

## **Ama de Casa: Gender Division of Labor the Response to Environmental and Economic Constraints, Ecuador**

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**Abstract :** In a coastal town of Ecuador, the role of women is commonly defined as an ama de casa, a woman who works in the house, raises children, and contributes to the community. This project, under the guidance of Dr. Michael Harris from the Florida Atlantic University, seeks to understand how the role of an ama de casa provides a secure environment for men and women, coexists with economic and environmental constraints that explain the origins of how this environment has been formed. The coastal community aspects of familia (family), trabajo (work), relación (relationships), machismo (masculinity), feminista (femininity), and the culture of Ecuador define the ways of life in a coastal setting. This ethnographic research project included the following methodologies: environment mapping, conducting interviews, surveys, participant observation, direct and indirect observations, and integration into daily life. Immersion into the daily life and building relationships with the local people allowed the documentation of intricacies of both the cultural and social spheres. The findings of this research offer insight on how culture, economics, and environment can form female and male agency. Our investigation shows that occupations such as fishermen, laborers, ama de casas, and even students utilize occupational routes to create social agency in the face of economic and environmental constraints in Ecuador.

**Keywords :** Ecuador, ethnography, gender division of labor, gender roles

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