

EVOLUTION OF ECUADORIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE PERIOD 2020–2025: A REVIEW OF THE LATIN AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Public administration plays a fundamental role in the functioning of the State, as it is responsible for implementing public policies, managing collective resources and guaranteeing the provision of services to citizens. In recent years, Ecuador has experienced institutional, economic and administrative transformations that have influenced the structure and performance of its public sector. In this context, the present study analyzes the evolution of Ecuadorian public administration between 2020 and 2025 through a systematic review of Latin American scientific literature. The research was conducted using the PRISMA 2020 methodological framework and the PISCO approach to structure the search and selection process. Scientific publications were identified in regional academic databases, particularly SciELO and Latindex. After applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, fifteen studies related to public administration, state management, public policy and institutional reforms in Ecuador were selected for the final analysis. The results reveal that the literature focuses mainly on five thematic areas: institutional transformations of the State, management of public enterprises and state assets, fiscal governance and public finance, transparency and regulatory frameworks, and administrative modernization through digitalization. The studies also highlight fiscal constraints, organizational challenges and debates about the role of the State in economic and administrative governance. In conclusion, the findings indicate that Ecuadorian public administration is undergoing a complex transition characterized by institutional restructuring, fiscal limitations and emerging modernization efforts aimed at improving transparency, efficiency and digital public services.

Keywords: public administration, state dismantling, Ecuador, public sector governance, institutional reforms

INTRODUCTION

The public administration constitutes the operational core of the State, since through it government decisions have materialized, public policies are executed, and the provision of goods and services aimed at collective well-being is guaranteed. In the case of Ecuador, the study of its recent evolution acquires special importance because, between 2020 and 2025, the country experienced political, economic, institutional and technological transformations that directly affected the way it manages the public. This period was marked by tensions between fiscal sustainability, institutional reorganization, administrative modernization, digitization of procedures, transparency in the public service and redefinition of the role of public companies within the state apparatus. Consequently, analyzing the evolution of Ecuadorian public administration during this period not only allows us to understand regulatory and operational changes, but also to identify the research trends that Latin American literature has built around these transformations.

The elaboration of this article is justified, in the first place, by the need to systematize a scientific production that appears dispersed in different thematic areas. Some studies focus on the political-institutional dimension of the State, others on the management of public enterprises, others on administrative transparency, others on the digitalization of procedures, and others on the effects of certain public policies on the administrative structure. This dispersion makes it difficult to build an

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articulated vision of the evolution of Ecuadorian public administration in recent years. In this sense, works such as those by Herrera et al. (2020) are relevant because they place Ecuador within Latin American debates on balances and challenges after the progressive cycle, showing that changes in the State cannot be analyzed in isolation, but in relation to ideological, fiscal, and governance reconfigurations. In a complementary way, Icaza (2020) addresses the associative mechanisms, expansion and development of public companies in Ecuador, providing elements to understand how certain state structures have adapted to new demands of management, efficiency and institutional articulation.

By virtue of the above, the object of study of this research is the evolution of Ecuadorian public administration during the period 2020–2025, understood as the set of institutional, organizational, normative and operational transformations that the Latin American scientific literature has identified in the functioning of the Ecuadorian State. On the other hand, the subject of study is constituted by the Latin American academic production published on Ecuador in that period, especially articles, theses and scientific studies that address issues such as public sector reforms, public enterprises, transparency, administrative digitalization, public policies, organizational sustainability, legal security and institutional management.

The justification of the study lies in the fact that a systematic review allows a fragmented field of knowledge to be rigorously organized and, at the same time, to establish which are the predominant thematic lines, the most frequent methodological approaches and the main research gaps. In the case of Ecuador, this need is even greater because the volume of specialized publications is not abundant and many of them are dispersed among legal, administrative, economic and multidisciplinary journals. Therefore, systematizing the available literature not only contributes to the state of the art, but also offers a useful basis for future research, for university teaching and for critical reflection on contemporary public management in Ecuador. In addition, the selected period is especially pertinent because it includes years of institutional rearrangement after the pandemic, debates on fiscal adjustment and sustainability, expansion of digital tools, review of public policies, and discussion of transparency, legality, and inclusion in state administration.

In accordance with this approach, the general objective of this article is to analyze the evolution of Ecuadorian public administration in the period 2020–2025 through a systematic review of the Latin American scientific literature. From this general purpose derive several specific objectives articulated among themselves: to identify the main thematic lines present in the reviewed literature on Ecuadorian public administration; to examine the theoretical and methodological approaches employed by the selected studies; describe the main findings related to institutional reforms, public management, state-owned enterprises, digitalization, transparency and public policies; and to recognize the research gaps that persist in Latin American academic production on public administration in Ecuador. Together, these purposes seek to offer an integrative vision of the recent changes in the Ecuadorian public sector, not from an evaluative or ideological stance, but from the critical systematization of the available scientific evidence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The interest in this article also arises because the period 2020–2025 concentrates a set of phenomena that modified the functioning of the Ecuadorian public administration. On the economic and fiscal level, Londoño Espinosa (2020) offers useful background by studying Ecuador's fiscal reaction and the tensions in the management of public finances, a fundamental aspect to understand how budgetary restrictions impact state organization. In a more political and

programmatic line, Varela (2021) examines proposals for heterodox stabilization in the face of neoliberalism, which helps to contextualize debates on the role of the State, the regulatory capacity of the public sector, and the orientation of government policies. Later, Pacheco Giraldo (2023) incorporates a reflection on debt and its implications in the Ecuadorian case, allowing us to understand that public administration does not evolve only due to internal reforms, but also due to financial conditions and broader governance frameworks. In addition, Moncada (2024) studies money laundering and its impact on the Ecuadorian public administration, revealing that the challenges of the contemporary State are not limited to administrative efficiency, but include risks related to institutional integrity, control, and legality.

In 2025, localized production on Ecuador acquires greater specificity and shows new thematic concerns. Avalos-Cuadrado et al. (2025) analyze proposals for transparency in meritocratic notary competitions in Ecuador, showing that the quality of public administration also depends on the legitimacy of the mechanisms for selection and access to public positions or functions. In a related way, Salazar-Carrillo et al. (2025) examine the scarce regulation of telematic notarial services and its impact on legal certainty, which highlights the challenge of keeping pace with digitalization with consistent regulatory frameworks. From another perspective, Zamora-Mendoza (2025) studies digital tools for administrative simplification in Ecuador, providing evidence on one of the most visible axes of recent state modernization: the incorporation of technologies to streamline processes, reduce times, and improve interaction between citizens and institutions. In turn, Collins-Ventura (2025) highlights the importance of strengthening organizational capacities with a focus on sustainability and risks, showing that contemporary public administration can no longer be evaluated only by classic criteria of legality and hierarchy, but also by its ability to manage uncertain, complex, and changing environments.

Other studies in 2025 expand the understanding of Ecuadorian public administration from sectoral and organizational angles. Cabrera and Toro (2025) examine the asset sale processes of public companies in Ecuador, opening a discussion on the State's asset management, the rationalization of resources, and strategic decisions regarding the State's presence in the economy. Loor and Cusme (2025), on the other hand, evaluate public policies aimed at strengthening the popular and solidarity economy, which allows us to observe how the public administration not only manages internal structures, but also designs and implements instruments of social and economic intervention. In the field of labor and rights, Gómez-Arévalo et al. (2025) study the suppression of positions held by people with disabilities in the public administration of Santo Domingo, evidencing tensions between administrative rationalization, inclusion, and protection of rights. Likewise, Rosero Moran et al. (2025) analyze the relationship between managerial leadership and public administration management in Ecuadorian public schools, providing indications of how institutional performance also depends on factors of leadership, organizational culture, and decision-making.

Although the temporal core of this review focuses on 2020–2025, it is also pertinent to recognize certain theoretical and conceptual antecedents that enrich the interpretation of recent findings. González Calle (2017) studied the legal situation and labor regime of public companies in Ecuador, providing bases for understanding debates that are still ongoing around the nature of the public business sector. Rey (2017), on a broader Latin American scale, reflected on the crossroads of the State and public companies in a disputed region, a precedent that helps to locate the Ecuadorian case within structural processes of reform and contestation of the state model. Even older works, such as those of Paredes (1995), Pinto and Lahera (1993) and Ramírez (1993), allow us to warn

that discussions on privatization, sale of public enterprises and redefinition of the state apparatus have a long-term trajectory in Latin America. This means that the changes observed between 2020 and 2025 do not emerge from a vacuum, but are part of a historical sequence of debates on state intervention, efficiency, regulation and governance.

METHODOLOGY

This study was developed through a **systematic review of the literature**, aimed at analyzing the evolution of Ecuadorian public administration between 2020 and 2025. To guarantee scientific rigor, transparency in the selection of studies and the replicability of the search process, the methodological guidelines of the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) declaration were applied in its updated version **PRISMA 2020**, widely used in academic research to systematize scientific evidence in different fields of knowledge.

The systematic review made it possible to identify, select and analyze scientific studies related to the Ecuadorian public administration published in the defined period, with the purpose of identifying research trends, predominant methodological approaches and main results reported in the Latin American literature.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a systematic review design with a qualitative-interpretative approach, based on the content analysis of the selected studies. This approach allowed for a structured examination of the available scientific production on Ecuadorian public administration, integrating different academic perspectives from areas such as public management, administrative law, public economics, and public policies. The methodological process was organized following the four main stages of the PRISMA 2020 protocol:

- a) Identification of studies
- b) Initial screening or filtering
- c) Eligibility Assessment
- d) Final selection of included studies

These stages were represented by a PRISMA flow chart, which shows in detail the process of progressive reduction of the identified records until the final set of analyzed investigations was reached.

3.2 Search strategy

The search for scientific literature was carried out in academic databases relevant to Latin American scientific production, prioritizing those that concentrate research in social sciences, public administration and public policies. The databases used were:

- SciELO
- Latindex

These platforms were selected due to their wide coverage of Ibero-American academic journals and their relevance in the dissemination of research related to public administration, state management, and institutional studies in Latin America.

The search strategy was developed using keyword combinations related to the research topic. Among the main terms used are:

These keywords were combined using Boolean AND and OR operators, with the aim of expanding or limiting the results obtained in the databases consulted.

3.3 Analytical approach using the PISCO model

To structure the process of searching for and selecting studies, the **PISCO model** was applied, used in systematic reviews in social sciences to delimit the components of the analysis. The model was structured as follows: The search strategy was structured using Boolean operators (AND, OR), combining terms related to public administration, state management, and institutional reforms in Ecuador.

The main search algorithm was: ("dismantling" AND "public administration" OR "public management" OR "public sector" OR "public institutions") AND (Ecuador) AND ("reform of the State" OR "administrative modernization" OR "public governance" OR "public policies"). The search was limited to the period 2020–2025.

P (Population): Latin American scientific literature that analyzes public administration in Ecuador.

I (Intervention – Phenomenon of interest): Institutional transformations, administrative reforms, modernization of the State, digitalization of procedures, administrative transparency and management of public companies in Ecuador.

S (Scope – Study Context): Ecuadorian public sector, including state institutions, public enterprises, public policies, administrative structures, and governance mechanisms.

C (Comparison): Comparison between theoretical and methodological approaches and results of the studies reviewed.

O (Outcome): Identification of research trends, main academic findings and knowledge gaps on the evolution of Ecuadorian public administration between 2020 and 2025.

The application of the PISCO model made it possible to precisely delimit the scope of the study and ensure coherence between the research question, the selection criteria and the analysis of results.

3.4 Inclusion criteria

To guarantee the relevance of the literature analyzed, the following inclusion criteria were established:

- Scientific publications between 2020 and 2025.
- Investigations related to state dismantling, public administration, public management, public policies or state institutions in Ecuador.
- Scientific articles, academic theses or indexed academic books.
- Studies published in scientific journals or academic repositories.
- Research in Spanish or English.

3.5 Exclusion Criteria

Documents that:

- They did not address the Ecuadorian case.

- They did not deal with issues related to public administration or state management.
- They did not correspond to academic publications (opinion papers, journalistic notes or texts without academic review).
- They presented duplicity between databases.

3.6 Study selection process

The process of identification and selection of studies was carried out following the PRISMA flow represented in Figure 1. In the identification phase, 61 records were located in the databases consulted: 39 from SciELO and 22 from Latindex. Subsequently, 4 duplicate records, 7 studies with thematic irrelevance and 1 retracted document were detected, which allowed a total of 51 initial records to be obtained. During the screening phase, the titles and abstracts of the identified documents were reviewed, reducing the number of records to 39 studies examined. At this stage, 9 studies that did not correspond to the quality or subject matter investigated were excluded.

In the eligibility evaluation phase, 30 articles were read in full, in order to determine their methodological relevance and their direct relationship with the object of study. As a result of this review, we excluded 15 additional studies. Finally, in the inclusion phase, 15 scientific studies were selected, which make up the final corpus of analysis of this systematic review. Of these, 9 studies come from SciELO and 6 from Latindex. The selected studies were organized in an analysis matrix presented in Table 1, which describes aspects such as authorship, year of publication, type of document, topic addressed, and methodology used.

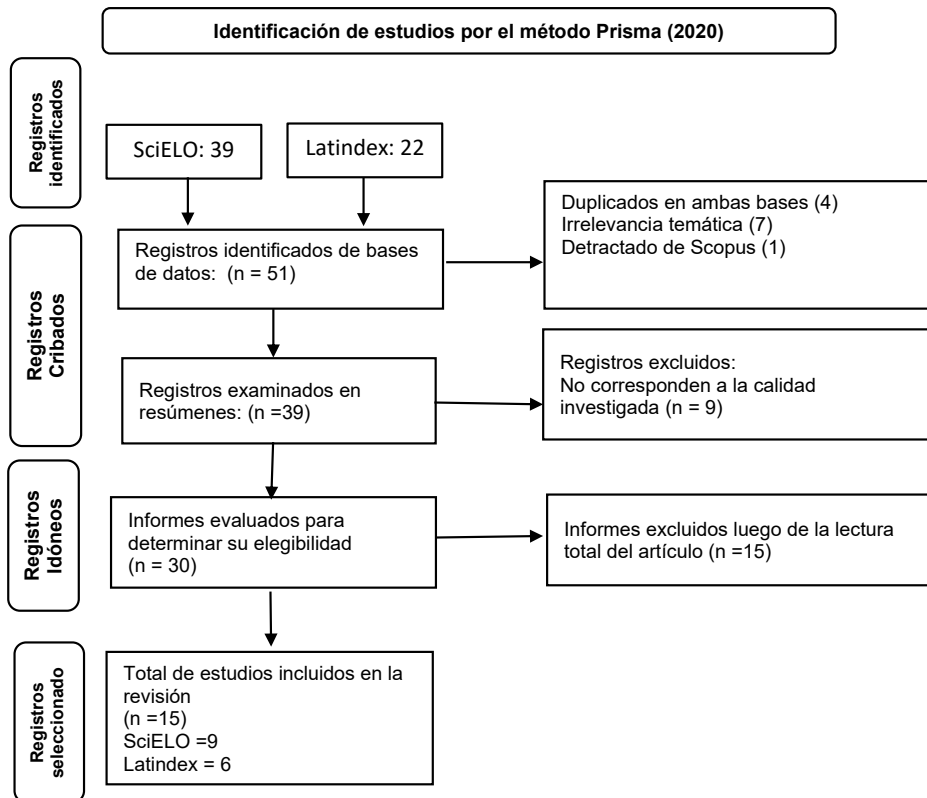
3.7 Analysis of information

Once the studies included in the review were selected, a qualitative content analysis was applied, in order to identify recurring thematic patterns in the scientific literature analyzed. This process allowed the studies to be grouped into different analytical categories related to the evolution of the Ecuadorian public administration, among which the following stand out:

- Institutional reforms of the State,
- Management of public companies,
- Public policies and state governance,
- Transparency and administrative regulation,
- Digital modernization of the public sector.
- Dismantling the state.

The comparative analysis between the studies allowed the identification of convergences, divergences and research gaps within the Latin American scientific literature on Ecuadorian public administration. Overall, the application of the PRISMA 2020 protocol and the PISCO approach made it possible to structure a systematic, transparent and replicable methodological process, aimed at understanding the recent evolution of the Ecuadorian public administration based on the scientific evidence available in the regional academic literature.

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow of Research



Source: Own elaboration

RESULTS

The analysis of the fifteen studies included in the systematic review (Table 1) allows us to identify a recurring trend in the recent literature on Ecuadorian public administration: the presence of processes of institutional weakening and reduction of the State's operational capacities during the period 2020–2025. Although the studies analyzed address various dimensions of public management, as a whole they show a series of structural problems related to budgetary limitations, transformations in the role of the State, tensions in the management of public resources and difficulties in the sustainability of State administration.

First, one of the most visible trends identified in the literature corresponds to changes in the role of the State within the economy and public management. Research such as that by Herrera et al. (2020) and Varela (2021) indicates that Ecuador has gone through political and economic debates around the scope of state intervention, especially after the progressive political cycle that characterized the previous decade. These studies suggest that the public policies implemented in recent years have been marked by processes of fiscal adjustment and institutional reconfiguration that have modified the role of the State in strategic areas of the economy and public administration.

A second line of results is related to the fiscal and financial constraints of the public sector, an aspect that has a direct impact on the State's ability to sustain investments and guarantee public services. Londoño Espinosa (2020) analyzes the fiscal reaction of the Ecuadorian State and highlights the existing tensions between fiscal sustainability and public spending. In the same vein, Pacheco Giraldo's (2023) study addresses the problem of public debt in the Ecuadorian context, showing that macroeconomic decisions significantly influence the operational capacities of the public administration. This research suggests that budget constraints can affect public investment and the maintenance of state infrastructure.

Another set of results relates to the management of public enterprises and state assets, reflecting transformations in the administration of state resources. Icaza (2020) analyzes the mechanisms of expansion and development of public companies in Ecuador, while Cabrera and Toro (2025) examine the processes of asset sales of public companies. These

studies show that state-owned enterprises have undergone processes of reorganization and revision of their management models, which is part of the debates on the efficiency of the public sector and the management of state assets.

Likewise, some works highlight problems related to institutional transparency and administrative regulation, evidencing challenges in the functioning of the state apparatus. Avalos-Cuadrado et al. (2025) analyze the transparency mechanisms in meritocratic notary competitions in Ecuador, pointing out the need to strengthen institutional procedures that guarantee legitimacy in access to public functions. Similarly, Salazar-Carrillo et al. (2025) examine the regulation of telematic notarial services and its impact on legal certainty, highlighting the importance of updating regulatory frameworks in the face of administrative digitalisation processes.

Another relevant dimension identified in the literature corresponds to organizational and management problems within public institutions. Collins-Ventura (2025) points out the need to strengthen organizational capacities in state institutions to improve the sustainability of public management and address institutional risks. For their part, Rosero Moran et al. (2025) analyze the relationship between managerial leadership and institutional performance in Ecuadorian public schools, highlighting that the quality of public administration also depends on organizational and internal management factors.

In the social and institutional sphere, tensions related to labor inclusion and human talent management in the public sector are also identified. Gómez-Arévalo et al. (2025) analyze the elimination of positions held by people with disabilities in the public administration of Santo Domingo, which reflects challenges in the implementation of inclusion policies within state structures. This type of research shows that administrative reorganization can have an impact on the labor structure of the public sector.

Finally, several studies show that the Ecuadorian State has begun to incorporate processes of administrative modernization and digitalization of public services, which represents an institutional response to contemporary challenges of public management. Zamora-Mendoza (2025) analyzes the use of digital tools for administrative simplification in Ecuador, while Loor and Cusme (2025) evaluate public policies related to the popular and solidarity economy. These studies suggest that, despite the structural limitations identified in the literature, there are also efforts aimed at improving administrative efficiency and strengthening certain areas of public management.

Overall, the results of the systematic review show that the recent scientific literature on Ecuadorian public administration describes a scenario characterized by tensions between fiscal restriction, institutional reorganization, governance challenges, and incipient processes of administrative modernization. These factors reflect a complex context in which the State faces difficulties in fully sustaining its operational capacities, while trying to adapt to new demands for transparency, efficiency, and digital transformation.

Table 1. Selected studies in final screening

Nº	Author(s)	Year	Document Type	Parent topic	Methodology	Databas e
1	Herrera, Torres Dávila and Molina	2020	Academic book	Debates and transformations of the post-progressive Ecuadorian State	Political and institutional analysis	SciELO
2	Icaza	2020	Scientific article	Development and expansion of public companies in Ecuador	Legal-administrative analysis	Latindex
3	Londoño Espinosa	2020	Scientific article	Fiscal policy and economic management of the Ecuadorian State	Econometric analysis	SciELO
4	Varela	2021	Scientific article	Economic policies and the role of the State in Ecuador	Public Policy Analysis	Latindex
5	Gonzabay Vera	2022	Master's thesis	Fixed Asset Management in the Customs Public Sector	Case Study	SciELO

6	Pacheco Giraldo	2023	Academic Research	Public Debt and Economic Governance in Ecuador	Legal and economic analysis	SciELO
7	Moncada	2024	Academic book	Money laundering and its impact on public administration	Institutional Legal Analysis	SciELO
8	Avalos-Cuadrado et al.	2025	Scientific article	Transparency in meritocratic notarial competitions	Legal and administrative analysis	SciELO
9	Cabrera and Toro	2025	Scientific article	Sale of assets of public companies in Ecuador	Administrative and financial analysis	Latindex
10	Collins-Ventura	2025	Scientific article	Organizational Capacities and Sustainability in Public Management	Organizational Analysis	SciELO
11	Gómez-Arévalo et al.	2025	Scientific article	Labor inclusion and elimination of positions in public administration	Socio-administrative study	Latindex
12	Loor and Cusme	2025	Scientific article	Evaluation of public policies for popular and solidarity economy	Evaluation of public policies	SciELO
13	Rosero Moran et al.	2025	Scientific article	Executive leadership and public management in public educational institutions	Correlational study	Latindex
14	Salazar-Carrillo et al.	2025	Scientific article	Regulation of telematic notarial services and legal certainty	Legal analysis	SciELO
15	Zamora-Mendoza	2025	Scientific article	Digitalization and administrative simplification in Ecuador	Administrative Innovation Analysis	Latindex

Source: Own elaboration

DISCUSSION

The results obtained in this systematic review allow us to interpret the recent evolution of Ecuadorian public administration within a context characterized by institutional transformations, fiscal restrictions, and changes in the role of the State. The scientific literature analyzed suggests that, during the period 2020–2025, the Ecuadorian state apparatus has faced a set of structural tensions that have affected its management capacity, the sustainability of its institutions, and the provision of public goods. These transformations should not be interpreted only as isolated phenomena, but as part of broader processes of reconfiguration of the State observed in various Latin American countries.

One of the central elements that emerges from the analysis is the relationship between fiscal restriction and the operational capacity of the State. Studies such as those by Londoño Espinosa (2020) and Pacheco Giraldo (2023) show that the financial constraints of the public sector directly influence the way in which the State manages its resources, prioritizes its public policies, and maintains its institutional infrastructure. In contexts where public spending faces pressures derived from indebtedness or fiscal adjustments, the public administration tends to experience institutional reorganization processes that can affect state investment in strategic sectors such as infrastructure, public services, or social programs. This phenomenon has been widely discussed in the Latin American literature on state reforms, where it is argued that fiscal consolidation policies tend to have direct effects on administrative capacity and the quality of public services.

Another relevant aspect identified in the literature is the debate on the role of the State in the economy and in public management. Herrera et al. (2020) point out that Latin American countries have gone through processes of political and institutional transition that have modified the forms of state intervention. In the Ecuadorian case, these transformations are reflected in discussions about the role of public enterprises, the management of state assets, and the reorganization of the institutional apparatus. Along these lines, Icaza (2020) analyzes the functioning of public companies in Ecuador, showing that these organizations have been the subject of debates related to their efficiency, their financial sustainability, and their role within the national economy. In a complementary way, Cabrera and Toro (2025) examine the processes of selling assets of public companies, which shows that the administration of state assets has become a relevant topic within discussions on public management and economic governance.

The literature reviewed also highlights the importance of strengthening mechanisms of transparency and institutional legitimacy within the public administration. Avalos-Cuadrado et al. (2025) highlight that transparency in meritocratic processes is a key element in guaranteeing the credibility of public institutions and strengthening citizen trust in the State. Similarly, Salazar-Carrillo et al. (2025) warn that insufficient regulation of certain administrative services, such as telematic notarial processes, can generate risks for legal certainty and for the proper functioning of the institutional system. These findings reflect that administrative modernization processes must be accompanied by solid regulatory frameworks that guarantee transparency, legality, and efficiency in public management.

Another important element that emerges from the discussion is the role of organizational capacities within the public sector. Collins-Ventura (2025) argues that strengthening institutional capacities is a fundamental requirement to face the contemporary challenges of public administration, particularly in contexts characterized by economic uncertainty, institutional risks, and growing demands for administrative efficiency. In this sense, the literature reviewed suggests that Ecuadorian public institutions require not only regulatory reforms, but also organizational strengthening processes aimed at improving planning, resource management, and decision-making.

Likewise, the results of the review show that the process of modernization of the Ecuadorian State has progressively incorporated tools of digitization and administrative simplification. Zamora-Mendoza (2025) highlights that the digitization of public procedures and services is a key strategy to improve administrative efficiency and reduce bureaucracy in the public sector. However, these processes also involve challenges related to regulation, legal certainty, and institutional adaptation, as pointed out by Salazar-Carrillo et al. (2025). This suggests that the technological modernization of the State must be accompanied by institutional reforms that guarantee its sustainability and its adequate implementation.

In the social and organizational sphere, the studies analyzed also show challenges related to the management of human talent in public administration. Gómez-Arévalo et al. (2025) show that administrative transformations can generate tensions in terms of labor inclusion, especially with regard to the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups within the public sector. On the other hand, Rosero Moran et al. (2025) point out that institutional leadership and the quality of management significantly influence the performance of public institutions, particularly in the field of education. These findings reflect that the efficiency of the State does not depend only on structural or financial factors, but also on organizational and human talent management aspects.

Finally, the literature reviewed suggests that the recent evolution of Ecuadorian public administration is characterized by a complex dynamic where processes of institutional restriction and administrative modernization efforts coexist. On the one hand, there are limitations associated with fiscal restrictions, institutional reorganization and debates on the role of the State. On the other hand, initiatives aimed at strengthening transparency, improving administrative efficiency and incorporating technological tools in public management are also identified.

In this sense, the discussion derived from the systematic review highlights that the Ecuadorian public administration faces the challenge of balancing fiscal sustainability with institutional strengthening and modernization of the State. Recent scientific literature shows that these processes are still in development and that their evolution will depend on political, economic and institutional factors that continue to shape the functioning of the public sector in the country.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study are derived from the general objective proposed, aimed at analyzing the evolution of Ecuadorian public administration during the period 2020–2025 based on a systematic review of the Latin American scientific literature. Based on the analysis of the fifteen selected studies, research trends, predominant analytical approaches and main findings related to public management and institutional transformations of the Ecuadorian State were identified.

In relation to the first specific objective, referring to identifying the main thematic lines present in the scientific literature on Ecuadorian public administration, the results show that recent academic production is mainly concentrated in five areas of research. The first corresponds to the debates on the role of the State and the institutional transformations of the public apparatus, especially in relation to the political and economic changes that have occurred in the country in recent years. The second area is linked to the management of public companies and the administration of state assets, which reflects the importance of analyzing the management of public assets and the reorganization of state business structures. The third area is related to economic governance and fiscal constraints that affect the operational capacity of the public sector. The fourth area corresponds to studies on institutional transparency, administrative regulation and legal certainty within the public administration. Finally, the fifth area is oriented towards the processes of administrative modernization, digitization of public services and strengthening of organizational capacities within state institutions.

Regarding the second specific objective, focused on analyzing the theoretical and methodological approaches used in the studies reviewed, a predominance of qualitative and interpretative approaches was identified within the scientific literature on Ecuadorian public administration. Most of the studies are based on legal-administrative analyses, political-institutional analyses, and evaluations of public policies, which reflects the influence of the disciplines of law, political science, and public management on research on the Ecuadorian State. In contrast, a lower presence of quantitative or econometric studies was observed, suggesting that the field of public administration research in Ecuador still presents opportunities to incorporate more diverse empirical methodologies that allow for a more accurate assessment of the effects of public policies and administrative reforms.

Regarding the third specific objective, aimed at systematizing the main findings of the scientific literature analyzed, the results indicate that the recent evolution of the Ecuadorian public administration is characterized by a complex institutional context marked by fiscal restrictions, debates on the role of the State, administrative reorganization processes, and incipient efforts at

institutional modernization. The literature reviewed shows that budgetary constraints and economic governance challenges have influenced the capacity of the State to sustain certain levels of public investment and maintain certain institutional structures. At the same time, some studies show initiatives aimed at strengthening institutional transparency, improving organizational management, and promoting the digitalization of public services as strategies to increase administrative efficiency.

In general, the systematic review allows us to conclude that the Ecuadorian public administration is going through a transition process characterized by tensions between the need for fiscal sustainability and the social demand to strengthen the institutional capacity of the State. This scenario poses important challenges for public management, especially in relation to administrative modernization, institutional transparency, and the strengthening of organizational capacities within the public sector.

Finally, the results of this research also show the existence of gaps in the scientific production on Ecuadorian public administration. Despite the recent growth of studies in this field, the volume of research is still limited and focuses mainly on normative or institutional approaches. Consequently, future research could expand the analysis by incorporating comparative studies, quantitative methodologies and empirical evaluations that allow a deeper understanding of the effects of public policies and administrative reforms on the functioning of the Ecuadorian State. In this way, the systematization carried out in this article constitutes a relevant academic basis to strengthen the scientific debate on the evolution of public administration in Ecuador and contribute to the development of new research agendas in the field of Latin American public management.

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