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LIFE PATHWAYS AS TOOL TO IMPROVE THE GOVERNANCE OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION. AN APPLICATION TO GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP OF THE MASTER DEGREE OF CUCEA-UDEG (MEXICO)

Jordi Planas*

Edith Rivas**

ABSTRACT: Good knowledge of students and graduates of higher education, based on research, is one of the essential technical requirements for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) governance. The goal of this article is to present a theoretical-methodological approach, the Life Pathways, capable of capturing and analyzing the itineraries of students and graduates of higher education when their diversity is increasing and the "traditional students" have become minorities in our HEI. The case that we have presented is an illustration of three things: a) the great diversity of the students participating in the same master degree programs, b) the usefulness of the Life Pathways approach to capturing and deepen this diversity, and c) the potentiality of this approach to support the HEI governance, identifying the diversity of students present in their programs and their transitions as critical points for their management.

KEYWORDS: Life Course, Student Life, Transitions, Work, Family Responsibilities.

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INTRODUCTION¹

Formal education is not necessarily separated from the labor trajectories, nor the life as a couple, nor the raising of children. The profile of university students has changed both in context, in their practices, priorities and ways of life. Thus, for the governance of Higher Education Institutions (hereinafter HEI) and the education system as a whole, it is essential to have information about their university students, their diversity, their previous work and family trajectories, during and after, their term at HEI.

Good knowledge of students and graduates of higher education, based on research, is one of the essential technical requirements for HEI governance. As Aguilar (2010) points out, governance has its technical requirements for research and information.² A requirement for general governance is also a requirement for higher education governance.

As the report points out "Higher Education Governance Reforms across Europe" (ESMU, 2009), governance in higher education refers both to the autonomy of the institutions and the inclusion of actors involved in the proper functioning of the HEI (ESMU, 2009, p. 10), which implies a deep and thorough knowledge of them. In the case of the students a knowledge about who they are and what are their pathways that allows both to improve the opportunities of access to higher education and to increase the effectiveness and efficiency in training; In addition to guaranteeing the equity in graduation, thereby preventing abandonments and unnecessary delays in their training processes.

This requires the knowledge and recognition of its diversity, paying particular attention to the critical moments of its pathways to which we will call "transitions" and which we will discuss in later sections of this text. The moments to which institutions should pay particular attention in the context of the diversity of the student pathways.

The theoretical-methodological approaches for the follow-up analysis of students and graduates of higher education, at least in the OECD countries, have evolved with the changes in the type of students, mainly with the increase of their diversity (Gilardi and Guglielmetti, 2011), but also with changes in public policies concerning higher education (mainly those related to educational expansion in three aspects: those aimed at increasing coverage, extension of this to postgraduate studies and incorporation of higher education to "Lifelong learning"). But, also with

1. We appreciate Doctors Adrián de Garay Sánchez and José Navarro Cendejas for their comments and criticisms of the draft version of this article.

2. "On the technical side, the first component of governance is scientific-technological knowledge, from which our proven causal beliefs about the behavior of nature and various social facts come from. Science and technology represent the fundamental reference to determine the causal suitability of activities, instruments projects, programs, forms of organization to produce effectively and even efficiently the preferred social objectives" (Aguilar, 2010, p. 48).

the evolution of management methods, evaluation of HEI as a whole and their programs. Evolution that includes the monitoring of students and graduates as one of the bases for their governance (Kehm, 2011 and ESMU, 2009).

In this text we present a proposal of a theoretical-methodological approach for the follow-up of students and graduates of higher education, which we consider adequate to the requirements of modern governance, because it reflects the changes that have occurred in students, which constitutes an indispensable requirement of information about one of its main actors.

The methods used "traditionally" for the follow-up of students and graduates of HEI are based on the "traditional student", which has been providing us information that does not allow us to deepen the real diversity of its students and its implications in the institutional design, in the indicators used for its evaluation (Planas and Acosta, 2014) and in the pedagogical model (Scott *et al.*, 2013).

Our HEI are now welcoming students who are increasingly stepping away from the "ideal student" (or "traditional" as they are accustomed to call in Anglo-Saxon literature), but not to be replaced by other homogeneous students but to increase their diversity. What we have called "ideal students" and others named as "traditional students", that is to say, young man or woman, who accedes to higher education around the age of 18, is a full time student, without combining his tasks as a student with work, single with no family responsibilities; Student who will finish their studies in the expected time, which according to the duration of their studies will end at 22-23 years and then will be dedicated to find a job according to their level and area of studies starting in this way his professional career. Similarly, we can describe the ideal "graduate student" by simply shifting the age of admission and the number of years corresponding to the expected length of the post-graduate cycles that he/she is in.

This type of student remains in our HEI but is a minority in the bachelor degrees and, even more, in the post-graduate courses.³ The "ideal" or "traditional" student

3. See Data in National Center of Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs/web/97578e.asp> for The United States of America, from Eurostudent V for Europe http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/EV_Synopsis_of_Indicators.pdf; and for Mexico, De Garay *et al.*, (2016) and Planas & Enciso (2014).

has not been totally replaced by other types of students, but also coexists with other types of students, hence one of the challenges today is to know and recognize the diversity of students coexisting in our HEI and to manage, institutionally and pedagogically, their entrance, permanence and graduation of the school cycles of degree and postgraduate, with inclusive, congruent and respectful proposals with the diversity present in the centers.

This diversity refers mainly to two types of events that vary with respect to the "traditional" student: on one hand, the moment in the life course of the students when they study, that is to say, their previous pathway and the future expectations that motivate their training and, on the other hand, the group of activities that the students carry out simultaneously to their studies (what Anglo-Saxons call "student life"), and for which, in the introduction to the program of a recent congress (May, 2016), Organized by SRHE⁴ and OFFA,⁵ held in London under the title "Making Sense of Student Lifecycles and Transitions", read as follows:

The student lifecycle has become a normative term used in higher education policy in an effort to capture students' transitions, stages through and experiences of accessing, participating and completing a university degree. However, the term has not been fully problematized to consider for example how institutional systems, processes, spaces and temporalities might not connect with students' complex educational and social identities and experiences. Furthermore, the notion of the student lifecycle suggests a homogenous and linear pathway through higher education, which is not the experience for many students. As higher education student communities become increasingly diverse, and with national and institutional aims to widen participation and create more inclusive cultures and practices, the need to pay critical attention to the meanings we impose on the 'student lifecycle' has become particularly imperative.⁶

4. Society for Research into Higher Education.

5. Office For Fair Access.

6. <https://www.acss.org.uk/news/making-sense-student-life-cycles-transitions/>

Lifecycle tends to be normatively associated with generation or age group, but there is another interpretation, as O'Rand and Kreckler (1990, p. 245) points out. We have to consider it "as a population-driven process, a more approximate notion to what most authors have been calling Life course".⁷ Because cycle is not generation, meaning that not everyone is doing the same type of transition or do it at the same age.

For example, not all people start to work or start their careers at the same age. Nor do they emancipate from the family or construct their own family, in the same way, or at the same ages, nor study the same school cycles, in the same way or same ages. One of the objectives of a new methodology for the follow-up of ES students and graduates would be, as Hareven stated (1978, pp. 97-100): "[...] to investigate the synchronization of individual timing with the collective timing." "[...] The timing and synchronizations of transitions." "[...] Most individuals are involved simultaneously in several configurations, fulfilling different functions in each".

In other words, we intend to make sense of student life-cycle without locking ourselves in its normative sense, but understanding that a certain formation must be located as part of the itineraries of which it is part and considering the transitions that imply. That is, adopting the concept of Life course as understood by authors like Hareven (1978 and 1985) or Elder (1994), we will return to this aspect later.

For their part, the HEI managed following the governance model (which implies both autonomy and actor's involvement) will have to be accountable, "upwards" the requirements of national, state and international authorities and the social institutions that govern and/or evaluate them, and "downwards" (in relation to their students and teachers), they must generate instruments to know and manage the diversity of their new students, in an equitable, effective and efficient way. In particular, this will require paying more attention to the transitions they must overcome in their access, permanence and graduation from the educational cycles.

7. "In much modern socio-demographic literature, the term life-course has replaced that of life-cycle in analyzing these sequences of events because the former carries fewer normative implications than the latter" (The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, 2005, p. 363).

As an illustration of what was mentioned in the previous paragraph, the recent celebration in London of the aforementioned congress whose main objective was the search for new models of analysis that allowed to incorporate a diversity of students to the higher education through the development of new models of Institutions, which goes beyond the presents, which rigidness and homogeneous (especially regarding the profile of the students on which they are based) have had the effect of excluding certain types of students from HEI, by expelling *de facto* or even by preventing access, of those student candidates whose “Life course” does not fit with the normative concept of “Lifecycle” nor with the institutional modalities that are offered⁸ and, therefore, with the institutional and pedagogical design that is offered to them.

Knowing the diversity of students, real and potential, recognizing it to manage it, is one of the present and future main challenges for the governance of our HEI. In this text we present a proposal with a theoretical-methodological perspective to understand the diversity of the students of the HEI and show a concrete application for the particular case, which we consider to be illustrative, of the master's degree graduates from A University Campus of Universidad de Guadalajara (Mexico) in order to show, through a concrete case, the relevance of our theoretical-methodological approach.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF OUR PROPOSAL

The theoretical-methodological approach that we propose has its origins in previous ones that have been evolving with the context as we have exposed in the previous section. The main sources of inspiration for our approach are: a) the “School to Work transition” approach; b) the “Student Life” approach; and c) the “Life course” approach.

8. State governments and HEI have already introduced timid institutional modifications to accommodate student diversity, such as in the UK, differentiating part-time and full-time students in Mexico with the different modalities at the postgraduate level. But these institutional adaptations are currently insufficient as shows, in the case of the United Kingdom, the convening of the conference in London.

“SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION” APPROACH

The approaches with the greatest tradition related to the follow-up of students and graduates of education, at all post-compulsory levels, are the analyzes of the “transition pathways from school to work”, these approaches, simplifying, start from three premises: a) students are young, b) before they finished their studies they did not have active working life or this is irrelevant professionally and c) the transition is essentially labor.

These approaches were strengthened by OECD countries' policies that aimed to reduce unemployment and underemployment among young people whose educational level was growing within the framework of educational expansion during the 1980's, but their unemployment as well. In the European case, it is illustrative that the European Science Foundation constituted the “Network on Transition in Youth” in the 1990's (see Werkin, Breen and Planas, 1996) that still survives.

The OECD also performed research works in the same years compared to this approach (see, for example, Stern & Wagner, 1999). From the theory, these works had as reference the text of sociology of the youth of Coleman (1985), in which the social changes that young people faced are analyzed in a context of growing juvenile unemployment.

On the side of political intervention on the transition of young people from school to work, the report by Bertrand Schwartz (1982) “L'insertion professionnelle et sociale des jeunes. Rapport au Premier Ministre” inspirer of the “Missions locales” in France and later of the “Transition in Youth Programs” of the European Union during the second half of the 80s. Programs that subsequently have had continuity with other names, although maintaining a very similar approach.

As a consequence, most of the researches we have on the departure of students from education systems have focused only on the transition from education to work and only the young people who finish their studies and who begin to work only after they have finished.

“STUDENT LIFE” APPROACH

As a source of our current approach, we must also quote the works on student life, that is to say, those works that instead of dealing longitudinally with young people and their transitions focus on the holistic dimension of students' lives, not only as students, but also as workers, as subjects of health, housing, as caregivers of children, as persons who have a private, sexual and affective life, as members of associations, as citizens, as consumers, with special reference to cultural consumption.

Of particular note are the numerous “Observatoire de la vie étudiante” available at the French universities and the services which, in various ways, address these issues in European and American universities. Comparative studies have also been made, including differences in motivations, objectives and identities among university students (see for example: Hadji, Bargel, Masjuan, 2005; Garay, Miller and Montoya, 2016).

From the analysis on the professional insertion of French young people, Schwartz's (1982) book already proposed to expand the professional insertion to its social dimension, but, as far as we are interested, it kept the limitations of being focused only on young people and particularly those who were in danger of exclusion.

There are a large number of particular studies on student life, but there is no common theoretical-methodological articulation between them. In Mexico, the work of De Garay (2004) is worthy of a note; De Garay, Miller and Montoya (2016) and Miller (2009) on the students of the UAM that address the diverse dimensions of student life. But the greater production of analyzes that consider student life as a whole has taken place in the line of “non-traditional students”, which contains a great diversity of collectives and characteristics that makes them difficult to synthesize (see Gilardi & Guglielmetti, 2011).

Moreover, some countries such as the United States and New Zealand have “Life Experiences Survey”, but these surveys have poor specific information about the students and it has been scarcely used for the analysis of the student pathways and their transition.

“LIFECOURSE” APPROACH

The focus of “Life course”, although it has a previous development centered on the “Historical study of family development” developed by Hareven (1978 and 1985), is of recent application in other subject areas as sociopsychology (Elder, 1994), or sociology on the pathway of transition to adulthood (Shanahan, 2000). More recently, it has also been applied to the analysis of students and graduates in general, and to university students in particular, as developed by Scott, Evans, Watson, Hughes, Walter & Burke (2013) used for the analysis of the transitions of postgraduate students in England.

Mexican authors (Caballero and García Guevara, 2007; Guerra, 2009) have also applied this approach to the career paths of Mexican professionals. The fact that these authors have focused their analysis on professional women has involved the incorporation of the family dimension in the itineraries of professionals and the functions that women perform in it, with much greater weight in the reproductive work than their male partners.

Reproductive work has been greatly forgotten in the follow-up of students and graduates of higher education. In part because the “traditional” student is placed at ages when reproductive tasks are assumed to be scarce or nonexistent. But this can no longer be assumed because older men and women, and / or with family responsibilities, start to study at universities, which is particularly present in postgraduate courses.

Life-course concept, born to understand different phenomena, and often very distant conceptually to student life or transitions from school to work, finds its application to university students as a theoretical-methodological approach due to the need to understand that the diversity of students and the conflicts that this diversity generates with some institutions of higher education thought of rigidly and normatively in relation to their students, identifying cycles with ages and, therefore, centered in certain determined generations which are anticipated to behave as the “ideal student”.

As noted above, Scott *et al.* (2013) developed a theoretical-methodological proposal for the study of the transitions of students of education, especially postgraduate, that can be applied to the analysis of cycles and transitions of both students and graduates of higher education. The main elements of its proposal are:

- Individual decisions are part of a Life course that is shaped by the transitions that people make throughout their lives, although their decisions are affected by the context, both personal and institutional.
- The different transitions: leaving the parental home, start to work, changing work, moving from one cycle of studies to another, the end of a study cycle, marriage, the creation of an independent home, procreation or others, imply ruptures and / or reorientations in the life pathway of people.
- Each individual develops at a different pace and assumes a variety of roles during his lifetime and in each of the fields in which he acts.
- The steps from one position to another, in case they involve reorientations and / or “ruptures”, are called **transitions**.

This type of methodology seeks to explore the interaction between the individual, family time and historical time. A similar concept can be made with regard to training and its cycles.

LIFE PATHWAYS

From the works cited above, what we intend in this text is to define an approach that we call **Life Pathways** (hereinafter **LP**) and articulate a) the **itineraries**, understood as a description of long and complex processes of transitions (Raffe, 2003); Which although conditioned by age and context, do not follow mimetically nor the generations, nor the context and in them great part of their diversity is concretized. Incorporating "Life course" perspective and, therefore, understood as different paths of life or careers in different areas, educational, labor, conjugal, reproductive.

It does not involve any sequence, nor determined speed, is influenced by what is socially and culturally assigned (Hareven, 1978 and 1985; Caballero and García Guevara, 2007); b) with **transitions** understood as a moment of rupture or reorientation in any of the areas of the itineraries (Scott *et al.*, 2014) and c) integration, in these itineraries and transitions, of the different dimensions of the **Life Course** (studies, work, family). And all this as an instrument to analyze the diversity of the students and alumni, who have in common to have participated in the same educational cycle.

Although there is an old debate about whether it is more appropriate to talk about "Pathways" or "trajectories" Raffe (2003) considers that the term "pathways" can be useful as a structuring concept that links politics to research. The analysis conducted in this report, both on the students and on the graduates. Are based on the theoretical-methodological approach of the "Life Pathways".

This perspective aims to place both training and professional insertion as a result and part of the itinerary of people in their various dimensions, which requires, in methodological terms, and using a photographic simile, to pass from the still photo, made in a single moment, to the film and from the close up, concentrated in a single aspect of the life of the people, to the scenic that covers the different aspect of his life or the diverse lives that constitute his life: the student life, the work life, the family life.

People's lives are not divided by themes or areas, but constitute an articulated whole, more or less complex, whose components interact with each other. We know that many of our students work during their studies and have worked before, often in areas directly related to their studies (Béduwè, Giret & Solaux, 2016; Navarro and Planas, 2016; Planas and Enciso, 2014), some of them study what they study because they work from what they work (Rivas, 2014). We also know that some (especially females) of our students assume family responsibilities before, during and after their formation, in their family of origin or from the creation of their own.

Whereby, both the work and the life forms that they have, the family responsibilities, condition and explain to a large extent their behavior regarding the same formation and their results of later professional insertion (for example, post-study inactivity, even superior studies, almost exclusively by females, because they dedicate to take care of the children).

We also know that our students, at the moment they start a post-graduate course, are in different moments of their professional and formative career which will imply different expectations and behaviors regarding their formation, conditioned by their experience in other areas of life depending on how long and complex their life trajectory had been prior to the access to training (even more in postgraduate studies).

The theoretical-methodological approach of LP is based on two analysis axes: one longitudinal and one transversal. The transversal axis is to approach in a global way the life of the people to be analyzed, simultaneously contemplating how the people articulate the student life, the work life and the family life; In this way, when analyzing students and graduates, the simultaneous analysis of the field of studies with the work and the family of the students will be maintained and when we analyze the insertion of the graduates we will do it simultaneously considering the family and student life of the graduates.

The longitudinal axis consists of situating the facts to be analyzed (in this case their passage through a determined educational cycle) in the itinerary of people's life. At what point in the life of the people, considered globally (transversally), are the formation and the professional insertion (first insertion / continuity / reorientation) of the people we analyze? In particular, at what point in their professional career and family (responsibilities) they were able to pursue their studies?

Summarizing, the application of the transversal axis implies that when we analyze the behavior of the students as students, we will do so taking into account simultaneously their work life and their family life. The application of the longitudinal axis implies to locate in which stage of the life (age, professional race, family responsibilities) are located the postgraduate studies and also the professional insertion of the graduates. By combining these two axes, we believe it will be our greatest contribution to the analysis of the diversity of students and the understanding of their implications for the governance of HEI.

But not all LP moments are equivalent; there are special moments whose overcoming implies greater difficulty. Moments of rupture or reorientation in any of the areas of life (work, family, education) which we will call "transitions" and we will have to pay special attention precisely because of the difficulties they entail. Transitions that according to our analysis will not be homogenous for all those enrolled in the

same educational program and of the same nature. Some will be more academic while others will focus on work and / or family aspects.

METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

The methodological problems raised by the LP approach are mainly two: first, to have the adequate information, how to obtain the necessary information to carry out the type of analysis that we propose? And, secondly, to identify the "transitions", the points of rupture and/or reorientation in the pathways of students and graduates, whose overcoming should be a fundamental objective of the HEI governance to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their educational programs.

The information required performing this type of analysis at the same time longitudinal and holistic (including the different aspects of people's lives). Our proposal for the follow-up of master's degree graduates is the beginning of a strategy that would also include an adaptation of the administrative data of the students and follow-up surveys of the same. It is not a coincidence that studies close to our approach, such as Scott, *et al.* (2013) are qualitative, quantifiable information systems, point surveys or regular statistics do not have the necessary information for this type of analysis. Our attempt, although very modest, aims to shed light on the feasibility of the approach.

We consider that for the follow-up of students and graduates of higher education required by modern governance must also be based on quantitative techniques, that provide us information on the proportion in which the different types of students and graduates and their itineraries are present in a concrete collective, and, more specifically, in surveys and in the accumulation of statistical monitoring data.

The application of this approach to the specific case of students and master's graduates of the University Center of Economic and Administrative Sciences (Centro Universitario de Ciencias Económico Administrativas CUCEA) of *Universidad de Guadalajara* (UdeG) in Mexico is based, for the moment, on a survey of graduates with longitudinal character, retrospective that responds to the LP approach. This survey was made in 2015 for the graduates of the CUCEA master degree, and the data are only a sample that, due to the numerical scarcity of the reference population, presents problems of representability, especially at the disaggregated level.

Regarding the content of the survey to the graduates, the questionnaire reflects the situation of the interviewees in four moments: before entering the master's degree, during their master studies, after leaving and at the time of the interview (2 years later). The information on these moments allows us to construct a temporal sequence based on

which we establish the pathways of the graduates. The fundamental axis of the survey is the labor, but, congruently with our theoretical-methodological approach, we also collect information about the academic and family trajectory, which allowed us to articulate the different areas of people's lives.

The sample obtained is reduced, in the two years after the graduation, 213 graduates of 14 master's programs of the CUCEA of the Universidad de Guadalajara in Mexico were interviewed, that is why the analysis cannot be disaggregated by separate programs, the main reason for this reduced sample is that the reference population is also reduced by being master degree of a single center of a single university in a school year. For this reason, we do not present the data as formally representative data of the students of each one of the master degree, but as an illustration of the phenomena and behaviors detectable by the methodology proposed, applied to graduates of the master degree's group.

CASE STUDY: LIFE PATHWAYS OF THE MASTER GRADUATES OF CUCEA FROM UDEG

The results of the analysis of the data obtained from the CUCEA 2015 graduates' survey, which were already reflected in a previous report,⁹ show that they reinforce the importance of studying the current life pathways of the student and their diversity, mainly because is a student who does not follows the pre-established or "ideal" behavior patterns according to the institution. Understand that their behavior does not depend solely on their activity as a student but on the adaptation or adaptation of their activity as a student at the time of their life cycle, which also affects work, familiar and personal spheres.

BASIC DATA ABOUT DIVERSITY

What do we want to say when we assert that students and master degree graduated are diverse? As we

9. Adrián Acosta Silva (Coord.) Study diagnostic of graduates of CUCEA postgraduate programs. Phase 1 of the institutional studies of follow-up of graduates of the CUCEA -UdeG: social origin, school trajectories and strategies of academic and professional Mimeo.

see below, even considering only some basic variables, there is a remarkable diversity among the master degree students to which we refer:

a) Age and gender of the graduates

The ages of the master degree graduates interviewed are very diverse and goes from 24 to 61 years, with a median around 27 years. This is one of the main diversities that, in turn, are an indication of other diversities that we will analyze, such as the previous career or family responsibilities. Graduates of the post-graduate program are mostly men (60%), but this predominance is mainly because of age.

The greater the age of the graduates, the greater is the male presence, while for the young, the ones we have called "in initial formation", and the distribution by gender is equitable. This is due to the fact that the different generations have their own history and the older generations had less female presence at the undergraduate level and their lower postgraduate presence derives from this lower previous presence in the university.

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b) Previous Training

The CUCEA, in the Center of Economic and Administrative Sciences could be thought that the previous training of the students of their master degree is in bachelors of this area or related. And it is, students coming from related areas represent more than 60% of the graduates, but it should be noted that the remaining third come from other disciplinary areas, among which are very predominantly engineering, which account for 25% of the total of the graduates.

c) Previous job activity and its relation with the content of the Master Degree

More than 80% of the interviewees were already working before entering the master degree and 65% of them considered that their work prior to the master degree was already related ("much" or "totally") with their master studies. Add to this that about an additional 20% considered that the relation was "regular".

In terms of previous work experience, graduates of master degree, when they entered it, were divided into three groups: the majority, more than half of them worked previously in an activity "much or all" related to the master degree that they

choose to study, 20% did not work and the rest (almost a third) worked in activities that were “nothing or little” related to the master degree to be undertaken. Here, in terms of previous experience, and hence of human capital, there are three notably diverse groups.

d) Lifestyle and family responsibilities

The lifestyle of the graduates is quite diverse, and depends on the age but not automatically, the age does not determine the lifestyle nor, as we will see next, the number or the age of the children. The way of life is, along with the number of children, an indicator, although it is not very precise and depends on the gender of the person, of the intensity of domestic work.¹⁰

Just over half of those interviewed live as couples (with or without children), 20% continue to live with their parents and similar proportions live alone. A smaller percentage, but not negligible (more than 5%), live alone with children. Interviewees who have children do not reach 50% and half of those who have, have only one and the other half two or three. 90% of the children are minors and more than 60% under the age of 12. With these indicators we can affirm that the intensity in reproductive work is also very diverse among the students and graduates of the analyzed master degree.

e) Couple's Characteristics

The characteristics of the couple of respondents, in terms of level of studies and type of activity, are clearly dominated by high levels of studies and economic activity in high socio-professional categories (the most frequent are: director-management and teacher researcher), although among the female couples of the older men, 10% of them are “housewives”. But we observed that the symmetry in the pair (formation and labor activity) is greater in young couples than in older couples, which shows a certain generational evolution also in the couple model.

10. In recent works we have incorporated more direct instruments of measurement of this work.

f) Main source of income during the post-graduate course

Despite the large number of postgraduates with public scholarship among the students interviewed, students who enjoy this type of income are only 60%, the remaining 40% of the students live from their work during their master degree studies, including one part of the scholarship holders (about 20%) which continue working during the postgraduate, so their income comes from the scholarship and their work.

BASIC WORK PATHWAYS

The clearest point of reference for organizing LP is the work pathways. In order to establish the work schedules of the graduates, the strategy was based on two types of data: objective (about work activity in four moments of its pathway) and subjective (self-assessment about the career stage –initial or advanced– in the moment of the access to master degree). The results are the following:

a) Work pathway: typology

By means of the survey to the graduates of the master degree, we have information about four moments of the work activity of the graduates: before the entrance to the postgraduate, during the postgraduate, the egress and the current situation. Based on these data we have constructed a typology of labor itineraries that are:

Inactive: those who did not work in any of the considered moments.

Expected: those who do what the educational system “expects” from them, do not work before or during graduate school, but they start to work immediately upon graduation, and are currently working.

Experience: those who worked at some time prior to master degree and currently.

Loss of employment: those who are not currently working but worked at some earlier time.

Scholar: those who worked at all times except during the master degree studies (master degree and some continued later with doctoral degree).

Permanent: those who have worked in the four moments, and those who stated to have a job during the postgraduate but licensed.

Based on the pathways that have been constructed, we see that the most frequent work pathway among the graduates is the “permanent”

that is to say the one of those who worked continuously from before entering the postgraduate until the present moment.

In Table 1 we observe that the majority work schedule among the master's degree graduates is the "permanent", that is to say those who worked in the four moments considered in the work pathways, followed by the "experience". The sum of the two totalizes three quarters of the cases. In the next section we analyze the relationship of these pathways with the self-assessment of the interviewees regarding to the professional stage in which they were when they entered the master degree.

b) Stage of professional career at the moment of access to master degree: IPC and APC

Another way of characterizing the interviewees was constructed by asking a question of subjective self-assessment in two groups: those who consider that at the time of access to the master degree were in an initial stage of their Initial Professional Career (from now on IPC) against those who were in an Advanced stage of their Professional Career (from now on APC).

The result of the survey based on the answer to this question shows us that IPC and APC are almost equivalent, which means that they exist, related to this self-assessment, two groups clearly differentiated in terms of experience, depending on the moment they were on their professional career at the beginning of the master degree studies.

In addition, this proportion is similar in each and every one of the master degree's programs analyzed. Regarding the age of these groups is usually very dispersed in both groups, and although of course IPC tend to be younger than APC, age does not predetermine belonging to one or the other group.

The division between IPC and APC is not a net division by age, if it were, it would be enough to establish age as the separation limit, but the results show that this is not the case. This fact is relevant because it indicates that there is no common age for the beginning of the professional career, which is closely linked with their work schedules before, during the postgraduate, immediately after and a few years later.

If we analyze the data showed in Table 1 about the crossing between IPC and APC with the typology of pathways presented in the previous section, it should be emphasized that the proportion of those who present a "permanent" labor pathway, that to say, they worked during the four times indicated above is almost double in the APC (where is close to 80%) than in the IPC. This itinerary represents 45% for IPC and 77% for APC. In the APC there are no routes of inactivity and in the IPC is around 5%. Finally, discontinuous work schedules (with moments of work

experience at the beginning and end of the trajectory but with work inactivity in intermediate phases) also show twice as much presence in the IPC than in the APC:

TABLE 1. PATHWAY TIPOLOGY WORK / PROFESSIONAL MOMENT AT THE BEGGINING OF MASTER DEGREE

Type	Professional career at the beginning		Advance professional career		Total	
Inactive	6	6%	0	0%	6	3%
Expected	13	13%	6	5%	19	9%
Loss of employment	8	8%	7	6%	15	7%
Scholar	6	6%	2	2%	8	4%
Permanent	45	45%	88	77%	133	62%
Experience	21	21%	11	10%	32	15%
Total	99	100%	114	100%	213	100%

Source: Survey of Postgraduates CUCEA, 2015.

For the IPC, the impact of postgraduate courses to access their current job, a better salary and a better work position is greater than for the APC, which is logical since the same formal training, the postgraduate, has different weights for both groups depending on the set of competences, if there was previous advanced career experience, than if the student is in an early stage of the career.

But if we look at the salary levels of both groups, we see that the salary income of the graduates at the present moment is greater than it was before and there is a clear difference in in the perceptions of the IPC and the APC. Almost 60% of the IPC earn lower wages than \$16,000 pesos, in the APC, the same proportion, 60%, stated that their salary is above \$16,000, and close to a quarter of the total of the APC mention that their salary is above \$32,000 pesos (top range present in the questionnaire). We also observe that the degree of connection between postgraduate studies with their current work, being high for all, is higher for APC.

For all these data, and because of the implications of postgraduate teaching management, it seems pertinent to maintain this division between the two groups in the analysis of the behavior of master degree graduates avoiding diluting the differences between them in misleading averages, as they are the result of very distant situations between them.

TRANSITIONS

We understand by transitions the ruptures and / or reorientation in the pathways of the interviewees, in this case in relation to the access and completion of the master degree that is the activity that all the interviewees have done. The identification of these transitions, which constitute critical moments in the pathways of students and graduates, is fundamental to the governance of HEI, as they are key to avoid failures and / or dropouts in the entrance and permanence in educational programs and/or in the later work reintegration.

These are moments that require a specific decided intervention, both in the institutional and pedagogical design, dedicated specifically to those groups of students or graduates who must overcome them. The transitions that we detect from the obtained data are the following:

a) From work to school

The vast majority of the graduates interviewed (remember that they were more than 80%) already worked before starting the master degree, but a non-minor part (about a third of the total) stopped working to study. What kind of changes does this change of status presents? And how does it affect the follow-up of their studies: changes in income? Do scholarships, in the case of the programs that have these, cover the economic needs of students in the case? Let's take into account that they are not the same for everyone according to their family situation, age and career moment. Does it involve loss of positions in their professional career? Do they require abandonment, even partially, of work?

b) From the active life to the school, after a long absence

But, in addition, for a significant proportion of those who worked before starting the master degree, their previous life experience (work or other) was intense and away from school. We have seen in previous sections that access to master degree occurred at very different times from the alumni LP and we can separate the students from those who were "in initial formation", those who acceded to the master degree without having interrupted during a long period their presence in the educational system and those who were "in continuous formation" because they reincorporate to the "school" world after having left it during a long period. For them, the re-entry into the "school" world implies additional difficulties that do not have those who are "in initial formation" who have not left the "school" world.

We also note important differences, in this case as far as previous experience is concerned, which implies substantially different

prior learning between those who enter at an early stage of their professional career (IPC) while others are at an advanced stage of professional career (APC), whose experience and learning paths do not have an explicit recognition in the master degree curriculum or in their pedagogical practices. These would be what we call “expert students”.

These differences in the moment of the vital pathway in which they enter the master degree divide the students into two halves and demand special attention for those who are “in continuous formation” (particularly those that start the master degree in an advanced phase of its professional career), having abandoned their formal studies for an important period. They are not the type of student of reference of the school systems with the consequent difficulties of incorporation and, mainly, permanence.

c) From one disciplinary area to another

A second kind of transition that we observe is the disciplinary one. As mentioned previously, one-third of the students in the analyzed master degrees come from different academic areas. This means that a part of their students are subject to a reorientation or academic break that they have to overcome; Which would require a specific curricular treatment, with its implications in the institutional design, and differentiated depending on its academic origin, for an effective incorporation to the new disciplinary area.

d) From work to reconcile school with work

An even greater proportion of those who leave their work to study, are those who decide to reconcile their studies with their work, in many cases continuing the previous work, to start a postgraduate program. Most of the interviewed graduates worked during their master degree studies (globally they are about 60% of the students). In some master degree, the compatibility of studies with work is favored by the establishment of modalities of studies that require a lesser or concentrated presence at weekends, but we observe that this proportion also occurs in programs that offer a unique modality of presence, Designed for “traditional” students, or, full-time.

e) Reconcile children’s dedication and to the work with master degree studies

Twenty percent of the interviewees had children at the beginning of their master degree or had them during their master degree studies, which implied, in a similar way to combine studies and works, a transition to approach the conciliation of these dedications. But, in addition, the great majority of those who had

children, also worked. The result we obtain is that 15% of the total of the students had to reconcile their dedication to the studies with a work and with the dedication to their children.

The proportion of men and women in this situation is very similar although we know that dedication to children exert a greater weight on women than in men; this is topic to be analyzed. But, in any case, the simultaneous activities to various occupations undoubtedly have an impact on the study rhythms, since the time of dedication to the various simultaneous occupations of daily life is limited.

f) From school to work: full reintegration after the master's degree

In relation to the postgraduate impact on the work continuity of graduates, their insertion or their reintegration into the workforce, we have focused on three aspects: access to their current position, improvement of salary and improvement of the position. The answer, in a synthetic way, is that, in a majority way, the postgraduate course has had a positive impact on all three aspects.

CONCLUSIONS

As we pointed out in the introduction of the text, the objective of this article is to present a theoretical-methodological approach, of LP, capable of capturing and analyzing the itineraries of students and graduates of higher education when their diversity is increasing and the "traditional students" have become minorities in our HEI. The "traditional" approaches for the follow-up of graduates are designed and serve to understand the behaviors of "traditional" students.

Which brings us to the subject already raised in the introduction to this text by the SRHE and the OFFA: "the notion of the student lifecycle suggests a homogenous and linear pathway through higher education, which is not the experience for many students." The students in the case study presented are an illustration that the budgets on which "traditional" follow-ups of graduates are based are false because of the diversity of our students in higher education, a diversity already seen in their basic characteristics: age and gender, previous training, previous professional experience and / or simultaneous to their studies, in their ways of life and sources of income. This diversity in its basic characteristics configures diverse personal pathways and a diverse location of the same formative cycle in the formative and vital pathways of the students.

The "traditional" model of students is what supports the "traditional" studies for the follow-up of students and graduates, and because

of this is a smaller part of the actual students, and also guides to a myopic management of HEI. "Traditional" follow-up of graduates is in conflict with the majority presence of "non-traditional" students in the classroom, as we have already mentioned in previous studies (Planas & Acosta, 2014). Modern governance requires information mechanisms that are closer to the reality of our students as we propose with LP.

The case that we have presented is an illustration of three things: a) the great diversity of the students participating in the same master degree programs, b) the usefulness of the LP approach to capture and deepen this diversity, and c) the potentiality of this approach to support the IES governance, identifying the diversity of students present in their programs and their transitions as critical points for their management.

The analysis of the diversity of the students has also allowed us to identify the different types of "transitions" (moments of rupture and / or reorientation) to which some and / or others have been subjected: a) Reinsertion for those who had left the education system, b) The disciplinary reorientation for those who came from a different of the master degree program, c) Moving from full-time work to full-time training, d) The difficulty of reconciling training with work for those who continued to work during their master degree, e) The conciliation, even more complex to study while at the same time continue to work with children that require intense dedication and f) Full reinsertion after master's degree.

The performed analysis has allowed us to identify and quantify these 6 transitions that affect differently the different groups that study the same cycle. The effective and efficient transitions that are detected in each case requires a special attention from the HEI addressed to those students who suffer them, in line with Scott *et al.* (2013) for the British case, to avoid exclusion and / or drop out of students.

Consequently, the need for new theoretical methodological approaches that allow us to capture the diversity present in HE students is not an intellectual whim of researchers, but a starting point, or an instrument, for the modern HEI governance. The governance of our HEI, and of the HE system as a whole, requires adequate scientific information tools about the characteristics of its students.

Trying to govern the HE with an information system that is based on the idea of the school cycle as corresponding to a normative "Lifecycle" and common to all its students, seems every day less viable, to the extent that it impairs survival and academic performance of "non-traditional students". The data presented show that a follow-up system that reveals and recognizes the vital diversity of its students and allows to identify and facilitate their transition is required.

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SUBNATIONAL DEBTS AND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MEXICO 2003-2014: REVIEW FROM THE THESES OF THE ECONOMIC-POLITICAL CYCLES (EPCS)¹

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ABSTRACT

In the last 15 years, debts of some subnational entities in Latin America and Mexico have increased their public debts up to slightly manageable levels, due to inherent causes of global economic, political and social transformations, which had a negative impact for the economic and political development. In this context, from the EPC's theses and the ambit of some entities of Mexico, an investigation took place to see the possible effect of the governmental debts in some economic variables not included in these investigations (*the electoral-economic effect*) that use these analysis perspectives. Therefore, the implications of these processes could have divergent balances in the progress of a given nation, in the medium and long term.

KEYWORDS: Public Debts, Economic-Political Cycles (EPC), Economic Development.

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CONTEXTUAL PERSPECTIVES

Establishment and consolidation of democratic processes, as well as the reforms to the public management in Latin America -*which began to be applied in the mid nineteen eighties-*, led subnational entities to acquire or be granted with faculties to manage their incomes and expenditures.

The consequent justification was the encouragement of its autonomous development and those faculties have been qualified by diverse authors as an **opportunistic exploitation**,⁴ since there are correlated political interests of governments, parties or social and private actors, in accordance with some researchers (Jordana, 2001, p. 2; Hutchcroft, 2001, p. 24; Borsani, 2002, pp. 14-18).

To explain these processes and its implications, some studies use the theses of the economic-political cycles (EPC), focusing on the management of three kinds of policies: fiscal, budget and public debt and its incidence both in the national governance and in subnational entities and municipalities (Squire, 2002, pp. 7-11; Gámez, 2004, pp. 3-5; Gámez and Ibarra, 2009, pp. 41-44). However, in Latin America, studies carried out on these public management processes have centered on analyzing and explaining the way in which the handling of the fiscal, budgetary and public debt variables influence or predetermine the permanence of the current political power.

It even favors to a certain public entity regardless its governmental nature: national, state, municipal or any organs of these, centralized or decentralized. This strategy incites to disregard to investigate on the feasible and positive economic aftermaths in some key developmental factors: GDP, GDP per capita and others, because the results can trigger divergent and opposite interpretations with the assumptions underlying these theories, specifically with the theses denominated *political-budgetary cycle (PBC)*.

In this context, the objective of the research is to analyze and explain the tendencies of the external debts of the previously mentioned entities in Mexico

4. This type of strategy is negative when the political actors achieve profits of diverse nature, which in many cases help them to gain the governmental power of a country through elections or to maintain it, indeterminately, according to the legal parameters of each nation.

and to demonstrate the existence of positive impacts on the economic development from some specific variables.

Based on that, the hypothesis of the study can be summarized as follows: Non-optimal levels of indebtedness of the subnational entities in Mexico, weighing up its electoral-political effect (EPC thesis/PBC), also stimulates positive increases in some variables of the macroeconomic progress, inducing a general improvement in a medium and long terms. The sources of such information are the reports from the Mexican Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (*SHCP*) -Treasury Department- and from the Central Bank of Mexico (*BM*) and statistical and econometric methods were used to calculate diverse inferences applicable to debt with the chosen variables.

To demonstrate the investigation assumption, the following four phases were developed:

1. In the first one, the EPC and PBC theses are explained, their main lines of analysis, applications and results in the Latin America and Mexico sphere and their implications in the political and economic development context.
2. In the second phase, it is explained the used methodology, its analytical processes and the presentation and justification of the chosen variables.
3. The third phase has two lines of analysis and the presentation of the results:
 - a) In the first line, there are examined the tendencies of six states debts with debt percentages higher than 3% of its annual GDP. Those are Chiapas (*CHIS*), Chihuahua (*CHI*), Coahuila (*COA*), State of Mexico (*EMEX*), Nuevo Leon (*NL*) and Veracruz (*VER*) in the 2003 to 2014 period, in the context of the selected and correlated variables from the total public debt, State Gross Domestic Product (*SGDP*), GDP per capita, employment and IDH.
 - b) In the second line, an econometric analysis with panel data -longitudinal data- deducing the effects on each of the constants, as well as the development prospective of the studied entities.
4. In the fourth phase, other lines of research are proposed to verify more extensively the particular implications of the problems and finally, listing a series of public policies that increase the positive effects of the indebtedness of subnational entities in Mexico.

THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSES: EPC-PBC

The theses of the *Public Choice School* are the theoretical basis of the *EPC* and aim to investigate and to explain specific aspects of the cause and effect relations, particularly between politics and economy: altering the temporary distribution of some economic variables induced by the rules of performance of agents of the public sector (Alesina, 1987, pp. 653-657; Price, 1997, pp. 409-413).

In this sense, the *EPC* would be caused by the political incentives derived from the periodic election mechanism of the civil representatives, which in a democratic system, is cleared in elections with direct or indirect vote of the citizens, guaranteeing the free game for the power and, with it, the legality of the process. (Alesina; Magician and Roubini, 1993, pp. 3-5).

As Persson and Tabelline (1990, pp. 490-496) verified, the assumption of the *EPC* takes as a premise to guarantee the regularity and fairness of the electoral process. These two variables would oblige political representatives (both elected and in active duty) to contend in *-at least legal-* equal circumstances in periodic elections, essential characteristic of any democratic regime (Dahl, 1998, pp. 13-15).

Functionally, this endorses that the electoral process itself, implies three resulting scenarios for the political leaders and citizens:

- 1) Control the performance of the current government. If it is not the appropriate one, it will not be re-elected again.
- 2) Select the most competent government, and
- 3) Choose the government whose ideological preferences are closest to the majority of voters.

The feasibility of occurrence of these scenarios "*encourages the emergence of incentives for the political leaders and parties, whose target is to win the elections and to be re-elected*"⁵ (Alesina, 1987, pp. 653-657; Price, 1997, pp. 409-413).

5. It is important to mention that in Mexico, by constitutional command, the holders of the President and Governors cannot be re-elected, but the political party or coalition in shift can repeat.

In order to analyze and to explain the effects of the incentives in the political processes there have been developed different EPC models, which allow diverse schematizations. The models are condensed in three types:

- 1) Irrational models: Opportunistic and partisan cycles.
- 2) Rational models: Opportunistic and partisan cycles.
- 3) Strategic model: Strategic debt cycles.

Generally, the opportunistic and partisan models are distinguished by two perceptions: In the first one, the political representatives tend to maximize their popularity or their probabilities of re-election by increasing public spending. In the second, political parties (*left wing-centrism - right wing*) represent the interests of different segments of the electorate.

Therefore when they are in power they arrange favorable policies to these political currents" (Alesina, 1987, pp. 653-657). In this context, every model has a specific development so its implementation causes differentiated effects. Irrational models were hegemonic in the 60's and 70's years of the last century (Gámez and Ibarra, 2009, pp. 41-44). The basis of the irrational models supposed that the voter (*citizen*) was unable to perceive the manipulation of the public expenditure because he does not have access to asymmetric information about the dynamics of public decisions.

In the opportunistic cycle, governments interested in maximizing the number of votes should adjust macroeconomic policy to improve the probability of being re-elected (Nordhaus, 1975, pp. 592-596). Therefore, this would induce to a high growth of the economy and a low unemployment by increasing inflation in the elections period and a post-electoral recession, and all this without bearing in mind the political orientation of the government on top.

And so on, the irrational partisan cycle, expresses an interpretation that combines the application of economic strategies (Hibbs, 1977, p. 1469). Under this perspective, the diverse political parties will tend to choose different combinations between inflation and unemployment, to prop their government project up. The left-wing parties prefer to control the unemployment at the expense of higher inflation as opposed to right-wing parties.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out, that the validity of these models came into a crisis in the 1980's decade, due to the postulation of theories of rational expectations (Cukierman and Meltzer, 1986, p. 199; Rogoff and Sibert, 1997, p. 409). These theses compel to restate the theoretical foundation of the cycles, because if the voters are rational it is assumed that they cannot make the same mistakes, since the systematical mani-

pulation of the budgets should become understood by the voters and annulled in a context of rational expectations.

It is necessary to indicate that in rational models, opportunistic and partisans, a greater manipulation is inferred: the existence of asymmetries of information between government, political parties and voters, the rational ignorance amongst voters and uncertainty about the results of the elections (Cukierman and Meltzer, 1986, p. 199; Rogoff and Sibert, 1997, p. 409; Alesina, 1987, pp. 953-957).

Being aware of the opportunistic model, it remains demonstrated that the concept of asymmetric information is not accurate, since regularly; the governments know the information before the voters. Therefore, the expectation centers on the perception of the electorate for the government's ability to compete and on its policy outcomes. When a government is perceived to be more competent, it is because it uses less income to provide high quality services to its citizens. The greater these appreciations increase the possibility of re-election or holding the political power by the party or coalition.

On the other hand, the partisan view of the *-rational-* model grounds the existence of two or more political parties that assign different estimations to the economic variables depending on the foreseen political effect (Alesina, 1987, pp. 409-413). As the electoral results are not predictable, every election can instigate political feuds that affect the real and transitory variables, where the voters' expectations can fit in a rational way. From the perspective of the winning party, the model infers effects in the following period afterwards elections; growth will be above its natural rate in a leftist government and below its rate in the case of a rightist government.

Nonetheless, for the later period, the growth will be in its natural expectable rate for both types of government. This way, the effects on the real variables are short-term in the case of a rational partisan theory, but inflation differs permanently, being higher in case of leftist governments.

According to Blais and Nadeau (1992, p. 391) it is deduced a substantial difference between the first generation models and the most current ones. At the time of contrasting the existence of the electoral cycle, the first models centered on the results of the political action, analyzing variables as the *aggregate output* and unemployment (*EPC*). The second ones are praised, for the most part, by the instruments such as expenditure or the level of government taxation and not by the results of the political action.

This is known as a *Political Budgetary Cycle (PBC)*. Apparently, it is easier to alter the expenses or the fiscal policy than the macroeconomic outcome such as the Gross National Product (*GNP*), inflation or unemployment. According to Escudero (2002), this process is demons-

trated in the national sphere; which has been studied extensively, however it is feasible to find in the subnational or municipal areas probative evidences of these theories, for which it turns out to be important to perform relevant investigations in these government segments.

It is in strategic models, specifically in the *Debt Economic Cycles (DEC)*, where this factor is the preponderant one. In these models, it is presupposed that the current governments try to create constraints for the future governments by using constant indebtedness producing a direct relation between the polarization of the preferences of the parties over the composition of public expenditure and the increase of the volume of indebtedness.

The result would be a difficult or even an improbable re-election of the current government (Escudero, 2002, pp. 7-11). The main difficulty in empirically verifying the assumptions lies in the fact that specific data are required on the expectations of governments to be defeated in the forthcoming elections; the internal studies on this matter are traditionally kept out of the public domain.

Aghion and Bolton (1990, pp. 53-56) raise a series of arguments that would help to understand the indicated uncertainty. In addition to a feasible influence on the policies of future governments, the public debt can be used as a political instrument tending to assure the re-election of the current government, depending on the existence risk of bankruptcy.

With this strategy, the government plays with the prospects of the creditors, promising the return of the capital and if this offering is not believable; when the opposition does it, then the regime in power has an incentive to accumulate excessive public debt. Therefore, it increases the number of guarantors *-these also are voters-*, who would be affected by a bankruptcy and consequently, they will vote for the ruling government and would pressure their subordinates to follow the same pattern.

Following Escudero's perspective (2002, pp. 7-11) public expenditure financed by public debt will concentrate the benefits of the spending on the current generation (groups of interest that can influence in the results of the next elections), while the tax burdens will be transferred to the future generations (who are not currently represented). Because of this circumstance, the incentives of politicians to use indebtedness rather than taxes to finance expenses varies inversely with the remaining time left until next elections.

The same author suggests, empirically, that there is evidence of increase in debt issuance levels in the electoral year and in the one before; also a reduction in the two years following the elections. These same variations are greater in those states where the political competition between parties is more intense and would indicate the use of these strategies to

keep themselves in power assessing the responsibility to inheritance if they do not continue ruling.

As it has been noted, the *EPC* theses, in their *rational* and *irrational* specific aspects, focus on investigating on the opportunistic or partisan use of resources for electoral purposes. In this context, the *EPC* and *PBC* models of analysis have direct approaches to study the way in which governments or political parties can in certain cases, manipulate the use of the budget, with the alleged intention of continuing in power.

Still today, in Mexico and other Latin American countries, these strategies apparently are carried out focusing on the irrationality of the electorate and minimally on its own rationality. As mentioned before, studies have concentrated on the national aspects and minimally on the subnational or local entities, mostly from the *EPC* models and its political effects (Borsani, 2002, pp. 12-14; Escudero, 2002, pp. 7-11; López and Rodríguez, 2008, pp. 139-137).

The investigations around the *PBC* theories, at least in Latin America and Mexico, have focused a little bit more on the subnational and local entities (Sandoval, Gutiérrez and Guzmán, 2000, pp. 10-13; Borsani, 2002, pp. 12-14; Gámez, 2004, pp. 3-5; Gámez and Ibarra, 2009, pp. 41-44, Ramírez and Erquizio, 2012, pp. 7-10). The studies have proven in all the cases the political opportunistic use of the expense with an electoral end, which in certain cases (not all of them) benefits the government in turn into achieving its permanence through the political party or coalition that nominated it in the first place.

In the case of Mexico, it is necessary to point out that there is no re-election of subnational leaders and the Mexican Constitution was reformed to allow, since 2018, reelection in the municipalities for one more period. The opportunistic use comes first, from the government in power and tends to coordinate with the strategies from the same party or coalition (*partisan opportunism*) that led it to rule, which informally and illegally end up syncretizing in its determination to perpetuate itself in public offices; from a basis in which prevails the irrationality aforementioned.⁶

According with this argument and based on the assumptions of the *DEC* and *PBC*, there is a hypothetical

6. With the target to avoid the political use of public debt of states and municipalities in Mexico, as well as to guide its efficient and effective use in the government activities and to make it contribute to the economic development, in the year 2016, the Congress of the Union unanimously promulgated the Law of Financial Discipline of the Federative Entities and the Municipalities (LDFEFM, March). This law was endorsed by the national government (Presidency of Enrique Peña Nieto, 2012-2018) and published in the Official Journal of the Federation on por in April 27, 2016.

justification framed on this study in its approach of the effects of the debt on some variables that affect development. Thus, the investigation extends the analytical reach of the assumptions, calculating the political influence of the public debt when trying to explain other collateral processes of the public indebtedness.

Such collateral processes are, for example, the economic and social effects provoked by these strategies in variables not calculated by the classic postulates of the theses, same ones that, in certain cases, encourage tendencies to increase of development in the medium or long term and thereby consolidate or improve the progress of a given entity. Having these arguments, in the next part there is explained the methodological process used and its reach.

7. Selecting the federative entities (*states*), besides complying with the GDP percentage, was also justified because the chosen six states are those ones that during the period of the study have registered the biggest tendencies to indebtedness. Another reason is that the *non-transparent, preferential and factional* management stirred strong conflicts with every political actor, since it was adduced that the strategy turned into an electoral instrument and would have negative effects in the economic development in a short and medium term. In this argumentation, the results of the entities can be the base to analyze and to explain the perspectives and prospective of the remaining states, using this model, or any other tool that could broaden the explanations on the economic consequences of the public debts.

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In the context of the objective and the hypothesis of the study there were selected six subnational entities that registered, the last years of the analyzed period, a level of indebtedness equivalent to 3% of its annual GDP of the debt. The entities that gathered these parameters were: Chiapas (*CHIS*), Chihuahua (*CHI*), Coahuila (*COA*), State of Mexico (*EMEX*), Nuevo Leon (*NL*) and Veracruz (*VER*)⁷ and there were used the variables of Total Public Debt, Public Debt Per Capita, GDP, GDP Per Capita, Debt and Employments and their interrelation with the Human Development Index (*HDI*) of the United Nations Development Program (*UNDP*).

The selection of the variables, took as a fundamental groundwork the inference established by López-Calva and Vélez-Grajales (2003, pp. 4-11). The researchers warned that to measure development, the *HDI* is normally used, since political media and academics recognize this index. There is a broad consensus for which the economic growth is a necessary condition to explain the grade of advance of a country, but it does not constitute a sufficient condition by itself, and the actual economic growth, where the most used indicator is the GDP per capita.

Then growth and development are related concepts, so they were used both indices including the employment as dependent variables in the causal analysis. The independent variables to be used are the debt per capita that is the main variable of interest. The source was the Treasury Department of the federal government of Mexico (*SHCP*), using information from every year of the study.

To avoid sidelines, the values of the Mexican peso fitted those in 2008 to have the same purchasing power and to allow eliminating the effect of the inflation. Moreover, they are presented in values per capita, using the population data reported by the National Council of Population (CONAPO) of Mexico.

In account of the type of information, it managed a *panel data* type so its handling adjusted to these methodologies. Generally, panel data is formed by economic agents or agents of interest when studying the entities over a certain period of time, in this case, 12 years -from 2003 to 2014- and combining both types of data: temporary and structural dimensions.

The main reason to apply and to study panel data was to capture the non-observable heterogeneity, between economic agents or study agents as well as in the timeline, since it is not possible to detect that kind of heterogeneity neither with temporary series studies nor with those of cross-sectional studies. The annual data was represented by a period of twelve years (**T**) and of six entities (**N**).

The introduction of this temporary data dimension increased the significance of the study, particularly in periods of big changes. Likewise, two aspects of extreme importance managed to be examined: i) the specific individual effects and ii) the temporary effects (Brooks, 2008, pp. 88-119). As for the specific individual effects, they affected unequally each of the agents of study contained in the sample, which are invariable through time and affect directly in the decision-making process taken, identifying this type of effects with several issues like business capacity, operational efficiency, capitalization of the experience, access to the technology, etc.

In this context, and to avoid correcting errors in the units of analysis, the fixed effects model was used (Brooks, 2008, pp. 226-257) which works when each unit has different error terms and the effect of all the variables is gathered in the error itself by its cross-sectional effect, but not by the effect of the time. For this, were used the dummy variables with which the units were identified, obtaining a value of the intercept for each unit, to understand the allocation of the units and their impact.

In the same order, the random effects model was also applied in some cases, known as the component error model (Brooks, 2008, pp. 226-257). Like in the fixed effects model, which proposes different terms of the

intercept, the random effects model propose a different intercept one for each entity and assume that they are constant in time.

All the information have been converted to per capita indicators and, to improve understanding, the change was done in those using variables like LOG (*logarithms*) that allowed to relate the data changes (*growths*) and to interpret the coefficients like percentage of change. For its application, there begins a regression, grouped with all the information. Then, the regressions are performed with fixed or random effects in the entities and in the periods. Finally, we verify if these regressions are better with effects by using the *fixed-effects* test and then we confirm which of the effects better reflects the behavior of the data. All the analyses are arranged in E-VIEWS.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND CONTRADICTIONS

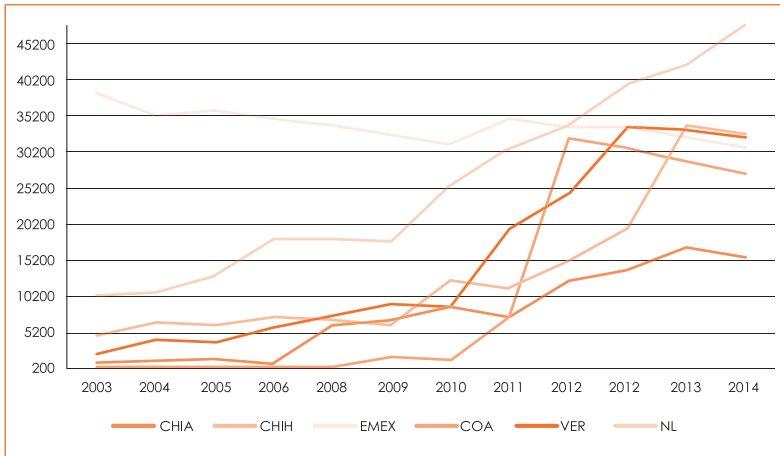
In the context of the research objective and hypothesis, tabulations were carried out sequentially, from the total public debt of the sub-national entities to the correlations and regressions of the rest of the variables. The first was subordinated to the tendencies in total public debt.

EVOLUTION OF THE DEBT AND ITS IMPACT IN THE DEVELOPMENT

As it turned out, according to the data presented in Figure 1, the selected entities increased their public debts, between 2008 and 2009. Of those who increased their debts, stand out Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua and Veracruz, in parameters that range between 30 to more than 50 billion pesos. Others, Chiapas, in less quantity and an atypical one, the State of Mexico, which tended to reduce its loans, although maintaining high levels of indebtedness.

These propensities would indicate that the federal government probably distended the financial pretensions of the governors and preferred to focus on the fight against the drug trafficking than monitoring the efficiency of the expense. Likewise, prospects for 2012, in the presidential elections, were likely to influence the flexibility of the rules so; in the end, their forecast of sustaining power was maintained. This strategy did not achieve the objective because the Institutional Revolutionary Party (*PRI*) returned to the presidency in that year and apparently continued with the non-monitoring of the states' debt:

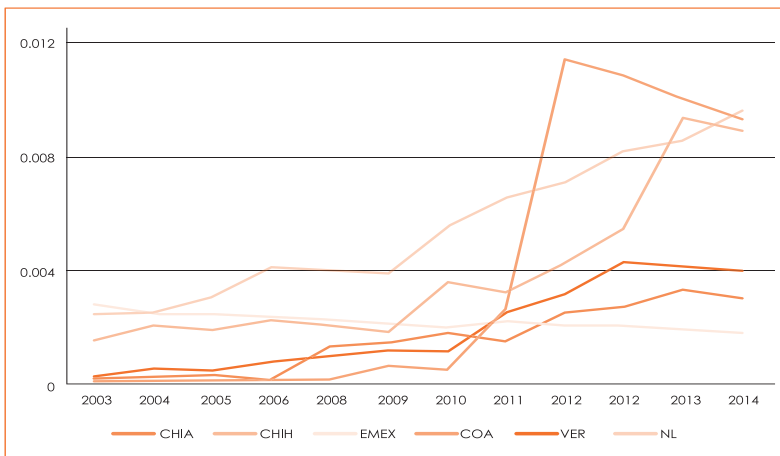
FIGURE 1
EVOLUTION OF THE SUBNATIONAL PUBLIC DEBT
(MILLION OF PESOS - 2008 VALUES)



Source: SHCP-Department of Treasury. Indicators of the Mexican states in 2015.

Meanwhile, the analysis of the per capita debt tendencies showed that, in relative terms, increases in state debt led to a rise in these parameters, mainly from 2011. Coahuila is the entity with the highest per capita debt growth in 2011 with 0.0114 million per capita (\$11,400 per person), followed by Nuevo Leon with \$0.0096, Chihuahua with \$0.008945 and Veracruz, while the rest remained between 2 and 4 thousands pesos:

FIGURE 2
TENDENCIES OF PER CAPITA DEBT
(THOUSANDS OF PESOS – 2008 VALUES)



Source: SHCP-Department of Treasury. Indicators of the Mexican states in 2015.

The examination of the SGDP⁸ of subnational entities demonstrated that despite the high levels of debt this parameter continued to strengthen. Firstly, in Table 1 (*weighted calculations*), the data indicated an increase except for the impact of the 2008 crisis of some entities, such as Nuevo Leon and Chihuahua, and minor registrations in Chiapas and Veracruz.

In second place, in absolute terms, positions were modified. Among those states that had an increment, like Nuevo Leon and the State of Mexico, the lowest was Chihuahua (Figure 3).

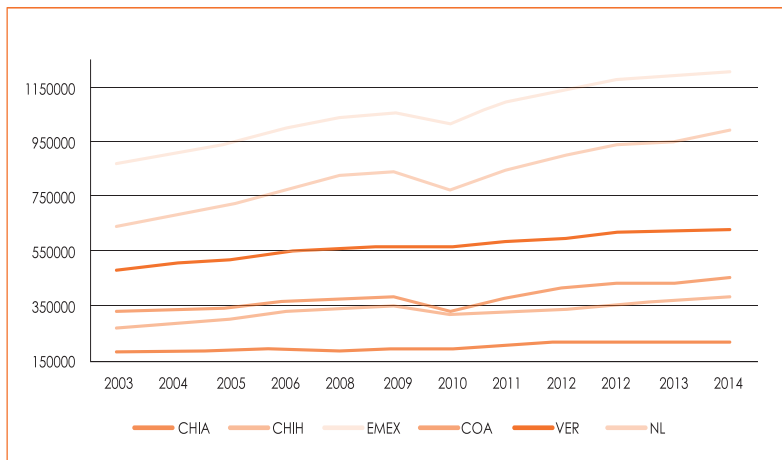
8. It does not consider the impact of mining and oil to eliminate bias, where revenues are actually administered by the Federation with a slight interference of the states.

TABLE 1
WEIGHTED GROWTH STATE GDP 2014-2003

CHIA	CHIH	COA	EMEX	NL	VER
1.780%	2.823%	2.758%	2.729%	3.800%	2.240%

Source: SHCP-Department of Treasury. Indicators of the Mexican states in 2015.

FIGURE 3
STATE GDP EVOLUTION 2003-2014
(BILLION OF PESOS - 2008 VALUES)



Source: SHCP-Department of Treasury. Indicators of the Mexican states in 2015.

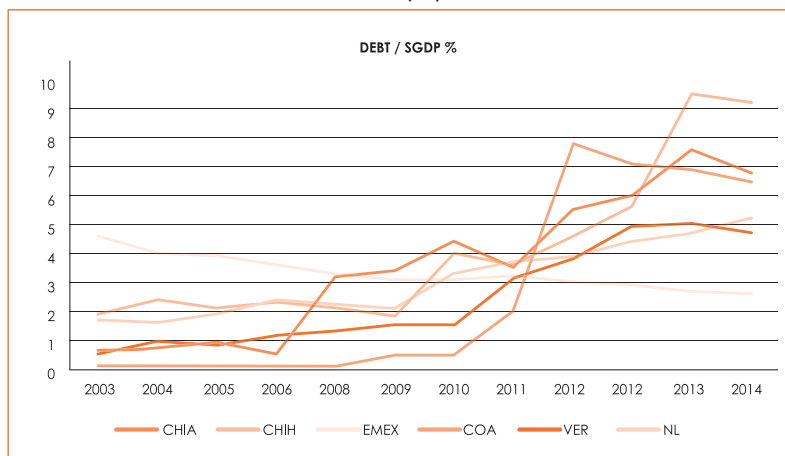
Finally, in the context of the correlation between public debt and state GDP, the parameter used to select the cases of study, most exceeded the 3% limit. It should be noted that the increases were verified mainly since 2008 and the states with the highest indices were Chihuahua, Coahuila, Chiapas, Nuevo Leon and Veracruz showing between 9% and 4.5% and 9. An atypical case is the State of Mexico that lowered its percentage to slightly more than 2% (Figure 4).

As it has been shown, since the review of the state public debt, GDP per capita, GDP and its correlation, the results indicated divergent effects in each of the entities, both positive and negative in the medium and long term for the economic development.

In this sense, and even with the high growth rates of the debt and its per capita range, both weighted and absolute tabulations of state GDP indicate probable atypical effects, which favored states such as Nuevo Leon, State of Mexico and Chihuahua, and in much less range to Coahuila and Veracruz and negatively to Chiapas.

These effects were the key to broadening the state debts analyses and to relate them with the perspectives that should have shown imbalances during these years. Therefore, in the following part, econometric analyses were used to keep on verifying the view of the study:

FIGURE 4
INDEX OF PUBLIC DEBT AND STATE GDP (%)



Source: SHCP-Department of Treasury. Indicators of the Mexican states in 2015.

ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this section, the econometric analyses were applied in three aspects: effect and implications on state GDP, job creation and the HDI. In the first, to determine the correlation between the subnational debts and the state GDP per capita, multiple regressions were made and the results showed auto correspondence; it should be noted that the independent variable was used with a lag, where GDP was affected by what happened in the previous period (Table 2).

The value of the 'R-Squared', as an adjustment measure between the model and the data, is high, with a value of 99.4. The significant variable at 1% is the lag of the state GDP per capita. The significant variables at 5% are the per capita debt and the expenditures on public invest-

ment per capita. The variables of the federal contributions and shares are not significant as are the expenses for the payment of the debt, represented null value for the relation.

As for its effect and sign, the debt has a positive impact on GDP growth with a value of 0.6122. This would indicate that, due to an increase of 1 million per capita debt, the state GDP per capita increased by 0.6122 million, therefore the increase in debt had a positive rise in this parameter. The variable of disbursement on investment impact 1.293 times the state GDP per capita, for each increase of one million of public investment; indicating that public investment in SGDP is more relevant, confirming the regulation of using debt only for public investment (as mentioned in the Financial Discipline Law enacted in 2016 and explained in a section earlier).

The lag of GDP for a period is significant and reflects the self-correlation to a period with a high impact of 1.000. The variable of disbursements for the payment of debt with a value of 0.043 positive, which does not correspond to expectations, possibly due to errors in the registration of these items, since some of the entities neither report payment in some years nor financial expenses, however it is not significant. It is possible to indicate that the debt has a positive impact to GDP growth, having to watch that it is properly used for the public investment.

Overall for the growth of the GDP is more relevant the increase of the public investment, confirming the proposal to only use public debt for the public investment. On the other hand, it is not possible to conclude that the shares and federal contributions have relation to the state GDP, in the same aspect the expenditures were to the debt. Nevertheless, the calculation is not possible, since there were errors in the public account report and impact on the quality of accounting information.

TABLE 2
REGRESSIONS WITH RANDOM EFFECTS IN THE PERIODS SGDP

Variable	Coefficient	Error std	T-estad	P-value
C	0.003155	0.004051	0.778741	0.4392
PIBE_SPETR_PC(-1)	1.000227	0.012837	77.92002	0.0000
DEUDA_MILL/POB(-1)	0.612172	0.254224	2.408005	0.0191
EGDEUMILL/POB	0.042328	0.812246	0.052112	0.9586
PARTAPORFEDMILL/POB	-0.578126	0.463753	-1.246625	0.2174
EGINVMILL/POB(-1)	1.293112	0.576542	2.242873	0.0286
R- Squared	0.994851	Dependent mean		0.035913
R- Squared Adjusted	0.994422	Standard deviation		0.047305
Sum of errors	0.003533	Durbin-Watson		2.149081
F- Statistic	2318.508	Prob F statistic		0.0000

Source: SHCP-Department of Treasury. Indicators of the Mexican states in 2015.

Regarding the second slope, the correlations of the state debt and the change in the employment rate were calculated (Table 3). In this sense, and to confirm if the public debt has an impact on the creation of jobs, the regression was performed after the process and, in the tests, it is obtained that the best model is the one of random effects over time.

The values the tests threw were the '*R-Squared*', as a measure of fit between the model and the data, of 25.3. Only the variable of the lag of occupational change data is significant at 10%, with a negative coefficient of 0.00004. All other variables are not significant. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that there is no relation of the debt to the generation of employment, as other variables.

TABLE 3
REGRESSION WITH RANDOM EFFECTS IN THE TIME OF EMPLOYMENT

Variable	Coefficient	Error std	T-estad	P-value
C	-4.62E-05	3.47E-02	-0.001333	0.9989
CAMB_OCUP(-1)	2.06E-01	1.27E-01	1.628786	0.1096
DEUDA_MILL/POB(-1)	3.10E-01	1.85E+00	0.168029	0.8672
INGPROMILL/POB	6.07E+00	8.44E+00	0.719033	0.4755
PARTAPORFEDMILL/POB(-1)	8.72E-01	3.98E+00	0.218998	0.8275
EGINVPMILL/POB(-1)	3.654058	4.655674	0.784861	0.4362
R- Squared	0.424985	Dependent mean		0.022779
R- Squared adjusted	0.252481	Standard deviation		0.033671
Sum of errors	0.029112	Durbin-Watson		1.67064
F- Statistic	2.463619	Prob F - Statistic		0.00876

Source: SHCP-Department of Treasury. Indicators of the Mexican states in 2015.

Finally, in the third aspect, the effect of the public debts of the selected entities in the HDI (Table 4) was tabulated. Among the measurements of development, one of the most used is the HDI, which includes health, education and economic opportunities.

The regression used is that of fixed effects on the entities, the values that it throws with the '*R-Squared*' as a measure of fit between the model and the data is of 99.1. The significant variables at 1% are the debt to SGDP per capita, the investment variable in public investment per capita and the dependent variable with a lag. The significant variable at 5% is the intercept. The variable of '*self-income*' is not significant.

As for its influence and sign, the debt has a positive impact to the growth of the HDI. In other words, that a 1% rise in the debt to SGDP will increase the HDI by 0.41336. Public investment variable is positive with a value of 3.498 so each increment of one million per capita investment

will influence the HDI in 3.49 points and, in the lag variable, the HDI is positive in 0.6480 showing that all what was achieved in previous periods is the basis for the future.

It is suitable to mention that the index has a decrease in the life expectancy due to the violence of the last years. This confirmed that the HDI is mainly influenced by the public investment, followed by the achieved in previous years and finally by the boost in debt to GDP, as well as it was shown in the regression of the state GDP that public investment is relevant, followed by the public debt:

TABLE 4
REGRESSION WITH FIXED EFFECTS ON ENTITIES IN HDR

Variable	Coefficient	Error std	T-estad	P-value
C	0.210071	0.084033	2.499846	0.0177
IDH(-1)	0.647996	0.123455	5.248844	0.0000
DEU_PI_PC	0.41336	0.140527	2.941509	0.006
INGPROMILL/POB	1.165177	3.701756	0.314763	0.755
EGINVPMILL/POB	3.498007	0.842025	4.154278	0.0002
R- Squared	0.993335	Dependent mean		0.718366
R- Squared adjusted	0.99146	Standard deviation		0.043932
Sum of errors	0.00406	Durbin-Watson		1.497206
F- Statistic	529.881	Prob F-Statistic		0.0000

Source: SHCP-Department of Treasury. Indicators of the Mexican states in 2015.

CONCLUSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

In the context of the objectives and hypotheses of the investigation and in contradiction of the PCE and PBC, the results can be interpreted integrally from three correlated aspects:

1. It was stated and found that the theoretical empirical assumptions of *EPC* and *PBC* (especially the *DEC*) are irrational, rational and strategic models, as well as the opportunistic and partisan order, have analyzed and broadly explained the political economic strategies used by different governments to stay in power and partly the effects on development. However as it is also explained, specifically in regard of public debts for the subnational case of Mexico. The investigations have not extended the implications of debt management on other variables, such as those handled in this study, which the explanatory lines are relevant to address, and with it, to contribute to the better understanding of the problems in any field.

2. In the context of the objectives, the exposition of the tendencies of the public debts of the chosen entities indicate a clear opportunistic maneuver that began between 2008 and 2009 on the part of these national entities and that has caused the uncontrolled increase of this factor and thus, negative prospective. On the other hand, when verifying the possible implications in the state GDP, there are indications -in weighted and absolute terms- of positive consequences revealed, since the increase of this economic variable seems to have a certain correlation with the increase of the debts. Empirically, the data indicate this and the econometric analyses support the affirmation.
3. In this argument and to respond to the raised hypothesis and to complement the objective, the econometric calculations showed some inferences that modify positively and affect less the tendencies of the variables. As for SGDP, the connection is direct, since increases in debt represent increases in this specific economic factor. Coincidentally, the HDI of each entity registers considerable highs in its annual indices, in the case that the loans are used for investment rather than current expenditure (Dahl, 2004). In the field of employment, the results reveal, up to the scope of the analysis, non-significance; therefore, the loans do not influence the occupational dynamics.

In perspective, it is possible to affirm that the research has partially demonstrated the raised assumption, since the used variables allowed to identify stray parameters in this type of issues and left a wide range of options to keep on investigating all the sides of this problematic. In this sense, the lines of investigation that must be explored in the short-term are, without being exhaustive, the following ones:

1. To investigate, from the theses of the opportunistic exploitation, the causes that encouraged the indebtedness of the subnational entities in Mexico.
2. To analyze in a disaggregated form the impact of the indebtedness on social policy and its effect in the areas of education and health: national and subnational.
3. To explain how the public debts encourage the increase of corruption and locate the sectors with higher rates.
4. To examine the effect of the public debt -*national and subnational*- on expenditure on public dissemination and publicity, as well as its impact on political preferences.
5. To study, with more variables and from a comparative perspective -*formal and informal economy*-, the effect of debt on the promotion of the employment.

6. To carry out an exploratory and explanatory analysis of the national legislations that have tried to control the process of subnational indebtedness and to project scenarios of success or failure of the LDFEFM recently promulgated by the Federal Congress of Mexico on April 27, 2016.

Finally, it is possible that the inadequate management of the public debt affected the electoral processes of some of the studied entities; for be investigating more integrally. In 2015, in Nuevo Leon an atypical alternation took place, since an independent candidate managed to reach the governorship: the debt issue was one of his political speeches. In 2016, both Veracruz and Chihuahua, also had alternations; their high indebtedness were used extensively to insult the current governments in power and the candidates of the regime parties.

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ACTORS AND SOCIAL POLICY INNOVATION AT STATE-LEVEL: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CASE OF MEXICO

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ABSTRACT

The role of sub-national governments as social policy innovators has been scarcely studied, especially in Latin America. In Mexico, state governments have been more active in designing and implementing their own social policy initiatives over the last decade. The aim of this work is to develop an analytical framework focused on the role of policy actors in the process of policy innovation at state level, especially in the countries where state-level policy innovation is incipient, such as in Mexico. This analytical framework emphasizes the importance of paying attention to the characteristics of key actors, in a context of particular political and institutional factors, in order to understand the complex processes involved in social policy innovation at state-level.

KEYWORDS: Policy Change, Policy Entrepreneurship, Subnational Policy, Policy Ideas.

INTRODUCTION

In developed countries state-level policy innovation has been a major topic of research by political scientists for several decades, particularly in the United States (Berry & Berry, 1990; 1999; 2014; Galle & Leathy, 2009; Volden, Ting, Carpenter, 2008). In fact, the opportunity for greater policy innovation has been presented as one of the greatest advantages of federalism -or decentralization- in the literature. The metaphor “laboratories of democracy”, popularized in the US federal system, captures this point and implies that states constitute an ideal

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environment to create and experiment new policies (Greve, 2001). Hence, the premise that decentralization leads to the emergence of many competing “laboratories of democracy”, in which policy innovation is a natural tendency (Galle & Leathy, 2009), is well known in this literature.

Unlike other developed countries, in Mexico -a federal Union with three tiers of government (federal, state and municipal), inspired by the US federal system- policy innovation is an unexplored topic. Among the reasons for this is the federal government’s *de facto* control over all policy areas, including social policy. However, since the end of the 1980’s the Mexican federal system has undergone different administrative, fiscal and political decentralization processes. Consequently, the indisputable hegemony of the federal government in policy making is no longer in place.

There is some evidence that state policy innovation is taking place in Mexico (Hudson & Medrano, 2013; Medrano & Smith, 2014). In the last decade, several states have introduced different social policy programs, such as the non contributory pension for the elderly, employment insurance, cash transfers for lone mothers and school children, among other (Canto, 2010; Hudson & Medrano, 2013). These initiatives suggest that important policy changes are in motion at subnational level. In fact, Mexico City is the most remarkable case of social policy innovation, as will be discussed in the following sections. Despite these initiatives, state policy innovation has hardly been studied in Mexico. The characteristics, extent, and causes of this phenomenon certainly deserve a thorough analysis from different perspectives and lines of research.

This work proposes an analytical framework to better understand the interplay of different key factors behind the decision of state governments to innovate in the realm of social policy. In particular, this framework explores the relationship between key characteristic of policy actors and social policy innovation in the context of relevant economic, political and institutional variables at subnational level.

Additionally, this model is focused on countries where participation in state policy-making is incipient, such as in Mexico. To do so, the proposed analytical framework incorporates actor-centered approaches to explain endogenous policy change (Haseenteufel *et al.*, 2010; Genieys & Smyrl, 2008), and relevant institutional and political variables identify by the traditional policy innovation literature.

The rest of this paper is organized in the following way. In the second part, the main premise of the paper and definition of social policy innovation in federal systems are briefly discussed. In the third section,

some evidence of the increasing involvement of subnational governments in social policymaking in Mexico is presented. The fourth section describes the analytical framework to analyze state policy making in the context of incipient policy-making at state level. Finally, some conclusive remarks are included.

SOCIAL POLICY INNOVATION AT THE STATE LEVEL IN FEDERAL SYSTEMS

Overall, state policy innovation refers to the adoption of a policy or piece of legislation that is new to a state (Mintrom, 1997; Berry & Berry, 1990, 1999). Policy innovation is different from creating new policies -inventing something new to the world- because the former means that a policy just has to be new to a given state.² Policy innovation also differs from policy ideas in that they have to be made operational, or implemented by a state government. This general definition departs from the well-known Walker's definition of policy innovation, which refers to "a program or policy which is new to the states adopting it, no matter how old the program may be or how many other states may have adopted it" (Walker, 1969, p. 881).

This study focuses on a specific field of governmental action-social policy. Generally, social policy refers to a wide array of social programs or actions of governments to provide money and services to its citizens in areas, such as "social security, social assistance, health services, education services, housing provision and subsidies, and social personal services" (Baldock, Manning, Vickerstaff, 2007, p. 8).

Social policies or programs usually involve either transfers of income or provide services to individuals to fulfill basic social rights (e.g. education, health care or social assistance). For the purposes of this study, state-level social policy innovation refers to the adoption of a particular social policy or social program that

2. State policy innovation can also be defined as the creation of novel policy approaches or programs to address local issues (Newton, 2012). This definition tries to capture "policy creativity and leadership among state's governors", as innovative policy or legislation may "diverge from federal policy because states face unique problems requiring customized solutions or, because as states, they are uniquely suited in their jurisdictional authority to offer some specific types of solutions" (Newton, 2012, pp. 115-116).

is considered to be new in a given state. Additionally, this study focuses on federal systems, particularly in the context of incipient participation of states in social policy-making, such as Mexico.

As previously mentioned, policy innovation has received a great deal of attention in developed countries, particularly in the United States (Galle & Leathy, 2009; Volden, Ting, Carpenter, 2008; Miller, 2004; Rom, 2014). This is not surprising since the US federal system is one of the most decentralized federal design models in the world (Stepan, 2005).

In fact, policy differentiation is assumed to be part of decentralized government. While central governments are presumed to provide a uniform level of public goods and regulations for all states, decentralized decision-making is better able to tailor policies to local tastes. This is the logic of Oates' (1972) famous decentralization theorem, which states that, in the absence of spillovers, decentralization is welfare superior to centralized decision making.

Unsurprisingly, a decentralized government offers the opportunity for greater policy innovation and therefore has been a basic argument in favor of federalism. The metaphor of "laboratories of democracy", popularized in the US federal system, captures this point, and refers to how state and local governments create and implement laws and policies. If any one or more of state policies are successful, they can be expanded to the national level (Greve, 2001).

This metaphor involves two main assumptions. The first assumption is that there exists a system of state autonomy, within the federal framework, which assigns ample policymaking power to the state governments. The second assumption is that the autonomous states actually enact different policies -which the federal government can eventually implement at national level-.

Policy innovation however is not a natural trend in decentralized systems (Galle & Leathy, 2009).³ Innovation is not an easy option. The risks associated with innovation, as the outcomes of innovative policies are uncertain, figures among the factors that may deter state policy innovation. State governments find

3. See Galle and Leathy (2009) for a summary of the restrictions of policy innovation in federal systems, from a public choice perspective.

it difficult to assess the success of a new policy, and when results might appear, or what unintended consequences may result (Cels, de Jong, & Nauta, 2012). Therefore, embracing innovation is not necessarily rational or the most desirable course of action. Nevertheless, policy innovation is often implicitly assumed to be an inevitable consequence of the increasing subnational autonomy in the face of decentralization (see Greer, 2006).

The “promise of doing things different” usually figures among the expectations of any decentralization process (Greer, 2006, p. 157). In other words, it is assumed that decentralization allows for states’ initiative to design their own policy to respond to the particular issues and demands in their territories -which are otherwise constricted by centralization-. Moreover, the introduction of enhanced actors (subnational governments with more power and faculties) to the already complex and contingent policymaking process make it more likely that similar governments and societies will opt for different policies (Greer, 2006, p. 161).

In sum, beyond the real and potential restrictions, the general assumption is that federal systems -or decentralized government- provide a better environment for subnational policy innovation than centralized systems. In the context of different processes of decentralization across the Western world, the study of the real and potential state policy innovation deserves meticulous attention.

This is particularly true in the case of developing countries, such as Mexico, where different processes of decentralization have advanced over the last three decades. Nevertheless, state policy innovation has received little attention. In line with this argument, this work discusses an analytical framework to better understand social policy innovation in the context of developing countries, such as Mexico. To do so, the main factors related to state policy innovation are briefly discussed in the following section.

DETERMINANTS OF STATE POLICY INNOVATION

One of the central research questions about state innovation is precisely, what causes a state government to adopt a new policy or program? In the context of developed countries, particularly in the USA, the factors that are behind the decision of state governments to adopt or not a given policy are commonly studied as part of either a process of policy innovation or diffusion.⁴ These labels are often used interchangeably as both processes involve the decision of adopting a given policy (Berry & Berry, 1990; 1999; 2007; 2014; Miller, 2004; Boehmke & Skinner, 2012; Whitaker *et al.*, 2012).

Overall, the determinants of state policy innovation are divided into internal and external factors (Berry & Berry, 1990; 1999; 2007; 2014; Miller, 2004; Boehmke, & Skinner, 2012; Whitaker *et al.*, 2012). Internal factors of policy innovation refers to economic, political, and social conditions within states that influences the decisions of state officials to adopt a new policy, such as electoral competition (Boushey, 2014) or a change in partisan control of state government; state officials' ideology or citizen ideology (Ma, 2015; Grossback, Nicholson-Crotty and Peterson 2004; Volden 2006; Berry & Berry, 1990; Walker, 1969), wealth and size of the state (Boehmke & Skinner, 2012), or institutional makeup (Boehmke, 2005). In short, the internal factors essentially refer to political, economic, and societal or social conditions internal to the state (see table 1).

External factors essentially refer to the idea that governments learn from each other's policy experimentations. It is important to bear in mind that a great deal of policy innovation (and diffusion) literature focused on the American federal system, where states have shown innovativeness for several decades. For this reason, the external determinants of state policy innovation refer to pressures or influences from other states, mainly due to vicinity or proximity from each other. Hence, these external factors are usually applied in policy diffusion studies and focus on the intergovernmental influence of one or more states on the actions of another state.

4. The analysis of the decision of 'states' government to adopt a given policy option is related to either policy innovation or policy diffusion. However, this latter notion is focused on the process involving the spread of a policy from one state to other states, which comprises certainly the decision of a given state government to adopt a particular policy option. Overall, policy diffusion refers to the spread of policies from state to state, and how the decision of one state affects other state's decision to adopt a given policy, that is, the interdependence character of such decision (Marsh & Sharman, 2009).

Accordingly, the primary hypothesis in studies that analyze this factor is that the probability of adoption of a new policy increases relative to the proportion of adopting neighboring states (Mintrom, 1997).

TABLE 1
PRINCIPAL DETERMINANTS OF STATE POLICY INNOVATION IN FEDERAL SYSTEMS

Type of factor	Examples
Internal	
Political	Electoral or interparty competition; divided or unified government; interest groups that support (or reject) a given policy; partisan ideology; year of election.
Bureaucratic and organizational factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Characteristics of legislatures (e.g. level of professionalization), and of the executive and administration (number of staff; executive structure). - Characteristics of the executive (governors) and government officials (e.g. elite ideology and priorities; professional characteristics).
Economic and fiscal	Economic development of the state; fiscal health or amount of financial resources.
Societal, demographic, or socioeconomic	Societal or cultural norms (e.g. religion); public opinion or public demands; size of population of the state; proportion of poverty.
External (neighborhood effects)	Geographical proximity; interstate networks among government officials.

Source: Own elaboration based on Berry & Berry, 1990; 1999; Boehmke & Skinner, 2012; Whitaker *et al.*, 2012).

In the literature, it is widely accepted that both internal and external factors influence states' likelihood for policy innovation (Berry & Berry, 1990; 1999; 2007; 2014; Miller, 2004; Boehmke, & Skinner, 2012; Whitaker *et al.*, 2012). Berry and Berry (1990; 1999) pioneered the development of one state policy innovation model and policy diffusion, using both terms interchangeably that integrated internal and external explanatory variables. To do this, these authors depart from Mohr's (1969, p. 111) theory that the propensity to innovate is a function of "the motivation to innovate, the strength of obstacles against innovation, and the availability of resources for overcoming such obstacles". Furthermore, this theory argues, "innovation is directly related to the strength to innovate, inversely related to the strength of the obstacles of innovation, and directly related to the availability of resources to overcoming such obstacles" (Miller, 2014, p. 38).

However, the interplay of these dimensions (motivations, resources and obstacles), as well as their relative weight in the explanation of the process of innovation, depends on the kind of policy in a given

state as well as period of time. Moreover, “what are considered to be obstacles and resources also depends in part on the specific policy area being considered” (Miller, 2004, p. 38). However, it is important to bear in mind that state policy innovation literature in federal systems is focused on developed countries, particularly in USA, where a great deal of quantitative data that spans over several decades is available.

Hence, it is not surprising that a great extent of this literature is based on quantitative studies. One of the main advantages of these studies is to show the extent and nature of a correlation of different variables. However, the logic and the dynamics behind the decision of state governments to introduce new policies in their jurisdictions, in a given context, usually falls short in their analysis. Moreover, the characteristics of policy actors (motivations, interests, professional profile, among other) are not necessarily treated as attributes of specific actors (and studied from an individual level of analysis) but subsumed into bureaucratic or organizational factors (see Miller, 2004).

The analytical framework proposed here incorporates in another theoretical approaches, which are focused on actors, as will be discussed later on. Nevertheless, the account of factors offered by traditional policy innovation literature is useful to develop an analytical framework for state policy innovation in developing countries, with a tradition of the *facto* centralized government, such as Mexico. Before explaining this framework, the context and evidence of state-level social policy innovation in Mexico are briefly discussed in the following section.

THE EMERGE OF STATE-LEVEL SOCIAL POLICY IN MEXICO

In the Mexican federal system, the long tradition of *de facto* centralization made it virtually impossible to imagine innovative subnational governments. However, over the last decade this seems to be changing. In particular, state governments are increasingly implementing social programs considered to be new or different in their territories. Mexico City is the most notable example in this trend (Canto, 2010; Hudson & Medrano, 2013).

The national context in which this is happening is complex. The most common characteristics of the Mexican national welfare system—high stratification and fragmentation, providing unequal access to social benefits and services (Barba, 2010; Valencia, 2010). The configuration of this welfare regimen has traditionally led to the exclusion of large portions of the population from any formal social protection coverage, particularly the poor.

However, Mexico's welfare regime has gone through substantive changes over the last three decades. Although the causes and characteristics of such changes is not the topic of this work, they can be summarized into two main streams of change. The first stream started in the 1980's, when the federal government implemented neoliberal social reforms (Valencia, 2010; Boltvinik, 2004; Laurell, 2003).

These changes included the privatization of pensions; decentralization of education and health care services; and the introduction of a new model of social assistance (or safety net) only for the poorest (Boltvinik, 2004; Barba, 2004). This social assistance model was introduced in 1997, under the form of conditional cash transfers programs only for people living in extreme poverty. This type of programs became the most important federal strategy for attending poverty, as well as a model of social programs design that emphasize focalization and conditionality (Medrano, 2011).

The second stream of change is related to the implementation of federal (and state) non-contributory social programs since the early 2000's. These programs seek to increment the coverage of some basic social services, such as health and pensions. In 2004, the federal government implemented a national non-contributory health program for informal or poor households, named Seguro Popular de Salud in Spanish, which aim to provide health coverage to 50 million uninsured Mexicans.⁵

The Mexican health-system mirrored the inequality and fragmentation of the general welfare system, resulting in the exclusion of a large proportion of the population from access to health care services. In 2000, 57.6 of the population lacked any health coverage (Sepulveda *et al.*, 2007). In 2010 this percentage dropped to 21.5 (OCDE, 2016). This change was mainly due to the introduction of a national insurance health program.

Similarly, the Mexican pension system was fragmented and unequal; traditionally, large portions of the population were excluded. In 2000, the Mexican federal government started to implement non-contributory pensions for the elderly (individual

5. The non-contributory national health program (Seguro Popular de Salud in Spanish) started as pilot program in 2001. In 2004, the federal program launched a national program that aimed to reduce the prevalence of catastrophic health expenditures by providing social protection in health. Seguro Popular consists of health policies and priorities, including entitlements for affiliated families, well defined and limited benefits packages including coverage for 266 unique health interventions, among other initiatives (Seguro Popular, 2013).

of 70 year and older), known as “70 y Más”. Originally, this program was targeted only for the poorest, but coverage under the program expanded over subsequent years. In fact, the introduction of non-contributory social programs began at the subnational level in Mexico City (as will be discussed in the next section).

In 2000, the proportion of elderly population receiving a contributory or non-contributory pension was only 20%. The impact of federal (and state) non-contributory pension programs significantly increased the total pension coverage (contributory and non-contributory) for the elderly population. While the percentage of elderly population with contributory pensions only reached 25.3%, in 2010, which signified a very modest increase from 2000, the total coverage of pensions (contributory and non-contributory) increase to 43.7% in the same year.⁶

Undoubtedly, the key characteristics of the welfare system at national level remain the same -i.e. fragmentation and inequality- until date. However, the streams of social policy changes mentioned above had a significant impacted on its configuration. These streams of change occurred in the context of different processes of decentralization since the 1980's.

These processes can be summarized in three aspects: 1) decentralization of education and health services, 2) political decentralization, and 3) relative fiscal decentralization. Overall, the decentralization of education and health care services led to the increase of state-government participation in the provision of education (Ornelas, 2014; Malgouyres, 2014) and health services (Homénedes & Ugalde, 2011; Molina, Vargas and Londoño, 2014). Although the federal government has kept key areas under its control, particularly financial resources (Ornelas, 2014; Malgouyres, 2014; Homénedes and Ugalde, 2011; Molina, Vargas and Londoño, 2014), states governments have certainly gained political leverage and attributions in these policy areas.

In the political realm, Mexico has witnessed increasing political competition and alternation at federal and subnational levels in the last three

6. In Mexico pension coverage had an important increase between 1984 and 2000, but during the last decade has stalled, reaching just 36% in 2010. This performance largely reflects the growth of informality in the country and high mobility between formal and informal labor market (Villagómez, 2013).

decades. For almost seven decades, a single party ruled Mexico: the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI, acronym for Partido Revolucionario Institucional in Spanish). This party was the main beneficiary of a non-competitive electoral system and enjoyed a near monopoly of all levels of public office. This started to change in the late 1980s. Political competition reached its peak in 2000 when the first democratic federal elections took place and Vicente Fox won the presidential election as the candidate of a coalition of the PAN and the Green Ecologist Party of Mexico (PVEM) (Emmerich *et al.*, 2010). As a result of this increased electoral competition, state governments now have greater political influence in the national political system.

Finally, fiscal decentralization has brought about more revenues for state governments to spend. In Mexico, federal fiscal system comprises two major federal transfers: a) revenue sharing (“participaciones” in Spanish), which are unconditional block grants, equally distributed to every state in the federation, and states government have the right to freely spend them; and b) earmarked transfers (“aportaciones” in Spanish), which are the conditional transfers, consisting of eight different funds, which states must spend based on federal rules.

These eight funds have specific aims, such as health, education, security, and social infrastructure. The majority of these funds, however, are devoted to education and health care services. In the last decade, conditional and unconditional federal transfers have constantly grown (ASF, 2013). However, state governments depend heavily on federal transfers to finance their spending. In 2012, the federal funding as a percentage of state revenue was on average up to 90% (ASF, 2013), except Mexico City. On the other hand, state governments -except Mexico City- that have enabled them to assume debt with little *de facto* federal government interference between 2001 and 2013 (Benton & Smith, 2013). In fact, on average, states have steadily increased their debt over the last decade (Benton & Smith, 2013).

In this context of different process of decentralization, several states have shown initiative to develop their own social programs. Beyond the extent and ways in which different processes of decentralization have influenced the surge of state social policy innovation, there is some evidence that some states have actually implementing their own social policies. The case of Mexico City is the most notable example of social policy innovation at the state level. The city government implemented social programs considered to be innovative in the Mexican context (Canto, 2010; Hudson & Medrano, 2013).

The most emblematic social programs implemented are the following: a non-contributory universal pension for the elderly; unemployment benefit (Programa de Seguro de Desempleo del Distrito Federal in Spanish); universal free medicines and health care; and direct

monetary transfers for lone mother in vulnerable social conditions and children in the school, among other socially vulnerable groups.

However, Mexico City is not alone in this innovative spring in social policy. Until very recently, non-contributory pensions or social pensions did not exist in Mexico. All age pensions were earnings related, financed with government subsidies and payroll taxes. Then Mexico City's government firstly introduced a non-contributory universal pension in 2000. This innovation spread across the country, to the point that in 2012, 17 of Mexico's 31 states had introduced non-contributory pensions on their own (Willmore, 2014).

Other popular programs are cash transfers or in-kind for lone mothers and scholarships for children, among others. According to the National Evaluation Council for Social Policy (CONEVAL),⁷ the number of social programs implemented by state governments rose from 2,391 in 2010 to 3,788 in 2012, and the budget spent increased from \$93.8 billion in 2010 to \$137 billion (Mexican pesos) in 2012 (CONEVAL, 2015).

State governments have the legal attributions -and capacity- to define both the content and implementation of the social policy. The analysis particular characteristics and extent of the social policy innovation in each estate, based on available information, exceeds the purpose of this paper. However, according to CONEVAL's database, there is a great divergence in the number, scope and resources allocated to social programs across states. Some states have implemented over hundreds of social programs over the last years (CONEVAL, 2015).

For instance, in 2012, the number of social programs implemented in Chiapas and Querétaro were 253 and 27, respectively. Overall, from 2010 to 2012, the states that have registered the higher number of social programs were Chiapas, Mexico City, Estado de México and Veracruz -the last three federal entities figure among the most populated in Mexico, while Chiapas has one of the highest percentage of poverty in the country-.

Beyond the disparities in the number and characteristic of state social program, this information

7. The Inventory of State Social Programs integrated and published by the Social Policy Evaluation National Council (CONEVAL is its acronym in Spanish). CONEVAL's database includes information on the administration, objectives, budget and spending, and target populations for each state level program, which were implemented from 2010 to 2012.

provides insight into the extent to which states participate in social policy-making in Mexico. As previously mentioned, the increasing initiative of state governments to innovate in terms of its characteristics, extent, and determinants has yet to be analyzed. This work focused on the identification of the main factors that explains why some states decide to innovate in social policy. In the following section, the framework to analyze applied to conduct this research is explained.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: ACTORS OF CHANGE AND IDEAS

As mentioned before, policy innovation refers to the adoption of a policy that is considered to be new in a given state, at a given time. Overall, state policy innovation depends on several internal and external factors; the degree of influence varies according to the kind of policy (Berry & Berry, 1990; 1999; 2007; 2014; Miller, 2004; Boehmke & Skinner, 2012; Whitaker *et al.*, 2012).

State policy innovation literature in federal systems is focused on developed countries, particularly USA scholars have extensively researched the determinants of policy innovation and diffusion, in general and related to an array of different policy areas -including lotteries (Berry & Berry, 1990), welfare reform (Soss, Schram, Vartanian & O'Brien, 2001), education reform (Mintrom, 1997), among many others-.

As previously mentioned, a great extent of this literature is based on quantitative studies. Although quantitative studies offer several advantages, which are not going to be discussed here, they do not offer an analysis of the particular logic and the dynamics of the decision of state governments to introduce new policies in their jurisdictions. This is usually bettered captured by qualitative studies. This is particularly the case in a context in which policy innovation is a relatively new phenomenon, and the availability of data to produce quantitative analysis is very limited, such as in Mexico.

Furthermore, in the context of an incipient participation of states in social policy-making, such as in Mexico, the external factors aforementioned (influences of neighboring states) may be non-existent at a certain point in time. This means that pioneering states engaged in policy innovation endeavors may have other kinds of external pressures, such as federal social policy. Nevertheless, this model can contemplates this potential influence of neighboring states. Keeping these limitations in mind, the main purpose of this work is to develop an analytical framework to identify the main factors of state policy innovation, in a context of incipient state policy activism, such as in Mexico.

This analytical framework focuses on actor-centered approaches to explain policy change (Genieys and Smyrl, 2008a; Hessenteufel *et al.*, 2010), and some of the key factors identified by the policy innovation literature in federal systems. The factors included in framework are summarized as follows:

- a) **Economic and fiscal resources.** Overall, this refers to relative level of wealth of the state. The general hypothesis is that governments with high level of economic development are more likely to adopt new policies or programs (Berry & Berry, 2007). Unlike federal government, states have less access to taxing options and debt; and “their finances depend on decisions of the central state” (Greer, 2010, p. 408). The general hypothesis is that the state with more financial resources available is more likely to innovate in social policy (Berry & Berry, 1999, 2007).
- b) **Political-electoral factors.** In particular, this framework pay attention to two main variables: 1) electoral competition in state elections; and 2) partisan ideology of the incumbent party in the state. This last factor is related to the ideological standpoint (e.g. right or leftist party) of the ruling political party of the state at the time of introducing a social policy innovation, as well as the ideological standpoint of the ruling political party at federal level. Overall, the main hypothesis is that electoral competition is positively related to social policy innovation (Barrilleaux, Holbrook & Langer, 2002), as well as the left wing political parties (Boehmke and Skinner, 2012; Huber, Mustillo & Stephens, 2008; Pribble, Huber & Stephens, 2009).
- c) **Initial social policy.** This factor refers to the idea that the particular characteristics of the social policy prevalent in a given state before any change is introduced, that is, the existing policies, tend to have some influence in the new policies adopted later on (Berry & Berry, 2007). This refers to the fact that as any new policy change has to depart from a previous arrangement, such innovations are somehow influenced by it. In other words, policies are “path dependent” in that they are strongly influenced by the “policy legacies” of earlier policy development (Hall & Taylor, 1996).
- d) **Socio-economic conditions of the population of the state.** This framework pays attention to the size of the population of the state, and the proportion of population living in poverty. The general assumption is that states with larger population are more likely to adopt new social policies or programs (Berry & Berry, 2007). It also expects that states with larger proportions of

population in poverty may implement more social programs to attend this population sector.

- e) **Agents of change.** This factor refers to the existence of a set of policy actors with institutional position, capacity, and knowledge to influence policymaking, and who seek to materialize particular ideas into policy, which are different to those already on place.

Genieys and Smyrl (2008a) have explained, policy systems are “personified” because the ideas circulated in the public arenas are actually formulated and mobilized by the flesh and bone actors that participate in them (Genieys and Smyrl, 2008a, p. 38). The role of the agents of change in social policy innovation is further developed in the following section.

AGENTS OF CHANGE AS A KEY VARIABLE OF CHANGE

The term agent of change is similar to “policy entrepreneurs”, which is widely used in policy literature. According to Kingdon’s classic definition, policy entrepreneurs are those characterized by “their willingness to invest their resources -time, energy, reputation, and sometimes money- in the hope of future return. That return might come to them in the form of policies of which they approve, satisfaction from participation, or even personal aggrandizement in the form of job security or career promotion” (Kingdon, 1984, p. 123). In this work, agents of change refers to only state-level policymakers, in particular those in the executive government, in order to focus the analysis on a specific set of incentives or motivations.

Overall, these actors must fulfill three conditions in order to be considered agents of change. The first condition is that “actors need resources to influence public policies. Institutional position, legitimacy, strategic capacity, and expert knowledge are among the most relevant resources for policy-making capacity” (Haseenteufel *et al.*, 2010, p. 528).

Actors who instigate change are usually a rather small group. These actors include policy entrepreneurs, who are often given the role of informing conduits or translators of ideas in the process of change (Lawrence *et al.*, 2004; Mintrom & Norman, 2004), or as sagacious actors that take advantage of a window of opportunity -exogenously created- to promote a given policy idea that ultimately creates change (Kingdon, 1994). Moreover, actors can actively create the opportunities for innovation, that is, to “work hard to develop and sell alternative approaches” (Huitema & Meijerink, 2010, p. 2). In other words, the role of agents of change involves instigating, implementing, and sometimes blocking policy innovation, not only taking advantage of windows of opportunity. In fact, actor-centered approaches emphasize the role of policy actors in creating change.

The second condition is the existence of actor's motivation or purpose for innovation, which is not only -or at least not always- material interests. Genieys and Smyrl (2008) and Hassenteufel *et al.*, (2010) suggest that at the core of policy change is the performance of "collective actors who share policy ideas and compete for legitimate authority over sectoral policy making" (Hassenteufel *et al.* 2010, p. 518). Similarly, we suggest that other motives can be the commitment to a moral imperative to change the status quo, and the belief that other options are viable. In following Sen (2002, p. 1977), this work departs from the idea that diverse motives are at the core of actors' choice to promote change, including ethical, moral, or normatively political reasoning.

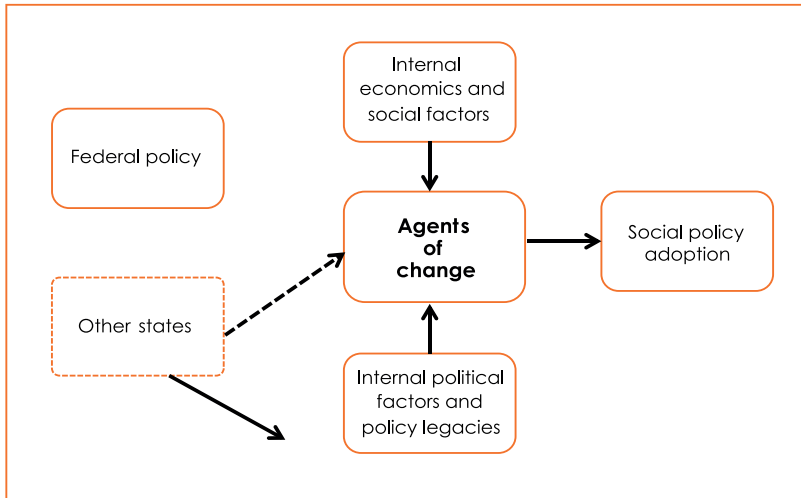
Therefore, actors may pursue change when they have strong ideological or ethical commitments against existent policy legacies (Béland & Wellan, 2012). Other motives can be the commitment or zeal to pursue particular principles or values (e.g. social justice, liberty, among other). Hence, the motivations of change could include a moral imperative for change that is not necessarily fueled by political gain. Acknowledging the complexity of actor's motives it is important to understand the dynamics of policy innovation.

The third condition refers to the existence of new policy ideas themselves. These policy ideas should take the form of a policy proposal, and they constitute an alternative to those already implemented in a given state. In other words, actors' policy ideas should challenge the status quo. The set of specific actors that fulfill these conditions is considered to be the catalyst of policy innovation. Although state policy actors (for instance, governors) may face similar fiscal or political restrictions, not all of them may engage in policy experimentation and others may innovate even when the likelihoods are minimal.

Moreover, in the presence of extreme exogenous factors, such as social instability, natural disasters or economic crisis may provide an important impetus for policy change. However, the actual policy responses to these shock events are also mediated by the actors' reactions (interpretations) to them, under specific circumstances (see for instance Birkland, 1997, 1998).

This framework allows for comparative analysis across different state units. The analytical framework can be used to identify the relationship between the traits of social policy actors (e.g. policy ideas, expert knowledge, and institutional position) and the adoption of innovative policy social, in a context of economic and political variables at state level. Although this comparative analysis may be used mainly for qualitative analysis (for instance, the analysis of official documents, and in-depth interviews with key social policy actors in the states), it could be applied to quantitative analysis, when the data make it possible to do so. Graph 1 summarizes all the factors included in the model.

FIGURE 1
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL POLICY INNOVATION AT STATE LEVEL



This analytical framework integrates some of the factors analyzed in traditional policy innovation literature, and ideational actor-centered approaches to explain policy change (Genieys and Smyrl, 2008a; Hessenteufel *et al.*, 2010). In addition, this framework of analysis focuses on the process of innovation decision, that is, the decision-making or choice situation in a given state, at given time. Hence, this framework helps to explain the propensity of a state to adopt a social policy or a set of social policies (or programs) during a specific interval in time that should be specified.

Economic, fiscal and political factor had a direct incidence in the decision of actors to innovate. But other potential influences, such as social policy developed in other states may be more indirect. In short, this analytical framework incorporates actor-centered explanations with specific institutional, political and societal variables in order to understand the opportunities and restrictions on social policy innovation at state level.

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

In Mexico, there is evidence that state governments have increasingly participating in developing their social policy. The extent and ways in which different factors, several of them related to different processes of decentralization, explain this surge in state social policy innovation deserves thoroughly investigations. This work offers a framework to analyze state social policy innovation in a context of incipient participation of state governments in this area.

This model integrates the principal insights of traditional policy innovation literature and actor-centered approaches for policy change. This analytical framework depart from the basic premise that policy actors operate in a special policy milieu, and use resources and display strategies to affect the making of the social policy that are specific to their state political context.

This model places emphasis in the motivation and ideas of key actors that perform as agents of change. The performance of these key actors who share policy ideas and compete for make them a reality is considered to be the main driver of state social policy innovation. In this sense, actors constitute the catalyst factor of change. Undoubtedly, fiscal constraint and political climate will always have an effect in social policy innovation. Moreover, the specific obstacles actors face (economic, political and societal variables) influences the extent and timing of their innovative efforts. Nevertheless, actors (which imply the mixture of their willingness, interest and knowledge) cam also create conditions for innovation.

The analytical framework can be used to identify the relationship between the characteristics groups of social policy actors (especially, policy ideas, expert knowledge, institutional position and leadership) and policy innovation, in the context of economic and political variables. In sum, this framework allows to provide an account of the political dynamics that drive social policy decisions at the state level, and their interaction with economic and social restrictions, taking at the center of analysis the forces that drive states to policy innovation, that is, the actions of actors, which reflect their motivations, as well as their management of the resources and obstacles at hand.

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ANTOLOGÍA SOBRE EVALUACIÓN. LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE UNA DISCIPLINA

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GABRIELA PÉREZ

CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIÓN
Y DOCENCIA ECONÓMICAS, 2015

Nielsen Daniel Hernández Mayorga

Within the study of public policies, the evaluation has become, since several years ago, in a problem and an alternative. A problem for the public bodies because the evaluation highlights their mistakes in the decision making process. Meanwhile on the other hand it is an alternative for the academic sector because it continues to expand an increasingly attractive field of study for academics of public policy.

In this sense, Claudia Maldonado Trujillo and Gabriela Pérez Yarahuán, both professors-researchers at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) and evaluation specialists at the CLEAR Center for Latin America, were responsible for coordinating a publication that includes ten classic texts and at the same time seminal, about the academic discussion of the evaluation, entitled Anthology on evaluation; the construction of one discipline.

In addition to the ten chapters, the book includes an introductory study in which Maldonado and Pérez Yarahuán emphasize the importance of evaluation as a fundamental activity for governments and, in the same way, describe the incremental growth that this practice has had in most of the countries and especially in Latin America.

What is the contribution of this publication to the debate in the field of study of public policies? First, they are texts that are translated for the first time into Spanish and this provides basic theoretical-methodological concepts and a common language around the academic study of evaluation. Second, its content may be a first approach for those readers who are unfamiliar with the study of public policy, so this book is a provocative element to broaden the interest on an important topic today.

Coming back to Maldonado and Pérez (2015) words, the central objective of this compilation is “to contribute to the socialization and dissemination of a shared language between the community of professionals in evaluation and those interested in it, students and evaluators in the process of formation” (21). The transversal and drive shaft that crosses the ten chapters of this book is the problematizing of evaluation study from different points of view. Therefore, I consider that this anthology is a direct channel for those interested in the evaluation of public policies knows a selection, obviously arbitrary, of some texts that opened the discussion several years ago, but which became classics.

This collection of theoretical-methodological articles brings together several pioneering authors such as Peter Rossi, Carol H. Weiss, Howard Freeman, Mark W. Lipsky, Jennifer Greene, Michael Q. Patton, Eleanor Chelmsky, Jean-Claude Thoening, Gary T Henry, Melvin M. Mark and Huey-Tsy. The first chapter contains an article by Carol H. Weiss, a widely acknowledged academic for being a forerunner in this discipline, entitled “Preparing the Ground,” in which she describes the development of the evaluation, as well as putting on the table basic concepts to understand this field of study and point out “the differences between evaluation and other types of scientific research” (32).

On the other hand, we know that, how to do an evaluation? Is one of the main questions that are asked by the students or interested parties who want to get involved in this field, and in that sense, I think it is extremely useful, the second chapter, in which Chen and Rossi reflect on the methodology to do evaluation exercises, and they question the paradigm of the “black box”, and discuss, mainly, how to approach the evaluation process.

In chapter three of the anthology we find a text by Mark W. Lipsey entitled “What can be built with thousands of bricks? Reflects about the accumulation of knowledge in the evaluation of programs”, which questions the capacity to collect and systematize the theoretical-conceptual contributions around evaluation and empirical findings. This is undoubtedly one of the most complex tasks, because in some cases the individual contributions on the collective are prioritized. In the end, the accumulation of all this knowledge generated in recent years is the basis for building a stronger and thriving discipline.

In Chapter Four, Carol H. Weiss again makes a series of considerations about the existing relationship between evaluation and the design of public policies. It can be said that both are closely linked phases of the public policy cycle, one need the other and vice versa. However, they are also stages that have grown separately from the theoretical-methodological point of view. For this reason, Weiss highlights the

importance of both phases and their scientific contribution. This article is entitled "The interface between evaluation and public policy".

In the fifth section, in "Evaluation as a Defense", Jennifer Greene places in the middle of the discussion the evaluator's position in the political context. Ideology and political interests are inherent in the individuals involved in evaluation. However, Greene proposes to overcome this slant and assumes a position beyond this subjectivity by ensuring that "evaluation, such as policy analysis, is a way of telling the truth to power," paraphrasing Wildavsky, therefore, "only the weights and counterweights of the democratic system and political pluralism can ensure possible and desirable conditions for telling the truth" (37).

As a sixth article, a text by Eleanor Chelimsky titled "The Purposes of an Evaluation in a Democratic Society," was included, the role of evaluation exercises in society is problematized. On one hand, and emphasis is placed on the fact that evaluation is an activity intrinsic to democracy that promotes accountability, analysis and information gathering of government interventions, and on the other, is a factor (or could be) that contributes to democracy and the construction of more efficient governments.

In the seventh chapter, Michael Q. Patton raises a number of questions about the lessons and good practices that have been generated around evaluations throughout the course of this discipline. Insists on the importance of maintaining an open dialogue among evaluators to exchange experiences and generate knowledge about models learned in recent decades.

In the last three sections of this compilation, Jean-Claude Thoenig focuses on the relevance of evaluation in administrative reforms of public management and questions whether this discipline helps to consolidate the bureaucracy, collaborating in decision-making and more informed opinions. Meanwhile, Gary T. Henry and Melvin M. Mark discuss in their article "Beyond Utilization. The influence of evaluation on attitudes and actions", a theoretical proposal "that incorporates various channels and mechanisms of influence of evaluation in the public policy process and invite to leave behind the old paradigm of utilization" (40).

While in Chapter Ten, Peter H. Rossi, Howard Freeman, and Mark W. Lipsey close this book with a synthetic and systematic article in which they voiced some reflections on the development of evaluation as a discipline in the last three decades and question their Role "as a profession, as public policy and as an imperative of democratic governance" (41).

In summary, this anthology is a tool that encourages serious and deep study of a discipline that continues to grow in the world and specifically

in Latin America, where there are few Spanish texts about the evaluation of public policies, so this book, I consider, is of basic consultation and always consider it in the horizon of academics of public policies and also of public officials.

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UNA INTRODUCCIÓN A LA ADMINISTRACIÓN PÚBLICA EN MÉXICO

MARÍA DEL CARMEN PARDO
EL COLEGIO DE MÉXICO, 2014

Alberto Arellano Ríos

María del Carmen Pardo is a role model researcher in the study and comprehension of problems Mexican public administration faces. With a very simple, clear style and taking our context into consideration, distinctive signature that has as academy El Colegio de México, a collection of works compiled by five texts of her own authorship written between 2010 and 2013 it is offered to us. The chapters included in this work of literature seek to offer an overview of the problems faced by the Mexican public administration and public function.

The texts analyze and describe the public administration profile in accordance with its capacity to design values to a society related to the political Mexican system. This is perhaps the nodal axis that will make the work a referent and mandatory consultation to the extent of separation between politics and administration not situated as an analytical division but a close and constant relationship.

This book is extremely important to the extent that realizes the transformation of the administrative Mexican system in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The public administration profile is analyzed in the first chapter. A socio-historical journey of the administrative structure of the state of Mexico is tried to be given. In this section María del Carmen Pardo analyzes the structural features of the Mexican government and its administration.

Del Carmen Pardo pauses to value the civil service and review the bonds of the bureaucracy with the political parties and the civil society. To this effect the political transition to an authoritarian regime towards democracy is taken into consideration. The section itself questions and points out that the administrative and management reforms implemented by the Mexican governments were short since they were classified into adjustment policies based on economic crisis.

In the next chapter the Mexican public administrations evolution during the XX century is traced. This section is the most extensive of the five texts compiled integrated in this work of literature; and in this chapter The College of Mexico researcher interweaves the storyline that the Mexican public has become. María del Carmen Pardo mentions how important and fundamental the public administration in the development of our country is.

The public role is seen as cause and part of modernization in the Mexican society and its political system. At the same time accounts for the dynamism of the Mexican bureaucracy which develops itself between autonomy and subordination; the local-regional transformations and the central government; the economic dynamics and social changes and in the public areas.

The common thread of exposure of this evolution explanation starts with the ideological display of public administration to later go to the periods of 1940-1960, 1960-1980, 1980-1990, and 1990-2000 and finishes in the decade that goes into this century. The thesis and conclusion reached by María del Carmen Pardo in this section is that public administration can be a factor for development as long is seen as part of society, capable of modernizing it, create new practices, new interests and new resistances.

In the third chapter the expert of El Colegio de México endorses a problem rarely considered by governmental studies and represents more interest than other disciplines in Mexico such as anthropology; the autochthonous issue. Under the title of representative bureaucracy, the section seeks to answer the unsolved mystery of why Mexico, a contraire other countries with ethnic diversity, there has not existed a clear effort to consolidate a representative bureaucracy for the indigenous minorities of the country.

The answer to this concern, she discovers the dominant inequality in Mexico. Then plans are made towards bureaucracy models, citizen conditions, and the political representation in Mexico, as well as the nooks and crannies in which mixed race populations have been immersed. The main problem, according to María del Carmen, and illustrator of the situation, is also a wakeup call for those who study such discipline, administrative reforms, stimulated and motivated by the New Public Management, had the problem of nurturing a citizen conception that trivializes different citizen segments and it does not allow to consider or value the complexity and diversity in the Mexican culture. In that sense, the central argument of the chapter is critical and reflexive and encourages having a greater theoretical imagination.

Chapter four is entitled more like a question: changes or paralysis in the Mexican public administration? Analyzes the efforts in the administrative reform carried out by the federal governments of Vicente Fox and Felipe Calderon (2000-2010), both were of the PAN (Action National Party). The administrative changes made are valued in the light of the transformations of the government itself. They are seen as background thesis like transactions that try to redistribute power resources. They contrast themselves in their discursive part and their real effects and reaches.

If in Vicente Fox's government there were ambitious proposals presented in terms of a managerial and transcendental reform, Felipe Calderon's was more modest. But the reforms were limited and framed in a managerial aspect because they sought to embed mechanisms and practices of the private initiative in the public administration. Although important, their core limitation was not to think that the administrative reforms must be situated on an agenda of wider and greater magnitude transformation for both political and economical aspects.

Finally, the self-called chapter "The Mexican State: From the intervention to the regulation?" Analyzes the agencies and commissions established by the State for this purpose, its functions, legal regimen, functional composition and when possible, to evaluate its performance. In order to achieve this goal María del Carmen Pardo traces the regulatory role of the Mexican State in the market and society. She realizes an historical outline to delve in how the change in the roles of the state took place.

The text stops to delineate the neoliberal model and how the Mexican State is redefined as well as the spheres that still regulates: the naturally competitive markets, healthy areas, security, environment, consumer protection, markets related with both face-to-face and online networks, applicable to financial markets; and institutional areas such as copyright, compliance, dispute resolution, laws in the administrative, civil and legal action area.

The agencies and commissions analyzed are lead to claim that most of them are classified in the figure of decentralized government bodies; their organizational management roles are collegiate; and it is subject to the professional civil service. However, from a structural vision the regulatory role of the Mexican State is still weak. Hence the existence and urgent regulatory need of a State that proves is strong is a longing one still.

