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**Mapping Organizational Change
in the Executive branch:**
The case of Ecuador 2007-2017

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1. Introduction

Pollitt and Bouckaert define the reform of the public administration as the set of deliberative changes in the structures or processes of the state organisations (2011:2). In this definition, we can identify three key elements: (a) the changes are deliberative, i.e. they are the result of a governmental decision; (b) the objects of reform can be structures or processes; (c) the subjects of the reform are the public organisations.

These three elements have long been debated within the discipline. According to the model of the state, the distribution of power and the spaces of social participation may involve different actors in the process of making reform decision, such as the President of the Republic (Robinson, 2004), Parliament, Ministers, the bureaucracy, or the groups of power (Bowornwathana and Poocharoen, 2010). Subjects of an administrative reform are not at all obvious. To define a public organisation, it is necessary to consider its legal status, its mission, or the property for companies or foundations (Rolland and Aagotnes, 2003:3). Finally, in relation to the object, our study focuses on the reform of the structures of public organisations, i.e. in the statements made about the organisational architecture and the physical appearance of the state (Naidoo, 2017:2).

Several studies have mapped changes in the structures of public organisations in the framework of the new public management in countries such as Norway (Rolland and Roness, 2009, 2010, 2011), Ireland (Hardiman, 2012, 2014), Hungary (Hajnal, 2012), Estonia (Sarapuu, 2012), and Lithuania (Nakrošis and Budraitis, 2012). This paper contributes to this body of knowledge through the analysis of the case of Ecuador in the context of the "left turn" in Latin America.

The Ecuadorian case is important because of (a) its correspondence with a moment of paradigm change, from neoliberalism to progressive or neo-developmental models that boosted economic growth and social equity; (b) the centrality of the state in the reform process. In some cases, through a radical rupture¹, and in others with gradual change², "the return of the state" was sought in at least two senses: to strengthen its capacities of regulation, representation, and political conduction, and to recover its autonomy, with respect to socio-economic groups or to the dominant classes (Stoessel, 2014:8–9).

In this context, the objective of this paper is to describe the changes in the structure of the Ecuadorian executive function, in the period 2007–2017, through two strategies: first, a category change proposal, as a result of the documentary analysis of the normative texts and based on the grounded theory; second, the construction of a database that registers all of the changes and that allows different exploratory and descriptive analyses.

¹ As in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

² The cases of Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina.

2. Methodological design

In constructing the database, the rules that have changed the structure of executive branch in Ecuador were used as a source of information. In total, 466 documents were identified, which correspond to the Constitution of the Republic, with 38 laws and 427 decrees. The documentary analysis applied the techniques of the grounded theory of open coding and axial coding. The selection of the methodology is justified for the following reasons:

- a) The importance that is assigned to the conceptualisation process from the transformation of the data. Unlike deductive analysis where the categories are previously defined, in the grounded theory, the categories are generated and emerge from the collection and analysis of the empirical data (Requena et al. 2006:9–18).
- b) The possibility of describing a phenomenon through classifications. Although the goal is to construct theories, it also allows the description and conceptual ordering of social phenomena, through categories or classifications (Strauss and Corbin, 2002:29; Lejeune, 2014:74–75).
- c) The constant comparison. The grounded theory compares the data collected among themselves and performs theoretical comparisons with the scientific literature to identify properties, dimensions, similarities, and differences in the analysis of the data (Strauss and Corbin, 2002:14).

2.1. Information gathering

The collection of information took place earlier and was not parallel with the analysis of the data, as suggested by the method (Luckerhoff and Guillemette, 2012:16). This methodological decision is explained by (a) the need to obtain the information from the website of the Presidency of the Republic prior to the termination of the government of Rafael Correa, which coincides with our period of analysis; (b) the initial proposal was not for the construction of a database on the reforms, but for a documentary repository with some references to the content of the empirical material in our case of the norms (Lejeune, 2014:63). This first compilation demonstrated the relevance and potential of the sources of information to describe the phenomenon, so the decision of a later analysis.

2.2. Analysis process

▪ Open coding

To achieve a first immersion in the texts and their comprehension in depth, the codification was carried out line-by-line (Lejeune, 2014:43–47). At this stage, the first codes were obtained, and it was determined that not all of the information contained in the document was relevant to the research. Subsequently, the analysis was limited to the following contents: (a) resolution section and transitory provisions in the case of presidential decrees; (b) chapters of institutionality and transitory provisions in the laws³.

³ The explanatory statement was not considered because most of the presidential decrees did not contain the fundamentals of the standard, but textual quotations of constitutional or legal provisions. In the few cases that

- **Axial encoding**

This second stage of the analysis was aimed at identifying the possible relationships between the codes (or tags) generated in the data (Luckerhoff and Guillemette, 2012:77). So, each author of grounded theory proposes a mechanism: Strauss suggests the use of questions as analytical tools to group the codes (Satrauss and Corbin, 2002:81–85), whereas Glaser formulates a list of theoretical coding families (Requena et al. 2006:37–40). In the analysis, the two proposals were used complementarily, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Axial coding

<i>Questions: Strauss</i>	<i>Families: Glaser</i>	<i>Application in the analysis</i>
What?	Types: form, species, styles, classes	Type of reform
Who?	Units: groups, status, roles	Reformed organization
How?	Strategies: mechanisms, tactics, instruments.	Rule used
When?	Processes: temporality, cycles	Date and presidential period of the reform

- **Theoretical comparison**

Parallel with the analysis of the data, several similar studies were reviewed that were conducted in Norway, Ireland, Hungary, Estonia, and Lithuania. The observations were recorded in different theoretical memos⁴ and, finally, the codes and categories were compared to identify the contribution of the Ecuadorian case to the literature (Satrauss and Corbin, 2002:86–89).

- **Conceptualisation**

All of the phases of the analysis allowed not only the identification of codes and categories but also the formulation of definitions, according to their properties and dimensions. These definitions are part of the codebook of the structured database.

were identified as explanatory elements, these corresponded with what March and Olson call the administrative rhetoric. That is, they justified government reorganizations – regardless of their type – for one of the following reasons: better execution, cost reduction, efficiency and greater coordination, elimination of overlap and duplication of effort, and reduction in the size of the state (March and Olson, 1983:283).

⁴ The memos are the records of the analysis that the investigator performs (Strauss and Corbin, 2002:236). In particular, the theoretical memos refer to elements external to the empirical material, for example the scientific literature (Lejeune, 2014:88–89).

- **Additional information**

In the theoretical comparison, several categories were identified which, although they had not emerged from the data, could easily be deduced from them. In consideration of their contribution to future analyses, it was decided to incorporate them. These categories are:

Type of organism: According to the classification of Rolland and Ronnes (2010) and to the forms of the entities that integrate the Ecuadorian executive function, the following modalities are identified: presidency and vice presidency, ministries, civil service, state-owned companies, governmental foundations, coordination mechanisms, entities for collective decision-making.

Type of function: Based on the typology of Dunlevy (1989) and the attributions of the Ecuadorian executive function, the following functions were formulated: policy formulation, regulation and technical control, coordination provision of goods and services to citizens or enterprises, operation in economic markets, provision of services to other governmental organisations, and evaluation.

Public-policy sector: The classification of the functions of government (COFOG) proposed by the United Nations was used for this category⁵.

3. Results

3.1. Organisational change codes and categories

- **Types of change in the structure of the executive function**

The analysis of the normative texts generated 26 codes referring to the types of changes made in the structure of the Ecuadorian executive branch from 2007 to 2017. These codes were grouped into six categories: the first three relating to the life cycle of organisations: creation, suppression, and succession (Rolland and Ronnes, 2011:400–402; Peters and Hogwood, 1988), and the last three relating to the position of the units within the structure: both at the horizontal level (division of work and the distribution of tasks), and at the vertical or hierarchical level (Lagreid et al. 2010:22–23), and in coordination with other units.

The emerging categorisation is related to the level of analysis proposed. By establishing as the object of the investigation of the executive branch – as a meta-organisation – we were able to identify the changes that have occurred in this structure – at horizontal, vertical, and coordination levels – and in the life cycle of the units that form it. This is one of the differences found in the theoretical comparison, because most of the literature describes the changes at the level of the executive's organisations, concentrating on their creation, maintenance, and suppression

⁵ Available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regcst.asp?Cl=4>.

Table 2. Types of change – theoretical comparison

Norway	birth survival (or maintenance) death	Rollan et Ronnes (2011)
Ireland	creation evolution death	Hardiman et.al. (2014)
Hungary	birth survival death succession	Hajnal (2012)
Estonia	Double coding: · Change events: birth, survival and death · Impact on the structure of government: vertical (des) specialization; and (des) horizontal specialization	Sarapuu (2012)
Lithuania	· Events leading to expansion in the number of agencies: Birth, Secession, Splitting · Events leading to contraction in the number of agencies: Absorption, Merger, Death · Other change events that do not affect the number of agencies: Replacement, Transfer of function, Change of name or affiliation	Nakrošis and Budraitis (2012)

▪ Changes in the life cycle of organisations

The life cycle of organisations, as analogous with other natural processes, conceives change as a sequence of successive stages: birth, development, and termination (Poole and Van de Ven, 2004:376). In the analysis of the Ecuadorian case, three phases or categories were identified: birth, death, and succession⁶.

Birth

In the codification and subsequent comparison of codes, different forms of birth of the organisations emerged, according to the following properties: (a) on the preceding organisation: existence, hierarchical degree, destination, and applicable regulations; (b) on the resulting organisation: hierarchical degree, applicable regulations, and difference with the previous respect to the scope, competences, or organisational form. As a result, seven types of births were obtained from the public organisations, summarised in Table 3.

⁶ The information collected responds to the objective of the investigation, that is, the identification of the changes in the structure of the Ecuadorian executive function; therefore, in the normative texts analyzed, no references were found to the survival, maintenance, or evolution of organizations. Therefore, this category is not considered.

Table 3. Organisational birth – Ecuador

Types of birth	Properties: preceding organization				Properties: resulting organization		
	Existence	Hierarchical Degree	Destination	Applicable Law	Hierarchical Degree	Applicable Law	Difference with antecedent
Pure Birth	No						
Birth by secession	Yes	Equal	Kept	Public Law	Equal	Public Law	Substantial
Birth by splitting	Yes	Equal	Removed	Public Law	Equal	Public Law	Substantial
Birth by merger	Yes	Equal	Removed	Public Law	Superior	Public Law	Substantial
Birth by Agencification	Yes	Superior	Kept	Public Law	Lower	Public Law	Not Substantial
Conversion	Yes		Removed	Private Law		Public Law	Not Substantial
Birth by Replacement	Yes	Lower	Removed	Public Law	Superior	Public Law	Substantial

In the theoretical comparison, four forms of birth coincide with the literature: *pure*, *by session*, *by splitting*, and *by merger*⁷. Births by *agencification* and *replacement* have been used only in Estonia and Ireland, respectively. Finally, the birth by *conversion* is a modality exclusive to the Ecuadorian case.

The conversion concept appears in the Organic Law of Public Companies that provides all state companies, created as legal entities of private law (companies) to provide public services reserved to the state, adapt their organization and operation to the new regulations. In practice, this provision implies the change of a private legal figure by another established in the administrative law, in this case, public company⁸.

Table 4. Organisational birth – theoretical comparison

Country	Types of birth	Source
Norway	Pure founding Founding by secession Founding by splitting Founding by merger Founding by complex reorganization Entered (new relevant unit)	Rollan et Ronnes (2009)
Ireland	Secession Split Merge Replacement Nationalisation	Hardiman et.al. (2014)
Estonia	New agency established (Pure founding) Founding by secession Founding by merger Founding by complex reorganization New agency with functions of the Parent Minister	Sarapuu (2012)
Lithuania	Birth (Pure founding) Secession Splitting Merger	Nakrošis and Budraitis (2012)

⁷ Hungary was not included because the work of Hajnal (2012) concentrates on the termination of the organizations and not on their birth.

⁸ It is similar to the case of foundations or corporations (private law bodies) of state ownership, which during the period of analysis were converted into public organizations.

Death

The types of organisational births, in contrast, identify some types of death. If an organisation is born by splitting, there is another one that dies by splitting, as in the cases of merger and replacement, where a double codification occurs. In addition to these four, in the analysis of the data, two other types emerged: *pure death* and death by *absorption*. The six termination codes of the organisations are coincidental with examined literature⁹. Each of these categories is then exemplified:

a) Pure death

Art. 1. To dispose of the public drug company "Enfarma EP", prior to the corresponding settlement process, to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the organic law of public companies (Decree No. 1103 of 30/6/2016).

b) Death by splitting

Art. 2. Splitting the National Institute of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine "Dr Leopoldo Izquieta Pérez" at the National Institute of Public Health and research-INSPI and the Agency for Regulation, Control, and Health surveillance – ARCSA (Decree No. 1290 of 30/8/2012).

c) Death by merger

Art. 1. Merge the National Technical Secretariat for the development of human resources and remuneration of the public Sector – SENRES and the Ministry of Labour and Employment and create the Ministry of Labour Relations (Decree No. 10 of 24/8/2009).

d) Death by replacement

[Transitory provision] *Twenty-fourth. The Ecuadorian Institute of Educational Credit and Scholarships, IECE... from the validity of this code will cease to operate and instead be created... a new public institution in charge of the administration of scholarships, follow-up, and academic counselling, Belonging to the executive function (Monetary and Financial Organic Code, ROs No. 332 of 12/09/2014).*

Art. 1. Create the Institute for the promotion of human talent, as an organism of public law, with legal personality, operating, financial, and administrative autonomy, with its own patrimony, attached to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (Decree No. 555 of 19/1/2015).

e) Death by absorption

Art. 3. Merger by Absorption the National Institute of Gerontológicas Research – Iniger to the National Institute of Research in Public health – INSPI (Decree No. 336 of 15/5/2014).

⁹ In this regard, the debate was considered on the extension – or restriction – of the category "termination" generated from the study of Kufman (1976) on the immortality of public organizations. However, the literal analysis of the texts was incompatible with extensive interpretations, such as that of Peters and Hogwood, who define as termination any significant transformation in the form or functions of a public organization (1988:120).

Succession

The succession category describes the transmission of the competences, rights, and obligations of a suppressed organisation to another already existing, as seen in the text below.

Art. 1. Abolish the National Institute of Agrarian Development, INDA...

Art. 2. Transfer to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture, and Fisheries the competencies, attributions, functions, administration and execution of agrarian policies, patrimony, law, and obligations of the National Institute of Agrarian Development (Decree No. 373 of 28/5/2010).

The category of succession is present in the literature, but with a different connotation. For Peters and Hogwood (1988:120) and Rolland and Ronnes (2011:201), the succession is equal to the "replacement" of a policy, programme, or organisation by a new one addressed to the same problem or population. Closer to our conceptualisation is the Hajnal proposal of "organisational threads" from the successions in the public sector (2012:835)

▪ Changes in the position of the units inside the structure

These changes were grouped into three categories: (a) horizontal level that corresponds to the way in which the tasks are divided between the units of the same hierarchy; (b) vertical level that determines responsibilities between different hierarchical levels; (Laegreid et al., 2010:21; Rommel, et al., 2010:68); (c) coordination that describes the mechanisms used by governments to strengthen the alignment – voluntary or forced – of management and public policies (Verhoest, Bouckaert and Peters, 2007:362).

Horizontal level changes

This category consists of four codes: the first two are secession and absorption, which are also types of birth or death of organisations, respectively; there is a double codification of change. In the first case, birth by secession corresponds to the organisation created, and secession corresponds to the antecedent organisation, which loses some of its original competences. In the second case, death by absorption is used for the organisation that is suppressed, whereas absorption applies to the organisation that remains with the added competences.

The third type of change is transfer of functions, which records the transfer of functions or a section of an organisation to an existing one at the same hierarchical level. When this transfer implies a change in the principle of specialisation or division of work (by process, clientele, and purpose) the code change the division of labour is used.

In the theoretical comparison, we observe the presence of the code transfer of functions in Ireland and Lithuania, and secession and absorption in Norway and Ireland. The studies of Hungary and Estonia do not include changes at the horizontal level.

Table 5. Organisational death – theoretical comparison

Norway	Maintained by secession Maintained by absorption	Rollan et Ronnes (2009)
Ireland	Secession Absorption Transfer of functions Transfer to Sub-national Transfer from Sub-national	Hardiman et.al. (2014)
Lithuania	Transfer of functions	Nakrošis and Budraitis (2012)

The fragments of the texts then correspond to each of the changes at the horizontal level:

a) Secession

Art. 1. Create the Ministry of Foreign Trade as an organism of public law, with legal personality, patrimony, and administrative and financial regime.

Art. 2. Merger by absorption to the Ministry of Foreign Trade, the voice of foreign trade and economic integration, which is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Decree No. 25 of 12/6/2013).

b) Absorption

Art. 1. Merger by Absorption [1] the National Directorate of Social Rehabilitation and [2] Transitional Unit of Emergent Management for the Construction and Implementation of Social Rehabilitation centres to the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights, and Cults, who will be responsible for social rehabilitation policies (Decree No. 985 of 16/12/2010).

c) Transfer of functions

Art. 1. Transfer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the competences that the immigration law gives to the Ministry of the Interior (Decree No. 1124 of 5/4/2012).

d) Change the division of labour

Art. 1. Transfer to the Ministry of Education, programmes and projects for the provision of food and food supplements for school feeding [division by client] currently under the responsibility of the public storage enterprise [division by process] (Decree No. 1120 of 18/7/2016).

Vertical-level changes

This category comprises six types of changes that differ from each other by two properties: (a) the hierarchical level at which they apply: all, upper, or lower; (b) the objective they pursue that can be: promotion, specialisation, or control. These codes and their properties are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6. Vertical-level changes – Ecuador

Type of change	Application level	Objective
Change of administrative level	All	Promotion
New line of control	All	Control
Agencification	Superior	Specialization
New unit under control	Superior	Control
Change of superior organization	Lower	Control

In the theoretical comparison, we determine that (a) in the studies of Ireland and Lithuania, this type of change is not considered; (b) the Estonian analysis mobilises the categories: vertical specialisation and vertical de-specialisation, but they are more related to the number of organisations than to the hierarchical level; (c) only in the case of Norway and Hungary, are there changes at the vertical level similar to those emerging in the analysis of Ecuador.

Table 7. Vertical-level changes – theoretical comparison

Norway	New form of affiliation/administrative level New line of reporting New superior organization	Rollan et Ronnes (2009)
Hungary	Agencification Insourcing back to parent Ministry Horizontal shift (under the supervision)	Hajnal (2012)
Estonia	Vertical specialization Vertical despecialization	Sarapuu (2012)

Changes in coordination mechanisms

In the coordination category we have three types of change: (a) additional coordinative portfolio, which operates when the coordination function is assigned to an existing organisation (Peters, 2006:129; Alexander, 1995:177); (b) creation of new entities for collective decision-making, for example, board of directors or regulatory board; (c) creation of new coordination mechanisms, such as: cabinet committees, ministers without portfolio, agencies with portfolios relevant to coordination, interministerial organisations, task forces, and working groups (Peters, 2006:82–91). As shown in Table 2, the literature does not incorporate the changes at the level of coordination in their analyses.

The fragments of the texts then correspond to each of the changes in the coordination mechanisms:

a) Additional coordinative portfolio

Art. 2. The constitutional Vice-President of the Republic will coordinate, monitor, and oversee the following institutions: [1] National Technical Secretariat for Human Resources Development and Public Sector Remuneration, [2] North Development Unit; [3] National Directorate of Civil Registry, Identification and Documentation, [4] National Council of Science And Technology and [5] National Secretariat of Science And Technology (Decree No. 43A of 17/1/2007).

b) Creation of new entities for collective decision-making

Art. 71. The body that will approve national public policies in the field of trade policy shall be a collegiate body of public inter-sectoral character [...] to be called the Foreign Trade Committee (Organic code of production, trade and investment, R.Os. No. 351 of 29/12/2010).

c) Creation of new coordination mechanisms

Art. 1. Create the Ministry of Littoral with administrative and financial independence, as part of the executive function [...] The Ministry of Littoral will be in charge of coordinating the policies, plans and programmes, projects, and actions taken by the different institutions of the Central administration in the provinces of El Oro, Guayas, Los Rios, Manabí, and Esmeraldas (Decree No. 494 of 25/7/2007).

3.2. Changes in the structure of the Ecuadorian executive branch

As mentioned in the introduction, the analysis of normative texts had a twofold purpose: to identify the types of changes made in the structure of the Ecuadorian executive function from 2007 to 2017, and to record these observations in a database, to carry out different exploratory and descriptive analyses.

The resulting database consists of 569 observations and 11 variables. Each observation corresponds to an organisational change in a recognised unit as part of the executive function (Hardiman, MacCarthaigh and Scott, 2014:16). The variables have been grouped into three blocks: source of information, organisation, and change.

- i. The source of information is recorded: presidential period, date of issue, type of rule, and number or denomination for identification.
- ii. The registration of each organisation contains: name, type of organisation, type of function, and public-policy sector.
- iii. In relation to the change is recorded: category of change, type of change, and a small summary or synthesis.

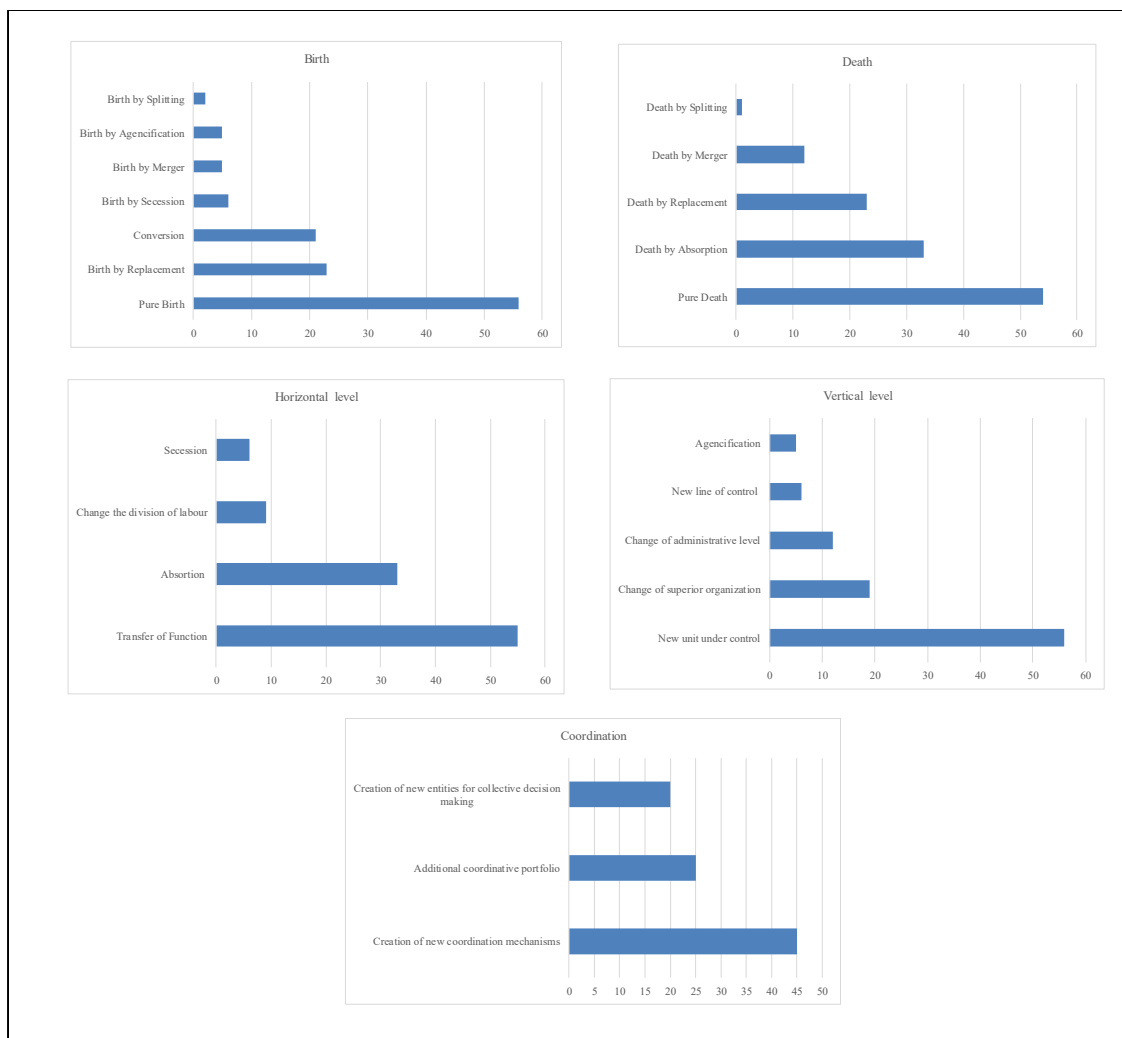
▪ Results by type of changes

By analysing the types of changes by code and categories, we identify that (a) in the changes relating to the life cycle of organisations: suppression records the highest value (123 cases), followed by creation (118), whereas succession has the smallest number (34); (b) changes in the position of the units inside the structure have more homogeneous values: 105 at the horizontal level, 98 at the vertical level, and 90 in the coordination.

Regarding the changes within each category, we note that in the case of the birth of the organisations, the type most used during the period was "pure birth" and in the suppression was "pure death". At the horizontal level, most of the changes are located in "transfer of function"; on the vertical level in the code "new unit under control", and in coordination but

with less difference; the change with more cases is "creation of new coordination mechanisms".

Chart 1. Results by type of changes



▪ Types of changes in relation to the other variables

Type of organisation

The organisations that records the greatest number of reforms are the ministries, with change mainly in the organisation of work and the distribution of tasks, i.e. at the horizontal level. The civil service organisations (agencies, institutes, and technical secretariats) have the highest values of suppression and creation. This duality occurred because, at the beginning, the reforms were concentrated in the elimination of a series of autonomous public entities – or with very little control – which weakened the management of the ministries and, in some cases, doubled their competencies (SENPLADES, 2009:8–9).

Table 8. Changes by type of organisation

		<i>Change categories</i>						<i>Total</i>
		Birth	Death	Succession	Horiz_Level	Vert_Level	Coordination	
<i>Type of organization</i>	Presi-Vice	0	0	0	0	5	7	12
	Min	19	11	22	81	64	20	217
	Civil service	56	72	6	14	24	14	186
	EP	33	8	1	5	2	0	49
	Coord-mechanisms	8	15	2	1	3	29	58
	Collective decision	2	17	3	4	0	20	46
<i>Total</i>		118	123	34	105	98	90	

Type of function

The "policy formulation" function has a greater number of reforms. This result is related to the previous one, because it is the role of the ministries. The table also highlights the strengthening of coordination and the creation of government support agencies, which have the function of providing services for the other organisations of the executive branch.

Table 9. Changes by function type

		<i>Change categories</i>						<i>Total</i>
		Birth	Death	Succession	Horiz_Level	Vert_Level	Coordination	
<i>Types of functions</i>	Policy-formu	13	22	14	57	53	26	185
	Regula	11	11	3	4	4	5	38
	Coord	12	31	14	20	14	58	149
	Goods-services	23	30	1	8	15	1	78
	Market-operator	25	5	0	4	1	0	35
	Gov-support	33	24	2	12	11	0	82
	Evalua	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Total</i>		118	123	34	105	98	90	

Public-policy sector

In relation to the sectors of public policy, we see that most of the changes are concentrated in the economic sector. In this respect, it should be pointed out that, in the classification used, this sector groups: (1) general economic, commercial, and labour affairs; (2) agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting; (3) fuel and energy; (4) mining, manufacturing, and construction; (5) transport; (6) communication; (7) other industries.

Table 10. Changes by public-policy sector

		<i>Change categories</i>						<i>Total</i>
		Birth	Death	Succession	Horiz_Level	Vert_Level	Coordination	
<i>Public policy sector</i>	Pub-ser	14	14	7	19	14	4	72
	Defen	2	4	0	9	1	2	18
	Pub-Order	5	9	1	8	6	1	30
	Econo	54	40	12	24	36	8	174
	Enviro	4	2	0	4	3	0	13
	House	5	6	3	4	9	3	30
	Health	5	3	0	1	2	0	11
	Recrea-cult	5	3	0	2	5	2	17
	Educa	6	4	0	7	7	0	24
	Social	6	13	1	14	4	0	38
<i>Intersector</i>		12	25	10	11	11	70	139
<i>Total</i>		118	123	34	105	98	90	

▪ **The types of changes in relation to periods and years of government**

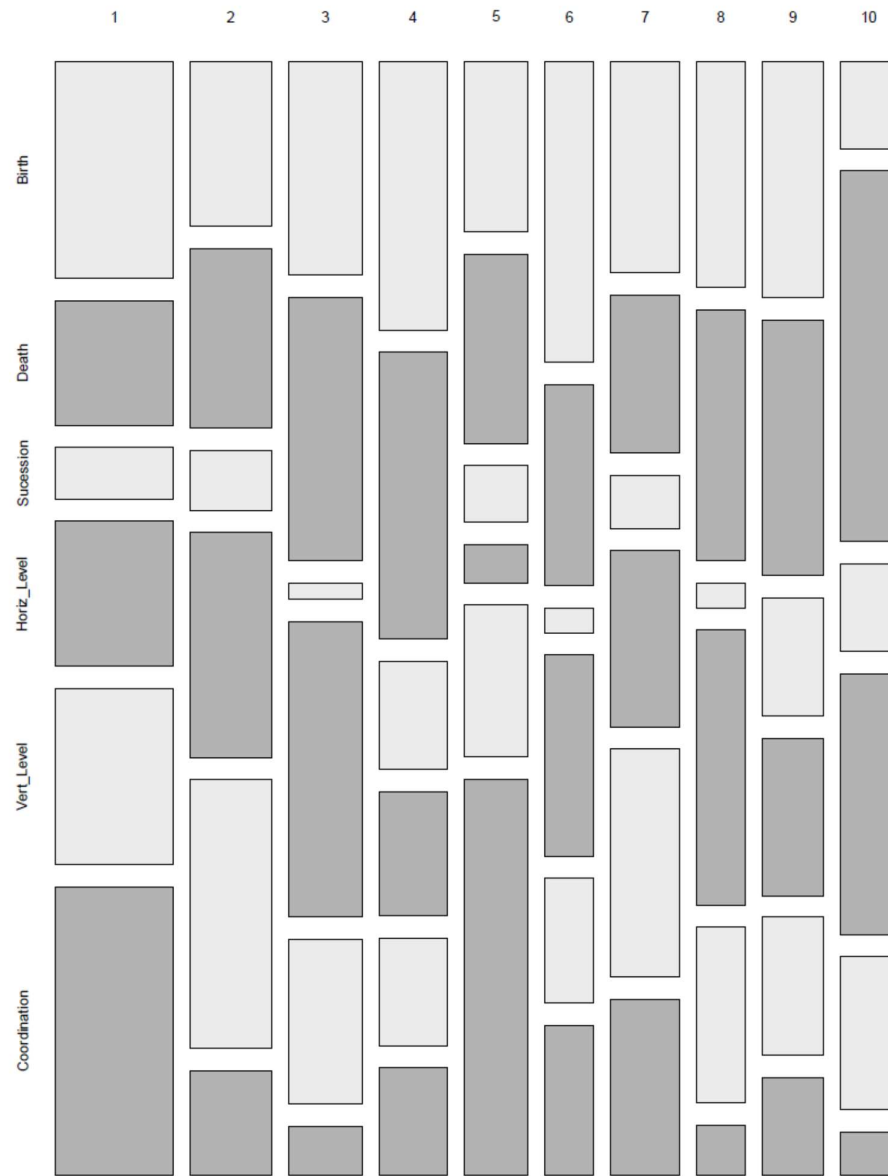
The temporal delimitation of our analysis coincides with the government of Rafael Correa. His presidency lasted ten years, divided into three periods: (1) January 2007–August 2009; (2) August 2009–May 2013; (3) May 2013–May 2017. In relation to the changes, we determine that the total values do not differ much between periods; the creation and suppression of organisations was carried out throughout the government and not only at the beginning, as suggested by the literature (Robinson, 2004:799); indeed, only coordination reforms record a significant decrease in the last period.

Table 11. Changes by period of government

		<i>Change categories</i>						<i>Total</i>
		Birth	Death	Succession	Horiz_Level	Vert_Level	Coordination	
<i>Presidential period</i>	P1	39	30	9	42	40	36	196
	P2	45	49	14	24	29	43	204
	P3	44	44	11	39	29	11	178
<i>Total</i>		118	123	34	105	98	90	

By linking the types of changes with each of the years of government, we find that the greatest number of reforms occurred in the first year; 2007 also registers the largest number of organisations created, whereas the suppressions, although they are constant, have their greatest value in the last year of government.

Chart 2. Changes per year of government



4. Conclusions

The main objective of the paper is to describe the changes in the structure of the Ecuadorian executive branch in the period 2007–2017, conceptually and empirically. In the conceptual section, 26 types of changes were identified, grouped into six categories: the first three related to the life cycle of the organisations – creation, suppression, and succession – and the next three concerned the position of the units within the structure at horizontal and vertical levels and in coordination with others. In the empirical section, a database was formed with all of the changes made during the period. In total, 569 observations and 11 variables that described them were recorded.

The conceptual analysis demonstrated the relevance of the method and the contribution of the case. The application of the grounded theory allowed the emergence of several types of changes not previously analysed in the literature, which mostly uses the population-ecology approach and concentrates its analysis on the life cycle of organisations, particularly in birth and mortality rates in relation to age or density population (Poole and Van de Ven, 2004:381). For its part, the study of the Ecuadorian case contributes a significant number of reforms in a short period; a heterogeneity of changes made in different types of organisations and sectors of public policy; and the emergence of new categories of analysis, typical of the Latin American context and the political orientation of the reforms in Ecuador. These categories highlight the creation of replacement and conversion organisations as well as changes in the division of labour in the lines of authority and in the coordination of public management.

With the empirical analysis, we identify the key points of the reform of the executive branch in Ecuador, among them (1) the configuration of a matrix structure as a result of the reorganisation of the public-policy sectors (transfer of functions); the creation of different government support organisations and the identification of inter-sectoral public problems that require coordinated action by different organisations (creation of coordination mechanisms); (2) the definition of ministries as bodies responsible for the formulation and direction of public policies, identified in the suppression of agencies outside their control or duplicating their functions, and the establishment of lines of authority for lower-ranking organisations; (3) greater participation of the state in the market as regulator (creation of agencies) and as economic operator (creation by conversion of public companies).

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