



THE COMPLEXITIES OF CHANGE

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The Metropolitan Zone of Mexico City (zmcm) is the most valuable, monumental and complex work that the country has constructed in its entire history: in 2005, almost one third of the gross domestic product was concentrated in this area. Its urban sprawl covers approximately 2,000 km², home to 19.5 million residents. The ZMCM is currently the second most populated city on the planet, although its economic scope is that of a secondary global metropolis, the function of which is to link up Mexico's urban system with the main super-cities worldwide.

Mexico City has always been the economic centre of the country, although this predominance has been diminishing in recent years. Having increased its share of the gross domestic product (GDP) from 35-38% between 1960 and 1980, the crisis of the 1980s had a greater effect on the city than on other parts of the county, and its share of the GDP fell to 32% in 1988. After Mexico's inclusion in the global economy, this index has been unstable, recovering slightly, reaching 33% in 1998, and then falling once more to 30% in 2003. The share of the ZMCM in the industrial GDP is higher and its decline even more marked, totalling between 44 and 47% between 1960 and 1980, reaching its highest ever level (48%) in 1970. Thereafter, this super-concentration declined, reaching 22% in 2003. Despite all this, like all large cities around the world, Mexico City has undergone indisputable de-industrialisation, although it produces over one fifth of national manufacturing. At the same time, the relative significance of specialist services grew visibly. The ZMCM absorbed 39% of the GDP of the tertiary sector in 1960 (trade and services) and in 1970 this figure rose to its highest recorded level (47%). After that, it began its relative decline, falling to 35% in 2003. The capital concentrates 42% of producer services and 59% of the financial sector in Mexico. In 2003, its profile was as the only leading tertiary centre in the country.

The macroeconomic dynamics of the ZMCM explain its urban growth and the evolution of the labour market which, in the early 21st century, are facing one of the greatest challenges of their modern history. The

intermittent crisis since the 1980s and economic opening-up have affected them significantly, dramatically reducing the real income of its population in the 1990s. In addition, the collapse of federal public investment in the city makes it impossible to modernise its infrastructural framework and it is therefore hard for the ZMCM to aspire to compete with European and Asiatic cities which are modernising themselves with the implementation of mega projects of worldwide importance. In a comparative classification of levels of productivity and competitiveness of 66 metropolitan regions from various countries according to the real GDP per capita, as the basic measure of productivity, the ZMCM comes 63rd. This situation is explained by the low levels of human capital, research, innovation and technology and by an insufficiently competitive market. The urban sprawl of Mexico City is made up of a vibrant amalgam of 4.2 million homes (2000), a total of 529,000 commercial and services buildings and 53,000 industrial places of business (2003), all of which is joined together by a system of highways, facilities and infrastructure. All these elements constitute 1,926km² of urban area, presenting an average density of 9,300 residents/km² (2000). However, the magnitude and characteristics of its future urban growth will depend on the economic dynamics and the labour market of the ZMCM. The particularities of the labour structure are summarised below, to complement this vision of the city as a productive social force.

In 1960, the ZMCM contained 17% of the country's economically active population (EAP), 22% of secondary sector workers and 34% of tertiary sector workers. Thereafter, its de-industrialisation meant that in 2003, secondary sector labour fell to 19% and tertiary sector labour to 25%. Within its labour structure, an increasing trend towards the tertiary sector can be seen; the proportion of the population working in services then rose from 58% in 1960 to 75% in 2003. In the last year, the EAP in the city totalled 7.7 million. The major inequalities in the income from the various occupations are given concrete form in sharp socio-economic contrasts within the metropolitan area. According to the spatial disintegration of the ZMCM into more than

three thousand Basic Geo-statistical Areas (BGA), 17% of the population are concentrated in the upper and upper-middle socio-economic classes, 39% in the middle classes and 44% in the lower classes.

It is estimated that within the ZMCM, there were 33 million journeys/person/day in 2005, with an average journey time of 47 minutes; this totals 26 million travel hours per day. These totals represent the equivalent of 3.2 million eight-hour working days, or one day's work by 42% of the active population in 2003. This data exemplifies the economic impact of the inadequacy of the urban services. Improving them is vital in order to have more efficient and productive cities. In a scenario of moderate economic growth, it would be hoped that the ZMCM will increase its population by 4.2 million between 2000 and 2020. To cope with this expansion, 37,000 hectares of new developed space will be required. The political and economic future of the country will depend on Mexico City being able to have the public and private investment necessary to achieve this urban expansion with the appropriate infrastructure and facilities in order to join in, on a competitive basis, with cities worldwide because if it does not, its future will be very uncertain.

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