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III. Informal Economy

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THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE ROLE OF INFORMALITY IN URBAN MEXICO

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The aim of this paper is to analyze, during the last decade, the restructuring of the urban labor market in Mexico as a result of the uneven impact of economic recession and a more recent neoliberal policy. Special emphasis is paid to the trends of the formal and informal sectors of the economy where three main aspects are to be argued: (i) the formal sector has lost dynamism to absorb labor force, which is particularly clear in the case of industry; (ii) the informal and less productive sector has experienced a very rapid increase more notably in the tertiary sector and; (iii) the occupational structure has suffered a marked polarization between the higher and the least qualified occupations.

Naturally, the economic recovery or restructuring has not been shared equally in all parts of the country. The most fundamental disparities in the geography of the urban labor market are examined comparing big and small urban areas, and the most depressed and the already affluent regions in the country. It is sustained that the most marked differences in the labor market restructuring are present in those cities and regions that before the economic crisis concentrated most of the job gains.

Key Words: Labour Market, Urban Informality, Occupational Structure, Regional Differences

I. Economic restructuring and the Urban Labour Market in Mexico.

The period 1970-1990 was a very important transitional phase in the country's history since there was a change in the development strategy, passing from an economic growth based on an "import substitution industrialization" (ISI) model, to a strategy to promote exports. The adjustment process that was applied in the early 1980s after the crisis period, obviously affected among other fields, the employment structure and the functioning of the labor market.

The economic development of Mexico from 1940 to 1980 was a result of a policy of import substitution industrialization. With this industrial model the Mexican economy experienced one of the highest rates of economic growth in Latin America. In the period 1940-70 the GDP grew at an annual rate of more than six percent while the average growth of the population was 3.1 percent (REYNOLDS 1970: 22).

With the first signs of exhaustion of the development model in the early 1970s, the effects of economic instability began to be felt later in the decade, only interrupted by the oil boom that took place between 1978 and 1981. By 1982 the economic crisis became evident: subsequent devaluation, 100 percent inflation, a current account deficit of 2,685 million dollars, a public sector deficit equivalent to 17 percent of the GDP and an external debt of approximately 85 thousand million dollars (BRAVO AGUILERA 1993: 319).

During the first half of the 1980s, Mexico adopted an adjustment program through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), receiving also support from the World Bank to apply structural changes that included emphasis in exports as a widely recommended measure. In fact, Mexico's entrance to the GATT in 1986 represented the elimination of trade barriers and a means to ensure the commitment to liberalize the national economy. Thus the transition from the old ISI or inward-growth model toward a different "outward integrated" or "exporting" model, took place in accordance with the demands of the new international division of labour.

The stagnation of the economy during the crisis had negative impacts in the integration of the labour market. The crisis provoked the increase in the unemployment level which at the beginning of the economic instability was of 6-7 percent in the main urban areas. Large sectors of the labour force had to find a modality within the informal activities, those who did not remain employed as a wage workers in the formal sector were willing to work for lower salaries in the informal sector as non-remunerated family labour. The informal labour market was very diverse and dynamic during the crisis period and the proliferation of these activities can be seen as an opposite phenomenon to the integration of the labour market (ALBA 1993: 187-191).

As LUSTIG (1992: 75) points out, in a country like Mexico with no unemployment insurance benefits, it is no surprising that people will accept working at lower quality jobs rather than be unemployed. To be unemployed is a luxury that most Mexicans cannot afford.

1. The absorption of labour force by the formal sector

The employment growth rate of industry has a big impact on the growth pace of the sector since more than 90 percent of its workers receive a salary. This situation is different to that in Commerce and Services where there is a great proportion of unpaid workers. In the last decade the manufacturing industry experienced a drastic fall in the rate to absorb labour force which was reflected in the performance of the whole formal sector.

In fact, the slow growth in the manufacturing industry during the period reveals a differential growth by industrial sectors. In some of this sectors, there was even a fall in the total number of firms which might be related to the effect of the crisis and the consequent bankruptcy of some firms (RENDON and SALAS 1992: 20). An example of sectors that experienced a decrease in their total number of firms is the textile and garment industry.

When we look at the data about employment growth by economic sectors, there is a great contrast between the manufacturing industry and the commerce and services sectors. In Table 1 data show that in the period 1980-89 whereas manufacturing only explains 25 percent of the employment generated in those years, commerce and services explain 39 and 36 percent respectively of the employment in the same

Table 1 MEXICO: Participation of number of establishments and workers in the economic sectoral change by city size, 1980-1989 (%)

Rank - size	Total	Manufac.	Commerce	Services
Total				
Establishments	100.00	4.43	56.30	39.26
Workers	100.00	25.33	39.03	35.64
1,000,000 and more				
Establishments	100.00	-0.48	58.21	42.27
Workers	100.00	-0.49	53.66	46.83
500,000 - 999,999				
Establishments	100.00	6.06	57.79	36.15
Workers	100.00	48.13	26.99	24.88
250,000 - 499,999				
Establishments	100.00	6.54	54.35	39.11
Workers	100.00	32.65	34.47	32.88
100,000 - 249,999				
Establishments	100.00	5.44	54.73	39.83
Workers	100.00	21.96	38.77	39.27
50,000 - 99,999				
Establishments	100.00	6.82	56.94	36.24
Workers	100.00	33.52	34.50	31.98
15,000 - 49,999				
Establishments	100.00	8.75	54.21	37.04
Workers	100.00	29.20	37.89	32.91

Source: Calculated from INEGI (1981 and 1989), Economic Census. Industry, Commerce and Services.

period. Thus industry lost importance to absorb labour force, and the tertiary sector was responsible of generating about 75 percent of the jobs, which also shows how the process of tertiarization became more relevant in the whole economy. In the case of the number of firms the situation is clearer, manufacturing industry only had a 4 percent of increment, while only commerce explained more than 50 percent (56 %) of the total increase in the number of firms.

If we examine this employment sectoral change by city size, it stands out that manufacturing activities had a dramatic decline in big cities with negative growth rates either in salary workers or in the number of firms, while middle-size and small cities gained employment in the three economic sectors.

In the particular case of industry, it is possible to identify two complementary processes: a deconcentration of manufacturing activities from big to secondary cities; and a slight tendency of industrial employment to concentrate in cities between 250,000 and less than one million inhabitants, where 67 percent of the total employment in the period was located. In a context of very slow growth of manufacturing activities the urban centres in those rank-sizes (250-499,999 and 500-999,999 inhabitants) were the "winners" in terms of jobs gains. However, it is worth to emphasize that analyzing the number of firms there is no correspondence with employment in the location of gains; the higher gains by number of firms are in the rank-size of 15,000 to 49,000 inhabitants in the first place with 32 percent of the total increment; and in second place the rank-size of 250,000 to 499,999 with 26 percent. Data tends to demonstrate that in the smallest cities there was a proliferation of very small firms without generating a lot of waged employment, probably family business; and in the intermediate cities the tendency was the location of big firms which although reduced in number offered much more employment, as in the case of the rank-size of 500,000 to 999,9999 inhabitants.

With reference to the commerce and services sectors the pattern is very similar. On the contrary to industry, these sectors registered the main increases in employment and number of firms in those urban centres bigger than one million inhabitants, confirming so the tertiarization of the urban economy (AGUILAR 1993); and in the second place, in those cities in the rank-size of 250,000-499,999 inhabitants. In general, the tertiary sector was the main generator of employment in all the cities across the urban hierarchy; commercial activities were the most important in all the rank-sizes, with more than 50 percent of all the number of economic units, and from the point of view of employment it was also the principal sector, with the exception of the rank-size of 500-999,999 inhabitants where manufacturing registered the highest employment gain (48 percent) (Table 1).

In regional terms, data demonstrates that the northern part of the country was the most benefited in receiving employment growth and new firms (Table 2). Just in the North Region the employment gains represented 40 percent of the total, here we have to remember that most of those new jobs are related to the *maquiladora* industry (assembly plants). Anyway, if we consider the proportion of new jobs in the two northern regions (North and Center-North/West) there was a clear preference of the economic activities to locate in those areas, with 65 percent of the total employment. Looking at the participation by economic sectors the picture seems consistent with the recent trends of industrial deconcentration and tertiarization of the economy. Table 2 shows that manufacturing registered a very small participation of the growth in employment and the number of firms, and the most went to the North Region. But the significant process was the decline of this activity in the Central Region that presented negative rates in the period. In the case of Commerce it represents the sector with the highest participation in the number of firms (more than 50 percent in all the regions), and employment (with the exception of the North

Table 2 MEXICO: Participation of number of establishments and workers in the economic sectoral change by region, 1980-1989 (%)

Region	Total	Manufac.	Commerce	Services
Total				
Establishments	100.0	4.4	56.3	39.3
Workers	100.0	25.3	39.0	35.6
North				
Establishments	100.0	5.7	56.7	37.6
Workers	100.0	41.2	30.2	28.6
Center / North / West				
Establishments	100.0	7.9	53.3	38.9
Workers	100.0	32.9	36.1	31.0
Center				
Establishments	100.0	-3.4	59.3	44.1
Workers	100.0	-16.4	61.0	55.4
South				
Establishments	100.0	7.3	56.3	36.4
Workers	100.0	19.8	41.5	38.8

Source: Calculated from INEGI (1981 and 1989), Economic Census. Industry, Commerce and Services.

Region); although the Central Region lost industrial dynamism its tertiary activities, Commerce and Services, presented the highest rise in the country.

In other words, whereas the industrial modern sector mainly moved and located to the northern part of the country where it generated more employment, domestic and foreign capital preferred to invest in tertiary activities in big metropolis, looking for more profitability away from industry, provoking a process of higher urban concentration as in the Central Region.

2. The characteristics of the informal and less productive occupations

During the 1980s the absorption of labour force in the urban modern sectors suffered a setback and the expansion of the tertiary sector in particular was highly associated to informal and less productive activities.

One of the more recent studies to characterize the informal sector in Mexico was based on the 1988 National Survey on Employment, and the following proportions of these activities were obtained, with respect to the total occupied population: 33.6

percent following the minimum salary criterion; 38.5 percent according to the size of the firm; 26.1 percent taking into account occupational categories; 37.9 percent combing the criteria of firm size and occupational categories. In total numbers these estimations vary between 7.3 and 10.7 million workers in some sort of informal working condition (see Secretaria del Trabajo y Prevision Social 1993: 81)[1].

In the following section data about the magnitude and recent growth of the informal sector are presented, with particular reference to the main urban areas in the country.

The size of establishments. - The increasing importance of the informal activities during the 1980s can be confirmed by the proliferation of small businesses that to a great extent were the cause of the economic expansion in the tertiary activities. There was a notable increase of firms with less than two persons where most of the non-salary workers are to be found.

Table 3 shows some data about the marked contrasts of economic activity in Mexico with respect to size of firms and occupied population. The size of 87 percent of the firms is of less than 5 workers; and 73 percent of these firms only give occupation to two workers. However, this last category of firms only represents about 24 percent of the total employment, even so, from 1986 to 1989 the proportion of workers in the small firms (less than 5 persons) increased its importance in three percental points, from 23 to 26 percent. On the other side, the biggest firms (more than 50 workers) that only represent about one percent of the total number of firms, in terms of employment are quite relevant with about 50 percent of the total employment, though from 1986 to 1989 its weight in these terms decreased in 5 percental points, from 53 to 48 percent (see Table 3).

Table 3 MEXICO: Total number of establishments and workers by size of establishments, 1986-1989

	Percentual Participation			
Size of establishment	Establishments 1986	Workers 1989	Establishments 1986	Workers 1989
1 to 2 persons	73.1	70.1	15.0	15.7
3 to 5 persons	14.0	17.2	7.5	10.0
6 to 50 persons	11.3	11.1	24.8	25.7
more than 50 persons	1.6	1.4	52.8	48.4

Source: INEGI (1986: Table 5); INEGI (1989: Table 3)

Looking at Table 4 there are clear differences of salary and non-salary workers by firms size. Those firms with the highest proportion of salary workers are the biggest (more than 50 workers) with about 60 percent of them, nonetheless, between 1986 and 1989, there was a decreasing tendency of its proportion. On the contrary, the small businesses with less than 5 workers, present the highest number of non-wage workers, in fact, its proportion increased in the period 1986-1989, from 81 to 83 percent (see Table 4); these small firms contain most of the self-employed and the unpaid family workers and their rise is consistent with the idea that during the adjustment process informal employment rose.

Table 4 MEXICO: Total number of establishments and workers by wage and non - wage condition, 1986-1989

	Workers (%)			
	Waged		Non - Wage	
Size of establishment	1986	1989	1986	1989
Less than 5 workers	9.4	11.6	80.6	82.7
6 to 50 workers	28.0	29.0	10.9	12.3
more than 50 workers	62.6	59.2	8.5	5.0

Source: INEGI (1986: Graphic 4); INEGI (1989: Table 3)

Characteristics of the informal economic units. - In order to give a general view about informal activities in México in this section the analysis is based in the so called 1990 National Survey of Informal Economy which is representative of the most urbanized areas of the country. The total sample was of 3,459 small businesses.

First of all, data shows the great importance of the small businesses in the commercial sector with 45 percent, representing the highest proportion of the whole sample; in this case this proportion includes either formal (26 percent) or informal establishments (19 percent). These establishments comprise retail activities at very small scale that respond to the purchasing patterns of poor population sectors that normally buy basic goods in very small quantities, for example food and general supplies; these units proliferate in low income and working-class settlements and also include street vendors. The small units that sell food and beverages are second in importance (11 percent); they serve the low salary workers and the informal ones, particularly in urban sectors with important social concentrations such as industrial areas, markets, or public transport stations. This is one of those type of businesses that do not require a lot of capital and skills to be established. The small units for repairing services follow in importance (12 percent), and also respond to the low purchasing power of ample social sectors that require low cost services to repair and maintain their households and domestic equipment. Examples of this sort of repair services are: car workshops, carpentry, plumbing, domestic appliances, electric workshops, construction workers etc[2].

Examining the size of the economic units by economic branch some interesting conclusions can be derived (Table 5). It stands out that in average, most of the units (69 percent) function with one person, and 18 percent have one worker; this is to say that 87 percent of these businesses are of very small scale. In consequence, only 13 percent of the units have more than two workers. By economic sector the situation is more accentuated in the case of textiles and leather (77 percent), informal retail (84 percent) and repair services (70 percent) with units that have no workers; on the other side, particularly the food and beverages businesses tend to present one or two workers, an average of two persons in their units. In general, data tend to confirm that most of all these units are one person family businesses.

If we examine the type of premises of the businesses it is possible to identify two main groups: the mobile activities and those with a permanent establishment (Table 6). In the case of the mobile, the most important are those that are exercised in the customer house (24 percent), these activities are related to wood industry (especially carpentry works), repair services, construction-related works, and other cleaning services; following in importance are those itinerant activities that are carried on in vehicles in public areas (22 percent), through this modality most of the informal retail and food preparation is offered.

With reference to the permanent establishments, those activities that are exercised in the own house of informal workers are the most important with 21 percent. This modality is relevant for the majority of the economic sectors represented in Table 6, which registered high percentages in this type of premise; the most significant are particularly the manufacturing of products, that for textiles and leather reaches 83 percent; the elaboration of food products; and repairing services. This means that a lot of precarious occupations, without any social security, are exercise in households which means great difficulties to apply labor legislation. This also explains the low proportion of expenditures on administrative costs, such as rent, electricity, water, etc. The other important permanent establishment are shops (19 percent) where informal activities such as formal retail and elaboration of food products are carried on.

3. Changes in the occupational structure and qualification of labour force

Not only during the 1980s the modern sector lost dynamism to absorb labour force but those jobs that were generated turned to be of inferior quality, and with it, workers found themselves receiving lower incomes. Thus, the adjustment policies during the crisis resulted in a deterioration of the urban labour market that can bemeasured, among other aspects, through a loss of quality in the occupations (AGUILAR 1993).

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Table 5 MEXICO: Size of Informal Establishment by Number of Workers and Economic Sector 1990 (%).

Number of Workers	Food Products	Textiles & Leather	Wood Industry	Other Manufac. Industries	Formal Retail	Informal Retail	Food Prepara-tion	Repair Services	Private housing construc.	Other Services	Total
none	43.9	77.3	66.6	64.5	56.8	84.4	53.0	70.3	62.9	86.0	68.8
1	31.0	11.6	14.1	19.5	24.4	8.6	26.1	18.6	29.8	9.4	18.3
2	14.4	6.3	15.4	9.0	13.2	4.3	10.1	6.3	5.2	4.1	8.2
3	10.1	3.8	3.3	2.4	4.0	1.4	8.4	3.1	0.3	-	3.1
4	0.6	1.0	0.6	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.4	1.3	1.6	0.1	1.0
5-7	-	-	-	3.3	0.6	0.4	1.0	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
% of the Total	1.9	6.0	2.1	5.3	26.2	18.9	9.1	12.0	6.6	11.9	100.0

Source: INEGI (1991: Table I.5)

Table 6 Type of Premises of Informal Economic Units by Economic Sector 1990 (%).

Economic Sector	Vehicle in public area	Stall in street	Customer House	Own House	Lunch Stall	Shop	Workshop	Total
Food Products	-	-	0.6	45.1	-	25.2	29.1	100.0
Textiles and Leather	-	-	1.0	83.1	-	-	15.9	100.0
Wood Industry	-	-	28.0	36.5	-	-	35.5	100.0
Other Manufac. Industries	-	-	8.5	50.7	-	-	40.8	100.0
Formal Retail	11.9	3.5	5.5	15.5	-	63.6	-	100.0
Informal Retail	68.1	1.2	19.7	10.2	-	0.8	-	100.0
Food Preparation	43.8	13.4	-	19.4	18.7	4.1	0.6	100.0
Repair Services	6.5	-	27.5	23.9	-	-	42.1	100.0
Private Housing Construc.	-	-	100.0	-	-	-	-	100.0
Other Services	7.8	1.0	65.3	12.2	-	12.3	1.4	100.0
Total	21.6	2.5	23.9	21.4	1.7	19.2	9.7	100.0

Source: INEGI (1990: Table I.8)

In order to sustain this aspect, Table 7 presents data of the Total Occupied Population (POT) by main occupation and economic sectors for all the metropolitan areas in the country, for the period 1970-90[3]. These data are very representative of the urban labour market since the total POT of these zones comprises 65 percent of all the urban POT in the country. It is argued that according to data, there is a double tendency. On one hand, a polarization in the occupations between the more and the less qualified population. On the other hand, a more numerous and rapid growth of the lower qualified occupations as a sign of a more precarious employment.

With respect to the dualism between highly paid workers and poorly paid workers it can be observed that, at one extreme, the most qualified occupations as Professionals and Executive Personnel significantly rose their weight passing from 13 percent in 1970 to 20 percent in 1990, growing at rates between 5 and 6 percent in the period. The growing of Professional occupations was more important in the tertiary activities, while the Executive positions registered the highest increments in the industrial sector. At the other end, less qualified occupations very much associated to retailers, wholesalers, administrative or service-related workers also registered an important rise. In the first place, commerce-related occupations passed from 11 percent in 1970 to 15 percent in 1990; and secondly, the administrative occupations from 13 to 14 percent in the same period, with growth rates of 5 and 4 percent respectively. In this occupations group it has to be remembered that particularly the Commercial sector is formed by a great number of very small businesses in the tertiary sector carried on by unskilled and self-employed population. Although the diverse occupations in Services did not increase their percentual participation in the two decades, they notably rose their total number, growing at a rate of 3.2 percent.

With reference to the second aspect, the net occupations increases in the period naturally benefited the lower level occupations. Whereas the Professional and Executive occupations registered a net rise of 1,334,720 jobs (25 percent of the total increment), those related to Commerce and Services had a higher participation with 1,798,945 jobs (34 percent); additionally, the blue-collar occupations also registered a very important participation in the net increase with 1,366,038 jobs (25 percent), however, in this case it has to be emphasized that manual workers had a much higher increases in tertiary activities than in industry. In other words, about 60 percent of the total increment in occupations was related to low qualified activities. Data confirms the present importance of sectors like Commerce and Services to absorb labour force (tertiarization of the economy), though in many cases in precarious situations; and the increasing importance and absorption of manual workers (blue-collars) in the tertiary sector.

Table 7 Mexico: Metropolitan Zones by Main Occupation and Economic Sector, 1970 - 1990

Main occupation	Total	Agriculture	Oil Industry	Extractive Industry	Manufact. Industry	Construct.	Electric Energy	Commerce	Transport	Services	Govern-ment	Not specified
% 1970	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Professionals and technicians	8.7	0.6	11.3	8.6	4.5	5.8	12.0	2.2	2.4	21.7	10.3	2.6
Executive pers. & top officials	4.2	1.2	2.9	4.9	4.9	2.8	4.3	6.1	3.2	3.8	6.8	3.3
Administrative personnel	13.2	0.9	18.8	9.2	12.6	4.4	28.7	16.0	12.6	13.3	38.8	14.3
Commerce workers	10.6	0.5	1.0	2.9	4.9	0.8	1.4	59.1	1.1	3.8	0.4	2.7
Services workers	18.8	1.9	9.6	8.3	5.7	3.6	7.8	6.3	60.1	42.1	29.9	10.5
Agriculture workers	8.7	89.7	0.4	1.6	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.9	0.3	0.6	1.8	0.7
Blue-collars	31.5	2.5	52.7	61.9	64.9	80.6	41.2	7.9	18.1	13.3	9.2	19.1
Not specified	4.3	1.8	3.4	2.9	2.1	1.0	4.2	1.6	2.2	1.5	3.0	46.9
% 1990	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Professionals and technicians	13.7	2.1	13.8	8.3	5.7	5.9	12.2	3.2	4.0	31.0	13.8	10.8
Executive pers. & top officials	6.0	1.5	9.1	10.7	9.6	7.2	8.1	4.7	3.3	4.6	3.9	6.0
Administrative personnel	13.6	1.2	20.9	10.5	8.6	3.7	28.4	11.4	20.1	14.2	42.8	27.2
Commerce workers	14.7	1.5	1.2	1.1	6.5	0.2	1.1	66.9	1.3	4.8	0.6	1.9
Services workers	17.8	4.4	12.7	15.2	6.5	3.4	9.3	7.5	63.0	26.8	32.2	15.9
Agriculture workers	3.3	87.5	0.0	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2
Blue-collars	29.3	1.3	40.7	52.7	62.0	79.3	39.2	5.8	7.7	17.9	5.3	8.1
Not specified	1.6	0.5	1.6	0.8	1.0	0.3	1.6	0.3	0.6	0.5	1.1	29.9
Growth rates 1970-1990	**3.47**	**-1.13**	**2.61**	**-0.37**	**2.91**	**3.72**	**4.80**	**4.67**	**5.17**	**4.30**	**3.76**	**1.22**
Professionals and technicians	5.81	5.14	3.63	-0.56	4.10	3.84	4.87	6.64	7.85	6.17	5.30	8.72
Executive pers. & top officials	5.27	-0.08	8.67	3.54	6.38	8.63	8.21	3.36	5.29	5.37	0.92	4.32
Administrative personnel	3.63	0.47	3.17	0.30	0.95	2.78	4.75	2.91	7.67	4.66	4.27	4.54
Commerce workers	5.16	4.56	3.48	-5.14	4.42	-3.21	3.73	5.32	6.05	5.60	6.04	-064
Services workers	3.20	3.06	4.06	2.70	3.61	3.43	5.72	5.66	5.41	1.98	4.15	3.33
Agriculture workers	-1.42	-1.26	-9.75	-3.73	-2.26	-8.25	-3.22	-4.67	-3.44	-4.62	-4.81	-4.39
Blue-collars	3.10	-4.34	1.30	-1.17	2.68	3.63	4.53	3.02	0.77	5.87	0.95	-3.05
Not specified	-1.36	-7.75	-1.28	-6.26	-1.03	-2.35	-0.04	-3.48	-1.78	-1.45	-1.35	-1.02
Net Increases 1970-1990	**5,041,070**	**-94,615**	**34,599**	**-1,650**	**1,126,690**	**348,701**	**49,700**	**1,026,954**	**384,371**	**1,811,100**	**278,541**	**76,679**
Professionals and technicians	944,294	4,837	6,044	-212	80,952	21,017	6,111	39,826	18,839	688,276	47,477	31,127
Executive pers. & top officials	390,426	-94	6,361	1,147	175,562	39,105	5,252	39,373	12,910	95,090	3,487	12,233
Administrative personnel	707,892	406	8,369	132	38,190	10,487	14,019	85,466	93,955	270,772	29,318	56,778
Commerce workers	948,818	3,259	498	-431	97,045	-1,265	477	740,383	5,469	102,060	2,238	-915
Services workers	850,127	7,427	5,973	1,345	84,961	11,109	5,091	86,445	248,344	276,638	95,636	27,158
Agriculture workers	-111,297	-93,027	-190	-191	-2,425	-2,737	-72	-3,736	-340	-4,655	-2,803	-1,121
Blue-collars	1,366,083	-6,793	7,944	-3,010	657,837	272,061	18,821	44,439	6,594	387,841	4,893	-24,589
Not specified	-52,944	-6,736	-402	-481	-5,739	-1,244	-11	-5,440	-1,481	-5,372	-1,798	-24,240

Source: INEGI (1981 and 1989), Population Census.

II Conclusions

The 1980s economic recession and the subsequent productive recovery or restructuring in Mexico has had an uneven territorial impact and has not been shared equally by the main regions and cities in the country. Data about restructuring of the labour market show a more heterogeneous and dualistic structure between the formal and informal sectors, and between the highly paid and skillful workers, and the poorly paid and unskilled workers.

The tertiarization of the economy presents a very marked growth tendency, and the anatomy of jobs creation demonstrate a clear shift from Manufacturing to Commerce and Services employment. The recent neoliberal policy has only privileged the growth of very few industrial branches, such as the *maquiladora* plants, and has lost dynamism to absorb labour force showing so a decline as the engine of the development strategy. The benefit of new jobs in the formal sector, particularly from manufacturing, has gone from big cities to middle-size cities like those in the rank-size of 500-999,999 inhabitants, and to the northern regions of the country widely oriented to the USA economy. In the tertiary sector, the big metropolis have received a good proportion of new jobs mainly in wholesale and high-level services linked to recent foreign investments, that require highly qualified workers and in some situations give support to productive processes.

In territorial terms, main metropolitan zones in the country constitute an expression of the most marked contrasts in the recent location of economic activities, and presence of qualified labour force. These urban areas present a large concentration of producer services given its high specialization and advanced technology; and at the same time, the largest proportion of the self-employed and the less qualified occupations proliferate in them. The tertiarization of the economy in Mexico has also meant a multiplication of informal microenterprises and other itinerant economic activities that maintain the precarious situation of important segments of the urban labour force given the scarce opportunities in the formal sector. Occupation with very low salaries, self-employed people, and a lack of labour stability tends to be predominant for the majority of less qualified and unskilled labour force.

NOTES

1 To measure the informal sector special calculations were made from this sample. It is acknowledged that the methodology used in this sample highly likely resulted in high estimations of employment in the country.

2 Following in importance, the industrial units in the textile and leather sector can be mentioned with 6 percent. In the study of ELIZONDO (1992: 59) about informal enterprises in Mexico, he gave more weight in his survey to those units in the industry sector, which contradicts the great importance that has been sustained here for the businesses related to the commercial activities. Perhaps this is due to the very small sample used in such studies (22 units).

3 These data refer to the 26 metropolitan areas that were delimited in the mid 1980s by NEGRETE and SALAZAR (1986).

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THE INFORMAL ECONOMY IN CHINESE CITIES

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Since the 1978 implementation of the structural reforms and the socio-economic as well as political opening to the outside world China is experiencing a period of fundamental economic restructuring. This period is going to cover a gradual transition from a centrally planned economy towards a socialist market economy. Experiences resulting out of these transformation processes are expected to pay world wide attention.

The structure of China's socialist market economy can be characterized by the following principles:

- the state is governing and in control of all basic decisions,
- public ownership will be the dominant form in future while individual economic initiatives should enable the market to develop its characteristic forces for world wide competitive potential,
- in case, this type of market-economy creates major regional disparities, uneven income distribution and long term imbalances in natural resource based economies or in environmental control, the government gets back its overall control.

The process of economic reform in China is organized as giving free rein to market mechanisms. The previous strictly centrally planned economic model has been changed in terms of

- ownership structure: the former public ownership - including state-owned and collective owned economy - is going to change into a new structure in which public ownership is dominating but individual ownership and private and foreign capital is an integrated part of the new structure.
- income distribution: the former simple distribution pattern has been replaced by a pattern which is preferably based on efficiency and productivity but also including other considerations.
- economic operations: the former approach of having a unique plan has been replaced by relying on a combination of both central-planning and market mechanisms. Price control on most of the commodities has been removed.
- economic decision making: the former system of central decision making is decentralized to form a system multi-level involvement. This system enables locations, enterprises and individuals to play a very active role under the guidance of the central government.

The non-public owned sectors of the economy embrace individual as well as private and foreign funded economic sectors which are known as appendages and recruitment of the public owned economy of socialism. These non-public economies are going to play an important part of the national economy of China. While in 1978 the state owned economy accounted for 56%, the collective economy for 42% and the others only for 2% of the gross national product (GNP), at the end of 1992 the proportions had changed to 40%, 50% and 10% respectively.

China's informal economy embraces individual, private and private-foreign joint ventures. Their importance in the overall economy is increasing because they represent the most active economic element in the urban economy. The main characteristics can expressed by the following aspects:

1. The overall progress has been made not only in a quantitative but also in a qualitative course. In recent years, the informal sector in China took its way from small scale and weak economies to large scale and strong economies. During this stages in development, the informal economy did not only pay attention to the increment of quantitative output but also to the improvement in quality. This course was made possible by major capital investment which enabled labor intensive industries to be reorganized into technology intensive industries. The former industrial pattern of "high output but low benefit" is being gradually converted by a high tech based pattern of high market capacity, high additive output value, high foreign exchange earnings and high benefits. In terms of the product structure, the elementary and mono-type products are going to be gradually replaced by deeply processed, refined and final products. These processes have been supported by training programmes which created a great number of managerial staff, professionality and an optimization of employment efficiency.

2. Trade developed from small dealers to private owned enterprises which play the key role in industrial and commercial retailing and wholesaling.

Table 1 The urban informal economy in China

secondary sector	tertiary sector
handicraft	commerce (self-employment, retailing, wholesaling)
printing	tourism
food industry	services (hotel, entertainment, catering, haircutting)
textile industry	transportation
clothing industry	real estate
building industry	advisory service
electronic industry	information service
communication equipment	
research and development	

3. The organizational form of business operations is tending to become more pluralistic. Their characteristic forms clearly are private and self operated, run by local people, based on joint stock with workers and staff, and co-operating with foreign investors.

4. The informal economy develops as the main urban tax payer. Since 1990, the informal sector became the main financial source of income for local governments, especially for small cities and towns.

Table 2 Share of taxes paid by informal sectors

Cities	Districts	Small Towns
>10% for large cities (Nanjing) >70% for intermediate cities (When Zhou) >70% for small cities (Shi Shi)	40% (Pukou)	60-80% (towns in Taicang city)

5. The informal economy provides the urban inhabitants not only with a wide variety of services for the daily life but also with a qualified range of jobs. Employment amounted in China in 1992 to 590 million people; among them there have been 150 million workers and staff, 8.38 million employees in private owned enterprises and self-employed laborers in cities and towns, and 440 million laborers in rural areas. Between 1971 and 1992, 102.32 million people found new jobs in cities and towns. Only in 1992, 7.36 million people in cities and towns entered work force. The unemployment rate was 2.3%. In the case of Nanjing, the capital of the Jiangsu Province, there are 93.698 individual industrial and commercial retailers with 157.710 workers and 2.656 private enterprises with 28.482 workers and staff members.

Since the 90s, the informal economy is serving as the main push factor which accelerates the progress in the economic development in Chinese cities. China is still in a stage of economic structure like other developing countries but its national conditions are of very particular interest. They result, especially in transitional periods towards market economy, in problems typical for the general adjustment.

1. Although the non-public sector has developed rapidly, its economic and financial contribution, however, developed disproportionally. E.g., in 1991 the non-public sector contributed two-thirds to the national income and nearly half to the industrial output value, while the financial contribution was far below these portions.
   China instituted various categories and rates of tax for enterprises of different ownership, e.g. China granted tax reduction or exemption to foreign funded enterprises. The persistency in the discriminatory tax rate toward state enterprises has not only violated the fairness and impartiality of market

competition but also caused a huge drain on the state tax revenue on "totally justifiable" grounds.

2. China is experiencing a stage of income gap expansion in the transition from a low-income to a middle-income country and from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. These processes will increase the disparities in income between regions, between peasants and non-peasants, and between rural and urban residents. These disparities count manifold because the population is stricken in poverty.
3. Increasing life expectancy, working life, polarization by market forces and many other factors will result in a long lasting and high rate of unemployment. The urban "open" unemployment rate and the rural "hidden" unemployment rate will rise steadily.

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THE URBAN INFORMAL SECTOR: A THIRD WORLD EXPERIENCE

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Population growth has been one of the most unmanageable problems of the Third World Countries. This has been exacerbated by the impact of investment strategies brought by global politico-economic policies. It may be noted that shifts in investment to the modern, capital-intensive-urban-based industry have been impoverishing the traditional-rural-agricultural countryside, thereby inducing massive rural-urban influx and a shift from rural underemployment to urban unemployment. These migrants are largely poor, unskilled, illiterate agricultural families that get eventually absorbed into the urban labour market of service and trade at very low wages through the informal sector.

The objective of the present paper is to see where and how these migrants get absorbed, what the patron-client relationship is, and how such activity is sustained by the dynamics of the urban economy. The focus of the study is on women as significant countributors to the domestic economy and their role in satisfying the basic human needs as well as in poverty reduction. The magnitude of the problem has attracted the interests of such international agencies as the ILO and Overseas Development Agency (U.K.). Hyderabad City, one of the leading metropolitan settlements of India, has a proliferation of the informal sector activity and is therefore selected as the study area for the purpose of this paper.

1 INTRODUCTION

The trends and patterns of population distribution and movements bear testimony to the existing dichotomies in global development, and consequently the classification of countries into developed, developing and under-developed regions. The continuing concentration of population within the developing countries, particularly the acceleration of metropolitan and even mega-city growth are proof of the deepening/ widening chasm between the rural and the urban, the traditional and modern, the indigenous and western, and the agricultural and industrial sectors. The wide disparities between these sectors have rendered the large urban settlements more attractive and magnetic than necessary and intensified population migration from countryside to the cities.

The problems accruing from unmanageable urbanization are peculiar to the developing countries particularly due to the non-complementarity of the city vis-à-vis the countryside. While urbanization itself is a global phenomenon, a greater proportion of the world's urban population i.e. 54.3% was concentrated in the developing countries in 1970. It increased to 65.3% in 1990. Estimates made by the U.N. indicate a further rise of urban population but a decrease in its share to 60.8% by 2000 A.D. A major chunk of this (41.2%) is projected to happen in Asia which has one of the oldest civilizations and, therefore, of urbanization. An increase in this proportion supported by an annual average growth rate of 3.2% per annum is expected. This concentration will thus sharpen to 44.2% by 2000 A.D.

Whereas the growth rate of urban population of the world is expected to stabilize in African and Asian countries higher growth rates (5.1% and 3.2% per annum 1980-1990) are indicated. Given these growth rates, the possibilities of declining urban concentration appears remote even if deliberate government policies do attempt to monitor the movements.

Although the size of the urban population itself is phenomenal the levels of urbanization are not very high, when compared to the developed or industrialized countries, owing to the predominant rural economies. Thus, whereas the world averages of urbanization levels range from 37% in 1970 to 43% in 1990, those in the developing countries are 26% and 34% respectively for the corresponding years.

In the developing countries hierarchies, forming various patterns and structures of urban system, have emerged, and continue to change in response to the investment policies of the nation states. However, one general trend is: national and regional polarization and emergence of primate cities. The paucity of finances have rendered greater importance to scale economies and investment in one or two settlements. They have thus grown to unmanageable proportion, as Table 1 indicates.

Table 1 Metropolitan Settlements: 1991

S. No.	Region	No. of Metropolitan Settlements	Total Population in Metropolitan Settlements	Average Size (mio)
1	Africa	16	30938	1.934
2	Central America	8	13713	1.714
3	South America	35	83133	2.375
4	Asia	101	293661	2.906
5	Total	160	421445	8.929
6	India	20	62688	3.134

The emergence, growth and proliferation of metropolitan settlements and urban agglomeration has been more marked during the second half of the present century. Particularly in the past 1960s, the independence of several has resulted in the lifting of migration restrictions imposed during the colonial period. This change has opened the flood gates of employment seekers. The inability to achieve political and economic stability due to internal conflicts between diverse ethnic groups and external economic dependence, has only exacerbated the trend of rural-urban influx and metropolitan concentration.

The developing countries have, by 1991, thus acquired 160 metropolitan settlements together supporting thus a population of 421,445,000 with an average size of 2.6 million per settlement. Over 63% of these settlements are concentrated in Asia. While the average Asian metropolis amounts to a population of 2.9 million India's average metropolis size is larger (3.1 million). India, by virtue of its very large population size, has almost 20% of Asia's metropolitan settlements, and over 21% of its metropolitan population. Even as proportion of the total developing countries, India's share is 12.5% of all settlements and 14.9% of population in 1991. Thus, it may be noted, that despite the Indian Planning Commission's warning since 1981 to encourage the growth of small and medium towns, the population concentration in metropolitan settlements and the complexity of the metropolitan settlements increased. What emerged the second half of the 20th century is a potpourri of the rural and urban lifestyle i.e. even while the settlement urbanized, it retained its rural/ traditional culture and way of life. One of these characteristic features is reflected in the informal sector of the urban economy. It stands in sharp contrast to its counterpart, the formal sector. Nevertheless the informal sector is becoming important and more widespread.

2 A CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Although the informal sector activity is an integral part of older cities, their prevalence in cities of newly independent (post 1960s) countries is not insubstantial. With the pioneering study by HERT (1972) on Ghana and the ILO report on Kenya, interest in this area gained momentum. The importance of the informal sector to the urban economy of cities, criticism of its negligence by government through their policy of discrimination between the formal and informal sectors, management problems, statistical information, in addition to conceptualizing the informal sector, are the principal themes studied. The more recent works highlight the coexistence of the formal and informal sector and the need to strengthen this relationship (RAJU 1992). MCGEE (1988) attributes the evolution of the informal sector to "urban involution".

While the existence of urban economic dichotomy is indisputable, AZIZ (1984) makes note of 'trichotomy' including within its purview, the organized formal sector, organized informal sector, and unorganized informal sector.

The informal sector, organized or unorganized, is the result of the excessive number of unemployed, unskilled and economically weak persons. These people occupy the interstices created by the gaps in demand and supply of services and infrastructure, extending the same at low and negotiable rates. It would be interesting to study the gender implications, particularly regarding women. The purpose of this paper is to look into:

(a) the incidence of informal sector activity in Hyderabad and the estimated growth in the 'mega-city' by 2000 A.D.,
(b) a comparison of proportionate informal sector activity in the higher income locality within a specific administrative unit (block), vis-à-vis its slum area,
(c) case studies of women in different informal activities, organized and unorganized.

3 HYDERABAD'S OCCUPATIONAL SITUATION

Hyderabad's feudal system of government and lifestyle gave rise to and sustained the informal sector activity (ALAM 1965). Estimates of the Third Economic Census, showing an account of 451,504 workers in the informal sector of Hyderabad, and 681,168 in Hyderabad including its suburbs, highlight quantitatively the importance of this sector and the need to allocate development funds. The vegetable, fruit, flower and fish vendors, the petty traders, both stationary and itinerant, and the welders, mechanics, painters, masons, etc. a male dominated sector, coexisted. Women, however, owing to what was called the purdah system, did not venture out and their participation in any formal or informal economic activity was minimal. Yet, since 1960 major changes took place. Greater awareness, economic necessity due to rising inflation, achievement of higher education and individual interest as well as the government's reservation policy of education and employment quota for women have served to increase both literacy levels and employment.

The Regional Center for Urban and Environmental Studies (RCUES) and Center for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) have made two exhaustive studies on the urban informal sector and the unorganized economic activity in Hyderabad. The occurrence, structure and importance of the activity was examined and its future growth assessed. While MOHAMMAD looked into the definite characteristics and nature of the informal sector, PRASAD looked into its management aspect, including economic regeneration, environmental improvement and small loan extension.

The economy of Hyderabad is managed by 714,101 workers employed in 221,792 units. 58.50% of the workers are occupied in the informal sector. The size of the informal sector units with an average of 2 employees per unit is small compared to the average size of the formal sector units (44 employees). This does not only emphasize the small size of the informal sector units, but also a proliferation of them, with the concentration of 97% of the total units as against 3% in formal sector.

Table 2 Proportionate Size of Units in Urban Activity in Hyderabad - 1987

Sector	Manufacturing, Processing & Repairs	Construction	Trade & Commerce	Transport & Storage	Services
Informal Sector	2.9	1	2.1	1.7	1.9
Formal Sector	52.0	-	18.0	67.0	44.0
Total	9.9	1	2.5	2.6	3.2

Source: computed from Table 1.3, MOHAMMAD (1992)

Of the total number of units 39.9% are located in the core of the city - 38.2% within the municipal limits. Another 17% are in the periphery of the city. It may be noted that these units cater thus to domestic needs and are located closer to residential rather than industrial areas.

4 WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

Female work participation in urban vis-à-vis rural areas is almost negligible. It is reported that in urban China women constitute over 21% of total laborforce (HOWE 1971). The existing sex-wise occupational structure of the manufacturing sector based on a sample study indicates a low 4.5%. This is mainly due to the requirement of highly skilled and professional qualified workers who are scanty amongst women. On the other hand the informal sector, owing to the lower technological skill required and relative accessibility extended, supports a slightly higher level of female work participation of 10%. In the non-manufacturing sectors of trade, commerce and services, the female participation rates are higher (Table 3).

Table 3 Hyderabad: Employment by Gender

S. No.		Informal Sector			Formal Sector		
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (in thousands)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (in thousands)
1	Manufacturing	90.0	10.0	60	95.5	4.5	179
2	Construction	91.1	8.9	43	-	-	-
3	Trade & Commerce	89.0	11.0	188	91.3	8.7	46
4	Transport & Communication	96.5	3.5	86	91.1	8.9	45
5	Services	74.5	25.5	208	88.4	11.6	225
	Total	85.3	14,7	585	90.0	10.0	495

Particularly in respect of services the proportion of females are comparatively high and are mainly constituted by domestic servants.

Over forty informal sector activities are identified but not all are accessible to women. Their accessibility is limited to only 23 activities. Some activities are shared by or indulged in by both sexes but four are restricted to women. In KARUNANYAKE and WONASHINGHE's (1988) study of Colombo female participation is not uniform in all sectors and areas. It is noted that some activities are gender-fixed. They include boutiques, housemaids, clothes/ utensils swappers, and papad/ chips makers. Selected sample cases, at random, in proportion to their incidence are taken to examine: the need to work, income ranges, the education status and their contribution to the family or household income-expenditure share. Ten broad categories are taken for this purpose.

The samples (Table 4) exhibit wide ranges in incomes and variations in educational status and contribution to household income and expenditure. Of the ten selected categories, eight do not require educational qualifications, only three require some skill (pottery, basket weaving, fish cleaning).

Table 4 Socio-Economic Profile of Households

S. No.	Occupation	Average Household Size	Literacy in Percent	Percent Earners	Average Income per HH	Per capita Income
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
1	Potter	4	75	25	1500	375
2	Housemaid	5	25	55	1729	353
3	Construction labour	6	21	54	2325	388
4	Fish cleaner	6	90	36	2650	481
5	Flower vendor	3	67	67	3325	1108
6	Vegetable vendor	4	46	54	3800	876
7	Basket weaver	5	80	40	4800	800
8	Fish seller	6	58	16	4200	700
9	Tailor/ Boutique	4	100	53	17708	5348
10	Beauty parlour/ Saloon	3	100	50	20000	5000

The last two activities (Table 4) require comparatively major investment as well as formal training. The size of households do not show much variation but the proportion of literates vary from 21% in construction to 100% in respect of tailors (boutique and saloons). The percentage of earners, too, range from 16% in the fish seller's category to 67% in the flower vendor's category. But here, the number of earners in a household is determined by many factors including need and willingness to work, availability of work, and accessibility of work. Most of them particularly in the lower income groups have developed on the one hand a resentment towards the formal sector workers, and on the other frustration due to inability to save money despite putting in much time and effort. The incomes of the households range from Rs. 1500 (= 75 DM) per month with Rs. 375 (= 19 DM) per capita to Rs. 17,708 (= 885 DM) per household and of Rs. 5348 per capita (= 267 DM).

The expenditure pattern of the household and the contribution by the women earners have their own peculiarities. In all income groups and occupational categories the percentage of income spent on food is substantial and ranges from 32% in the tailor/ boutique households to 73% in the case of the vegetable vendors. However, the proportion of income spent on food in the city of Hyderabad is 30%, which is the lowest in comparison to other metropolitan cities of India (Economic Census of A.P.). The vegetable vendor group spends about 18% towards rent, which would increase their total expenditure on food and rent to 92%. The balance of a meager 8% is stretched to support children's education, clothes etc. The amount and proportion spent for rent is not substantial. The expenditure in all these households surveyed (except the last two categories), is compared to earnings substantial. Many households can not provide the necessary food, shelter, clothing and education.

The contribution of women's earnings to the total household's earnings (Table 4) varies from 28% to 100% as does the contribution to the household expenses. The daily wages particularly in the low income category spend as much as their husbands on household expenditure. The vendors also subscribe large amount. In all cases, however, the husbands as head of the households give a fixed amount to their wifes. But this amount is not adequate to manage the household expenses, and, thus she earns to supplement that. Among the largest income earners, their amount given is normally sufficient for the total household expenditure, therefore, women can keep their earnings for all their personal savings.

The female population share in Hyderabad is 48% of the total population (2,055,543 in the year 1991). The sex ratio is 0.926 in Hyderabad (India 0.893). It constitutes 42% of total literate in Hyderabad and accounts for 50.6% literate of total female population. In contrast to these figures, the proportion employed is negligibly small, constituting only 7% of the total employment, and 10% of workers in the informal sector.

The principal factors that determine the low participation rates of women include (1) the priority they give to children's upbringing, (2) time taken by household chores, (3) increasing number of nuclear families, (4) limited number of temporary and part-time jobs, (5) low level of skills and specialization, (6) husband- and/or in-laws-dissuasion. These criteria are most applicable to the middle class families. In the higher and lower income groups, the causes vary widely. The higher income groups and elite families employ people to do the routine household work, and they themselves continue to work in their area and occupation of interest and choice. In the lowest income group economical compulsions and increasing inflation rates are the crucial determinants for entering workforce.

However, the primary objective of all these women, as their responses to queries suggest, is to see that their children are given a better education and training so that they get better jobs. These women, very few of them are single mothers, manage the limited earnings, and hold the fabric of the Indian urban society together. They bear the responsibility of offering the next generation a better life and strive towards this with total determination whereby the urban poverty levels are kept at bay. What they do require to ensure success in their endeavor are indoctrination and guidance through certain awareness programs e.g. on health, hygiene, thrift as well as to the right perspective of priorities to spend their limited resources judiciously.

5 INCIDENCE OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR - IN THE CITY

The urban informal sector as is reiterated by successive studies, is of peculiar characteristic to the urban settlements in developing countries. Several scholars have attributed its preponderance to the slum areas and the poorest sections of the urban population. To test the applicability of this observation to Hyderabad, an administrative block of Hyderabad (block 3 of administrative ward No. 8) has been selected for detailed investigations.

From within this block, 68 households were selected randomly, based on a 0.5% sample (total number of households 13,600). These 68 households are split in 35 living in slum areas and 33 living in higher income residential areas. In the slum area (SA), 46% of the households were in the informal sector, while in the non-slum area (NSA) the proportion was only 27%.

A comparison of the informal sector activity and the socio-economic implications in the two specified areas highlights the presence of variations and the degree of variations if any. The related average household income is Rs. 2084 and 1300 respectively. It is surprising that the informal sector income in the SA is higher than in NSA, exceeding by over 1.6 times. Similar variation exists with respect to per capita income too, with Rs. 263 and 202 respectively. The literacy level in the NSA, however, is twice (81%) that in SA (41%). This implies that literacy and income levels need not correlate positively (Table 5).

Table 5 Hyderabad: Informal Sector in Slum and Non-Slum Areas (block 3)

Total Sample = 68	Total No. of Households	% in Informal Sector	Average Household Income (Rs.)	Per capita Income (Rs.)	% Literacy
Slum Area	35	46	2084	263	41
Non-Slum Area	33	27	1300	202	81

Reasons for this surprising results are:

(a) the informal sector is not slum-specific;
(b) low income need not to be peculiar to slums above;
(c) literacy levels and income levels need not to be interrelated;
(d) preference to shift to the formal sector is minimal.

6 MEGA-CITY PLANNING AND THE INFORMAL SECTOR

The informal sector activity in Hyderabad is as old as the settlement itself. Its flexibility and wide ranging activities have rendered it more accessible to many people who seek part time or temporary employment. The growth of this sector is preordained (MOHAMMAD 1992).

The implication of Hyderabad's geographical conditions is that the newly emerging mega-city planning, coordinated by HUDA and MCH, are likely to displace more people from the rural sector and indirectly channelize their shift to the informal sector. An assessment is attempted here, taking the proposed area planned under the mega-city program for the year 2011. A 50-kilometer radius has been earmarked for land use planning with Rs. 913 crore. There are 453 villages within this area. Taking for granted that the landed gentry are likely to shift from agriculture to industry and the educated get observed into these industries, the mega-city plan is likely to affect the landless agricultural labor, who constitute 17% of the population in each of the mandals around Hyderabad (1991 Census).

Taking into consideration the different growth rates of the population in the mandals during 1981-91, which range from 17.6% in Choutuppal to 61.8% in Rajendranagar, the population for 2000 and 2011 A.D. can be obtained. The existing rural population component in the specified area in 1991 was 704,043, of whom 70% are illiterate and 20% are landless agricultural laborers and marginal workers. With growth rates ranging from 18% to 62%, the population is expected to increase to 170,671 and 212,251 respectively by 2001 and 2011 A.D. Most of these people will be absorbed by the informal sector in either construction or as domestic assistants. The mega-city program includes, among its objectives, creation of additional employment opportunities; but, the outcome remains to be seen. The provision of viable and gainful, alternative occupations would help to a large extent in improving the quality of life. However, it would be more economic for the urban development authority to guide these inmigrating people rather than to extend all the facilities that a planning package entails. It would also be beneficial to the informal sector, if the government adopted a policy of positive interference, as advocated even by the ILO.

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INFORMAL URBAN ECONOMY IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

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The Lake Chad basin is a turning point between Cameroon, Chad , Niger and Nigeria. In this region of precolonial trade and migrations, N'Djamena the Chadian capital is the major town. The informal sector or the sector of small urban activities little or not at all controlled by State, as far as the Cameroon section of this basin is concerned, seems to have specific characteristics. Contrary to the rest of the country where it is carried out by natives and developed to meet the local consumption, here it is extroverted not only by the origin of its human resources, but also by the destination of its services. It is also basically made up of commercial activities and concerns less products of local microenterprises than imported goods. The reasons, implications and prospects of this unusual situation are examined in this paper.

Key Words: Informal Sector, Lake Chad Basin, Cameroon Section, Extroversion.

Many studies have been carried out on the informal sector related both to its definition and to its delimitation criteria. We will not come again across these general features here. The development of this sector is growing in importance in Africa as population increases and as the standard of living deteriorates. This importance can be observed not only through the number of inhabitants involved in it but also through the amount of services rendered to a growing population. In general this sector is more developed in big towns than in small.

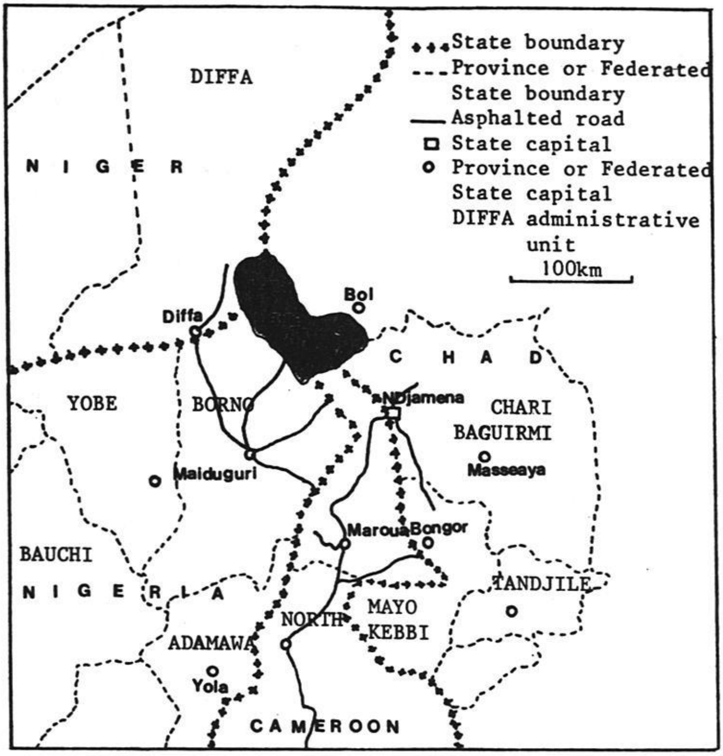
The Lake Chad basin stretches on four countries and comprises the far north of Cameroon, the west of Chad, the south east of Niger and the north east of Nigeria (Figure 1). In this region, N'Djamena appears as the biggest city. The other localities are of modest size. Towns of this region share not only the exploitation of the Lake Chad resources - mostly fish - they belong to the same borderland and, last but not least, their informal sector seems to have specific characteristics. What are they? Why is it so? What could be their implications on the regional economy and their prospective? Before analysing these characteristics, the context has to be presented.

1. Towns of the Lake Chad Basin

During the precolonial time the Lake Chad basin as terminus of two Saharan routes namely Tripoli-Njimi and Cairo-Njimi was very often visited by Arabs and Berbers in search for gold and slaves. It was also a region of high population migration following the rise and fall of several Sudanese empires.

Nowadays the region is a turning point between Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. It is therefore a transnational zone in which populations and goods from different countries get across each other (SIMEU 1994a). In this region of precolonial trade and migrations, N'djamena the Chadian capital is the major town. With a little more than 300 000 inhabitants, it has for many years suffered from a civil war. During that time trade was the only activity in the whole country which appeared deeply dependent on Nigeria for its manufactured goods, its oil and building materials. The present economic crisis does not seem to facilitate a quick recovery.

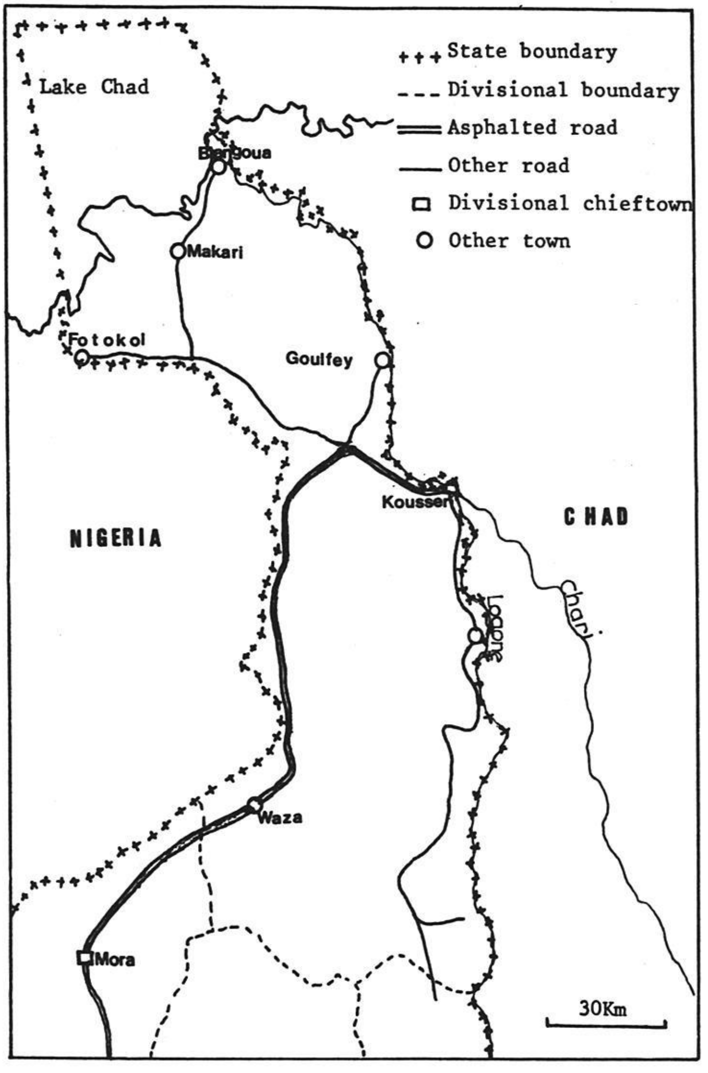
Figure 1 The Lake Chad Basin



Apart from N'Djamena, other towns are of less importance. As far as the Cameroon section of the Lake Chad basin which coincides with the Logone-et-Chari division is concerned, Kousseri appears with its 53 173 inhabitants (1987), as the most important town. Though located some 1600 km from Douala the Cameroonian main port, it is at the same time well linked to the rest of the country by a good communication infrastructure and geographically very close to N'Djamena. Situated along the Logone river, it faces the Chadian capital across the river at 200-500 m. Like in N'Djamena, urban activities here have been greatly disturbed by the Chadian civil war. Other towns of the Logone-et-Chari division are of less importance. Their economy is very close to that of rural centres. However they singularise themselves by their specific locations (Figure 2). Blangoua and Makary with respectively 8671 and 5228 inhabitants in 1987 are very close to Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Fotokol (6401 inhabitants) is near to Nigeria whereas Goulfey and Logone-Birni (4955 and

5529 inhabitants respectively) are close to Chad. Consequently they are populated both by Cameroonians as well as by people from neighbour countries. So if towns in this section of the Lake Chad basin remain different as far as population size, urban and commercial equipment and administrative status are concerned, they share the same particular location - close to a neighbour country - and therefore have their economy greatly influenced by the outside world. With the present market integration they stand as satellites for the Nigerian economic pole (EGG and IGUE 1993).

Figure 2 Cameroon Section of the Lake Chad Basin



2. Characteristics of the urban informal sector in the Cameroon section of the Lake Chad basin

2.1 Structure of the urban informal sector

Productions and services proposed by the informal sector are generally extremely diversified. Three main branches are easily distinguishable. They are handicraft production, trade activities and services activities.

Exception made to tourist towns like Maroua, the main town of the Far-North province, where handicraft tends to be an important branch of the informal sector, in other towns, it is generally marginalized. In these towns like in many others all over sub-Saharan Africa, trade and services are the dominating activities (SCHNEIDER 1993). Figures drawn from KENGNE (1991), show the following structure of small road activities in Yaoundé:

- handicraft production: 13,7%
- trade: 59,8 %
- services: 26,5 %

In Maroua the proportion of persons involved in handicraft activities should probably be higher than that of Yaounde. Whereas the dominance of trade and services tends to be typical of the informal sector in general, the Kousseri small activities are based mainly on trade. Very few handicraft activities are carried out here. Repair work and other services like hair dressing, shoe polish or nails cutting are also limited.

In a recent investigation on the local private sector in Kousseri (SIMEU 1994b), the general structure of population activities was:

- informal commercial activities: 31,5 %
- agriculture: 35 %
- small activities: 12,5 %
- other formal activities: 21 %

What is important to notice is that even at the general level of the town's activities, trade is still important. Small trade here is based mainly on imported goods (pharmaceutic products, cosmetics, etc.), oil products and building materials. It is also based on agricultural products such as tomatoes, vegetables grown up in winter, yams, fruits and on fish.

In the other towns of the Logone-et-Chari division, the structure of the informal sector is slightly different from the one of Kousseri. Although trade is still the dominating activity, there are more agricultural and agro-pastoral products on the market than manufactured goods. These are cereals, goat, sheep, fish, gum, firewood and date palm nuts. Products of local microenterprises such as smithy and basketwork are more present here. This is probably the result of a greater influence of the rural environment (SIMEU 1993). Because producers and consumers are almost the same, the volume of exchanges in these towns is relatively low.

2.2 The origin of workers

The informal sector or the sector of small urban activities little or not at all controlled by the State (De Miras 1987), is in general, mostly carried out by natives or by immigrants from surrounding rural environment. This can be verified through many examples. In 1976-1977, 98,2 % of town dwellers involved in handicraft originated from Maroua and surrounding regions (Mainet and Paba Sale 1982). In Garoua, we emphasised on the fact that people involved in the informal sector in 1982 were recruited inside the town among the marginalized population made up of new or old immigrants from the entire northern province, that is the present North, Far-North and Adamaoua provinces; whereas some directly come from their native villages (Mandara mountains, Diamaré or Adamaoua), other transited through a small town before (Simeu 1985, 1989). In another study in Yaoundé (Kengne 1991), origins of workers involved in the informal sector were:

- Yaoundé and surrounding regions' ethnic groups: 31 %
- Bamiléké: 50,4 %
- Ethnic groups of the rest of Cameroon: 11 %
- Foreigners: 7,5 %

Here Bamiléké come first. In fact, although originated some 260 km far away from Yaoundé, the country's capital city it has to be pointed out that people of this ethnic group represent almost half of the city total population. They also have completely monopolised the entire trade system in the capital. These examples contrast violently with the situation prevailing in the Cameroon section of the Lake Chad basin. In Kousseri, informal activities in general are largely influenced by Chadians. This is obvious not only for trade but more specifically for technical activities. In 1982, they owned, as stated by Paba Sale (1982), 82 of the 111 stands existing in the five streets situated south of the market. According to the same source, Chadian wives represent 62 to 74 % of various vegetables retailers in samples of 92 and 94 respectively. Still in Kousseri, a survey carried out in 1989 by the divisional office for Labour and Man Power on 31 joinery's microenterprises and their workers showed the following nationalities (Table 1).

Table 1 Nationality of workers in joinery's microenterprises

State of origin	Owners	Other workers	Total workers	Percentage
Cameroon	10	20	30	39,5
Chad	16	16	32	42,1
Central Africa	2	2	4	5,3
Other nationality	3	7	10	13,1
Total	31	45	76	100

It appears that the leading group of workers in these joineries as in many other technical works are not composed of Cameroonians but of foreigners and especially Chadians. Foreigners are numerically more important not only as owners but also as workers. This domination of foreigners in informal technical branches is not as such as in trade were natives are relatively well represented. In Kousseri Cameroonian young people of 10 to 15 are very early initiated to cola and many other commodities' trade. Among them, a good number are later involved in the urban informal sector. In fact, trade for natives is the easiest way of gaining money.

In the other towns of the division, the market holds only once a week. At that day, people from several origins, but mostly natives found themselves on the market sailing at the same time agricultural products and commodities imported from or through Nigeria. Among them, many are ambulant.

2.3 Destination of products

With a limited population size - less than 60 000 inhabitants in 1987 - Kousseri does not seem to be the main destination of trade and services generated or arriving in the town. The fact that half of the estimated sixty thousand persons who cross the N'guely bridge towards N'djamena every morning, return to Kousseri in the afternoon reveals the importance of exchanges between the two towns (PABA SALE 1982). Although some of them are just walkers or are from outside Kousseri, a big proportion are involved in the local informal sector. This importance of exchanges can also be viewed on the Logone river through which a heavy boat traffic carrying drinks and rice leaves Kousseri every day to N'djamena. It therefore appears that most of the services and products offered by the informal sector in Kousseri are mainly destined for N'djamena, the Chadian capital city which is also a big market. Contrariwise products in small towns are destined mostly to local consumers. Blangoua is however an important centre for collecting and redistribution of agricultural and agro-pastoral products.

Contrary to most of the towns where the informal sector reflects the characteristics of the surrounding rural environment, here it reveals specific features. This is an unusual situation as far as Cameroon towns are concerned.

3. Some reasons for *understanding* the urban informal sector in the Cameroon section of the Lake Chad basin

This unusual situation of the urban informal sector in Cameroon can be attributed to four main reasons. The first one is the presence of a huge number of Chadian refugees in Kousseri (SIMEU 1994a). At the beginning of the 1980s, following the civil war in Chad, many fugitives found refuge in this town. Very rapidly, they got integrated in the local population and did not hesitate in getting involved in the informal sector, the easiest job opportunity at that moment. With time, they found themselves more dynamic in this sector than the natives and today, they largely control it.

The second factor is the proximity of N'djamena, the Chadian capital city situated just half a kilometre away. With its over 300 000 customers and a higher purchasing power, it is a more attractive consumption market than Kousseri. It is therefore the preferential market of the informal sector in the Cameroon section of the Lake Chad basin.

Thirdly the structure of the informal sector made up here mainly of commercial activities is the result of the proximity of the Nigerian economic pole. This is a big production market from which natural, agro-pastoral and agro-industrial products such as mangoes, yams, eggs, maize flour, milk, butter, sugar, oil etc. are exported at low prices to Cameroon. Not all of these products are automatically made in Nigeria, some of them come through reexportation. Moreover exchanges are not limited to neighbour regions. Some originate far away, from south or west Nigeria (EGG and IGUE 1993). To have an idea on the level of prices, oil was sold five times lower in Nigeria than in Cameroon before monetary devaluation in January 1994.

Lastly, the existence of good communication infrastructure also facilitate external influences on the Kousseri urban informal sector. It is easy to get from Nigeria to Chad through Kousseri and vice versa.

4. Implications and prospects

The fact that the urban informal sector in the Cameroon section of the Lake Chad basin is extroverted and made up mainly of commercial activities have several implications. The first one is the increase of external influences through exportations and the number of foreigners involved in the informal sector, on the national economy and more specifically, on the informal sector. Exportations from Nigeria to N'Djamena through Cameroon have negative effects both on the national industry as well as on the agriculture. On the industrial sector, it reduces sales and jobs and sometimes it results in the close down of some units (for example Sodeblé, the wheat factory in Ngaoundéré). On the agricultural domain, it weakens the local production and can lead to food insecurity or dependency. In fact, during the dry season, there are serious problems of foodstuffs in Kousseri. Another implication of this extroverted informal economy is that it benefits mainly to foreigners. It has very little or no effect on the municipality's budget and therefore on the town's development.

In this context, what can the Cameroon section of the Lake Chad basin expect from its informal sector? With the increase of the present economic crisis it is almost obvious that young Cameroonians who for now are not seriously attracted by the informal sector will get more and more involved in it. From this attitude, Kousseri town dwellers and municipality could expect more benefits from the informal trade even if it is still destined mainly to N'Djamena.

Anyway the future of this activity depends very closely on the evolution of both the economic situation in Nigeria and on the political climate in Chad. If for monetary, political or any other reason, prices are no more competitive in Nigeria or Chad breaks again into war, the structure of the informal sector could rapidly be transformed. Could this be at the benefit of Cameroon national products? Its hard to say. Nevertheless, this activity would be affected here. In another point of view, a significant change in Cameroon tourist policy can also boost the production of local micro-enterprises and therefore have positive effects on the national economy.

5. Conclusion

It appears from this study that contrary to other regions, the urban informal sector as far as the Cameroon section of the Lake Chad basin is concerned, is extroverted not only by the origin of its human resources, but also by the destination of its services. It is also composed mainly of commercial activities made up more of imported goods than of products of local microenterprises. This is the result of the presence of a huge number of Chadian former refugees now completely integrated in the Cameroon sector of the Lake Chad basin, and the location of the region at the intersection of two big economic poles which for the first determines the destination of services and for the second, the structure of the informal sector.

The main implications of this unusual aspect of the urban informal sector are that it weakens the national economy and more specifically the modern sector and accentuate the Cameroon economic dependency. With the increase of the economic crisis, the involvement of more Cameroonians in the urban informal sector in this region is expected and therefore a greater benefit from this activity.

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