Populism and policy change. The reform of the Ecuadorian mining sector under Rafael Correa between 2007 and 2010+

PAÚL CISNEROS*
Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales
Centro de Gobierno y Administración Pública
paul.cisneros@iaen.edu.ec y pcisneros@ucdavis.edu

https://doi.org/108800/rcpg.201802.004

Abstract
This article investigates the influence of populism in a process of policy change. The case of the mining law approved by the government of Rafael Correa between 2007 and 2010 is studied using the Advocacy Coalition Framework and discourse network analysis to study the structure of the narratives used by actors during the process of reform. The article uses an original dataset built from newspaper articles, which is analyzed using computational techniques. There are two main findings. First, the populist strategy that exploits emerging policy images to reduce institutional friction motivated reformist and incumbent coalitions to expand the conflict to promote their policy preferences. Second, the populist strategy deployed by president Correa reduced the degree of openness and diversity of the policy subsystem beyond what was expected in the policy process.
Keywords: social networks, policy change, populism, Advocacy Coalition Framework, mining law, Ecuador.

+ Recibido el 13 de marzo de 2019; aceptado el 20 de enero de 2020.
I would like to thank Christopher Weible, Daniel Nohrstedt, Manuel Fischer and Mark Lubell, and two anonymous reviewers for comments on earlier versions of this paper. Naturally, I remain responsible for any mistakes still present. Ecuador's Secretary for Higher Education, Science Technology and Innovation (SENESCYT) financed this research through grant 27017.
* Doctor en Ciencias Sociales con especialidad en Estudios Políticos por la Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales FLACSO Sede Ecuador. Docente de políticas públicas del Centro de Gobierno y Administración Pública del Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales.

Populismo y cambio de política. La reforma del sector minero ecuatoriano durante el gobierno de Rafael Correa entre 2007 y 2010

Resumen
Este artículo analiza la influencia del populismo en el proceso de cambio de las políticas públicas. Para esto, utiliza el caso de la reforma a la ley minera realizada durante el gobierno de Rafael Correa entre el 2007 y el 2010. Se estudia la estructura del discurso que los actores de la política minera utilizan para incidir en el proceso de reforma a partir del *Advocacy Coalition Framework* y del análisis de redes discursivas. El artículo utiliza técnicas computacionales para analizar redes sociales. Los hallazgos principales del artículo son dos. En primer lugar, la estrategia populista utilizada por el presidente Correa, que explora imágenes de política pública emergentes para reducir la fricción institucional, influyó en que tanto la coalición reformista como aquella defensora del status quo, expandieran el conflicto para posicionar sus preferencias de política pública. Además, la estrategia populista de Correa redujo el nivel de apertura y diversidad del subsistema de política pública más allá de lo que se esperaba en el proceso de reforma de la política pública.
Palabras clave: redes sociales, cambio de política pública, populismo, Marco de Coaliciones de Causa, ley de minería, Ecuador.

Introduction

During the past decade, several governments in Latin America reformed the legal framework of their mining sector to increase extractive rents during the super-cycle of commodities initiated in 2002 (Haarstad, 2012; Nem Singh & Bourgouin, 2013). In some cases, the initiatives of sectoral reform interacted with system-wide processes of regime change that saw the re-emergence of populism at the center stage of politics (see Cisneros, 2011). In Ecuador, the regime headed by Rafael Correa (2007-2016) carried out a comprehensive reform of the mining sector in a local context characterized by an increase in social spending and the radicalization of demands for institutional innovations to deal with pressing social and environmental issues in the sector.

Current literature on recent mining policy reforms in Latin America is largely based on the idea that existing political institutions reinforce and expand extractive sectors' activities. Often, this process takes place in detriment of other institutions, such as those in charge of dealing with the adverse effects of extraction (Arsel et al. 2016; Bebbington et al. 2018, and for a complementary view see Dargent, et al. 2017). We argue that scholars should study the interactions between the macro-political system and sectoral subsystems where the strategies seeking to promote and oppose policy change are deployed. Through this perspective we seek to expand current understanding of the influence of political institutions on policy development. This focus is particularly important in contexts where populist politics control governmental initiatives of policy reform because of the adverse effects those can have on the quality of the policy process in the long-run.

Such an exploration can also contribute to existing discussions about the role of populism within democratic systems (Mény & Surel, 2002). These studies argue that populism is a political phenomenon that reveal the failures of democratic systems. However, these failures often refer to system-wide institutions of political dynamics, leaving the specifics of subsystem dynamics understudied. Knowledge about macro-system and subsystem dynamics will improve our understanding of the causal mechanisms tying populism with the development of democratic institutions. In particular, a focus on the influence of populism in policymaking will shed light on the specific mechanisms by which populism reinforces the mechanisms that contain the influence of the *demos* in policymaking.

In this paper, we explore the influence of populism on policymaking by studying the role of policy narratives in shaping the process and outcomes of

reforms in the mining sector in Ecuador between 2006 and 2010. The paper is organized in 3 sections. In section 1, we present the theoretical background of the research. In section 2, we discuss how discourse network analysis can contribute to the evaluation of the structure and change of policy networks. Section 3 presents the results and the discussion of the study. We close with some conclusions.

1. Networks, policy narratives, and policy change

Three interwoven approaches to the study of policy change populate the literature on mining governance in Latin America. First, there is an international political economy approach that focuses on the outcomes of policy reforms seeking to answer the question: who gets what? This approach shows that cleavages between political and economic elites allow the expansion of the extractive sector due to their capacity to maintain existing institutions in place. When cleavages between elites emerge, challenges to existing policies can form and may create conditions for policy change (Bebbington, et al. 2018).

Second, the conflict-centered approach is, predominantly, framed within the literature on political ecology (see Bebbington and Bury, 2013; Delgado Ramos, 2010; Walter and Martinez-Alier, 2010). The study of conflict shows how organized communities and their support networks politicize existing conceptions of the territory or nature to challenge the development of particular mining projects. This approach employs a single case-study design that rarely offers a replicable analysis of conflicts and their policy outcomes because these studies use networks as a metaphor for collective action, leaving the properties of these networks understudied.

Finally, there is a post-structuralist approach centered on social and environmental justice and identity-politics that investigates parts of the policy process -mainly the agenda-setting phase- but is not in dialogue with the literature on the policy process. As with the conflict-centered approach, post-structuralist studies can also at times be methodologically opaque (see Svampa and Antonelli, 2009).

In order to overcome some of the limitations of these studies, we draw on the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), one of the leading frameworks in the field of policy studies (Nowlin, 2011; Petridou, 2014; Schlager & Blomquist, 1996). From its inception, the ACF is concerned with the production of research that is theoretically grounded, empirically-based, but also transparent and reproducible (Sabatier, 1991). In comparison to other frameworks, the

ACF provides a more structured and somewhat parsimonious account of the policy process (see Capano and Howlett, 2009). The ACF has two main components: the policy subsystem and a set of exogenous variables that describe the macro-political system. Competing advocacy coalitions, governmental authorities and institutions, and policy outputs and outcomes compose the policy subsystem[1]. The macro-political system includes the so-called stable parameters, such as constitutional rules, the distribution of natural resources and cultural values, and dynamic parameters, such as changes in socio-economic conditions, systemic governing coalitions, public opinion, and decisions made in other subsystems (Sabatier, 1988).

When the more stable elements change, long term opportunity structures open for coalitions to pursue policy change (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014; Sabatier, 1988). Long-term opportunities relate to the openness of the political system or the degree of consensus needed for major policy change. Additionally, when the relatively dynamic elements change, short-term constraints or additional resources become available for subsystem actors. Existing ACF literature has not explored the role of populist leadership, a political phenomenon of increasing interests for scholars in many regions of the world, in creating short and long-term opportunities for other policy actors. We take steps towards overcoming this gap in the literature by investigating how a populist leader influenced the capacity of other actors to participate in the reform of the mining sector in Ecuador.

In the ACF, the critical factor that allows coalitions to change policies is the ability that actors have to expand policy networks to mobilize resources and make the most out of the emerging opportunities (Ingold, 2011). Coalitions will seek change in policies that are compatible with their shared system of beliefs. These systems have three layers. First, a layer of core-beliefs that define the normative values and the ontological axioms that guide the behavior of individuals across policy issues. Second, the policy-core or policy-preferences layer that is bounded by the scope of the subsystem. These preferences can be normative or empirical, meaning they identify how policies should work or the outcomes that specific mixes of policy instruments produce. The beliefs in this layer reflect the basic orientation and value priorities or the assessments of the seriousness of the problem and preferred solutions for addressing it.

[1] Coalitions include, among others, governmental authorities, activists, scientists and members of the press who show a degree of non-trivial coordination and, to an extent, share similar beliefs about policy (Sabatier, 1988).

Finally, the layer of secondary beliefs includes the means (instruments or tools) to achieve the desired policy outcomes (Jenkins-Smith, Nohrstedt, Weible, & Ingold, 2017).

When coalitions perceive the opening of an opportunity for change, they use their belief system to produce new policy images or interpretations about the problems that policies are meant to fix. Baumgartner et al. (2014: 161) define a policy image as a «mixture of empirical information and emotive appeal» that structures interaction within the subsystem but also connects the subsystem to the macro-system.

Policy images are contained in larger narratives that delineate the universe of potential forms to understand the substantive issues of a policy problem (Shanahan, McBeth, & Hathaway, 2011b). Current scholarship on policy narratives highlights three strategies used by coalitions to achieve policy change: scope of the conflict, causal mechanisms, and devil-angel shifts (Jones & McBeth, 2010; Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2011a; Shanahan, McBeth, & Hathaway, 2011b).

The producers of policy narratives change the scope of policy conflicts depending on the relative position to the outcome. If they are on the losing side, they aim to expand the scope of the conflict. Conversely, when policy narratives producers are on the winning side, they engage in narrative strategies that contain an issue to the status quo. Given that populist leaders position themselves as representatives of ´the people´ that confront the dominant elites and institutions (see Levitsky & Loxton, 2013), we could expect to find evidence of support for those proposing alternative policy images in early moments of the policy process. However, populists are bound by existing democratic institutions that they seek to control, not change or eliminate; therefore, in later stages of the policy process, they defend the institutions from further attacks (Mény & Surel, 2002).

When policy actors use causal mechanisms, they arrange narrative elements strategically to assign responsibility and blame for a policy problem. There are at least four types of causal mechanisms: intentional, inadvertent, accidental, and mechanical. An intentional mechanism portrays an actor as purposefully causing harm or small benefit to others. The mechanical mechanism denotes an arrangement where actions are unguided, but harmful results emerge naturally. The inadvertent mechanism depicts a story where some act is producing unforeseen negative consequences. Finally, the accidental mechanism is a situation where there was no intended outcome guided by directed behavior (Shanahan, Jones, McBeth, & Lane, 2013). Regarding this mechanism, populist leaders

are expected to charge against democratic institutions, in particular, those that serve to represent popular interests. Populists argue that representation serves only the elites; therefore, political and policy elites, such as political parties and the bureaucracy, will be assigned the blame for the shortcomings of a policy when populists seek policy change (see Mény & Surel, 2002).

Finally, the angel-devil shifts is the mechanism by which a policy actor identifies other actors as villains or problem instigators in comparison to how much that same actor identifies him- or herself or others as problem fixers or heroes (McBeth, Jones, & Shanahan, 2007; Shanahan, Jones, McBeth, & Radaelli, 2017). A populist leader will create or modify institutions that allegedly protect the interests of the people because they do not reproduce the shortcomings of representative democracy since they are controlled by the leaders' party or movement (Mény & Surel, 2002).

2. Method

Social network analysis provides techniques to analyze the structure and development of networks using relational data, which is connections (ties) between actors (nodes) considered as non-independent units (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). In this paper, we study the Ecuadorian mining subsystem between 2006 and 2010 using a discourse network as a proxy. A discourse network is elicited or constructed considering a group of actors and the messages or utterances they make during a specific period. In previous studies of policy change, scholars have elicited discourse networks from transcripts of parliamentary hearings and newspaper articles convincingly avoiding problems of retrospective reporting (see Leifeld, 2013, and references therein). We used newspaper articles to elicit the discourse network of interest and complemented that information with in-depth interviews.

For the mathematical analysis, we broke the discourse network in two. A co-occurrence network of actors that show connections between actors if they utter the same idea. On the other hand, a co-occurrence network that shows connections between utterances if they are emitted by the same actor. For example, if two actors express support to the idea that conflicts in the mining sector are caused by the mining companies, then a tie or a connection is computed between these actors. In the second network, an utterance has a connection to another if an actor emits both during the period under analysis.

Using computational techniques, we measured changes in the structure of the discourse network considering two variables. The first one measures the relative position of nodes with respect to others in a network. This measure, known as centrality, provides an assessment of which actors are key (more central) in conveying messages to others in the network. We also study density or the number of connections present within a group of nodes in the network. Higher density suggests more communication between policy actors, or more compatibility between utterances, during the policy process. These variables should change as the policy process unfolds to show a prominent role of the populist leader in policymaking.

We coded the type of actors inductively, and for the utterances, we used the definition of the components of belief systems proposed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999). To analyze the components of policy narratives, we coded causal mechanisms using binary variables (present or not present). Finally, the angel and devil shifts were identified, considering the changes in the number of connections between the populist leader and the pro-change and the pro-status-quo coalitions considering four sub-periods. T1 is the year before the election of Rafael Correa as president, T2 corresponds to the rise of Rafael Correa to power in 2007, T3 includes the Constitutional Assembly of 2008 and the legislative process to write a new sectoral law, T4 corresponds to the first year of implementation of the law[2].

The core of our dataset consists of 816 online news reports from news sources published in Ecuador between 2006 and 2010[3]. From these, we extracted explicit quotations of utterances that were deductively coded using Discourse Network Analyzer (DNA), a category-based content analysis

[2] In this paper, we do not elaborate on the interaction of discourse about the mining sector with another contextual variable such as the macroeconomic situation for two reasons. First, during the period of analysis, mineral commodity prices (especially gold and copper) rose in a sustained manner; therefore, the government did not have to adapt its discourse to changing market conditions. Second, the government maintained high levels of public spending on social programs and infrastructure development during this period, contracting debt even when the prices of oil decreased in 2009. To cover the budgetary deficit, the government resorted to pre-selling oil (see Caria & Martín, 2009; Ruiz & Iturralde, 2013), which maintained the pressure to exploit the country´s metallic endowments.

[3] The sources for articles are the websites *Explored*, *El Comercio,* and *EcuadorInmediato.com*. They cover all major newspapers in the country for the entire period under analysis. The keywords (in Spanish) *minería* (mining) and *mina* (mine) were used to retrieve the articles. The period for analysis was defined considering two aspects. First, the number of reports before 2006 going back to 1994 was minimal; we found less than five reports per year. Second, the Legislative Commission approved the new mining law in 2009. Additionally, in 2010, the dispute between Correa and the privately-owned media changed the coverage of events with media owned by the state reporting for the government and the private media in stark opposition.

software developed by Leifeld (2013). All graphical representations and network measurements were generated using Gephi 0.9.2. One researcher coded all the newspaper articles in three waves. All articles in each wave were coded and then coded again after two weeks. Stability was the (weak) criteria used to control the quality of the coding process (Krippendorff, 2004). Intra-observer inconsistencies were roughly 2% across waves.

Communicative validation, that is, a consensus achieved discursively about the content of the analysis between researchers and the researched (Kohlbacher, 2006; Mayring, 2014), was used to assess the validity of the coding phase. We used in-depth semi-structured interviews with coalition elites from pro-change (n=5) and pro-status-quo organizations (n=4) to validate the timeline of events leading to network change and to identify the main actors and the main issues of contention. Respondents suggested minor changes in the structure of the networks — most of these changes related to the names of some civil society organizations.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Central issues in the mining subsystem before the reform

During the decade of the 1990s, Ecuador reformed its mining code to attract foreign capital, and as many other countries in Latin America, started environmental standards modernization (Zimmerer & Carter, 2002). In 1991, the National Congress passed a new mining law that, among others, eliminated State-owned mining companies, introduced tax incentives for foreign investments, and lowered royalty payments (Cisneros, 2011). After a brief period of growth, the mining sector was paralyzed due to the financial crisis in Southeast Asia in 1996. To attract more investments, in 2001, the government of Ricardo Noboa introduced reforms to the mining law, increasing fiscal incentives. Petitions of new areas for exploration grew so fast that, by 2003, the sectoral authority had dropped all oversight of existing operations and devoted its resources solely to granting exploration permits (Liebenthal et al., 2003).

On the environmental and social fronts, Ecuador ratified Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization on Free, Prior and Informed Consent to Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in 1998, which mandates that governments seek consent from indigenous leaders before implementing projects that may affect local livelihoods. Further consultations to local stakeholders potentially affected by mining operations were introduced in the constitutional reform

of 1998 and regulated in the 1999 General Environmental Law as part of preliminary environmental assessments.

In the remainder of this section, we show how the discourse network related to the mining sector in Ecuador evolved from this point onwards. We analyze the changes in the composition of the network in terms of the relative position of policy actors and the elements of their belief systems across the four subperiods of interest.

3.2. Policy change and the mining policy subsystem

In 2006, the dominant policy image of the mining sector entered in crisis. The dispute about the future of the mining sector started during the administration of Alfredo Palacio (2004-2006). In this period, anti-mining organizations from different regions of the country clashed with security forces, both public and private, that protected concessions during protests against the development of large-scale mines (Cisneros, 2011).

The analysis of media reports shows that organized anti-mining groups disputed the core idea that large-scale mining promotes sustainable development. Based on the experience of conflictive relations with mining companies over the 1990s, they argued that large-scale mining undermines all forms of capitals: social, environmental and even economic. These rivaling interpretations of the effects of large-scale mining were the most frequent elements of the discourse network before Correa took office in 2007. They constitute antagonistic definitions of the ontology of large-scale mining, which speaks of a highly polarized policy subsystem.

Table 1 shows the most central utterances made by the policy actors of the mining policy subsystem in 2006. As shown in the Degree column of Table 1, these rivaling images were uttered by the same number of actors. However, the critical policy image had a more central role in the discourse network (higher score of betweenness centrality) because it was connected to a higher number of other highly central utterances. This structure suggests that critics of the existing policy image were using a diversity of discursive elements intertwined in a complex narrative to politicize the effects of large-scale mining.

Figure 1 shows the structure of the discourse network in 2006 elicited from media reports. The nodes in the network represent utterances, and their size corresponds to the normalized scores of betweenness centrality. The right-hand side of the network (in green) corresponds to the pro-change coalition while the left-hand side of the network corresponds to the pro-status-quo coalition (in red). Higher betweenness centrality suggests that larger nodes sit between

the paths that connect any other two nodes more often than others. The most central utterance (in yellow), is a secondary belief used by pro-change actors to demand a halt to new concessions, and audits for existing concessions for their future return to the State. This means that actors on rivaling sides (all nodes in depicted green) of the network supported the opening of negotiations to reform the existing policy, but this required taking stock of the existing effects of large-scale operations.

Table 1 also shows the type of utterance according to its position in the belief system of the actors that employ it. The distribution of the types of utterances is shown in more detail in Table 2.

Table 1. Betweenness centrality and popularity of utterances in 2006

Utterance	Betweenness Centrality	Policy belief	Degree
Halt new concessions, audit & revert unlawful concessions	0.169548	Secondary	13
Conflicts emerge from companies and government targeting dissent	0.167135	Policy preference, empirical	9
Large Scale Mining undermines all forms of capital	0.164849	Core	10
Large Scale Mining promotes development	0.120833	Core	10
Form ad hoc commissions to audit existing concessions	0.083611	Secondary	10
Conflicts emerge from electoral interest or ideological extremism	0.040833	Secondary, origin of conflicts	9
The 2001 neoliberal law is detrimental to the interests of the State	0.031389	Policy preference, empirical	9
Reform the 2001 law to increase revenue for the State	0.031389	Policy preference, normative	9
Conflicts emerge from lack of free prior and informed consent (FPIC)	0.030468	Policy preference, empirical	6

Table 2 shows the percentage of each type of utterance by type of actor. In both coalitions, most actors uttered policy preferences more than they did policy core beliefs and secondary beliefs. Additionally, empirical policy preferences were the most common in both coalitions. In T1, actors disputed interpretations of the effects of the existing law and the causes of conflicts more than they did ontological and axiological elements of their belief systems. This finding suggests that despite the polarized structure of two coalitions bridged by just one actor, the subsystem was relatively open to actors and ideas and that consensus about the future of large-scale mining could have been pursued between them.

Table 2. The composition of discourse network in 2006

	Belief	Percentage total	NGO	CSO	Sectoral. Authority	Political Party	Mining guild	Local govt	National govt.	Company-Contractor
pro-change	Core	21%	17%	26%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%
	Policy preference	50%	39%	28%	40%	50%	50%	43%	0%	0%
	Normative	29%	9%	5%	30%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Empirical	21%	30%	23%	10%	33%	50%	43%	0%	0%
	Secondary	29%	4%	19%	20%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
pro-status-quo	**Core**	**20%**	**0%**	**33%**	**25%**	**0%**	**50%**	**0%**	**0%**	**33%**
	Policy preference	60%	0%	33%	25%	0%	25%	0%	50%	0%
	Normative	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Empirical	60%	0%	33%	25%	0%	25%	0%	50%	67%
	Secondary	20%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

The network of actors has a similar structure to the network of utterances depicted in Figure 1. The two rivaling coalitions are connected by just one node, in this case, the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM). Table 3 shows the centrality score for all actors and identifies the type of actors present. Pro-change actors had, on average, higher centrality scores than pro-status quo actors, which speaks of a larger and more connected coalition. Additionally, from the information contained in Table 3, we can determine that during 2006 roughly 80% of actors critical of large-scale mining were civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations. These organizations included local grass-roots organizations, as well as regional and national coalitions. On the other hand, roughly 60% of the actors that promoted a positive image of large-scale mining were industry actors such as mining companies, and the chamber of mining.

Figure 1. Discourse network in 2006: utterances

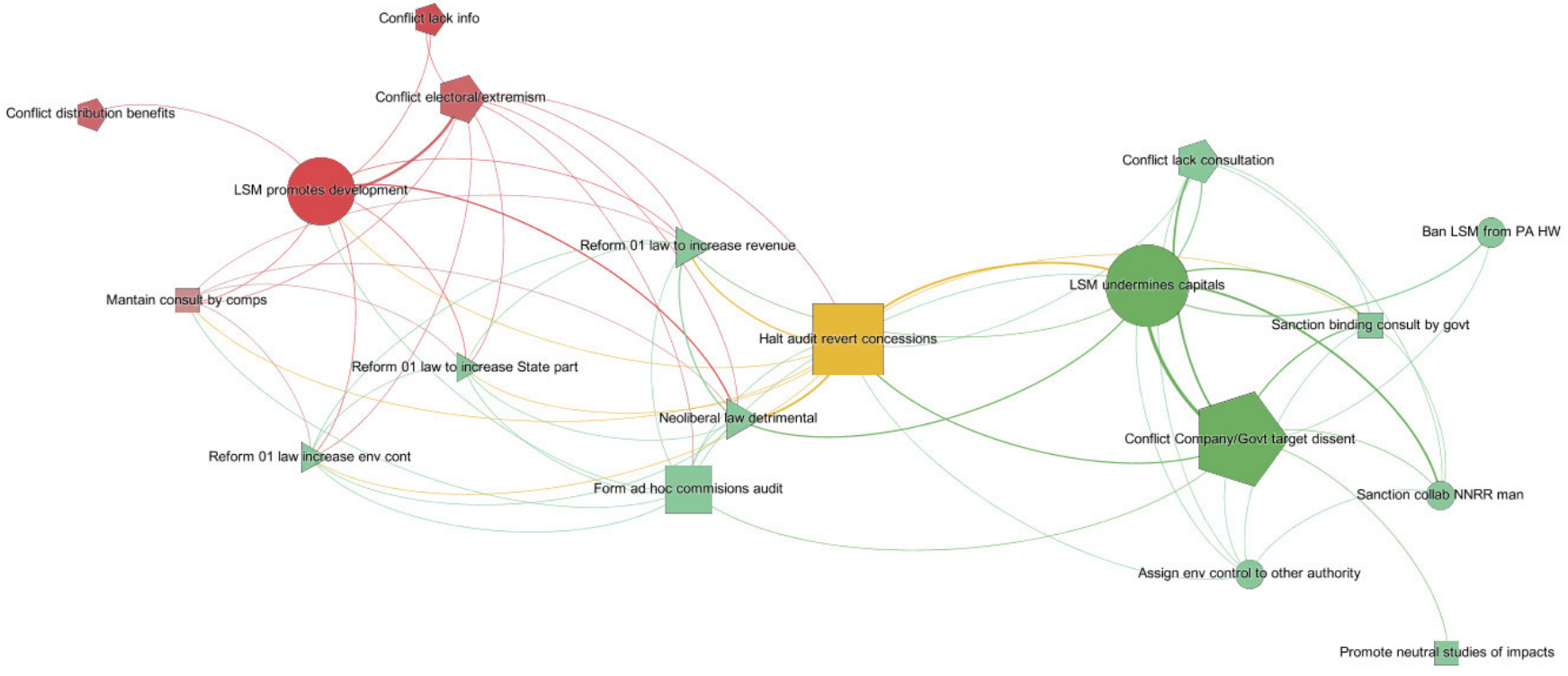


Table 3. Actors in the discourse network during 2006

Actor	Type	Betweenness centrality
Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM)	Sectoral Authority	0.192421
PACHAKUTIK	Political Party	0.157958
Foro de los Pueblos Afectados por la Mineria	CSO	0.133213
Consejo de Comunidades de Intag	CSO	0.101414
Acción Ecológica (AE)	NGO	0.091406
Comite Defensa Vida Morona	CSO	0.081371
DECOIN	NGO	0.081154
Ascendant Copper	Mining company	0.039211
Coordinadora Zonal de Intag	CSO	0.03178
Municipality of Cotacachi	Local govt	0.014223
Consejo de Comunidades de Garcia Moreno	CSO	0.014134
Ingenieros geólogos	Mining guild	0.012587
Junta Parroquial de Peñaherrera	Local govt	0.006885
UNAGUA	CSO	0.005741
Asamblea Nacional Ambiental (ANA)	CSO	0.001635
Cámara de Minería del Ecuador (CME)	Mining guild	0.00135
Organizacion Desarrollo Intag	Contractor	0.00135
Canton Naranjal	CSO	0.000854
UNORCAC	CSO	0.000273

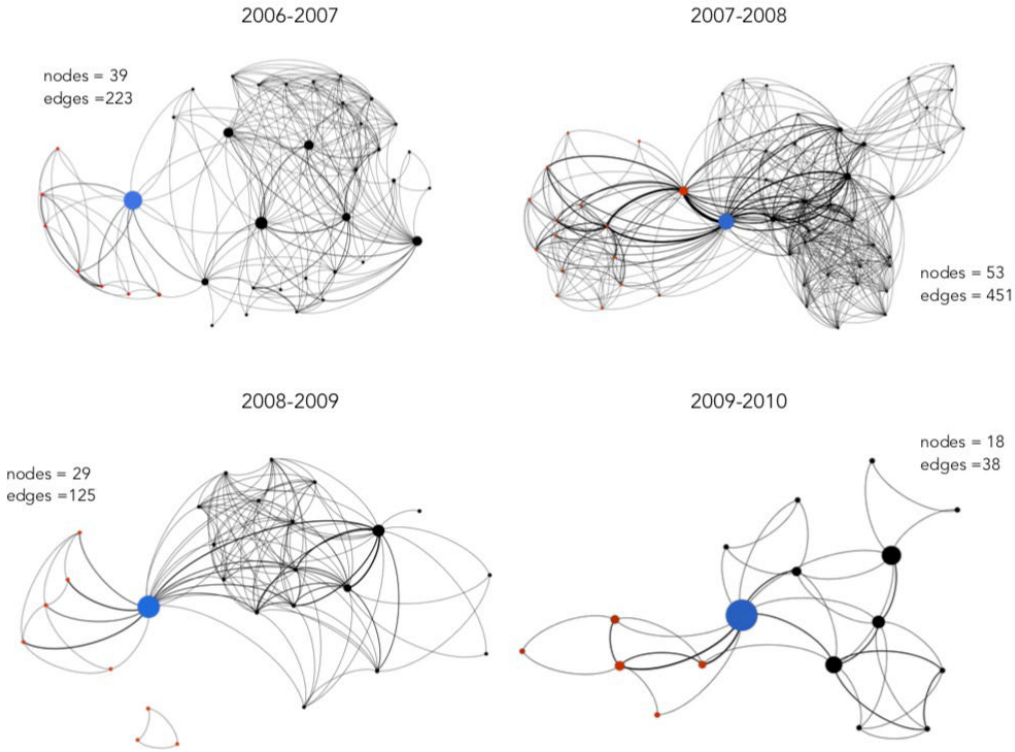
The remainder of this section discusses the evolution of the discourse network highlighting that a) at all times, the network included one pro-change and one pro-status-quo coalition; b) both challengers and dominant actors expanded the conflict in the early stages of the policy cycle; c) as a populist leader seeking to change the sectoral policy, Rafael Correa became the bridge between these rivaling coalitions; then d) he used angel and devil-shifts to reduce existing institutional friction, and to e) position himself as the dominant actor in the discourse network.

a) A polarized mining subsystem

Figure 2 shows the structure of the discourse network of actors in the four sub-periods under analysis. In all cases, the red nodes correspond to the pro-status-quo coalition, and the green nodes represent the pro-change coalition.

The most central actor in the network is depicted in blue, and the size of the nodes corresponds to their normalized betweenness centrality.

Figure 2. Co-occurrence network of actors



Two elements are critical for the comparison of the four periods. First, the pro-change coalition always had more actors than the pro-status-quo coalition. Table 4 presents the count of actors and the density of each coalition for each period. The difference in size and density suggests more complexity in the pro-change coalition.

Table 4. Evolution of the network of actors

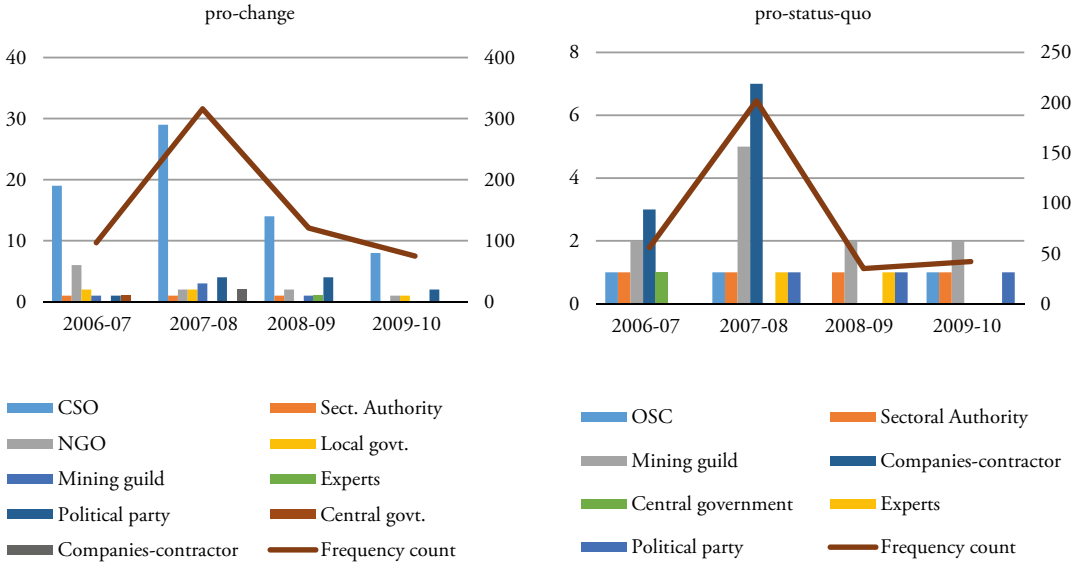
	T1 2006-2007		T2 2007-2008		T3 2008-2009		T4 2009-2010	
Coalitions	Density	Nodes	Density	Nodes	Density	Nodes	Density	Nodes
Pro-change	0.399	32	0.504	38	0.643	19	0.382	11
Pro-status-quo	0.857	8	0.691	17	0.273	11	0.476	7

Second, the analysis of the density of the connections between actors in each coalition shows that the pro-status-quo coalition was relatively denser during the agenda-setting phase (T2) compared to the decision-making (T3) and implementation (T4) phases. The most radical members of this coalition lost connection during T2 when Rafael Correa took office using a nationalistic rhetoric that foreign private companies and some of their national counterparts opposed, as depicted in the left lower corner of Figure 2. Reports from the media show that Correa confronted the mining companies over the idea that the existing law was detrimental to the interests of the State. The same source shows that some pro-status-quo actors expressed deep opposition to the principles of the reform, arguing that under the existent regulations, large-scale mining was effectively contributing to sustainable development.

b) Conflict expansion and containment

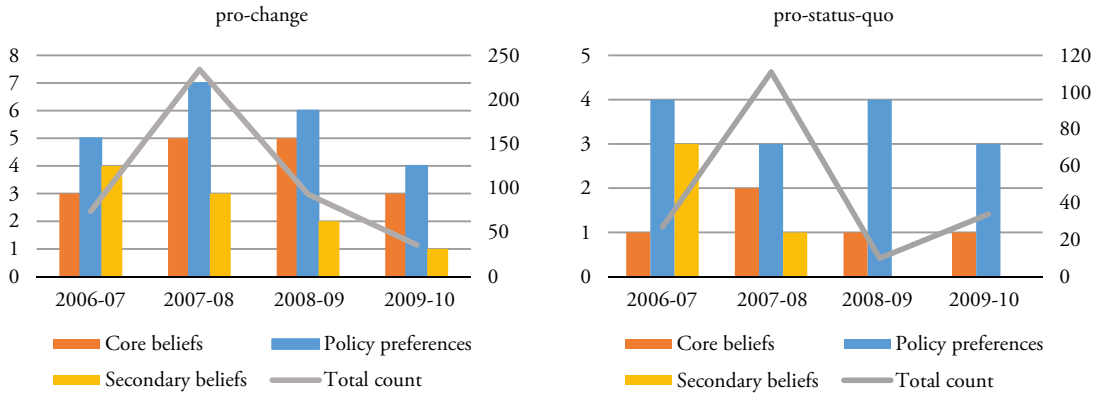
Figure 3 shows that during agenda-setting (between 2006 and 2008), the total number of actors in the pro-change coalition increased by roughly 30%, while the total count of appearances of actors in the discourse network increased by a factor of three. On the other hand, the number of actors in the pro-status-quo coalition doubled, while their frequency of appearance nearly quadrupled.

Figure 3. Number of policy actors per coalition



In the same period, the number of utterances favorable to change increased only slightly (see Figure 4). However, their frequency quadrupled. The utterances that increased the most, correspond to core beliefs and policy preferences. Meanwhile, the number of utterances defending the status-quo increased marginally for both core beliefs and policy preferences. The frequency of these utterances grew by a factor of five, in particular, the utterances regarding policy preferences.

Figure 4. Utterances of policy beliefs per coalition



These findings suggest that the two coalitions engaged in network expansion, both in terms of the number of supporters that joined the discourse network and the frequency in which they appeared. Although the increase in the frequency of appearance could be explained by an increasing interest of the media in covering this salient policy issue, the analysis of the content of the utterances shows that the rise of a populist leader to power created uncertainty for both challengers and incumbents. Hence, both coalitions may have sought expansion to increase their resources for political struggle. This finding adds nuance to the idea that the revisionist coalition will expand conflict while the incumbents will contain the conflict as it is presented in the Policy Narratives Framework (see Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2011a, p. 543). The presence of a populist leader changes this dichotomous view of incumbents and challengers, adding a third actor that could sway policy narratives towards both sides demanding conflict expansion from all the involved actors.

Both coalitions relied on core beliefs and policy preferences to expand the discourse network during T2 or the agenda-setting phase. Data shows that the number of secondary utterances diminished slightly for both. Table 5 shows

that while the number of normative policy preferences increased significantly, the number of empirical preferences dropped in for both coalitions. These changes speak of polarization of the political struggle within the policy subsystem as the policy process advanced.

Table 5. Distribution of policy preferences by coalition

Coalition	Policy preference	T1 2006-2007	T2 2007-2008
Pro-change	Normative	8%	37%
	Empirical	45%	18%
Pro-status-quo	Normative	0%	20%
	Empirical	56%	40%

Scholars of the Policy Narratives Framework (PNF) argue that not all coalitions will be as effective in using policy narratives strategically. Advocacy coalitions with policy narratives that contain higher levels of coalitional glue will more likely influence policy outcomes (Shanahan, Jones, McBeth & Radaelli, 2017, p. 191). Our data partially confirms this idea. As Figure 2 showed, the pro-change coalition incorporated a larger diversity of actors that uttered more diverse elements of their belief systems, configuring a complex policy narrative in all periods. This coalition was always less dense than the pro-status-quo rivals; therefore, it had less coalitional glue. As predicted by the PNF, the pro-change coalition did not gain control of the subsystem during implementation. Its diversity only allowed for some of the elements of their belief system to be incorporated by other actors in the new law because they were instrumental in opening an opportunity for change. However, the more cohesive network did not maintain its dominant position at the end of the policy cycle. As we discuss in the next subsection, the angel and devil shifts used by the populist leader to deal with existing institutional friction presented by this coalition was vital to produce a reform that combined elements of the pro-change and the pro-status quo coalitions.

c) The populist leader as a catalyst for change

The crisis in the mining sector was a relatively salient issue in the mainstream media during 2006, and Rafael Correa became a prominent actor in the discourse network after his inauguration as president in January 2007. Moreover, President Correa became the main connector of the pro-change and the pro-status-quo coalitions. Despite the appointment of a pro-change minister

in the MEM in 2007, Correa replaced MEM as the most central actor in the discourse network.

Table 6 shows the betweenness centrality for selected actors between 2006 and 2010. It shows that president Correa became more central to the network as the policy-cycle evolved. Correa maintained a dominant position in the network well above the sectoral authority MEM even after the new law was approved. This finding suggests that the personalistic approach to politics characteristic of populist leaders as highlighted in the literature is transferred to the realm of policymaking, affecting the evolution of sub-systemic dynamics.

Table 6. Normalized betweenness centralities

		Betweenness centrality			
Actor	**Type**	**T1 2006-2007**	**T2 2007-2008**	**T3 2008-2009**	**T4 2009-2010**
Rafael Correa	President	N/A	0.28	0.29	0.39
MEM	Sectoral Authority	0.27	0.13	0.00	0.03
CNVDS	CSO	N/A	0.10	0.01	N/A
CME	Mining guild	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.06
UNAGUA	CSO	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00
PACHAKUTIK	Political Party	0.11	0.01	0.05	0.17
MPD	Political Party	N/A	0.01	0.00	N/A
DECOIN	CSO	0.09	0.00	N/A	N/A

In terms of utterances, or the components of the belief system deployed in the policy process, those defended by President Correa were always more central in the network; however, not always the most frequent. Correa's utterances became the most frequent in the last period (2009-2010) after the new law was approved, and implementation started. This finding suggests that compatibility of the contents of policy beliefs is more important than the frequency of utterance to position an actor as dominant in a discourse network.

d) Populist politics: angle and devil-shifts

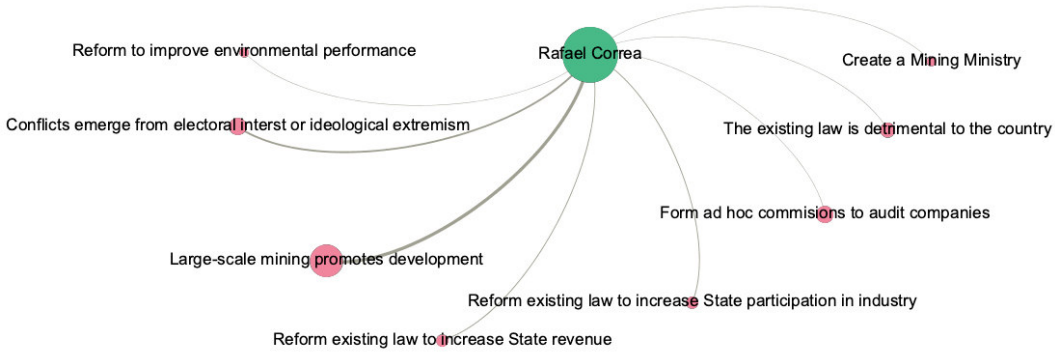
Correa used a combination of strategic appointments and a plebiscite to reduce the existing institutional friction in the mining sector and skew the system against his opponents. Initially, the dominant actors of the network opposed the reforms arguing that the existing law allowed the mining industry to promote sustainable development and that the conflicts in the mining sector originated in electoral interests and ideological extremism. Pro-status-quo interests

effectively mobilized to block the proposed reform in Congress. To break this policy monopoly, Correa appointed a supporter of reform as minister of mines and then convened a Constituent Assembly where the new principles for the policy image were set. During this period (2007-2009), Rafael Correa, the most central actor in the network, uttered the messages depicted in Figure 5. Utterances are represented as red nodes, and they are scaled considering the number of mentions they received during the period. They are ordered clockwise considering the dates when Correa uttered them.

From right to left, Correa set the tone for the upcoming reform; he recognized the importance of the mining sector and proposed to create a «specialized ministry» (Rafael Correa, El Comercio, 21-2-2007). Then he criticized the existing configuration of the mining subsystem labeling it as a very «messy sector» (Rafael Correa, El Comercio, 5-06-2007) and proposed to order audits to check if «multinational companies are affecting water catchments» (Rafael Correa, El Comercio, 6-30-2007). Up to this point, Correa used an intentional causal mechanism constructing a negative image of the subsystem and its dominant actors. For this narrative, he adopted some elements introduced in the discourse network by pro-change actors in the previous period, such as the discussion of the effects of mining over water catchments.

Later, Correa criticized those same actors which resumed mobilizations against the government's plan to develop the mining sector. Again, he used an intentional causal mechanism to label anti-mining activists as «irresponsible people who want to live sitting above such richness, who want to leave it in the ground due to their fundamentalism» (Rafael Correa, El Comercio, 8-11-2008). At the same time, Correa adopted the idea of mining as an industry that uses environmentally sound practices, and along with the mining guild spoke of «responsible mining» (Rafael Correa, El Comercio, 21-10-2019).

Figure 5. Utterances made by Rafael Correa during the reform



These findings show that angel and devil shifts served an actor with authoritative power in a polarized subsystem to reduce the institutional friction and accomplish policy change. Narratives, however, are not sufficient conditions for achieving this result. In this case, the mobilization of legal power and voter support to the Constitution proposed by Correa´s political movement served to break the existing policy monopoly.

e) The consolidation of the populist leader

Current literature on Latin America's populist leaders of the 'Pink Tide' highlight the personalistic approach to politics used by these actors in pursuing state reforms. Our study shows that the realm of policy reforms also exhibits this characteristic. Our data show a change in the composition of the discourse network of the mining policy subsystem that suggest a loss of diversity and openness.

Figure 4 shows a decaying number of actors between 2008 and 2010 when the legislative process unfolded in the Constitutional Assembly and then in the Legislative Commission that approved the new mining law. As Howlett et al. (2009) argue, this dynamic is expected as the policy cycle unfolds because of growing specialization in the discussion of policy alternatives and instruments. However, it is noticeable that the number of civil society organizations, unlike any other type of actors, diminished more dramatically.

Civil society organizations (CSO) had the highest numbers, in particular, during T2 or the 2007-2008 period. By 2010, the number of CSOs fell below the initial numbers seen in 2006. The second most popular type of actor, NGOs also dropped between 2006 and 2010. Additionally, Table 6 shows declining centralities for the most central actor of the pro-change coalition, the umbrella organization CNDVS formed in 2007. CNDVS's centrality declined as the policy-cycle evolved until it disappeared from the network in 2009. In this year, CNDVS´s organizations resumed attempts to challenge the new policy independent of each other; therefore, we see a slight increase in the centralities of the regional organization UNAGUA, and the indigenous political party PACHAKUTIK.

Regarding the frequency of appearance of each type of actor, the sectoral authority MEM rose to prominence during T2 or the 2007-2008 period when along with Rafael Correa it mediated between the two sides of the network. However, unlike Correa's frequency of appearance, that of the sectoral authority fell between 2008 and 2010. This difference indicates that after the reform, subsystem interactions remained under the control of a macro-system actor and not the sectoral authority as is expected.

As we mentioned above, Correa's utterances became the most central of the discourse network as the policy process evolved and they also became the most frequent. In the 2009-2010 period, the most frequent utterance made by Correa was about the environmental soundness of the new policy because the institutions created by the Constitution had clear mandates oriented towards guaranteeing the right of the people and nature. He highlighted that after the reform, the State had the means to effectively control mining operations to promote sustainable development in the mining regions.

Figure 3 shows that the number of utterances that refer to core beliefs increased between 2006 and 2010, while policy preferences and secondary beliefs declined in the same period. This finding suggests a growing polarization of narratives during the reform because core beliefs are harder to negotiate between rivaling coalitions than policy preferences or secondary beliefs (Weible & Sabatier, 2007a).

As we showed above, the devil shift performed by Correa during the legislative process explains the reduction in the number of actors from organized civil society. There are strong indications that the judicialization of protest during this period played a significant role in de-mobilizing organized civil society (Cárdenas, Jaramillo, & Loachamín, 2011). In sum, the findings in this section suggest that as a result of the reform, the policy subsystem became less diverse and less open to actors and ideas.

Conclusion

Populist leaders can undermine democratic institutions and politics, but the mechanisms by which they influence policymaking processes do not often receive enough attention from scholars. In this paper, we have shown that changes in the macro-political system, where a populist leader deployed anti-establishment rhetoric, influenced reforms to the mining sector, reducing the openness and diversity of a policy subsystem. In this way, populist strategies have undermined policymaking by constraining the influence of civil society organizations in it. This outcome will likely deepen the limited capacity that public sector organizations, as well as mining companies, have to manage the adverse effects of mining on local populations and the environment.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework provided essential theoretical tools to analyze the interaction between changes in the macro-political system and the policy subsystem, mainly through the concept of the belief system. In combination with discourse analysis, the ACF's lenses on policy change and subsystem

dynamics highlight the power of policy narratives as resources deployed by populists to increase their influence over the policy process. It shows that populists break down existing policy monopolies by strategically using alternative policy images and their legal capacity to reduce institutional friction and promote policy change. This strategy influences the expansion of conflict by existing coalitions and not just by the reformists, as current theory proposes. Additionally, in order to cement their control over policy subsystems, populist leaders use angel and devil shifts producing reforms that combine policy beliefs from both reformists and incumbents.

Future studies interested in the interactions between populism and policy-making should focus on the long-term effects of policy change under populist regimes to expand our understanding of the capacity of policy actors to regenerate the diversity and openness of a policy subsystem. The use of larger data-sets and more advanced social network analysis techniques would further this objective. This approach is still in its infancy for the analysis of policies in Latin America, but we hope this article will encourage others to follow this line of inquiry.

References

Arsel, M., Hogenboom, B., & Pellegrini, L. (2016). The extractive imperative and the boom in environmental conflicts at the end of the progressive cycle in Latin America. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, *3*(4), 877-879. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2016.10.013

Baumgartner, F. R., Jones, B. D., & Mortensen, P. B. (2014). Punctuated Equilibrium Theory: Explaining Stability and Change in Public Policymaking. In P. A. Sabatier & C. M. Weible (Eds.), Theories of the Policy Process (pp. 25-58). Boulder: Westview Press.

Bebbington, A., & Bury, J. (2013). Subterranean struggles: New dynamics of mining, oil, and gas in Latin America. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bebbington, A., Abdulai, A.-G., Humphreys Bebbington, D., Hinfelaar, M., & Sanborn, C. (2018). Governing Extractive Industries. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198820932.001.0001

Capano, G. & Howlett, M. (2009). Introduction: The Determinants of Policy Change: Advancing the Debate. Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice, 11(1), 1-5.

Cárdenas, A., Jaramillo, L., & Loachamín, R. N. (2011). *Los escenarios de la criminalization a defensores de Derechos Humanos y de la Naturaleza en Ecuador: Desafios para un Estado Constitucional De Derechos*. Quito: Defensoría del Pueblo de Ecuador.

Caria, S., & Domínguez Martín, R. (2015). Estructura productiva primario-exportadora y Buen Vivir en Ecuador, 2009-2014. Revista Internacional de Cooperación Y Desarrollo, 2(1), 1-28. https://doi.org/10.21500/23825014.2232

Cisneros, P. (2011). *¿Cómo se construye la sustentabilidad ambiental? Análisis de experiencias conflictivas de la industria minera en el Ecuador*. Quito: FLACSO Ecuador.

Dargent, E., Orihuela, J. C., Paredes, M., & Ulfe, M. E. (Eds.). (2017). Resource Booms and Institutional Pathways. Chaltenham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-53532-6

Delgado-Ramos, G. C. (Ed.). (2010). Ecología Política de la Minería en América Latina. Mexico: UNAM.

Haarstad, H. (2012). New Political Spaces in Latin American Natural Resource Governance. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137073723

Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Perl, A. (2009). *Studying Public Policy*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Ingold, K. (2011). Network Structures within Policy Processes: Coalitions, Power, and Brokerage in Swiss Climate Policy. Policy Studies Journal, 39(3), 435-459. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2011.00416.x

Jenkins-Smith, H. C., Nohrstedt, D., Weible, C. M., & Sabatier, P. A. (2014). The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Foundations, Evolution, and Ongoing Research. In P. A. Sabatier & C. M. Weible (Eds.), Theories of the Policy Process (pp. 183-223). Boulder: Westview Press.

Jenkins-Smith, H. C., Nohrstedt, D., Weible, C. M., & Ingold, K. (2017). The Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Overview of the Research Program. In C. M. Weible & P. A. Sabatier (Eds.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (pp. 135-172). Boulder: Westview Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429494284-5

Jones, M. D., & McBeth, M. K. (2010). A Narrative Policy Framework: Clear Enough to Be Wrong? *Policy Studies Journal*, *38*(2), 329-353. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2010.00364.x

Kohlbacher, F. (2006). The use of qualitative content analysis in case study research. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum on Qualitative Sociology, 7(1).

Krippendorff, K. H. (2010). Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Leifeld, P. (2013). Reconceptualizing Major Policy Change in the Advocacy Coalition Framework: A Discourse Network Analysis of German Pension Politics. Policy Studies Journal, 41(1), 169-198. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12007

Levitsky, S., & Loxton, J. (2013). Populism and competitive authoritarianism in the Andes. *Democratization*, *20*(1), 107-136. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2013.738864

Liebenthal, A., Dahan, C., Babelon, D., (2003). Project Performance Assessment Report: Ecuador Mining Development and Environmental Control Technical Assistance Project (Loan 2655-EC). Washington DC: World Bank.

Mayring, P. (2014). Qualitative content analysis: theoretical foundation, basicprocedures and software solution. Klagenfurt: GESIS. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9181-6_13

Mény, Y., & Surel, Y. (2002). The Constitutive Ambiguity of Populism. In Y. Mény & Y. Surel (Eds.), Democracies and the Populist ChallengePalgrave. (pp. 1-24). https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403920072_1

McBeth, M. K., Jones, M. D., & Shanahan, E. A. (2007). The Narrative Policy Framework. In C. M. Weible & P. A. Sabatier (Eds.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (pp. 225-266). Boulder: Westview Press.

Nem Singh, J., & Bourgouin, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Resource governance and developmental states in the Global South: Critical international political economy perspectives*. New York: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137286796

Nowlin, M. C. (2011). Theories of the Policy Process: State of the Research and Emerging Trends. *Policy Studies Journal*, *39*(s1), 41-60. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2010.00389_4.x

Petridou, E. (2014). Theories of the Policy Process: Contemporary Scholarship and Future Directions. *Policy Studies Journal*, *42(s1)*, 12-32. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12054

Ruiz Acosta, M., & Iturralde, P. (2013). La alquimia de la riqueza. Estado, petróleo y patrón de acumulación en Ecuador. Quito: CDES.

Sabatier, P. A. (1988). An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein. *Policy Sciences*, *21*(2-3), 129-168. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00136406

Sabatier, P. A. (1991). Toward Better Theories of the Policy Process. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *24*(02), 147-156. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096500050630

Sabatier, P. A., & Jenkins-Smith, H. C. (1999). The Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Assessment. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), (pp. 117-168). Boulder: Westview Press.

Schlager, E., & Blomquist, W. (1996). A Comparison of Three Emerging Theories of the Policy Process. *Political Research Quarterly*, *49*(3), 651-672. https://doi.org/10.1177/106591299604900311

Shanahan, E. A., Jones, M. D., & McBeth, M. K. (2011a). Policy Narratives and Policy Processes. *Policy Studies Journal*, *39*(3), 535-561. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2011.00420.x

Shanahan, E. A., Jones, M. D., McBeth, M. K., & Lane, R. R. (2013). An Angel on the Wind: How Heroic Policy Narratives Shape Policy Realities. *Policy Studies Journal*, *41*(3), 453-483. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12025

Shanahan, E. A., Jones, M. D., McBeth, M. K., & Radaelli, C. M. (2017). The Narrative Policy Framework. In C. M. Weible & P. A. Sabatier (Eds.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (pp. 173-1213). Boulder: Westview Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429494284-6

Shanahan, E. A., McBeth, M. K., & Hathaway, P. L. (2011b). Narrative Policy Framework: The Influence of Media Policy Narratives on Public Opinion. *Politics & Policy*, *39*(3), 373-400. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2011.00295.x

Svampa, M., & Antonelli, M. A. (Eds.). (2010). Minería transnacional, narrativas del desarrollo y resistencia sociales. Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos.

Walter, M., & Martinez-Alier, J. (2010). How to be heard when nobody wants to listen: community action against mining in Argentina. Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue Canadienne D'études Du Développement, 30(1-2), 281-301. https://doi.org/10.1080/02255189.2010.9669292

Wasserman, S., & Faust, K. (1994). Social Network Analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815478

Weible, C., & Sabatier, P. (2007). A Guide to the Advocacy Coalition Framework. In *Handbook of public policy analysis: theory, politics, and methods* (pp. 123-136). Boca Ratón: CRC/Taylor & Francis. https://doi.org/10.1201/9781420017007.pt3

Zimmerer, K., & Carter, E. (2002). Conservation and Sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Yearbook. Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers, 27*, 207-249.