Globalization, informality, and nonstandard employment

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Preliminary – for Comments

I. Introduction

In this paper, we explore the intersections between the current trajectory of globalization and changes to the structure of employment, including processes of informalization. By 'informal employment' we mean employment for which social protections and government regulation (e.g. labor standards) do not apply or apply to a lesser degree. In some cases, limited interactions with non-government, formal institutions (e.g. formal credit markets, trade unions) also characterize informal employment. Informal employment may be closely associated with nonstandard forms of employment (e.g. short-term hires, part-time employment, or dependent contractors), particularly when the regulatory apparatus does not afford equal protection to workers in nonstandard employment.

The paper reviews salient issues with regard to the impacts of globalization on the structure of employment in developing and developed countries. Greater global integration of economies, particularly under neoliberal policy regimes, affects patterns of informality and nonstandard employment.

The paper pays particular attention to the ways in which formal employment has become less regulated and social protections eroded. Increasingly, processes of informalization affect pockets of employment in developed countries, in part through nonstandard work arrangements (Houseman and Osawa 2003; Carré and Heintz 2009). Similar processes are rolling back protections on formal employment in developing countries, a pattern that is reverse to common expectations.

In many academic and policy writings, the concept of informal employment is restricted to developing country contexts. Here, we propose a global approach to these issues and highlight common dynamics that bridge developing and developed country contexts. Specifically, we identify the key factors that shape processes of informalization and formalization worldwide and, in so doing, contribute to a more unified approach to these issues. We use the concept of the 'structure of employment' to provide a framework applicable to both developed and developing countries.

It is worth exploring the process of informalization in both developing and developed countries because it is a manifestation of the process of change in the nature of work globally. The global organization production and exchange as well as transnational migration engender dynamics in both developing and developed countries that are related though not identical. At a basic level, workers in distinct economies are frequently connected through supply chains and international production networks. More generally, the processes associated with globalization impact formal work, informal work, and the interactions among the two. Because globalization has been driven by corporate actors and has grown along with the spread of neoliberal policy regimes among leading nations, it is difficult to sort impacts on work that are due to one or the other of these trends.

In both developed and developing countries, workers in formal employment have experienced an erosion of the tenets of formal employment (job stability and social protection package) for their society or witnessed processes of tiering of the workforce with recent hires obtaining lesser conditions than senior workers. In developing countries, those in informal work experience new arrangements (for production, for trade). Meanwhile, forms of employment that present features of informality—such as limited coverage by social protection or labor standards—have become a fixture in developed countries labor market though these typically represent a small share of employment. Without arguing that employment structures are the same across all types of economies, we argue that processes of informality share more similarity than is commonly acknowledged across developing and developed economies.

II. The structure of employment

In this paper, we use the term ‘structure of employment' to describe the relative importance of different types of employment and employment arrangements in a particular country or context. The structure of employment can be described along a number of dimensions. We choose to focus on three aspects:

- Sector or industry
- Status in employment
- Formal or informal

The use of sectoral divisions to describe patterns of employment and relate these patterns to developmental dynamics has a long history, with the work of Kuznets and Kaldor making important early contributions. The sectoral distribution of employment can be described in very fine detail, but for our purposes we emphasize broad divisions, e.g. agriculture, extractive natural resource industries, manufacturing, and services. As economies grow and develop they typically undergo changes in the structure of production that have direct implications for the quality and quantity of employment opportunities. Put another way, an evolving structure of production implies an evolving structure of employment.[1]

One scenario of economic development is a shift away from agriculture towards manufacturing, other types of industrial production, and services (Kaldor, 1967; Kuznets, 1971). Such a change in the productive structure will generally be associated with changes in the structure of employment. Labor tends to move out of agriculture and into industrial activities and services. However, changes in the sectoral shares of employment will not exactly mirror those changes in the sectoral shares of production, except under exceptional circumstances. It is quite possible for manufacturing to account for a growing share of production and a stagnant, or even shrinking share, of employment, if, for example, labor productivity in manufacturing is rising rapidly. Many developing countries – e.g. India and South Africa – have experienced episodes of 'jobless growth' in their formal manufacturing sectors in recent years.

Early research on the changes in the structure of production and employment indicated that the industrial share of output would rise with income per capita (Kuznets, 1971). As the share of industrial production increased, the structure of employment changed – agricultural employment declined as a share of total employment and the share of industrial and service employment increased. Since earnings were higher outside of agriculture, these structural shifts in employment had important implications for average standards of living for the working class, particularly as any surplus labor in the agricultural sector was absorbed by growing industrial demand for labor (e.g. Ranis and Fei, 1961).

The structure of employment will change in the course of economic growth and development. However, the direction of causation runs in both directions. The structure of employment also affects the course of economic development. Concentration in low-productivity activities with limited opportunities for upward mobility will adversely impact economic growth and living standards. This, in turn, will retard the development of domestic markets with feedback effects on the composition of employment and the scope for productivity growth. Similarly, a significant share of employment in sectors with the potential for rapid productivity growth will provide a foundation for improvements in living standards and the expansion of domestic purchasing power.

Given these dynamics and the theoretical foundation which exists, we feel that it is necessary to include the sectoral dimension when describing the structure of employment. The second aspect which we include is the status in employment. The International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93) provides a set of standard categories for classifying employment along two basic criteria : (1) the type and degree of economic risk, including the strength of attachment between the person and the job,

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[1] Throughout this paper, we use the term 'employment' to refer to work producing goods and services which would be included, at least theoretically, in the system of national accounts. We use the term 'unpaid labor' to refer to non-market work in services which are excluded from the system of national accounts. Note that unpaid family workers on enterprises that produce marketed goods or services represent a particular category of employment – i.e. 'contributing family worker.'

and (2) the type and degree of authority/autonomy which workers have in a particular employment situation.

Five primary employment status categories are identified in the ICSE-93, with an additional sixth residual category ("not classifiable by status"). The five categories are:

(1) employees;
(2) employers;
(3) own-account workers;
(4) members of producers' cooperatives; and
(5) contributing family workers;

The ICSE-93 notes that the first category – employees – may be further subdivided into employees with a stable contract and those without a stable contract.

Many forms of employment can be classified within the five main groups of the ICSE-93, including some types of 'atypical' or 'nonstandard' employment (Greenwood and Hoffmann, 2002). For example, in many cases it is clear that part-time workers are employees. However, the lines between these employment status categories may be blurred for other forms of nonstandard employment. For example, short-term hires who sell their labor to a series of different employers share characteristics of both wage employees and the self-employed. "On-call workers" who only work when called, represent a similar intermediate case. Day laborers may be classified as wage employees or self-employed, depending on the interpretation of the implicit contract, even if the employment arrangement is effectively the same in both cases. Forms of "disguised wage employment" are treated as self-employment for regulatory purposes, but may have risk and authority profiles similar to wage employees (indeed, standard wage employees may enjoy lower risk and more authority in many situations).

The general concept of employment status – defined in terms of the allocation of economic risk and the allocation of authority and control – is particularly relevant for analyzing categories of nonstandard employment. It is often argued that the emergence and growth of non-standard employment involves a reallocation of economic risk and authority. If so, employment status categories should be defined so as to be able to track such changes over time. The standard ICSE-93 categories do not fully capture these emerging employment relationships. Therefore, when we speak of 'status in employment' as a dimension of the structure of employment, we mean a broader concept, one that includes various intermediate categories and forms of disguised wage employment but remains focused on the core issues of the allocation of economic risk and the allocation of authority and control.

The final aspect of the structure of employment which we emphasize in the current analysis is the distinction between formal and informal employment. The concept of informal employment is meant to capture employment relationships that are not governed by formal economic regulations or basic social protections. Because such employment falls, either wholly or partially, outside of the formal regulatory sphere, it tends to be more precarious, with lower earnings and higher poverty risk than employment which enjoys formal regulatory protections (Chen et al., 2005). Note that this definition of informal employment is related to, but distinct from, the other dimension of the structure of employment we have discussed. For example, non-standard work has a higher probability of being informal, but this does not imply that atypical employment arrangements must be informal.

Moreover, because informal employment refers to employment which is not regulated or which does not enjoy core social protections, the relationship between the regulatory regime and the employment relationship depends on the status in employment. Specifically, a distinct set of laws government the employment relationships of paid employees relative to those of the self-employed. 'Labor law' typically focuses on the relationship between employers (the principal) and employees (the agent). For the self-employed, often no clear principal/agent relationship is evident (or such relationships are hidden, and often unregulated). Self-employment is typically regulated by the laws governing enterprises, with a distinct tax code. Because of this distinction in the regulatory frameworks governing individuals in different employment statuses, the definition of informal employment must be flexible enough to accommodate paid employees and various forms of self-employment.

In 2003, the 17th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS) endorsed a framework for defining informal employment. We will not review all the nuances of these recommendations here. However, the ICLS framework illustrates how different approaches must be used to define 'informal' with regard to wage employees and the self-employed. Wage employees are often defined as being in informal employment if the employment relationship between worker and employer is not governed by a set of basic social protections (e.g. established by law, expected from customary practices, or linked to international standards). However, the self-employed are considered informal if the enterprise (or business) in which they work is not regulated (often enterprises are considered informal if they are not registered with a government entity or if no formal accounts exist which are separate from household finances).

These three dimensions – the sector of employment, the status in employment, and the formal/informal distinction – constitute the structure of employment for the purposes of this paper. We argue that changes in the global economy and the dominant policy framework have changed the structure of employment in such a way as to reduce social protections (i.e. a process of informalization), redistributed risk to workers without greater autonomy (i.e. reflecting changes in status in employment), and growing concentration of employed individuals in low-paid, low-productivity sectors (e.g. service activities with low earnings).

III. Labor Demand and Labor Supply: Factors Transforming the Structure of Employment.

a. Overview

We now turn to an analysis of the factors that have impacted the structure of employment in this recent era of globalization with a particular emphasis on informal and nonstandard forms of employment. We frame this analysis in terms of 'labor demand factors' and 'labor supply factors'. However, our approach to labor demand and labor supply is institutional, not neoclassical. That is, we are interested in broad developments in the global economy which influence labor demand and labor supply – their interaction changes the structure of employment. We do not discuss demand curves, supply curves, or conventional measures of price elasticities. In addition, we identify factors which influence the structure of employment in both developing and developed economies, although not necessarily in the same ways.

We will show that growth in labor demand has been limited relative to labor supply and this creates pressures leading to changes in the structure of employment. In some cases, slower growth of labor demand leads to higher levels of open unemployment. However, this is not the only possible outcome. Of course, slow growth of labor demand relative to supply will lead to greater unemployment if the structure of employment remains fixed. However, an alternative outcome is that the structure of employment itself changes.

For example, a lack of formal employment opportunities for an expanding labor force may lead to increased entry into informal activities, including informal self-employment, as a livelihood strategy. To the extent this happens, these forms of informal employment represent 'residual employment' – in the sense that they are activities taken up by those who cannot find work in the formal sector due to inadequate demand. We would expect such residual employment to have low barriers to entry and, as a result, low earnings. Informal employment in basic services (e.g. street trading, personal services, etc) often represents forms of employment with few barriers to entry, but also low productivity.

Although earnings are low in informal services, they are often higher than in agricultural self-employment. Therefore, we can imagine an alternative to the traditional Kaldorian trajectory of movements out of agriculture to higher productivity manufacturing. A movement out of agricultural still occurs, but this labor is not automatically absorbed by a growing industrial sector, since labor demand growth is limited. Instead, the workers move disproportionately into the service sector and informal employment. Earnings are higher, at least on average, than in agriculture. However, the scope for sustained productivity growth is limited.

An increase in the size of 'residual employment' is only one outcome of an imbalance between labor demand and labor supply. Large labor surpluses may place downward pressure on the terms of employment (including wages, but also the distribution of risk). Workers' fallback position deteriorates, reinforcing a power shift away from labor. For those in employee-employer relationships, this manifests itself as a decline in labor's bargaining power. For the self-employed, it also may affect their bargaining power, but with respect to other forms of dependency. For example, self-employed traders are often dependent on a larger supplier or various intermediaries with greater market power. Home-based production workers that are integrated into a global supply chain may see their loss of bargaining power manifest itself as a decline in the piece rate they are paid.

On a micro level, growing competitive pressures due to greater global integration and a weaker position for labor often encourages employers to pursue cost-saving strategies in wage employment relationships. This can take the form of employers taking advantage of atypical or nonstandard employment arrangements which are often not subject to regulatory oversights (i.e. they are informal).

As we move from an aggregate discussion of labor demand and labor supply to a more micro level, the distinction between the demand and supply sides may become blurred in the case of self-employment. Here it is important to remember that the demand for the labor of the self-employed is derived from the demand for the goods and services being produced. What determines the demand for a street trader's labor? It is the demand for the goods being sold (i.e. the demand for retail services)? Similarly, the productivity of a street trader's labor is determined by the quantity of goods she can sell in a particular time period. One manifestation of an imbalance between labor demand and labor supply for the self-employed is widespread underemployment – which includes working excessively long hours in very low productivity service activities.

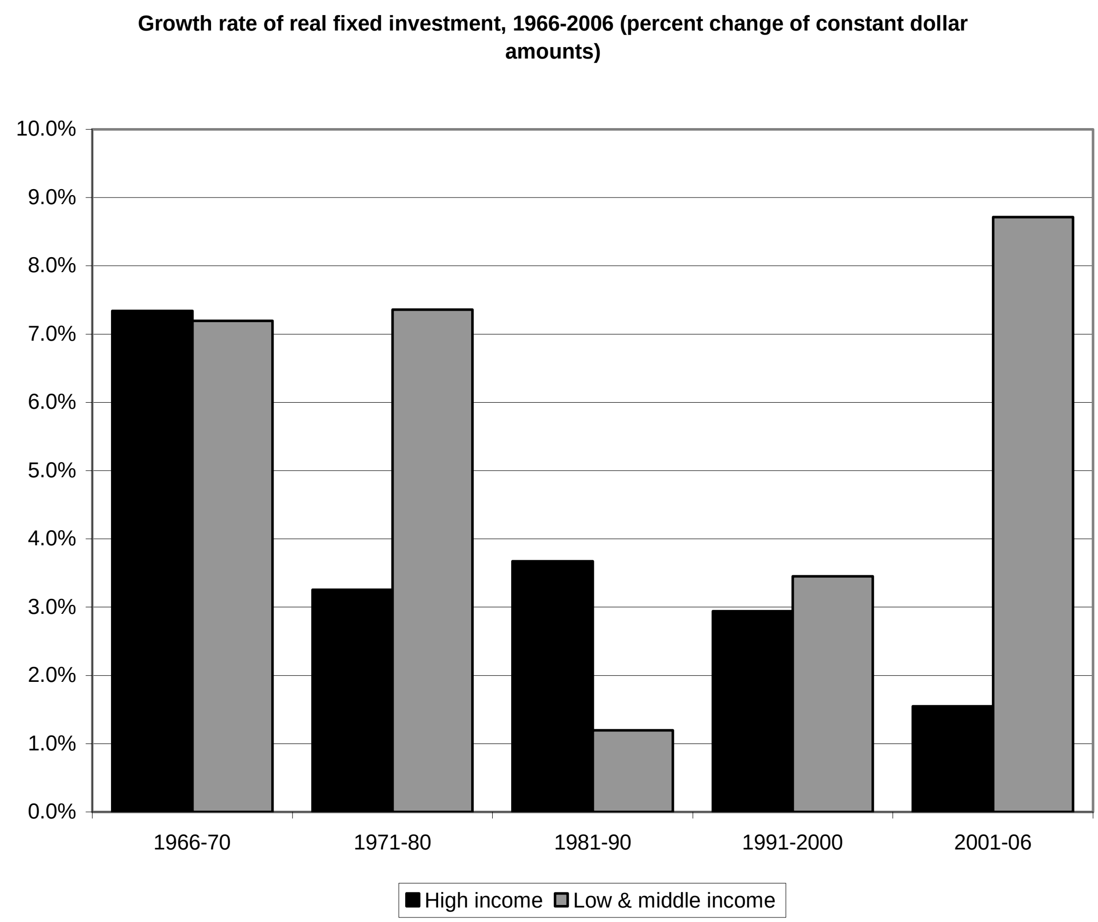
In summary, the interaction of labor demand and labor supply can fundamentally alter the structure of employment and the terms under which labor is exchanged. The remainder of this section examines the factors contributing to labor demand and labor supply dynamics in greater detail.

b. Labor demand: macro developments, policy frameworks, and employer strategies.

Neoliberal strategies have dominated the economic policy landscape since the late 1970s. These policies have tended to slow the growth of labor demand by reducing the rate of fixed capital accumulation and focusing on supply-side interventions to reduce labor costs (i.e. through competitive pressures to raise productivity) while de-emphasizing aggregate demand. Liberalization of capital and trade flows has increased volatility and economic and financial crises have grown in frequency. As we will discuss in greater detail later in the paper, such crises can have a lasting impact on the structure of employment. In addition, pressures to downsize the size of the public sector have had an adverse effect on employment.

The rate of private capital accumulation declined significantly during the years in which neoliberal policies were implemented (Akyüz, 2006). Figure 1 shows the growth rate of gross fixed capital investment for high-income countries and low- and middle-income countries from 1966 to 2006. During the period 1980-2000, when the implementation of neoliberal policies under the Washington Consensus was in full force, the growth rate of investment deteriorated. The decline in low- and middle-income countries is particularly noticeable. For high-income countries, the decline began in the 1970s, as the industrialized world adjusted to the shocks to oil prices. The growth rate of investment in developing recovered in the last period (2001-06) of Figure 1.

Figure 1



Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators.

Two factors contributed to this recovery – the rapid rate of capital accumulation in China (which pulls up the average) and the commodity price boom (which raised profit rates for exporters of natural resource based commodities). The food price, energy price, and financial crises that began in 2007 are not reflected in Figure 1. To the extent that the commodity boom was driven by speculative activities in commodities, futures, and derivatives markets, the recovery in capital accumulation of the 2001-06 period was not sustainable.

Neoliberal policies affect the rate of investment through a number of channels. Inflation-targeting monetary policies – or monetary policies which exclusively target low rates of inflation – often increase real interest rates, slow economic activity, and discourage investment in productive capital assets, relative to financial assets. Higher real interest rates often attract short-term capital flows which, during sudden reversals, contribute to heighten volatility. In this way, short-term flows contribute to macroeconomic uncertainty and discourage investments. Inflows of capital can also lead to an appreciation of the real exchange rate, which discourages investment in tradable sectors, e.g. export producing industries (Frenkel and Taylor, 2006). In many cases, rapid trade liberalization leads to extensive import penetration and displaces domestic production. If the surge in imports is not met with a similar surge in exports, an overall decline in productive capacity results.

Neoliberal policies also preclude the kind of targeted industrial policies which have supported productive investment and industrial development in other countries in the past. Industrial policies, including directed credit through financial institutions and development banks, were instrumental in supporting rapid capital accumulation in the newly industrialized countries of East Asia (Amsden, 2001; Chang, 2003, 1994). The neoliberal framework, by emphasizing the supposed efficiency of unfettered markets, excludes these types of purposeful development strategies.

With slower accumulation of fixed capital, the growth of labor demand for productive activities also declined. One could argue that an increase in the labor intensity of production would compensate for the decline in fixed capital investment. However, this shift to greater labor intensity did not take place. Neoclassical claims to the contrary, production technologies are not infinitely flexible and capital and labor are not perfect substitutes. In addition, the increase in global integration which accompanied the implementation of neoliberal policies raised competitive pressures to keep labor productivity high. A switch to low-productivity, labor intensive activities is often not possible without compromising a country's competitive position. These dynamics help explain episodes of 'jobless growth' in the formal manufacturing sectors of countries like India and South Africa.

Neoliberal policies also lead to the downsizing of the public sectors and privatization. This reduced the relative contribution of government institutions and agencies as an important source of formal employment in many countries. Hammouya (1999) presents figures that show that government employment either declined faster or grew more slowly than private employment in most countries during the 1990s. The reduction in public sector employment has been particularly noticeable in the transition economies of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Hammouya (1999) also shows that public employment is a particularly important source of formal jobs for women. Therefore, we expect that government downsizing would have a disproportionate impact on the demand for women's labor.

Financial crises, and subsequent real economy crises, have become increasingly common during this period of liberalization. During a crisis period, labor demand contracts suddenly. The sudden drop in labor demand manifests itself differently in different contexts – it may trigger rapid increases in open unemployment, it may increase the prevalence of underemployment, and/or it may directly impact living standards of those who remain employed. Such crises are seen as transitory. However, as we will discuss more later in the paper, short-run crisis may cause permanent structural changes with regard to employment and labor markets.

As discussed above, a central feature of the most recent period of globalization is the widespread liberalization of trade and the intensification of competitive pressures. In order to maintain a competitive advantage in this environment, deliberate policy measures are frequently undertaken to keep the price of key factors of production low. For many countries, the critical factor of production is labor. Therefore, employers face pressures to keep labor costs low in order to protect returns to capital.

Competitive pressures also place great emphasis on raising labor productivity in order to lower average labor costs rather than securing adequate domestic demand for the goods and services produced. This can have a negative impact on labor demand – particularly in sectors which traditionally generated formal employment opportunities in the private sector (e.g. manufacturing). Improvements in labor productivity will negatively impact employment when output does not respond vigorously to productivity increases. If the growth rate of output falls behind the growth rate in productivity, employment will decline. More generally, changes in labor productivity will directly impact the relationship between the growth in output and the growth in employment. Numerous researchers have documented a reduction in the output elasticity of employment in many, but not all, countries over time (Ghosh, 2008; Heintz, 2006; Khan, 2006; Kapsos, 2005). A declining elasticity indicates that employment is becoming less responsive to economic growth. One explanation for this change is that, in recent years, labor productivity has grown without a proportionate increase in demand for output. The result is fewer jobs being generated for any given increase in economic output.

Why would aggregate demand lag behind productivity growth? Greater global integration and increased competitive pressures provide one explanation. Competition on global markets creates pressures to reduce unit labor costs. Unit labor costs can be reduced by raising productivity without a proportionate increase in wages. When living standards do not keep pace with productivity improvements, the growth in output, relative to the growth in productivity, will fall. When an increasing share of output is being produced for export markets, this potential intensifies. Since the goal is not to produce for the domestic market, little is gained by insuring an adequate level of demand at home. If large numbers of countries pursue this strategy simultaneously, uncoordinated competition can result in the underdevelopment of markets at the global level. High-income countries may act as 'consumers of last resort,' in which competition among producers results in lower prices for relatively high-income consumers. Nevertheless, if demand in affluent markets is not highly responsive to reductions in unit labor costs at the point of production, the result would be a weakening of the relationship between output and employment growth.

Underlying these macro-level changes in productivity and labor demand are a set of employer strategies adapting to heightened competitive pressure that accompanies the shortfall in demand. As discussed above, most commonly, and most immediately, intensified competition translates into the pressure to cut labor costs (both total and unit labor costs), particularly in labor intensive activities. With time, corporations may also change their product market strategy, changing the mix of products, or of products and services, or moving down market, or up market. These changes in product market have consequences for labor as companies select a labor strategy (skill mix, recruitment, employment arrangements) that is aligned with their product strategy.

Such employer strategies impact the structure of employment. The various results run a spectrum from generalized reduced commitments of earning or hours stability, and of job stability, to tiered systems of employment and social protection (a core workforce combined with less protected workforces), to high downward pressure on wages, and, in worst cases, to unregulated employment (where labor standards are not respected). During times of crisis, pressures to adopt labor cost saving strategies intensify, often leading to permanent changes in the nature of employment. We analyze these issues in greater detail below, when we specifically discuss the impact of economic crises.

c. Global trends in labor supply – four developments deserving of attention

In recent years, there have been far-reaching developments on the supply-side of labor markets around the world. Here we highlight four labor supply issues that are of particular importance: women's labor force participation, urbanization, greater integration of the global work force, and international migration.

i. Women's labor force participation

Over the past several decades, one of the most significant transformations of the employment situation in a large number of countries has been a notable increase in women's labor force participation (ILO, 2008; Tzannatos, 1999; Horton, 1999; Çağatay and Özler, 1995). The impact of this shift on the total labor force is often ambiguous. This is because, in many parts of the world, men's labor force participation rates have been falling, while women's rates have been increasing. Nevertheless, the growth in women's paid employment remains, on average, an important global trend.

Table 1 presents estimates and projections of labor force participation by broad geographical regions from 1980 to 2010. Table 1 includes only low and middle income countries. Trends in women's labor force participation rates vary significantly from region to region. The most dramatic increases are apparent in Latin America and the Caribbean. In these countries, the rapid growth in women's labor force participation pulled up the total labor force participation rate – i.e. total labor supply increased relative to the size of the working age population – and fundamentally transformed the nature of the region's labor supply. In sub-Saharan Africa and East and Southeast Asia, women's labor force participation increased, but by a relatively modest amount. However, it is important to note that in these regions women's labor force participation was relatively high on average, even at the beginning of the period show in Table 1 (1980).

Table 1. Estimates and projections of women's, men's, and total labor force participation rates, 1980-2010.

		1980	1990	2000	2010
Latin America and Caribbean	All	60.1%	62.3%	67.5%	70.5%
	Men	83.8%	84.9%	83.8%	83.0%
	Women	36.7%	40.2%	51.6%	58.4%
	Ratio	*0.44*	*0.47*	*0.62*	*0.70*
Sub-Saharan Africa	All	71.3%	71.7%	71.9%	72.4%
	Men	82.7%	82.9%	82.6%	81.1%
	Women	60.1%	60.8%	61.5%	63.8%
	Ratio	*0.73*	*0.73*	*0.75*	*0.79*
East and Souteast Asia	All	79.4%	79.9%	79.5%	77.9%
	Men	88.9%	87.1%	86.5%	84.8%
	Women	69.5%	72.2%	72.1%	70.7%
	Ratio	*0.78*	*0.83*	*0.83*	*0.83*
South Asia	All	63.9%	63.6%	61.7%	62.0%
	Men	88.5%	87.0%	84.6%	84.2%
	Women	37.4%	38.5%	37.2%	38.5%
	Ratio	*0.42*	*0.44*	*0.44*	*0.46*
Middle East/North Africa	All	53.4%	54.9%	53.0%	53.1%
	Men	80.6%	80.1%	77.5%	75.8%
	Women	25.6%	28.6%	27.5%	29.3%
	Ratio	*0.32*	*0.36*	*0.35*	*0.39*
Eastern Europe	All	76.4%	74.2%	67.7%	68.9%
	Men	81.5%	79.5%	73.0%	73.6%
	Women	71.7%	69.3%	62.7%	64.5%
	Ratio	*0.88*	*0.87*	*0.86*	*0.88*

Source: ILO, Economically Active Population Estimates and Projections, 5th edition, 2008 revision.

In South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa regions, women's labor force participation rates also increased, but from a much lower base. The speed of increase was significantly lower than was apparent in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Perhaps the most interesting pattern captured in Table 1 occurred in the transition economies of Eastern Europe. During the market-based transition away from centrally planned economies, the countries of Eastern Europe experienced a significant drop in both men's and women's labor force participation rates. The ratio of women's to men's labor force participation rates remained relatively constant throughout this transition, but the level of labor force participation plunged in absolute terms. Therefore, it is not accurate to state that women's labor force participation has grown significantly in all countries around the world. What is true is that there has generally been an increase in women's labor force participation in most developing countries over the past three decades, if we exclude the transitional economies as a special case. The speed with which women's labor force participation rates have grown varies widely. And, in general, the ratios of women's labor force participation rates to men's have grown in most regions of the world.

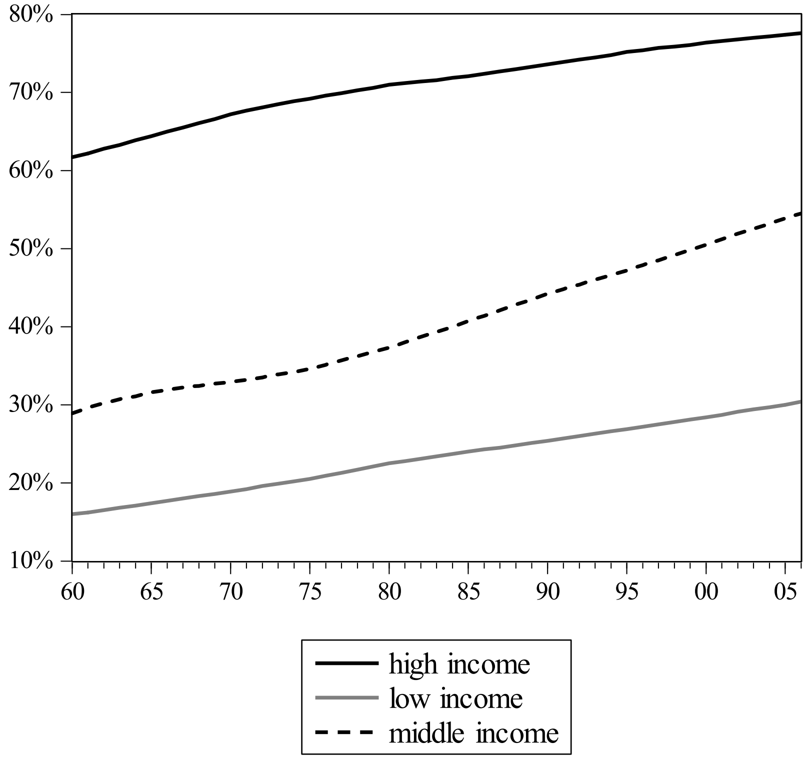
Women typically spend more time in unpaid household and care work. Their increased labor force participation means that women work a 'double shift' – part of their day is spent in paid work and part performing unpaid caring labor. However, given a limited amount of time available in a day, women's growing labor force participation will represent a reallocation of labor away from non-market activities and to market activities – even when participation rates in unpaid care and household work remain high.

It is also important to recognize that women's increased labor force participation coincided with changes in the structure of employment associated with economic growth and development - specifically, the limited growth in formal industrial employment and the more rapid increase of the share of service and informal forms of employment. More and more women around the world are being employed in service activities (ILO, 2008). The service jobs which employ women are often less well paid and more precarious. Improving the quality of employment for women will therefore require a specific focus on employment in the service sector.

ii. Urbanization

An increasing share of the world's population lives in cities and urban centers. Figure 2 shows the trends in the urban population's share of total population from 1960 to 2006. The trends are disaggregated into three country groupings: high-income countries, middle-income countries, and low-income countries. Two observations are immediately obvious. First, the urban share of the population is highest for the high-income countries and lowest for the low-income countries. We have already seen that the share of agricultural employment is highest for lower income countries and smallest for higher income countries. Figure 2 suggests, not surprisingly, that processes of urbanization will be associated with changes in the structure of employment. Second, in all three country groupings, the share of the urban population has been growing steadily. There is some slight indication in the graph that the growth of the share of the urban population has slowed somewhat for the high-income grouping. Nevertheless, urbanization is clearly a global phenomenon.

Figure 2. Urban share of total population (percent) by country grouping, 1960-2006.



Source: World Development Indicators, 2008.

What this suggests is that the urban labor supply has been growing, and will likely continue to grow, faster than the total population. This raises serious questions about the associated trends in urban employment opportunities and whether urban labor demand will grow sufficiently to absorb the expanding urban work force. For example, Table 2 illustrates recent trends in the growth of urban populations, total population, and industrial employment for 11 developing countries. In all cases, the urban population is growing faster than the total population. Note that these are annual average growth rates spanning 20-25 years.

Table 2. Annual growth rates of urban population, total population, and industrial employment, 11 selected countries.

	Urban population annual growth rate	Total population annual growth rate	Industrial employment growth rate	Years	Source
Bolivia	3.6%	2.2%	4.2%	1981-2003	GGDC
Botswana	7.8%	2.6%	7.2%	1981-2003	UNIDO
Brazil	2.6%	1.7%	1.6%	1981-2005	GGDC
Costa Rica	3.9%	2.4%	3.2%	1981-2006	ILO
India	2.8%	1.9%	0.6%	1981-2002	UNIDO
Indonesia	4.6%	1.5%	3.7%	1985-2006	ILO
Korea	2.2%	0.9%	1.5%	1981-2006	ILO
Mexico	2.2%	1.7%	1.8%	1981-2005	GGDC
Peru	2.3%	1.8%	1.2%	1981-2005	GGDC
Philippines	4.3%	2.3%	2.1%	1981-2006	ILO
Thailand	1.9%	1.2%	4.2%	1981-2006	ILO

Source: For population growth rates: World Development Indicators, 2008. For industrial employment, see source column in table (GGDC=Groningen Growth and Development Center 10-sector database; UNIDO=Industrial Statistics Database, 3-digit ISIC; and ILO=LABORSTA database, ILO, Geneva). Note: Industrial employment includes manufacturing, construction, and utilities. For Botswana and India, industrial employment only includes manufacturing.

There appears to be a positive relationship between the growth rate of the urban population and the growth rate of industrial employment. This suggests that as labor demand in the industrial sector increases, so does rural to urban migration. However, in most of the countries examined here, the growth in the urban population exceeds the growth in industrial employment opportunities. This indicates that, over time, industrial employment will account for a decreasing share of total urban employment. Rural-to-urban migrants who are not employed in industrial jobs will work in the service sector, in informal employment, or will become unemployed. Of course, not all industrial employment is located in urban areas, but the majority of such opportunities are concentrated in and around cities. Table 2 suggests that the growth of industrial employment will not be sufficient to maintain a constant share of urban industrial employment relative to total urban employment, given rates of urbanization. If these patterns persist, the net result will be more informal employment in urban areas, much of it concentrated in low-productivity services.

iii. Integration of the global workforce

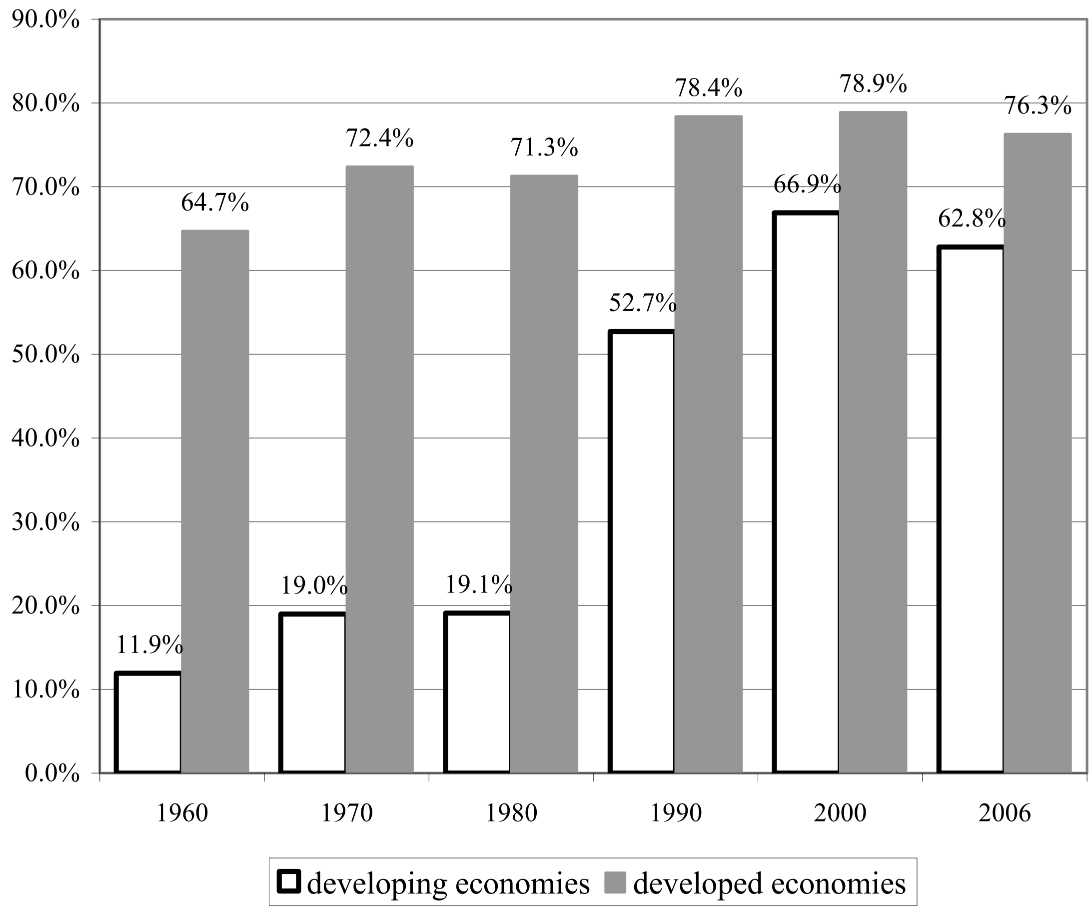
As the countries of the world re-orient their economies to produce for a more integrated, common global market, the labor forces of individual countries become increasingly consolidated into what could be considered a single global labor supply, albeit still deeply segmented. Richard Freeman (2006) has made this point in terms of what he identifies as the doubling of the global labor pool. With the market reforms in Easter Europe, Central Asia, and, perhaps most significantly, China, and India's adoption of more outward oriented economic policies, the number of workers engaged in production for the global market has increased enormously in recent decades. The increase in the global pool of labor has outstripped the increase in the global pool of capital, making labor relatively more abundant and capital relatively scarcer (Freeman, 2006). An abundance of labor relative to capital will place downward pressure on labor's terms of trade, at least until global capital accumulation can catch up.

Whether the economic and geopolitical changes which Freeman discusses has produced an actual doubling of the global pool of labor is subject to debate and qualification (i.e. substitutability and mobility may be highly imperfect), but his general point remains valid: global production for international markets has increased dramatically – effectively meaning that the workforce which is integrated, directly or indirectly, into global markets has expanded much more rapidly than the world's population. Since developing countries, in which labor is abundant relative to capital, have been entering areas of global production that have been dominated by the high-income nations, we would expect that the global ratio of available labor to available capital would have risen in recent years. The relative scarcity of capital has been made more severe by neoliberal policies which discouraged fixed capital investment (Akyüz, 2006).

Figure 3 illustrates one dimension of the integration of the global workforce: the rise in the share of manufactured exports originating in developing economies, representing the new global division of labor. The growth in manufactured exports contributes to an intensification of trade competition. Not only are developing countries competing with the established manufacturing sectors of advanced industrial countries, they also are competing with each other. Improving a country's global competitive position has emerged as a cornerstone of export-orient growth strategies in which expanding the export sector becomes the engine of industrial development. Ironically, the competitive pressures unleashed may make industrial development more difficult, since intense competition erodes the resources available to invest in industrial production and up-grading.

The growth in industrial production for global markets has transformed the relationship between labor demand and potential sources of labor supply. Demand for production is no longer associated with increased demand for labor among a small set of highly industrialized countries. Today production can be sourced (and labor services purchased) from a wide range of competing countries. Labor in these countries can be said to be integrated, since one set of workers in one geographical location can easily substitute for an equivalent set of workers elsewhere. The increase in the global substitutability of labor will tend to raise the elasticity of labor demand (Rodrik, 1997). As labor demand becomes more elastic, improvements in the terms under which labor is exchanged will become more difficult to secure without risking job losses.

Figure 3. Exports of manufactured goods as a percentage of total exports, 1960-2006.



Source: UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2008 and UNCTAD Globstat Development and Globalization Facts and Figures (globstat.unctad.org).

iv. International migration

Movement across international boarders also affects labor supply and the global distribution of human resources. The total number of international migrants has grown steadily in recent decades, reaching nearly 200 million by 2005 (Table 3). This total includes refugees and asylum seekers. However, most of the world's migrants go abroad for economic reasons. As Table 3 indicates, women account for a growing share of global migrants. In many cases, women's migration is associational – i.e. women migrate to stay with or join their families. However, an increasing number of women are migrating for economic reasons (UN, 2005).

Table 3. Estimated global stock of international migrants, 1960-2005.

	Total stock of international migrants (millions)	Women as a % of total migrants
1960	75.5	46.8%
1965	78.4	47.1%
1970	81.3	47.2%
1975	86.8	47.4%
1980	99.3	47.2%
1985	111.0	47.2%
1990	154.9	49.0%
1995	165.1	49.3%
2000	176.7	49.7%
2005	190.6	49.6%

Source: World Migrant Stock 2005 Revision, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Although the total population of international migrants has been growing, the relationship between the number of migrants and the world's population has been more stable. Since 1990, the stock of international migrants as a percent of the world's population has remained around 3 percent. This implies that international migration has tended to increase with the size of the total population – at least since the beginning of the 1990s.

The level of international migration may seem modest – e.g. 3 percent of the total population – but it is important to bear in mind that the international migrant population is not distributed evenly across the countries of the world. In addition, countries experience uneven patterns of emigration. For countries with high levels of migration, remittances from employment can constitute a sizeable inflow of financial resources – e.g. Mexico, Ghana, and the Philippines, to name a few.

In high-income countries, international migrants may be concentrated in low-paid, contingent, and unprotected forms of employment. For example, in the U.S., non-citizens account for a disproportionate share of employment as day laborers, part-time workers, and temporary hires – categories of work which tend to be significantly more precarious on average (Carré and Heintz, 2009). In some cases, migrant workers are caught up in highly exploitative, illegal employment arrangements. Despite these labor market disadvantages, remittances, financed through employment income and sent back to the country of origin, often constitute a sizeable component of household income, thereby reducing the risks of poverty.

IV. Crisis, labor demand, labor supply and the structure of employment

During times of crisis, changes to labor demand and labor supply are more extreme, often leading to rapid changes in the structure of employment. On the labor supply side, there is evidence that labor supply may increase in times of crisis, when household incomes come under pressure due to rising unemployment or falling real earnings. This runs counter to some neoclassical models that emphasize substitution between work and leisure as the critical labor supply decision facing households. On the demand supply, firms typical respond to economic downturns by reducing their workforce – since hiring decisions tend to be more easily reversed than investments in fixed plant and equipment. For the self-employed, demand for labor is directly derived from the demand for goods and services. An economic crisis lowers earnings and raises the degree of underemployment.

As mentioned above, the empirical literature suggests that, in some circumstances, labor supply will increase in response to economic crises. Specifically, it is not uncommon to find that women respond to adverse economic conditions – including rising unemployment – by increasing their rate of labor force participation. For instance, studies have shown that increases in women's labor force participation have corresponded to the implementation of structural adjustment programs (Çağatay and Özler, 1995; Benería and Feldman, 1992). Women's labor force participation has been shown to increase with economic crises and policies that trigger labor displacement, job instability, and higher rates of unemployment (Cerrutti, 2000; Arriagada, 1994). Women also increase their labor force participation in response to sustained structural unemployment. For instance, research into the determinants of women's labor supply in post-apartheid South Africa has shown that women's labor force participation responded to increases in household joblessness, thereby placing further upward pressure on the country's average unemployment rate (Casale, 2003).

Economic crises directly impact the demand for labor as investment dries up and employers cut their workforces in response to falling levels of aggregate demand. Government revenues come under pressure as tax receipts fall, leading to job losses in the public sector. The dynamics with respect to labor demand and labor supply mean that the pressures for increasing informalization and the prevalence of nonstandard employment arrangements grow. The same factors which contribute to the transformation of the structure of employment to include a larger share of informal and nonstandard employment arrangements are intensified in times of crisis.

In our discussion of labor demand, we have stressed the importance of employer strategies to reduce labor costs. The pressures to cut costs will be more intense during crisis periods. In addition to pressure on labor costs which trigger changes in employment systems, economic crises also strengthen the hand of management in the employment bargain. They are a propitious time for employers to alter job structures and employment relationships whether or not cost savings are required. Plans to erode job-related protections, to reduce pay for some worker categories, or to reduce access to career ladders may get implemented during a crisis because it is an opportune time to do so, when it is least likely to be resisted by workers at risk of unemployment and who perceive their employment alternatives to be limited. What we witness coming out of a crisis is the result of both these processes.

a. Tiered employment systems-use of nonstandard arrangements

Evidence of the impact of crises on job structures includes, most visibly, the growth of some forms of nonstandard arrangements as well as the introduction of new forms of nonstandard arrangements. Patterns of employment that started as part of a recovery tend to become entrenched if they serve a cost cutting purpose provided they are not injurious to other business goals. Thus, an employment practice that entails generating substantial numbers of nonstandard jobs can become systematized and then increase during times of economic growth too. A share of new jobs takes the form of nonstandard arrangements and, over time, the structure of employment changes.

In developed countries in particular, large employers have over the past 35 years moved their employment structure away from a single model of steady, year-round, full-time employment toward using a multiplicity of arrangements that differentiate and create "gradients" in worker access to job security expectations, training and promotion, employer-based benefits, and full coverage from labor standards. In most these countries, the turn to systematic use of these nonstandard arrangements (as compared to episodic, ad hoc, use) can be traced back to the end of the first oil price shock recession and years immediately following it.

In the United States, for example, in recent history, the categories of employment that have grown fastest when coming out of recession are temporary help/staffing and other forms of short-term employment. This is to be expected as employers are reluctant to make job commitments in early stages of recovery. Yet, adaptation of this kind has not always been followed by a return to pre-recession structures of employment. Starting with the recession of the late 1970's-early 80's, temporary help jobs grew steadily as share of US private employment more than doubling from 0.5% in 1982 to 1.2 % in 1995, and reaching nearly 2.1% by 1998 (it has since fluctuated to around 2 % (EPI, 1997, p. 268; EPI 2007, p. 239). Many of the years in this span were years of rapid economic growth but a pattern started in response to the crisis of the 1970s, experienced as one prompting a structural change, has sustained and grown over time; temp work (and other non-standard arrangements) has become a standard tool in labor strategies of corporations. Most recently, the US temp industry employment growth which started as early as fall 2009 was seen as one sign of the tapering off of the current deep recession (BLS 2010).

There appears to have been "migration" of changes to employment practices affecting formal employment from high income to middle income countries, and even to small parts of the formal economy in some low-income countries. Some have termed this process the "informalization of formal employment" (Devey, Skinner, and Valodia 2006).

South Korea, experienced differentiation of employment with the rapid rise of temporary and short-term employment in the years following the 1998-2000 East Asian crisis. Varied forms of fixed-term, contingent, temporary agency, and on-call workers grew from 16.6 percent of total wage and salary employment in 2001 to 28.8 percent in 2006 (Grubb, Lee, and Tergeist 2007,17). This change happened against a back drop of significant total employment growth –nearly 14% over the period but followed restructuring among large employers that left them with workforce reductions and a changed employment structure.

In recent years, other countries also have experienced similar patterns. India has reported the growth of short-term employment in formal sector firms, noting that new jobs in the formal sector are "mostly informal" meaning they entail no job security or no access to social security protection (research by National Commission on Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector 2008) so have South Africa (Devey, Skinner and Valodia 2006) and Mexico (Beneria 2001, Levy 2008, Negrete 2008).

b. Unregulated employment

In some developed countries in particular, a number of forces have combined to create incentives for employers and vulnerabilities for workers that are such that a notable share of workers experience what some have called "unregulated" employment, meaning that by design or practice their work conditions are not governed by prevailing labor standards. Large cities in the United States seem propitious terrain for such occurrences. In recent years, they have been recipients of large numbers of immigrants, a share of whom are undocumented; both groups of workers are vulnerable and not well able to resist employer practices. Also, the US policy enforcement apparatus is not well suited to monitoring large numbers of small work sites and has been weakened in recent years. Most common are violations of minimum wages, overtime pay, and health and safety conditions. Research on Chicago, Los Angeles and New York City indicates significant levels of violation in industries such as food retail, restaurants, building maintenance and security, domestic and other personal services, and construction (Bernhardt et al 2009). These employer practices benefit from the migration flows that are part of globalization as it currently operates and change bargaining power for workers as a whole.

c. Extending subcontracting

Employers have turned to core production subcontracting and service subcontracting as part of differentiating their employment systems as well as re-organizing their process of production. When subcontracting is undertaken primarily with the goal of cost reduction, or in periods such as crises when cost reductions are sought, subcontractors experience the pressure most directly in contract negotiations. They act to cut labor costs through pressure on wages, labor reductions, and/or by implementing their own process of subcontracting to an operation with lower production costs—whose employment practices may not be monitored or questioned. Dynamics that we have come to understand about global supply chains in terms of pushing down risk and cost pressures on weaker members of the chain also take place within country. It is among the subcontractors of large companies that lower pay and worse working conditions are found.

V. Conclusion

Employment structures in developing and developed economies have experienced parallel and related, though not identical, processes of change in response to greater global integration, the internationalization of production and labor markets, neoliberal policy regimes, and economic crises. In this paper, we have offered a framework for analyzing these trends, and the factors behind the transformations we observe.

In developing countries, there has been an increase in labor supply in urban area and increase in female market-based work. This has not always been accompanied by a similar increase in labor demand or formal employment opportunities. The share of informal employment remains high but a greater part of it is taking place as part of global supply chains. Also, formal employment experiences "informalization" meaning that new jobs entail less or no job stability, and/or diminished social protection.

In developed countries, there is a decline in the relative share of formal employment (though it remains very high). International migration to developed countries is an added dimension of the dynamics of labor supply. In these cases, imbalances between labor supply and demand often do not cause an expansion of self-employment or informal employment as observed in developing countries. Instead, downward pressure on compensation, a redistribution of risk towards workers through a rollback of social protections, and a decline in job security represent common outcomes of employer strategies to cut labor costs. The consequences are erosion of compensation in formal jobs, informalization of formal jobs, and even unregulated employment. Also, transnational migration and attended undocumented immigration provide a vulnerable labor pool and make underground employment, employment that is not declared and also not protected in any way by labor standards, a feasible option for employers.

When globalization is accompanied by policies of market liberalization, we expect crises to be more frequent and broader in scope. The evidence suggests that recent economic crises exacerbate the patterns above – increasing labor supply when there is a shortfall in demand. A crisis strengthens employers' hands, and enhances their ability to institute more advantageous employment patterns.

What we have offered in this paper are the elements of a framework for fitting these various developments together—using the concept of the structure of employment. However, this approach is preliminary: the issues raised have not been comprehensively developed, issues that we do not discuss could be integrated, and there is much room to examine the theoretical assertions we make empirically. Nevertheless, the paper represents a step towards analyzing recent patterns and trends in both developed and developing countries which impact our understanding of processes of informalization as a global phenomenon.

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