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Ecuadorian Political System: Tension in the context of the COVID 19 (March-May 2020)

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Abstract. The Ecuadorian political system represented by President Lenin Moreno has caused an atmosphere of constant tension in the face of the spread of COVID 19, leading to a setting of greater disturbance as the health crisis situation, that was used to apply neoliberal measures that had been suspended in October 2019, in the setting of massive protests and discontent. This work is a case study that analyzes the decisions made by the Moreno administration in the face of the pandemic in the temporary cutback that took place during the months of March and May of 2020, a clear move to take advantage of the health crisis situation, and in order to complete its decisions regarding austerity and budget cutbacks. It is, thus, inferred that there is a loss of the sense of protection of life as a primary constitutional right.

Keywords. Political system, health, Covid19, Neoliberalism

1. Introduction

COVID 19 is a type of infectious respiratory disease caused by a new respiratory virus, the epicenter in Wuhan (China) –outbreak and spreading- December 2019. Its global expansion has generated gradual and then massive isolation, causing a complete uncertainty and the almost total paralysis of our future projects. The daily news and reports on the sick, recovered and dead, have only generated doubts. Present and future, rise to an almost unrealistic level of analysis that no one had thought possible, so abrupt and untimely. We citizens feel like prisoners, plunged into the boundaries of our own homes, faced with this invisible external enemy.

In the light of this new scenario, governments have assumed different roles, some as protectors of life as a universal right, and others as promoters of the economy above any other priority, in some cases taking responsibility on what has to be done, and in others holding it back.

Based on this reasoning, *the objective of which is the analysis of Ecuador as a case study, the impact, the reaction to the expansion of COVID 19 during a short lasting cutback that runs from March to May 2020.* Faced with this new situation, the Ecuadorian citizen has been degraded and subdued, to a point that they seem to have lost their status as such, thus experiencing a setback rightwise, rather typical of premodern societies, a *realstate of nature* (Hobbes, 2003). This correlates to the decisions imposed by president Lenin Moreno (2017-2021) in the face of the COVID 19 pandemic and to the death scene that has surrounded the main cities of Ecuador. He used this backdrop and benefited from it, in order to apply

neoliberal-tinge measures.

In other words, this efficiently complied with the most privileged sectors of society and international organizations, but not with the vast majority of citizens: the middle class and low sectors. This work has been carried out from the perspective proposed by David Easton (1959) in *The Political System: an Inquiry into the State of the Political Science*, who considered the political system with imperatively applicable roles and interactions in a society (Easton, 1965).

This article covers the Ecuadorian political system understood within the framework of a minimal state and deconstruction; based on this, the population, the economic situation, state budgets and annual investment plan are considered as indicators, and the health sector as value.

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2. Materials and Methods

The research consists of a case study (Liphart, 1971), allows an intensive examination with limited resources (Collier in Sartori and Morlino, 1994, P.54): on the one hand, the immediacy of the temporal arc (March to May 2020), and on the other, the intrinsic subjectivity in the face of reactions to the worldwide declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is approached through the *Systemic Theory proposed by David Easton*, understanding by system to "any set of variables, regardless of the degree of relationship between them" (Easton, 1965, P.224). In other words, a political system would be that set of interactions through which values are authoritatively assigned in a society" (Easton, 1965, P.224). "*Political life is a system of conduct incorporated into an environment to whose influences the political system itself is exposed*" (Easton, 1965, P.221), which does not exist as something empty, is surrounded by physical, biological, social environments and psychological; comprising two parts: *intrasocial* (series of behavior, attitudes, ideas, belonging to the same society of the political system: the economy, culture, "are functional segments of society, one of its components is the political system itself" (Easton, 1965, P.225) and *extrasocial* (the international society or the international cultural system) that would represent the total environment of any political system.

There is tension when values are assigned to a society and when it is achieved that the majority of its members accept these assignments as mandatory (Easton, 1965), these two being the variables (intrasocial and extrasocial) essential to access the knowledge of the disturbances of a system. Regarding this Easton adds, we can say that *tension occurs when there is a danger that these variables are driven beyond what can be called their critical margin*. This means that something may be happening in the environment: the system suffers a total defeat at the hands of an enemy or a serious economic crisis (Easton, 1965)

To the above a third example can be added: a global pandemic such as COVID19 and the application of neoliberal measures to complete the tragedy that the country is going through; that is, it would reach the so-called "critical margin" (Easton, 1965, P.225).

Every political system has the capacity to respond to disturbances; it regulates its own behavior, transforms the internal structure and reshapes objectives (Easton, 1965), in this sense what is intended is a balance, that is to say to face changes, to restore the old break-even point, or, at least to head towards a new one, it is what Easton calls "The search for stability, as if stability were to be pursued above all else" (Easton, 1965, P.223). Regarding this, he adds, that

any system may well seek other goals or reach other break-even point, it may also strive to destroy a previous balance and even reach some new point of continuous imbalance (Easton, 1965). This is relevant considering the measures adopted in the context of a COVID 19 crisis and taking into account the protests against the previous neoliberal measures of October 2019, which make us infer the disapproval of the majority of citizens regarding the extension of Moreno's decisions. He took advantage of the state of emergency to increase those economic and financial decisions suspended the previous year, harsher this time, and with consequences in the sanitary area, as explained below.

Easton states, the system can either successfully provide protection against disruptive influences or incorporate them (Easton, 1965). In the case of Moreno and under the alleged fight against corruption, he has managed to *free himself* from his alleged disruptive forces (for example, with the prosecution of former President Correa, former Vice President Jorge Glas, among others), but has generated other, the almost massive rejection of Ecuadorian citizens. Every political system has the capacity to face tension, whether it succeeds or not; it can take appropriate measures to move away from danger and tension, or rather, ramp it up; that would be the case of Moreno. This means that before COVID 19, Moreno boosted his financial economic policy and generated a greater degree of internal tension and disturbance.

Easton's theory uses the word "inputs", it represents claiming versus supporting, which shape the political system from which "outputs" are derived, that is, the consequences resulting from the behavior of the members of the system; the two would become variables that centralize what is important –the weigh of it- in the political system and therefore, in the context of existing strain. Taking this into account, if citizens need and demand support in the face of an exceptional situation such as COVID 19 and the effect is the reduction in wages and the removal of a percentage of their income - due to the decrease in the amount of working hours- the tension puts at risk the ruler-ruled relationship; the disturbance increases not only due to the severity of the existing pandemics, but also due to government abuse.

The effect of these inputs -health and economic needs compared to COVID 19- culminates in outputs, meaning the use of neoliberal measures according to international organizations, that is, decisions made and actions implemented by the President or by his Minister of Economy (Richard Martínez) as explained below. The effects of these behaviors and decisions not only managed to harm the majority of citizens who depend on a salary in the public sector, but the context of the population as a whole, with the exception of a privileged minority

By means of these, as Easton puts it, in order to achieve collective action, any system must have people and authorities. Thus, we find that, at the moment, Moreno's administration is facing the relentlessness of the system and "a decrease in support below some specified minimum" (Easton, 1965, P.229).

That is, the important thing is to know at this stage of events, how this political system in Ecuador subsists, contrary to the premises for which it was chosen in 2017. However, in order to answer this, it is worth taking into account the former participation of the President Moreno during much criticized administrations such as those of the exiled President Abdalá Bucaram (1996-dismissed in 1997), Gustavo Noboa (1998-2000 // 2000-2003) and Lucio Gutiérrez (2003-2005), or his current colleagues: Jaime Nebot (Mayor for eighteen consecutive years of Guayaquil), Cynthia Viteri (successor to the latter) and Guillermo Lasso (banker and former political opponent); clustered in their strong rejection of the figure of former President Correa.

2. 1. Results

2.1.1. Political System: Minimal State and Deconstruction. Ecuador a small country with 252,000 km², being crossed from north to south by the Andes. The most populated cities are Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenca, followed by Ambato and Santo Domingo.

With a peripheral economy, dollarized since 2000; It was historically characterized by economic activities of raw material exploitation (BC, 2010). The country was governed from 2007 to 2017, by Dr. Rafael Correa, with whom the country experienced economic growth and development while maintaining a welfare policy; being subjected under the administration of his successor, Lic. Lenin Moreno (2017-2021) *to a radical, political, economic and financial change.*

Moreno took office on May 24, 2017, after the balloting which Guillermo Lasso, won out with 51.16% compared to 48.84% of the votes (Newspaper La Vanguardia, 2017). He was chosen as heir to an ideological continuity for the constitutional period 2017-2023 together with Jorge Glas: both had been Vice Presidents of Correa between 2007-2013 and 2013-2017 respectively and members of the *Alianza País* Party. Almost two months after he took office, Moreno began a process that could be understood within the framework of a deconstruction (Derrida, 2004) of the order inherited from the previous government, which had been characterized by an interventionist policy with a mixed public-private economic system that led to a decade of growth (Ganuza, 2019).

In Ecuador, what is clearly shown are the following: Firstly, a *decision-making process with public effect*, that is, a government program of a neoliberal nature, translated into maintenance of political power specially in the health sector, but in turn, *an erosion of legitimacy* as they took advantage of the context of health crisis as they had been applying pending economic-financial measures since October 2019; Secondly, *the control and use of power, having taken advantage of the COVID 19 framework*, especially in view of the declaration of a health emergency, and finally, *the conflict* that has caused the government's decision, in disagreement with the needs of national society considered arbitrary, because Moreno was not chosen according to this economic plan applied months of his assumption but as a successor to the preceding policy.

The peculiarities of the Moreno administration are understood within the framework of gradual and permanent neoliberal measures; constitutional and institutional deconstruction, understood as follows: The priority objective is to advocate a *minimal state*, a dominant vision from neoliberalism applied since 1980, which consists of an economic theory close to classical liberalism, defended by the United States Treasury, the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose epistemological bases are limited to the works of Adam Smith, Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman.

The provisions make up a program and a complete vision of the world, where political and economic freedom are indispensable conditions. It involves an idea where the priority is the market as a "regulatory system, where insecurity, uncertainty, poverty are not evils to be fought, but the condition of possibility of the desirable order" (Escalante Gonzalbo, 2016, P.167). The dismantling of the state is accompanied by poverty and inequality, increasing the gap between rich and poor. For neoliberalism, the human being is selfish, does not include solidarity, intervenes in the market but not in human freedom. Therefore, *the ruling principle is not life, but death.* By highlighting these controversies, the main antagonistic source of this postulate emerges, the Keynesian Welfare State, which seeks to plan, reduce social gaps, reduce poverty and hunger, which thing identifies Rafael Correa administration.

According to Ricardo Gómez (2014) and to Hayek's thesis, neoliberalism starts from ontological, epistemological and moral assumptions, as an interrelational normative

framework. *First*: society is a complex, non-homogeneous, diverse and plural order where attempts are made to satisfy desires. *Second*, human beings are not omniscient; for neoliberalism there is no confidence in the results of deliberate actions, so there cannot be planning (something that would take place in the welfare state). The market is the supreme place of rationality (Gómez, 2014,). "According to Hayek there is no theory of rational action that goes beyond the rationality imposed by the market" (Gómez, 2014P.41). *Third*, there is a concept of "ethics" subject to natural and / or scientific terms,"(Gómez, 2014, P.43). Inequalities are undeniable, parts of the process, therefore we cannot define a universal scale of values, only those instituted by the market. Hayek maintains that "the market is beyond all moral evaluation. There is nothing outside of it" (Gómez, 2014, P.45). As a corollary, Milton Friedman adds that every government must refrain from establishing: minimum wage, rate policies, establishing income control mechanisms; poverty must be aligned but without distorting the market; that is to say, they never come to recognize that the market generates poverty (Gómez, 2014.)

Based on these axioms, Moreno administration is located and identified as an executor of a plan to reduce the income tax of the wealthiest classes; decrease in government spending; introduction of laws that diminish capital control (Joon Chang, 2014); privatization of public companies (Mencías, 2020).

This logic that favors certain sectors of society is opposed to the Ecuadorian reality (INEC, 2019), which exhibits Ecuador with a population of 17,023,000 million people, with a population density of 66 inhabitants per km², where the 25% live in conditions of poverty and 8.9% extreme poverty; while in rural areas, poverty is 41.8% and extreme poverty is 18.7% (INEC, 2019).

These data have varied with respect to the year 2017 (the moment power was transferred from Correa to Moreno), when poverty was 21.5% and 7.9% respectively, that is, in just three years, multidimensional poverty has increased 3, 5%. These data are not minor and must be understood in the programmatic and the economic model of public-private combination established by the previous government that reduced poverty and that, at the time of his assumption of power (year 2007), reached 36.7% and the extreme poverty, 16.5% in urban areas, while extreme poverty was 61.3% and 33.3% in rural areas (INEC, 2019). In a few words, it could be said that Moreno administration is "a dying economy ... a financially and socially unsustainable model that reproduces poverty" (Mencías, 2019).

The gravitational center of Moreno administration consists of the dismantling of the *Plan del Buen Vivir* (Spanish for Well-being Plan) the destruction of the *Res Publica* and the drastic turn of the policy applied by its predecessor, imposing a budget reduction in the framework of an austerity setting; It is in this context that a loss, or rather, absence of moral and ethical values is inferred by the Moreno administration, where life and its preservation have lost their meaning.

Along with the metamorphosis of economic policy and an alleged attack against "corruption" (Presidency of the Republic of Ecuador, 2019b), Moreno generated the modification of constitutional institutions, causing a breakdown situation; Massive mobilizations against their decisions (October 2019), with thousands of deaths as a result of the repression, arbitrary arrests of citizens and legally elected authorities (Amnesty International, 2019) This is also complemented by resignations in all ministries between 2017-2020.

2.1.2. Budget and Investment Plan. Therefore, the output is the result of the actions stemming from the behavior of the members of the political system, as Easton states: "the activities of the members of the system may very well be important due to the subsequent actions or circumstances" (Easton, 1965, P.228). That is why the decisions imposed within the austerity

framework have been selected as indicators of analysis, taking into account the different *General State Budgets* for the years 2017 to 2020 and their incidence in the face of health care needs given the pandemic: In the year In 2017, it was *36,818 million dollars* (with 2% more than that codified in 2016), in 2018: *34,818 million dollars* (with a reduction of 5.34% compared to the previous year), in 2019 it was of *31,818 million* (with a 15% cutback over the previous year) and in 2020, it was *31,469 million* (with a cutback of 600 million for the public sector (Ministry of Finance, 2020).

Given the decisions of the Ecuadorian political system as repercussions on the situation of the health sector in particular, the previous figures were supplemented with the *Proforma Expenses of the General State Budget (2017-2019)* taking as indicators the sectors subject to budget reduction: health, education, work, and administration, published by the Ministry of Economy and Finance (2020), being relevant in this case the administrative and health care sector. It is also highlighted that the Budget assigned for the year 2020 is not available in its entirety.

Picture N° 1: Proforma Expenses of the General State Budget (Ecuador) 2016-2019.
Millions of dollars.

Proforma Expenses of the General State Budget (Ecuador) Years 2016 to 2019. Millions of dollars			
	2017	2018	2019
03 Administrative Sector	472.744.259,00	401.499.152,00	369.893.883,00
09 Educational Sector	5.199.412,991	5.718.509.129,48	5.401.746.754,86
11 Work Sector	49.269.257,98	53.963.043,82	88.737.650,66
12 Health Sector	2.779.194.987,31	3.573.120.111,53	3.138.540.811,00
Accrued Budget	2.692.000.000,00	2.845.000.000,00	3.097.000.000,00

Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas de Ecuador (2020). Observatorio del Gasto Público (2019).

Source: Ecuadorian Ministry of Economy and Finance (2020). Observatory of Public Expenditure (2019).

According to this, the amount of money derived to the administrative sector for public sector personnel expenses has been gradually reduced, which was clearly accompanied by the elimination of jobs, and salary reduction. This is included in the neoliberal Trole I, II (2000) and Trolebus III (2018) and IV (2019) laws.

With this, it was determined: *Permission of debt contraction*; reduction in state revenue through liberalization and public spending; *Elimination of Income Tax*, which allows tax evasion and reduction of the Tax on the Departure of Foreign Currency (ISD); according to the Internal Revenue Service (SRI), 6% of debtors are responsible for 79% of the debts to be collected (Calle Masache, Et.al, 2018); which would solve the problems of the supposed shortage of government funds; *Remission of interests, fines and recharges* for small-medium and large companies is determined (Faculty of Economic Sciences, 2018) (SRI, 2017).

In parallel, the difference between *the State Budget and the accrued* (obligation contracted but not fulfilled) in the health sector, shows a constant reduction since 2017, which places the area in a clearly complicated situation, since **2,779 million dollars (2017); 3,573 (2018) and 3,138 (2019)** amounts assigned and without information for 2020; It is opposed to an *accrued Budget*, that is, effectively used in the sector studied, which was actually: **2,692**

million (2017); 2,845 (2018) and 3,097 (2019) (Ministry of Finance, 2019). While the *Annual Investment Plan* for the sector in the period 2017-2019, has been:

Picture 2: Annual Investment Plan for the Health Sector (2017-2019). Millions of dollars.

Annual Investment Plan for the Health Sector. Years 2017-2019. Millions of dollars

	2017	2018	2019
Scrambled	350	302	186
Accrued Budget	306	201	130
Paid	241	175	110

Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas Sub Secretaría de Presupuesto (2019).

Source: Ministry of Economy and Finance-Deputy Budget Secretary (2019)

The figures express the abrupt decrease in investment amounts and the differences between the Expenditure Proforma of the General Budget, the accrued and the Annual Plan, from which emerge the real but partial difficulties that health care would have to deal with in the face of the declaration of the pandemic.

2.1.3. Health Sector. From the *Budgets and Investment Plan*, the health sector emerges as an analytical value due to its relevance in the context of COVID 19, due to the severity of the disease.

In order to achieve this, it has to be assessed that Ecuador divides its territory into 9 zones (Jiménez Barbosa, 2017), each of which has different health centers, within those that stand out are: 44 public hospitals internationally accredited by Canada International Accreditation (ACI) (Presidency of the Republic of Ecuador, 2019), to which 82 new healthcare centers were added in the 2007-2017 period, 47 centers were re-empowered under the Ministry of Public Health, 35 to the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute (IESS) and 43 were being built in the year 2017, altogether give a total of 225 new centers (AméricaEconomía Cluster Salud, 2017).

This process of creation and remodeling of infrastructure (2007-2017) was accompanied by a plan to increase wages and a strategic plan for new professionals (Ministry of Public Health, 2017).

Beyond the numbers, there is both public and private medical assistance; in rural regions there are greater difficulties, both due to the lack of health centers and the shortage of medical professionals.

According to CIA World Factbook (2019) there are two doctors for every 1,000 inhabitants at least until 2016 (CIA World, 2019). The World Health Organization (WHO) considers that less than 2.3 health workers (doctors, nurses and midwives only) per 1,000 would be insufficient to meet primary care needs; This would not be the situation in the case of COVID 19 (CIAWorld, 2019), since a greater amount of human resources are required.

According to the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC, 2016), there are 29,374 doctors for every 10,000 inhabitants in the country; figure to be reconsidered since these include 4,686 dentists and 1,237 psychologists; that is, the number of doctors is wayless. Also according to the same Institute, there are 16,931 nurses (INEC; 2016), therefore it is deduced that the number of medical professionals is not enough before this exceptional situation.

3. Discussion.

Following WHO declaration of the COVID 19 pandemic on March 11, Moreno declared a state of emergency on that same date with 17 confirmed cases (General Secretariat for Communication of the Presidency, 2020). The protocol established greater control in border

areas and those who entered had to respect isolation in their homes.

At that time, he said that he had strengthened biosecurity measures for health personnel, according to WHO protocol, while pursuant to Decree No. 1017 dated **March 16, 2020**; the previous declaration was expanded, establishing the state of emergency and the curfew in Ecuador (Newspaper El Comercio, 2020).

On **April 10th 2020**, in an atmosphere of chaos and a health emergency never seen in the country before, with corpses exposed on the side of the roads and city streets, especially in the cities of Guayaquil and Quito; Moreno announces a series of measures “*to face the awkward tax situation during the health emergency*” (RT; 2020), the so-called “*Organic Law of economic support to combat the health crisis derived from COVID 19*”, with this he poses the creation of a “great national agreement” setting up a Humanitarian Trust, administered, as one may fathom, by individuals from private sectors (RT, 2020). Its two sources of provision are: *payments from companies and citizens*. In other words, those companies that have earned at least a million dollars will have to give up to only a 5% of those profits in three monthly payments (to be deducted later from their tax returns); while citizens who earn salaries of more than five hundred dollars will have to make progressive payments for nine months and will have to give out 2% of their wages. (Newspaper Los Andes, 2020).

According to Article 7 of that Proposed Bill, it is established that the donations of money made by individuals or companies, between March 17th, 2020 and April 10th, 2020, will be considered as a tax credit for the payment of temporary contributions; a project brought up by the most interested parties, of course. The draft Constitutional Law to combat the health crisis derived from COVID 19 is nothing more than an instrument of the state's political system against citizens who live and depend on a paycheck.

Amongst the measures adopted allegedly to support the sustainability of employment in the context of the virus crisis, Article 21 states the following: employers may modify employment conditions; and in Art. 22: in events of *force majeure* or a fortuitous event, the employer may reduce the work shift, and must pay reduced working hours only. (Newspaper Los Andes, 2020).

In addition to this chaotic scenario, the government has not complied with the payment of public sector wages, however it has respected the obligation to pay a foreign debt that amounts to US \$ 320 million. That is, when facing a choice between life and public debt, he chose the latter. On top of it all, more than four hundred doctors were laid off in the midst of the pandemic in the cities of Manabí and Santo Domingo (Newspaper El Comercio, 2020). Moreover, he was accused of felony: “extermination” by the National Federation of Lawyers of Ecuador (Peralta, 2020) and of bringing about public unrest (Newspaper El Comercio, 2020).

Meanwhile, **on April 12th, 2020**, Richard Martinez, Minister of Finance, announced “a humanitarian effort” (Martinez, 2020) framed in the “Ecuador Solidarity Plan,” using the catchphrase: “give more to the one who needs the most”; with an immediate deployment of 760 million for medical equipment and medication, and USD 60 to each individual. The above mentioned clearly contradicts the layoffs in the health care sector in the cities of Santo Domingo and Manabí, and the aforementioned budgets.

His speech expresses that it is the “intention” of the government “to preserve of employment” (Martinez, 2020); which is opposed to the measures adopted. The Minister endorses the President, ratifying that “reality has exceeded legal rules” (Martinez, 2020)... and ethical standards! However, on top of these “announcements”, you have the dismissal of more than two hundred teachers, the failure to pay 50% due to the public sector, while the agreed amount of foreign debt was duly paid.

In an effort to complete the interpretation on the progress of COVID19, the number of

patients and the severity of the health and institutional situation in Ecuador; the reports of the WHO and Johns Hopkins University at regional, national and continental levels were selected and are as follows:

The First Report of February 28, 2020 (PAHO-WHO, 2020) alludes that the first case of COVID 19 in America was identified in the United States (USA) on January 21 and from that date until February 28, they reported a total of 15 confirmed cases (PAHO-WHO, 2020).

In the **Second report of April 20, 2020** (PAHO-WHO, 2020) establishes that *Ecuador is fourth* in the continental level with **9,468 confirmed-probable cases and 474 deaths** (WHO, 2020). (Following order from highest to lowest quantity: Brazil, Peru and Chile with 36,599, 14,420 and 10,088 respectively).

In the **Third Report of May 22, 2020** (PAHO-WHO, 2020), Ecuador is fifth with 34,854 deaths (PAHO-WHO, 2020). (First was US with 1,525,186 cases; WHO, 2020). By this date, the high evolution of the virus is noted, with community transmission in forty countries; The US tripled the death toll and in Brazil it increased nine times (PAHO-WHO, 2020)

While **Johns Hopkins University (2020) for May 24, 2020**, according to the *Corona Resource Center*, establishes that the largest number of cases is in the US with 1,633,076 cases; while Ecuador with 36,258 cases (Johns Hopkins, 2020), that is, it went from **9,468 to 35,258** positive cases in a month.

When making an assessment on the progress of COVID19 and taking as a point of reference the date of the declaration of the pandemic worldwide, on March 11th, it can be seen that Ecuador had *15 cases* on that date; nine days later, it already reaches 367 confirmed cases (WHO, 2020) and one month later, that is, on April 11th; *4,965 cases*; as shown in Picture N ° 3. That is, a growth of more than a thousand percent.

Picture 3: Confirmed cases; total confirmed cases and total deaths produced in March 11, 16, 20, 26 and April 01, 7, 11- 2020. Position of Ecuador at a South American level regarding confirmed cases.

	Report 51 3/11/2020 6th nivel	Report 56 3/16/2020 5th nivel	Report 61 3/20/2020 5th nivel	Report 66 3/26/2020 4th nivel	Report 72 4/1/2020 5th nivel	Report 78 4/7/2020 5h nivel	Report 81 4/11/2020 5th nivel
Number of confirmed cases	15	37	367	1211	2240	3747	4965
Total new confirmed cases	0	14	168	162	278	182	515
Deaths Total	0	2	5	29	75	191	272

Source: WHO (2020).

Putting in context the situation of Ecuador in the South American framework between the dates March 11th to April 11th, 2020 and according to Reports No. 51, No. 56, No. 61, No. 66, No. 72, No. 78 and No. 81 (WHO, 2020), the countries with the greatest expansion of the virus at a continental level have been: *United States, Brazil and Chile*, and these alarming figures can be observed: the United States went from 696 cases to 1,678, then 63,570; 163,199; 333,811 and 425,889. The rampant spread of the disease also affected Brazil with 34; 200; 621; 2,433; 4,579; 11,130; 15,927 and Chile 17; 75; 434; 1,142, 2,738; 4,815; 5,972 (WHO, 2020). Globally, the spread escalated, going from 118,319; 167,515; 266,073 to 462,684 and as of April 1st, reaching 823,626; 1,279,722 and 1,521,252 confirmed cases (WHO).

4. Conclusion

When analyzing the Ecuadorian political system, we understand a process of interactions that have developed in a complex way since the beginning of Moreno's Presidency. He was elected because he belonged to a definite political platform, but months after taking office, he went

from an interventionist policy towards another one with a neoliberal and openness attitude with austerity measures.

This can not be performed in isolation, since there have been changes in structure, use of mechanisms for this transformation, generating an imbalance in the entire system, generating social disturbances; Moreno has reinforced its economic and financial stance, taking advantage of the COVID19 context; generating an erosion of political legitimacy. The sharpening of his economic plan seems to seek a point of continuous imbalance (Easton, 1965) which, according to this author, would occur in the event of riots or dangers; nothing more representative than a pandemic. The intensification of economic measures only shows the *lack of ethics in Moreno's decision-making power*.

Changes, economic transformations contained in the Investment Plan, State budgets in the framework of increasing austerity make up the intrasocial environment on the one hand; the Monetary Fund, international organizations, the extrasocial environment on the other, everything that is outside the political system, can and, in this case, has in fact led to a framework of increasing tension. However, cannot be held accountable of the government decisions taken. These two environments comprise the total environment of the political system and are in tension, boosted by the health crisis, and there is a danger in reaching its critical margin, because the real scope of the measures within the poor and middle social sectors is unknown.

Moreno “made real the premise that the market is beyond all moral evaluation” (Gómez, 2014); in the midst of a health crisis with figures ranging from 15 confirmed cases (March 11), 9,468 cases (April 20), 34,854 deaths (May 22) and 36,258 cases (May 24), numbers that represent individuals, doctors and patients, facing health sector unresolved issues, the impossibility of receiving adequate treatment, among many other issues that go beyond the scope of this work. In addition, a government response of severe austerity plus isolation; all of which seems to constitute abuse and reinforce the idea that neoliberalism is governed by the principle of death and not of life.

This administration has not finished its constitutional period, it is yet to be seen what unfolds next, taking into account the overall health crisis, the fear of the virus, and the outcome of the financial measures adopted.

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