

## **AN OVERVIEW OF MEXICO'S SYSTEM OF LEGAL EDUCATION\***

Luis Fernando PÉREZ HURTADO\*\*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In 2001, a United Nations Human Rights Commission visited Mexico to assess the degree of independence of its judges and lawyers.<sup>1</sup> Among other findings, the final report concluded that "[the] total want of organization of legal education and qualification for practice, and the lack of organization of the profession, without any disciplinary procedures to ensure accountability, may have been the cause of the many ills in the administration of justice in Mexico over the years."<sup>2</sup> The report further indicated that "it is imperative that the government undertakes without delay a study of the system of legal education and qualification to practice the legal profession in Mexico, at both the federal and State levels."<sup>3</sup>

Despite its bearing on the quality and efficiency of the legal system, little is known about Mexican legal education. Few studies have been carried out on this topic and most consist of anecdotal accounts or personal points of view on the current characteristics of, or suggested improvements for, legal education at particular universities. There are few empirical studies on the matter; even if such studies provide valuable information and an interesting analysis, many topics need exploration.

One of the first efforts to describe Mexican legal education was Charles Eisenmann's study carried out in 1954, *The University Teaching of Social Sciences: Law*, which included Mexico as one of the countries studied.<sup>4</sup> Several other studies came from five Latin American law school conferences organized by UDUAL (*Unión de Universidades de América Latina y el Caribe*) between 1959 and 1972, which addressed topics like curriculum content, teaching and pedagogy, legal research, and institutional organization. Some of these studies have been included in two of the most influential books on Mexican legal education: Héctor Fix-Zamudio's *Metodología, Docencia e Investigación Jurídicas*, and Jorge Witker's *Antología de Estudios sobre Enseñanza del Derecho*.<sup>5</sup> These works describe Mexican law schools and legal education in the 1960s and 1970s, pointing out the advantages and problems of such education and suggesting different approaches to improve it. Most of the studies published thereafter either focus only on a single university, a specific legal area or a geographical region.<sup>6</sup> The limited number of empirical studies on this subject (e.g. the work of Héctor Fix-Fierro, Sergio López-Ayllón and Ana Laura Magaloni)<sup>7</sup> provide little information on the situation nationwide.

In addition, my field work<sup>8</sup> has revealed that the government collects only limited information on the institutions of higher education (hereinafter also referred to as "institutions" or "IHE") that offer a bachelor's degree in law (hereinafter also referred to as *Licenciatura en Derecho* or "LED").<sup>9</sup> The analysis, evaluation and planning of legal education is based on particular guidelines at each IHE, mainly built upon the individual perceptions and opinions of faculty members and administrative staff. There is no existing agency to regulate or provide guidelines for legal education. As a result, there is general agreement among faculty, deans and practitioners that the problems and challenges of legal education and legal practice must be addressed urgently.

But what do we mean by "Mexico's system of legal education"? Broadly speaking, the legal education system consists of formal and informal educational experiences that prepare lawyers to practice law.<sup>10</sup> These begin before students enroll in a program and continue throughout their careers. In addition to studying for a bachelor's degree in law these experiences include students' perceptions of a range of topics that comprise the law and any law courses taken before the LED; internships, *pro bono* work and extracurricular undergraduate activities; graduate programs, continuing education and other courses; as well as programs focused on specific legal activities like those for the judiciary and notaries.

More specifically, Mexico's system of legal education refers to the *Licenciatura en Derecho*, the basic program that will ultimately allow graduates to practice law.<sup>11</sup> This system focuses on the creation, operation and development of institutions of higher education that offer a LED; the regulatory framework that applies to higher education and professional practice; students' profiles and interests; professors' training, performance and experience; the structure and contents of the study plans and programs; as well as the educational context of the teaching-learning process. This study will be based on this specific understanding of Mexico's legal education system.

**For those not familiar with legal education in Mexico and the LED**, it is important to first clarify some general characteristics, which will be developed more fully below:

- a. The basic law degree —*Licenciatura en Derecho*— is not a graduate program as in the United States, but an undergraduate degree.
- b. At the beginning of the 2006-2007 academic year, 930 institutions offered an LED. Less than 20% of these institutions are involved in research or academic extension activities. Some institutions offer two or more LEDs with different modalities, durations and/or approaches.
- c. In most IHEs, the curriculum is rigid. Students at each level are assigned courses, professors, and schedules without any choices or elective courses. Law students take between 40 and 70 mandatory courses during their studies.
- d. Over 90% of the law professors combine teaching with professional practice, and most law degree programs do not have full-time faculty.
- e. The cost to open and run a law degree program is low. In general, all that is required is a few badly paid lecturers; facilities for educational purposes with one classroom for each level; and a library with the books recommended for each course.

The present article focuses on three aspects of the structure of legal education in Mexico: *a)* the procedure to obtain the license to practice law; *b)* the content and structure of the law degree programs; and *c)* the increase in the number of law degree programs, focusing on the causes and characteristics of this growth.

## **II. THE PROCESS TO OBTAIN A LICENSE TO PRACTICE LAW**

At first glance, the process to obtain a license to practice law in Mexico seems straightforward. After graduating from high school, a student begins the *Licenciatura en Derecho* at an institution belonging to the National Education System. There, the student takes the required courses, meets the institution's requirements to graduate and gets a diploma. The student then registers the diploma at the General Office for Professional Practice, and finally gets a license (*cédula profesional*) that allows him to practice law anywhere in the country.

[...]

### **3. *What requirements are needed to obtain a law diploma?***

A professional diploma is a document issued by public or private institutions with RVOE to someone who has met with all the graduation requirements.<sup>31</sup> Obtaining the license for professional practice is simply an administrative process, which consists of registering the diploma with the appropriate authorities. The difference between a law graduate who cannot practice and one who can is the fulfillment of the requirements to obtain a law diploma.

All institutions of higher education share certain common requirements to obtain a diploma.<sup>32</sup> The student must have *a)* taken and passed all the courses in the corresponding plan of study, *b)* completed mandatory *pro bono* service, and *c)* fulfilled the graduation requirements stated in the institution's internal rules.

[...]

Each institution determines its graduation requirements in its internal rules. In other countries —the United States, for instance— the local bar association or the judicial branch of government determines the requirements a graduate must fulfill in order to practice law. Generally, in these countries, a standardized exam designed by the professional association or the judicial branch must be passed. However, in Mexico, institutions determine the requirements their own law graduates must complete to be able to practice.

[...]

### **4. *How is a license to practice law obtained?***

A professional license is required to practice law.<sup>44</sup> Obtaining a license is a simple administrative procedure that consists of registering the diploma from a public or private institution with the DGP,<sup>45</sup> the federal authority able to issue professional licenses valid nationwide.<sup>46</sup> Anyone can obtain a license to practice as long as the diploma comes from an IHE that has been registered at the DGP.<sup>47</sup> This procedure is to check compliance with IHE requirements for degree conferral, as well as the validity of the diploma.<sup>48</sup>

Even if the lawyer's profession requires a license to practice law, this license is necessary only when working with judiciary authorities and in an administrative dispute when acting as an agent, employer or adviser,<sup>49</sup> except when acting as an agent in labor, agrarian or cooperative law matters, and in the case of constitutional protections in criminal law.<sup>50</sup> Thus, those without a license cannot present themselves as lawyers or act as such in the above situations. However, they may give legal advice and express their opinion in legal matters without engaging in unauthorized practice of law.

[...]

### **5. *Quality of law degree programs***

Each law school, and not lawyers' associations or the judicial branch, generally determines its study plan and programs as well as the requirements for graduates to become licensed lawyers. The process to incorporate an institution into the National

Education System is not intended to achieve specific quality standards; rather, its purpose is to assure minimum educational conditions for a law degree program.

[...]

### **III. STUDY PLANS AND PROGRAMS FOR THE *LICENCIATURA EN DERECHO***

While there is no "national law curriculum" in Mexico, there are common characteristics that will be explored here.

#### **1. *Basic legal education***

The contents of the academic programs are defined in plans and programs of study. As mentioned above, public IHEs, private IHEs with a presidential decree RVOE, and, to a certain degree, private IHEs with federal or state RVOE, are free to define their own study plans and programs.

One may think that such freedom and the lack of a mandatory standardized exam would produce a wide variety of structures, contents and approaches in the plans of study of Mexico's LED programs. However, that is not necessarily the case. Based on the analysis of several institutions, plans and programs of study are very similar. They generally differ only in some courses each law school adds according to their approach or ideology, or in areas of specialization at higher levels of study. Ana Laura Magaloni points out that: "In our experience when we started the CIDE program, we could see that there is a strong idea in Mexico that a set of substantive law courses is the central core of lawyers' education. Thus, its modification or reduction would practically mean not to train lawyers."<sup>56</sup> Moreover, upon analyzing the plans of study of seven leading institutions in the country, she adds, "variations in the programs are subtle, and the emphasis is on the substantive law courses that intend to soundly describe branches considered 'fundamental' in the regulatory system."<sup>57</sup>

[...]

#### **2. *Basic courses in the study plans***

In general, law students take between 40 and 70 mandatory courses as part of the law program. This considerable number of courses confirms the idea that Mexican law students receive an "encyclopedic" education: "A lawyer must know all the areas of law."<sup>61</sup>

In its study plans, each institution integrates some courses that reflect its identity or ideology, as well as courses in one or several specialized fields of law if the program has a particular focus. However, a set of courses considered the basic legal education is included in every law program.<sup>62</sup> The first level usually includes courses like Introduction to the Study of Law, Civil Law (Individual Rights and Family Law), Roman Law, Sociology of Law, Economic Theory, and Legal Methodology.

[...]

Some of the courses that have been introduced recently in an increasing number of programs are Electoral Law, Human Rights Law, International Commerce Law, Securities Law, Environmental Law and Intellectual Property Law. At advanced levels, some

programs have sets of courses designed for students seeking a particular specialization, as well as elective courses, seminars and/or law clinics.

[...]

## **5. Division and duration of law programs**

In general, each IHE decides the academic terms and the duration of its study plan. Still, Agreement 279, which standardizes certain aspects of higher education, states that the minimum amount of time for learning activities under an instructor's guidance in a full-time program is 2,400 hours.<sup>67</sup>

Traditionally, law programs lasted five years, but since the 1980s, shorter programs have been developed. By the 2006-2007 academic year, only 23% of full-time law programs were five-year programs.<sup>68</sup> In contrast, 33% of the full-time law programs that year were less than four years long.<sup>69</sup> A few full-time LEDs may be completed in two years and eight months.

[...]

## **IV. THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF LAW SCHOOLS**

During the 1997-1998 academic year, there were 170,210 law students in 364 institutions offering 367 LEDs. By the 2006-2007 academic year, the number of law students had increased to approximately 240,000 distributed among 930 institutions offering 1,130 LEDs.<sup>73</sup> This represents a 41% increase in enrollment over the past decade, a 156% increase in IHEs offering a law program, and a 208% increase in *Licenciaturas en Derecho*.<sup>74</sup> In other words, in the past ten years, approximately every week a new law school begins to offer one or two new LEDs to 134 new law students.

It is a paradox that this rapid increase of the number of law programs has occurred simultaneously with a serious problem of lack of job opportunities for law graduates. In principle, higher education must give a balanced response to both social demand for opportunities of higher education and the needs of the job market. Nevertheless, employment prospects for most law graduates are not very good. In the 1990s, ANUIES examined the employment prospects for graduates from different programs.<sup>75</sup> The study found that 13 programs, including the LED, had a high enrollment surplus, which could be considered critical in the mid-term job market.<sup>76</sup> The study calculated a surplus of approximately 47% of the law graduates and points out that "long-term perspectives (through 2010) further emphasize the adverse conditions expected for the job market."<sup>77</sup> The ANUIES study concludes that law graduates, like those in other *critical* programs, "may be unemployed, and at best, they may find a low quality occupation that is not a professional career. This implies a considerable amount of sub-employment for professionals."<sup>78</sup>

The main causes of this growth include: 1) increased availability of higher education in Mexico, in general, in response to the growing demand for higher education programs; 2) ease with which new law programs can be started, as well as the low investment required to do so; and 3) the wide range of reasons students have to study law.

[...]

## V. SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. The quality and structure of Mexican legal education directly affects the quality of the professional services lawyers offer, as well as the quality and efficiency of Mexico's legal system. Despite its importance, there are only a few studies on Mexican legal education and very little is known about the subject. This study aims to provide information about the subject by analyzing the structure of Mexico's system of legal education, specifically the content and structure of the law programs and the procedure to obtain the license to practice law.
2. In a narrow sense, the term Mexico's system of legal education refers to the necessary studies and requirements for obtaining a license to practice as a lawyer. At first glance, the process that allows an individual to practice law seems to be straightforward. After graduating from high school, a student begins the *Licenciatura en Derecho* at an institution that is part of the National Education System. There, the student takes the requisite courses, meets the institution's graduation requirements, and earns the degree diploma. The student then registers the diploma at the General Office for Professional Practice, and finally receives the license (*cédula profesional*), which allows that individual to practice as a lawyer throughout the country. However, each of the steps may present some variations depending on the specific case; for instance, there are different ways for an institution to be part of the National Education System, each of them with its own requirements and procedures. The way in which each IHE enters the system determines the degree of academic and administrative freedom the institution has and, consequently, the flexibility to define the requirements that its students must meet in order to obtain the law degree and the license to practice law.
3. In general, law students take between 40 and 70 mandatory courses during the law program. Moreover, each institution integrates some courses that reflect its identity or ideology into its study plans, as well as courses in one or several law areas if the program has a particular specialization. Despite the relative freedom that IHE have to define study plans and programs, they do not differ significantly in the content of the law programs that they offer. This uniformity is the result of the strong belief among lawyers regarding a "core" of knowledge that every law student must acquire, the lack of appropriate proposals promoting change, and the standardized process for recognizing study plans and programs for most private IHE. Existing differences do not center on the content of the study plan, but rather on the program structure and development, including the degree of flexibility, division, duration and class shift.
4. Mexico's system of legal education has increased in size dramatically. Even though employment prospects for most law graduates are not very optimal, enrollment in legal education programs has grown by 41% in the past decade, with a corresponding 156% increase in the number of IHE offering a law program, and a 208% increase in *Licenciaturas en Derecho*. In other words, during the past ten years, every week, an institution began to offer one or two new LED programs to 134 new law students. The principal causes of this growth include: 1) the increased availability of higher education in Mexico, in general, as a response to the growing demand for higher education programs; 2) the ease with which a new law program could be started, including the low investment required; and 3) the diverse reasons that students have to study law. The largest increases have been in a) private education, especially in small IHE and in IHE that belong to a system of institutions; b) regions that formerly offered fewer educational opportunities; and c) locations outside of the Major Urban Zones.



5. The rapid growth in the number of institutions that offer law degrees as well as the new role of law in Mexico require a clear definition of what basic legal knowledge is and who can practice law. Debates and initiatives addressing this challenge should be based on reliable, updated information, as well as on meaningful and systematic research on this subject. This study aims to provide useful information for the endeavors and serve as a catalyst for new research on the matter.

\* This article is based on Chapter II of Luis Fernando Pérez Hurtado, *The Next Generation of Mexican Lawyers: A Study of Mexico's System of Legal Education and its Law Students* (2008) (J.S.D. dissertation, Stanford Law School), available at [www.ceed.org.mx](http://www.ceed.org.mx).

\*\* Director of the Centro de Estudios sobre la Enseñanza y el Aprendizaje del Derecho (CEEAD), a research center on legal education based on Monterrey, Mexico ([www.ceed.org.mx](http://www.ceed.org.mx)). LL.B. from Universidad Panamericana in Mexico City; LL.M. from Harvard Law School; J.S.M. and J.S.D. from Stanford Law School. E-mail: [luisph@ceed.org.mx](mailto:luisph@ceed.org.mx).

## Notes

1 *Civil and Political Rights, Including Questions of: Independence of the Judiciary, Administration of Justice, Impunity. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, Dato Param Kumaraswamy, Submitted in Accordance with Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2001/39. Addendum. Report on the Mission to Mexico*, U.N. ESCOR, 58th Sess., at 4, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/2002/72/Add.1 (2002).

2 *Id.* at 41.

3 *Id.* at 45.

4 Charles Eisenmann, *The University Teaching of Social Sciences: Law* (Revised and enlarged ed. 1973).

5 Héctor Fix-Zamudio, *Metodología, Docencia e Investigación Jurídicas* (12th ed. 2004); *Antología de Estudios sobre Enseñanza del Derecho* (Jorge Witker ed., 1976).

6 For example, see *La Enseñanza del Derecho en la Universidad Iberoamericana* (Víctor Manuel Rojas ed., 2002); Universidad Iberoamericana, *Diagnóstico sobre la Educación Legal en Derechos Humanos en México* (2002); or David Cienfuegos Salgado, *Breve introducción sobre la enseñanza del derecho en Guerrero*, *Lex, Difusión y Análisis*, 3th Epoch, Year VII, No. III (September 2004).

7 For example, see *Del Gobierno de los Abogados al Imperio de las Leyes. Estudios Sociojurídicos sobre Educación y Profesión Jurídicas en el México Contemporáneo* (Héctor Fix-Fierro ed., 2006).

8 See *infra* Section VI.

9 Several concepts mentioned in this study can have varying interpretations. Therefore, I here provide the following definitions to specify how each term is used in this study.

— *Institution or IHE*: An establishment, campus, academic unit, institution or center of higher education. Most university systems and public universities are formed by two or more IHEs. Even if some institutions are part of the same university and share administrative structures and some educational elements, each IHE operates within a different context. As a result, in this study, we will differentiate such IHEs for purposes of clarity.

— *IHE System*: A group of IHEs under the same administrative, financial, curricular, and/or pedagogical structure. Each IHE system states the characteristics or elements that unify or identify the institutions that form the system. In the case of public institution systems, IHEs generally share the same administrative, financial and curricular structures. The private institution systems present different kinds of structures and most are operated by corporations, families or religious groups.

— *Academic year*: This term is synonymous with "school year." The academic year generally starts in August or September and finishes by the following June or July.

— *Academic Terms*: These are blocks of time into which each academic year is divided. Generally, the division is into years, semesters, four-month periods or quarters.

10 The term "lawyer" is used in this study for the terms "*Abogado*" and "*Licenciado en Derecho*" as used in Mexico.

11 The principal federal laws, regulations and agreements relevant to legal education and legal practice in Mexico are:

— Articles 3 and 5 of the Mexican Constitution (*Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, hereinafter referred to as "Const.");

— General Education Law (*Ley General de Educación*, hereinafter referred to as "LGE") (Published in the Federal Official Gazette (*Diario Oficial de la Federación*, hereinafter referred to as "D.O.F.") on July 13, 1993). According to Article 1: "This law governs the education provided by the State—Federation, federal entities, and municipalities—, their decentralized organs and private entities with authorization or recognition of official validity of studies.";

— Law for the Coordination of Higher Education (*Ley para la Coordinación de la Educación Superior*, hereinafter referred to as "LCES") (Published in the D.O.F. on December 29, 1978). Article 1 establishes that this law "is of general observance in the entire Republic, and its purpose is to establish foundations for the distribution of the higher educational functions among the Federation, the states and the municipalities, as well as to foresee corresponding economic contributions, in order to contribute to the development and coordination of higher education.";

— Regulatory Law of the Constitutional Article 5 relating to the Practice of Professions (*Ley Reglamentaria del Artículo 5 Constitucional*, hereinafter referred to as "LR5") (Published in the D.O.F. on May 26, 1945). Article 1 points out that LR5 dispositions will govern the Federal District in common order matters, the Republic in federal matters, except those excluded by the LGE and in local authorities concurrent with jurisdiction matters;

— Agreement Number 234 which establishes the General Bases for Authorization or Recognition of Official Validity of Studies (*Acuerdo 243*, hereinafter referred to as "Agreement 243") (Published in the D.O.F. on May 27, 1998);

— Agreement Number 279 which establishes the Formalities and Procedures related to the Recognition of Official Validity of Studies (*Acuerdo 279*, hereinafter referred to as "Agreement 279") (Published in the D.O.F. on July 10, 2000).

31 Articles 1 of LR5, 12 of RLR5 and 1 of LGE.

32 Article 8 of LR5.

44 Article 2 of LR5.

45 There are two other ways to obtain a law license without a law degree from an institution incorporated to the National Education System. One is to register a diploma from a foreign institution issued to a Mexican law graduate. See Agreement 286 where Self-Acquired Knowledge or Working Experience Knowledge are Accredited, published in the D.O.F. on October 30, 2000, and its modification by Agreement 328, published in the D.O.F. on July 30, 2003. The other is for a person to validate self-taught legal knowledge through working experience. See [http://www.sep.gob.mx/wb2/sep/sep\\_1285\\_acreditacion\\_de\\_cono](http://www.sep.gob.mx/wb2/sep/sep_1285_acreditacion_de_cono).

46 Article 23 of LR5.

47 Article 3 of LR5. See articles 14, 15 and 18 of RLR5. The documents submitted with the application are: birth certificate, high school diploma, *pro bono* service certificate, final overall examination act or waiver of final examination, and the professional diploma. For further information on the procedure, see Requisitos para el Registro y Expedición de Cédula Profesional, available at: [http://www.sep.gob.mx/wb2/sep/sep\\_Registro\\_de\\_Titulo\\_y\\_Expedicion\\_de\\_Cedula\\_Prof](http://www.sep.gob.mx/wb2/sep/sep_Registro_de_Titulo_y_Expedicion_de_Cedula_Prof).

48 The number of licenses to practice law has increased in the last years, from 14,699 in 1999 to 19,958 in 2003. Source: Information provided by the Dirección de Autorización y Registro Profesional (March 17, 2004). The increase will continue, not only because of the increase in the LED enrollment, but also because institutions are simplifying the degree conferral process.

49 Articles 27 and 28 of the LR5.

50 Article 27 of LR5.

56 Ana Laura Magaloni, *Cuellos de botella y ventanas de oportunidad de la reforma a la educación jurídica de elite en México*, in Del Gobierno de los Abogados al Imperio de las Leyes 61, 83 (Héctor Fix-Fierro ed., 2006).

57 *Id.* at 64.

61 Magaloni points out that, "[In law programs,] a teaching model based on the transmission of a great amount of information about the content of rules, and about key legal concepts to understand those rules prevails. The idea that a good lawyer is one who knows lots of laws, is still deeply rooted in Mexican legal education." Ana Laura Magaloni, *supra* note 66, at 64.

62 The names of the courses may vary in some programs, as well as the level at which they are taken, but the content is generally the same.

67 Article 15 of Agreement 279. Study plans for all bachelor's degrees, including law, will consist of at least 300 credits. One credit equals 16 hours of effective learning activities. A learning activity is any action in which the student participates to acquire the required knowledge and skills in a study plan, either under academic staff supervision or independently. Articles 13, frac. II and 14 of Agreement 279. 67

68 However, this correspond to 55% of the law programs in public IHEs, and only 19% of the law programs in private IHEs. 68

69 All of these programs, except one, are offered at private institutions. 69

73 Source: Personal database and data from the Dirección de Análisis y Sistemas de Información de la SEP. 73

74 Population in Mexico increased 13% over the same period. Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI). 74

75 ANUIES, Mercado Laboral de Profesionistas en México: Escenarios de Prospectiva 2000-2006-2010, Segunda Parte (2003).

76 Besides law, the other critical degrees are Business Administration, Accounting, Computer and Systems Engineering, Elementary Education, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Medicine, Political Sciences and Public Administration, Pedagogy and Education Sciences, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Communication Sciences, Marketing and Architecture, all which, according to the study, "will provide 82% of the total offer of professionals with a bachelor's degree during 2000-2006." *Id.* at 217. 76

77 *Id.* at 218. 77

78 *Id.* 78

79 ANUIES, Anuario Estadístico 2004. Población Escolar de Licenciatura y Técnico Superior en Universidades e Institutos Tecnológicos 4 (2004), citing as source: Anuarios Estadísticos de la ANUIES, 1980-2004 and SEP, *Sistema educativo de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Principales cifras ciclo escolar 2006-2007* (2007), at 177, available at: [www.dgpp.sep.gob.mx/Estadi/Principales%20cifras%202006-2007%20gris1.pdf](http://www.dgpp.sep.gob.mx/Estadi/Principales%20cifras%202006-2007%20gris1.pdf).

80 Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, Education at a Glance 2007, Briefing Note for Mexico 7 (2007) (hereinafter referred to as "OECD, Briefing Note for Mexico"), available at: [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/51/22/37392816.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/51/22/37392816.pdf). 80

81 See, for example Secretaría de Educación Pública, Programa para la Modernización Educativa 1989-94 (1989); *id.*, Programa Nacional de Educación 1995-2000 (1995); *id.*, Programa Nacional de Educación 2001-2006 (2001). 81

82 Instituto Internacional para la Educación Superior en América Latina y el Caribe / International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC-UNESCO), Informe sobre la Educación Superior en América Latina y el Caribe 2000-2005. La Metamorfosis de la Educación Superior 247 (2006) (hereinafter referred to as "IESALC-UNESCO").

83 Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, Education at a Glance 2007, OECD Indicators 286-87 and 294 (2007) (hereinafter referred to as "OECD, Education at a Glance 2007"), available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/4/55/39313286.pdf>.

84 One study that explores these ideas is: OECD, Education at a Glance 2007, *supra* note 94, especially the sections "A8: How does participation in education affect participation in the labor market?" and "A9: What are the economic benefits of education?"

85 OECD, Education at a Glance 2007, *supra* note 94, at 136. See also OECD, Briefing Note for Mexico, *supra* note 91, at 8.

86 Indicator A4: What are the students' expectations for education?; Table A4.1a. Percentage of students that expect to complete different levels of education (2003), in OECD, Education at a Glance 2007, *supra* note 94, at 84 (Source: OECD PISA 2003). See also OECD, Briefing Note for Mexico, *supra* note 91, at 13. It is important to point out that in Mexico the percent of women that want to complete a bachelor's degree is 56%, surpassing 42% for men.

92 ANUIES, *Anuario Estadístico 2003, Licenciatura en Universidades e Institutos Tecnológicos, Resúmenes y Series Históricas* 17 (2003), available at: <http://www.anuies.mx>. 92

93 See Luis Fernando Perez Hurtado, *The Next Generation of Mexican Lawyers: A Study of Mexico's System of Legal Education and its Law Students* (2008) (J.S.D. dissertation, Stanford Law School), available at: [www.educacionjuridica.org](http://www.educacionjuridica.org) (Chapter IV: Deciding to Study Law). 93

94 In private IHEs enrollment in law programs increased from 63,310 students to approximately 124,600, the number of IHEs with LEDs increased from 297 to 822, and the number of law programs increased from 299 to 1005. Source: Personal database and data from the Dirección de Análisis y Sistemas de Información de the SEP. 94

95 In public IHEs enrollment in law programs increased from 106,900 students to approximately 115,400, the number of IHEs with LEDs increased from 67 to 108, and the number of law programs increased from 68 to 125. Source: Personal database and data from the Dirección de Análisis y Sistemas de Información of the SEP. 95

96 Héctor Fix-Fierro & Sergio López-Ayllón, *¿Muchos abogados pero poca profesión? Derecho y profesión jurídica en el México contemporáneo*, *supra* note 88, at 18. 96

97 As mentioned before, a System of IHEs is formed of two or more IHEs sharing the same organizational, administrative, financing, curricular, ideological and/or pedagogical structure. Each system states the characteristics or elements that unify or identify the institutions in the system. We only took into account those Systems that offer law programs at two or more of their institutions. 97

98 There are three systems with more than 20 private institutions: Universidad UNIVER with 37 IHE; Red UVM (Universidad del Valle de México) with 25 IHE; and Sistema UNID (Universidad Interamericana para el Desarrollo) with 22 IHE. As a basis for comparison, the public institution system with the most IHEs is the Red UdG (Universidad de Guadalajara), with 13 institutions, followed by the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, with 10 institutions. 98

99 ANUIES divides IHEs into 6 regions: Northwest (Baja California, Baja California Sur, Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Sonora); Northeast (Coahuila de Zaragoza, Durango, Nuevo León, San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas); Central-West (Aguascalientes, Colima, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit); Mexico City Region (Metropolitan Zone of Mexico City); Central-South (Guerrero, Hidalgo, México, Morelos, Puebla, Querétaro, Tlaxcala); and South Southeast (Campeche, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Tabasco,



Veracruz, Yucatán). See Regiones de la ANUIES, available at: [www.anui.es.mx/r\\_anui.es/index2.php](http://www.anui.es.mx/r_anui.es/index2.php).<sup>99</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Source: Table of College Enrollment by State 1992-2003, in ANUIES, *Anuario Estadístico 2003, Licenciatura en Universidades e Institutos Tecnológicos*, *supra* note 103, at 12. <sup>100</sup>

<sup>101</sup> The figures were calculated by dividing the population in 1995 by region and the GDP per thousands of pesos in current prices for basic values in 1997, by region. 1997 GDP Source: INEGI, *Sistema de Cuentas Nacionales de México, Producto Interno Bruto por Entidad Federativa 1997-2002* 40 (2003), available at: [http://www.inegi.gob.mx/prod\\_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/derivada/cuentas/pib/pibef97\\_02.pdf](http://www.inegi.gob.mx/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/derivada/cuentas/pib/pibef97_02.pdf).<sup>101</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Source: INEGI, *Conteos de Población y Vivienda 1995 and 2005*, available at: [www.inegi.gob.mx](http://www.inegi.gob.mx).<sup>102</sup>

<sup>103</sup> The Major Urban Zones are state capitals (and, if the case, the entire metropolitan area), Mexico City and metropolitan areas that, according to the INEGI classification in 2005 had more than 500,000 inhabitants. See INEGI, *Delimitación de las Zonas Metropolitanas de México* (2004), available at: [www.inegi.gob.mx/est/contenidos/espanol/metodologias/otras/zonas\\_met.pdf](http://www.inegi.gob.mx/est/contenidos/espanol/metodologias/otras/zonas_met.pdf) (visited on October 24, 2007). <sup>103</sup>

<sup>104</sup> I also interviewed directors of the General Registrar's Office and the General Office of Incorporation and Validity of Studies at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). <sup>104</sup>

<sup>105</sup> A telephone interview with Fernando Ulises González Colorado, Director, Dirección de Sistemas de Información de la Secretaría de Educación Pública (November 16, 2006). <sup>105</sup>

<sup>106</sup> To develop this database, I: (1) combined different existing lists, such as the Subsecretaría de Educación Superior de la SEP ([www.ses4.sep.gob.mx](http://www.ses4.sep.gob.mx)), Dirección General de Planeación y Programación de la SEP ([www.dgpp.sep.gob.mx](http://www.dgpp.sep.gob.mx)), ANUIES ([www.anui.es.mx](http://www.anui.es.mx)), Universia ([www.universia.net.mx](http://www.universia.net.mx)), UNioportunidades ([www.unioportunidades.com.mx](http://www.unioportunidades.com.mx)), Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas de la UNAM ([www.juridicas.unam.mx/navjus/esc](http://www.juridicas.unam.mx/navjus/esc)), Guía Universitaria Reader's Digest (Special Edition, Year 2, No. 2, 2004); (2) consulted lists of private IHEs and the programs recognized by authorities and accreditation institutions, such as federal government lists (e.g., Subsecretaría de Educación Superior, SEP, in [www.ses4.sep.gob.mx](http://www.ses4.sep.gob.mx)); state governments (e.g., Chiapas, in [www.educacionchiapas.gob.mx/1024/es3.htm](http://www.educacionchiapas.gob.mx/1024/es3.htm)), and autonomous universities (e.g., UNAM, in [www.dgire.unam.mx](http://www.dgire.unam.mx)); (3) called dozens of lawyers and law faculty members; (4) conducted a broad internet search. When this list was completed, it was verified with the official web page of each institution that offers an LED. For those without a web page, the information was verified by phone. Finally, in the case of not having an IHE's number (or in the case the IHE did not have a phone line, as happened in some cases), I resorted to personal contacts, lawyers, an authority or another IHE in the region that might be related to the institution, to verify the information. <sup>106</sup>

<sup>107</sup> The database is available at [www.educacionjuridica.org](http://www.educacionjuridica.org).<sup>107</sup>