



Social Enterprise in Ecuador: Institutionalization and Types of Popular and Solidarity Organizations in the Light of Political Embeddedness

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is part of a series of Working Papers produced under the International Comparative Social Enterprise Models (ICSEM) Project.

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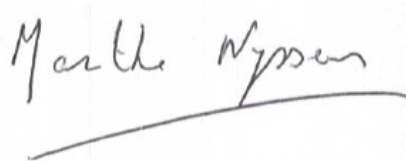
As intermediary products, ICSEM Working Papers provide a vehicle for a first dissemination of the Project's results to stimulate scholarly discussion and inform policy debates. A list of these papers is provided at the end of this document.

First and foremost, the production of these Working Papers relies on the efforts and commitment of Local ICSEM Research Partners. They are also enriched through discussion in the framework of Local ICSEM Talks in various countries, Regional ICSEM Symposiums and Global Meetings held alongside EMES International Conferences on Social Enterprise. We are grateful to all those who contribute in a way or another to these various events and achievements of the Project.

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1. INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

This paper is part of the ICSEM project, which aims to build a typology of social enterprises at the international level in collaboration with research teams from all over the world (see www.iap-socent.be/icsem-project). One of the main axes of the project aims to compare social enterprise models worldwide and their respective institutionalization processes.

It is important to underline that the notion of “social enterprise” is unusual in Ecuador. Social actors and practitioners engaged in promoting alternative economic models (not linked to the private capitalistic model nor to the public statist model) have recognized themselves through historically established concepts (e.g. cooperativism and associations) or more recent expressions such as the “popular and solidarity economy”. The latter emerged from theoretical and conceptual contributions by Latin American scholars (e.g. Coraggio 1999; Razeto 1984; Singer 2000) who analyzed practices of production, exchange, consumption of goods and services, and finance not driven by the sole purpose of profit maximization. The concept of solidarity economy also gained relevance within the public debate through the rise of anti-neoliberalism and anti-globalization activism by civil society organizations in the last three decades, and more particularly in the aftermath of the World Social Forum in 2001.

Moreover, since the second half of the 2000s, the rise of the so-called “new left” governments in Latin America (Ellner 2012) encouraged particular trajectories of conceptual construction and institutionalization of the solidarity economy (Coraggio 2011; Hillenkamp and Wanderley 2015; Lemaître et al. 2011). The institutionalization of the solidarity economy is considered as a part of a project of state transformation driven by an apparent post-neoliberal turn (Ettliger and Hartmann 2015; Molyneux 2008). In this context, since 2008, the term of “popular and solidarity economy” (*economía popular y solidaria*) has been the concept used by Ecuadorian state officials for public policy design and implementation as well as bureaucratic intervention (Nelms 2015). Due to its heuristic relevance, and since it draws close to the EMES social enterprise theoretical framework (Defourny and Nyssens 2013), the “popular and solidarity economy” (for simplification, hereafter referred to by its Spanish acronym, EPS) will be the object of study in the Ecuadorian case for the ICSEM Project.

The aim of this paper is threefold. First, we present a synthetic theoretical framework concerning institutionalization and the concept of embeddedness (section 2). Through an institutionalist and historical perspective (Polanyi 1944), we review the main historical traditions that led to a political and legal recognition of EPS initiatives in Ecuador as well as their enrollment in public policies. Section 3 drafts four models of EPS organizations, each drawn from one of the sources of institutionalization previously presented. Through a synthetic analysis, in the light of the ideal-type proposed by EMES (Defourny and Nyssens 2013) and the works of Hillenkamp and Laville (2015), we identify some distinctive features of the different models regarding

their legal forms, type of mission, governance structure, and resources. These models are also illustrated in different fields of activity, both established and emerging in the Ecuadorian landscape. We conclude by some final considerations regarding the social enterprise and solidarity economy research agenda.

2. EPS INSTITUTIONALIZATION IN THE LIGHT OF POLITICAL EMBEDDEDNESS

The question of institutionalization opens very diverse analytical perspectives in social sciences. There are different approaches to what embodies an institution and so various methods of analysis of institutionalization processes. In general, institutionalization could refer to what brings stabilization and recurrence of particular socioeconomic practices (Salamon and Anheier 1998)—in the present case, emerging SE initiatives that do not aim at accumulation in the capitalist sense.

From an international comparative perspective, a large number of studies have examined how a variety of institutional factors across different contexts shape the economic initiatives that are not driven by the sole purpose of profit maximization. According to the social origins approach (Kerlin 2010), the influential factors shaping social enterprises (SE) are civil society, state capacity, market functioning and international aid. Kerlin's main argument is that the relative strength of the aforementioned factors—and their combinations—engenders various models of SE in a given context. Moreover, Kerlin (2013) underlines that, at the macro level, significant differences between the institutional contexts of developing countries and industrialized countries result in distinctive features determining the emergence of SE. In this regard, Scarlato (2013: 1271) argues that “market mechanisms working poorly, low state capacity, different religious and cultural traditions, the pervasive role of international agencies and massive problems connected to poverty and inequality” could explain the differences between the existing but also the emerging SE models across different geographical regions.

In another register, following the public action approach, literature considers social and solidarity economy (SSE) as those initiatives located between the private and public spheres given that those mostly private organizations can contribute to the definition of issues of general interest because of their multiple objectives (including a political goal) and through their practices (Laville 2005; Lemaître et al. 2011). This premise thus refers to the potential ability of SSE organizations to create public spaces (Habermas 1986, 1997), while overcoming a formal and deterministic separation between economy and politics (Fraser 1990). It is, in fact, the relations between these two spheres, forged in the practices of SSE organizations, which might make them a suitable field to operationalize a project of democratization of the economy (Hillenkamp and Laville 2015)—hence the importance of analyzing SSE institutionalization processes in different contexts.

Various scholars (Castelao Caruana and Srnc 2012; Coraggio 2011; Defourny et al. 1999) point out that the phenomenon of SSE institutionalization is related to the evolution of public policies. According to them, analyzing institutionalization includes

studying the building process of legislation and state apparatus as part of the environment in which SSE organizations operate. Indeed, this approach mostly focuses on how the institutional environment shapes the goals and practices of SSE organizations in a given context. More precisely, the analysis of SSE institutionalization focuses here on the various ways in which organizations adopt legal frameworks, programs, and public policies and, to a lesser extent, on the ways in which those organizations modify the existing structures that recognize and develop mechanisms to support SSE initiatives. Nevertheless, this approach might neglect the fact that the relations between SSE organizations and their institutional environment—a set of norms, at various scales and in different registers, enshrined in law or not (Hillenkamp and Laville 2015)—rarely occur in a one-sided way.

In this regard, scholars such as Vaillancourt (2009) and Laville et al. (2012), opposing the institutional contingency theory (according to which the influence is only one-sided, with institutional frameworks influencing organizations), underline that SSE initiatives may influence their institutional frameworks and thus contribute to the development of public policies. In Latin America, a large amount of theoretical and empirical work in different disciplines (e.g. research by RILESS, coordinated by José Luis Coraggio, Luiz Inácio Gaiger, Paul Singer and Jean-Louis Laville) has been devoted to examining SSE institutionalization and the public dimension of what can be considered as “new political subjects” (e.g. the social movements and SSE organizations). Institutionalization refers here to how SSE organizations enroll in public action. Scholars in this field have often focused their analysis on the micro-organizational level rather than on the macro-institutional one (Sousa and Toye 2014). However, some authors (e.g. Hillenkamp and Wanderley 2015; Lemaître 2009) have adopted both approaches to study the building process of SSE public policies. Those policies can be either the result of a proactive strategy merely driven by the state (Hintze 2012), or the outcome of a relation—in tension—between state intervention and SSE organizations (Lemaître 2009).

The latter argument refers to the approach of **political embeddedness** (Lemaître 2009), which puts forward the hypothesis that the interactions between SSE initiatives and their institutional context are relations of **mutual influence**. Political embeddedness refers to the ability of SSE organizations to enroll in the public debate (in the terms of Habermas 1986), to act as a political actor, and more precisely to lead to the development of public policies. Hence, this approach prompts to examine the ability of SSE organizations to enable public action.

Following a review of the existing literature on the social and solidarity economy and—more precisely—on the popular and solidarity economy in Ecuador, a content analysis of a series of documents (e.g. legislations, organizations’ activity reports and public authorities’ communications), and data analysis from semi-structured interviews,¹ we

¹ From April to June 2015, we conducted semi-structured interviews with key actors: a) leaders or members of EPS initiatives; b) representatives of intermediary organizations (mainly NGOs) and networks advocating the interests and projects of EPS initiatives in the public sphere; and c) state officials and policy makers. We selected interviewees both among participants in the meetings held during the redaction of the Constitution in 2008 and the Law of Popular and Solidarity Economy (LOEPS) in 2011, and among those who did not participate in those processes. The objective of this choice was to minimize a selection

argue that the Ecuadorian organizations that nowadays recognize themselves as part of EPS originate in **four institutional sources**:

- a) The **cooperative tradition**, which has been mostly institutionalized *via* the state since the first half of the twentieth century (Da Ros 2007).
- b) A **popular associations tradition**, which has developed since 1970 in rural and urban areas as a response to conditions of exclusion and precariousness, and which, during the 1980s and 1990s, was supported by grassroots NGOs, international cooperation and the Catholic Church (Andino 2013; Calvo and Morales 2013).
- c) **Social movements**, originating mainly in indigenous communities, as well as among women, migrants, and environmentalists groups, and which emerged from a common objective of confrontation in the public sphere about the effects of a neoliberal state model in the late 1980s and 1990s (Scarlato 2013), and led to the networking of a variety of social actors bearing a political project of transformation.
- d) The **new institutional framework**, which set off the creation and implementation of legal arrangements and public policymaking, since the adoption of the new Constitution in 2008 and the LOEPS in 2011, and which resulted in the emergence and the multiplication of new forms of entrepreneurial ventures trying to combine individual and collective forms.

Through an institutionalist and diachronic overview (Polanyi 1944), we present below the institutional trajectory observed in each tradition. We show how institutional frameworks concerning political arrangements, at various levels and in different registers, have historically enabled or limited collective action. We also examine how EPS initiatives have in turn politically embedded their practices in public action, thereby influencing the current public policies. We operationalized this concept of “political embeddedness” through the use of three criteria: i) the recognition and participation of EPS initiatives in the public debate, ii) the setting up of a political actor acknowledged in the public sphere, and iii) EPS organizations’ involvement in the field of public policies design (Lemaître, 2009).

2.1. The cooperative tradition

Since its origins, during the first half of the 20th century, Ecuadorian cooperativism has been a heterogeneous field in terms of nature and scale of its activities (Da Ros 2007). In fact, cooperatives emerged as multiclass conglomerates, encompassing small industrialists, urban workers, middle-class merchants, employees and employers, with the aim of granting mutual aid and professional defense to their members, given the lack of public social programs for workers in circumstances of vulnerability. During the 1930s and the 1940s, military governments carried out a process of important institutional reforms in response to claims by impoverished indigenous populations supported by the Catholic Church and the socialist political party. The first National Cooperatives Act and the Labor Code were announced in 1937; they appeared

bias favoring an ideological position (pro-participation) at the expense of other postures involved. We combined interview data with documentary analysis to identify the events of history pointed out as essential for EPS institutionalization in Ecuador and the traditions shaping the models outlined in section 3.

alongside a series of social policies sponsored by the Ministry of Social Welfare. In this context, two main types of cooperatives have had trajectories that appear interesting in terms of their relations with the state: agricultural cooperatives and credit unions. Agricultural cooperatives were supported by the state with the aim of transforming precarious forms of production and land occupation into modern collective organizations, so as to increase productivity and contribute to the expansion of cacao and banana exports. Credit unions mostly assumed the role of providing a subsidiary financial support for the agricultural sector's development (Chiriboga 1980).

The two agrarian reforms of 1964 and 1973 fostered the merging of smallholdings and land redistribution as mechanisms suited to achieve modernization and development of an industrial economic model (Almeida 1981). The existing peasant unions regrouped under the form of cooperatives to access land. As part of this process, a series of legal and administrative developments were undertaken for the promotion of the cooperative sector. The National Cooperative Direction (*Dirección Nacional de Cooperativas*, or DNC) was created in 1961 within the Ministry of Social Welfare to design and operationalize training and technical assistance programs. Then, following a recommendation of the 49th Conference of the International Labor Organization (ILO), the National Cooperatives Act was announced in 1966; it aimed to enhance the productive reconversion of the cooperative sector towards industrialization (Da Ros 2007).

Furthermore, from the 1960s onward, the Catholic Church and the US international aid agencies (e.g. the United States Agency for International Development, or USAID); the Credit Union National Association, or CUNA; and the National Cooperative Business Association, or CLUSA financially supported the creation of legal bodies under the form of federations. The aim of these entities was the integration of cooperatives by fields of activity and their expansion (Acosta 2006). According to Hübenthal (1987), the number of cooperatives rose from 2,280 organizations operating in 1963 to 4,378 cooperatives in 1972. Most of those organizations encompassed middle and upper middle-class people, motivated not necessarily by principles of cooperation and mutuality, but by the incentives set up by the government (e.g. tariff exemptions on imported inputs). Thus, despite the proliferation of production cooperatives, the aforementioned legal measures came to weaken the local and traditional forms of production (Miño 2013). In fact, the predominant model of agricultural cooperativism fostered by the state reinforced the dominance of established rent-seeking elites engaged mainly in the banana agro-export model (Larrea and North 1997).

Beside production cooperatives, another type of cooperatives—namely savings and credit cooperatives, or credit unions—have an interesting historical trajectory in Ecuador. Although most of them arose during the 1960s, it was during the oil boom of the 1970s that these organizations experienced their most dynamic development (Da Ros 2007). Between 1973 and 1982, the number of members of saving and credit cooperatives increased from 87,000 to 445,000 (Miño 2013). During this period of numerical growth, the members' profile also underwent a transformation, from a predominantly rural population to an urban population composed of middle and upper

social classes that benefited from revenues resulting from the oil sector (Miño 2013). Furthermore, cooperatives represented a response to the needs of segments of the population (an urban informal workforce) excluded from the traditional banking system (Jácome et al. 2004). Over time, savings and credit cooperatives gradually weakened their links with the original territories and communities in which they had emerged. A geographic concentration in the major Ecuadorian cities was one of the strategies that these cooperatives implemented to compete with the private banking system (Miño 2013).

The most significant Ecuadorian financial crisis occurred in 1999; it affected the traditional banking system (e.g., according to Jácome et al. [2004], 20 banks out of 27 went bankrupt), leading to the adoption of dollarization. In the aftermath of this crisis, cooperatives emerged as a strengthened sector and most likely as an institutional alternative to the traditional banking system for new depositors who had lost confidence in formal financial institutions (Ponce 2011). In 2013, there were 907 savings and credit cooperatives, with about 5.3 million members,² operating in Ecuador (SEPS 2013).

Case studies carried out in cooperatives in the fields of production and finance (Ruiz Rivera 2014; SEPS 2013) suggest that those organizations having achieved periods of economic outperformance (related to incentives granted within the frame of modernization public policies, during the 1960s and 1970s) were more likely to prioritize economic growth, at the expenses of their initial democratic project. Due to conditions linked to the institutional environment, which demanded consistent levels of growth, new challenges concerning governance were not sufficiently taken into account by their members. Singer (2006) suggests that the lack of adaptation of these organizations' governance mechanisms while scaling up might have led to opportunistic behaviors, which resulted in a centralization of power among the founding members and eventually a deviation from their original core values and objectives.

To sum up, cooperatives have historically become "functionalist" actors, serving the interests of socioeconomic elites, and standardized "implementers" of governmental programs. Those organizations have taken the risk of weakening their autonomy by historically entering into agreements with other actors (including governments) and raising capital from external sources, without systematically ensuring that the terms of such agreements did not threaten democratic control by their members. Nevertheless, in spite of a likely inconsistency between Ecuadorian cooperatives' principles and their historical development (Da Ros 2007), these actors explicitly identify themselves nowadays as one of the original and legitimate forms of solidarity economy organizations, because of their trajectory and capability of meeting the needs of workers.

² One person can be a member of several unions simultaneously. In the highland region (Sierra), it is estimated that each member of a savings and credit cooperative belongs simultaneously to two additional cooperatives (SEPS 2013).

2.2. Popular associations: support structures and EPS recognition in the public debate

Practices of production, exchange, and financing based on principles such as horizontal solidarity and reciprocity can be traced back in Ecuador to the Amerindian communities. For instance, the *minga* or the *ayni* are collective activities (still practiced in the Andean region) that consist of joint work and mutual aid among community members or families during times of need or crisis (Da Ros 2007; Gleghorn 2013). Those practices, which were usually considered to belong to the informal sector, still to be modernized, progressively started to be recognized as forms of popular economy (Coraggio 1999). Popular economy practices are rooted mainly in the rural economy, but they also appear in the urban economy as a means to fight exclusion from the employment market (Hillenkamp 2009). These initiatives, be they individual or collective, did not necessarily adopt the legal form of cooperatives; they remained mostly informal. They sought to ensure, through the use of their members' workforce and the available resources, the securitization of their livelihoods (Sarria Icaza and Tiriba 2006).

The 1970s was a decade characterized by state programs aiming to foster modernization and industrial development on the basis of an economy relying on oil extraction and exploitation. As in many other Latin American countries, such as Bolivia and Brazil (Hillenkamp 2008; Lemaître et al. 2011), during these years, the expansion and institutionalization of EPS practices within the public debate were supported by civil society structures, such as national and international non-profit organizations. Some of these were religiously affiliated organizations, and they were often financed by development cooperation programs. The "Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio" (FEPP) and "Gruppo Salinas" could be considered as representative examples of grassroots NGOs led by ecclesiastical communities in the aftermath of land reform. Their mission was to assemble and organize producers in conditions of precariousness or exclusion by providing them with direct support in the form of organizational and technical assistance (Korovkin 2000; Petras and Veltmeyer 2001).

Those **support organizations** identified themselves with the critical thinking, advocated in Latin America, which opposed the modernization model: the dependence theory, which denounced an unequal exchange, in the international trade, at the disadvantage of countries producing raw materials, such as Ecuador (Peemans 2002). Similarly, support organizations driven by the Catholic Church and associated with the liberation theology³ highlighted the importance of creating mechanisms of participation targeting marginalized segments of the population, and aiming mostly to involve them in the decision-making process (Espinosa 2012). These support organizations were initially decisive for the empowerment of producers. Then intermediary organizations made it possible, for popular economy initiatives, to enroll gradually in the public sphere

³ According to Espinosa (2010: 85), the Catholic Church organized in 1962 the Second Vatican Council, which launched a formal appeal for the opening of the Church. Progressive theological ideas were discussed. Following the Council, the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967), on the development of peoples, was issued; it focused on the Third World. Pope Paul VI set up the Pontifical Commission "Justice and Peace", which was entrusted with the task of "(...) promoting the progress of the poorest nations, promoting social justice among nations, giving to those 'less developed' the necessary assistance so that they [could] achieve their progress themselves" (Pope Paul VI, 1967: 5).

through two types of actions. First, they shared their visions and methodologies regarding modes of organization, and they offered training mechanisms and technical support services (Lemaître 2009); and secondly, they become interlocutors passing on the popular economy initiatives' demands at the local and national levels. The intensification of the actions carried by those support organizations has been a source of expansion of SE during the 1980s and 1990s. The term of "solidarity economy" began to appear with increasing frequency in the civil society debate (Calvo and Morales 2013). Furthermore, popular associations were gradually integrated into a series of projects aiming at poverty alleviation (Petras 2008).

As in various other Latin American countries, popular economy initiatives addressed different types of exclusion, such as exclusion from formal trade channels or from access to credit (Muñoz 2013). Regarding the issue of commercialization, while national policies on import substitution during the 1970s tended to favor the local market, neoliberal policies in the 1980s and 1990s supported the integration into the international market (Acosta 2012). In this regard, Espinosa (2012) shows that popular associations in urban and rural areas, mostly driven by local NGOs and church communities, then started incorporating community production and trading practices in their activities (these activities were subsequently—more precisely, during the 1990s—articulated into fair trade networks). "Tiendas Camari Solidarias" and the "Maquita Cushunchic" Foundation (MCCH) provide a good illustration hereof. These organizations emerged respectively in 1981 and 1985. "Tiendas Camari Solidarias" is an initiative focused on the development of community trading circuits, led by suburban groups of Quito and the progressive Catholic Church (Calvo and Morales 2013). As for MCCH, since its foundation, this organization has aimed to organize producers and consumers from the indigenous and popular sectors to create public spaces in which direct commercialization could happen, such as neighborhood and community stores, consumer cooperatives, local fairs, and exchange networks (Espinosa 2009). MCCH arose as a concrete response from the popular sectors to the deterioration of their livelihoods provoked by the structural adjustment policies in the neoliberal model; it aimed at supporting self-managed production organizations and direct trading mechanisms to cope with the arrival of imported goods competing with local production in the aftermath of the commercial opening of the country (Castilla 2015).

In order to achieve their mission, support organizations became fully invested in two types of action: first, they supported the setting up of internal public spaces, particularly democratic structures such as general assemblies; secondly, they fostered the creation of micro public spaces based on proximity (e.g. neighborhood fairs *qua* meeting places for generating income but also for discussing and debating issues of mutual concern), thus leading the supported organizations in their evolution from survival tactics to more political strategies. Support organizations also played the role of interlocutors between public authorities and popular associations within intermediate public spaces during the 1980s and 1990s, claiming the implementation of redistributive sectorial public policies (Andino 2013). Although support organizations fostered processes of deliberation and collective consultation within the initiatives they supported, the economic fragility of these initiatives raises the question of the extent to which an objective of economic reinforcement remained predominant, to the expenses of any political objective.

2.3. Networking and social movements: the construction of a political actor

In Ecuador, the democratic transition—i.e. the end of military governments—occurred in 1979; the shift to an economic model based on a self-regulated market and the adoption of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) driven by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) started a few years later. This dual process of implementation of a democratic order and a market order led to reforms involving both the reduction of the state apparatus and the expansion of the market sphere in all socioeconomic activities (Weyland 2004). National policies thus focused on fiscal discipline and sectorial reforms to restore competition between public and private providers. In addition, selective privatization of public enterprises, the establishment of free exchange rates, the prioritization of the external debt repayment, financial market deregulation, foreign investment, and the flexibility of labor markets were major elements in the governmental agenda (Hey and Klak 1999). Under the impulse of the Washington Consensus, at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, such shift has been widespread in Latin America. Moreover, deregulation reforms in the financial system led to the most significant crisis of the banking system, which in turn resulted in 2000 in the adoption of the dollar as the country's official currency (Acosta 2006).

During the 1980s and the 1990s, the indigenous communities demonstrated their ability to mobilize forces of resistance and opposition to the neoliberal agenda; some of them were even at the origin of the most dynamic social movements in Latin America (Petras and Veltmeyer 2006). Just like the labor movement (trade unions), the indigenous movement often had to deal with state repression or cooptation mechanisms by the political parties in power during the 1990s and the early 2000s (Disney and Williams 2014). These factors limited the impact of these two movements (mostly the labor movement) in the EPS institutionalization. Despite the negative factors, in the 1990s, popular associations undertook a phase of **networking**. Indeed, due to the social crisis that resulted from neoliberal policies and the continued lack of social protection systems, grassroots NGOs emerged, creating concrete spaces of “collective social practice” (Sarria Icaza and Tiriba 2006). For example, in 1991, under the impulse of Maquita Cushunchic (see previous section), the Latin American Network of Community Trading (*Red Latinoamericana de Comercialización Comunitaria*, or RELACC) arose with the aim of articulating popular associations and community production forms through a regional structure for commercialization, as an alternative to the inequality of exchanges in the international trade. RELACC operated at three levels—those of local, regional and supra-regional trading networks (Espinosa 2010)—and it was one of the sources of the creation of the Ecuadorian movement of social and solidarity economy (*Movimiento de Economía Social y Solidaria del Ecuador*, or MESSE) during the first half of the 2000s (Aguilar 2014).

Conceptually, the term “solidarity economy” spread during the 1990s through the creation of academic networks, conferences and international meetings in South America. This notion was then understood, by both the scientific field and practitioners, as referring to concepts such as “popular associations” and “cooperativism”. Yet, the

term of “solidarity economy” also introduced a normative reference; it also hints at the fact that “another way of producing, exchanging, consuming, and financing based on non-utilitarian principles, institutions and practices is possible” (Jubeto Ruiz et al. 2014). Popular associations found in social movements a way of expanding new forms of collective action against neoliberal policies and of supporting the quest for more radical social and political change (Bebbington 1993). Indeed, social movements mostly paved the way for the further promotion of a plural economy. More importantly, these experiences contributed to a redefinition of development that supports principles of solidarity and reciprocity as an alternative to the hegemonic economic model, which generates inequality and poverty (Escobar 2010).

Moreover, Scarlato (2013) unveils that, unlike popular associations, which were mainly oriented toward work and income generation, the organizations that became involved in social movements were concerned with rights, collective capabilities, and the realization of an alternative development model. Those initiatives, gathered around issues such as the struggle against neoliberal policies, contributed to the construction of the international debate on alternative development paradigms. “*Buen vivir*” —which literally means “living well”—is the term that arose in Latin America to describe a vision of society that constitutes an **alternative to mainstream development** (Gudynas 2011). Political platforms (e.g. women’s groups, environmentalists, agro-ecologists, etc.) supported popular resistance processes, thus stimulating a renewal of popular associations and their embeddedness in social movements, which in turn gave rise to intense collective mobilization. Indeed, this articulation and this interdependency between popular organizations and social movements opened a path for SE institutionalization through supporting the adoption, in 2008, of an innovative Constitution, which recognizes the existence of a plural economy, that includes private and public forms of economic organization as well as a popular and solidarity economy sector (Nelms 2015).

The **Ecuadorian Movement of Social and Solidarity Economy (MESSE)** provides a good illustration of this “social movements” tradition. The MESSE is a social platform that appeared in 2006. Its creation was financially and technically supported by NGOs (namely VECO, AVINA and the International Federation for Alternative Trade - IFAT), upon the initiative of two Ecuadorian fair trade actors (MCCH and RELACC), both with more than two decades of existence at the time, and umbrella organizations related to agroecology. By 2014, the platform brought together 1,300 members (individual and collective popular economy initiatives and support organizations) located in 15 of the 24 Ecuadorian provinces. Member initiatives include organic producers (or producers engaged in the transition towards organic production techniques), artisans, promoters of popular education, fishermen, community tourism initiatives, a housing cooperative, consumers, and several support entities such as NGOs. Their shared political discourse explicitly addresses social transformation, “[which is] only possible by implementing economic practices founded on reciprocity, solidarity, complementarity and cooperation in the public sphere” (Aguilar 2014). The platform provides its member organizations with training, technical assistance, and advocacy services.

The solidarity economy movement constituted one example, among others, of a process of renewal of social movements, which had weakened during the second half of the

1990s due to co-optation and instrumentalization practices on the part of the state. Scholars (De la Torre and Ortiz Lemos 2015; Ortiz Lemos 2014) argue that in Ecuador, the relations between the state and civil society have historically been marked by corporatism, which refers to the exercise of control by the state over the organizations through an apparent participatory project. Nevertheless, an autonomous part of civil society could have played an important role in the development of political and economic critical questioning during the late 1990s and 2000s. In this regard, organizations embedded in social movements recognized themselves as “concrete expressions of solidarity economy given that, beyond their economic purpose of income generation, they collectively pursue a political goal of social change” (Aguilar 2014: 60). However, the union of a series of platforms and networks into a unified political actor nowadays is only partial, and the action of each network remains limited, thus hindering any close relationship with the state (Becker 2013).

2.4. New institutional framework: EPS participation in designing public policies

As stated in the previous section, during the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s, the Ecuadorian public debate was focused on tensions concerning the failure of neoliberal policies and the persistent increase in poverty levels⁴ (Escobar 2010). After recurrent periods of political instability⁵ and dynamic social mobilization (led principally by the indigenous movement, in opposition to the free trade agreement that was then to be imminently concluded with the US, among other issues), President Rafael Correa was elected in 2006. He presented himself as a detractor of neoliberal approaches and eloquently advocated the important role of the popular and solidarity economy in the national economic system (Becker 2011). His whole approach was based on what has been called “twenty-first-century socialism”, which seeks to increase state regulation in a democratic way that does not hinder innovative private actions and citizen participation (Kennemore and Weeks 2011). Among Correa’s main proposals were his commitments to fight social injustice and poverty, and to end “party dominance” — a concept to be understood as a historical consensus among the economic and political elites and barely supported by a popular basis (Bateman 2013).

In this context, one of the most relevant actions undertaken by the government as a starting point for state transformation was the establishment of a Constituent Assembly

⁴ Poverty levels increased by 12.84% between 1995 and 1999, reaching 52.18% of the population. This increase could be correlated to punctual factors, such as “El Niño” in 1998 and the banking crisis in 1999. Regarding incomes, between 1990 and 2006, only households belonging to the highest income layers did not experience a reduction of their *per capita* income. The first eight deciles of the population experienced a reduction of their income level; households belonging to the ninth decile kept their share of income at 16.2%, while the richest decile saw their incomes increase, from 35.5% to 41.8% (Ramírez 2008).

⁵ The dismissal of President Abdala Bucaram by the Congress and the popular protests of 1997 led to a series of weak brief governments: in 2000, after one year and a half of term of office, President Jamil Mahuad was ousted by a civilian-military coup d’état. Then in 2005, popular protests overthrew President Lucio Gutiérrez after two years in office. Among the arguments explaining those episodes, Blake and Morris (2009) point out the accumulation of an external debt since the oil boom in the 1970s; the exclusion, from public action, of important segments of the population, especially indigenous groups; and corruption, patronage and corporatism.

in 2008. This Assembly's primary goal was to rewrite the national Constitution; in the new Constitution, "*Buen vivir*"⁶ is pointed out as the macro social horizon in a post-development perspective (Gudynas 2011; Acosta 2010; Chambers 2004). Through iterative working sessions, organizations and practitioners (mainly activists, community leaders, cooperatives managers, social movements and networks representatives) were consulted about issues of general interest—among which, for example, their comprehension of the popular and solidarity economy itself (Andino 2013). As a result of this process, the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution asserted significant changes from the existing economic paradigm. For example, it was the first Constitution worldwide to underline the role of nature in human well-being and to recognize its rights (Becker 2011). From this point onward, public intervention started to be designed following this new paradigm of development, in which solidarity was assumed to be part of the logics guiding public action, and opposed to a neoliberal rationale (Scarlatto 2013).

To operationalize what scholars (Escobar 2010; Yates and Bakker 2014) have called a "shift to the left" in state politics, the Law of Popular and Solidarity Economy (*Ley Orgánica de Economía Popular y Solidaria*, or LOEPS) was passed in 2011. The LOEPS is considered to result from a process of legislative co-construction: seventeen nationwide workshops were conducted, with the participation of around 1,800 representatives of the government (policy makers and public authorities) and of social movements (Espinosa 2012; Jubeto Ruiz et al. 2014). These movements (including the MESSE) got actively involved in the public sphere. Social movements and EPS networks managed to relay grassroots initiatives' demands and aspirations within those deliberative public spaces. Indeed, the process of LOEPS' redaction presented itself as a historical moment of participation targeted at those "socioeconomic alternatives that already exist, [but had often been] hidden or marginalized by the dominant economy" (Nelms 2015: 113). Thus, the new current legal framework was intended to embody the reflection of practitioners about their own initiatives as well as the position of state officials about a "socially embedded economy" and EPS' operating logics (Nelms 2015: 107).

In this context, a formal definition and a series of principles were collectively recognized as inherent in the popular and solidarity economy:

*[The popular and solidarity economy refers to] the forms of economic organization in which members, **individually or collectively**, organize and develop processes of production, exchange, trading, financing and consumption of goods and services **to satisfy their needs and generate incomes**, based on relations of solidarity, cooperation and reciprocity, **prioritizing** the work and the human being as well as the "*Buen vivir*" in harmony with nature **over profit and capital accumulation**.*

(LOEPS 2001: art. 1)

⁶ *Buen vivir* or *Sumak Kawsay* describes a collective approach to wellbeing based on respectful exchanges between humans and the natural environment, and on the promotion of collective rights as a community-based model of production (Gudynas 2011). For a more detailed description, see Acosta (2011), Radcliffe (2012) or Vega (2014).

Popular and solidarity organizations should be guided by the following principles (or shared ends):

- a) search for the “*Buen vivir*” and the common good;
- b) priority of labor over capital and of collective interests over the individual;
- c) fair trade and ethical and responsible consumption;
- d) gender equity;
- e) respect for cultural identity;
- f) self-management;
- g) social and environmental responsibility, solidarity and accountability; and
- h) equitable distribution of surplus (LOEPS 2011: art.4).

Table 1: Popular and solidarity forms of organization

Type of organization	Legal definition	According to their economic activity
Cooperatives	Organizations whose members have voluntarily joined to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs, through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise with legal personality under private law and social interest.	Production cooperatives Consumer cooperatives Housing cooperatives
	Cooperatives must comply with the principles established in the LOEPS and universal values of cooperation.	Services cooperatives (mainly transportation)
	Organizations formed by natural or legal persons who join voluntarily to perform financial intermediation activities with their members and clients.	Savings and credit cooperatives
	Organizations formed by individuals with similar or complementary economic activities, with the aim of producing, trading and consuming legal and socially necessary goods and services; ensuring the self-supplying of raw materials, tools, technology, equipment and other goods; or trading their production according to a solidarity and self-management logic based on the principles issued in the LOEPS.	Producers associations Services associations
Community organizations	Organizations or communities linked by territory, family, ethnic, cultural or gender bonds and which, by working together, carry out the production, trading, distribution and consumption of legal and socially necessary goods or services, according to a solidarity-based and self-management logic based on the principles defined in the LOEPS.	Community organizations
	Organizations formed by economic contributions of their members (savings), which are used for mutual lending.	Community banks
Popular economic units (UEPs)	Workers in the care economy, individual undertakings, family businesses, self-employed workers, retailers and craft workshops that are engaged in economic activities of production, trading of goods and provision of services.	Heterogeneous and vast segment of popular economic ventures (mainly informal)
Integration bodies	Intermediary structures for representative or economic integration at a local, provincial, regional or national level such as federations.	-
Support organizations	Foundations and non-profit corporations (mainly without economic activity) whose primary purpose is the development of and provision of training and technical assistance to EPS individual or collective initiatives.	-

Source: based on LOEPS (2011: art 9-16).

Moreover, the LOEPS (2011: art. 8) establishes a classification of EPS initiatives operating in production, exchange, consumption of goods and services and financial intermediation into four categories: a) cooperatives; b) self-managed associations; c) community organizations; and d) popular economic units. The two last categories mostly include informal initiatives, which are thus not included in national information registries. Table 1 describes each of the current legal categories and the minimum criteria established in the LOEPS for any initiative to be recognized as part of the EPS sector.

Following the current classification defined in the LOEPS, by December 2016, there were 786 savings and credit cooperatives, 2,556 non-financial cooperatives, and around 6,952 production-based associations registered and operating in Ecuador (Jácome 2016). It is also estimated that there are around 12,000 community banks and 678,000 popular economic units in the country (SEPS 2012).

2.4.1. Public policies aimed at strengthening the economic dimension

The LOEPS initiated a process of bureaucratic reform and institution-building, which involved an explicit inclusion of the popular and solidarity economy in regulatory frameworks, development agendas and the design of public policies at different levels (Nelms 2015). The National Plan for “*Buen Vivir*”, the Code of Production, the Organic Code of Territorial Organization, Autonomy and Decentralization (*Código Orgánico de Organización Territorial, Autonomía y Descentralización*, or COOTAD), the Organic Law of Food Sovereignty, among other legal instruments, explicitly encourage the promotion of popular and solidarity economy as a new field of public intervention. Moreover, the “*Revolution Agenda of the Popular and Solidarity Economy*” of 2011 establishes a set of flagship public programs and projects aimed at the promotion, coordination, and consolidation of the sector. In this regard, the expanded institutional framework comprises specific state bodies tasked with the coordination, the promotion, the control, and the financing of popular and solidarity initiatives (Table 2).

Furthermore, through the creation of the National Institute of Popular and Solidarity Economy (IEPS) and the National Corporation of Popular and Solidarity Finances (CONAFIPS), a series of policies for the promotion of the sector was defined. Overall, the current national programs aim at increasing social inclusion and alleviating poverty by strengthening the economic dimension of EPS initiatives, hence fostering entrepreneurship. Table 3 summarizes the main guidelines of current national policies.

Table 2: State institutions of EPS in Ecuador

Institution name	English translation	Mandate and mission
<i>Comité Interinstitucional</i>	Interinstitutional Committee	Formulates and coordinates EPS public policy.
<i>Corporación Nacional de Finanzas Populares y Solidarias (CONAFIPS)</i>	National Corporation of Popular and Solidarity Finances	Offers financial support, services, and training to local financial organizations.
<i>Fondo de Liquidez y Seguro de Depósitos</i>	Liquidity Fund and Deposit Insurance	Responsible for guaranteeing financial security and stability of EPS institutions.
<i>Instituto Nacional de Economía Popular y Solidaria (IEPS)</i>	National Institute of the Popular and Solidarity Economy	Provides support and training to EPS actors and works to articulate them with other state institutions.
<i>Junta de Regulación</i>	Regulatory Board	Issues regulations governing EPS entities and enforces policies issued by the Interinstitutional Committee.
<i>Ministerio Coordinador de Desarrollo Social (MCDS)</i>	Coordinating Ministry of Social Development	Umbrella ministry responsible for coordinating policy across other government bodies; MCDS representatives sit on the Regulatory Board and Interinstitutional Committee.
<i>Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social (MIES)</i>	Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion	In charge of promoting social and economic mobility, poverty alleviation, and protection for vulnerable populations.
<i>Superintendencia de la Economía Popular y Solidaria (SEPS)</i>	Super-administration of the Popular and Solidarity Economy	Responsible for supervision and control of EPS actors.
<i>Servicio Nacional de Contratación Pública (SERCOP)</i>	National Public Procurement Service	Regulation and management of public procurement procedures.

Source: Nelms (2015).

Table 3: Guidelines of EPS public policies in Ecuador

Public policies axes	Actions for operationalization	Channeling institution
Access to markets	Local governments must provide spaces and infrastructure in which EPS organizations can commercialize their goods and services (e.g. public fairs, international forums and fairs). Local governments must prioritize the outsourcing of public goods and services provision to EPS organizations (e.g. water and irrigation may be delegated to community organizations). It becomes mandatory to implement procedures and margins of preference for EPS organizations, so that they can access public procurement. Programs to promote the export of EPS products (mainly in the framework of fair trade) must be implemented.	IEPS SERCOP
Access to knowledge	Training programs based on the needs of EPS organizations in technical (oriented to industrialization) and management issues must be set up.	IEPS SEPS SERCOP
Access to financing	Central government must channel resources to local financial organizations (mainly savings and credit cooperatives) and, through them, to end beneficiaries (EPS initiatives). Financial support, services, and training must be offered to local financial organizations.	CONAFIPS

Source: based on Andino (2013); Castelao Caruana and Srnc (2012).

As aforementioned (cf. section 2.2), barriers to commercialization are an aspect that has been historically identified and encountered by EPS initiatives. According to Castelao Caruana and Srnec (2012: 723), “policies for strengthening EPS [in Ecuador] focus on the promotion of micro and small ventures capacity regarding productivity, association, efficiency and competitiveness”. More precisely, the current national programs carried out by IEPS focus on enabling EPS initiatives to access markets, productive activities, and production means. To this end, the access of EPS initiatives to financing has become one of the main objectives of the programs carried out by CONAFIPS. The main stakeholders in those programs are local financing organizations such as savings and credit cooperatives, which channel public resources and propose credit facilities to collective or individual undertakings in rural and urban areas for the acquisition of production assets and working capital (Castelao Caruana and Srnec 2012).

In addition to the promotion programs, the issues of control and supervision have a significant presence in the new EPS regulatory framework, which explicitly provides that the state will quantify, map and formalize EPS initiatives through a process of setting up of a national register. Such process was undertaken in 2012 (Jácome and Ruiz Rivera 2013), but despite several initiatives launched by different public and private entities (such as Ministries and NGOs) with the aim of mapping EPS organizations, a unified and standardized national register has not been set up yet. Within the public apparatus, the existing efforts for mapping EPS organizations revealed isolated and scattered actions, without the necessary coordination mechanisms among public entities.

To address this situation, since late 2012, the Super-administration of the Popular and Solidarity Economy (SEPS) has undertaken a process of registration and adaptation of statutes, whose initial target was cooperatives and associations. The process was based on the updating of administrative information about EPS organizations (e.g. registration of members and board of directors) and the updating of accounting and financial information in a second phase. The objective of this registration process was twofold: i) building a baseline of EPS organizations in Ecuador (at this stage, only for cooperatives and associations), and ii) enabling them to operate legally, thus enabling them to qualify for obtaining the incentives envisioned by the LOEPS (such as tax benefits) and for participating in public programs (Jácome and Ruiz Rivera 2013).

2.4.2. Evolution of EPS initiatives: rise and multiplication

The registration process was the starting point for a rise and proliferation of what we call a **new wave of popular-economy ventures**. State officials, tasked with identifying EPS, are confronted with the diversity of existing practices in terms of size and internal operating logics. Indeed, within the new institutional framework, a whole universe of collective initiatives, such as cooperatives or associations, ought to be included in public programs. Nelms (2015) argues that, when delineating and identifying EPS, there is a reliance on the part of government employees on traditional models, such as cooperatives. Yet, state officials might be more focused on the integration of informal undertakings (such as individual or family businesses and self-employed workers) that

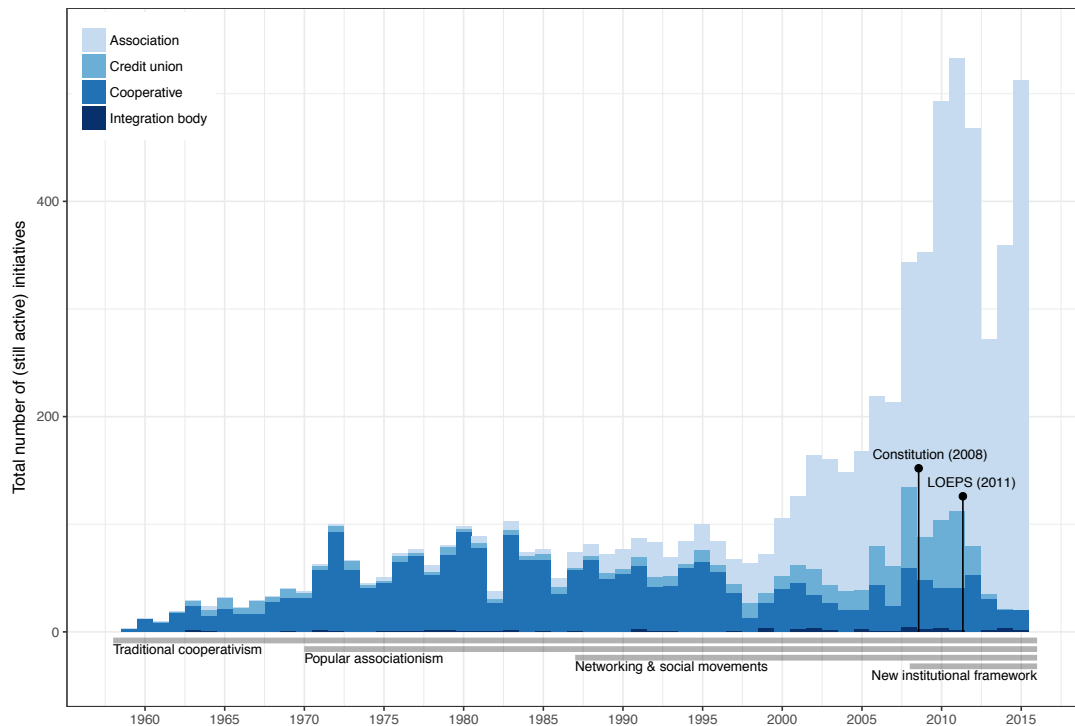
tend to be considered as being in a “very low level of development”, since fostering the process of association is one of the current priorities (Andino 2013).

In this regard, IEPS officials are focused on linking this diversity of EPS initiatives with potential markets, such as the public one, through what is called “inclusive markets” (*ferias inclusivas*) and (since 2014) the adoption of the “inclusive purchase catalog” (*catálogo dinámico inclusivo*). Inclusive markets constitute one of the current public purchasing programs targeting EPS’ potential providers; this program provides that any state institution can place an order for a particular good or service (e.g. uniforms or cleaning services) previously entrusted to private capitalist subcontractors. The order is made directly to EPS providers, without them being put in competition with other private providers such as medium and large companies. The IEPS serves as a mediator for and provider of technical assistance to EPS initiatives, so that they can fill that order. When local manufacturers are informed about a public call, they are invited to register themselves in the inclusive purchase catalog and then participate in the inclusive markets.

Since formalization is a condition for EPS initiatives to be included in this sort of programs, mostly informal undertakings producing, trading and providing goods and services tend to reorganize and register as associations in order to participate in the program. According to IEPS officials, one of the main reasons for choosing this legal form rather than the cooperative one lies in the fact that the association form helps to reduce transaction costs (e.g. costs of the procedures required to create the organization). Thus, since the implementation of the public programs mentioned above, there has been a **rise of initiatives registered under the legal form of associations**. Between 2012 and 2015, the number of associations rose from 2,839 to 5,613 (Jácome 2016). Figure 1 shows this increase in the number of registered associations in comparison to the other legal categories. It has to be underlined, though, that the newly registered associations do not necessarily function on a community-based logic or are not necessarily based on practices of democratic organization, self-management, and control. Nelms (2015) states that the current demands of bureaucratic practice seem to spur state officials to an “instrumentalization of the social [dimension]”; as a matter of fact, in order to fulfill the exigencies of reporting indicators related to employment generation, state officials tend to prioritize criteria based on size to the detriment of criteria based on principles.

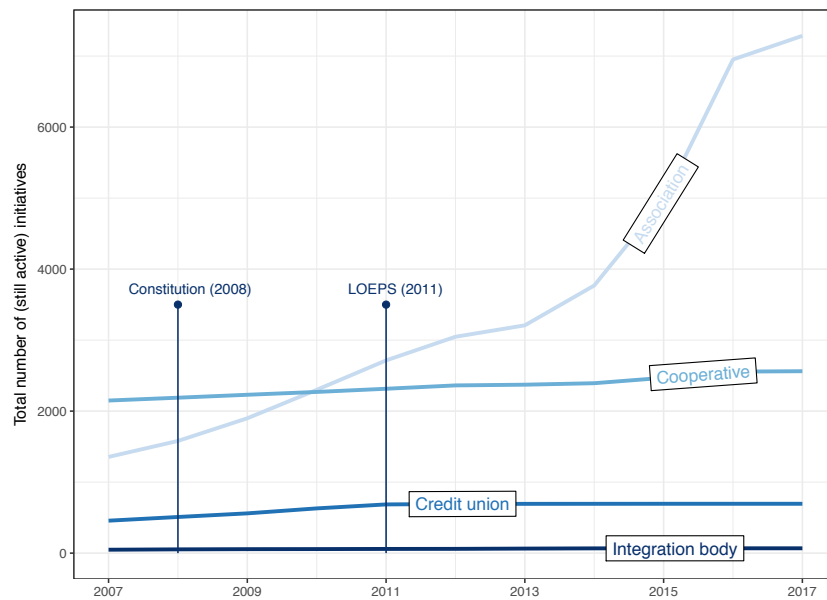
We argue that this new wave of associations reflects a pragmatic logic, stimulated by the current institutional framework and public policies. For instance, there was a significant growth between June 2015 and December 2016 (Figure 2): 3,301 organizations were registered in this period of time, 93% of which were associations that potentially might participate as providers in the programs of inclusive markets and inclusive purchase catalog. We thus argue that this phenomenon is the last source of EPS institutionalization, as the current institutional framework (which originated in the LOEPS) represents a new path of public recognition for these popular ventures.

Figure 1: Currently active registered EPS initiatives in Ecuador



Source: based on National Register of EPS organizations (SEPS 2016).

Figure 2: Currently registered EPS initiatives since LOEPS enactment



Source: based on National Register of EPS organizations (SEPS 2017).

2.5. EPS institutionalization: a process of mutual influence

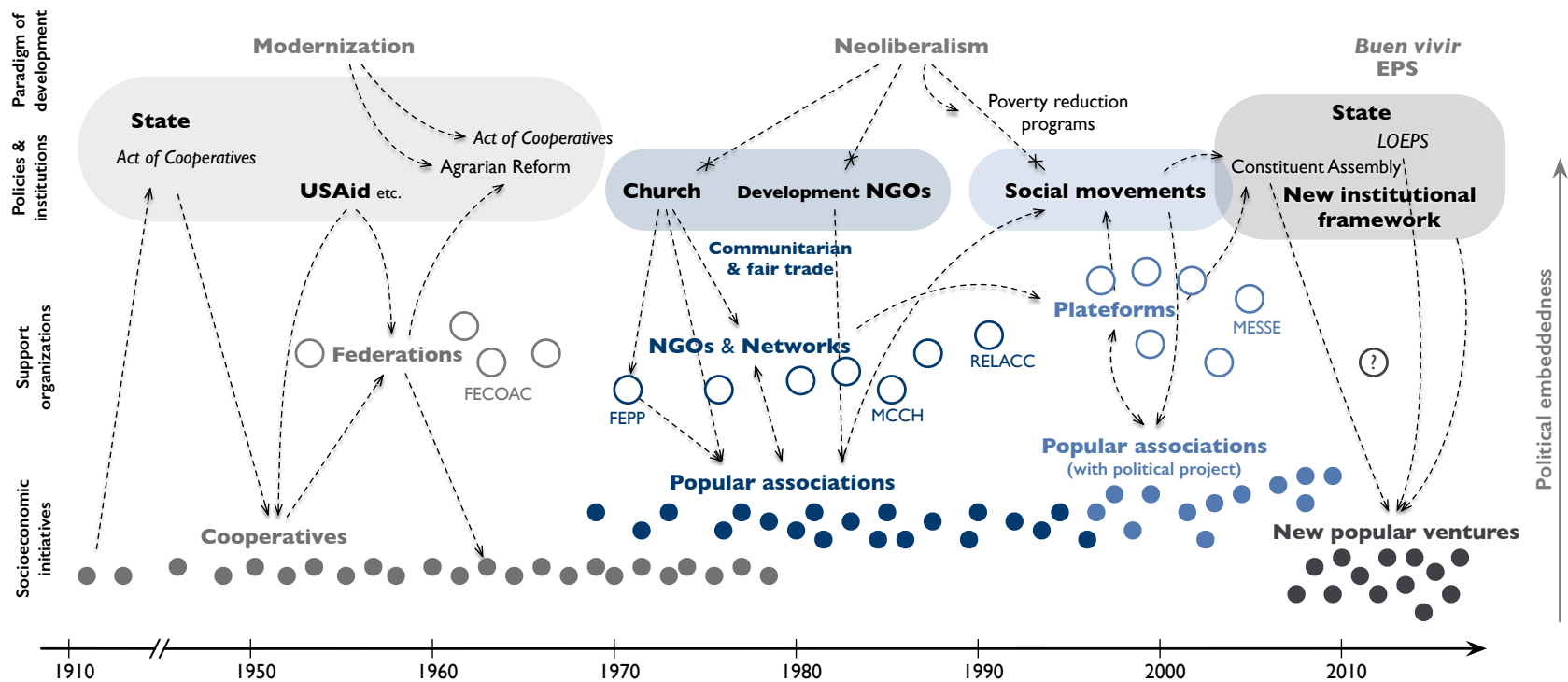
To conclude this section, figure 3 offers a representation of this process; in this figure, we illustrate the numerous interactions between SE initiatives and their institutional context.

The X-axis represents the EPS institutionalization timeline. We adopted a diachronic approach since a photograph of the situation at any given period may generate bias in the analysis by wrongly suggesting a unilateral action by the state (or another institutional actor) enabling the recognition of EPS initiatives in the public debate and public policies. It was the historical perspective that allowed us to give insights into the relation of **mutual influence between the intervention of EPS initiatives and the intervention of public authorities**. We show how the former perform public action leading to the development of public policies, which themselves, in turn, have effects on EPS organizations.

The Y-axis shows the political embeddedness of EPS organizations from each of the aforementioned traditions: cooperatives, popular associations, rooted or not in social movements, and the new popular economy ventures. We illustrate a series of interactions (represented by arrows) between three categories of actors: i) the organizations, ii) the intermediate organizations, which constitute the level of political organization of EPS (e.g. NGOs acting directly in the organizations, but also social platforms acting in the public sphere), and iii) the field of public policy design (mainly carried out by the state). Those interactions follow an interdependent logic, sometimes reflecting tensions, and can be analyzed according to four levels of action:

- The first level represents the **grassroots organizations** themselves, which have historically been inspired by the four traditions previously reviewed (sections 2.1 to 2.4), and correspond to particular operating logics. In the next section, we will analyze the distinctive features of each model. At this stage, we only underline their place in the construction of EPS and their time of emergence.
- The second level represents the main **intermediate support organizations** that have contributed to the participation of EPS initiatives in the public debate by relaying their social, economic and political demands. We illustrate this by highlighting the role, within the cooperative tradition, of federations, which supported cooperatives' organizational growth and integration during the 1950s and 1960s. Likewise, the role of the progressive Catholic Church and of NGOs was crucial for the organization of the popular associative tradition, and the empowerment of their grassroots groups. Finally, the role of the **EPS platforms** (rooted in social movements) has reinforced, since the 1990s, the networking dynamic, with the aim of shaping a unified political actor—a goal that has not been achieved yet.

Figure 3: EPS institutionalization timeline



- The third level corresponds to that of the **legal instruments** and **political and administrative arrangements** resulting from the interactions among diverse actors: SE organizations, support structures, and the state. We argue that some institutional actions (e.g. the adoption of specific norms at the national level, such as the LOEPS) were inspired by the collective action of EPS initiatives through their political dimension, which converges with public action as part of a project of transformation following a post-neoliberal conception of development. In turn, the Constituent Assembly and the LOEPS were the starting point for the design and implementation of a new institutional framework enabling SE initiatives to participate in the construction of public policies. In addition, this institutional framework has had a direct effect on EPS organizations in terms of growth and proliferation of new forms (e.g. popular economy ventures) that consider themselves as part of the sector without explicitly claiming nor practicing principles of solidarity and reciprocity.
- Finally, the fourth level corresponds to the **dominant paradigm of development** according to the historical moment; it reflects the government's understanding and rhetoric of development that has framed the process of EPS institutionalization.

To conclude this section about the institutionalization of EPS, our findings suggest that, in Ecuador, this process results mostly from historical **bottom-up relations** between organizations (following different institutional traditions), intermediate organizations, and state intervention. We also argue that, although this bottom-up construction has led to the widespread recognition and the participation of EPS initiatives in the **public debate**, the establishment of a unified **political actor**, acknowledged in the public sphere, has not yet been achieved by the various existing EPS platforms. Indeed, although organizations belonging to the different traditions recognize themselves as part of EPS, they have not constituted a unified political movement, and there is no configuration of a collective identity. The MESSE (cf. section 2.3), for example, is one of a variety of social platforms encompassing initiatives mostly rooted in the popular economy; its collective action has not transcended the level of its member organizations themselves and, therefore, has not been recognized by policymakers in local, regional or national public spaces. The union of platforms and networks into a collective political actor is only partial, and the action of each network remains limited.

As regards the participation of SE organizations in the field of **public policy design**, which constitutes another way to analyze public action, we argue that although the LOEPS itself is the result of an experience of co-construction involving different categories of actors, the current policymaking derived from this law is underpinning a **top-down intervention**. As we explained previously (cf. section 2.4), particular public programs (such as call for tenders targeting EPS potential providers) are resulting in the creation of a new vague of organizations and reshaping the existing ones. Several issues could be at stake in this regard.

First, there appears to be a risk of institutional isomorphism. As Gordon (2015) states, institutional isomorphism occurs when organizations adhere to the dominant institutional norms because this could enable them to fulfill the expectations of their key

stakeholders—in this case, governmental authorities that define the eligible criteria to get access to resources. As a result, the interactions among the different types of EPS initiatives and between them and other categories of actors (public authorities and support organizations) entail a risk of the sector becoming fragmented, because of the tensions emerging while competing for access to public grants. Indeed, the current institutional framework is notably influencing the aspirations (including the political ones) that are not necessarily shared by EPS platforms and networks because of tensions among their members.

Secondly, the institutional framework derived from the LOEPS might be creating exclusion, rather than opening up spaces for political participation. In spite of the existence of formal instances for the articulation between EPS initiatives and public authorities (e.g. national consultative councils), these arrangements do not operate effectively, because of restrictive regulations. For example, umbrella organizations can be legally recognized as representative organizations provided that they bring together 25% of organizations with the same legal form present in a territory. Networks, which claim to be EPS's political organizations, are allowed only if they group at least twenty organizations with three different organizational forms (LOEPS regulation, Art. 116).

Through an analysis developed in the light of political embeddedness, we highlighted the points of convergence and tension emerging between different categories of actors: EPS organizations (from various institutional traditions), intermediate support organizations (operating in the public sphere), and state authorities (in the field of public policy design). It seems that the institutionalization of these forms of organization—whose rationale is not driven by the sole purpose of profit maximization, but also by the will to secure the livelihoods of their members and communities—has a **dynamic character**. At a given stage, the institutionalization process can occur by shaping the conditions under which EPS can scale up while ensuring that their objectives are preserved through public recognition; at another, it can affect the nature of EPS organizations.

3. OVERVIEW OF ECUADORIAN EPS ORGANIZATIONS

3.1. Four models

Following a historical and institutional analysis, we argue that the traditions reviewed in section 2 might have led to the emergence of four major models of EPS in Ecuador. To support this hypothesis, we combined the former approach (based on traditions) with an analysis of how the different actors construct various SE discourses nowadays. This analysis was based on: i) a review of various documents, such as EPS organizations' activity reports and communications; ii) semi-structured interviews; and iii) observation of participants in EPS initiatives.⁷ We then related the resulting

⁷ From April to June 2015 and from April to June 2016, we conducted semi-structured interviews with key actors, such as: a) leaders and/or members of EPS initiatives; b) representatives of intermediary organizations (mainly NGOs) and networks advocating the interests and projects of EPS initiatives in the public sphere (e.g. the MESSE—see section 2.3); and c) state officials and policy makers from the IEPS

observations to theoretical assumptions based on a review of the existing literature on the popular and solidarity economy in Ecuador (e.g. Andino 2013; Coraggio 2009; Da Ros 2007; Espinosa 2012; Jácome and Ruiz Rivera 2013; Jubeto Ruiz et al. 2014; Martínez Godoy 2015; Nelms 2015; Ponce 2011; Scarlato 2013).

We outlined a classification of **four EPS models** that complements—without diverging from—the typology derived from the approach based on traditions (see sections 2.1 to 2.4). The EPS models that we defined, and which are presented below, ought to be considered as “ideal-types” in the sense given to this term by Weber (2001). Indeed, rather than constituting prescriptive criteria, their characteristics describe an abstract construction that enables to position each category within the “galaxy” of EPS, also helping to locate the position of any observed entity in relation to the others and, eventually, identifying subsets of units. It should also be noted that, since EPS initiatives are likely to be situated in some connecting zones of the landscape, they could belong to areas to which various authors (e.g. Defourny and Nyssens 2013) refer as “blurring frontiers”. Finally, we underline the fact that, as each type follows a particular source of institutionalization, the various types should be considered as evolving “alongside” one another, in a non-hierarchical order.

Cooperatives

Cooperatives are formal organizations composed of a group of persons, voluntarily united, and seeking to meet common economic, social or/and cultural needs through practices of cooperation and mutuality. Members are the beneficiaries of the economic activity. These organizations appear to operate in a jointly owned and *economic democracy* framework (instituting organs of representativeness).

Community-based organizations

Community-based organizations are initiatives mostly rooted in the popular economy, in which members are linked by a plurality of bonds (based on family, ethnicity, culture or gender). These organizations are characterized by the importance of the territory, which goes beyond the mere fact of sharing a common geographical location; they might pursue workers’ empowerment, in addition to market-driven aims. These initiatives might also aim to operate according to *self-management* principles, in the strict sense of being entirely managed, in equal parts, by their workers.

Organizations embedded in social movements

This third model refers to initiatives—be they rooted or not in the popular economy—in which members are (like in the previous model) linked by a plurality of bonds based on family, ethnicity, culture or gender. But in addition to this, initiatives in this category are also characterized by a political dimension; they might appear as new forms of collective action, giving rise to an explicit project: the quest for social, economic and

and SEPS (see table 2). The analysis is also based on participant-observation techniques developed from a professional experience in projects involving EPS initiatives during the period 2011-2014.

political change, relying on a post-neoliberal vision of development. These organizations might also aim to operate according to *self-management* principles.

New popular economy ventures

New popular economy ventures mostly refer to individual urban undertakings, small family businesses or self-employed workers; they do not appear embedded in a local community but serve individual or group needs. They are mostly market-driven initiatives, although they are characterized by their organizational volatility and fragility in creating stable work and income. They appear to pursue formalization to gain access to the benefits linked to various current public policies.

3.2. Distinctive features of the four models

Through a synthetic analysis inspired by the indicators of social enterprise proposed by EMES (Defourny and Nyssens 2013), we discuss some distinctive features to characterize our four SE models in terms of three key dimensions, namely the economic project, the social aim, and the political dimension. Given the specificities of the Ecuadorian context, we also call on the works carried out by Hillenkamp and Laville (2015) to support our analysis. Their approach is similar to the EMES one in that it is based on the identification of criteria in the social, economic and political fields; its additional contribution concerns the analysis of the political dimension of SE organizations beyond the field of governance related mostly to “internal choices”. Hillenkamp and Laville (2015) indeed discuss the public dimension that might characterize SE initiatives, that is their role in the creation of micro and intermediate public spaces, which encourage direct and iterative contacts and well-argued exchanges, transcending singular autonomous experiences to reach the level of institutions of mediation and eventual co-construction with public authorities (Laville 2005).

3.2.1. Economic dimension

This first dimension encompasses the following indicators: i) a continuous production of good or services, and ii) the origins of the principal resources sustaining the production (e.g. shares of market resources, public grants, voluntary resources, and householding—i.e. self-provisioning for and by the group members).

A continuous activity of production

First, for all four categories, the economic goal is convergent: all SE organizations, whatever the model they belong to, have a continuous activity of production of goods and/or services. This condition makes it possible to distinguish SE initiatives from other types of organizations pursuing a social mission but without economic activity, such as support organizations (e.g. foundations).

Cooperatives and *new popular economy ventures* might consider their production activity as the primary motive, or as one of the main ones, for the organization’s

existence. These two types of organization attempt to obtain the highest margin from their economic transactions. The other two categories—namely *community-based organizations* and *organizations embedded in social movements*—could also relate their economic goal to the provision of social or collective services for improving not only the livelihood of their members, but also of their community. This is the case, for example, of community-based organizations providing irrigation channels in rural areas.

Multiple resources and economic relations

Secondly, following Polanyi's (1944) substantive approach and converging empirical contributions about Latin America (e.g. Hillenkamp 2009, 2013; Ruiz Rivera and Egüez 2014; Wanderley et al. 2015), the economy is considered as plural and characterized by multiple forms of exchange. We argue that the economic relations in each type of SE organization reflect mixes of resources and rationales. We refer here to what actors identified in their discourses as the main source of revenue (including both monetary and non-monetary resources) that allows the organization to fulfill its mission. Further in-depth studies, involving an audit analysis, will be conducted to confirm the exchange principles mobilized by SE organizations.

Concerning *cooperatives*, their members mention market resources from sales of goods or services as the main economic source sustaining their activities. They identify a minor proportion of reciprocity resources (e.g. local voluntary work or local donations). They do not mention the existence of householding relations but rather indicate the presence of resources from redistribution, mostly under non-monetary forms, such as training services provided in the framework of public programs.

Members of *community-based organizations* identify the market as an important source of revenue. SE initiatives of this type are mostly linked to fair trade circuits. Interviewees here consider redistribution resources (mainly in the form of training activities led by NGOs or state officials) and voluntary resources resulting from reciprocity relations (e.g. donations from the community) as essential for the fulfillment of their mission. They also mention that it seems unlikely that they might be able to access public monetary resources (e.g. grants or funding) because of the compelling conditions regarding credit guarantees issues.

Regarding *organizations embedded in social movements*, members identify relations based on reciprocity (local donations) and (indirect) redistribution (e.g. funding and training services provided mostly by NGOs and social platforms) as the main sources of revenue. Interviewees also mention an important proportion of market resources, arising mainly from short circuits and fair trade, and which play a significant role for their sustainability. Similarly to community-based organizations, SE initiatives embedded in social movements are not particularly dependent on public grants. They consider that there are many obstacles, in terms of eligible criteria, to accessing public monetary resources.

As regards *new popular economy ventures*, members clearly identify public resources, originating in a redistributive relation (e.g. fees resulting from state programs, or

resources in the form of financing or training services), as essential for their operation. They do not mention the existence of reciprocity resources from the community but identify householding relations as an important strategy for their subsistence, especially during periods of vulnerability.

We finally underline that this kind of analysis, based on resources' origins and on economic relations, leads to recognizing the great variety of ways in which SE organizations might operate, intertwining different resources, connecting with diverse actors, and drawing on various logics.

3.2.2. Social dimension

The four SE models explicitly claim to pursue a mission of **work and income generation**, which they all prioritize as the main goal of their economic activities. We notice that this social mission is also the reason why SE organizations are currently the target of public policies that aim to foster socio-economic integration and poverty alleviation (Castelao Caruana and Srnec 2012). This is the case, for example, of *new popular economy ventures*. Indeed, interviewees consider their mission of generating work as the element that legitimates their participation in current public programs.

Subsidiary goals

Beyond the mission of work and income generation, the social dimension could also be connected to other social objectives, such as the creation of community bonds and social cohesion and the reduction of inequalities, among others. SE organizations might thus have dual or multiple purposes.

Cooperatives and community-based organizations consider their mission of work and income generation as the means of securing the livelihoods of their members as well as of other groups in their communities. In the particular case of community-based organizations, the notion of empowerment counts as a vital part of their mission: it is one of the primary benefits for the organization's members. As highlighted by Lemaître and Helmsing (2012: 754–5), “the economic activity in organizations [could appear] as a means to empower workers and for them to access citizenship [...] They gradually realize their capabilities by becoming aware of their reality of economic, social and political exclusion.” Mostly linked to support organizations such as NGOs, the participation of community-based organizations in training programs (focused on professionalization and “awareness-raising”⁸) might allow them to progressively gain access to the public sphere.

Organizations embedded in social movements mention the importance of an ethical purpose as part of their social mission. Scarlato (2013) argues that organizations embedded in grassroots social movements are more concerned with the awareness of democratic rights and collective capabilities for the common good in the medium and long term than with the immediate and pragmatic interests prioritized by other SE types.

⁸ By “awareness-raising” (*sensibilización*), the actors refer to those training programs focusing on acquiring awareness of what makes participation possible.

We further discuss this matter in section 3.2.4, which addresses the political goal that SE initiatives might pursue.

Valorization of work

In their discourse, all the four EPS models give priority to work over profit and surpluses. However, it remains necessary to examine the effective instituting logics within those initiatives to assess whether there is a real congruence between their discourse and their practices.

In *community-based organizations* and *organizations embedded in social movements*, interviewees mention that members are usually workers, and that the majority of workers are also members. The presence of paid work might be negligible. By contrast, in the *new popular economy ventures*, members are not systematically workers, and there is a significant presence of paid work. This is the case, for example, of textile manufacturing ventures, in which workers have the status of employees. Interviewees mentioned here that production activities during the periods of state purchasing programs (e.g. uniform-making for public schools) could require a significant recourse to subcontracted or outsourced work. In *cooperatives*, members are *a priori* workers. However, this condition could vary from one field of activity to the other. For example, paid work is significant in transport cooperatives: bus drivers operate as employees and do not (or barely) take a direct part in the management of the organization (Ruiz Rivera 2014).

3.2.3. Governance dimension

In this section, we analyze the aspects linked to ownership reflected in the decision-making processes, and the mechanisms of distribution of the revenue surplus in each type of EPS organization.

Decision-making

In the four EPS models, interviewees mentioned that, by principle, decision-making was not based on capital ownership; however, each type of organization has some specificities.

Cooperatives appear to mainly operate in exercise of joint ownership and indirect economic democracy framework. Indeed, the LOEPS requires that these organizations set up representation bodies: a general assembly, a board of management, and a supervisory board. The members of the cooperative elect—following the “one member, once voice” rule—the representatives to whom they delegate the decision-making power for the day-to-day management of the organization. Interviewees here declare to follow the principles defined by the International Cooperative Alliance (ACI).

Community-based organizations and *organizations embedded in social movements* both appear to be willing to practice self-management, which, according to Lemaître and Helmsing (2012: 755) refers to the fact of being “totally managed, in equal parts, by the workers”. In this regard, interviewees of both types of organization express their

will to achieve an active participation of all the members in defining the mission of the organization and the means to achieve it. They also consider that participation should concern as well the sharing of knowledge (e.g. on customers, suppliers, support and umbrella organizations, and networks, among other stakeholders).

Concerning the *new popular economy ventures*, it appears that processes of decision-making do not necessary involve all the members. Interviewees here declare a more pragmatic approach: members might delegate power to a representative leader, who is tasked with assuming management responsibilities.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that all the EPS types of organization, except cooperatives, might “overlap” in terms of decision-making processes and navigate between self-management practices and indirect economic democracy. The processes implemented also depend on the legal form adopted by the initiative. For example, any organization—whether community-based, embedded in social movements or belonging to the popular economy ventures—that chooses to register as an “association” will be legally obliged to elect a general manager and to set up representation bodies: a board of management (composed of 3 to 5 members), and a supervisory board (3 members).

Surplus distribution

The instituted norms for the distribution of revenue and surplus differ according to the EPS type.

As required by the LOEPS, *cooperatives* have specific rules that regulate the distribution of net income and surpluses. Those organizations must contribute to a so-called indivisible “legal reserve fund”, which serves to face economic contingencies. This fund corresponds to at least 50% of the annual surplus. Cooperatives are also required to contribute up to 5% of their surplus to the Super-administration (SEPS). Besides those legal requirements, cooperatives mention that net income could be equally shared among members in some specific cases (e.g. to increase motivation or to face crisis). Yet, the most common practice regarding surplus distribution is reinvesting revenue in the organization.

In *community-based organizations* and *organizations embedded in social movements*, the revenue is distributed according to productivity, following criteria such as the number of hours worked, the units of production or specific conditions enshrined in (formal or informal) contracts. Interviewees express that, if there are surpluses at the end of the year, those resources are reinvested in the organization or allocated to collective projects, such as training programs addressed to the members or recreation events organized for them and their families.

Regarding *new popular economy ventures*, there are no systematic rules that regulate the distribution of the net income. The actual practice is that revenue is distributed according to the work performed by members. As already underlined, this type of initiatives is characterized by organizational volatility and fragility in creating stable work and income, and interviewees declare that their organizations do not (or barely) generate surpluses.

3.2.4. *Political dimension: beyond the governance structure*

Beyond the governance structure, political-type criteria such as those highlighted by Hillenkamp and Laville (2015) appear necessary to characterize EPS in Ecuador. In this section, we examine the existence of an explicit *political goal* and the *public dimension* of each type of EPS organizations. We show that considering the political dimension also gives us insights into the articulation of EPS organizations with other actors (e.g. support organizations as NGOs or umbrella organizations, and policy makers). We argue that these criteria could be one of the most important defining features that distinguish one EPS type from another.

Political goal and public dimension

In addition to socioeconomic purposes, EPS organizations might pursue an explicit political goal, oriented toward institutional change, and which embodies a normative horizon of democratizing the economy (Hillenkamp and Laville 2015). This political dimension could be observed by examining the public dimension of EPS initiatives. The public dimension of organizations refers to their participation in the public sphere (Habermas 1986, 1997), which involves external actors to discuss and deliberate on common issues and to make decisions beyond the organization itself. As Hillenkamp and Laville (2015) highlight, the public dimension of solidarity economy might avoid the separation that Habermas operates between the political and economic spheres, and propose a scenario of co-construction of public action, which would thus no longer be produced by the state alone but would also be driven by initiatives. This dimension concerns the creation of autonomous public spaces (based on proximity), and the participation of the organizations' members in intermediate public spaces with a view to achieving institutional change.

Members of *cooperatives*, *community-based organizations*, and *organizations embedded in social movements* all declare to support the creation of autonomous public spaces (e.g. producers/farmers' markets) in which, besides carrying out trading activities, they discuss and deliberate on common issues. Such collective action might make it possible to continuously assess and redefine the organizational interests and values, but also to build a long-term political project.

Regarding intermediate public spaces, *cooperatives* are usually officially members of sectorial federations, which should make it possible for them to engage in collective action in the public sphere. However, interviewees consider the pursuit of a political goal secondary to their economic and social objectives. As described in previous sections (cf. 2.1 et 2.4), leaders from cooperatives actively participated in the elaboration of the LOEPS—which they consider as the historical concretization of a political project of institutional recognition. Nowadays what remains of a political project might appear implicit and not necessarily shared by all the members.

As regards *community-based organizations*, interviewees identify the pursuit of a political goal among their organizational purposes. Yet, they make such political goal conditional on the existing relations with support organizations, mostly NGOs and

social platforms. Indeed, it seems that what defines and circumscribes the extent of any political project in community-based organizations is their interaction with intermediate organizations, which are more likely to foster dialogue spaces with a plurality of actors (including public authorities), in which they advocate the organizations' needs and aspirations. Intermediate organizations tend to defend the rights of a historically marginalized population, proposing short-term aid, rather than pursuing long-term aims for the common good. For example, popular banks (which collect members' savings and then use them for granting credit to members) systematically tend to adhere, in their discourse, to the critics made by NGOs regarding exclusion and marginalization from the formal banking systems. Concerning the relation with umbrella organizations, community-based initiatives describe a possible membership in terms of accessing markets and training, and not as being motivated by any political project.

As concerns *organizations embedded in social movements*, their political goal is explicitly reflected in their willingness and ability to create autonomous public spaces and to participate in intermediate public spaces with policymakers. Interviewees consider it as an important role of the organization to seek iterative contacts and exchanges with multiple actors outside the organization (e.g. public authorities) for discussing and deliberating on public issues. Scarlato (2013) points out three issues that have been internalized by organizations embedded in social movements in Ecuador: environment, ethnicity and migrants' rights. As an illustration of the political dimension, some women associations of handicraft production are embedded in the Ecuadorian Popular Women Movement. By developing periodic encounters for discussion and deliberation with the movement, these initiatives are able to translate their concerns for gender justice into practical local action. The movement plays a role of political lobbying for the initiatives, relaying women's demands and proposals to the public sphere. Organizations of this type might also have a transnational dimension (Sumner and Tiwari 2009), due to the contribution their members make to the regional debate on poverty and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agenda.

New popular economy ventures are not likely to be linked to intermediate organizations such as the aforementioned federations and social platforms. They do not have either a goal of political participation. Interviewees here rather declare to sometimes engage in direct discussions with state officials only as regards their participation in public programs, particularly *ex-ante* and during the intervention. These articulations seem to follow a pragmatic logic and not to result from an explicit political motivation. Thus, faced with uncertainties regarding any eventual change in public procurement policy within the recently elected government,⁹ new popular economy ventures have undertaken, under the tutelage of IEPS and SERCOP, the creation of EPS networks and regional chambers. The aim of these actions is to formally conglomerate the EPS sector; however, they do not necessarily respond to the organizations' motivation, but to an initiative from the current public authorities.

⁹ Lenin Moreno, candidate of the official political movement "Alianza País", was elected president on April 2, 2017.

Table 4: Ideal-typical EPS models in Ecuador

Criteria		Type 1 Cooperatives	Type 2 Community-based organizations	Type 3 Organizations embedded in social movements	Type 4 New popular-economy ventures
Dimension	Sources of institutionalization	Traditional cooperativism	NGOs and Catholic Church Popular associations	Social movements	New institutional framework
	Main legal form	Cooperatives	Informal/Associations	Informal/Associations	Family/small ventures, recently formalized as associations
Economic	Main resources sustaining the activity	(1) Sales of goods or services on the market	(1) Market sales (2) Voluntary resources	(1) Voluntary resources (2) Market sales	(1) Public grants (public redistribution)
	Type of market	Capitalist market	Fair trade	Short circuits Fair trade	Public markets Capitalist market
Social	Purpose	Cooperation and mutuality arising from voluntary action	Job and income generation and members' empowerment	(More radical) societal change towards a more inclusive/ecological... society	Job and income generation serving individual/group needs
	Status of member-worker and minimum number of members	Members = workers but it depends on the field of activity Minimum 20 members in production and services cooperatives 50 in saving and credit cooperatives	Members =/≠ workers Minimum 10 members when the legal form is that of association	Members =/≠ workers Minimum 10 members	Members ≠ workers Minimum number of members not defined
Governance	Ownership & decision making	Democratic governance (ACI principles)	Democratic participation in decision making and in the management of the organization	Democratic participation in decision making and in the management of the organization	Democratic participation in decision making and in the management of the organization
	Surplus distribution	Limited surplus distribution, reflecting the primacy of social aim (articles of incorporation)	Revenue distributed according to productivity If there is a surplus, it is usually used for collective activities decided by the general assembly	Revenue distributed according to productivity If there is a surplus, it is usually used for collective purposes decided by the general assembly	Revenue distributed according to productivity No surplus
	Pursuit of a political goal	Non explicit	Non explicit	Explicit	None or non explicit
Political	Creation of public spaces	Participation in intermediate public spaces via umbrella organizations	Autonomous micro public spaces	Autonomous micro public spaces and intermediate ones	None
	Articulation with other actors	Formal membership in umbrella organizations (e.g. federations)	Support structures, mostly NGOs, social platforms and networks	Formal adherence by the commitment to a Chart of principles to social movements, and networks	No federative dynamic Relation with state officials while taking part in national programs

Table 4 sums up the characteristics of each EPS type of organization according to the aforementioned criteria. These models can be illustrated in different fields of economic activity. Table 5 presents concrete examples of (both established and emerging) EPS initiatives in the Ecuadorian landscape.

Table 5: Examples of EPS initiatives in Ecuador by models and fields of activity

Models Fields of activity	Type 1 Cooperatives	Type 2 Community-based organizations	Type 3 Organizations embedded in social movements	Type 4 New popular economy ventures
Production	Agricultural production cooperative	Craft manufacturing association (usually operating in a fair trade framework)	Economic circuit based on solidarity (organic agriculture)	Family venture, textile manufacturing association
Services	Cooperative for touristic services Transport cooperative	Community tourism project	Association aimed at popular education	Family venture (catering services)
Finance	Savings and credit cooperative	Popular bank	Social currency exchange device	⊙

4. CONCLUSION

The ICSEM project recognizes the importance of institutionalization processes for social enterprises. In this regard, a historical and institutionalist analysis, carried out from the perspective of the political embeddedness approach (Lemaître 2009), allowed us to highlight the importance of the dialogue between the socioeconomic and political dimensions to characterize the institutionalization process of EPS in Ecuador. Indeed, this macro institutional perspective led us to identify the paths followed by organizations emerging from different traditions to achieve recognition in the public sphere and find their place in the current field of public policy design. The process of EPS enrollment in public action appeared to be dynamic and to be a long-term one; it results from relations of mutual influence between different categories of actors: EPS organizations, intermediate organizations (operating in the public sphere), and state authorities (in the field of public policy design). It appeared to us that at a given stage, the institutionalization process could shape the conditions in which EPS organizations scale up while not endangering their values; at another, it could affect the nature of these initiatives.

Furthermore, by presenting the results of exploratory qualitative research, we aimed to provide a first contribution to a classification of popular and solidarity economy (EPS) organizations in Ecuador in the framework of the ICSEM project. Indeed, in order to further support our typology, we carried out—in addition to the macro institutional and historical analysis, which allowed us to outline the traditions that might have led to the emergence of four types of EPS in Ecuador—an analysis of how, nowadays, different actors produce various discourses. On such basis, we presented four types of initiatives that can be considered as EPS in the Ecuadorian context. This classification appeared consistent with what practitioners and public authorities refer to as the

“popular and solidarity economy”, and which goes beyond the current legal classification established by the LOEPS since 2011.

It should be noted that our typology does not pretend to be generalized. Rather than defining clear-cut frontiers between the different categories, this contribution aims to emphasize some particular traits that distinguish different forms of organizations in the Ecuadorian context. These features give insights into the economic, social and governance dimensions put forward by the EMES approach (Defourny and Nyssens 2013) and inspired some criteria developed by Hillenkamp and Laville (2015) regarding solidarity economy’s political dimension. Getting in-depth insights into the effective operating logics and practices of initiatives, beyond what actors shared in their discourses, is beyond this paper’s purview, but we acknowledge that the macro institutional analysis needs to be complemented by a comprehensive and systematic examination at the micro level, including a review of the mobilization of various economic principles and rationales (e.g. reciprocity, redistribution, market, and householding). The challenge remains to develop empirical research that could balance an understanding of the specific macro-institutional contexts in which EPS has been/is being institutionalized as well as the operating logics underlying the practices of these forms of organizations.

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