

Letter from the Editor

The Covid-19 pandemic has hardly disappeared from the international scene. Gradual access to vaccines in various places has been decisive in reducing the mortality rate, but health system reconfiguration has clearly become urgent, for dealing not only with health crises but the different chronic illnesses that clamor for attention, as well. Amidst the waves of contagion and deaths, economies reveal their frailties and challenges in overcoming recessions, unemployment, transition to new ways of working, lags in education, among many others. To add to this already perilous situation, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has worsened the global economic crisis with risks of further exacerbation as the war extends in time and space.

All of this encourages the community of economics professionals to delve deeper into theoretical reflection, developing new ideas in the complex environment in which scientific knowledge is being configured.

This issue begins with a contribution by Anuar Sucar Díaz Ceballos of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, United States, with the article “Mexico's Economic Growth Quandary: Time for a Classical Development Theory Approach?” The provocative title is clearly a riddle aimed at finding out to what extent structural reforms were reflected in economic growth in Mexico. More precisely, the author attempts to respond to why those reforms did not lead to a productive structure that would speed up the capital accumulation process. The support of classic development theory seems pertinent in this research.

An examination of deregulation, privatization and economic liberalization, begun in Mexico in the 1980s, along with institutional changes, should lead to the threads that were woven together toward an open economy, the North American Free Trade Agreement and economic and social benefits. But also that missing or insufficient social and institutional interweaving that would make the most of possible benefits of the commercial and financial opening. Why second generation reforms? Were they prepared to get beyond the economic and development duality Mexico found itself in within global value chains and get to a phase of creative destruction with positive effects for economic growth?

Anuar Sucar's reflections on economic stagnation that pick up on the lessons of classic development theory are valid for proving his hypotheses on the ineffective reforms of the Pact for Mexico in terms of economic growth. The very intriguing conclusions beg a careful reading of the article and encourage a close look at the subject matter presented by the author.

Turning to consumption and production, the article "Some Dynamic Extensions of von Thünen's Spatial Arrangement Model (1826)," coauthored by Jaime Glaría, Raúl Fuentes and Oscar Orellana at the Federico Santa María Technical University, Chile, attempts to respond how an economy comes to agreement on determining the use of space to organize economic activity, considering the monotonic model that the title introduces, in the case of the dynamic and sudden evolution of transportation cost. Considering a dynamic monotonic transition to a stationary state rather improbable, the authors find a window for tracking the stage of change on the way to that state and the complex concomitance of the spatial development of economies. Moving forward with this effort, the authors do detailed theoretical analysis of simulations, what takes place in the losers' realm and what it implies for economic policy decision-making.

Luis Manuel Sánchez Correa and Simona Arroyo Martínez, both from Guadalajara Autonomous University, have contributed to this issue with "Administrative and Technological Innovation as a Strategy for Addressing the Current Challenges of the Vertical Real Estate Market: A Theoretical Review." The theoretical concern of the authors targets identifying variables that contribute to an atmosphere of administrative and technological innovation in organizations, specifically in the vertical real estate sector, balancing growth and profitability, through hermeneutics.

Luis Manuel Sánchez and Simona Arroyo extend their study to qualitative analysis of vertical mixed-use real estate developments in San Pedro Garza García, known for its dynamism, modernity and leadership in Mexico, to conclude with a theoretical model proposal. How to establish niches of opportunity for creating sustainable housing that improves the systemic atmosphere, encompassing everything from family interaction to every social sphere and efficient energy use? Surely, innovative routes shed light on ways to solve many of the lags or problems that societies face, so from this angle we must learn to take the right routes. The real estate sector requires a creative answer to improving living conditions of people living in large cities, and small ones, too.

A very suggestive and extremely current subject is the one addressed by coauthors Raúl Barutch Pimienta Gallardo and Marco Tulio Ocegueda Hernández, at Baja California Autonomous University, and Alejandro Mungaray Lagarda at Sonora

University, in the article “Efficiency of Public Spending among Mexican Universities and Its Determinants: Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) with the Application of Two-Stage Semi-Parametric Models.”

Upper education acts as a cornerstone for the economic and social development of nations, not only because it produces professionals who will use their knowledge for an array of scientific and technological endeavors but also because, depending on the frontiers of knowledge its graduates reach, they will have learning, absorption and endogenous innovation skills. In that sense, this Data Envelopment Analysis study is extremely relevant. The choice and theoretical justification of variables to use comprise a great challenge.

The authors look into what endogenous institutional factors considered in their hypothesis influenced efficiency levels in 34 public state universities in 2015 and 2017, the changes recorded and which exogenous variables from the *meso* environment could explain such variations in efficiency levels. The findings are highly revealing and constitute elements to consider in public policy design. This worthy empirical exercise suggests broadening analysis to more recent years and detecting substantial changes in the relative efficiency of universities that may point to improved institutional practices, or the contrary, and the endogenous and exogenous aspects that would be behind it. This is especially so as university budget cuts during this federal government administration seem to be significant and consequently triggering changes within institutions that may not always be for the best.

Another study using DEA methodology, but this time in the microfinancial realm, “Comparative Analysis of the Efficiency of Microfinancial Institutions in Latin America; A Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA)” was coauthored by Antonio Kido-Cruz, Alberto Ortiz Zavala and María Teresa Kido-Cruz, all three from the San Nicolás de Hidalgo Michoacana University.

It is an interesting review of theoretical and empirical sources that visualizes the relevance of microfinancial institutions, especially for less developed countries, where poverty prevails. If the difficulties that small companies or even social or community groups face attempting to get credit from banks are assessed, microfinancial ones turn out to be valued, moving through different associations, such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and making it possible.

The authors define their goal as estimating the relative technical efficiency in the universe of microfinancial institutions in Latin America, through parametric (stochastic frontier analysis) and non-parametric (DEA) methodology and a database from the World Bank, 2019. It also includes identifying the factors that influence the results, using econometric tools. The importance of incorporating more suitable variables in accordance with a theoretical discussion and precedents from prior empirical studies is underscored. The findings from this comparative study of models prove interesting.

Continuing with access to financial resources, Alfredo Cuecuecha from the State of Puebla Popular Autonomous University; Arturo Vásquez and Patricia Meneses, both from Tlaxcala Autonomous University, refer us to gender inclusion through their piece “Is There a Link between Financial Literacy and Inclusion of Women? Evidence from Mexico.” After conducting a literature review on the topic and stylized international incidents that report on the huge percentage of residents excluded from savings circuits, credit and therefore deprived of inclusive economic and social development, the authors carefully examine the case of women in the town of Zacatelco, in the state of Tlaxcala, Mexico.

Based on the financial literacy variable, defined as that which combines knowledge, behaviors and attitudes essential to financial decision making and thus aimed at prosperous individual and social wellbeing, as per the OECD (2005), Cuecuecha Vásquez and Meneses set out to verify the causal effect of financial literacy on financial inclusion for women over age 17 in the previously indicated town. Theoretically and methodologically strong, the study contributes highly suggestive elements for policy proposals aimed at promoting financial inclusion of women.

One more extremely relevant subject, especially since the reflections of Olga Lourdes Vila of Carlos Rafael Rodríguez University of Cienfuegos, Cuba on reforms in the economy since 2011 and their impact on the work atmosphere, resound strongly for nations that lean toward State economies, in circumstances of economic and social crisis. The piece is titled “Self-Employment in Light of the Cuban Reality: Trends and Challenges in the 21st Century.” Emphasizing that “the role of work and its place in the creation of collective wealth is one of the basic precepts in providing for the human condition and the life of society,” the author attempts to show how transition toward an economy that includes state and non-state sectors in productive activities may stimulate national economic growth and how such heterogeneity seems to be irreversible. Given inequalities that take place, however, the Cuban State will have to adopt a reconfiguration role as necessary.

A country with a socialist regime having also been affected by the economic embargo for over five decades, Cuba urgently needed to move to complementary forms of property, types of work and management styles, seeking paths leading to superior economic and social development. How did self-employment contribute to income secured by Cuban citizens? Were different skills and new knowledge attained through the jobs undertaken, and how did they contribute to social skills? Besides the changes begun, analysis is done on how employment on and off the island is put together and how labor migration takes accumulated know-how to other countries.

A topic of great interest for fiscal policy design when attempting to diminish an addiction that noticeably affects health and recover social wellbeing is that developed by Anel Rodríguez Quinto, of Texas A&M University, and Luis Foncerrada Pascal of Anáhuac Mayab University in the article “The Mexican Tax on Alcoholic Beverages: Reasons to Change It.” A discussion of the literature leads to the question of whether Mexico needs to modernize its Special Tax on Production and Services on alcoholic beverages. Refined methodology is used to attempt to prove a hypothesis, while the authors come up with intriguing findings.

The issue ends with a review by Ignacio Rossi from General Sarmiento National University, Argentina of the book *Pensar la economía argentina. Por una macroeconomía compatible con el desarrollo*, edited by Matías Kulfas and Guido Zack, Editorial Siglo XXI, Buenos Aires, 2018. The great interest of the book is not limited to the Argentine economy but can extend to Latin American countries as a whole whose economic performance in growth and social development does not seem to be positive and has been aggravated by the Covid 19 pandemic.

The magazine *Economía Teoría y Práctica*, has strived to establish itself as an editorial project of the Metropolitan Autonomous University, with increased visibility through international content and adequate avenues of diffusion. The quality of the articles published is the result of several stages that start when authors from different national and international institutions submit their theoretical and empirical research contributions to the OJS portal, followed by the Editorial Committee's initial systematic review for pre-opinions, specialized double blind judgment and the follow-up process on observations and recommendations that judges generally formulate for their final approval. Later, editing work is carried out by a highly competent team before finally putting together a new issue every six months. This whole process requires financing by the institution, which we hope to continue receiving. The magazine looks forward to ongoing growth, with new international contents offering greater prestige and impact factor, which, in the long run, are indicators that reflect on the University itself. We would also like to encourage the National Council for Science and Technology to reactivate the financial support targeted for magazines, according to level.

ALENKA GUZMÁN
MAGAZINE EDITOR IN CHIEF

