

The effect of municipal capacity and political institutions on sustainability

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Abstract

The large majority of municipal governments in Mexico are characterized by fragile institutional arrangements, limited capacities, and inadequate professionalization of public servants. Nevertheless, in the last twenty years, a number of municipalities have been making substantial efforts to build stronger institutional arrangements and professionalization of their personnel. In particular, many urban municipalities have been able to provide better quality of public services, enact local ordinances and regulations to improve urban growth, and improve the quality of life for their residents. This study constructs an index of sustainable growth for 402 municipalities. HLM estimations explain the sustainability of these cities as a function of a number of variables associated to the political institutions and capacity of these municipalities. In addition, the analysis also accounts for the effect that belonging to a given metropolitan area has on the sustainability index of a city.