franklin Adecar and Dario Lastras. The conversations are explored through the lens of the category of economic text.

Mr. Arguella's economic text explains the strategy of how he learned to prioritize limited available financial resources as a young man. He explains, "I learned this early on, because we were six brothers; I am the oldest. At one point when we did not make enough money and my mom said she could not buy shoes one month, I learned how to prioritize. If I have \$100 I prioritize for food and the well-being of my family." The rationale invoked here invites me to make many interpretations as the researcher. As Herda (1999: 75) states, "[t]his text, created from transcriptions of previous conversations, provides a proposed world that the reader or researcher could inhabit and in

which they could project possibilities.” Arguella’s proposed world of making rational economic decisions through changing circumstances from this conversation promotes an understanding for me as a researcher to also reexamine my world and reflect on my own economic priorities in order to become thriftier.

I observed Ms. Jovita Mina share her own limited stock of produce with an incapacitated beggar at the objections of other vendors. She was giving away her only source of income on a day which was very slow in sales and encouraged other beggars to ask for produce from other vendors. However, I am reminded to focus on the act of giving, and not Ms. Mina, as Ricoeur (1981: 111) mentions, “....the hermeneutical task is to discern the ‘matter’ of the [economic] text and not the psychology of the author.” The focus on the action is important to better understand what has taken place. Though it is an economic transaction where goods are exchanged and the author (seller) receives no pay, Ricoeur (1992: 107) posits, “the action of each person (and of that person's history) is entangled not only with the physical course of things but with the social course of human activity.” Ms. Mina, as a market vendor, is also the author of the economic text. The action of giving necessitated the becoming involved in the social community of vendors to feed the very poor. Ms. Mina’s economic text also was a referential dimension to other vendors in the market. The interpretation by researcher and all observing the event of kindness will point to possibility of providing immediate food to the incapacitated homeless at the market. As Herda (1999: 75) proffers,

The referential dimension of a text unfolded in the process of interpretation is an important aspect of Ricoeur's philosophy for field-based hermeneutic research. The referential dimension points to future possibilities and alternatives for our social problems and requires creativity on the part of

the interpreter(s) to imagine new possibilities and configurations of social life and policy.

Ms. Mina explains what she does at the end of the selling day with the remaining produce by stating, “I usually take it home with me raw to cook it in my home.” At this point she makes a rational choice to use her excess produce for food at home. Ricoeur (1981: 161) writes that “the [economic] text seeks to place us in its meaning,” and I interpret Ms. Mina’s actions as economic text to budget money by not spending for food when it is not necessary. The actions of Ms. Mina are also supported by Dambisa Moyo (2009) in her book *Dead Aid* where the author argues for the aid to be provided and distributed by the local participants in an economy. As Moyo (2009: 54) writes, “Instead of flooding foreign markets with American food, which puts local farmers out of business, the strategy would be to use aid money to buy food from farmers within the country, and then distribute that food to the local citizens in need. ... There needs to be more of this type of thinking.” Ms. Mina would be able to have her business flourish if the produce was purchased from her to give to the people in need at the public market.

The conversation participants interpreted the challenges of the new dollar economy in different ways from one another in order to improve their individual potential economic success. Each took different actions in the hope of making the right decision. Mr. Jorge Castillo opened a store; Evan Paredes and Cecilia Vallejo acquired a lease for a hotel to venture into the hospitality trade; Alberto Morales increased his store inventory, and Jorge Arguella transitioned from accountant to a taxi driver. Each had interpreted the need and the meaningful action required, but there is no definite approach to arrive at a correct interpretation to determine whether either of the participants’ solutions was the best solution. As Gary Madison (1991: 36) states,

Whether it is texts or actions of people that we are trying to understand, there is no such thing as a 'correct' or best interpretation of them (no 'validation', in Hirsch's positivistic sense). Which is not to say that some interpretations may not be better (more persuasive, rational) than others (the hermeneutical rejection of objectivism and foundationalism does not entail relativism).

These participants were compelled to discover possibilities to address their interpretation of the economic text. As Ricoeur (1981: 142) mentions, "What is to be interpreted in the [economic] text is a proposed world which I could inhabit and in which I could project my own most possibilities." It is this proposed world of entrepreneurship which will provide the possibilities to succeed.

Narrative Identity

The narrative identity of Ecuadorians after dollarization may be formed from unshared stories, until this research, of their experiences. Each of these participants has revealed, through their stories, part of their narrative identities and the influence of these identities on their lifeworld. As Ricoeur (1984: 74) writes, "This narrative interpretation implies that a life story proceeds from untold and repressed stories in the direction of actual stories the subject can take up and hold as constitutive of his personal identity." Jose Crespo corroborated of the untold and repressed stories by saying that "Many Ecuadorians specifically the elderly were too embarrassed to tell anyone how much money they had lost in the conversion to the dollar for they held on to the sucres too long." Mr. Crespo describes how the narrative identity of these elderly going forward would encompass suspicion and "[t]hey are never going to trust anyone with their money."

According to Herda (2010:138), "Ricoeur argues that the past, the present, and the future presuppose cosmological time, but that in order for us to understand human existence we must use a composite framework of time, which is only possible in a narrative

whose expression relies on imagination.” Herda’s summary above resonates with participants like Mauricio Pozo, Jorge Villaruel, Mauricio Quaran and Franklin Adear as they had created a narrative with stories of likes or dislikes for different reasons of dollarization but ultimately a narrative identity expressing an image of hope and prosperity with more possibilities.

Mr. Pozo had some difficulties with the dollar, but he was able to project the dollar into the future in his imagination, seeing a brighter future. He was enthusiastic about dollars, explaining, “I think I’ve been earning more. I think the people with money in the bank lost a lot of money. Those who are in business, who know about business...they used to buy in sucres, now in dollars. I think they were very happy when dollars came because now things can be done with dollars.” Clearly, Mr. Pozo’s words indicate a sense of confidence in the potential of the dollar.

Jorge Villaruel saw the dollar as a big change, and one that gave initial challenges, but that would pave the way for greater entrepreneurship through loans. He elaborates, “I think this government has made more of an attempt to teach people about money, including the indigenous.” His statement of faith in his current government reflects a sense of hope for its support in the future.

Mauricio Quaran believed that his business became more competitive after the dollar, but he also believed that in the future his family would do better. He said of his children, “I talk to them about these things, since I handle the earnings aspect. I show them ways they can spend their money, how to handle \$5, \$10. I try to show them how to save for later in the day, week.” Mr. Quaran’s focus on saving is a technique that will help him and his family make more informed financial decisions in the future.

Franklin Adear struggled with adapting to the dollar, but thought that the rest of the world would come to know about corruption in Ecuador through the currency change. When I asked him why he wanted to tell his story, he responded, “For the world to know about the currency change; how the switch to dollars happened, and the political interests involved.” For Mr. Adear, even though the shift to dollars had been challenging, dollarization could also provide an opportunity for the rest of the world to know Ecuadorian politics.

The participants had to re-conceptualize the story of their activities surrounding the changing economic environment in Ecuador to survive. Each one had a unique way to approach the challenge of dollarization. As Ricoeur (1984: 30) contributes, “I will say that making a narrative...resignifies the world in its temporal dimension, to the extent that narrating, telling, reciting is to remake action.”

Ricoeur’s thought above applies to participants Rosa de Alvarado, Jorge Arguella, and Maria Garcito because all three of these individuals re-made their stories through telling their narratives. Mrs. de Alvarado created a narrative of hard work leading to a successful restaurant, as recounted through her story of struggle and working with the community for mutual benefit. Of the future, she says, “I hope we will all be well and continue working.” Her philosophy of the value of work is a narrative that weaves her current situation and her life in the future together. Mr. Arguella re-made his economic text as a man of action through his stories of personal journey and struggle during his early adult years, taking on many roles, from illegal immigrant to PhD. He stated that “when things change, it is difficult to adjust to a less comfortable lifestyle,” words that indicate Mr. Arguella identified himself through change, a key piece of his narrative. Mrs. Garcito

re-created her story by reflecting on her past and recognizing that people were taking care of her now rather than the other way around. Of these people, she said, “They take care of me with what they can.” Mrs. Garcito acknowledged this change in her story by appreciating the efforts of others in helping to take care of her.

The determination of the participants to succeed was such that they required the alternate formation of narratives, acquired from past experiences, which were interpreted differently by each participant according to his imagination. It is this paradigm of re-examining legacy of personal narratives to arrive at a new narrative that will be more appropriate for the praxis required. As stated by Ricoeur (1984: 81),

The narrative work is an invitation to see our praxis as it is ordered by this or that plot articulated in our literature. As for the symbolism internal to action, we may say that it is exactly what is resymbolized or desymbolized—or resymbolized through de-symbolization—by means of the schematism turn by turn traditionalized and subverted by the historicity of our paradigms.

Ricoeur’s words above apply to participants Glenda Girando, Jorge Castillo, and Jose Montoya. These three participants underwent significant resymbolization through dollarization, affecting their narrative identities. Ms. Girando went from working in a pharmacy as an employee to helping her parents by assuming complete responsibility to operate the pharmacy. This took place after dollarization which devalued the worth of the pharmacy. After sucres, Ms. Girando did not have the option of allowing the family business to fail. When asked about whether her parents were able to help support her, she replied, “When they can. I try to support myself through work.” Ms. Girando’s family survival required that she play an important role in sustaining the family unit. The economic literacy practiced by Glenda, Jorge, and Jose provides a new economic narrative derived from their understanding of the economic text brought about by their imagination of what is possi-

ble and necessary to provide for their families and themselves. As presented in Chapter One, Stern (1998: 1) states that people need to “understand the [economic] forces that significantly affect the quality of their lives,” and the dollarization event in Ecuador provided the impetus for people to become more economically literate towards their economic activities with the use of the new currency.

Mr. Castillo went from being a store-owner before dollarization to being the community lender and financial advisor after dollarization. In many ways, Mr. Castillo’s position became elevated after dollarization because he possessed knowledge about dollars that his neighbors did not. Mr. Castillo informed me that “I always try to save. All my brothers have stores too;” communicating a kind of specialized knowledge of how to run a store efficiently, even with customers from abroad possessing different currencies.

Mr. Montoya went from being a local museum curator before dollarization to the head curator of an important historical numismatic museum which commemorated an important part of Ecuador’s past, the sucre. His position in society became more meaningful after dollarization. Of his museum, he stated, “[It] acquired more cultural value because it went from being a monetary museum to a historical museum.” His work would now be associated with an important part of the history of Ecuador. Upon reflection of his historic paradigm, his present story was ordered by a new plot brought about the event of dollarization.

The participants in this study were all affected by the displacement of their existence before dollarization. As Ricoeur (1984: 95) expresses, “The eclipse of narrative proceeds principally from a displacement of the object of history, which is no longer the active individual but the total social fact.” In particular, Hernan Buendia, Dario Lastras, Ka-

tiusca Andres, and Juan Ruiz are good examples of individuals struggling with displacement in the form of social fact (in this case, the instatement of the dollar over the sucre). Mr. Buendia expressed a concern that his work and personal life have undergone significant and negative changes since dollarization, finding that he was unable to save money and afford the same lifestyle he once had. He expressed his feelings about dollarization in these words: "All the prices went up, out of our reach...the things I buy daily are just to survive." Mr. Buendia's quality of life decreased dramatically after dollarization.

Mr. Lastras struggled with making change for his customers since dollarization, a big problem for someone who worked as a taxi driver to support his family. Of dollarization, he said, "I think it was good for me, but for buying small things it is difficult. Getting change is difficult." His difficulty with getting change is a threat to the sustainability of his business.

Ms. Andres found herself trying to support a household and a husband with diabetes, while yearning to work as a massage therapist on the beaches of Ecuador. Her dream of individualization was temporarily displaced by dollarization. When considering her future, she expressed that "[dollarization] gives me hope for my family and a better life." Hope for the realization of her desires in the future may have helped her to weather the disappointment of having to put off her goals until later.

Mr. Ruiz, in some way, lost part of his narrative, expressed through his belief that sucres were "his money" and that he would "never forget" this fact. Indeed, Mr. Ruiz's money, and perhaps his pride, had both been displaced by a foreign currency.

Imagination

According to Herda (1999:10), “[the] productive imagination rather than a reproductive imagination in prescribing a new reading of our lives sees that understanding one's past is not an end in itself. An understanding can serve, however, to mediate the past, which can be related to the development of a just social text.” In the minds of the people of Ecuador it was necessary for them to practice a productive imagination in order to understand their past before dollarization. By doing so they may develop a just social text after dollarization so that their lives are able to progress in the new dollar economy.

The participants in the conversation were compelled to imagine the past with a new understanding of what dollarization meant to them. Ms. Malez reflects this attitude when she states, “Where we live, there are white people, from the United States. We have a home with a church and the kids study and help each other.” She wants to create and maintain what she considers a just social text by associating the dollar with people from the United States and a community that helps each other.

Mr. Castillo comments concerning his situation, “We never thought we would dollarize, we always thought we would have the sucre. I always try to save. All my brothers have stores too.” He was able to mediate the past, where the dollarization was not a possibility, to a new reading of prescribing positive actions to dollarization. Mr. Castillo was not reproducing an imagination to remain in nostalgia as he proudly boasted that he is now saving money and his brothers have become business owners. Mr. Castillo has developed a just social text from his productive imagination.

Ms. de Alvarado imagined in dollarization the possibility of creating a social text of more job opportunities for the community. She mentions, “The poverty is still very bad, there are no jobs. Because of that, there is some crime.” Ms. de Alvarado was not blaming dollarization for crime as it existed before, but instead understood the past to mediate the expectations of a community with less crime.

When I conversed with Mr. Jorge Villaruel, he exclaimed in an excited manner “Yes, [the indigenous] are training [their children] now. They are also teaching [their children] to play music and sell their crafts abroad.” At this point Mr. Villaruel alludes to a past of community training not present within the indigenous people prior to dollarization, but now his reading to understand a community in need of educating their children has developed into a just social text.

As the participants mediate their imagination from the past during the sucre economy towards a better life using the dollar, Ricoeur (1974: 68) posits that “The productive imagination fundamentally has a synthetic function. It connects understanding and intuition by engendering syntheses that are intellectual and intuitive at the same time.” The participants demonstrate they are quite capable of enduring tough economic times through their productive imagination. The synthesis of rationale or intellect to make hard economic decisions with their intuition allows them to get a clearer understanding of what is necessary to survive. This combination of the intellect and intuition may be a cornerstone of economic literacy, enhanced by a productive imagination.

In words of advice to people about to experience a change of currency, Ms. Jovita Mina warns people “[t]o be careful.” Here Ms. Mina can synthesize her economic challenges of daily experiences into words derived from her productive imagination.

To further support Ricoeur's concept of a productive imagination the following participants, Mr. Mauricio Quaran, Mr. Franklin Ahear, and Mr. Dario Lastras provided a definitive synthesis of their economic experiences to give an opinion on comparing cost of living before and after dollarization. Mr. Quaran mentioned his responsibility to survive no matter the circumstance, before or after the dollar. "It depends on me, also. If I don't work, I don't eat. So I need to work, keep up house payments." In this conversation he understands what is required of him to be a provider and to survive in the economy. He is capable of making the necessary synthesis in his imagination. Mr. Ahear corroborates Mr. Quaran's thinking by explaining the price fluctuations in the cost of living with the dollar. He comments, "Well, I think we are somewhat stable now. With dollars, there have been many more loans. In order to pay my debt for the car, I had to buy dollars to pay back the bank." He imagines that no matter how inconvenient the truth about his economic disposition, he needs to settle his debts even if it means at a higher price with the dollar in order to survive.

Mr. Ahear synthesizes his rationale with his intuition as he imagines towards the future what is required to progress with the dollar. Mr. Lastras, in a disappointed tone, mentions, "I don't really want any other kids because it's hard to provide for them. When you have children, it's hard to manage your money." Mr. Lastras responsibly imagines a family of an appropriate size to survive in a questionable economy. He is capable to draw upon his synthesis of his intellect and intuition to determine, based on his personal experience, the costs associated with raising a family. Mrs. Garcito tells the story while starting to cry, "They [landlords] had me work very hard without pay until I could barely walk when I was about 60." She depended on an imagination developed through many

years of involuntary servitude that paints a narrative not sufficiently developed to function as a free person in a capitalistic economy. The long years of involuntary servitude provided only a history of pain and suffering for Mrs. Garcito. The question remains whether she will ever be able to imagine a different type of life.

The imagination of the participants in this study, with the possible exception of Mrs. Garcito, allowed them to create narratives of solutions to approach their economic challenges after dollarization. These solutions provide transformations of how they understand the world around them, and to live and manage their finances. Appropriately, Kearney (1998: 149) writes,

[M]etaphors, symbols or narratives produced by imagination all provide us with “imaginative variations” of the world, thereby offering us the freedom to conceive of the world in new ways and to undertake forms of action which might lead to its transformation. Semantic innovation can thus point towards social transformation. The possible worlds of imagination can be made real by action.

The imagination of participants after dollarization improvised a view of suspicion for the newly built homes of the indigenous people in Otavalo. As depicted by Mr. Crespo “Even though construction here is horribly ugly...here, like I’ve told you...you see for example Otavalo used to be very ugly ...and now you see everything looking very nice, beautiful homes.... It’s because it’s all from laundered drug money.” He is conceiving a world of corruption where some people are benefiting by the dollar in ways that are not legal. The indigenous constructed homes throughout Otavalo, uncompleted in most cases, altered the ambient landscape to at times look offensive. The participants’ imagination produced not a metaphor to be interpreted as prosperity to all, but instead another possible world of nefarious activity associated with the dollarization. In a more positive light, a narrative arose to promote savings; as explained by Katiusca Andres “[a]s a culture, it helped us

understand how important it is to save.” She was able to have her imagination transform an economic challenge of budgeting her expenses to find a way of saving money.

Thoughts on Economic Literacy

Though there is limited literature on economic literacy, Duvall (in Stern 1998: 1) and Stern (1998: 1) posit that economic literacy is important for a successful socioeconomic life. However these authors never adequately defined economic literacy. Perhaps this lack of definition has a good reason, for Wentworth as early as 1976 recognized the elusive nature of this type of literacy. For the purpose of this research, I defined economic literacy above on page 7 as the following:

“Economic literacy is the action-related ability to make informed choices using the financial resources one has, even in the context of poverty to live a quality of life in dignity that provides food, shelter, and security to support oneself and family.” Based on this idea of economic literacy and my data analysis, there is interdependency between my idea of economic literacy and a viable social life.

This research may provide an understanding of how economic literacy can emerge from the historic paradigm through a productive imagination to a new way of thinking. Also, this research may shed light on how to make a viable living within the context of dollarization where economic literacy and imagination play key roles, and narratives of identity change. In reviewing this scenario, an economic text opens to a new world, one in which people can work through social and personal changes, overcoming disruptions. Herein is a call for resymbolization of both currency and economic understanding that result in new actions, actions more attuned to a dollarized economy.

The dollarization provided the catalyst to determine the minimum level of economic literacy the participants needed to meet their basic living expenses. This paradigm could only be supported by the participants prioritizing the various economic needs by order of value. As determined by Rao and Walton (2004: 161), “Adam Smith already saw for the economic good in general that governments and international organizations are limited in their power to generate the values that are really important to people.” In listening to the participants’ imagination for a better world I found that their dreams and aspirations are no different than mine.

Summary

Chapter Six presents a secondary analysis through the categories of economic text, imagination, and narrative identity. Critical hermeneutical theory was used to interpret the narratives of the people in Ecuador after dollarization.

When I began my data collection in Ecuador, I quickly realized that the conversations from the participants had stories that had not been told before. The narrative identities of my participants provide me with an opportunity to understand what people in Ecuador had to endure in difficult economic times after dollarization.

The analysis also provided thoughts on what economic literacy reveals from the stories of the participants as they prioritized the values of their economic challenges on a daily basis. The prioritizing of what participants consider of greater value determined the economic activities they were more likely obligated to perform. In Chapter Seven I present my research summary, findings and implications. Also included in this Chapter Seven are suggestions for future research and my personal reflection.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of my study was to understand the narratives of the people of Ecuador as they experienced the acquisition of the United States dollar as their national legal currency. In this final Chapter of my dissertation, I summarize the research, discuss findings, implications, and proposed suggestions for future research, as well as personal reflections that have surfaced through my new understandings as a participatory researcher applying critical hermeneutic protocol.

Summary of Research

This study through critical hermeneutics investigated the categories of imagination, narrative identity and text with an ontological approach to interpret the data of conversations in the lives of people of Ecuador. As Ricoeur (1991: 160) posits, “If it is true that there is always more than one way of construing a text, it is not true that all interpretations are equal.” It is those interpretations which lead to new understandings of being with the lifeworld of the conversation participants. It is the social process given to meaning that the conversation provides meaningful data through mutual understandings as Herda (1999: 31) explains,

Through in-depth analysis, a social researcher can uncover significant meanings behind the metaphors, symbols, and codes and make these underlying meanings more obvious for conscious consideration. In doing this, the researcher participates in a social process, because the revelation of meanings does not occur as a result of abstract reasoning or formulations. Mutual understanding on part of the participant and researcher were followed thereby promoting deeper understandings of meaningful actions, or text in the research.

Ecuador was selected for this study due to my interest in the dollarization event which influenced many of the economic decisions that people have to face in their daily lives.

Those decisions are approached through a rationale where people have to practice some form of economic literacy. The emphasis has been to identify through critical hermeneutic research how the people approach the economic text, their narrative identity and their imagination in the midst of a new currency. It has been the examination of those three components that has painted a picture of what a country goes through when a foreign currency is selected over their own. Having to visit Ecuador to gather the data allowed me to not just have the conversations with the participants, but also to be exposed to many of the abstract symbols and metaphors of Ecuador that people take for granted. As an illustration, I noticed the gaudy homes that were popping up everywhere like weeds, in their unfinished construction, were symbolic of the newfound corruption after dollarization.

Ten years after dollarization, Ecuadorian narrative identities adopted another story, and that was the dollar. Ecuadorians also appropriated a new economic text that made the spending of money much easier, because they had to go from thinking in whole numbers with the sucres to fractions of costs with the dollar. The lives of these conversation participants represented the economic text of Ecuadorians making an effort to cope with a currency whose value is controlled by a foreign country, the United States.

Findings and Implications

Finding One: Dollarization Promoted Suspicion

Prior to my arrival in Ecuador, the literature I had researched provided a very limited perspective on dollarization. As the conversations progressed, a recurring narrative brought out by the participants was the nefarious activities associated with money laundering by mostly the indigenous populations bordering Colombia. I was not prepared to even consider such a scenario of corruption with dollarization. My participants provided

the catalyst of their awareness for me to understand, not just their narratives but also the possibility of other narratives which contribute to the social narrative of a community. It was not possible to isolate a prospective participant involved in money laundering, but some of my participants warned me not to approach certain areas where residents would not like my questions and possibly threaten my physical safety.

Implication and Proposed Action

Finding One describes a community atmosphere of tension, divided by the unintended effects of dollarization through illegal activities. The indigenous people prior to the change were of the same economic status as the majority of Ecuadorians, but within a few months in rural areas such as Otavalo the rise the construction of prominent homes where most were badly built or uncompleted littered the scenery. A proposed action could be a national advertising campaign informing the public of what money laundering is, where the money usually comes from, who the victims are, and the effects on the community. The education of the population in Ecuador is necessary in preventing laundering as Brent Bartlett (2002: 33) warns,

[A]llowing money laundering activity to proceed unchallenged is not an optimal economic-development policy because it damages the financial institutions that are critical to economic growth, reduces productivity in the economy's real sector by diverting resources and encouraging crime and corruption, and can distort the economy's international trade and capital flows to the detriment of long-term economic development.

Finding Two: Lack of Smaller Denomination of Coin Creates Business Challenges

On the return trip from Esmeraldas to Quito the conversation with my participant took an interesting turn which completely surprised me; he mentioned how difficult it is to obtain change when completing a sales transaction. I began to remember previous events I had observed customers paying for merchandise and clerks demanding exact

change. During one purchase I observed, the vendor told the customer to take an extra candy because he did not have enough change. As confirmed in other parts of the world that have similar problems with availability of change, Anne Szustek (2008: 1) reports,

In Argentina's capital, Buenos Aires, the sort of money that jingles carries more weight than the sort that folds. A severe shortage of coins, allegedly at the hands of black market traders who amass large amounts of coins to sell them to small business owners for a profit, has led shopkeepers to go such extremes as offering inexpensive goods such as candy or mints in place of change. Larger stores simply round off bills in their own favor.

Implication and Proposed Action

The availability of change influences the pricing of goods and services. No one in Ecuador is immune to the pricing structure. If an item or service is priced to avoid a lack of change, the merchant will price it at a higher level to avoid losing the sale. Ecuador is experiencing already what Szustek (2008: 1) describes, "Coin shortage or not, in some countries shopkeepers leave the onus on the customer to provide change. In Italy and Turkey, for example, many shopkeepers categorically refuse to break large bills out of sheer reluctance to part with small change." A proposed action to address the change dilemma is to have the government of Ecuador increase the amount of change into the economy. This change may be comprised of circulating larger quantity of smaller bills and coins to facilitate the availability of change for commerce transactions.

Finding Three: There is a Loss of National Narrative Identity

The narrative identity of Ecuador was represented, in part, through the sucre notes, and some Ecuadorians felt a lack of international representation after dollarization. Among my conversation participants it was the older generation which was more attached to the sucre, or at least more reminiscent of it. This was comparable with a survey

to plan for implementation of the Euro as reported in EOS Gallup Europe (2004: 25)

“When analyzing the socio-demographic categories, we can also note that the feeling of national identity loss due to the adoption of the euro seems to be considerably more present among the elderly and the less educated.”

The sucre notes contained battle scenes, geographical features, and important national figures. It was the absence of these national symbols, not incorporated into their newly acquired currency, the dollar, which contributed to some Ecuadorians not feeling represented in the new currency. Although Ecuador eliminated the printing of paper money and the minting of metal coins for the sucre, it began to mint Ecuadorian coins with dollar values. While these coins have depictions of national symbols, they are not in use outside of Ecuador and do not come to any significant national attention.

The Ecuadorian economic narratives were bound by the national currency prior to dollarization. The narratives associated with national identity can be prescribed through the symbol of currency as stated by Dominick Salvatore (2003: 225),

At the symbolic level, a national currency is particularly useful to rulers wary of internal division or dissent. Centralization of political authority is facilitated insofar as citizens all feel themselves bound together as members of a single social unit—all part of the same “imagined community,” in Benedict Anderson’s (1991) apt phrase. Anderson, a cultural anthropologist, stresses that states are made not just through force but also through loyalty, a voluntary commitment to a joint identity. The critical distinction between “us” and “them” can be heightened by all manner of tangible symbols: flags, anthems, postage stamps, public architecture, even national sports teams. Among the most potent of these tokens is money,...

It is the imagined community of the sucre which many Ecuadorians felt a part of and now that community no longer exists.

Implication and Proposed Action

Finding Three describes the loss of a national identity associated with the sucre in Ecuador. The implication of such a loss can be described analogously to the symbolic portrayal of the British pound when the euro threatened its complete replacement as written by Amelia Hadfield-Amkhan (2010: 189),

The pound clearly symbolizes British unity and English values within singular discourse capable of generating statements such as ‘Losing the pound is like losing the Royal Family.’ The national currency is therefore best analyzed from the perspective of identity. As demonstrated, identity is an ‘instrumental [or civic] attachment associated with the benefits of citizenship.’ Entailing concepts of legitimacy and judgments regarding ‘the quality of various social goods and mechanisms.’ The pound also represents an ‘economic political dimension.’ It is part of the national culture and is integral to cultural [historical and national] pride as language or history.

A proposed action to celebrate the narrative identity of Ecuador would be to establish a national day of remembrance for the sucre. The national activity will allow the people to re-remember the sucre and not just feel nostalgic about it. Also, the opportunity will be there for a time of healing to reconfigure the imagination to develop a new narrative identity allowing the dollar to play a part of the new economic narrative of Ecuador.

Finding Four: Imagination is used in Entrepreneurship

The economy in Ecuador is improving but the available jobs are limited. The conversations I had with Ecuadorians contributed another component to the repertoire of survival after dollarization. It was a recurring story to discover how imagination played on the dreams and hopes for people to begin new ventures. Entrepreneurship was common; it included hotel ownership, retail shops, restaurant ownership, and transportation.

The data collected from the conversations did not specifically describe entrepreneurship ventures, but the way the participants expressed their economic texts, imagina-

tion, and their narrative identities all pointed towards entrepreneurship as a solution to unemployment in the midst of dollarization. The economic literacy required to succeed for entrepreneurship of the participants was much more prominent through the economic text as they imagined they must take educated financial risks to succeed in the dollarized economy of Ecuador.

Implication and Proposed Action

Finding Four seems to be a solution that will provide plenty of possibilities for the entrepreneurs post dollarization. However, in reality entrepreneurship is very risky to anyone. At the time of this study there is no data from Ecuador to report on the failure or success of entrepreneurs.

A proposed action to assist the success of entrepreneurs in Ecuador is for the government to develop a national mandate to educate the people on becoming small business owners/entrepreneurs. The people also can be proactive and work towards a productive imagination to develop a narrative representing themselves as informed business owners.

Suggestions for Future Research

The process of deeper understanding in future research of dollarization and its influences in Ecuador could be addressed in the form of critical hermeneutic inquiry. The following three questions could be topics of study:

1. What will be the economic text of influence or legitimization of power the United States economy projects on Ecuador as the United States government controls the value of the dollar? Since the United States attaches a value to the dollar through politics and economics, Ecuador is very susceptible to any variability caused by the United States.

2. What influence of narrative identity, imagination, or economic text does a dollar economy have on the pricing of Ecuadorian hand made goods to be competitive against the surrounding economies of Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia that still have their national currency? When tourists in Otavalo are looking at a handmade sweater priced at 20 dollars, what will happen when the same tourist looks at the same sweater in one of the surrounding countries that is less than half the price?

3. What has happened to the elderly whom either never converted the sucres or delayed too long to convert sucres to dollars? What form of solicitude has been practiced or can be practiced from one self to another when thinking of the elderly in Ecuador? During the dollarization, the elderly did not comprehend the gravity of such conversions and kept their sucres at home. Clearly, those holdings are worthless today.

Personal Statement

The path towards completing this dissertation has been more challenging than I imagined. At first, I had a preconceived notion that every conversation would fall right into my research theme. Field research associated with critical hermeneutics allowed me to re-examine my expectations of categorizing the data. The conversation participants who contributed to those categories were not an issue; however, it was the incidental data that emerged from the same conversation which really surprised me. I have learned more from those incidental encounters than from the formalized, planned conversation questions.

My participants allowed me, through our conversations, to develop new understandings of what they are experiencing in Ecuador. Those incidental encounters I mentioned earlier were much like conversations within conversations. As I formulated an im-

age when questions were being answered, another conversation arose from the same answer with another question. It was this interweaving of conversations that made me appreciate more each of the encounters I had with my participants. The conversations had much more meaning.

The personal observations I made of the ambient surroundings also contributed to a deeper understanding of not just my participants' stories but their lifeworld. Immediately upon arrival at the airport I noticed a more intimate approach in engaging with others. The Ecuadorians were more concerned with the pleasantness of the interaction than the interaction itself. This was a change of pace from interactions with others in the United States, where we are often more concerned with everything else except being mindful of the presence of the other person.

My very first conversation caught me completely off guard as I did not expect such a knee-jerk reaction of someone waving sucres in the air, explaining how proud they are of their currency. Having this person display the sucres was a surprise to me for I was not expecting anyone to be in possession of these notes because dollarization took place ten years ago. Clearly, this participant felt strongly about his old currency. I was very fortunate to have this participant for a first conversation, for the ones that followed thereafter found me much more prepared.

What was most interesting in listening to the stories of my participants was the notion this was the very first time in their lives that any person had taken an interest in them. Not one of my participants was exempt from the novelty of this situation. A result in my noticing this about my participants was that I became very humble and cognizant of their dignity as individuals.

Perhaps because I recognized the dignity of each participant, my conversation partners reciprocated by engaging in a trusting relationship with me. Some of my participants warned me not to ask about money laundering in certain areas and to avoid some areas of town. I have a strong suspicion that as I was the researcher looking for understandings into their narrative identity, economic text, and imagination of their experiences in Ecuador through dollarization, that perhaps they also were researchers, observing me. To support this thought, my participants expressed curiosity in me. They did not ask me a lot of questions but I could intuitively sense by their body language an inquisitive disposition to know more about me. Therefore, just as we reach for ontological experiences in the research of hermeneutics, I believe that the participants were also striving for the same.

The participants were, for the most part, very cooperative in my inquiry and they allowed me to see more of what they really see in a typical day after dollarization. The prices of consumer goods were almost the same as here in the United States.

Conclusion

This study has gathered, presented, and analyzed conversation data from participants in Ecuador on the subject of dollarization. The people were successful using the dollar as expressed in their economic text and they were able to imagine new possibilities with the dollar, however, the narrative identity conflict had residual effects as some conversation participants still made references to the national identity in the sucre.

It is possible for Ecuadorians to continue moving towards a new national identity incorporating the dollar; and it appears they are well on their way. In support of this, Kearney (1997: 188) writes:

There is no such thing as primordial nationality. Every nation is a hybrid construction, an 'imagined' community which can be reimagined again in alternative versions. The ultimate challenge is to acknowledge this process of ongoing hybridisation from which we derive and to which we are constantly subject.

Ecuador has begun the process of reimagining its national identity in new ways and only time will tell us where their narrative identity will lead.

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Appendix A: Letter of Invitation

Date:

Participant's Name

Participant's Address

Dear (Name of Participant),

I am a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco in the Organization and Leadership Program. I am conducting my dissertation research on the development of economic literacy in Ecuador and the effects of dollarization in everyday life.

My research is grounded in interpretive theory and has a participatory orientation. In place of formal interviews or surveys, I engage voluntary participants in conversations using guiding questions directed toward one's experiences in understanding and applying financial arrangements in the everyday lives of Ecuadorians. Upon your approval, the conversations are audio and/or video recorded and then transcribed. You may request the recording device be turned off at any time during the conversation. I will send you a copy of the transcript for your review. At that time, you may add, delete or change any of the transcribed text. Upon receipt of your approval, I will analyze the data. Please note that participation in this research, including all data collected, the names of individuals, and any affiliations, is not confidential. Before participating in the research you will be required to sign a consent form.

I am primarily interested in finding out your story of how the currency change affected your life, and how economic literacy may have been built into your childhood experiences, and whether this literacy makes a transformation over a lifetime of experiences. Furthermore, I am interested in exploring how concepts of general economic literacy have changed through the currency changes in Ecuador. After I ask you to tell me your story about how currency change affected your life, I will ask you the following general questions which will be used to guide our conversation:

1. Describe for me how you plan your daily transactions for food, transportation, etc. Are your transactions consistent or do they vary significantly on a day-to-day basis?
2. What kinds of activities do you remember your family engaging in to earn and spend currency? Do you remember any bartering, and if so, can you tell me about this experience?
3. What kind of system do you have in place that alerts you to when you overspend or are about to overspend? What kind of tangible impact does this activity have on your family?

4. Does how you spend your money influence your sense of self, and if so, how does it do this?
5. How do you see your family of origin influenced by money? Can you give me some examples?
6. How do you see your current family influenced by your financial decisions? Do they take part at some level in these decisions?
7. If you had all the money you needed, what would you have accomplished to earn this money? What would you do with these funds for yourself and your family?
8. What does “spending within my means” signify to you? What might it mean to other people?
9. If you could choose to barter for an item you need rather than use currency, which option would you choose and why?

In my work in the educational profession, there is a great emphasis on general education curriculum for multicultural students and diverse family groups. Investigating the role of economic literacy may help the development of educational literacy curriculum around the world, thereby helping to improve the global quality of life.

If you are willing to participate in this research, or if you have questions about this study, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached via email at reynoso.husd@gmail.com or by telephone at (510) 265-4346.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Luis Reynoso
Research Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco
School of Education
Organization and Leadership Program
reynoso.husd@gmail.com
(510) 274-1807

Appendix B: Thank You Letter

Sample Thank You Letter

Date

Dear (Participant's name)

Thank you for meeting with me on **DATE**, and for sharing your life experiences and insight regarding your economic choices and the effect of dollarization on your life. I value the opportunity to speak with you and thank you for your time.

Included in this letter is a hardcopy of our transcribed conversation for your review. The transcript is a very important part of my research. I ask that you please review the transcript for accuracy and make any notations regarding changes, deletions, or additions you deem appropriate. I will contact you in the coming weeks to discuss your comments and notations. Once the review and editing process of the transcript has been finished, and upon your approval, I will use the revised transcript for my data analysis.

Again thank you for participating in my research study. Your unique perspective about this topic is a valuable contribution to the research material I have collected. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Luis Reynoso
Research Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco
School of Education
Organization and Leadership Program
reynoso.husd@gmail.com
(510) 274-1807

Appendix C: Transcription of Pilot Project

Conversation with Mejia; retired school administrator from Ecuador 11/20/2010

Questions asked by Luis Reynoso

Luis: Who are you?

Pilar: My name is Pilar Mejia and I'm currently retired. I worked for over 30 years in education, most of those years in the public school system here in San Francisco. I've been a teacher, a principal, and a central office administrator. My sons both graduated from the public school system here in San Francisco, my granddaughter is attending first grade in the public school system, and my son is a teacher in this system so I have a very long history.

I was born in Ecuador and when I was almost 6, my family moved to Los Angeles and we lived with family there until we got our own place. We went from L.A. to Paramount and eventually when I was 12 to Buena Park in Orange County.

I went to Catholic school most of my life and then when I graduated from high school to Fullerton Junior College in 1967, I decided to move to SF. It was that era where people were doing very alternative things. I was pregnant and decided not to get married.

"but I wanted to live independently, which is very difficult to do in Southern California because you need a car, etc. I had some friends in San Francisco so I moved there, didn't need a car. That era it was much easier to find small jobs, retail type jobs, so I moved there. I was also school bus driver."

I was part of starting an alternative school for my son. About 4 yrs later, I decided to go into the public school system, which was a coop type system. I don't know if you heard of Summerhill? We didn't make children do anything that they didn't want to do, unless it had to do with the group. We made them clean up, but they didn't have to read if they didn't want to. The curriculum was motivated and built around what they wanted to do. Our pre-K was very similar to Montessori, which I was familiar with because I studied Montessori, but we did a little bit more because we did more project-based work, newspapers, and we used the city a lot. After a while, we decided to go into the public school system. I became a bilingual paraprofessional, then a teacher, principal, etc.

Luis: Why did you decide to go into the public school system?

Pilar: Our school was very small, and we decided we were isolating our children too much. If we wanted to have more of an impact on the system, improve conditions and the status quo, social justice, it was better to work in the public school system.

Luis: You mention you wanted to move to SF because you wanted to live independently. If you had had the resources you needed, would you still have moved?

Pilar: I did not want to be dependent on my parents, I was still living at home w my parents, I was about 20. I wanted to move away from my family. My father was an alcoholic. He had been a captain in the Merchant Marines in Ecuador, and was educated. My mother did not graduate from HS but she was from the upper class. He was an alcoholic at that time and a *mujeriego* also. So when family started moving to the US, some of my family moved to NY. If you look at the map, NY is almost right above Ecuador, L.A. is much farther away...

...anyway, this was the land of opportunity in those days. My mother really thought there was more equality for women, men took care of their families better, there would be better job opportunities for my father. Because he had a brother here, he decided to make a move. When he went on the ship through the Panama Canal through New Orleans, at the beginning it was difficult for him because he was used to being a part of the upper class. Here he didn't know English so the only job he could get was as a janitor. The language, especially, was a barrier. What happened to me was, I was about to enter first grade, and I'm the first and oldest on my mother's side. I had a lot of cousins on my father's side. I was outgoing, verbal, recited poetry, danced. When I came to school here, I lost my voice both literally and figuratively because I couldn't speak Spanish in school and I didn't know how to speak English. No one was allowed to speak Spanish in school. So I stopped speaking in school, I only spoke at home. I did not speak in school until I got to high school, it was really difficult to do things like raise my hand. I had insecurity about who I was and because I was a white *latina*, I was treated differently from the *mexicanos* even though I identified with being a *latina*. So I was neither here nor there. I never really quite got over it, and it wasn't until I was older and got into therapy groups and women's groups, that I started to reclaim my identity and my history. I really felt the racism inherent in the educational system in a different way than many *mexicanos* did...

...for example, when I moved to LA and I was about to enter 6th grade, they put me with the white kids. I remember seeing the Mexican kids sitting in a corner, isolated, there were not a lot of them in that school (maybe a 1/4 of the class). It was the first time I was put in a higher reading group. People from the same regions tend to stick to the same

neighborhoods. When you come here as an adult, you tend to stick together, because otherwise you are nobody here...

Luis: Why is it that people who come here tend to stick to the same regional groups?

Pilar: ...I think for South Americans who come here, the relationship of *mexicanos* to the US government, there is definitely a second class citizenship here. For Europeans who come here, they can make up time. For my parents, they couldn't identify with the *gringos* because *gringos* didn't accept them and they didn't have the language; they didn't have the same relationship with the *mexicanos*. They did not understand what was going on. My three younger brothers all married *mexicanas*...

Luis: At what age did you start to see this as the land of opportunity?

Pilar: ...I never saw it as the land of opportunity; I'm saying this is why my parents came. At that time, there was that "myth" in relationship to the economics of our country. There were more job opportunities, especially at the end of the last war. In high school I begin to understand it in this way. In college, eventually there was the idea that there should not be a melting pot and there really wasn't one...

Luis: Did you notice your father's disappointment as a child or when you got older?

Pilar: He absolutely expressed his disgust with the system, he was very frustrated he could not have a better job. He worked as a janitor at Sears. My uncle worked as a draftsman or salesman at Sears, he was working his way up. My father became a draftsman; he was a skilled architectural drawer. He then went to work for an architect, but believed he was not recognized for his work because he did not have a credential, nor the money. He was disgusted and resentful about how he was treated here, because he came from the

upper class. Eventually they developed a domestic help employment agency (dad and mom). I was in high school at that time.

Luis: When your dad went through his transitions, what was this like for your? Did you feel pain for his experience?

Pilar: After hearing the stories of what a lively, extroverted girl I was in Ecuador, my parents faced so many challenges here that it was difficult for me to feel a sense of accomplishment. My parents could not help me with homework, but she would be pronouncing words as though they were in Spanish. I knew she wasn't reading the words correctly, even though I couldn't read much myself. This was a source of frustration for us. My mother was adamant that myself and my brothers speak Spanish at home. My parents were dissatisfied, spanking was considered ok, my father usually did a formal kind of spanking, but my mother would actually slap us. I know I would have had a very different childhood in Ecuador.

Luis: Did you decide you might have a different childhood in Ecuador as a child or later as an adult?

Pilar: I think as I got older, I learned to analyze the situation better. I always felt the displeasure, frustration, etc. In high school, I could see my cousins had a different life in Ecuador than here. They were a part of the culture, and here I did not feel a part of the culture. It takes a while before you really understand what's going on. I dropped out of college for a while, had my two children, and went back for my credential. When they came here, my parents could not integrate into the society here. Now I analyze this as US imperialism. Even when I was working in the women's group, participating in anti-war activities, eventually working with different groups, they questioned what I was doing there

because I looked white. Eventually they accepted me. When the Allende government fell, I remember the *chilenos* that came here looked just like me, and I remember feeling this sense of relief.

Luis: How did the quality of your resources back in the '60s impact you personally and professionally? What would it have been like if the quality of these resources had been better?

Pilar: In Catholic school, many of my friends were going to college, so I wanted to. It was assumed that my brothers would go to college, but not myself. I went to college because my girlfriends did, otherwise I probably would have gotten some store clerk job. I think there are a lack of resources in that area.

Luis: When did you become aware that education and your living style are interconnected? At what age and level of education?

Pilar: I think I understood the connections in high school, probably starting the 10th grade. Teachers started talking about it more...

Luis: Did you see your lifestyle and resources affecting your education?

Pilar: I think it was about that time.

Luis: When you remember that, was there something you needed and couldn't get? Was there a trigger in your mind that made you realize that?

Pilar: For me, I think it was growing up in white culture. Lots of my friends were *gringas*. That is what gave me the awareness. To a certain extent, I wanted to go to college because it wasn't expected of me, and I wanted to defy my parents in that way. But I did not understand the real connections until I became a paraprofessional. My kids were 1 and 7 years old. At that point, I realized I was satisfied with that. I became a teacher not

for economic reasons (I was fine with my salary as my paraprofessional and rooming with others), I just wanted to live a purposeful and happy life. It was more about making a change in the world than my upward mobility. As a paraeducator, I had to follow what my teacher said which was tough if the teacher was not a good one. I became a principal for the same reason.

Luis: Do you think education would improve your economic status?

Pilar: I know education improves your economic status. Since I got a MA in admin, I made a lot more money than other teachers do, and I was able to retire. I live within my means, but I feel privileged because I'm able to do what I want to do because I have a wonderful pension. I make a little more than what my son does, and he is a working teacher. If you don't want to be an administrator, you're not in a very good economic situation. When teachers complain about their salaries, I tell them to get their administrative credential. Although I was not very motivated by money, I am happy I took this step.

Luis: How would you help your friend who has a PhD and is at her earning limit?

Pilar: I am helping her get a job in admin.

Luis: What do you mean when you say "I live within my means"?

Pilar: As I was growing up, I never had a lot of money.

Luis: How did you become aware that you even needed money?

Pilar: I was aware when I wanted clothes. Fortunately in Catholic school we had uniforms.

Luis: How old were you when you realized this?

Pilar: I was in what we would call junior high school today. I had to ask my parents for clothes, but there was never enough money for things like this. We didn't vacation or go

out to restaurants much. We had a nice house and we always had food, and a car. We never had any luxuries. I was aware only in that context. My father wasted money on alcohol. But we did pay the monthly bills, and my father was a working alcoholic. I've never really thought very consciously about money; maybe as a Catholic I learned that it is ok to be poor. That was always part of my consciousness. When I got pregnant, my friend told me I could get welfare, and I was on welfare for 4 years until I found a school bus driver job.

I lived with my friends who rented a room together. I didn't have credit, but I knew I couldn't spend money if I didn't have it. It was relatively easy to buy clothes at the second-hand store, and live within your means that way.

Luis: Thanks for the data; you would be very surprised how many people do not understand the concept of living within one's means.

Luis: Did geography play a factor in your education?

Pilar: My mother and father came because they thought there would be a lot more opportunities. I was always able to get a job, in stores, restaurants. There was the possibility of making some money. When I came to SF, there were free stores. You could get anything you wanted in these stores for free and just leave. There was this spirit of rejection of the monetary value, and more of a hippie philosophy.

Poor people in Latin America are much poorer than here. Even the poor people here benefit from the exploitation of people in other countries for the US economy. For people like me, I was able to get on welfare and live with others. I think there is something about the mindset of what one should aspire for. There are values associated with money (why do I need it? Etc.) and this is a big hole in education.

I think there is an unspoken education around money that it's having a lot of stuff that makes you happy. My mother always used to say *que mi importa del dinero? Lo que me importa es que mis hijos esten bien*. She was very adamant that having your health was so much more important than having money. My father felt differently, because it was a reflection of who he was as a man.

When I came here, living in the Haight or living in the Mission, I felt like I was living in a little community. The sense of support begins to shift your values.

Luis: What is your impression on dollarization and what happened to people?

Pilar: I'm not real familiar with dollarization. I've heard different things around it, that it's a sell-out, that it is a negative phenomenon. It did not go to the root of what needed to happen, economically and socially. I have a cousin who is a business person in Ecuador, and he is in favor of it. In general, though, I've heard negative things about it.

Luis: Do you go back every year?

Pilar: I haven't been back in about 5 years.

Luis: Do you go back after 2000?

Pilar: No, actually it's been about 10 years since I've been back. It has been a long time. ..It would appear that the people of Ecuador have Reconcile with the change of sucre to dollar

Appendix D: Pilot Project Data Presentation

As she grew up, Ms. Mejia deepened her knowledge of economic literacy through instances of trial and error. She remembers going to middle school and high school and not being able to wear the clothes that she desired to buy but could not afford. Her sudden pregnancy at the age of seventeen threw her into an economic conundrum; should she stay in southern California with her troubled parents and the need for a car or should she risk everything and move? She made the courageous choice to move out of her home to San Francisco during the 1960s. Away from the protection of key family members and, ultimately, economic support her choice to pursue economic literacy as an individual who would soon become responsible for a child is particularly poignant.

After her move to San Francisco, Ms. Mejia's economic literacy skyrocketed through much practical experience. She chose to live with roommates while working as a school bus driver and caring for a young child, a situation that helped her learn how to budget money monthly and share expenses with others. She understood that in order to live independently from her family and support herself and her child, she needed to rely on living with others for community and to help pay expenses. In her capacity as a bus driver, she began to learn more about the school system, eventually transitioning to the role of paraeducator. This career change represented a move up for her and the beginning of her burgeoning economic literacy.

As a paraeducator, Ms. Mejia became aware of the social injustices, still rampant in society, which she associated with her own school experience. While she admits that she did not make a lot of money, she believes she could have lived on her meager earnings while living with others. In analyzing her level of economic literacy, this is a re-

markable belief, and says much about Ms. Mejia's point of reference when considering economic matters. Finally, though, she realized that becoming a teacher would allow her to help students more effectively, and so she took the step of earning her credential.

As her experience broadened, she learned that administrators could make well-informed economic decisions due to the greater salary and pension options available to administrators. She realized that her bargaining power would increase considerably with another career change, so she went ahead and took the extra step to become an administrator. In my discussion with her, she remarked that this decision was well-informed because it allowed her to retire comfortably. In terms of economic literacy, Ms. Mejia proves that people can come a long way if they can commit themselves to self-education and self-betterment

Even as a retired administrator, Ms. Mejia continues to test her knowledge and assumptions regarding economic literacy. She has been very generous with helping me on this project because she likes to keep an open mind to new ideas and ways of looking at the world. While she has not kept up to date on Ecuador, she intends on going back in the near future to see the effect of dollarization on the economy. One of the things she mentioned to me, and that I think was important in the extension of my research, is that she will never forget the admonitions of her mother about the importance of health over money and being careful to "stay within her means."

In conversations with participants I continued to strive for a growing understanding of the participatory research data produced from each new conversation, together with my research journal which has notes and observations about the conversations.

Appendix E: Pilot Project Data Analysis

Therefore, her conclusions about her identity are acceptable, because they follow a logic that she lays forth in her description of her feelings; for example, “..when I moved to LA and I was about to enter 6th grade, they put me with the white kids. I remember seeing the Mexican kids sitting in a corner, isolated, there were not a lot of them in that school (maybe a ¼ of the class). People from the same regions tend to stick to the same neighborhoods. When you come here as an adult, you tend to stick together, because otherwise you are nobody here...”

4) Why is it that people who come here tend to stick to the same regional groups?

“...I think for South Americans who come here, the relationship of *mexicanos* to the US government, there is definitely a second class citizenship here. For Europeans who come here, they can make up time. For my parents, they couldn’t identify with the *gringos* because *gringos* didn’t accept them and they didn’t have the language; they didn’t have the same relationship with the *mexicanos*.”

Another rich point in our conversation. This matches up with Ricoeur’s comment on *fusion of horizons*, namely that,

[We] exist neither in closed horizons, nor within an horizon that is unique. No horizon is closed, since it is possible to place oneself in another point of view and in another culture...only insofar as I place myself in the other’s point of view do I confront myself with my present horizon, with my prejudices (Ricoeur 1991:75).

Ms. Mejia, by confronting the prejudices of others, also confronts herself because she looks upon her family’s experience and her own prejudices (in this case, against the majority English-speaking culture).

5) When your dad went through his transitions, what was this like for your dad and did you feel pain for his experience?

“After hearing the stories of what a lively, extroverted girl I was in Ecuador, my parents faced so many challenges here that it was difficult for me to feel a sense of accomplishment.”

As Ricoeur mentions, “consciousness...belongs to and depends on that which influences it,” and Ms. Mejia’s consciousness is no exception. Her experience in the United States as well as the experience of her family has clearly influenced her consciousness.

6) Do you think education would improve your economic status?

“I know education improves your economic status. Since I got a MA in admin, I made a lot more money than other teachers do, and I was able to retire. I live within my means, but I feel privileged because I’m able to do what I want to do because I have a wonderful pension.”

7) What do you mean when you say “I live within my means”?

“As I was growing up, I never had a lot of money.”

8) How did you become aware that you even needed money?

“I was aware when I wanted clothes. Fortunately in Catholic school we had uniforms.”

9) How old were you when you realized this?

“I was in what we would call junior high school today. I had to ask my parents for clothes, but there was never enough money for things like this.”

10) What is your impression on dollarization and what happened to people?

“I’m not real familiar with dollarization. I’ve heard different things around it, that it’s a sell-out, that it is a negative phenomenon. It did not go to the root of what needed to happen, economically and socially. I have a cousin who is a business person in Ecuador, and he is in favor of it. In general, though, I’ve heard negative things about it.”

Appendix F: Research Journal Sample Entry

Journal Entry 08-06-2011 Return day from Esmeraldas to Quito

The day has begun after finally getting a good night's sleep at a decent hotel room in Esmeraldas. In comparison the previous night I stayed in a hotel next to the beach where very loud music played through the night. Upon checking out, I was beginning to wonder whether the cab driver that we had scheduled to pick us up would show up on time. My experience so far had been that in Ecuador, people seemed very laid-back at keeping appointments. To my surprise, the cab showed up on time (actually about 15 minutes late) but better than a half hour to an hour late. As we drove to the bus station, I had the last conversation with the cab driver while he explained to me how difficult it had been for him and his family to adapt to this part of Ecuador, for this area relied heavily on tourism. It was very evident as he was speaking I noticed that most tourists were actually from Ecuador, and hardly any foreigners were there.

Upon arriving to the bus station I noticed substantial foot traffic of people trying to get to the right bus for their destinations. In this part of Ecuador, the population relies heavily on the public buses that transport people from town to town, anywhere between 10 to a few hundred miles.

When I boarded the bus, the atmosphere resembled that of boarding an airplane at any of our U.S. airports; people knew exactly where to go for their seats were numbered. It was difficult not to forget some of the people I had met the previous day in trying to understand the hardships they have to endure to survive, while, in comparison, in the United States, we tend to worry more about things like finding parking spaces while going to work.

As the route began, it was very educational to watch several different vendors enter the bus at different times on the route from Esmeralda to Quito. Each of these vendors had their own flair in pitching their wares. One vendor would attest to the healing powers of crystals, where another vendor would guarantee that their candies are the best in the land, to another vendor providing a sob story as to why we needed to buy his key chains. These vendors reminded me of what people are willing to do to put food on the table. They have understood that in order to sell anything, they would have to be the ones to promote it. These vendors in many ways also understood the needs in all of us anywhere from eating to look for healing powers and quick fixes for anything that troubles us.

One of the vendors I just couldn't resist, and gave in to buying one of his home-made breads; it was delicious. These breads had cheese and sometime of an herb and to my surprise, they were very warm. Apparently this person has the bus schedule and knows exactly when to cook these breads, very fresh and delicious. This is a good example of anyone using their imagination to accommodate a need for economic gain. Who would not be hungry in a five hour bus ride? His economic text and his narrative identity coincided with his methodology of knowing what to provide and what he has to become in order to meet everyone's needs, including his own.

While the bus climbed through the mountains in vicarious rate of speed passing every vehicle, eventually came to a stop. The bus driver did not notify any of the passengers to tell us what was going on. It was through the side conversations of fellow passengers that I figured out we were in trouble. The bus driver went out along with some passengers and while this was going on, many of us was getting hot due to the lack of air conditioning. I became very worried; would we stay stuck here or would we make it to

Quito? There was no clear sign of leadership from the bus driver or his helper. I eventually instructed all the people to please open their windows. They all did, and they began to tell me how inept and incompetent these people are running the buses. I tried to go out to see if I could help repair the bus for I have extensive experience in automotive mechanics. As I started to go out, the bus driver came in, and I asked what the problem was. He responded that we had a broken fuel line and there was no way to repair it. Eventually, after about an hour, we were picked up by another bus that was sent for us.

Finally, I arrived in Quito at 11:30pm and surrendered to a peaceful night's sleep. What a day this was in returning from Esmeraldas collecting data through conversations and really having a better understanding of how people survive not only in a poor area of the world but also in Ecuador after dollarization.