

## **Decentralization and governance of the education system in Mexico**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of the progress of little more than two decades of political decentralization in Mexico, through so-called "educational federalism". The "Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education" in 1992, is a turning point in the history of education in Mexico, because it represents the first attempt at comprehensive reform in the sense that, in addition to the curricular reformulation and promotion social participation, comprising the overall redesign of the organization and management of the education system. Our analysis aims to show the dislocation suffered by the national education policy, due to the lack of coordination between actions of the different levels of government. We do not intend to argue against federalism as a system of political organization but to draw attention to the concrete experience of educational decentralization in Mexico, and how the advantages of decentralization can be undermined by shortcomings in their design and implementation.

### **Key words**

Decentralization, educational federalism, comprehensive reform, social participation, education system, coordination

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this article is to analyze the educational policy since the signing of the Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education in 1992 which is a benchmark in the history of education in Mexico, it represents the first attempt to reform completeness in the sense that, in addition to the curricular reformulation, the revaluation of the teaching function and boost social participation, comprising the general rethinking of the organization and management of the education system.

It starts from the assumption that the decentralization model or educational federalism that is established through the National Agreement has affected the governance of the education system as a whole, and in particular, the carrying capacity of the Ministry of Education as national authority responsible for setting objectives, strategies and lines of action of educational policy, measure results and to compensate differences. In other words, to direct the education system towards the goal of providing quality education for all.

To define the subject matter, we note that among the many factors that affect the governance of the education system, our analysis aims to show the dislocation suffered by the national education policy, due to the lack of coordination between actions and levels of government, manifested from decentralization. In no way seeks to argue against federalism as a system of political organization but to draw attention to the concrete experience of education called Federalism in Mexico, and how the advantages of decentralization can be undermined by shortcomings in their design and implementation.

According to this purpose, the text is divided into four sections. In the first, the government education system is proposed as a theoretical, political and practical problem. In the second, the meaning of the notion of national education policy in the context of existing decentralized model, known as Educational Federalism is explored. The third section, articulation problems of educational policy on federalism are documented. The fourth section, hits a boundary between the Education Sector Programmes and the National Policy on Education. Finally, conclusions are presented.

### **1. The Government of the education system.**

After two decades of implementation of reforms on education systems in several countries in Latin America, we are able to raise the issue of governance of the education system as a theoretical, political and practical problem. However, since it does not operate in a vacuum, it is necessary that previously we locate the subject in the context of governance problems that affect society as a whole.

Today the task of government involves complex configurations and interactions within the public administration and the latter with their environment through a variety of connections

that mark the passing of important government policies and programs. Public issues have become terms of size, strength and connectivity. Assume greater territorial and population affected, an accumulation of effects and a significant amount of the factors involved increasing. We can say that the expansion in the scale of the phenomena, also reflects an increase in the scale at which decisions (Covarrubias, 2008) should be taken.

The complexity in the States, indicates Claus Offe, more than in other types of organizations, undermines organic integrity and consistency. From the notion of "decomposition of state power by Increase of functions", says the complaint states rational decision is explained by the fact that the multiplication of responsibilities is accompanied by increased instances, authorities, and administrative agents involved. For Offe, this produces an internal pluralization and fragmentation of departmental perspectives within the administration, an escalation in the conflict, and in general, an increase in the unpredictability of long-term results, as well as the alleged effects "synergistic" Individual policies that are almost impossible to coordinate (Offe, 1996). In our opinion, the above tends to increase in federal systems of government, where public administration is a complicated multi-organizational system functionally differentiated by departmental units and sectors, levels vertically and horizontally territories, so that the implementation of a policy not regards a particular instance, but a conglomerate of them.

Under these considerations, although the complexity is present in the different spheres of government task, it is in the social area where it is more visible and therefore more necessary an articulated governance. Health policy, public security, environmental or educational object of our interest, to name a few, are related to problems requiring joint efforts between different organizations not only within the same government, but other governments involved geographical and jurisdictionally. These are issues that know no boundaries, or stop at any barrier, whose causes are interrelated and mutually determined. In this sense, the political-administrative political maps are no longer useful to understand and even less to contain them.

Educational policy is an issue that illustrates the difficulties in reaching a joint public action on an issue that requires the intervention of different levels of management. Given the current structure of education systems in most Latin American countries, the development of a general policy, is difficult interactions within and between educational governance at central, sub-national, municipal and school level, as well as between it and its environment.

Define the notion of governance of the education system imposes consider a number of concepts associated with or contained in the idea itself, help to clarify the essence of it. Within the limits imposed by the extension study, as part of this section some concepts that allow us to consider the conduct of the educational systems as a research problem will be needed. First, we refer to the category of education. The notion of system has been present in various sociological conceptions of educational phenomenon, as a conceptual tool has

helped to understand the complexity of the educational function and its internal and external relations.

According Crozier (1969), the education system is a reflection of the social system, and is at the same time, the essential medium perpetuated. Referring to the characteristic features of bureaucratic system as adherence to rules, vertical relations, specialization and obedience as a cardinal virtue Crozier notes that these patterns are arranged around the problem of social control and can only survive transmitted and strengthened by the education. From Luhmann's social theory, education is not only a constitutive, but constitutional system of the social system (Luhmann and Eberhard, 1993). It seems important to recover at this point the view Sander (1974), who believes that the use of systemic perspective is not only possible but essential to understand and develop educational activities. By the nature of the functions assigned to it, education is one of the fundamental components of any social system in modern societies.

For our purposes, the words of government, governance and governance are also essential. It is without doubt, the terms "knotted" suggested another. For example, the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy (2010) associates the word governance to the "quality of governable" and equates the concept of governance as "art or manner of governing" that has as objective the achievement of a sustainable economic, social and institutional development, promoting a healthy balance between the state, civil society and market economy. The dictionary also defines governance as "the action and effect to rule or govern.

Governance refers to a form of government more cooperative, other than the old hierarchical model, in which the authorities exercised sovereign power over groups and citizens who make up civil society. According to Mayntz, there where policy networks are developed, the government ceases to be the principal center of society: "In policy networks, government and civil society are loosely coupled, and interaction within this such networks produces a negotiated consensus which facilitates the formation of a policy, which at the time of your application encounters rather than resistance "(Mayntz, 2001).

Specifically governance of education systems has been defined in the "Declaration of Conception" of the Organization of Ibero-American States (1996) as the ability to meet the demands of education of the school population and of society as a whole as well as the ability to resolve internal conflicts that occur within it. Thus, the Declaration realizes the emergency issue of governance of education systems in Latin America that, by then, had various reforms to its credit.

It is noteworthy that the governance of education was born linked to the need to strengthen its systemic behavior. Thus, for Tenti the government assumes the notion of system, ie something that has a consistency, a reality, and who is ruled; but also the idea that there are

gifted actors of interests, projects, programs, resources and strength to give it direction and meaning to the system (Tenti, 2004). Another statement that accounts for the relevance of systemic look for effects of governance of education is what makes Delors (1996), who relates that future societies, the need to mobilize forces far beyond formal institutions confer on public authorities a new role. On the one hand, must ensure the visibility and legibility of the educational system, thus ensuring the stability of the whole. Furthermore, it should arouse associations to release new energies for education.

In this vein, the problem of driving education systems has to do with the fact that education is increasingly less like a system has no center from where it leads, the protagonists are increasingly more numerous and maintaining -Partnerships game, Steeplechase is increasingly complicated and in many cases polarized (Tenti, 2004). Meanwhile, Tedesco adds that governance of education systems should be placed in the broader context of governance problems of society. There is ample evidence to justify this broader view, many phenomena that occur outside the education sector but penetrating its scope (Tedesco, 2004).

The situations that have come to complicate the governance of education we want to emphasize the fact that currently the educational systems are fragmented, are increasingly polycentric and the actors who play in the field of education policy are more numerous because the traditional school community, professional associations, employers, unions, media, international expert bodies and of course local government bodies are added.

In the case of Mexico, we start from the assumption that the educational federalism that is established through the National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education has affected the governance of the education system, particularly the drivability of the Secretariat of Public Education national authority responsible for setting objectives, strategies and lines of action of general education policy. It is essential to contextualize the driving task, noting that does a system with more than 37 million students, 240,000 schools and one million 600 thousand teachers (INEE, 2008). System being organized federally, consists of 32 local education centers subsystems own authority.

## **2. National Education Policy and educational federalism.**

Once raised the issue of governance of the education system as a political, theoretical, and practical problem, we now turn meaning that the notion of national education policy has in the context of the current model of organization and functioning of education in Mexico. Understanding this model and the role it has played the federal government through the Ministry of Education requires us to do before a general overview of the management steps that preceded it: devolution and decentralization. To schematically illustrate the reform process that has been organizing the Mexican educational system, and thereby put into

perspective the educational federalism as operating scheme in force, we will rely in Table 1.

Table 1: Variants of the reform of the education system in Mexico				
1921...		1983...	1992...	
Federal Government Secretaría de Educación Pública Ministry of Public Education (SEP)		Federal Government (SEP)	Federal Government (SEP)	State Governments
GOBIERNOS ESTATALES				
Centralization (I)	Devolution (II)	"Decentralization" (III)	"Educational Federalism" (IV)	
Representation offices of the SEP in the states	Delegations of the SEP in the states	Coordinate Services of Public Education in the States	Regulation faculties at national level	Regulation faculties in the state

Source: Covarrubias, 2000.

As seen in the table, in the management of the education system in Mexico can be distinguished four main stages. The first (I) corresponds to the phase of centralization that begins with the creation of the Ministry of Education in 1921 and with it, the deployment of educational action of the state scale. The performance of successive governments would be characterized by maintaining and expanding educational services. Along with the quantitative expansion of educational service intended to reach all regions of the country, was consolidated alongside a structure in which substantive decisions were defined and exercised from the center of the country.

The federal interference is considered as a prerequisite of educational growth, only the national government could guarantee sufficient resources to expand enrollment, goal linked to economic and social development. Referring to the centralized nature of this process, Aguilar notes that in the twentieth century, post revolutionary political system configuration and the need to modernize the social and economic life of the country emphasized the dominance of the federal government over the other branches of government (Aguilar, 1996). After holding that centralization is a natural tendency of federal systems, adds that in the case of Mexican federalism, resulted in the supremacy of the federal government over the sovereignty of the states. Thus, argues that the dominance of federal power was the only way to make economic development compatible with the requirements of social justice, bringing the expansion of the state apparatus to strengthen its intervention in the areas of social benefit. However, centralization also brought bureaucratic processes, problems of efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative apparatus, as well as quality, efficiency and inequality of educational services themselves.

The second stage (II) comprises known as deconcentration 1978-1982, and its history explosive population growth and the spread of education, which resulted in a disorderly expansion of the educational system, the gradual and progressive loss of control administrative as well as the deterioration of the substance. The education system ended up favoring the more populated regions to the detriment of rural areas. Urged to curb the

growing gap between different areas of the country and promote a more equitable distribution of educational opportunities. Through devolution, the Federal Government established in 1978 in each of the states of Mexico, General Delegations dependent organs called the Ministry of Education, grouping them all operational tasks with the respective powers of decision for the purpose that they were taken according to the particular characteristics of the states. With deconcentration decision-making power between levels and instances of the Secretariat itself was redistributed and represented a previous phase of education decentralization that the government would try since 1982.

The third stage (III) in the management of education in Mexico, spanned from 1982 to May 1992 and was known as "decentralization". This was justified in finding a redistribution of power in a more balanced decision for the provision of services in the states; by the approach of decisions to where the services are provided; the possibility of greater involvement of the user community service in defining needs to be met by work programs; as well as the relevance of learning through participation of stakeholders in defining the curriculum. At the time, the intention to decentralize, was reflected in the National Development Plan 1983-1988, which stated that decentralization of basic education was a fundamental line to improve efficiency and quality educational action and to sponsor community participation (Federal Executive Branch, 1983). Although this period is known as "educational decentralization", in practice it was far from being a true decision redistribution of power between federation and states. Instead, it was decided to establish in each state organs called Coordinated Services of Public Education, by which he sought to administer educational services through a scheme of responsibility between federal and local authorities. However, the federal government not only did not transfer services, but also its regulation on an important aspect of pedagogical repertoire and administrative faculties were strengthened.

Finally, the fourth stage (IV) hitherto in force, formally began in May 1992 with the signing of the National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education and Educational Federalism corresponds to the call. To Moctezuma (1993), the federalization is qualitatively different than in other countries decentralization has meant the fragmentation of a national system or the simple transfer of functions and resources. It states that in the case of Mexico, the federalization of education strengthens both the powers of the federal authority to ensure national unity education and participation of governments of the states in the operation of services. According to the official discourse, federalism the paper should rethink education authorities at central and local level; in the first case, to concentrate efforts on strengthening the capacity of national leadership, in the second, for greater articulation between school work with authorities, institutions, and other sectors of the community (DOF, 1992).

In our opinion, the educational Federalism refers to two issues:

Federation transferred to state governments, administration of basic services and normal education. Another is that the restricted operational responsibility for the federal government to the capital, the general regulation of the education system is confirmed as substantive jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. With this, a clearer picture of powers between the orders of federal and state boundaries, a situation that occurred in the previous step, where both appeared at least in theory, be responsible for the operation of the service in one of the entities set states.

Today, 18 years of educational federalism have been implemented, the data suggest that this measure has not translated into better education as important problems of terminal efficiency and quality persist. Referring to this, Santizo Rodall (2009) which argues that one of the main causes that have impeded the success of decentralization in Mexico, is that responsibilities were delegated but not the means that would enable local authorities and school communities were provided exploit the spaces decision were granted.

It is noteworthy also that the decentralization of education in our country, has been framed by a recurring economic crisis which has led to a deterioration in the living conditions of a growing number of inhabitants. Which prevented despite the efforts of educational authorities, can eradicate the problems of illiteracy, neglect, truancy, failure and underachievement. On the other hand, still problems such centralization, bureaucracy, lack of educational update, a strong presence of union interests and poor formulation and implementation of policies affecting the management and operation of the educational system limiting the possibilities to solve issues affecting education.

However, decentralization has also offered opportunities for education closer to the needs of communities and schools. Several states have conducted exercises at the regional level, regarding the design of educational policies, plans and programs of study, to promote new leadership by school managers, the impulse to collegiate work, as well as the dissemination of projects strategies for solve educational problems in school zones and schools (Calvo, 2002).

It is important to clarify that when we speak of educational federalism, not looking demonstrate against federalism as a mechanism of government, but we refer to the specific strategy of decentralization in Mexico, which by the way it was done has presented disadvantages and opportunities.

After this brief review of the management periods of the education system, we are able to define the concept of national education policy in the context of educational federalism force today. For purposes of this paper, we define it as follows: set of objectives, strategies and action plans that deal with the conduct and development of the education system as a whole. A policy whose national character comes not only from the fact that it promoted or conducted by the federal authority, but because it refers to a matter of principle, involves

equally to state and local authorities. Politics, that while such collective action involves the intervention of a large number of participants, is directly linked to the fundamental tasks of the Ministry of Education, in the sense that its role as federal authority imposes on the subject, responsibilities two aspects: one related to the overall conduct of the educational system; another, with the establishment of a framework for planning to be taken by local authorities.

This guiding nature of the federal government, has ample support in legislation across different systems. Article 3 of the Constitution of the Mexican United States, in addition to enshrine the right to education makes it compulsory, free and secular education that is imparted by the State (DOF, 2002). For its part, the Education Act (DOF, 1993) of this constitutional provision to make the distribution of the educational task, Article 12 establishes the powers that correspond exclusively to the federal executive branch through the Ministry of Education, among them are:

- Determine for the Republic plans and curricula for preschool, primary, secondary, normal and for the training of basic education teachers education;
- Conduct the overall planning and programming of the national education system; and
- Ensure the evaluation of the national education system as well as to establish general guidelines for the evaluation that local authorities must make.

Article 13, this law also states the powers that correspond to LEAs, highlighting the services provide initial, basic, indigenous, special education and teacher training.

Considering the nature and scope of responsibilities in the Mexican educational system can distinguish four levels of administration: 1) Federal or central, 2) State or subnational, 3) Municipal or local, and 4) School. However, it should be noted that the municipal share is reduced to collaborate with the respective state government in the construction, maintenance and improvement of school buildings and equipment. To summarize, the responsibilities of each level are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Levels of administration of the education system in Mexico

Levels	Responsibilities	Administrative Structures
Central Administration	Scope: National education system General regulations of the education system, determination of plans and curricula for basic education and teacher training, set educational requirements for initial and preschool education, establish the school calendar, develop free textbooks, authorized textbooks for primary and secondary, regulate the national credit system,	Central Offices of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP)

Table 2: Levels of administration of the education system in Mexico

Levels	Responsibilities	Administrative Structures
	revalidation and equivalence, perform the planning, programming and global evaluation of the education system and exert the necessary powers to ensure the national character of basic and normal education.	
	<p>Scope: Capital of the country</p> <p>Provision of services of initial, basic and special education*.                      *According to the transitional quarter of the Education Act, while transferring these services to the Government of the DF is concluded, this responsibility in the country's capital, correspond to the SEP *)</p>	Federal Administration of Educational Services in the Federal District (decentralized office of the SEP)
State Administration	<p>Scope: Federal entities</p> <p>Administrative ownership in its territory, serve of initial, basic and normal education, propose regional content to be included in the plans and curricula, adjust the school calendar for each school year, validate and grant equivalence study basic education and Normal, grant, deny and revoke permission to individuals to provide basic education and teacher training.</p>	State Ministries of Education or equivalent administrative units.
Municipal Administration	<p>Scope: Local</p> <p>Promote and provide educational services of any type or form, participate in the maintenance and provision of basic public school team.</p>	Municipalities
School Administration	<p>Scope : Schools</p> <p>Direct provision of educational services</p>	School organization. Composed of directors, colleges, teachers, staff and supplemental educational services, support and assistance to education.

Source: Prepared based on the General Law of Education (DOF, 1993)

Repertoire and nature of authority cited, include those related to the planning of the educational system. The legal basis thereof, in addition to Article 12 of the General Law of Education mentioned above formed by Article 21 of the Planning Act which provides that the Federal Executive agencies should plan and conduct their activities subject to the objectives and priorities of the national development planning (DOF, 1983). However, it should be noted that although the General Law attributes the overall planning of the educational system to the federal government, decentralization forces us to rethink this role both in its methods and its resources. By increasing the involvement of local authorities in

the provision of services from educational federalism, education policy can no longer be considered an exclusive responsibility of the federal government.

Once defined the notion of national education policy and the role that federal authority as regards the Ministry of Education, touch now indicate that this policy is formally expressed in the sectoral program, according to the aforementioned Planning Act, should be integrated so every six years, which is the duration of the federal government in Mexico. For example, during the period covered by the educational federalism, were prepared as follows:

- Educational Development Program 1995-2000
- National Education Programme 2001-2006
- Education Sector Programme 2007-2012

The last program corresponds to the current government, ie the presidency of Felipe Calderón Hinojosa. In that document, objectives, strategies and lines of action of federal departments and agencies belonging to this sector are expressed. :

At present, President Calderón (SEP, 2007) noted: "The Education Sector Programme, like the rest of sectoral programs, has been prepared as a starting point Mexico's Vision 2030 and National Development Plan and the results of extensive consultation with stakeholders in the sector who have contributed diagnostic elements and action. "He pointed also to elaborate it adhered to the guidelines of the Planning Act, and is part of a strategy both to promote development country.

We conclude this section by pointing out that the Education Sector Programme represents for our purposes, the current expression of the process of change or evolution of educational policy that we alluded to the title of our article, and it shows with the educational federalism, as a relatively uniform system regulated by a central authority, it transits to another pluricentric, fragmented into 32 local educational subsystems. Educational policy causing longer a matter for the federal government.

This occurs by greater democratization and political pluralism, which makes new governments at different levels emerge from opposition parties. Which undoubtedly government becomes more difficult task given that consensus decisions should take into account the views of various political parties, social groups and dissident groups with often conflicting projects. It should be noted that in 1989, an opposition party won the first governor and ten years later there were already 11, including Mexico City as the capital. Of these, six belong to the National Action Party, four at the Party of the Democratic Revolution and one for an alliance between various parties (Espinoza, 2002). With this, the increasing presence of relatively autonomous political powers, which are not accountable to the central government but to their Voters introduces a new dynamic in the evolution of public policy in general and educational in particular. With federalism, the formulation and

implementation of education policy have become increasingly complicated. The presence of new actors and decision centers locally, requires larger and more intense negotiations to articulate and get the required support for a course of action or reform. In this context, emerges the problem of governing capacity of the Mexican educational system and the meaning the Education Sector Programme 2007-2012 formulated by the Ministry of Education as a national ministry, is an expression of national education policy.

### **3. The problems of articulation of educational policy on federalism.**

As we have seen, since the signing of the National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education in May 1992, educational policy changes genealogy. The objectives, strategies and targets previously considered national, begin to align with needs-and especially to suit the abilities-from each state. From then emerge and acquire preponderance tuning problems; educational policy as had been conceived until then it breaks. The priorities and targets set out in this document, go strictly, to be mandatory only for units responsible for the ministry of education, and agencies grouped in the sector of the federal public service coordinated by that agency.

Process certainly significant, because it leads to a sort of division of educational planning that loses cohesion. Which is due not so much to LEAs assume or diligently exercising devolved powers, but as factors associated with the fact that subnational and local governments have their own traditions, "looks" ways of understanding or doing things; as well as these, have different administrative capacity to operationalize policies and programs, why, dissimilar paths and achievements in each case (Covarrubias, 2006) are recorded.

However, the various factors that affect the governance of the education system in this paper we focus on the problem of structuring of political federalism. In this regard, we provide two types of evidence that seem significant. One, the series of testimonies of secretaries of education in the different states of the Mexican Republic, and officials from the Ministry of Education, expressed in a series of meetings called: National Dialogues on Education Policy. And two, a fundamental question: how they are structured periods of government at the federal and local levels in the Mexican state.

In the first case, are illustrative own meetings not only itself, but about everything in them expressed those responsible for education in states with regard to problems of coordination between federal and local programs on the subject. For starters it would be appropriate to say that the information presented here was no public disclosure precisely, it is the acts or what is known as "executive summaries". In these documents, defined these meetings as small workgroups, which under a "strictly confidential mechanical" allow the discussion of new scenarios for managing the Mexican educational system with state pairs and

undersecretaries; Planning and Coordination and Basic and Normal Secretariat of Public Education (SEP 2003) Education. Its objectives are mentioned:

- Create operational working groups between the Secretaries of Education of the various states and the Secretariat of Public Education.
- Confronting experiences and policies implemented by the various states, and from them, evaluate alternatives.
- Evaluate cooperatives to improve the education systems of each state strategies.

The strategy for education secretaries of the states were integrated into small groups which allow the extensive discussion on the following topics: Quality, Equality, Federalism and Financing. To this end four regional working groups were organized:

Northwest Region	Northeast Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baja California.</li> <li>- Baja California Sur.</li> <li>- Chihuahua.</li> <li>- Colima.</li> <li>- Jalisco.</li> <li>- Sonora.</li> <li>- Nayarit.</li> <li>- Sinaloa.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aguascalientes.</li> <li>- Coahuila.</li> <li>- Durango.</li> <li>- Hidalgo.</li> <li>- Nuevo León.</li> <li>- San Luis Potosí.</li> <li>- Tamaulipas.</li> <li>- Zacatecas.</li> </ul>
Center Region	Southeast Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distrito Federal.</li> <li>- Morelos.</li> <li>- Michoacán.</li> <li>- Guanajuato.</li> <li>- Guerrero.</li> <li>- Estado de México.</li> <li>- Tlaxcala.</li> <li>- Puebla.</li> <li>- Querétaro.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Campeche.</li> <li>- Oaxaca.</li> <li>- Quintana Roo.</li> <li>- Tabasco.</li> <li>- Veracruz.</li> <li>- Yucatán.</li> <li>- Chiapas.</li> </ul>

1. The topics were grouped into four areas: Quality, Equality, Federalism and Financing. The procedure used was to analyze the reports that account for the topics addressed and agreements of each working group, in order to specifically identify statements regarding the need to improve coordination between planning of federal authority and the State authorities. In this regard, it is important to note that the issue was part of the agenda of the four regional forums. The views or claims expressed about the secretaries of local officials from the Ministry of Education federal education can be summarized in the following five points: It is necessary to improve coordination between the national program and state education programs bidirectional sense, both during design and implementation.

2. It requires institutionalizing mechanisms for joint planning and coordination between federal and local education authorities. The need for a collegial body in which the actors discuss what everyone wants to do and how you can support mentioned.
3. The national education program is formulated unilaterally and centralized at the federal goals do not respond to local needs. It calls into question the contribution of federal projects to the quality of education locally.
4. The national program imposes additional workloads to state authorities without providing adequate financial support. There is a perception in local officials that their states only provide resources to federal programs, so that they will also review the financial needs of state programs.
5. States have a narrow margin of maneuver caused by chronic lack of funds. While receiving these federal funds should be allocated to payroll as well as the realization of federal programs in the federal entity.

The information presented obvious similarities in expressing those responsible for the education of states with regard to the need to coordinate the federal and state policies. Do not quote for reasons of space, but also abound claims on financing. Which besides being tied to the problem of joint policies, speak of the limited room for maneuver available to the educational authorities at both the federal and local levels to invest in new projects. It's assertion expressive responsible for education in the states of the Northeast Region in the sense that approximately 95% of the budget should be allocated to pay staff.

Also worth noting, that in December 2005 the First National Meeting of National Authorities on Planning and Educational Evaluation in which it was determined to propose to the National Council of Educational Authorities creating a permanent body to deal exclusively performed issues related to the educational planning. Months later, on April 3, 2006, he formally established the Working Committee of Educational Authorities Responsible for Planning and Evaluation, "a deliberative and thematic instance", composed of the principal areas of planning and evaluation of the secretariats and educational institutions of the states, coordinated Unit Planning and Policy Evaluation of the Secretariat of Public Education (CONAEDU, 2006). This is a far from simple purpose: to promote coordination of planning the national education system.

The issues affecting the management federalized education system, have also been addressed in the National Conference of Governors (CONAGO) -created in 2002- July 13, a space for dialogue and interaction between the Holders of State and Government Executives Mexican Federal. From a review of the agreements reached at the various meetings of governors on the subject at hand, we consider it necessary to quote the following to be specifically related to the coordination of educational policy:

MEETING	AGREEMENTS
XVII Regular Meeting held on June 7, 2004 in Villahermosa, Tabasco (CONAGO, 2004).	- The proposal to hold a meeting with the Secretary of Education is approved, and that the Secretaries of Education of the States maintain constant contact because the information presented by the Commission differs from what happens in some states on this issue.
XXIX Regular Meeting held on September 11, 2006 in Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit (CONAGO, 2006). -	- The Governor of the State of Zacatecas, Amalia García Medina D. poses within the meeting that CONAGO manifest because the Federation expedite the delivery of resources to States for education.
XXXI Regular Meeting held on February 16, 2007 in Tlaxcala, Tlaxcala (CONAGO, 2007).	In this event, the Secretary of Public Education of the Federal Government, Josefina Vazquez Mota, proposed establishing a joint educational agenda between the National Conference of Governors and the Ministry of Education, it would contain the following twelve points: - Educational backwardness - Training and updating of teachers - Participation of the school community - Evaluation of educational quality - Establishment of a national education information system - Technological modernization for education - Comprehensiveness in upper secondary education - Safety and certainty - Infrastructure - Certification of educational institutions - Educational Decentralization - Governance.
XXXII Regular Meeting held on May 29, 2007 in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco (CONAGO, 2007) Source: own calculations based on the declarations of the 36 Meetings CONAGO.	Coordinator of the Education Commission of the CONAGO is authorized to meet with the Secretary of Finance to review the budgetary aspects, highlighting the current lack of resources for infrastructure and to cover basic needs.

Source: Self elaboration based upon the declarations in the 36 Meetings of CONAGO.

It should be noted that as a result of the proposal made by the Ministry of Education, Josefina Vazquez Mota in the XXI Regular Meeting of the CONAGO, as reflected in the above table, on 26 and 27 April 2007 took place in Saltillo, Coahuila, the National Meeting of Secretaries of Education. According to the official report (CONAGO, 2007), the discussions that took place in the subject line of educational federalism, focused on "Governance and financing and the coordination between the three levels of government." At the meeting, the revision of the National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education and Normal 1992 was also discussed and the development of a new National Agreement was proposed. Among the most significant aspects that are indicated for dialogue on a new Agreement, the following were mentioned:

- Extension of Agreement to all levels of education, foster structural reform in the art that integrates all levels of education;

- Redefine the responsibilities for distribution, allocation and use of financial resources from the three levels of government, providing alternatives to compensate the existing financial deficit;
- Contents, materials, and assessments to improve educational quality,
- Expansion of services and educational infrastructure to ensure universal coverage of education; and
- Promote the participation of parents and other stakeholders in the public, private and social spheres in the educational process and its improvement.

It is now refer to the second type of evidence, in our opinion, has to do with a root cause of the disruption and incoherence of the actions of the Mexican government on major social issues such as education. The many "gaps" resulting from the asynchrony between cycles of activity of the government's structural origin of major inconsistencies between national and local planning.

As noted in Section 1, wherein propose the government education system as a complex task, the education system does not operate in a vacuum, in the case of Mexico, articulation problems to which we have referred must be placed in the framework which points Aguilar (2010), in the sense that today, a critical issue in the operation of government is its fragmentation and incoherence. He argues that the Mexican State is a constellation of divergent self-referred and political organizations. A view is the breakdown of concepts, approaches, practices and priorities. For our part, we would add that education policy is one of the buttons example of this.

As shown in the following table 3, only five legislatures of the 32 states coincide with the cycle of the central government: Chiapas, Mexico City, Guanajuato, Morelos and Tabasco. The remaining twenty-seven states, should develop their programs, taking into account two different national education programs. For example, in the case of Aguascalientes, the "incoming state government" must develop its planning taking into account the guidelines of a "projection federal government." Table political affiliation of governments is also shown. As can be seen, the party in the federal government's National Action Party (PAN) and the opposition parties are the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).

This explains largely the concern expressed by the then Secretary of Basic and Normal Education, Lorenzo Gomez-Morin in the sense that: "... there are states that built their policy with a national plan, and if there was a national change, they drop another program (national) above "(CONAEDU, 2003).

**Table 3 : Periods of Government and Political Map of Mexico**

	2001 – 2006						2007 - 2012						2013 - 2018					
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Gobierno Federal</b>							PAN											
Aguascalientes							PAN											
Baja California							PAN			PAN								
Baja California Sur							PRD											
Campeche							PRI			PRI								
Coahuila							PRI											
Colima							PRI			PRI								
Chiapas							PRD											
Chihuahua							PRI											
Distrito Federal							PRD											
Durango							PRI											
Guanajuato							PAN											
Guerrero							PRD											
Hidalgo							PRI											
Jalisco							PAN			PAN								
México							PRI											
Michoacán							PRD			PRD								
Morelos							PAN											
Nayarit							PRI											
Nuevo León							PRI			PRI								
Oaxaca							PRI			PAN-PRD								
Puebla							PRI											
Querétaro							PAN			PRI								
Quintana Roo							PRI											
San Luis Potosí							PAN			PRI								
Sinaloa							PRI											
Sonora							PRI			PAN								
Tabasco							PRI											
Tamaulipas							PRI											
Tlaxcala							PAN											
Veracruz							PRI											
Yucatán							PAN			PRI								
Zacatecas							PRD											

Tags: Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). National Action Party (PAN). Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).  
Source: Self Prepared

If we look at things in more detail, we can realize that besides lapses or discontinuities caused by multiple bottlenecks, in the first year of the federal government lacks a national planning. It should be noted that Article 21 of the Planning Act, granted within six months to prepare the National Development Plan (DOF, 1983). And virtually the remaining six months of the first year of management are intended for the development of the respective sectoral programs. This is fairly simple, but illustrates the problem of mismatch between periods or cycles of government in Mexico.

Federally change results in a cascade of transitions locally. Where there besides the risk of transitions longer, due to incoming authorities should also expect that the federal government released the National Development Plan, especially the various sectoral programs that guide the formulation of own plans and programs. This speaks of a dispersion of effort, significant opportunity costs are generated.

All this should lead to wonder about the implications of the lack of harmony in government periods have, in terms of planning overall development of the country as well as their own states, especially in areas such as education claiming the treatment of long-term policies. It is very difficult to align policies when most states must assemble your planning taking as reference sectoral programs in two different federal administrations. Referring to the need to carefully review the Mexican political system to detect dysfunctions, Francisco Casanova (2008) states that it is convenient to rearrange the election and periods of government of the country to improve governance and efficiency calendars.

In addition to the gap between the design of national policy and state policies, the chronic shortage of resources reinforces the fact that SEP enjoys a margin of maneuver to gravitate quite narrow as normative element of the education system. To illustrate this situation, it is noteworthy that Mexico spends 5.7% of its national education revenue with what percentage has the highest rate of investment in OECD countries (21.7% of total government expenditure compared to an average 13.3% in the OECD), however, in absolute numbers, spending per pupil remains very low. For example, Mexico spent \$ 2.111 per pupil in primary education compared to an average of \$ 6.741 in the OECD, and \$ 2.236 per pupil in secondary education versus an average of 8,267 in the OECD (2010). In addition to the limited budget, over 90% of expenditure is consumed by the payment of payroll staff (OECD, 2010).

To continue spending the same structure, ie, tied mainly current spending increases is not clear where to go for additional funding to be earmarked for special programs such as quality, equity and efficiency of education. Of those who depend heavily influence the possibilities of the future in the desired direction.

In short, the impact of multiple transitions of government is not easy to measure, policies are talking about medium and long term, but as we have already noted, the lags of educational policy seriously damage the dynamics and efficiency of government in this important area.

#### **4. Sectoral Education Program versus national education policy.**

In this section we will make some clarifications that help us to answer the question of whether the conditions mentioned above, the Education Sector Programme and the National Policy on Education are equivalent issues. To begin we must say that although broadly the concept of sector can be understood all public and private organizations within a society

provide a good or service; specifically in the field of public administration, a sector refers to a party in which it is divided to fulfill a function or purpose that is inherent to the State. Sectorization represents the delineation of roles and responsibilities in homogeneous groups of activity to clarify responsibilities, avoid duplication of functions and enable government decisions to flow efficiently.

In this sense, the policy of a sector can be defined as behavior that assumes the government intended to effectively articulate the actions of the agencies and entities which contribute to the implementation of the same subject, under the coordination of a ministry legally responsible to set the guidelines and guidance necessary to give coherence to government policies and thereby avoid the contradiction of shares within the same sector. Thus, the action of the cluster of organizations that make up a sector gravitates singularly about a character who formally has the authority and responsibility to formulate sectoral policy: the minister or secretary of the branch or sector.

In a federal system, the government adopted this form of organization leads to the existence of sectors at the federal, state and municipal levels. Of course in the case of the federal government, unlike the local level, sectors are characterized by their usual activities have implications for the country as a whole. In this sense, the formulation of sectoral policy by a federal ministry, is a responsibility linked to the notion of national policy, whose formal expression is ordinarily contained in sectoral plans or programs which by their nature and sphere of influence, "govern" the set of sectoral and institutional programs of local character.

These details are useful for determining where the notion of national education policy with respect to the Education Sector Programme 2007 2012. Raising the outset that are not equivalent issues; the first has as regards the education system as a whole and it is for three levels of government. The Sector Programme, meanwhile, but also is eyeing to, objectives, lines of action and goals commit national education system strictly, only to the administrative units of the Ministry of Education and the sectoral bodies coordinated by this dependence. The same is true in each state, where local authorities are governed in the first instance, for their own education sector programs.

Similarly, the very name of the Sector Programme, appears to account for a kind of waiver or recognition by the federal government, shortened possibilities driving the national education system. The sectoral nature of the program, in contrast to the designation given to previous programs mentioned above.

What apparently could be only a matter of form, becomes meaningful if taking into account the few references therein, decentralized management and administration of the education system. For example, the National Education Programme 2001-2006, is devoted one of its three parts, the management of the education system.

## **Final thoughts**

After two decades of reforms to the education systems in several countries in Latin America, the issue of governance of the education system as a theoretical, political and practical problem emerges clearly. And since this system does not operate in a vacuum, it is an issue that must be seen in the broader governance problems of society as a whole context. There is ample evidence to justify a broader perspective, as increasingly phenomena occurring outside the education system penetrate its scope

As we have seen the problem of driving education systems has to do with the fact that education is increasingly less like a system lacks a single center from where you drive it, the actors are increasingly more numerous and increasingly complicated and in many cases more polarized relationship.

In Mexico the National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education May 1992, by which basic education services to the states are transferred, educational policy loses cohesion. The compact policy which had for decades been structured vertically thereafter began a process of dismantling.

Among the main reasons we mention that a sort of lack of responsibility held by the federal government. Decentralization was used to take a share of responsibilities in which, as if it were a hydraulic movement, one level of government receives what the other loses. As a result, mechanisms that would allow joint efforts between government levels were neglected.

No less important is the way they are structured periods of government in the Mexican state. As has been documented, it is a substantive issue that limits the structuring of political federalism. The gap between government cycles to federal and local levels, is the origin of the problems of fragmentation and inconsistency in education and in other important areas of public policy.

Against this, a realistic goal is to build long-term comprehensive policies to enable sync and rebuild the unity of state action in education and thereby reduce the numerous lapses that afflict action in this field. A disordered, dispersed state is ineffective even when resources become available and formally detente power. New trends in governance and public administration appear to be directed to the reconstruction of the lost unity of the state structure and action.

In this sense, the claim of a systemic and comprehensive vision of the educational task in our country, will be required to eventual risk of further fragmentation of the educational system. This approach turns out to be significant for purposes of the study not only the object but in terms of its management. Today, that federalization a larger number of

institutions and actors are involved in educational task, the more necessary it be a vision that recognizes the existence of different levels of action and the importance of their joint.

The segmentation of the educational system as a side effect of decentralization may lead to loss of essential global perspective for decision-making, both statewide and nationally, if not taken into account that education issues and even their solutions exceed jurisdictions and capacities.

In short, with the development of this test is expected to provide elements that help you think more clearly about the problems of disarticulation affecting public policy in Mexico. It's a topic that so far has not aroused much interest among specialists and academics. However, in the federal state structure, is a factor that prevents respond in an orderly, coordinated and effective response to the problems that affect us all way.

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