



In the Name of Integrality and Living in Harmony: Genealogy of Student Counselling Departments in Ecuador¹

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Abstract: In this paper, we analyze from genealogy the emergency of the student counseling department (DECE) in the contemporary educational policies in Ecuador. Specifically, we examine the construction of a new legal–normative architecture from the principles of living in harmony (buen vivir) that seeks to guarantee the delivery of psychological and social services to Ecuadorian students from a novel incorporation of knowledges, practices and expertise based on the psychological sciences. Methodologically, we followed Michel Foucault's principles of genealogy to analyze a textual corpus made up of legal, normative and regulatory documents, as well as interviews with policymakers and district coordinators who participated in the development and implementation processes of educational policies related to DECE. Thus, through our axes of analysis we expose the configuration of a new State rationality around the notion of integrality, and

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through a variety of sociotechnical, regulatory and practical adjustments, the promotion of management logics focused on governing and controlling specific forms in which professionals deploy their actions in schools. Finally, we discuss how the *Sumak Kamsay* knowledges are relegated, compared to an influential scientific-technical rationale that seeks to orientate educational processes in specific ways with a psychological language based on biomedical perspectives that inhibit alternative ways of understanding the subject and subjectivity within Ecuadorian education.

Keywords: Discourse; Ecuador; Genealogy; Living in Harmony; Psychology

En nombre de la integralidad y el buen vivir: Genealogía de los departamentos de consejería estudiantil en Ecuador

Resumen: En este artículo analizamos genealógicamente la emergencia de los Departamentos de Consejería Estudiantil (DECE) en el campo de las políticas educativas contemporáneas de Ecuador. Específicamente, examinamos cómo se ha construido una nueva arquitectura jurídico-normativa que, desde los principios del Buen Vivir, busca garantizar la entrega de servicios psicológicos y sociales a los estudiantes ecuatorianos a partir de una novedosa incorporación de saberes, prácticas y experticias basadas en las ciencias psicológicas. Metodológicamente, adherimos a los principios de Michel Foucault sobre la genealogía, a fin de analizar un corpus textual compuesto por distintas fuentes documentales que contienen archivos jurídicos, normativos y reglamentarios relevantes para nuestra problemática, así como también por entrevistas realizadas a policymakers y coordinadores distritales que han participado en los procesos de elaboración y puesta en práctica de las políticas educativas relacionadas con los DECE. De esta manera, mediante nuestros ejes de análisis exponemos cómo se ha configurado una nueva racionalidad de Estado en torno a la noción de integralidad y cómo mediante diversos ajustes sociotécnicos, reglamentarios y prácticos se han promovido lógicas de gestión orientadas a gobernar y controlar las formas específicas en que los profesionales despliegan sus acciones en las instituciones educativas. Finalmente, discutimos cómo los saberes del *Sumak Kamsay* quedan relegados frente a una influyente racionalidad científico-técnica que busca orientar en vías específicas los procesos educativos y frente a un lenguaje psicológico orientado desde una perspectiva biomédica que inhibe formas alternativas de comprender al sujeto y la subjetividad en la educación ecuatoriana.

Palabras clave: Buen Vivir; Discurso; Ecuador; Genealogía; Psicología

Em nome da integralidade e do bom viver: Genealogia dos departamentos de aconselhamento estudiantil no Equador

Resumo: Neste artigo, analisamos genealógicamente a emergência dos Departamentos de Aconselhamento Estudiantil (DECE) no campo das políticas educacionais contemporâneas no Equador. Especificamente, examinamos como se construiu uma nova arquitetura jurídico-normativa que, a partir dos princípios do Bem Viver, busca garantir a prestação de serviços psicológicos e sociais aos estudantes equatorianos a partir de uma nova incorporação de saberes, práticas e expertises das ciências psicológicas. Metodologicamente, aderimos aos princípios de Michel Foucault sobre genealogia, a fim de analisar um corpus textual constituído por diferentes fontes documentais que contêm arquivos legais, normativos e regulatórios relevantes para o nosso problema, bem como entrevistas com legisladores e coordenadores distritais que têm participado dos processos de desenvolvimento e implementação de políticas educacionais relacionadas aos DECEs. Desta forma, através dos nossos eixos de análise expomos como uma nova racionalidade do Estado se configurou em torno da noção de integralidade e como através de diversos ajustes sociotécnicos, regulatórios e práticos se promoveram lógicas de gestão voltadas para gobernar e controlar formas específicas em que os profissionais implantam suas ações nas instituições de ensino. Por fim, discutimos como o conhecimento de *Sumak Kamsay* é relegado a uma influente racionalidade técnico-científica que busca

orientar os processos educacionais de formas específicas e a uma linguagem psicológica orientada a partir de uma perspectiva biomédica que inibe formas alternativas de compreensão do sujeito e da subjetividade na educação equatoriana.

Palavras-chave: Bom Viver; Discurso; Equador; Genealogia; Psicologia

Introduction²

Ecuadorians are rare and unique beings:
They sleep peacefully in the middle of crunchy volcanoes,
They live in poverty amidst incomparable wealth
And they rejoice with sad music.

Alexander von Humboldt (1802)

Historically, Ecuador has been characterized by its geographic, ethnic, and idiosyncratic uniqueness. The balance between the highest peaks of the Andes, the *hanaq pacha* (sky), and the *inti* (sun) is also present in the daily life of its native communities, who, attached to the worldview of *sumak kawsay* (good living), seek to develop a life of harmony, integrating the natural, the social, and the spiritual. Recently, these particularities have colored the arguments and discourses of public policy, especially in the field of education, regarding the substantive remodeling of the constitutional and political architecture generated by Rafael Correa's (2007-2017) government. The promulgation of a new Constitution of the Republic in 2008 and the Organic Law of Intercultural Education (*Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural* – LOEI) in 2012 significantly redefined the structure and functioning of the educational system, based on a significant increase in state size and expenditure, the strong infrastructural development of its organizations, and a guarantee of the rights that organize the lives of Ecuadorian citizens, in which education has a special place. From a historical perspective, this program constituted a counter-response to the conditions that the governments of the last two decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century generated to face the country's serious economic and political crisis through the intervention of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (Badillo, 1994; Hidalgo, 2011); it also defined a path to recover the state and its capacity to govern Ecuador's economic, political, and social life (Guayasamin, 2017).

In the field of education, this government program generated substantive changes that can be analyzed along two complementary lines. In economic-political terms, Rafael Correa's government considerably increased public spending on education, from 1.15% in 2000 to 5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020), which allowed for greater development of educational infrastructure, greater coverage capacity, and the development of policies oriented toward educational quality and equity (Guayasamin, 2017). This also meant a strategy to confront the trends of neoliberalization and privatization in education that significantly affect Latin America (Moschetti et al., 2019; Verger et al., 2016). Ecuador is one of the countries where privatization trends have advanced more consistently, both in primary (enrollment variation of +52.6% from 1990 to 2014)

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and secondary education (variation of +22.9% in the same period, ranked third among 20 Latin American countries; for a detailed review, see Verger et al., 2017).

Complementarily, from a conceptual-cultural perspective, this government program was semiotically structured from the principles of *Buen Vivir*, a worldview coined by the Indigenous nations that widely colored the language of public policy developed under Rafael Correa's government. This concept, which is known in its original languages as *sumak kawsay* (in Kishwa), *suma qamaña* (in Aymara), *ñandareko* (in Guaraní), and *kiime mongen* (in Mapudungun), has been emerging in Latin American political discourse for two decades, starting when Indigenous nations began to acquire greater prominence as a political force in Ecuador and Bolivia (Guardiola & García-Quero, 2014; Villalba, 2013). In spite of its polysemic character and the diverse interpretations that it raises in different contexts, the concept of *Buen Vivir* refers to a harmonious community life (Garzón, 2013), where the collective is prioritized above the individual, ancestral knowledge and the influence of spirits are respected, and protecting the environment triumphs over the socio-natural devastation promoted by the logic of accumulation, progress, and growth embedded in Western thought (Rojas-Lizana & Itatí, 2019). Therefore, *Buen Vivir* represents an alternative to decolonization from an Indigenous perspective in relation to the civilizing project of capitalism, where all damage caused to nature is understood as inherent damage to human life (Schavelzon, 2015).

At this point, it should be noted that based on the 2007-2008 debates that shaped the new Ecuadorian Constitution, the notion of *sumak kawsay* was appropriated and creatively recontextualized in the political discourse of Rafael Correa's government. This served, in principle, to counteract the advance of neoliberal policies in the country and in the region; it also constituted an attempt to deploy public policy organizations and practices that favored the oppressed (Villalba, 2013). From a more critical perspective, Guardiola and García (2014) have argued that its definition in the Ecuadorian constitution is vague and reduced, as it simply states that it is a way of living in harmony with nature and the community, which implies that, from the technocratic-economic-humanist perspective, the concept can be trapped in the ideas of development and the state (Schavelzon, 2015). Nevertheless, the *sumak kawsay* philosophy acquires an important role in the development of Correa's agenda of educational policies and a unique form, specifically in the definition and articulation of the Student Counseling Departments (hereinafter, DECE – *Departamentos de Consejería Estudiantil*), an organization that we analyze genealogically in this research; it is understood as an “organization incorporated within the educational institutions that ensures a harmonious coexistence and the development of skills for life” (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2016, p. 4). We will explore this further in the next section.

Psychology, Education, and Public Policy: The Case of the DECE in Ecuador

The emergence of the DECE as an educational policy organization was oriented toward the creation of initiatives that would promote Ecuadorian children's and adolescents' overall development. Within the framework of *Buen Vivir*, which is consecrated both in the Constitution of the Republic and in the LOEI, the *Model of Operation of the Student Counseling Departments* was published in 2016 (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2016). It defines the basic principles and values to create a harmonious coexistence and cultures of peace in educational institutions; the guidelines and actions required to ensure, protect, and restore children's and adolescents' rights; and the technical criteria for “transparency and optimizing the performance of professionals” (p. 4). As we will examine later, a central aspect of this organization is that it creates a rational distribution of professionals according to the number of students enrolled in the educational units; the presence of educational and clinical psychologists is also prioritized to address the school population's psychosocial needs, based on a logic in which a broader population supports a greater diversification

of professionals and is then able to incorporate, for example, social workers, family counselors, and psychopedagogues.

In addition to the above, it should be noted that the DECE did not emerge in an institutional vacuum; rather, to a certain extent, the DECE redefines a previous organization, the Guidance and Student Welfare Departments (hereinafter, DOBE – *Departamentos de Orientación y Bienestar Estudiantil*) under the new constitutional and political architecture formulated within the framework of the General Education Law No. 127 of 1983, which was in force until 2012 in Ecuador. Until the emergence of the DECE, the DOBE constituted a specialized technical organization that focused on comprehensively training students; on their pedagogical, vocational, and professional orientation; and on their adaptation to the teaching-learning processes, when appropriate (Illescas & Tapia, 2010). Specifically, the DOBE constituted the technical organization in charge of developing the Annual Orientation Plan for each educational institution, which was organized by at least one psychology or pedagogy professional holding an administrative role and was supported by other specialists (clinical psychologists, physicians, and family therapists) who attended the referrals made by the responsible professional to treat problems related to their specialties.

With the first projects of the DECE in 2014, the DOBE formally disappeared as an educational policy organization in 2016. Based on this historical event, this article will examine the changes in the rationalities, methods, and techniques that shaped this shift in educational policy, in addition to examining how the DECE are part of the co-evolutionary processes of the modern state and modern subjectivity. For this purpose, we follow the Foucauldian developments regarding governmentality (Foucault, 2006, 2007) to address the questions of how this emerging organization allows governing, how it does it, and in what directions, by whom, and through what criteria. We assert that one of the unique aspects of modern processes of state governmentalization is that they reconfigure knowledge relations—the power to lead individual and collective subjects from the intimate core of their psychological dispositions (Miller & Rose, 2008; Rose, 1999). In this framework, the modern Western state represents the result of a complex combination of political power derived from the Greco-Roman tradition and the pastoral power that has shaped the Judeo-Christian tradition, a fusion that allows for the development of methods of analysis and reflection and supervision techniques that provide access to a deep knowledge of the individual's internal truths, but which do not seek to directly model actors' actions, but rather to indirectly and reflectively determine the possible options for action (Lemke, 2016).

Considering the above, we argue that a unique aspect of the current processes of state governmentalization is related to the psychologization of the educational policy discourse. This notion refers to the use of vocabularies and explanatory psychological schemes to look at ourselves, others, and the world (De Vos, 2013, 2015), the expression of which is a discursive colonization in educational policies and daily practices at school regarding concepts such as identity, the mind, emotions, and emotional intelligence (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2018). In the field of education, psychologization is a long-standing trend that has been facilitated by the disciplinary institutionalization of psychology and its contribution to the development of modern states and has also been enhanced by the uses that local elites have made of this discipline to address different social concerns that converge at the core of the school institution (Grinberg, 2019; Moretti & Energici, 2019). In particular, in some Latin American contexts, contemporary educational policies show an important tendency to incorporate psychological and neurological languages to conceptualize and intervene in broad and diverse social issues, such as educational quality, comprehensive development, school performance, and incident factors (Palacios et al., 2020).

To further understand the logic of psychologization, Pykett, Jones, and Whitehead (2018) have proposed the notion of psychological governance, which allows for the analysis of the actions

coordinated by the state to create policies that seek to model the population's behavior through the deployment of knowledge from the psychological sciences. This has resulted in the establishment of an expertocracy, in which actors from these disciplines promote forms of argumentation and political reasoning that support modes of psychological intervention related to neoliberal ideology (Binkley, 2018). In our opinion, the concept of psychological governance has a heuristic value, since it allows us to examine the discursive aspects of these emerging policies to analytically capture the psychological perspectives that are promoted and those that are disregarded, the methods and techniques that are deployed as well as by whom and in pursuit of what societal goals and projects, and the conceptions of subject and subjectivity that underlie them.

Similarly, Ecclestone (2018) has argued that contemporary governance tactics are based on compulsive forms of therapeutic governance defended by psychocrats, who have established diminished and pessimistic perspectives of agency and human capacity through concepts such as risk and vulnerability, which are arguments that create a market of psychotherapeutic interventions that seek to adapt vulnerable citizens to the same structures and conditions that have determined their vulnerability. Complementarily, Friedli and Stearn (2015) have proposed that the neoliberal project is characterized by a psycho-compulsion, that is, an exaggerated tendency to impose psychological explanations for diverse social problems; this tendency is always linked to orientations to action that seek to modify beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions instead of intervening in the conditions that organize these problems. Therefore, the therapeutic discourse co-produces and validates the structural myths of neoliberalism, such as its conception of freedom and its vision of a rational agent seeking to fulfill its purposes, which consequently inhibits and erodes the capacity to build alternative discourses based on solidarity, collectivity, and interdependence.

With these elements in view, the purpose of our article is to genealogically analyze the emergence of the DECE in the contemporary scenario of educational policies in Ecuador, emphasizing the rationalities and arguments that supported the creation of this organization, the methods and techniques that it proposes to materialize its aspirations, and how it mobilizes psychological languages to fulfill specific purposes in a country that supports the need to develop educational policies based on *Buen Vivir* on a continent where neoliberalization trends have most profoundly influenced the educational agendas of the last decades.

Methodological Notes

This research follows the theoretical-methodological principles developed by Michel Foucault in his genealogical approach. In this regard, in the first class of the course *Il faut défendre la société*, held from January to March 1976 at the Collège de France, he emphasized that if archeology is the appropriate method for analyzing local discourses, genealogy is the tactic that makes it possible to apply the knowledge freed from the subjugation that results from it (Foucault, 2014). In this research, we consider it both a methodological approach and a political tactic, the main aspiration of which is to “put into play local, discontinuous, declassified, and non-legitimized knowledge against the unitary theoretical instance that attempts to filter it, to hierarchize it, to order it in the name of a true knowledge, in the name of the rights of a science that some would possess” (p. 22).

Genealogy as a method of suspicion (Nietzsche, 2011) enables us to immerse ourselves in events, their singularities, their artificiality, and the diverse ways in which our truths relate to chance, passions, and the struggle between human beings' wills within their complex power relationships. In addition to this, we follow a genealogical approach as a way of renouncing the search for continuity of events or causal coherence that would illuminate the present; instead, we focus on understanding

the dispersion and accidentalness from which our present and its struggles precede, its historical and political specificity, the discursive formations and statements that support it, and the diverse ways in which different procedures, techniques, and mechanisms guide our actions (Abreo, 2011).

With these elements in view, we are interested in analyzing the emergence of the DECE in Ecuador's contemporary educational policy scenario. In order to further understand the ruptures and discontinuities of this recent history, we built a broad and heterogeneous collection of documentary and testimonial sources, considering that "Genealogy is gray; it is meticulous and a patient documentary maker. It works on muddled, scribbled paths, often rewritten" (Foucault, 1980, p. 7). Our preliminary goal was to trace laws, legislative debates, regulations, operating manuals, and ministerial agreements to capture the singularities related to our study object. Given the wide range of materials, we chose some that, for their historical uniqueness, provided elements for a deeper and more specific investigation, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1

Documentary Sources

Documentary source	Purpose of the investigation
Text 1: <i>Model of Operation of the DECE</i> (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2016).	Investigation of theoretical foundations, objectives, technical principles, and technical organization.
Text 2: Organic Law on Intercultural Education (Organic Law on Intercultural Education, 2011).	Investigation of principles and purposes of education and of indications as to the construction of psychological and social care organizations.
Text 3: Regulations of the Organic Law on Intercultural Education (General Regulations LOEI, 2012).	Investigation of the technical guidelines for the implementation and operation of the organizations that were created.
Text 4: Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008)	Investigation of the objectives, principles and purposes assigned to education in Ecuador.
Text 5: Ministerial Agreement ME 00046-A (Agreement ME 00046-A, 2016).	Investigation of the guidelines for the creation of DECE teams and the definition of objectives and functions.
Text 6: Ministerial Agreement ME 0069-14 (Agreement ME 0069-14, 2014).	Investigation of the guidelines for the creation of DECE teams and the definition of objectives and functions.
Text 7: Ecuadorian Education Law (Law 127 of Education, 1983).	Investigation of the principles and purposes of education and indications as to the construction of psychological and social care organizations.
Text 8: Situation of children and adolescents in Ecuador (Observatorio Social de Ecuador, 2018)	Investigation of the general panorama of economic, political, and socio-cultural difficulties in Ecuador.

These documentary sources were combined with two types of testimonial sources. We conducted semi-structured interviews with policymakers who participated in the ministerial agreements and technical tables that supported the design of the *Model of Operation of the Student Counseling Departments* (Ministry of Education from Ecuador, 2016) and interviewed coordinators of the DECE who belong to district offices, which are organizations in charge of implementing public policy guidelines and actions in specific territorial units. We have incorporated these documentary sources to guarantee that their interpretations preserve and safeguard rationalities, decision-making processes, idiosyncratic aspects, and specific events in Ecuador's recent history. Each testimonial source was contacted and interviewed following a snowball procedure. Our first participant, Policymaker 1, holds a managerial position in the Undersecretariat of Educational Innovation and Good Living. He referred us, to Policymakers 2 and 3, who also participated in the design of the *Model of Operation* and hold managerial positions at the provincial and district levels. Finally, Policymaker 2 helped us contact two DECE district coordinators who helped us build a perspective on how these organizations are deployed in specific contexts. Table 2 summarizes each participant's role and the purpose of the investigation in each of their interviews.

Table 2*Testimonial Sources*

Testimonial source	Role	Investigation purpose
Policymaker 1	Psychologist – Undersecretary for Educational Innovation and Good Living	Investigation of the context in which the DECE emerged, as well as the socio-educational problematization, rationalities, and mechanisms that guided systemic changes.
Policymaker 2	Psychologist – District Director – Sierra Area	Investigation of the context in which the DECE emerged, as well as the change in healthcare and education systems in Ecuadorian schools.
Policymaker 3	Psychologist – Provincial Director – Former Coordinator of the Orientation and Student Welfare Departments (DOBE)	Investigation of the context in which the DECE emerged, as well as the most relevant organizational changes that occurred between the implementation and operation of different healthcare and education systems in Ecuadorian schools.
District Coordinator 1	Psychologist – District Coordination DECE – Sierra Area	Investigation in the specific context of recontextualization of the public policy of the DECE, with emphasis on which actions are deployed to <i>make</i> policy.
District Coordinator 2	Psychologist – District Coordination DECE – Sierra Area	Investigation in the specific context of recontextualization of the public policy of the DECE, with emphasis on which actions are deployed to <i>make</i> policy.

The documentary and testimonial sources were addressed in our analysis using two conceptual tools of great heuristic value, namely *event* and *system*, from the Foucauldian system of

thought. Analytically, we focused on recomposing the scenario in which the DECE emerged from the perspective of invention, which supports and legitimizes it. We captured and deepened this in different events, for both singular and practical instances, to examine the concurrence at a given moment of different force and counter-force relations that compose a strange story, where the rarity and originality of the event prevail (Foucault, 1980). Therefore, our primary analytical task consisted of outlining the DECE’s origin from the question of the possible conditions that shaped this public issue and, more precisely, from the questions of when, why, and under what circumstance(s) this event emerged, what are the mechanisms that have made it possible, and what or who participates in the decisions that are those and not others.

We combine this with the notion of system, which is understood as “everything that has, in one way or another, the capacity to capture, guide, determine, intercept, model, control, and ensure gestures, behaviors, opinions, and discourses of living beings” (Agamben, 2011, p. 257). Following Foucault (2002), the systems represent a heterogeneous set of practices and mechanisms, with a discursive and non-discursive nature, which seek to face urgencies in a given field of power relations to obtain relatively immediate effects. From this perspective, every system deploys, in a unique manner, elements of a legal (legal and regulatory provisions), technological (provisions of mechanisms and their adjustments), and military (provisions of tactics and strategies) nature. For this reason, and to track the discursive movement of these dispositions, we use some critical discourse analysis tools (Fairclough, 2003, 2018), especially those that allow us to address processes of emergence, recontextualization, and difference/resistance, as well as overlaps of genres (ways of doing), discourses (ways of representing/projecting), and styles (ways of being). This approach helped us address discourses as symptoms of the irruption of events, since their singular emergence “opposes the discursive regularity constructed by the operators of continuity” (Márquez, 2013, p. 225). For schematic purposes only, Table 3 shows the guiding questions and tactics that shaped our analytical path.

Table 3

Analytical Path

Guiding questions	Analytical tactics
What power relations supported the emergence of the DECE? What accidents, deviations, errors, or failed calculations supported its emergence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renouncing the search for continuity and regularities and betting on the search for discontinuity and singularities
What economic, political, historical, and socio-cultural circumstances demanded and produced the emergence of the DECE? What problems and emergencies must this organization face in the current field of education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further exploration of the ruptures, hazards, and intricacies evident at the beginning → Monitoring the complex story of events’ origin and accidentalness
What principles built the foundation of the DECE? How are these principles legitimized? How are they used strategically and tactically?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the local discourses (archaeology) + the struggles of erudite and buried knowledge (genealogy)
Which principles had a real effect? Which principles remain?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A precise understanding of the meaning of the sources in the time and space in which they were enunciated

The Emergence of the Student Counseling Departments

We organized our results and analysis in two sections. Section I addresses the rationalities and strategic and tactical adjustments that supported the DECE's emergence in the last decade. Section II critically analyzes the new management logic that has reshaped the labor market of psychosocial professionals, the epistemes, and the theoretical frameworks upon which their actions are based, as well as desirable ways of proceeding in specific scenarios and situations.

Section I: In the Name of Integrality

Following what was delineated in the Second General Provision of the Ministerial Agreement 2016-00046-A, the *Model of Operation of the Student Counseling Departments* was created in May 2016; in its Introduction, it indicates that "Today's society presents new and disturbing challenges in the task of training and guiding for life; the Ecuadorian educational system has sought to reorganize itself around these demands" (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2016, p. 5). The uncertainty of the contemporary scenario and the radical changes that have occurred in recent decades represent the primary basis to justify the emergence of the DECE as a public policy organization, as well as the articulated response of the Ecuadorian state to "social and cultural transformations that societies have experienced in recent decades, [and that] have marked new radical furrows in how human reality is perceived and conceived" (p. 3).

The uncertain and radical nature of these transformations, far from being a limitation, represented an opportunity to promote a new state rationality, as established in the Constitution of the Republic and the Organic Law of Intercultural Education and its regulations, both aimed at "breaking the status-quo that prevailed in the traditional educational system with its respective limitations and promoting a model that ensures comprehensive training" (p. 5). In this scenario, facing a chaotic world, the arguments that have shaped the DECE select integrality as the main weapon for combat. Since the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2008), comprehensive education is defined in terms of the state's capacity to provide free education, equal opportunities, inclusion and participation, and respect for diversity and freedoms, while in regulatory frameworks for the field of education, specifically the Organic Law on Intercultural Education (2011), this integrality is aligned with ensuring children's and adolescents' right to comprehensive development (Art. 345), which translates into "receiving free comprehensive social, psychological, and healthcare services in their educational circuits" (pp. 17–18). It is this law that stipulates that the DECE will organize comprehensive student care, since it is considered "an indispensable component of educational action" (General Regulation LOEI, 2012, p. 23).

In addition to the above, the *Model of Operation of the Student Counseling Departments* (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2016) provides other clues to understand how the notion of comprehensive care is organized. The DECE provide support and accompaniment for the comprehensive training process. The challenge for the Ecuadorian state and the various educational actors is, above all, to "respond technically and ethically to the diverse needs of children and adolescents, transcending the task of teaching and accumulating knowledge to a process that is based on the mutual construction of an alternative to comprehensive development" (p. 5). In this case, integrality emerges from the nucleus of two breaks: the first is related to the criticism of educational conceptions based on knowledge transmission to bet on a logic grounded in construction, and the second is related to the traditional unidirectional and vertical relationship schemes to bet on the LOEI-promoted educational co-responsibility between school, family, and students.

We think that these breaks, particularly the first one, are part of widespread criticism that points out that contemporary educational discourses, policies, and practices have promoted

curricular and teaching–learning approaches built mainly as control strategies, which must be overcome by (re)positioning the students and their learning at the center of educational life (review the concept of “learnification” in Biesta, 2020). There is an open commitment to abandoning any attempt at direct and opaque knowledge transmission and, more subtly, to an announcement that this would imply redefining the purposes and social relations that are at the base of encyclopedic teaching practices. With this, the Ecuadorian educational system is invited to bet on something different: a mutual construction and a new alternative to comprehensive development. Who could oppose these aspirations? From this, another question arises: What could the DECE specifically contribute to materialize them? One of the policymakers who participated in the formulation and design of the organization and its regulations provides some insights:

Since 2014, there has been a substantial change regarding the protection of student rights. This is not something new in educational institutions. This is not something that did not happen and that appeared or began when the DECE arrived. This is not the case. Rather, it is something that was kept hidden and that, unfortunately, if students would raise their voices or say something, the institutions themselves would silence them. It was a culture of silence. There was no hearing from the authorities at that time, neither from the provincial directorates nor others, but, when there was this political change, these processes began to be regulated. (Interview with Policymaker 2)

In this excerpt, the emergence of the DECE is portrayed as representing a redefinition of the educational tactics aimed at promoting new forms of regulation that should redefine what happens in educational institutions, which are spaces the hidden and the silenced inhabit. What is presented as a substantial change in rights protection has its constitutional basis in Article 44 – Children and adolescents, which establishes the right to comprehensive development, this time understood as a “process of growth, maturation, and deployment of their intellect and their capacities, potential, and aspirations, in a family, school, social, and community environment of affectivity and security” (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, p. 21). In particular, the creation of this safe affective environment is committed to generating effective dialogues between students and authorities, attempting, from a legal and regulatory perspective, to modify the cultures of silence that mark daily life in Ecuador’s educational institutions.

At this level, if what is hidden needs to be made transparent and what is silenced needs to be said, not only should a change occur in the legal and regulatory discourses, related methods, techniques, and expertise should also be available. This did not represent a totally new action, since, in fact, the General Education Law No. 127 of 1983, which was in force until the promulgation of the LOEI in 2012, stated in its Chapter II – Principles and Purposes, Article 2 that one of the governing principles of education in Ecuador is that “b) All Ecuadorians have the right to a comprehensive education and the obligation to actively participate in the national educational process” (Law 127 of Education, 1983, p. 1). In its Chapter V – Student Guidance and Welfare, Article 37, it stated that “The Ministry of Education shall plan and compulsorily execute the guidance following a comprehensive approach, considering it as consubstantial to the educational process and as an interdisciplinary action [...] conducted by specialized professionals” (p. 5). In other words, integrality constitutes a pre-existing concern, and there is a specific system to materialize it: the DOBE, technical bodies in charge, within the curriculum, of the interdisciplinary accompaniment of the needs of vocational guidance and student welfare. What, then, is the basis for a change in the epistemes, methods, techniques, and expertise deployed to govern? What can the emerging DECE offer that its vestigial organization was unable to provide? The policymakers provide some elements to address these questions:

The DOBE were spaces with a professional in medicine, nursing, or dentistry – if there were any – and all of them were led by a professional in psychology or social work. It was a sort of medical-psychological center within the educational institutions. Not all schools had them. In fact, before the LOEI, the regulations established that these professionals should be present to provide services in the schools that were in a position to hire them. In other words, there was a deregulation around the number of professionals per educational institution or the number of these bodies within the institutions [...] They were vocational guidance processes; exclusively that, no psychosocial support. (Interview with Policymaker 1)

Based on this, another aspect that the DECE must regulate is related to the number of professionals and the economic and rational criteria that organize their assignment and deployment to each educational institution. As we will see below, the LOEI and its regulations are aimed at correcting the administrative deficiencies associated with the DOBE, but a fundamental issue acquires greater relevance at this point: a qualitative change in the ways of understanding educational and health problems within the epistemes of each system. The definition of the DOBE as a sort of medical-psychological center describes, in principle, the biomedical nature that constituted these systems; however, it more fundamentally sheds light on the need to redefine their expertise and how to deploy them, since DOBE professionals only offered vocational guidance and did not aid from a psychosocial perspective. This criticism is also made by another policymaker, who maintains that each professional worked according to their expertise, since the psychologists focused on “the follow-up of students in the behavioral part [...] the doctor to the medical check-up protocol, the dentist to dental matters, but they did not hold an interdisciplinary meeting to consider biopsychosocial factors” the policymaker also asserts that they carried out very “empirical” work based on intuitive criteria, where “they did not assume a therapeutic approach, a vocational guidance approach, as required by educational psychology, or a psychopedagogical approach, and they did not work holistically either” (Interview with Policymaker 3).

Preliminarily, we maintain that the DECE emerge as an educational policy organization that seeks to regulate three fundamental aspects: i) from a legal-normative perspective, the rights that each educational institution must guarantee and restore to children and adolescents; ii) from an organizational perspective, the ways in which the different educational actors should proceed to optimally materialize the rationality of the state; and iii) from a socio-technical perspective, the epistemes, methods, techniques, and expertise that must be deployed to realize the government’s goals. Prior to our second section, we argue that the emergence of the DECE enabled the entry of a scientific-technical language that, supported by contributions from the psychological sciences, contributed, through a sort of epistemic imposition, to a substantive redefinition of the operational framework, the necessary experiences, and the ways in which they should be deployed—all this in order to abandon forms of action and procedures that have historically characterized the idiosyncrasy of Ecuadorians and their lives at the country’s different educational institutions. This resulted in a strengthening of the surveillance structures that, from the technical language of routes and protocols and from the therapeutic language that was proposed instead of sanction/punishment as an essentially beneficial measure, have begun to operate, albeit not without problems, in recent times.

At that time, the DOBE was that space where they send you when you behave badly and where they simply applied a sanction or a punishment. It did not have a therapeutic focus, let alone one of care or well-being. The fact that there were no routes or protocols to fully serve students generated another problem: you ended up falling out with the authorities of the educational institutions for wanting to generate

more orderly processes [...] Many thought that it was a pimp model³, that we were the students' pimps.

Why a pimp model? In what sense?

They said it like that. People said it like that. The teachers told me that I was the students' pimp. In other words, I accompany the students, so they continue being lazy. I just wanted them to study and learn. (Interview with Policymaker 3)

Section II: Management and the Order of Chaos

The *Model of Operation of the Student Counseling Departments* (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2016) announces a redefinition of the principles, objectives, and frameworks of action to be followed by the professionals on the psychosocial teams. Specifically, this manual provides “a series of theoretical and practical strategies for dealing with the different situations that emerge in the educational context, detailed in specific and delimited actions for a transparent and optimized performance of the professionals” (p. 4). This novel emphasis on transparency and optimization functions, as described by the policymakers, is a way of solving the problems derived from the culture of silence and the intuitive and experiential criteria that guided the DOBE professionals' work. In this section, we will argue that, strictly speaking, this document deploys a series of principles from management theories that seek to govern professional action in three areas: i) labor market and modalities (who makes up the teams and the criteria used to select them), ii) epistemes and specific theoretical-conceptual bodies (from where and how problems and solutions are described), and iii) procedures and techniques (how to proceed and how not to proceed). In this regard, a distinctive characteristic of management as moral technology (Ball, 2001) is that it conceives the social world and educational life as chaos that requires order from a scientific-technical organization and adjustment to legal generalizations, so that the directed imperfections do not succumb to irrationality, atavistic practices, and emotional excesses.

Regarding the first area, it should be noted that the deregulations derived from the number of DOBE professionals and the schools' financial capacity to contract their services were intervened in by the creation of Ministerial Agreements 0069-14 (2014) and 00046-A (2016). These agreements stipulate, in principle, that the DECE are responsible for providing comprehensive care to students through psychological, psychoeducational, emotional, and social support and accompaniment, as established by the current legal framework. More fundamentally, each of these agreements conceives a particular structure and specific conformation criteria that have been subject to variations over time. In this context, Article 4 of the first agreement states that the DECE “will be articulated within the different levels of the National Education System, respecting the proportion of (1) professional for every 300 students, according to the [following] parameters” (Agreement ME 0069-14, 2014, p. 4).

³ In the context of everyday Ecuadorian language, the word *alcabuetaría* [pimp model] refers to situations that are not legal and that, in a complicit manner, are kept secret by mutual agreement between those involved in the action.

Figure 1

Structure of the Student Counseling Departments

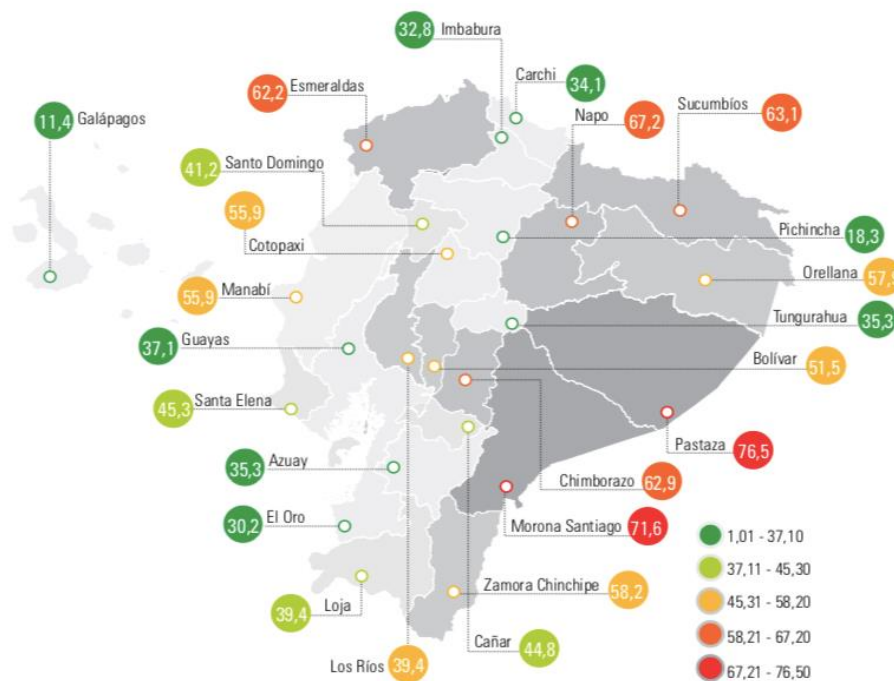
Number of students per day		Interdisciplinary team of professionals from the Student Counseling Department per day
From	To	
300	600	One (1) clinical psychologist and one (1) educational psychologist.
601	900	One (1) clinical psychologist, one (1) educational psychologist, and one (1) social worker.
901	1,140	Two (2) educational psychologists, one (1) clinical psychologist, and one (1) social worker.

Source: Agreement ME 0069-14 (2014).

There are two striking aspects of this first definition. The first is the predominance of psychologists on the interdisciplinary team of professionals and the specialty differences that established between them (clinical and educational), an aspect that we will address below. The second is related to the arbitrary definition of minimum and maximum numbers of students per day for the assignment of a certain number of professionals. This initial proposal was hampered, according to one of the policymakers, as the professionals “are concentrated in cities that have large universities and the most remote cities do not have this type of professional [...] It is difficult to hire and people do not mobilize for the money you can pay” (Interview with Policymaker 1). However, this can be best explained by structural reasons, such as multidimensional poverty (Figure 2), since “more than monetary issues, the professionals do not move to the Amazon or the Esmeraldas due to poverty and racial issues, for which they are not prepared, or due to our interest in them” (Interview with Policymaker 2).

Figure 2

Children and Adolescents in Households Suffering Multidimensional Poverty in Ecuador in 2016



Source: Observatorio Social de Ecuador (2018).

The difficulties derived from this first definition are addressed by Ministerial Agreement 0046-A (2016), which issues regulations for the implementation, organization, and operation of the DECE in the country’s educational institutions. This new agreement, while maintaining the essence, promotes two relevant changes: one is related, as shown in Figure 3, to the number of professionals that are assigned according to the number of students, with greater flexibility in the technical criteria for choosing professionals, although first priority continues to be given to professionals in the field of psychology (Article 5 - Conformation Criteria); the other effects an administrative reorganization that is especially valid for fiscal support schools and seeks to solve the difficulties of geographical connectivity that characterize the country, benefitting the schools with an enrollment of less than 450 students. These schools will be defined as associated institutions that are administratively dependent on the core institution, whose DECE must provide support and accompaniment through weekly visits to extend the services this public policy organization provides (Article 6 - Associated educational institutions).

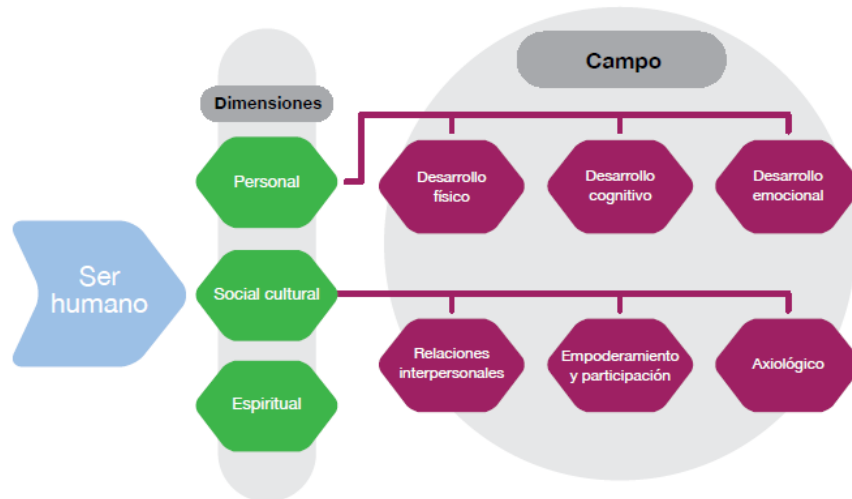
Figure 3

Structure of the Student Counseling Departments

Número de estudiantes	Número de profesionales del Departamento de Consejería Estudiantil requeridos
450-675	Un (1) profesional
676-1.125	Dos (2) profesionales
1.126-1.575	Tres (3) profesionales

Source: Agreement ME 00046-A (2016).

A second area that seeks to govern in specific ways is language, along with the theoretical-conceptual systems that shape and support it as a guide for action. Based on the current legal framework, it is relevant how a specific vision of the human being is constructed and nourished by the discourses that have configured the functionalist perspectives of psychology and that are characterized by an epistemology of divisions that generate diverse dualisms. As shown in Figure 4, the human being is constituted by a personal dimension separate from the sociocultural dimension and a dimension of physical development separate from the psychological dimension, which, in turn, is subdivided into the cognitive and the emotional. Although it is understood that this could possibly be presented from this perspective for didactic and expository purposes, what is relevant is the way this language is discursively constructed and how it will operate tactically to guide intervention practices. For example, the sociocultural dimension is defined as “*external* elements that form the human being through cultural guidelines that influence the conformation of the personality, behaviors, thought, and [the] relationship with the environment” (p. 12; emphasis added by the authors) or the cartesian conception of the spiritual dimension, which “*transcends the physical world* and allows us to connect with all living beings in harmony, through principles that guide the interrelation of the person, society, and nature” (p. 13; emphasis added by the authors).

Figure 4*Dimensions of the Human Being*

Source: Ministry of Education of Ecuador (2016).

These general definitions become more complex within the *Model of Operation* framework through the proposal of a set of approaches or “conceptual assumptions that support the construction of a comprehensive view of individual and collective development” (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2016, p. 8). Therefore, the rights, gender, well-being, intercultural, intergenerational, inclusion, and pedagogical approaches are proposed as a general framework for DECE professionals to execute certain plans, programs, and projects. In this context, these languages promote specific ways of conceiving educational life issues, where diverse theoretical traditions of psychology are often mixed creatively. For example, it is argued that it is important for DECE professionals to contribute to “facilitating students to carry out a process of *introspection* and *personal empowerment* that allows them to make decisions regarding their life projects in a conscious, co-responsible, free, and autonomous manner” (p. 22, emphasis added by the authors); this supports a liberal conception of the subject in its individual, free, and autonomous expression, eventually distant from the ancestral knowledge of the indigenous nations of the Andes, which is positioned as a central element in this emerging architecture of educational policies.

In relation to the above, and even when we do not consider coherence as an ideal, we argue that the epistemic framework of good living in this regulation appears sporadically and only as a sort of reminder, since what predominates are these hegemonic forms for understanding the psychological dimension of the human being and humans’ life in society. In this regard, and in relation to the spiritual view, defined in a cartesian manner as we have previously shown, it is added that “It is necessary to *fertilize it* with the philosophy of Sumak Kawsay (life in harmony), a perspective that allows us to understand the need to promote a balanced relationship from the human being with the world around us” (p. 13). Regarding the relegation of this worldview in the discursive expression of this regulation, one of the policymakers critically argues that:

I consider that *Buen Vivir* never existed. It existed in political discourse, but not in practice, not in mechanisms. It was never carried out and ended up being a good intention within a political model. The trend was more discursive than pragmatic and that perhaps made and still makes everyone empower themselves in an extremely

demagogic manner [...] The text and the discourse are beautiful, but in practice, landing it is very difficult. (Interview with Policymaker 3)

This relegation is confirmed by how the procedures and techniques are organized, particularly the specific ways that define how to (and how not to) proceed. This issue, inscribed in the logic of management theories, functions in two directions: as a technology that allows for blaming and informing about actions to a central control system and as a technology that allows for the supervision and control of professional actions *in situ* through confessional techniques and a complex ritualization of the practice. As practical applications of power, these technologies make it possible to configure a hierarchy of continuous surveillance that is functional for the ways in which this organization is conceived but has generated a series of difficulties in workers' daily lives. Within this framework, the ways in which the fundamental actions of the DECE execution teams were discursively constructed in the *Model of Operation* are relevant. The most important functions according to the logic of accountability and control, both remote and *0* (for a detailed review, see Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2016, p. 20):

- Contribute to the design of the DECE's annual operating plan
- Ensure compliance with the routes and protocols of action provided by the central level
- Periodically monitor and follow-up on cases reported to the DECE
- Prepare reports as requested by the coordinator of the DECE, institutional authorities, and decentralized levels
- Compulsory registration on the *Educar Ecuador* portal of information about the students assigned by the coordinator of the DECE

The emphasis on operations, procedures, compliance, and records has contributed, from policymakers' perspective, to the emergence of a "culture of evidence [...] [that] is exhausting for professionals" causing them "to resign, even if they have stable contracts" (Interview with Policymaker 1); in addition, it makes everything "extremely bureaucratic [...] You show what you know in an evidence format, where the fatter you are, the more attention you received, but in the process, in practice, it was never applied" (Interview with Policymaker 3). In alignment with the policymakers, although living in their own flesh, i.e., the logic of performativity, the district coordinators who participated in this research note the nonsensical accountability practices that have gradually began to take over the scene:

This is the case every day, especially when the DECE analysts must prepare monthly reports. I see that they are all exhausted filling in new matrices that are invented every time. And I don't think those matrices are useful, but sometimes they are invented matrices, and they are invented to justify the work. (Interview with District Coordinator 1)

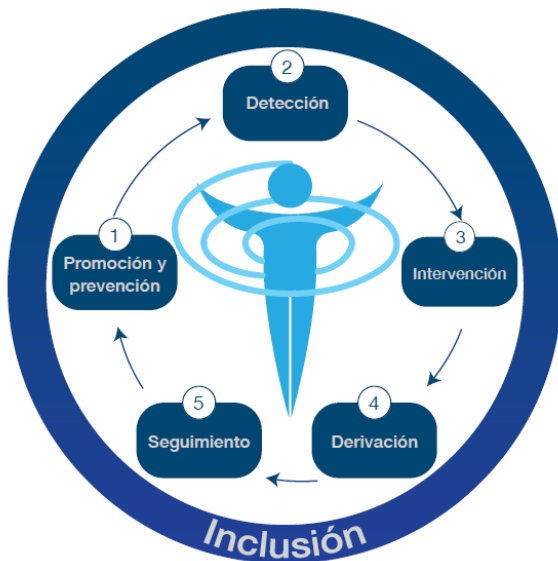
This logic to justify the work that emerges from the specific contexts of policy implementation overloads the actors, despite its redeeming quality in terms of the control mechanisms, since the important aspect is to develop innumerable actions to respond in line with expectations, as expressed by another research participant:

We do not have up-to-date data on the issues that affect students, and in this system, it is good to have everything backed up to properly handle the documentation. We need to regulate the activities, and for that, we have created working groups with other organizations to get the message and the appropriate information. We have also made a compendium of the things we do, to justify our work and reduce the workload.

Finally, we consider it relevant to examine the ways in which the deployed psychological languages are associated with specific forms of action provided in the *Model of Operation* (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2016). In this way, the so-called lines of action provided in this document are constituted as “a position and a moment in which the professional of the DECE is located to identify and guide the process or processes that are desirable for implementation without the final result of the process implying not developing subsequent actions” (p. 21). As shown in Figure 5, a series of consecutive actions to be carried out within the DECE framework are grouped within the framework of educational inclusion. Visually expressed in a spiral with no start or end, they account for the need to carry out actions of promotion and prevention, detection, intervention, and follow-up on a subject who, ironically, is positioned individually, without the presence of collective ties to guide it in the search for comprehensive development.

Figure 5

Lines of Action for the Operation of the DECE



Source: Ministry of Education of Ecuador (2016).

Regarding the excerpt presented in the previous paragraph, we consider the notion of *posture* to be particularly relevant, since it entails a specific arrangement of bodies in space for professionals and even guides the gestures, tone, and form of approach that must be deployed when linking with other actors through these lines of action (Figure 5). It is in this context that a ritualization of professional activity operates, expressed as a moral technology, as it crosses the boundaries of the desirable/undesirable, correct/incorrect, adequate/inadequate. For example, to deploy intervention practices, it is argued that:

The intervention involves *approaching* the identified person *in a friendly manner, without prior value judgments and with a high level of assertiveness, empathy, and resilience* so that the situation the student is experiencing can be assessed, from their own reality. It is important to remember that the professionals of the DECE *are not authorized* to structure clinical diagnoses; however, to have *an adequate intervention*, it is necessary to assess the different areas that may be involved in the problematic situation at a personal, family, academic, and social level, identifying strengths and weaknesses of the person and the context. (Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2016, p. 27; emphasis added by the authors)

We consider that the discursive and material effect that these performance modalities generate not only leads to the technical regulation of the task, but also allows the professional to renounce intuitive, experiential, and evaluative criteria, so that they can guide their actions using the scientific tools validated by their own discipline and even from an unfolding of their own corporeality in consonance with the knowledge that they proclaim and distribute. The rationality and neutrality with which this management language is deployed to promote control functions from a primary distrust of the professional that translates into stereotyped recommendations that do not consider the contexts or the subjects of the interaction, where an open attitude and abstention of value judgments constitute the performative paths to be followed by the professional in front of the students.

Once any unfavorable event, problem, or risk situation that disrupts the normal development of the student has been identified, it is necessary that whoever detected it maintains an **open attitude** to analyze the case, **refraining** from making value judgments, diagnoses, or discriminatory attitudes (for ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, way of dressing or acting, family situation, academic performance, orientation, etc.; Ministry of Education of Ecuador, 2016, p. 25).

Finally, the deployment of these new management and control modalities opens spaces for nostalgia, allowing us to appreciate, from a microphysical dimension, the true value of other forms of action. Along with the optimism of a scientific-technical rationality that orderly and systematically arranges guidelines for professionals, the desire for freedom and the autonomy to carry out the work coexist. In those same shadows, what is supposedly an aid to achieving certain educational purposes operates with increasing strength as a form of control, demand, and sanction that, from a distance and *in situ*, is deployed with ceaseless and unstoppable pressure.

Being old school, I am nostalgic for the freedom that we used to have from the DOBE, from that old DECE, where certain things were not regulated, but I think that the psychologists had the responsibility of keeping the school in order. So, I was in charge of the school running smoothly. We were the heart of the institution [...] Before, it was the church, then we were the heart of the institution. Then, blood from that heart nourishes the ones at the top, the directors, as well as the teachers, the students, and the entire institution. But now the institutional heart, which is the DECE, is watered down.⁴ The heart does not belong to that body; it belongs to the districts. That body waters down the information and it does not do it in a good way,

⁴ In the context of everyday Ecuadorian language, the expression *regado* [watered down] refers to the spilling of a fluid.

since there is a lot of pressure on us and from us, for it is not a disciplinary mask of help; rather, it acts as a mask of demand and sanction.

Discussion

The emergence of the Student Counseling Departments in Ecuador was a response to the effects of a series of global economic, political, cultural, and technological changes, as well as new directions promoted by the rationality of the state established under Rafael Correa's (2007-2017) government. This public policy organization, through its principles, objectives, and techniques, seeks to confront a complex, fragmented, and uncertain world, while attempting to radically distance itself from previous ways of addressing the psychological and social dimensions of the students in the Ecuadorian educational system. It is in the name of integrality, a complex amalgam of educational policy aspirations, that a path is traced, from an approach focused on students' intellectual capacity to a model that seeks to integrate the emotional, relational, and value dimensions of the subjects in training. This integrality acquires a regulatory function in the legal-normative language that promotes and maintains it, but also in the ways of conceiving the problems to be addressed in the educational scenario and in the actions that must be deployed to solve them.

The Student Counseling Departments emerged in 2016 within the framework of the tensions caused by the processes of educational neoliberalization on a global-local scale, specifically in the new constitutional and political architecture generated by Rafael Correa's government to differentiate and oppose some of the logic promoted by international organizations in Latin America and Ecuador. A discursive and ideational barrier to fulfilling this goal was the novel incorporation and recontextualization of the *sumak kawsay* philosophy from the indigenous nations in the agendas and government programs developed during the decade when Correa ruled Ecuador. This integration operates as an attempt to articulate a view of education, subject, and subjectivity that is qualitatively different from that promoted by the neoliberal order, as well as a differentiating element of the internal tensions that Ecuadorian education has historically faced. However, we have shown that its conceptual value and the alternative ways of conceiving educational practices and relations that unfold from it are relegated to a scientific-technical rationality that, protected by the principles of classical management theories, seeks to organize the chaos of school institutions by renouncing intuitive and situated ways of understanding and acting in the face of certain events.

In this sense, the emergence of the DECE and their respective technical documents upon which their principles and modalities of intervention are based sheds light on a redefinition of the labor market and of the professionals in charge of realizing the aspirations defined in this state rationale, as well as on a qualitative change in the epistemes and procedures to be deployed to address psychosocial problems. In particular, the adoption of scientific-technical criteria for resource and organizational management was intended to guide, model, and control the responses that educational institutions should provide to students by establishing a broad set of routes and protocols that will make them transparent and optimize the forms of professional performance. In a way, this *protocolization*, promoted by educational policy organization, contributes to a preliminary outline of forms of accountability through the actions and omissions of some educational actors. This should be addressed in future research that explores how these and other regulations are recontextualized in specific contexts.

From a historical perspective, the DECE are presented as a strategy to overcome some of the restrictions of its vestigial organization, the DOBE. As shown schematically in Table 4, we assert that although there are relevant changes in terms of objectives, professional structure, the implementation and deployment of resources to ensure coverage, and even in the modes of

operation, what remains, under the circumstances, is a biomedical understanding of the subject and human subjectivity and of ways to intervene in a planned manner to respond to specific rationalities. In this context, we consider it relevant how, in the name of a Cartesian and liberally oriented psychological language, forms of intervention are constructed that seek to atomistically and aseptically adjust the subjects to the ways of a society that, even with recognized complexities, seems to have no responsibility in the generation of the psychological and social problems faced by students and their families. In this context, the subject outlined by the DECE is placed in a continuous circle of calculations that will (dis)allow its adjustment to the dynamics of a society that requires full inclusion. At this point, we wonder if the same logic of *sumak kawsay* would not allow us to overcome this scientism that inhibits alternative ways of thinking about the complexities of human life in contemporary societies, or if a genuinely Latin American perspective would shed light on how to problematize educational events and articulate solutions that are respectful of Ecuador’s broad socio-cultural diversity.

Table 4

Transition from DOBE to DECE

Scope	DOBE	DECE
Objectives	Addressing physical health, mental health, and behavioral issues	Addressing promotional and preventive health processes; the guarantee and restitution of rights
Structure	Psychologists-Medical-Odontologists-Nurses-Social Workers	Educational and clinical psychologists - social workers - related professions
Coverage	Deregulation of the number of hired professionals Restricted to each institution’s economic possibilities	Regulation of the number of hired professionals Restricted to the number of students at each institution according to technical criteria
Operation	Predominance of decisions based on professional criteria (experiential, intuitive, and moral sources)	Predominance of decisions based on scientific-technical criteria (standards, protocols, and action routes)
Orientation	Biomedical, with preventive and curative practices	Biomedical, with preventive, promotional, and inclusive practices

Regarding the above, and in relation to the genealogical perspective that supports this research, it is interesting to observe the conflict that unfolds from the buried knowledge of the *sumak kawsay* philosophy and the scientificity that has colonized the educational policy discourses. The commitment to regulations provided by the DECE is built on an appeal to pro-integrality discourses based on the principles of *Buen Vivir*. However, the construction and implementation of the mechanisms are guided by the criteria of transparency, accountability, and optimization based on standards and technologies of the neoliberal order. Even though coherence is not an end in itself, it is important to indicate the recurrent tension that emerges in contemporary educational policies

regarding the existing imbalance between the heterogeneity of the discourses (ways of representing/projecting) and the homogeneity of the genres (ways of doing). Particularly in the context of the emergence of the DECE and, more broadly, in the legal-normative framework built in Ecuador during the last decade, this tension shows how the philosophical principles of the indigenous nations may have been tactically employed for the formulation of a new discursive order that is committed to Ecuador's plurinationality, but is adjusted in power relations through the mechanisms that exercise global control over the educational systems from the neoliberal imaginary. We think that, for this reason, it is necessary to prepare a critical history of supranational organizations' participation in Ecuador's educational policy agendas and programs, closely examining the ambiguities between neoliberalism and the perspectives that have been articulated from the socialism of the 21st century, as well as the way in which both gain and/or give ground in the struggle of ideas.

Similarly, we consider it necessary to examine in greater detail how the apparent rationality with which decision-making processes are developed adjusts (or not) to the educational, psychosocial, and sociocultural needs of school-age children and adolescents in Ecuador. The technical-administrative criteria used to assign professionals to schools pose a series of challenges that, while protecting the economic dimensions of public spending on education through allocation according to the number of students, do not sufficiently address the problems resulting from the structural conditions of poverty that exist in many areas of Ecuador, particularly in the Amazon region. Furthermore, given the predominance of psychology professionals both in the DOBE and in its updated form, the DECE, we assert that it is necessary to ask ourselves if they, and by extension the deployment of their knowledge and practices, are indicated to promote integrality and *Buen Vivir* within educational institutions. What is the rationale for assuming this imperative need to position them at the forefront of these processes of educational change? What knowledge do these professionals have that is so essential to spread in Ecuadorian schools? Are professionals specialized in psychological knowledge the only ones who are required for the development of integrality and *Buen Vivir*? Should the educational communities be guided and commanded from this expertise to achieve the desired educational goals?

Finally, this research, in addition to contributing to political analysis in the educational arena, also invites us to think in broader terms about the general political processes in Ecuador. In this context, we leave the question open as to the political possibilities of the principles of *sumak kawsay* in contemporary global capitalism and in the country's recently displayed internal tensions, as well as the need for epistemological observation of the creative ways in which its principles are incorporated into Ecuador's political agenda.

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