



# AUTOPOIESIS AND ORGANIZED ANARCHY IN UNIVERSITIES

Franco Pombo, Mónica<sup>1</sup>, Aroca Jácome, Rubén<sup>2</sup>, Escudero Durán, María Lorena<sup>3</sup>, Carrillo Punina, Álvaro Patricio<sup>4</sup>

## Abstract

University life, inserted in social contexts undergoing permanent changes, is going through a series of mutations that have forced it to mobilize itself to try to respond better to social demands. This paper will review this set of beliefs that have shaped a current typology of the organizational culture of Ecuadorian universities, but which, at the same time, mark the fervent desire to remove those beliefs and shared meanings that have anchored them to a Napoleonic university model whose primary objective is the training of new professionals capable of integrating and efficiently meeting the needs of the public and private sectors to move to a model more in line with the needs of the social environments they serve.

6601

**KeyWords:** Organizational culture, universities, anarchy, typology of cultures.

DOI Number: 10.14704/nq.2022.20.8.NQ44684

NeuroQuantology 2022; 20(8): 6601-6614

<sup>1</sup> Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil, monica.franco@cu.ucsg.edu.ec

<sup>2</sup> Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil, carlos.aroca@cu.ucsg.edu.ec

<sup>3</sup> Universidad de Cuenca, lorena.escudero@ucuenca.edu.ec

<sup>4</sup> Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas ESPE, Quito, apcarrillo@espe.edu.ec



## Introduction

The objective of this article is to describe and analyze how the construct of "Organizational Culture" has been positioned in university communities, as well as the dominant beliefs that allow approximating a typology of cultures present in Ecuadorian universities.

In this study, the search was based on an approach to the theoretical developments of: Cohen, March and Olsen's model of the organization as anarchy (1972, 1976), García's Complex Systems (TSC) (1981, 2000, 2006), Luhmann's Social Systems Theory (TSS) (1990) and Stacey's contributions (1995) on the Theory of organizations as complex systems; to select and describe the elements that constitute them and position them within the framework of organizations whose mission is the production of higher education service.

The thought developed about organizations is abundant and multifaceted, so it was not easy to choose a theoretical position that could be considered complete; however, relevant theorizations were selected and integrated to interpret the university actors' understanding of organizational culture.

## THEORETICAL SUPPORTS FOR THE ANALYSIS

A. Cohen, March and Olsen's model of the organization as anarchy (1972, 1976).

Although this may appear to be an oxymoron, given that anarchy is conceptually opposed to the idea of organization, it is useful to briefly describe the rationale behind the term, especially when this paradoxical vision is oriented to the case of educational organizations such as universities.

The term anarchy, as stated in its first meaning by the RAE (2021) "absence of public power" whose definition is expressed as an opposite of organization seen as the "association of people regulated by a set of rules according to certain purposes; disposition, arrangement, order" poses the task of understanding to what extent this paradox opens the way for the analysis of an organizational model that can be applied to universities from the characteristics postulated

by Cohen (2011) that are graphed in the following way:

Figure 1. Anarchic organizations



Note. Own elaboration based on the theoretical development of Cohen, M. D., March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (2011).

In anarchic organizations, one is permanently navigating in waters impregnated with disorganization and ambiguity. Universities are not entirely orderly and rational structures; they are in fact complex systems characterized by large doses of ambiguity in which decisions are mediated by the intervention of multiple actors in their decision-making processes.

In this type of organization, decision-making is generally preceded by extensive discussions in the staff, most of the time without formal planning, which leads managers to accelerate or delay the decision-making process and events occur as a simple consequence of the system.

The model, developed by Cohen et al. (2011) established the idea that universities show a certain level of "organized anarchies" because they must develop in scenarios characterized by high doses of disorganization and ambiguity; according to these authors, says Rouleau (2010), "Given the chaotic nature of the decision-making process, organizations are in fact "organized anarchies" in which the phenomena of power are central" (p.113).

Organized anarchies, states Rouleau (2010), assume a systemic organization whose actors



have varied and multiple interests, which on many occasions leads to turning them into arbitrary political scenarios with ambiguous objectives and goals and therefore susceptible to capsize during conflicts. In this type of organization, decision-making processes reach a limited level of rationality because they are characterized by working with ambiguous, imprecise and unclear goals.

This model conceives of the organization as a space in which people function in various directions, where decisions are the product of uncoordinated actions and in which its actors move along a flexible but uncertain path.

Organized anarchies have the following characteristics: "Decisions are made according to varied, inconsistent and ill-defined preferences; technology is fuzzy; organizational members do not understand procedures that work by trial and error learning from experience; finally, member participation is multiple and fluctuating" (p.114).

B. Garcia's Complex Systems (TSC) (1981, 2000, 2006)

A complex system, according to García (2006), "is a representation of a section of that reality, conceptualized as an organized totality (hence the name system), in which the elements are not "separable" and, therefore, cannot be studied in isolation" (p.21).

A complex system is an organized totality made up of heterogeneous elements in constant interaction, insofar as it is a whole, the properties that identify it are not the result of the sum of its components.

In addition to heterogeneity, the determining characteristic of a complex system is the interdefinability and mutual dependence of the functions performed by these elements within the total system. This characteristic excludes the possibility of obtaining an analysis of a complex system by the simple addition of sectoral studies corresponding to each of the elements (p.87).

Stratification and evolution are organizing principles that characterize complex systems:

Stratification. The components of the system, those that determine its functioning can be distributed in differentiated levels, each one of them with its dynamics, although these levels are

not interdefinable, the interactions between levels are conditioning factors of other dynamics for the rest of the levels, these interactions correspond to processes located in the subsystems, they occur between levels and give rise to various influences on a given level, Garcia (2006) designates them as boundary conditions or boundary conditions.

Evolution. Complex systems are transformed in a timeline, they evolve gradually and continuously not only because of the processes that influence them but also because such modifications result from a permanent action of unbalance-rebalance that gives way to continuous reorganizations. After a reorganization, the system remains in relative equilibrium, with slight dynamics and fluctuations, until a perturbation causes another imbalance (Garcia, 2006). Complex systems are transformed in an evolutionary process whose dynamics are not linear, thus, the smallest changes at a given moment can develop or increase until they affect the system as a whole.

According to Torres et al. (2012) "Organizations behave as if they were living organisms that adapt to the conditions of the context through self-organization and in which structures are dissipative and co-evolve" (p.197). A complex system applied to the case of universities allows to see organizations integrated by a series of emergent elements (figure 2) that independently could not make sense, but that in their totality come to life and manage to transform them into a social system constituted by a complex network of functional-relationships that assume actions and adaptive capacities.



**Figure 2. Elements that make up the complex system in universities**



Note. Own elaboration

When describing universities as complex organizations, their determinism and unpredictability are recognized; in short, it is a matter of observing them as scenarios in which they exhibit a variety of contradictions and multiple problems to be solved; some of them are impossible to solve. In this type of organization, the stability maintained for long periods places them at risk of becoming entrenched and remaining in one place without making major efforts; however, when faced with instability and uncertainty, they behave like a system that develops, innovates and grows from the production of new and varied forms of behavior with which they seek to adapt to the system.

Although the mechanisms to quantitatively measure the levels of complexity in social organizations are not clear, the degrees of development and evolution of a complex system can be observed according to its distance from or proximity to states of equilibrium (Torres, Ramírez, & Ríos, 2012).

### C. Luhmann's Self-Referential Systems Theory or General Theory of Social Systems (1993)

The General Theory of Social Systems developed by Luhmann is one of the most valued instruments in the last two decades since it traces a route to approach and observe the complex dynamics that develop in different social scenarios and, in the case of universities, it allows to focus on the so-called substantive functions (training, research and linkage), but also on the

relationships that are expressed in the contact of these with other subsystems that are part of their immediate and mediate environment.

Luhmann postulates a powerfully instrumental vision insofar as he provides conceptual tools for the understanding of the society-organization phenomenon from its macro functioning to the meso (subsystems) and micro (the organization itself) levels. Through an extensive theoretical development, he proposes a new general theory of systems that departs from previous versions and introduces characteristics such as self-referentiality, autopoiesis, differentiation and interpenetration, marking a new conception of the environment, which he conceives not as a concrete and definable space but as a distinction, Luhmann (2007) "the system can only be conceived as the difference between itself and the environment. That is to say that there is no system without an environment. The concept must be thought of as a unity in difference" (p.43).

From this approach, system and environment operate as a dyad that constitutes the sides of the same form, although they are separate, one does not exist without the other; environment refers to system and system refers to the environment. There is, then, a condition of simultaneity: the environment exists and is, while the system exists and vice versa.

These multi- and inter-disciplinary theoretical developments appear in themselves as a universe to be unraveled, in which societies and social systems are described as autopoietic and self-referential systems nuanced by complex behavioral processes and integrated by elements produced by the systems themselves.

Unlike previous theories in which systems sought to adapt to the environment, this new approach suggests that such adaptation is not possible, since systems structure themselves and set their limits of operation. What is possible is a structural coupling between system and environment; although the system has among its characteristics to be operationally closed, it is not true that it remains insensitive or is not irritated by the environment. The environment irritates, disturbs, and poses problems that affect the system in the broad sense of having a certain



effect on it.

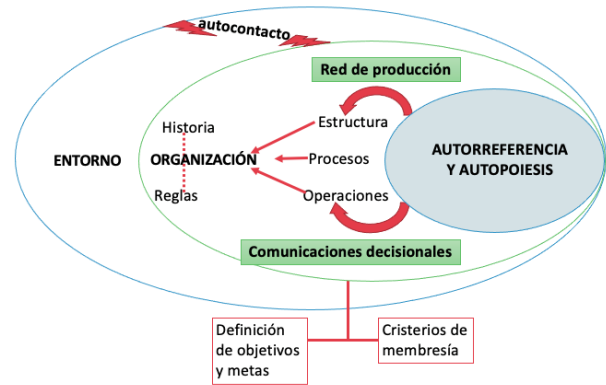
However, in organizations, these irritations, which are also internal constructions produced by the confrontation of one or more events with the structure of the system itself, are internally reworked through operations carried out within the framework of absolute autonomy to produce and reproduce the components that constitute and specify them. This self-generating capacity is realized from communicational support.

From this conceptual framework, universities are complex organizational systems, characterized by self-referentiality and autopoiesis, which articulate a network of processes and operations with which they seek to identify themselves; but at the same time differentiate themselves from other systems. In the exercise of the autopoietic function, they produce, analyze, feedback or annul the elements of their system, all in response to the irritations or disturbances that they contact in the environment.

Luhmann (1984), attributes to organizations the possibility of self-reference in the creation of their internal structures; as autopoietic systems, they define themselves through their operations that produce and reproduce them by themselves, he also points out that in this type of operations decisions play an essential role so that organizations should be seen as a set of decisions.

According to Luhman (1997), universities become a very particular type of self-referential systems, their operations refer to themselves, to their structure, this quality places them as observers of their environment to make distinctions and selections from these self-contacts according to their structural capacities. By assuming a form of self-referential operation, they must decide between two alternatives: 1) to arrogate to themselves the function of thinking and designing their structures, proposing lines of management that do not depend on the environment, and 2) to observe the environment without being subject to the structuring actions that they develop within themselves and then analyze the effectiveness of their decisions.

Figure 3. Self-reference and Autopoiesis.



D. From organizational theories to the identification of organizational culture in universities.

This paper attempts to enrich the set of ideas that may come into play when studying and analyzing the articulation of components that give rise to that construct of organizational culture that is positioned in universities through, as Shein (1988) argues, a teaching process, that is, from acts of educational communication in which the interactions between members of a community, in this case, the university, give rise to learning situations related to values, beliefs, forms of management, expectations and types of behaviors required and validated in the educational institution.

...I will call "culture" a pattern of basic assumptions - invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learned to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration - that have been sufficiently influential to be considered valid and, consequently, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel those problems (p.25-26).

The concept of organizational culture has been relevant in the analysis of organizational behavior during the last three decades, despite the conceptual disagreements and the controversial literature produced around the construct, it has become an unavoidable topic in organizational studies. Robbins (2011) defines organizational culture as a system of shared meanings among the members of an organization that distinguishes one organization from the others, as Oseda et al., 2020, points out.





In this framework of thought, a strong organizational culture provides stability to an organization. However, these authors recognize that in all organizations, having a strong organizational culture carries a positive connotation. In some cases, it can become a serious obstacle to change initiatives. In this sense, any organization has a culture whose influence on the attitudes and behavior of its members will depend on the solidity with which it has taken root in the organization (p.77).

In this case, the purpose is not to delve into the value per se of the concept, but to understand how the meanings of organizational culture have been articulated in university communities.

In scenarios where the number of decisions increases, efficient communication processes are required to collaborate in the configuration of the meanings that support the construct of organizational culture, according to Franco (2011), "a participatory communication that facilitates the exchange of ideas, experiences, knowledge and involves all the actors in a process, whether it is a strictly educational process or an essential and purely communicational process". According to Fonseca Martínez (2020).

Each university has its own identity, its system of symbols that are represented in socio-cultural activities, academic services, public communication actions, and online platforms where nuances and common thoughts are highlighted around the training institution, but there is no systematization of these heritage relations in all spaces, media and supports with strategic purposes that encourage the discourse of authenticity (p.331).

What is interesting for this case is to refer to and infer how the self-descriptions that members of the universities make regarding the construct operate, since, from this semantics, the meanings that operate within this type of social system and that at the same time are those that accompany their processes of autopoiesis can be deduced.

This work is situated as a second-order observation, universities are seen as a system that observes and self-observes. As Luhmann (2007) states "all functional systems have been

operationally converted to second-order observation, to observer observation - observation that refers to each system's corresponding internal perspective of the system/environment distinction" (p.113). The self-observations as well as the self-descriptions that are collected from the empirical process, allow recognizing the unity from the differentiation that are pointed out in each of the cases.

From these theoretical supports, it was productive to analyze the quantitative results obtained through the application of the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) and qualitative results obtained through focus groups and interviews. The analysis focused on the identification of the current type of culture experienced by the universities and the characteristics of the desired culture; all this, appeals to six key dimensions that support the vision or desire to be in this type of organization: Dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, human resource management, union in the organization, strategic emphasis and success criteria.

### Methodology

The information for this study was obtained from the inter-university research project: "Relationships between organizational culture, classroom situation and university development in HEIs in Ecuador" whose main objective was to verify the existence or not of a causal relationship between the manifestation and management of organizational culture and its relationship with classroom teaching practices and levels of university development.

The present research corresponded to a design of an exploratory, descriptive and explanatory nature that aspired to identify and represent the mental map of the actors of the university community to the constructed meanings that are being shared in each of the universities that were integrated into the study, all this to describe and explain the orientation of the organizational culture that is perceived in each context and the relationship between the culture that is lived or practiced and its incidence in the processes of



learning and university development.  
 The corresponding population for this research consisted of eight universities: 3 public, 4 private

co-financed and 1 private, the sample of finite character was integrated as follows:

**Table 1. Population and nature of the sample**

Informants	Population	Sampling error	Confiance	Estimated sample	Observed sample
IES teachers	13261	+/- 4	95%	574	580
IES Students	190473	+/- 4	95%	598	2061
IES Administrative Staff	No data available			717	717
Total				1889	3368

The type of sampling used was stratified probability sampling assigned by percentage quotas, which kept the same proportions observed in the population of each of the universities in the sample. It is, therefore, a

probability sampling technique in which the sample gathered has a proportion of individuals that was set according to the population of each stratum in each of the participating HEIs (Tables 2 and 3):

**Table 2. HEI student population targeted by the project**

IES	Home City	Sex		Total Enrolled
		H	M	
UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE CUENCA	CUENCA	5,137.00	6,471.00	11,608.00
UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA SALESIANA	CUENCA	15,797.00	12,269.00	28,066.00
UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA	CUENCA	7,447.00	9,478.00	16,925.00
UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE QUITO (PUCE)	QUITO	9,822.00	13,133.00	22,955.00
UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS FUERZAS ARMADAS ESPE	QUITO	10,030.00	6,302.00	16,332.00
UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO	QUITO	4,021.00	3,990.00	8,011.00
UNIVERSIDAD DE GUAYAQUIL	GYE	28,513.00	36,328.00	64,841.00
UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA EMPRESARIAL (UTEG)	GYE	782	1,367.00	2,149.00
UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE SANTIAGO DE GYE	GYE	8,512.00	11,074.00	19,586.00
TOTAL		90,061.00	100,412.00	190,473.00

Source: Senescyt geographic viewer information up to 2015. <http://www.senescyt.gob.ec/visorgeografico/> and updated to 2015.



**Table 3. HEI target teaching population of the project**

IES	Home City	No. of teachers
UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE CUENCA	CUENCA	996
UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA SALESIANA	CUENCA	1,224
UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA	CUENCA	1,257
UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE QUITO (PUCE)	QUITO	2,702
UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS FUERZAS ARMADAS ESPE	QUITO	1,257
UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO	QUITO	742
UNIVERSIDAD DE GUAYAQUIL	GYE	3,383
UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA EMPRESARIAL (UTEG)	GYE	188
UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE SANTIAGO DE GYE	GYE	1,512
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>13,261.00</b>

Source: Senescyt geographic viewer information up to 2015 To measure the degree of reliability of the instrument, the Crombach Alpha Coefficient method was applied, obtaining a reliability index of 0.99 for the current culture and 1.00 for the desired culture. For the analysis of the data, descriptive, absolute frequency and percentage statistical techniques were used.

Since this was a mixed-method study, the instruments used were as follows:

- a) The qualitative phase was developed through focus groups and interviews.
- b) For the quantitative phase, the instrument used was the standardized questionnaire Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), whose application and analysis make it possible to describe the central elements of organizational culture, assessing "how things are and how we wish things to be" (current culture and desired culture) in the organization.

**RESULTS**

The OCAI questionnaire is part of a quantitative methodology developed by Cameron and Quinn (2006) for the study of organizational culture based on the Competing Values Framework model whose application offers the diagnosis of the dominant culture and its link with the performance of the organization at the time of the research, through the application of an instrument called Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI).

The model developed proposes the existence of four types of culture: Clan, Adhocracy, Hierarchy

and Market, which are defined from two central dimensions: 1) Stability-flexibility and allows detecting whether the organization prevails a tendency of order and control or a proposal of dynamism and discretionally; 2) Internal or external orientation. In turn, the types of culture are identified based on six indicators: 1) dominant characteristics, 2) organizational leadership, 3) employee management, 4) organizational cohesion, 5) strategic emphasis and 6) success criteria.

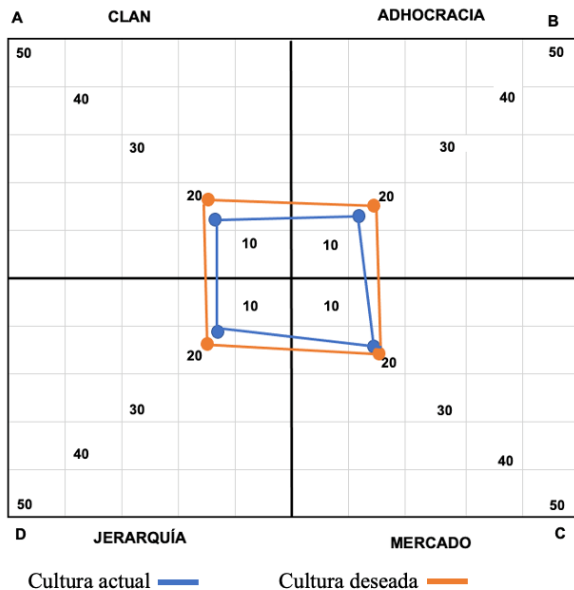
From the application of the OCAI questionnaire, the following results were obtained:

- 1. Figure 5 shows that the observers' viewpoint indicates that the predominant feature of the current culture is that it is market-oriented but with very marked hierarchical nuances, that is, with an idea positioned towards organizations in which order and control prevail; while the preferential trend in the case of the desired culture is towards a clan tendency, that is, with an idea positioned towards organizations in which order and control prevail.





**Figure 5. Current and desired culture in Ecuadorian universities**



2. The current organizational culture in the group of self-observed universities shows a clear tendency of these organizations towards the configuration and perception of controlled and rigid work environments, spaces where the established instructions, processes and regulations lead and guide the decision-making process.

3. From the data collected, it can be inferred that the organizational culture in Ecuadorian universities is market-oriented with a marked incidence of a hierarchical structure perceived as strong. There is a prevailing focus on external positioning, concentrating efforts on the analysis of the competition and rapid decision making; there is also a perceived need to achieve stability and control.

4. From elements positioned in the discourse of the members of the university community, it is obtained that the idea of privileging management based on the "user of the educational service" leads them to a permanent self-contact with the environment to analyze the characteristics and conditions of the offer of other universities (competition), all of this tinged with a weak medium and long term vision.

5. In this case, the market-oriented organizational culture stems from a structure whose centralized management style concentrates efforts on strategic plans, climate measurement, proposals for reward schemes, leadership based on the authority and the dissemination of institutional values. However, in the focus groups, it is common to find a discourse that nestles phrases linked to the attributes of the culture Table 4.

**Table 4. Organizational culture attributes**

APPOINTMENT REGISTRATION	ATTRIBUTES OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE	INFORMANT CODES
12:16	We are a very vertical, centralist organization, which makes us a very heavy elephant to move, and when you want to do something you have so many steps that in the fifth step you lose the initiative or you can insist and achieve the result you are waiting for. We are an institution whose management style makes us very slow and very heavy and does not make us easy to mesh in a more fluid and dynamic world.	(GF.D12)
12:17	I observe isolated efforts. And when isolated initiatives come, although they can have important results within the university, they do not have the same multiplying effect as if it were a community idea, in which, if one moves, we all move along that line.	GF.D2
12:18	It is a public institution of higher education with a hierarchical and centralized organization where the Rectorate has a great deal of administrative and political power.	(GFE.D2)
12:19	I have also seen vertical decision-making, only the decisions made by the rector are valid, without a democratic process.	(EA1)
12:20	There is no respect for thinking differently and accepting that	(GF.A5)



	diversity. Because I think differently does not mean that I am against this or that person, the disrespect for diversity has caused these gaps in various spaces such as the highest authorities. This is reflected in the emails, or in the management of all of us who make up the University, which is hindered because we do not know what to do or where to go.	
12:21	The objectives and values of the University of Cuenca are expressed in its mission and vision. Although the university community is not always informed about them, this information is presented in the signage and certain communication spaces of the University (e.g. web page).	(GF.E2)
12:22	The different interest groups that prevent the university from fulfilling, in a joint manner, the interests and needs of the university as set forth in its mission and vision.	(E.D1)
12:23	I do not see that there is effective teamwork, I am talking about the whole institution, working with the firm purpose of reaching an objective; this does not happen. I believe that there is very poor communication, decisions are made but not efficiently disseminated.	(GF.A1)
12:24	I would think that one of the fundamental aspects in my opinion is the high turnover of management personnel in the university, there is a lot of change and as the highest authority changes then the following authorities also rotate.	(E.A10)
12:25	"The main inhibitor of change is a hierarchical structure that will always make decisions solely to comply with orders from higher civilian or military entities."	(GF.D7).
12:26	There is no cohesion among the different areas, which do not receive much guidance from their leaders.	(GF.D8).
12:27	Students are at the center of everything we do, so we must work to meet the demands of the users of the educational service we provide.	(GF.D9).
12:28	Centralized decision making, limited performance of middle management.	(GF.D7).
12:29	Leadership is conceived as someone who achieves results by making his team work in harmony, who manages to form a work team, for the benefit of the team itself, that is considered a leader.	(GF.D5)
12:30	The University of Guayaquil lacks leaders, since it is not possible to call a leader a person who executes functions that are entrusted without considering time or knowledge of what is being done.	(GF.D6)

Note: Informant codes: Event: (FG=Focus Group; I=Interview) Participant: (D=Teacher, S=Student, A=Administrative)

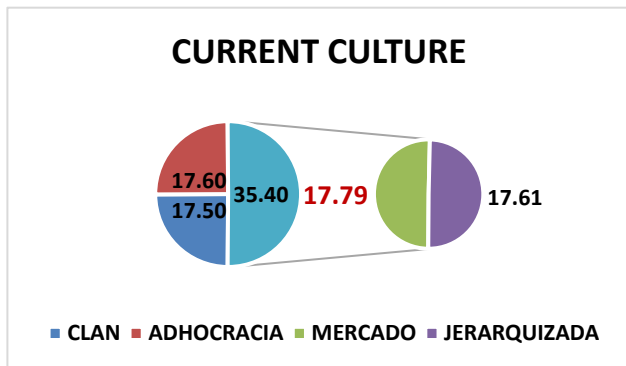
6. The current organizational culture has allowed the universities to define their operational limits and differentiate themselves based on decisions with which they sought to build a sense of identity coupled to their aims,

objectives and goals, thus showing a shared belief that sees university leaders as managers, possessing clear lines of authority, but that also "delegates" the almost absolute responsibility for the results to the leaders.



7. From eight self-observed universities, a current vision of the organizational culture that offers a solid combination between market and hierarchical cultures is collected, and it is revealed that the beliefs positioned within the universities identify a culture that is defined by a decision-making located at the positional level of an authority not always validated in the environment, referring rather to an authority that holds power and in most cases linked to a political vector.

**Figure 6. Current culture in 8 self-observed universities**



8. In universities, this political vector produces a high level of rotation in decision-making areas. When decision-makers respond to temporally limited periods of function, priorities vary according to the approach of a centralized authority that exercises power for a short time, thus the complexity is manifested in the difficulty of reconciling objectives and goals that are often contradictory. Lacking efficient communication processes, the implementation of decisions does not always occur in strict adherence to standardized processes, so the resolution of problems often has varied results of success or failure in the different academic units.

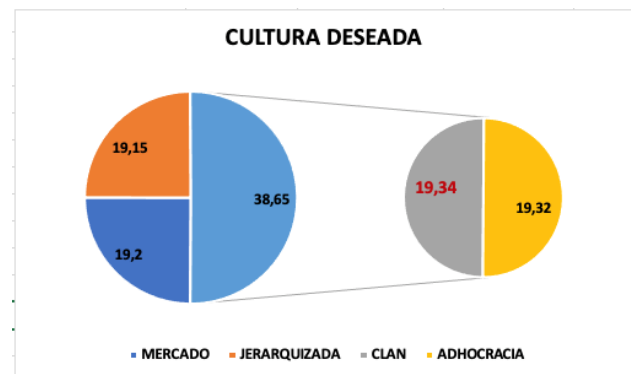
9. The desired or future organizational culture (Figure 7) in the set of self-observed universities shows a clear tendency of these organizations towards a desire that configures an expectation predominantly oriented towards the Clan-type culture, with a sustained orientation towards the Adhocratic culture. These results confirm that Ecuadorian universities build their expectations regarding the culture they wish to have towards attributes of flexibility, dynamism and discretionality. As stated by Hellriegel and

Slocum, (2009):

Tradition, loyalty, personal commitment, extensive socialization, teamwork, self-management and social influence are the attributes of a clan culture... The individual's long-term commitment to the organization (loyalty) is exchanged for the organization's long-term commitment to the individual (security). Because individuals believe that the organization will treat them fairly in terms of pay increases, promotions, and other forms of recognition, they feel accountable to the organization for their actions (p.389).

10. A prospective Clan culture in universities would be characterized by a focus on human development, participatory management, efficient and results-oriented teamwork, and most importantly a leadership that guides and protects the members of the community.

**Figure 7. Desired culture in 8 self-observed universities**



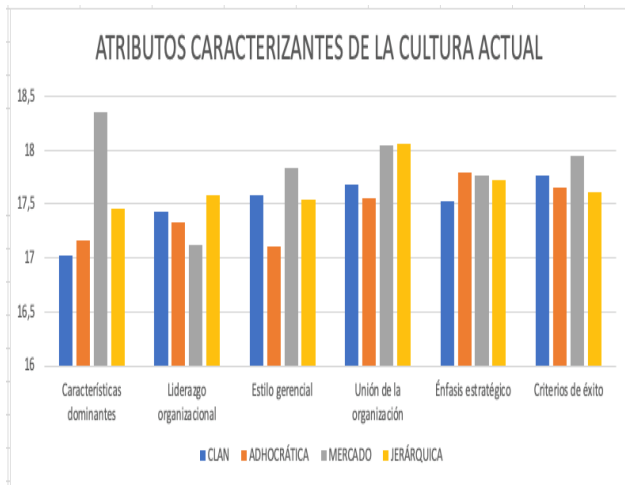
11. Adhocracy as a culture promotes dynamism, adaptability, and innovation, especially in environments with high levels of complexity; thus, universities recognize the need to manage ambiguity and information saturation and have an expectation of a decentralized form of organization in which authority relationships are not dense and heavy, but rather spaces, where power is widely distributed so that teams can make decisions and problem solving, is much more assertive.

12. From the same OCAI questionnaire, the attributes of the organizational culture prioritized in each of the universities are shown as follows in an exercise of self-observation: The characteristics prioritized as identifying features



of the current culture located within a market-oriented culture (18.36 points), are specified through their institutional management practices. A hierarchical leadership stands out (17.58 points), which seeks to improve results in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, and promotes stability and security; a market management style (17.83 points), is focused on competitiveness and the direction of expected results. The sense that stands out is focused on stability and control (Figura 8)

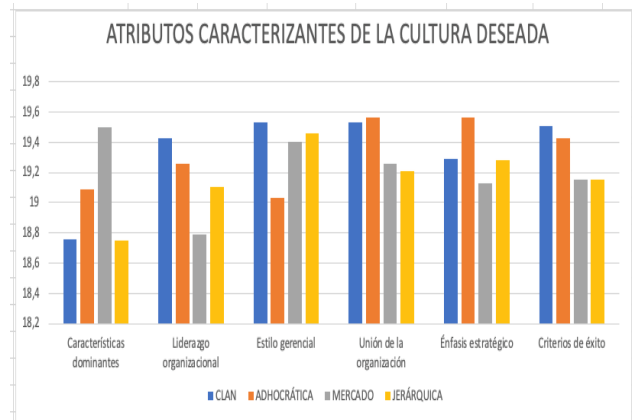
**Figure 8. Characterizing attributes of today's culture**



13. The characteristics prioritized as identifying features of the desired or future culture offer, on the other hand, a clear expectation towards a group-oriented culture (Clan), but which runs very parallel to Adhocracy (18.76-19.09 points), its institutional management practices are expected to be based on values and objectives, on the quality of teamwork and the commitment to the organization. Clan leadership stands out (19.43 points), based on the strengthening of individual commitments and the creation of role models. A Clan management style is claimed (19.53 points), it is presented centered on socialization and recognition of capabilities, and dissemination of its history, values and traditions; thus creating a stream of shared beliefs that influence organizational behavior. The sense that stands out, at the level of desire, is oriented towards flexibility and innovation, but strongly anchored to that sense of belonging, which is the pride of being part of the universities' membership.

(Figure 9).

**Figure 9. Characterizing attributes of the desired culture.**



**CONCLUSIONS**

The analysis of the current and desired organizational culture in a group of Ecuadorian universities allowed the following conclusions to be reached:

It was found that the current type of culture prevailing in Ecuadorian universities shows a clear trend that identifies them as structured and formalized organizations, that is, with rules and procedures, not always socialized and therefore not clear enough for the members of the university communities; in them, the leadership roles have prioritized the fulfillment of goals and objectives whose results will allow them to stand out among the other universities identified as competitors. These are, then, management spaces that concentrate on the quality of their internal operations but are permanently attentive to what is happening in their environment. Already located in the prospective vision, for the desired culture (Clan with a strong adhocratic orientation), there is a ritual or aspirational belief in having greater spaces of flexibility that favor innovation, and a kind of disenchantment with centralization and formalization is observed, which implies a clear vision towards new organizational forms that encourage the learning of its members intending to make the figures of delegation more frequent and efficient. On the other hand, while the orientation towards group culture shows a high valuation of an internal orientation that tends to the development of a



strong commitment to the organization, preceded by processes that strengthen group capacities derived from the management of a protective leader, the adhocratic orientation validates the need to have a geo-management view that considers the external and places them assertively in a scenario of permanent changes.

From the systemic perspective with which the study was approached, it is confirmed that universities are organizational systems constituted by operations whose dynamics of interaction, their simultaneity and coexistence with the environment allow them to realize their systemic and communicative functionality through the result of self-referential operations aimed at maintaining limits with their environment. In this sense, universities are not called to be forms that respond to external impulses but to self-reproduce their structures independently of what happens in the environment.

From the perspective of sociopoiesis, it is concluded that the organizations studied are characterized by being operationally closed, but neither lagging nor insensitive to what happens in their environment; in such a way that, by participating in elements that irritate and disturb them, they generate within themselves, and from their decisional operations, new proposals. The self-observation witnessed in this study determines the need to reorient the communicational processes, with the aim that those irritations or disturbances that are reached from the self-contact with the environment, allow ordering a wider range of alternatives so that a variety of selection options are available when arriving at the decision-making processes. Finally, taking up the title of the article, it is concluded that universities still show certain traits of organized anarchy insofar as they are characterized by operating in environments impregnated with high doses of ambiguity and uncertainty, This leads them to make decisions preceded by ample moments of discussion that are not always based on formal planning for the long term since the high turnover of leadership leads managers to accelerate or delay decision-making, which in most cases causes events to occur as a simple consequence of the

spontaneous action of the system.

## References

1. Cameron, Kim S. y Quinn, Robert E. (2006). *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture. Based on the Competing Values Framework*. United States of America: Jossey-Bass.
2. Cohen, M. D., March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (2011). El bote de basura como modelo de elección organizacional. *Gestión y política pública*, 20(2), 247-290.
3. Franco Pombo, M. (2011). *Gestión de comunicación para el cambio cultural*. Cuadernos de Educación y Desarrollo, (28).
4. Fonseca Martínez, A., & Brull González, M. (2020). Patrimonio cultural e identidad en las universidades. *Revista Universidad y Sociedad*, 12(5), 328-336.
5. García, R. (1994). Interdisciplinariedad y sistemas complejos. *Ciencias sociales y formación ambiental*, 85-124.
6. García, R. (2006). *Sistemas complejos: conceptos, métodos y fundamentación epistemológica de la investigación interdisciplinaria*. Editorial Gedisa.
7. Hellriegel, D., & Slocum, J. W. (2009). *Comportamiento organizacional (No. Sirsi) a458263*.
8. Luhmann, N. 1984: *Soziale Systeme: Grundrib einer allgemeinen Theorie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, p. 36.
9. Luhmann, N, (1990). *Sociedad y sistema: la ambición de la teoría*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 1990.
10. Luhmann, Niklas (1997), *Organización y decisión. Autopoiesis, acción y entendimiento comunicativo*, Ed. Anthropos. Universidad Iberoamericana, 1o ed., España.
11. Luhmann, N. (2007). *La sociedad de la sociedad*. Universidad Iberoamericana.
12. Oseda Gago, D., Flores Arocutipá, P. J., Luján Minaya, J. C., & Oseda Gago, M. A. (2020). Cultura organizacional y control interno del personal administrativo de la Unidad de Gestión Educativa Local de Yauli, La Oroya. *Revista Universidad y Sociedad*, 12(5), 75-82
13. Rouleau, Linda (2010) *Théories des organisations: approches classiques, contemporaines et de l'avant-garde*; Presses de l'Université du Québec, Canada.
14. Schein, E. (1988). *La cultura empresarial y el liderazgo. Una visión dinámica*. Plaza & Janes Editores. P.
15. Torres, F. C., Ramírez, D. B., & Ríos, G. A. C. (2012). *La organización como sistema complejo: implicaciones para la conceptualización del liderazgo*. *Criterio Libre*, 10(16), 194.
16. Distancia, 5-6.  
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/red/61/00>
17. González González, C. (2019). *Gamificación en el aula: ludificando espacios de enseñanzaaprendizaje presenciales y espacios virtuales*. Researchgate. net, 1-22.





18. Harter, S. (1981). A scale of intrinsic versus extrinsic orientation in the classroom (Vol. 3). New York, Estados Unidos: University of Denver.
19. Illlescas Cárdenas, R. C., GarcíaHerrera, D. G., Erazo-Álvarez, C. A., & Erazo-Álvarez, J. C. (2020). Aprendizaje Basado en Juegos como estrategia de enseñanza de la Matemática. *Revista Interdisciplinaria de Humanidades, Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología*. doi:10.35381/cm.v6i1.345
20. Lowenhaupt, R., & Hopkins, M. (2020). Considerations for school leaders serving US immigrant communities in the global pandemic. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 5(374), 375-380. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-05-2020-0023>
21. Martínez Bonafé, J. (1988). El estudio de caso en la investigación educativa. *Investigación en la escuela*(6), 1-10.
22. Observatorio de Innovación Educativa del Tecnológico de Monterrey . (2016). Gamificación. *Observatorio de Innovación Educativa*, 1-36.
23. OLiva, H. A. (2016). La gamificación como estrategia metodológica en el contexto educativo universitario. *Realidad y Reflexión*, 1-19.
24. Rodríguez Oroz, D., Gómez Espina, R., Bravo Pérez , M., & Truyol, M. E. (2019). Aprendizaje basado en un proyecto de gamificación: vinculando la educación universitaria con la divulgación de la geomorfología de Chile. *Revista Eureka sobre Enseñanza y Divulgación de*, 16(2). doi:<https://doi.org/10.25267/RevEurekaensendivulgcienc.2019.v16.i2.2202>
25. Román, R. (2019). Gamificación: mitos y realidades. Instituto para el futuro de la Educación. Obtenido de <https://observatorio.tec.mx/edu-news/gamificacion-mitos-y-realidades>
26. Scout Creating a better Word. (Enero de 2021). La Historia del Movimiento Scout. Scout Creating a better Word. Obtenido de <https://www.scout.org/es/node/9691>
27. Unir. (13 de Octubre de 2020). La gamificación en el aula: que es y como aplicarla. Obtenido de Educación Unir: <https://www.unir.net/educacion/revista/gamificacion-en-el-aula/#:~:text=La%20gamificaci%C3%B3n%20es%20una%20t%C3%A9cnica%20que%20nos%20permite%20emplear%20diversos,conocimientos%20y%20mejorar%20la%20atenci%C3%B3n.>
28. Villarroel, R., Quispe, V., Santa María, H., & Ventosill, D. (2020). La gamificación como respuesta desafiante para motivar las clases en educación secundaria en el contexto de COVID-19. *Revista Innova Educación*, 3(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.35622/j.rie.2021.01.001>

